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Words Of T

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

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 25

FRIDAY, JANUARY 1, 1988

NUMBER 1

1987 Words Of Truth Index

1987 WORDS OF TRUTH INDEX ANNOUNCEMENT

- Ivey Named Executive Vice Chairman Of Faulkner University Board (1-2)
- FHC Lectureship Feb. 2-6, 1987 (1-9)
- 21st Annual Memphis School Of Preaching Lectureship Nears (3-6)
- Missouri-Kansas Lectures (3-27)
- An Appeal For Information About The Multiplying Ministries (6-26)
- Faulkner University Lectureship Set For October 4-8 (6-26)
- Bob Carrell To Join ETSOPM Faculty (4-10)
- Computer Church Program (7-10)
- Second Annual Mississippi Lectures Aug. 23-27 (7-10)
- 8th Annual Gus Nichols --Words Of Truth Lectureship (8-14)
- Hall L. Calhoun: "The Christian Scholar" (9-4)
- The Third Annual Freed-Hardeman College Preachers And Church Workers Forum (9-25)
- Important Notice To Subscribers (12-25)
- BIGHAM, Harold**
 - The Godhead And The Absurdity Of The "Jesus Only" Doctrine (3-6)
 - The Godhead And The Absurdity Of The "Jesus Only" Doctrine (3-13)
 - Caleb (4-10)
- BIGHAM, Howell**
 - Christ As Prophet, Priest And King (2-20)
 - The Conversion Of The Ethiopian Eunuch (4-24)
 - A Picture Of The Blessed Man (5-22)
- BRIGHT, Tom L.**
 - When Loyalty Becomes Idolatry (4-17)
- BROWN, T. Pierce**
 - Stick To Your Bush! (8-7)
 - A Strange Thing (10-2)
 - "Doubting" Thomas And His Faith (11-6)
 - Sanctification (11-20)
- BURLESON, Edsel**
 - Your Faith Greatly Determines Your Child's Faith (4-24)
 - "It's Your Business To 'Learn' Him" (5-8)

- How Much Of The Lord's Time Have You Stolen? (5-22)
- Guilty Until Proven Innocent? (5-29)
- If You Have Time To Talk About Jesus, I Have Time To Listen (6-12)
- Is Yours A Borrowed Faith? (6-19)
- We Can Not Live By Success Alone (6-26)
- Did You Ever Tell A Lie? (7-3)
- Permissive Parents Produce Pitiful Problems (7-10)
- To Save Souls We Must Cooperate With God (7-17)
- Good Intentions Do Not Save Souls (9-25)
- You Can't Live Wrong And Die Right (10-2)
- Why Not Fill Up Your Oil Can Tonight? (10-9)
- "Character Is What You Are In The Dark" (10-16)
- Good Intentions Don't Get Work Done (10-30)
- Covetousness Puts One In Forbidden Company (11-13)
- Magnets Won't Attract Rusty Nails (11-27)
- "Daddy, Have I Ever Seen A Christian?" (12-4)
- Let The Bible Mean What It Says And Say What It Means (12-11)
- "Lord, Fix The Roof . . . Quick!" (12-18)
- Do You Know Who I Am? (12-18)
- Discouragement, The Devils Costliest Tool (12-25)
- COATS, Wayne**
 - Media Ethics And Modern Music No. 2 (2-6)
 - Media Ethics And Modern Music No. 3 (6-5)
 - Media Ethics And Modern Music No. 4 (6-12)
- COBBLE, Sandra F.**
 - "Only A Vegetable" (11-6)
- COLLEY, Glenn**
 - A Little Bird (7-17)
 - What Did It Cost Me? (7-24)
- COOK, Charles**
 - The Instrumental Music Question No. 1 (4-3)
 - The Instrumental Music Question No. 2 (4-17)
 - The Instrumental Music Question No. 3 (4-24)

- Our Quest For Happiness (10-9)
- They Turned Their World Upside Down! (11-13)
- COURINGTON, David**
 - Be On Time (4-3)
- CRUMP, Peggy T.**
 - An Attitude (10-15)
- DIXON, Clifford**
 - A "Pure Language" (3-13)
- ELAM, Demar**
 - "And I, If I Be Lifted Up" (1-16)
 - God Called Him A Fool (1-30)
 - Surrogate Motherhood (2-13)
 - "Brought To A Piece Of Bread" (3-6)
 - Oh, Come On, Mr. Roberts! (3-20)
 - That Which You Rely Upon (6-12)
 - The Eldership No. 1 (7-24)
 - What Do Elders Do? No. 2 (8-7)
 - Elders Are Important People No. 3 (9-4)
 - Elders And A Checkbook Mentality No. 4 (8-28)
 - Will Smokers Listen To Corporate America? (11-27)
 - When God Breaks The Bottle (12-4)
- ELLIS, Edna**
 - How Can I Make My Country A Better Place? (10-30)
- ESKEW, Victor M.**
 - The Virgin Birth's Importance No. 1 (11-13)
 - The Virgin Birth's Importance No. 2 (11-20)
 - The Virgin Birth's Importance No. 3 (11-27)
- EVANS, Bryant**
 - "Natural" Religion (2-27)
- FIKE, Barry**
 - Who Are The "Older Women?" (4-24)
- FORD, Gynnath**
 - The Lost Letter (1-9)
- FULLER, Roy**
 - Spiritual Robbers (7-17)
- GALLOWAY, Joe E.**
 - Bulletin Article Hoaxes (5-8)

Continued on page 2



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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

God Is Omniscient

The Old Testament is replete with evidence that "the Lord is a God of knowledge" (1 Samuel 2:3). God is "perfect in knowledge" and "mighty in wisdom" (Job 36:4-5), and "His understanding is infinite" (Psalms 147:4-5). When "God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1), he "measured" the waters, "meted out heaven," "Comprehended the dust," "and weighed the mountains . . . and the hills" (Isaiah 40:12; compare Proverbs 3:19-20) --consequently the earth's orbit provides an atmosphere which sustains life!



Flavil H. Nichols

God knows also "every imagination of the thoughts" of man's heart (Genesis 6:5). He "declareth unto man what is his thought" (Amos 4:13), and stunned the "ancients of the house of Israel" (Ezekiel 8:12) with the announcement: "I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them" (Ezekiel 11:5).

He knows and is able to foretell the future, for Jehovah himself affirmed: "There is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done. . . ." (Isaiah 46:9-10).

Jesus Knows

From all eternity in the direction of the past, Jesus himself, in his pre-fleshly state, not only was "in the form of" Deity (Philippians 2:6), "was with" Deity [the Father and the Holy Spirit], but he himself "was" Deity (John 1:1-3). In God and Christ "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3). He affirmed that he had "glory" with the Father "before the world was" (John 17:5). He said, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58), and could converse with Moses and Elijah (Matthew 17:1-5). Through the virgin birth (1:18-25) God prepared for him "a body" (Hebrews 10:9-10) in which he "took upon him the form of a servant," and was "found in fashion as a man" (Philippians 2:7-8). Even on earth Jesus possessed supernatural knowledge. This was manifested in his knowledge of the Father. He affirmed: "I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me" (John 7:29). "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matthew 11:27).

Jesus also "searcheth the reins and hearts" (Revelation 2:23). The scribes were amazed when Jesus forgave the palsied man's sins; "and immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?" (Mark 2:8;

compare Matthew 9:4; Luke 5:22). When the scribes and Pharisees watched to see if he would heal a man's right hand on the Sabbath day, Jesus "knew their thoughts" (Luke 6:8). When the Pharisees thought the Holy Spirit in Jesus was Beelzebub, "Jesus knew their thoughts" (Matthew 12:25). Knowing those who quizzed him about tribute to Caesar were insincere, "Jesus perceived their wickedness," and openly called them "hypocrites" (Matthew 12:18). When his own disciples wrangled about who would be greatest in the kingdom, "Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child" and taught them an object lesson (Luke 9:46-48). Some "tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven. But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them. . . ." (Luke 11:16-17).

Knows The Present

To the seven churches of Asia he could say: "I know thy works . . ." (Revelation 2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15).

Knows The Future

Jesus knew Peter and John would (1) meet a man (2) carrying something; (3) his load would be a pitcher, (4) of water; (5) he would permit them to follow him home (6) his house would have an upper room, (7) it would be a "large" upper room -- large enough to accommodate a dozen or more, and (8) the man would be hospitable enough for them to use his room for the Passover (Luke 22:10-12).

Also, "Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him" (John 6:64; 13:11).

Jesus foreknew that Peter would catch at least one fish, and that in the mouth of the first one caught would be a coin of sufficient value to pay tribute for two citizens (Matthew 17:27). He put Peter on notice that (1) Peter would deny Jesus thrice that night before the second cock-crowing (Matthew 26:34; Mark 14:30), and (2) that Peter would live to be an old man (John 21:18). He foretold the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11:23), and that all the apostles would forsake him (Mark 14:27, 50). Jesus announced in advance that he would be crucified, and rise again the third day (Matthew 16:21; 17:9; 20:17-19; Mark 8:31); that his kingdom would be established in the lifetime of some who heard him (Mark 9:1); that the apostles would be baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8); and that they would be inerrant in their preaching (Matthew 10:19-20; John 14:26; 16:13). Each predictive prophecy (e.g., the destruction of Jerusalem, Matthew 24) demonstrates that Jesus knew the future!

Able To Limit Himself

In the Old Testament, God said Judah had done something "which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind" (Jeremiah 19:5; 32:35). Similarly, in the New Testament, Jesus, while on earth, could refuse to know (then) the time of his second coming (Mark 13:32). One who has the power to know, is also capable of choosing not to

1987 Words Of Truth Index

Continued from page 1

- Saving Our Young People (10-16)
- GARDNER, E. Claude**
Dr. C. P. Roland Lecture Series April 23 at Freed-Hardeman College (4-3)
Third Preachers And Church Leaders Forum Scheduled (7-17)
- GARDNER, R. N.**
A Painful Lesson From The Past (12-11)
- GRAY, R. W.**
God's Amazing Grace (1-30)
Instrumental Music - And The Restoration (5-22)
Instrumental Music - And The Restoration (5-29)
"Stand, Therefore!" (6-12)
- GREENE, Michael D.**
Repentance (10-9)
Repentance Again (11-20)
- HAMPTON, Gary C.**
A Class Commentary On Ephesians (9-25)
- HAYES, Alton**
A Debate Concerning Peer Pressure No. 1 (3-20)
A Debate Concerning Peer Pressure No. 2 (3-27)
- HEARN, Roy J.**
Grace Appropriated Through Law No. 1 (1-2)
Grace Appropriated Through Law No. 2 (1-9)
The Inspiration Of The Bible No. 1 (1-16)
The Inspiration Of The Bible No. 2 (8-14)
The Inspiration Of The Bible No. 3 (8-21)
The Inspiration Of The Bible No. 4 (9-4)
The Inspiration Of The Bible No. 5 (9-11)
The Inspiration Of The Bible No. 6 (9-18)
The Inspiration Of The Bible No. 7 (9-25)
The Inspiration Of The Bible No. 8 (10-2)

Continued on page 3

Continued on page 4

1987 Words Of Truth Index

Continued from page 2

- The Inspiration Of The Bible No. 9 (10-9)
 The Inspiration Of The Bible No. 10 (10-16)
 The Inspiration Of The Bible No. 11 (10-23)
 The Inspiration Of The Bible No. 12 (10-30)
 The Inspiration Of The Bible No. 13 (12-18)
- HESTER, Johnny
 "Oil Is Oil, Fire Is Fire, And Music Is Music" (1-9)
- HESTER, Guy F.
 Lessons From The Eunuch (8-28)
- HOLLEY, W. A.
 Oral Roberts Does It Again (2-6)
 Does The Believer Have Eternal Life Now? (2-13)
 Why Preach Christ? (2-20)
 Why Study The Bible? (2-27)
 Facts Concerning The Bible Church (3-20)
 Billy Graham's Notion Of How Sinners Are Saved (4-10)
 The Hope Of Young People (4-17)
 The Church Of Christ --What Is It Like? (6-19)
 How To Profit Most From The Sermon (7-3)
 How To Determine The Identity Of Churches Of Christ (7-10)
 Why Did Jesus Appear To Saul? (7-17)
 Did Jesus Die For All Men? (7-24)
 The Sin Of Drunkenness (8-7)
 Walking By Faith (8-14)
 "Remember Lot's Wife" (8-21)
 Elders And Deacons (8-28)
 The Unity Of God's People (9-4)
 The Virtue Of Godliness (9-11)
 Let Us Not Act Like Fools (9-18)
 The Pope's Recent Visit (10-23)
 Pride: A Deadly Sin (10-30)
 Signs Of Spiritual Decline No. 5 (11-20)
 Almost A Christian (11-27)
 The Death Of The Righteous (12-11)
 "Go . . . And Preach . . . The Preaching That I Bid Thee" (12-18)
 A Shipwrecked Faith (12-25)
- JENKINS, Ancil
 The Land Of The Living (1-16)
 False Optimism (6-26)
 David's Wonderful Ark-Moving Machine (9-25)
- JENKINS, Dale
 A Father's Influence! (5-1)
 Tireless Work? (5-8)
- KEARLEY, W. Edwin
 Holy Spirit Baptism And Gifts No. 1 (1-2)
 The Holy Spirit Baptism And Gifts No. 3 (1-9)
 The Holy Spirit's Part In Conversion No. 4 (1-16)
 The "Gift Of The Holy Spirit" No. 5 (1-30)
 "Thou Shalt Not Covet" (Romans 13:9) (2-13)
 New Commandment (3-13)
 Neither Cold Nor Hot (5-1)
 The Price Of Discipleship No. 1 (5-22)
 The Price Of Discipleship No. 2 (9-25)
 Are You Dwelling In Sin? (8-7)
 One Is The Product Of His Thinking (8-14)
 The Unknown God (8-21)
 Being Of The Same Mind And Judgment (8-28)
 What Shall I Do With Jesus No. 2 (10-2)
 What Shall I Do With Jesus? No. 3 (11-27)
- KEY, Dalton
 A Few Questions Concerning Christian Music (10-9)
 Beware The Mania (10-30)
- KIDWELL, Tim
 Is Barking Authorized In Our Singing? (6-19)
- LANGFIELD, Weldon
 What's In A Name? (7-24)
 Why Preach The First Principles? (11-6)
- LIDDELL, Bobby
 Who Is Old Fashioned? (4-3)
 Modest Apparel (7-31)
- MAJOR, Trevor J.
 The Great Compromise (1-9)
- MANASCO, Jerri
 Conduct In The Church (7-31)
- MAY, Cecil, Jr.
 Leadership Workshop At Kosiusko (10-16)
- McCLISH, Dub
 Massive Effort Planned To Counteract Boston/Crossroads Movement (7-24)
 Sixth Annual Denton Lectures News Release (10-2)
- McCLUSKEY, Trent
 Thou Art The Man (3-27)
 Wisdom (4-3)
 The Whole Truth (5-29)
 Are You Standing For Truth? (6-12)
 The "Lakeside" Church Of Christ (6-19)
 A Matter Of Choice (7-10)
- MEADOWS, James
 In Times Like These When False Teachers Are Encouraged By Christians No. 1 (10-2)
 In Times Like These When False Teachers Are Encouraged By Christians No. 2 (10-9)
- MILLIGAN, Douglas W.
 "What Is A Christian . . . In The World's Eyes?" (6-26)
 "Till Death Do Us Part . . ." (9-25)
- MISSILDINE, Brent
 "Maybe Tomorrow" (7-31)
- MISSILDINE, Ronnie A.
 The Goodness Of God (1-2)
 King Of My Life?! (1-9)
 The New Birth (1-16)
 Building Up, Not Breaking Down (1-30)
 Thanks, Noah! (2-13)
 The Privilege Of Serving In Public Worship (2-20)
 Forgiving Without Condoning (2-27)
 ". . . The Lord's . . . Compassions Fail Not" (3-27)
 We Can't Be "Exclusive!" (5-8)
 Some Just Don't Like Preaching (5-22)
 Make Up Your Mind No. 1 (7-31)
 Make Up Your Mind No. 2 (8-7)
- MYERS, Neil
 Conversion No. 1 (5-22)
 Conversion No. 2 (5-29)
 Conversion No. 3 (6-5)
 Conversion No. 4 (6-12)
 Conversion No. 5 (6-19)
 Conversion No. 6 (7-3)
 Conversion No. 7 (7-10)
 Conversion No. 8 (7-17)
 Conversion No. 9 (7-24)
- NARAMORE, Eva Nell Brown
 The Perfect Pattern Is God's Word (1-23)
- NICHOLS, Flavil H.
 1986 Words Of Truth Index (1-23)
 A Look Backward, And Forward (1-23)
 Series On Holy Spirit Baptism, By Gus Nichols, Begins In This Issue (2-6)
 The Mission Of The Church (3-27)
 8th Annual Gus Nichols -- Words Of Truth Lectureship (9-18)
 Sanctification No. 1 (10-23)
- Sanctification No. 2 (10-30)
 Sanctification No. 3 (11-6)
 Congratulations To Brother Rex Turner! (11-13)
 Mailing List Being Purged (11-20)
 Sanctification No. 4 (11-20)
 Sanctification No. 5 (11-27)
 Sanctification No. 6 (12-4)
 Elders, Send Words Of Truth (12-25)
- NICHOLS, Gus
 Baptism Of The Holy Spirit No. 1 (2-6)
 Baptism Of The Holy Spirit No. 2 (2-13)
 Baptism Of The Holy Spirit No. 3 (2-20)
 Baptism Of The Holy Spirit No. 4 (2-27)
 Baptism Of The Holy Spirit No. 5 (3-6)
 Baptism Of The Holy Spirit No. 6 (3-13)
 Baptism Of The Holy Spirit No. 7 (3-20)
 Baptism Of The Holy Spirit No. 8 (4-10)
- NICHOLS, Tim
 Privacy In God's House (1-23)
 Worst Enemy? Or, Best Friend? (1-30)
 Confusing The Issues (3-6)
- PERRY, Novie C.
 Basic Foundation Principles Of New Testament Christianity No. 1 (7-24)
 Basic Foundation Principles Of New Testament Christianity No. 2 (8-7)
 Basic Foundation Principles Of New Testament Christianity No. 3 (8-14)
 Basic Foundation Principles Of New Testament Christianity No. 4 (8-21)
 Basic Foundation Principles Of New Testament Christianity No. 5 (8-28)
 Basic Foundation Principles Of New Testament Christianity No. 6 (9-4)
 Basic Foundation Principles Of New Testament Christianity No. 7 (9-11)
 Basic Foundation Principles Of New Testament Christianity No. 8 (9-18)
 Basic Foundation Principles Of New Testament Christianity No. 9 (9-25)
- PHILLIPS, Dabney
 The Preacher Jonah (2-27)
 Restoration Convictions (5-8)
 Fifty Years A Gospel Preacher (7-17)
 Restoration Mountain-Peaks (12-4)
- PRICHARD, Bob
 Was Peter The First Pope? (5-22)
 Reincarnation (6-5)
 Can We Be Sure That "Sunday" Is The "First Day" Of The Week? (6-26)
- POUNDS, Wheeler
 The Old Colossus (1-16)
 The Final Judgment No. 1 (10-2)
 The Final Judgment No. 2 (10-9)
 The Final Judgment No. 3 (10-16)
 The Final Judgment No. 4 (10-23)
 The Final Judgment No. 5 (10-30)
 The Final Judgment No. 6 (11-6)
 The Final Judgment No. 7 (11-13)
 The Final Judgment No. 8 (11-27)
 The Final Judgment No. 9 (12-11)
- RANDOLPH, Kenneth L.
 The Simple Gospel (1-30)
- ROGERS, James E.
 Lads To Leaders (6-5)
- ROY, W. Gaddys
 Miracles And Divine Providence (1-16)
- RUTHERFORD, Rod
 E.T.S.O.P.M. Lectureship Set (1-16)
 Waddey To Edit Christian Bible Teacher (1-16)

Continued on page 4

1987 Words Of Truth Index

Continued from page 3

- SEXTON, M. L.
Leadership No. 1 (8-7)
Leadership No. 2 (8-14)
Leadership No. 3 (10-16)
Leadership No. 4 (10-23)
- SHORT, David
New Development Director Appointed At
Freed-Hardeman College (4-3)
- SIMS, Douglas
"A Formula For The Prevention Of
Divorce" (4-17)
Statement Of Ownership (10-2)
- TAYLOR, Robert R. Jr.
Studies In Romans 14 No. 8 (1-2)
Studies In Romans 14 No. 9 (1-9)
- TAYLOR, Tracey
"Super Saturday" At Freed-Hardeman Col-
lege (4-10)
- TOMS, Garvin M.
The Living Christ (1-30)
- TYLER, Ken
A Prostitute In Faith's Hall Of Fame? (1-2)
I Samuel 1:23-24 (4-3)
Hunger And Thirst After Righteousness
(4-24)
Caleb, A Man Of God (5-8)
The Necessity Of Obedience (6-5)
- WADDEY, John
Ed Jones Joins ETSOPM Faculty (1-16)
Famine In The Land (2-6)
D. S. Burnet: Architect Of Apostasy (2-20)
The Two Builders (2-27)
Three Views Of Woman (3-20)
Cleansing The Leper (3-27)
The Cost Of Discipleship (4-3)
Gospel Preaching? Or, Gospel "Pop"?
(4-10)
Debates: Some Recommendations (4-24)
The Rich Young Ruler (5-1)
Some Things Baptism Can't Do (5-8)
How The Liberals Won The Battle With The
Disciples Of Christ (5-29)
What Is The New Unity Movement? No. 1
(6-5)
What Is The New Unity Movement? No. 2
(6-12)
What Is The New Unity Movement? No. 3
(6-19)
What Is The New Unity Movement? No. 4
(6-26)
What Is The New Unity Movement? No. 5
(7-3)
Signs Of Growing Unity And Fellowship
(6-19)
Problems That Prohibit Fellowship No. 4
(6-26)
Lessons From A Lost Cause (7-17)
Rights And Responsibilities Of Gospel
Preachers (7-24)
Dr. John Thomas, Heretic (7-31)
A Letter To A "Weak" Brother (8-14)
Peter's Mother-In-Law (8-21)
Some Problem Verses In First Corinthians
Explained (8-28)
The Paraleptic Let Down Through The Roof
(9-11)
Before You Divorce (9-18)
Some Perils Of Preaching (11-6)
Preachers: Then And Now (11-13)
Advice For Christian Writers (11-20)
The Preacher Of The Church (12-4)
The Rebaptism Of Samuel Rogers (12-11)
The Foolish Rich Man (12-25)
- WHEELER, John L.
Filters For The Ears (5-1)
The Hardening Of Pharoah's Heart (6-26)
"A Remnant Will Be Saved" (7-3)

In Consideration of "If" (11-13)
"The Goodness And Severity Of God" (12-4)

- WILLIAMS, Don
The Perfect Gift (1-30)
"The Works Therein Shall Be Burned Up"
(4-24)
"Let Us Go . . . And Visit . . . And See How
They Do" (12-25)

WILLIAMS, Ron
You'd Better Be In The Right Lane (1-30)

WILLIAMSON, Lawrence
Does God Threaten To Kill Men? (4-10)

- WINKLER, Dan
"Commitment" (1-2)
To Help Our Children Mature Properly No.
1 (9-4)
To Help Our Children Mature Properly No.
2 (9-18)

If I Had Three Wishes (12-18)

WINKLER, Wendell
Lectureship To Address "Sincere Current
Questions" (8-21)
Lessons From The Conversion Of Saul Of
Tarsus (12-18)

YOUNG, Frank D.
Faith No. 1 (5-22)
Salvation By Faith No. 2 (5-29)
Faith And Belief No. 3 (7-3)
Can "That" Faith Save Him? No. 4 (7-10)
Faith No. 5 (7-17)
Faith No. 6 (8-21)
Faith No. 7 (8-28)
Faith No. 8 (9-4)
Faith No. 9 (9-11)
Brother Howard Winters On First
Corinthians (7-10)

God Is Omniscient

Continued from page 2

know.

How This Truth Relates To Us

The fact that Jesus knows us 'through and through' is a powerful stimulus to motivate us (collectively, and as individuals) to lovingly and promptly fulfill the will of Christ. How can any child of God be unfaithful to Christ, while he recognizes -- and fully believes! -- that Jesus knows what is in man? "he knew all men" and "needed not that any one

should bear witness concerning man; for he himself knew what was in man" (John 2:24-25).

Conclusion

With the apostle Paul we exclaimed: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33).

Madison Elder Homer Roark Crosses Jordan

George Goldtrap

The Lord's church lost one of its most able, and dedicated workers November 20. Homer Roark, 82, faithfully served the Madison, Tennessee, congregation for 34 years, as elder, church historian, business manager, and Superintendent of the Children's home. William Homer and Ann Lunn Roark were married May 8, 1930. They moved to the Nashville area in 1942, and placed membership at Madison in 1944. In January, 1951, he was appointed an elder. In 1960, Roark became a "full time" elder.

Homer Roark was actively involved in "every good work." He was concerned with the financial, spiritual, and numerical growth of the church. For several years he taught Madison's largest Bible class providing spiritual depth and inspiration.

Roark's greatest fame grew out of his work with the innovative Madison Children's Home, the brotherhood's first congregational cottage-type care for fatherless children. He traveled the nation teaching how to heal the wounds of hurting children, and how to leave lasting impressions that God is truly good. In 1977 health problems forced retirement,

but did not dim Roark's enthusiasm. Collecting news clippings, congregational milestones, and bulletins had always caught his attention, and he began assembling facts and the history of the Madison congregation.

Homer Roark will be remembered for his tireless work, Christian spirit, and friendly personality. He was a gentle, godly, man. He encouraged thinking big and planning great. He truly believed plans must always be larger than life so that God can have room to supply the blessings.

When asked his dreams and goals for the Madison church, Roark replied, "To continue planning and teaching the Good News and saving souls, to upgrade the work of the deacons, and to see greater plans made for the training of young people."

The Roarks' marriage was blessed by two sons and a daughter, each of whom survives. Ann Roark enjoys her grandchildren and continues as a vibrant part of the Madison church.

Like David of old, Homer Roark was a man after God's own heart.

—Madison Church of Christ, 106 Gallatin Rd., Nashville, TN 37115.

Freed-Hardeman College Bible Lectureship

Winford Claiborne

The 52nd Annual Bible Lectureship is scheduled for February 8-12, 1988. The theme is "Love for God and His Word." Outstanding speakers such as Guy N. Woods, Alan E. Highers, Leroy Brownlow, Franklin Camp, Hugo McCord, J. Wayne Kilpatrick, Dowell Flatt, James Tollerson, Winford Claiborne, David Sain and John Waddey, to name a few, will bring vitality to the more than a half-century-old series.

Ladies classes will be conducted by Imogene Siburt, Linda Bradshaw and Rosemary Whittle McKnight. Preachers 80 years old and older will be honored at a dinner on Monday evening.

The public is invited. Write Winford Claiborne, Annual Bible Lectureship Director, Freed-Hardeman College, Henderson, TN 38340, for a program.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am not mad
Words of Truth and sob

—ACTS 2.

VOLUME 25

FRIDAY, JANUARY 8, 1988

NUMBER 2

Brother Nichols And The Indwelling Of The Holy Spirit

This past November 16 marked the twelfth anniversary of the death of our beloved brother Gus Nichols. Only eternity will measure the amount of good accomplished by this one man. While none of us would claim for him perfection, those of us who knew him saw in him a marvelous example of one who was patterning his life after Jesus Christ, who is the perfect example.



Bobby Duncan

Words of wisdom spoken by brother Nichols are still being quoted; articles he wrote are still being printed and reprinted in brotherhood publications and church bulletins. His comments on certain subjects or certain passages of scripture are still referred to quite frequently. Few brethren in modern times can command the admiration and respect he received from members of the church in general -- even many of those who differed with him on some point of doctrine.

Brother Nichols believed, as do many faithful brethren, that the Holy Spirit dwells personally in the Christian. This view he advanced freely from many platforms and in print as well. He believed this to be the teaching of such passages as Acts 2:38 and 5:32. He always made it plain that he considered the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to be what he referred to as the ordinary, non-miraculous indwelling of the Spirit. He emphasized that the only influence of the Holy Spirit upon the Christian is that exerted through the Bible. Many in our brotherhood, including this

writer, are not in agreement with the idea that the Holy Spirit personally dwells in the Christian. Brother Nichols did not believe, and I do not believe this matter should be made a test of fellowship. Brother Nichols knew what I believe about the matter, and yet I preached in the last gospel meeting the Sixth Avenue church conducted before brother Nichols died. He was an elder in that church, as well as its evangelist, and he had some say about who came for meetings. On more than one occasion he came to Adamsville to work with us in lectureships, meetings, special occasions, etc.

It is not the purpose of this article to argue this point of difference. It is rather to correct a false impression of, and an injustice to, the position brother Nichols held relative to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Occasionally I see some reference to the idea that when one is baptized, he receives the gift of the Holy Spirit, and as a result thereof he has a special source of strength for living the Christian life. Before being baptized, he could not overcome temptation, but now, by means of the indwelling Spirit, he has the power to overcome. It is believed that the Spirit comforts, encourages, and even guides the Christian by dwelling in him. When called into question about this view, some of those who teach it will imply that this is the view held by brother Gus Nichols. Their reasoning seems to be: "There can't be very much wrong with this view. Brother Nichols held it, and nobody would consider brother Nichols unsound or a false teacher."

But brother Nichols did not hold that view. In his *Lectures on the Holy Spirit*, (Nichols Bros., Plainview, Texas, 1967), in answer to the question, "Does the Holy Spirit guide men today other than through the word?" he replied: "Tonight I have been saying over and over that he does not" (P. 83). In answering a

question about whether or not the Spirit gives daily help in living the Christian life, he said: "Oh, yes! the Spirit encourages us very much to live the Christian life; but he does it through his word. When we study that, and follow his word, we are encouraged by it, strengthened by it and by it mortify the deeds of the body. But when you imagine that the Spirit in some direct way encourages you, how would he do it? What sort of thought would he present? How much more could he say than has been said?" (P. 84). On page 176, brother Nichols emphasized that he did not believe the Holy Spirit inspired him with any new revelation or gave him a single idea of religious truth not found in the scriptures.

I lived about thirty miles from brother Nichols the last seventeen years of his life. I sat many hours at his feet in his classes on Friday nights. I heard his radio program almost on a daily basis. I heard him speak in person hundreds of times. *Words of Truth* has come into my home on a weekly basis from the very first issue published in December of 1963. I know what brother Nichols believed and taught. I know he did not believe the personal indwelling of the Spirit furnishes to the Christian some special guidance, strength, encouragement, or comfort. He rather believed the Spirit furnishes these through the written word, the Bible, and only in that way.

Those who believe the Holy Spirit, by personally dwelling in the Christian, furnishes some assistance in living the Christian life not furnished by the written word, need to examine again what the Bible teaches. And if they think they are teaching what brother Nichols taught, they need to examine again what brother Nichols taught.

—4207 Adamsville Parkway, Adamsville, Alabama 35005.



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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How The Holy Spirit Converts The Alien Sinners

The view that the Holy Spirit guides men apart from the word of God is very prevalent today, especially in Charismatic circles. It is maintained that the alien sinner is personally taught and convicted of sin by the Spirit of God without his having the gospel preached to him by a human agent. This, of course, negates the commission of our Lord to go and preach the message of salvation to every creature. And, if what they claim is true, why do we not find active believers and functioning churches where the gospel has not gone -- in the mission regions of the world? If the Spirit is operating apart from the Bible, why even send men out with the gospel? The whole idea is preposterous! If the Holy Spirit personally guides the lost into a relationship with God apart from the word and then continues to personally guide that person apart from the word until he dies or till Jesus comes, then what is the role of the written word?



Charles Cook

It seems clear that people of the Pentecostal/Charismatic persuasion have not thought this thing through. Perhaps some are discouraged because of wide-spread rejection of the word when it is proclaimed without Pentecostal frills. A hard-working missionary couple who had preached simple New Testament Christianity for many years in a difficult field returns to the States openingly declaring: "We are Charismatic now! We no longer believe that God guides men through the scriptures alone. We are now convinced that he guides people personally by his Spirit apart from his word." Emotionalism reigns; and every attempt to reason with the emotionally-guided seems to fall on deaf ears.

However, we simply must continue to search the scriptures for answers, and hope that people will give reason equal billing with their emotions. John (14-16) recorded our Lord's last discourse to the twelve. In it he promised to send them the Holy Spirit to guide them into all the truth. He said that the Spirit would not deliver a new or different message, but rather declare the message of Christ (John 14:25-26; 15:26; 16:13). Who would argue that this did not happen? Certainly not our Charismatic friends! The New Testament stands as evidence that the last will and testimony of Jesus Christ (who is "the way, the truth and the life") was delivered. The question is: Does the Spirit guide us today solely through this document? or, does he sometimes guide men apart from it?

Starting on the day of Pentecost the apostles proclaimed the Holy Spirit's message just as Jesus promised. Consistently throughout the book of Acts that identical message is proclaimed; and wherever men were touched by it and accepted it, they were saved. No where in the New Testament do you read about people being saved apart from that message being proclaimed. No where do you

find a description of people having emotional or personal experiences as evidence of their salvation. True, people felt good and rejoiced in this new life -- and that is as it should be. The eunuch "went on his way rejoicing" after obeying Christ (Acts 8:39).

In the interest of finding a pattern, let us peruse the cases of conversion in the book of Acts:

Acts 2:1-47 --On this first Pentecost feast following the resurrection of our Lord the promised Holy Spirit was "poured out" on the apostles. They proclaimed the Spirit-guided message; whereupon, 3,000 souls responded by faith, repentance and baptism and were added to the church. There is no evidence that anyone was converted apart from their acceptance of the message preached.

Acts 8:5-18 -- After the church began to be persecuted in Jerusalem, Philip (not the apostle) took the gospel message to Samaria and there people heard, believed and were baptized. Again, no evidence is given to indicate an experiential conversion apart from obedience to the word preached.

Acts 8:26-39 --While Philip is personally guided by the Spirit to a truth-seeking man in the wilderness, there is no evidence that the eunuch's salvation was any different from the cases cited above. The eunuch was taught the message of salvation in Christ, believed it, confessed Christ as his Lord and was baptized. The pattern we are seeing is that the Holy Spirit works in the conversion of alien sinners through the word.

Acts 14:1 --Notice that Paul and Barnabas spoke to great numbers of people, thus producing faith. Later Paul wrote to Rome saying that "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Again, the pattern shows that salvation never comes apart from the word. No one in New Testament times was saved by some unique, personal experience. Salvation came to every sinner through uniform acceptance of Christ's message delivered by the Spirit through these chosen apostles and prophets.

Acts 9:1-16 --While it is true that Paul's calling to be an apostle was a supernatural event, his salvation came in exactly the same way it does for everyone. He came to believe the gospel, repented (as evidenced by three days of remorse), and was baptized (Acts 22:16). He as a sinner was converted by the Spirit through the word.

Acts 10 and 11 --It is argued that Cornelius saw a vision in connection with his conversion, and that this proves God saves people apart from obedience to the word preached. This is clearly untrue! The vision was given to put him in contact with Peter, who preached to him the plan of salvation: namely, faith in and obedience to Jesus Christ (Acts 11:13-14). No one was saved in New Testament times apart from the word proclaimed and his obedience to it. Today we have access to that same message through which the Holy Spirit continues to convert sinners.

Acts 16:13-15 --Paul spoke the Spirit's message to a business woman and her family. They opened their hearts to what they heard, and were all baptized into Christ.

Acts 16:25-34 --Paul "spoke the word of the Lord" to a man and his family and they were

Restoration Wives

(No. 1)

The wives of the pioneer restoration preachers contributed substantially to the growth of the kingdom of God. Tremendous sacrifices were made by these women as they gave encouragement to their husbands in preaching the gospel. Lonely hours were spent by the wife as she observed her husband ride off on his horse or in his buggy for an indefinite time to preach the gospel. Often the wife ran the farm and cared for the children while the husband was out sowing the seed of the kingdom. Too little mention has been made of these servants; and this article attempts in a meager measure to correct this neglect.

A. Campbell

Alexander Campbell was blessed with two devoted wives in his life-time. He was twenty-two years old when he married the eighteen-year-old tall and slender Margaret Brown in 1811. Mr. Hughes, a Presbyterian minister of West Liberty, performed the ceremony in the parlor of the Brown mansion. Margaret was noted for her industry and moral character. Her education had been the best offered in that area. Margaret was sympathetic with Alexander's work. She became the mother of eight children. In 1827, Margaret died at the age of thirty-seven of the tuberculosis plague. The words of John Milton describe Margaret: "Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eyes; in all her gestures, dignity and love." After her death, Alexander wrote, "She was in truth a good wife, a tender mother, a faithful and affectionate friend. She



Dabney Phillips

Continued on page 3

Continued on page 4

Winning The Unbelieving Companion

In the ideal home situation both the husband and wife are faithful Christians. This we know by Bible teaching, by reason, and by experience. Yet, often this ideal condition has not been realized. Many Christians marry those who are not Christians. Sometimes when the marriage begins, neither is a member of the Lord's church; but subsequently one is converted, while the other is not. It is sad that sometimes both have been faithful Christians, but one has turned away and needs to be converted again (James 5:19-20).



Joe E. Galloway

Regardless of how the home became divided spiritually, the Christian companion's number one goal in life should be to win the unconverted companion. He is lost, and will be lost eternally unless he can be won to Christ. [In this article the pronoun "he" is used generically to refer to either husband or wife. Nothing else you can do for a lost companion is as important as bringing him to salvation. Such conversion will not only make it possible for both to live together, eternally, with God

and all the redeemed of the earth; it will help your home immeasurably during THIS life, too. You will experience a happier, fuller life together, and will be in a much better position for rearing your children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

Let us now give attention to some things that should help win the unbelieving companion.

Show Proper Love and Respect

The Bible teaches wives to submit themselves to their husbands, as unto the Lord (Ephesians 5:22-24). Husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies, as Christ loved the church, and are not to be "bitter against them" (Ephesians 5:25-28; Colossians 3:19). This seems the natural way of conduct between two Christians; but sometimes it becomes extremely difficult to practice when the companion to be loved or submitted to is ungodly, and seems set against the Lord's way. In fact, sometimes we are asked if the Christian companion is obligated to show this love and respect when the companion is an unbeliever, and is so uncooperative and difficult.

I Peter 3:1-7 clearly addresses this situation. The Holy Spirit makes it clear that such proper love and respect are especially needed when one of the married partners is not a Christian. Notice that the wife is to "be in subjection" to the husband who has not obeyed (verse 1) and is to imitate Sarah in show-

ing her husband respect (verse 6). "Likewise" the husband is to be careful to give his wife the understanding, tender care, and honor she needs (verse 7). Withholding such love and consideration will only make wider the rift between the Christian and the non-Christian husband and wife.

"But," someone may say, "how can I show love and respect to someone who has turned into the inconsiderate 'slob' I now have to live with?" With many this is a very real problem. Yet we insist that it MUST be done if the companion is ever to be won to Christ! Perhaps it will help if the Christian can think of the good qualities that caused him to be attracted to his spouse to begin with. Then emphasize and build on these. Letting one know that he is appreciated and admired for these good qualities will help reinforce and increase such desired behavior.

Be A Good Example

Peter clearly teaches that even if direct oral teaching does not affect the unbelieving companion, the right kind of living may do it. The word "conversation" in the King James Version means "manner of living." So with this change of words it says that "they also may without the word be won by the manner of living of the wives; while they behold your chaste manner of living coupled with fear" (or "respect," J.E.G.) (I Peter 3:1-3).

Some seem to "reason" that the way to gain the unbelieving companion is to join with him in ungodly things, such as dirty speech, smoking, drinking, dancing, and immodest dress. Or, some may think that going places and doing things with the spouse is more important than being faithful to God in attending the services of the church. Their rationale seems to be that trying to please the companion in matters like this will eventually cause him to reciprocate by coming to church.

This never works! One cannot accomplish good by sinning! (Notice Paul's condemnation of this idea in Romans 3:8). One who tries to win a companion by compromising truth and right is, instead, pulled away from Christ into sin. Tragically, this happens in situation after situation.

Although wives are to submit to their husbands, there is an exception. They owe their first allegiance to Christ. When a choice must be made between submitting to and pleasing the husband, versus submitting to and pleasing Christ, one must choose Christ!

It is often especially difficult for a Christian wife to attend services faithfully and live a pure, moral life when her husband is pulling the other direction. This is doubly hard when they have several children. It takes real love and dedication to the Lord for a mother to get several children ready and bring them by herself to each service of the church. Yet, it pays! We have often seen this kind of dedication finally attract to the Lord a difficult mate. Even if this does not result, the children can be saved along with the faithful parent.

Don't Talk Church Problems

Any discussion of church problems should be done only between members of the church. To talk about such to non-member neighbors and friends is to disgrace the Lord's body before the world. We have even known of children's being discouraged from wanting to become Christians by their constantly hear-

Restoration Wives

Continued from page 2

lived the life of a Christian, and died in the full hope of a blessed resurrection to eternal life."

The year following Margaret's death, Alexander married Selina Huntington Blakewell, a spinster of twenty-six. Alexander and Selina were married for forty years. To this union six children were born. Prior to her death, Margaret suggested that Selina would make Alexander a good wife. After the death of Alexander, Selina wrote a book, entitled, Home Life and Reminiscences of Alexander Campbell.

Stone

Barton W. Stone married in 1801 Eliza Campbell, the daughter of Colonel William Campbell of Greenville, Kentucky. Stone was twenty-nine when he married Eliza. He and his bride returned to Cane Ridge and built a cabin a few miles east of the Cane Ridge meeting house on the 105 acres he owned. Eliza died in 1810, leaving Stone with a son and four daughters. The following year Stone married Celia Bowen. She bore him fourteen children; thus Stone fathered nineteen children by his two wives.

Scott

The powerful evangelist, Walter Scott, was married three times. He first married Sarah Whitsett in January, 1823. He was twenty-seven at this time. Five children were born to this union. Sarah had been a member of the Covenanter Presbyterian church, but soon embraced Scott's teaching of the Bible. Family worship was held daily in the home each morning. Sarah was a faithful helper, sharing without murmuring the toils and privations of Scott's teaching schedule. Sarah died in 1849.

The next year Scott married Annie

B. Allen of Mayslick, Kentucky, whose death in 1854 was untimely. A three-year-old child was left when Annie died of tuberculosis. At the age of sixty, Scott married the fifty-year-old rich widow, Eliza Sandiage, of Mason County, Kentucky. This was an unhappy union, as Scott knew little about money, and often gave away what he possessed. Eliza frequently drove Walter out of the house, and he spent several nights on the steps, or with neighbors.

Smith

In 1806, at the age of twenty-two, "Raccoon" John Smith married Anna Townsend. Smith had secured 200 acres of Kentucky land and moved his bride into an undaubed log cabin with dirt floors and without doors or windows. However, with diligent work the cabin soon compared favorably with their neighbors'. In 1814 the Smith family moved to near Huntsville, Alabama. In a tragic fire while "Raccoon" John was away on a preaching tour that year, their children, Eli and Elvira, died. Anna died two months after the fire from grief over the deaths of these two children, and was buried in their ashes.

Friends urged "Raccoon" to remarry for the sake of his children. He married Nancy Hurt in a simple wedding on December 23, 1821. Smith was thirty at the time of his second marriage. Nancy was most helpful in supporting John in preaching the gospel. Nancy died in 1861, and was buried in Lexington, Kentucky. "Raccoon" lived seven more years than Nancy, and was buried beside her in Kentucky.

—3953 Elm Ave. Montgomery, AL 36109.

Continued on page 4

How The Holy Spirit Converts The Alien Sinners

Continued from page 2

baptized into Christ.

Acts 18:1-8 --The Spirit caused Paul to preach in Corinth and many heard, believed and were baptized. Again, notice that the Spirit was personally guiding men like Paul who were the vehicles for the message in those days. But no one ever received salvation apart from hearing and obeying the word preached. Today the vehicle for the message is the written word

and the function of apostles and prophets is finished. The pattern is consistent: since the day of Pentecost people have been saved by hearing, believing and obeying the word.

The idea that people can be saved through some personal encounter with God's Spirit which is unique to them is a delusion. The "Big I" syndrome! Such people are just self-centered enough to think that God must meet

them on 'their' turf. He no where has promised to meet the sinner on the sinner's grounds! The sinner can put his hand on the old radio, kneel in front of his TV, come down to the mourner's bench and cry his tear-ducts dry -- and God is still under no obligation to save him. No sinner was ever saved until he accepted God's will. In Romans 8:16 Paul wrote that God's Spirit "bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." The meeting must take place on GOD'S grounds. The question is not, "Does the Spirit work on alien sinners?" but rather "HOW does he work?"

In Hebrews 10:15 we are told, "And the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us . . ." The Hebrew writer goes on to explain that this "witnessing" is done through God's written words as they influence our hearts and minds. The idea that some will encounter unique experiences as evidence of God's witness to them is completely foreign to the Bible. In the book of Acts we saw that when men were converted to Christ they were always brought into contact with the word of God. When the Holy Spirit did something apart from the word it was only to bring sinful, truth-seeking parties into contact with the word. To say that God does providentially bring searchers into contact with men today who will share his word with them is to miss the point. Surely all Christians believe in divine providence!! But in the New Testament there is no instance where a person was converted separate and apart from the word. Each had to hear and submit to it in order to be saved. The same holds true today!

—P.O. Box 803, Kailua-Kona, HI 96745.

Could You Spare Five Minutes?

Are you a "Christian" in the same sense and in the same way as were Peter, James, and the other disciples in that first church in ancient Jerusalem? If you are not, or if you are not sure, will you take just five minutes to examine the New Testament teaching on how to become a true follower of Jesus.

RECOGNIZE that all men are sinners and therefore, lost, apart from Christ (Romans 3:23; 6:23). Recognize further the fact that just being religious is not sufficient. Jesus taught that one must do the will of the heavenly Father to be acceptable (Matthew 7:21).

UNDERSTAND that apart from the Bible you can have no dependable knowledge of how to be saved and how to live acceptably to God. Faith cometh by hearing the word of Christ (Romans 10:17).

BELIEVE with all your heart that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16; John 8:24). Your faith must be more than mere assent; it must be an obedient faith that gladly does God's will (Galatians 5:6). Your faith must be strong enough to confess before men your acceptance of Christ as Lord (Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9-10).

RESOLVE in your heart to turn away from all your sins in genuine repentance. Without repentance you will surely "perish" (Luke 13:3). True repentance is "unto salvation" (II Corinthians 7:10).

SUBMIT yourself to the Lord's command to be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; 10:48). The baptism of Christ's gospel is a burial or immersion in water



John Waddey

(Romans 6:3-4; Acts 10:47).

When you thus take up your cross to follow Jesus, it must be a lifetime commitment (Matthew 16:24). Only those who are "faithful unto death" will receive the crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

This simple plan of salvation is as old as the New Testament and as reliable as the Holy Spirit of God who inspired its writing. Your acceptance, and submission thereto, will guarantee the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 22:16), your membership in the Lord's true church (Acts 2:38, 41, 47), and thus your place among the redeemed as a child of God (Galatians 3:26-27).

As a fellow mortal soon to meet the Lord in judgment, I urge you to take your stand with Christ today on the infallible word of God, to be a "Christian" and only a "Christian." Could such a commitment possibly be wrong?

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

Winning The Unbelieving Companion

Continued from page 3

ing Daddy and Mother talk about problems, and continual criticism of the Lord's people. Understand that it is crucial, in trying to win an unbelieving companion, not to criticize the church, nor the teaching of the Bible. Never discuss church problems in the presence of the one we hope to convert to Christ.

Really Try To Teach Your Spouse

It appears that some members of the church have never really tried to convert their companions! Do they think it is important that they bring their companion to gospel obedience? Are they, themselves, not fully convinced that the gospel plan is essential to one's being saved? Is it that they are ashamed of the Lord's way? May it be that they are too afraid of what the untaught companion will say, or do? Regardless of the excuse, we need to re-emphasize that the Bible way is the only way of salvation. If one really loves a companion, he will do his best to teach him what he needs to do (and then encourage him to obey God's will) to be saved. (Read Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 2:36-41, 47).

Some Christians have tried to isolate their unbelieving mates from other members of the church. Maybe some are afraid that the companion will say something to others that will be embarrassing, if he has contact with other Christians. This should not keep us from encouraging such contact; for other Christians realize already that non-members do not always think and act like Christians. Perhaps some Christians fear that other members may act unwisely and not be tactful

enough in their dealings with the spouse who needs converting. (This can, indeed, be a problem with some members). Still, this should not discourage trying to help arrange opportunities for contact and teaching with others who are better able to tactfully teach the truth.

We need to face the fact that before one can be saved he must be taught (John 6:44-45). Good examples of the Christian spouse, and of other Christians, can help interest the one who is lost, in studying God's will. This may also encourage those already taught to go ahead and obey the gospel. But teaching must be done before one can believe, obey, and be saved. Remember, "Faith comes by HEARING" (Romans 10:17) and Jesus said, "Every man therefore that hath HEARD, and hath LEARNED of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:45, emphasis added).

Never Give Up

It may at times seem that your companion just will not listen. You may despair that his interest in God's will can ever be stirred. But remember: other Christians have felt the same way, yet have finally seen their loved ones obey the truth! We have known of some spouses of faithful Christians who obeyed after they had been married for 30, 40, or 50 years! What if THEY had given up earlier?

May God help each of us to do our best to win our loved ones to the Lord! Heaven will make worthwhile all the patient waiting, effort, and heartaches that this may take!

—218 Pinecrest Dr., Greeneville, TN 37743.

PLAN NOW...



TO READ THE
BIBLE THROUGH
THIS YEAR. . . .



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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, JANUARY 15, 1988

NUMBER 3

A Question Of Chronology

"Now this I say: "A covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect" (Galatians 3:17).

Our task in this article is to explain the problems connected with this passage and Old Testament verses relating to the same event.

Before we attempt this, we should consider the context in which the passage is found.

The problem that prompted Paul to write the Galatian letter was that some Jewish Christians had come among them teaching them that they must be circumcized and keep the law of Moses to be saved (Galatians 5:3-4). Responding to this challenge, Paul pounds away at their erroneous teaching with numerous arguments.

In 1:6-9 he labels it as "a different gospel" than that which God had given him. He solemnly lays the anathema of God upon it.

By his own personal history, he demonstrates that Jewish Christians had died unto the law that they might live unto God (1:11-2:19). In 3:1 he chides them for foolishly allowing the Judaizers to bewitch them with their erroneous teaching.

He reminded them of his pioneer work among them: how they became Christians without the law (3:2-5). He then went back to Abraham to show that the father of the Jewish race was saved by faith in God rather than by the law; therefore it is "they that are of faith" who are the true spiritual heirs of Abraham (3:6-7).

He argues that God had always planned to save the Gentiles by faith, having said to Abraham, "In thee shall ALL the nations be blessed" (3:8).

He reminds them that those who seek



John Waddey

salvation by the law are under a curse if they fail to obey any of its precepts (3:10).

He quotes Habakkuk 2:4 to show "that the righteous shall live by faith," and then shows that the law is not of faith (3:11-12).

Christ, says Paul, died to redeem us from the curse of the law; how foolish of them to blindly submit themselves to it (3:13).

In 3:15-18, he draws an analogy between a MAN'S will or testament, and the promise GOD had made to Abraham. Lenski makes a strong argument for translating DIATHEKE "testament" rather than "covenant" as in most of our translations.

"It is a confirmed, ratified, we should say a probated testament that is the basis of the illustration . . . The point of comparison is the inviolability, the fixedness of such a testament. Nobody can void, annul it, and put something else in its place. Nobody can 'add anything thereto,' affix a codicil to it, and thus alter the original testamentary provisions."²

Paul then makes his application:

"Now to Abraham were the promises spoken and to his seed . . . Now this I say: "A covenant (will) confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect" (3:16-17). "No ancient or no modern legal practice allows a will that is duly in force to be set aside by a substitute that is offered by somebody else, or allows the addition of codicils by any person. Once in force, the will stands exactly as it is."³

God's promises to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:6; etc), where like a human testament duly probated and in force. The law of Moses given to the Jews hundreds of years later can in no way bind on the heirs of that testament additional conditions of salvation. Since God blessed Abraham on the basis of his obedient faith (James 2:21-24), so will he bless us who are Abraham's spiritual heirs. "For ye are all

sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ . . . And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise" (Galatians 3:26-29).

The problem we are asked to solve is Paul's figure or number of 430 YEARS for the time between the promise to Abraham and the exodus from Egypt.

First, there is the difference between Paul's 430 YEARS and Stephen's statement "that they should sojourn in a strange land, and that they should bring them into bondage, and treat them ill, FOUR HUNDRED YEARS" (Acts 7:6). This is clearly a case of rounding off the numbers, which was common among ancient writers, as it is today. This is Lenski's view.⁴


Second, the greater problem lies in the apparent discrepancy between Paul and Moses. Moses says, "Now the time that the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years" (Exodus 13:40). Paul seems to say that the time lapse between God's promise to Abraham and the giving of the law on Sinai was four hundred and thirty years (Galatians 3:17). This problem has troubled expositors from the earliest times.

At the heart of the problem is the textual reading in Exodus 12:40. "The Hebrew text implies that the residence in Egypt occupied the whole time. In the latter, however, the LXX inserts words so as to include the sojourn of the patriarchs in Canaan before the migration, thus reducing the term of residence in Egypt to about half this period."⁵ This chronology is used in the Vatican and Alexandrian manuscripts, the Samaritan Pentateuch, Josephus' Antiquities II:15, 2, and other ancient documents."⁶

Josephus writes, "They left Egypt . . . four hundred and thirty years after our forefather Abraham came into Canaan, but two hundred and fifteen years only after Jacob removed into Egypt."⁷

Barnes offers an excellent chronology that

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
—Acts 26:35

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

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A Question Of Chronology

Continued from page 1
helps to clarify the matter.

The promise was made when Abraham was seventy-five years old; Genesis 12:3-4. From that time to the birth of Isaac, when Abraham was a hundred years old, was twenty-five years; Genesis 21:5. Isaac was sixty when Jacob was born; Genesis 25:26. Jacob went into Egypt when he was one hundred and thirty years old; Genesis 47:7. And the Israelites sojourned there two hundred and fifteen years, which completes the number.⁸

Alford, Bloomfield and Doddridge take the same approach to the problem. To simplify the figures we observe:

- 25 Years from the promise to the birth of Isaac;
- 60 years from Isaac's birth to Jacob's birth;
- 130 the age of Jacob when he went to Egypt;
- 215 the sojourned of the nation according to the Septuagint;
- 430 years in all.

Henry Alford establishes in a conclusive manner that the sojourn in Egypt was approximately 215 years. He reasons that Levi was about 49 . . . when he went down into Egypt. Now (Exodus 11:16) Levi lived in all 137 years: i.e., about 88 (137-49) years in Egypt. But Amram, father of Moses and Aaron, married his father Kohath's sister Jochebed, who was therefore as expressly stated (Numbers XXVI:59) 'the daughter of Levi, whom his mother bare to Levi in Egypt.' Therefore Jochebed must have been born within 88 years after the going down into Egypt and seeing that Moses was 80 years old at the Exodus, (Exodus VII:7) - if we call "x" his mother's age when he was born, we have 80 plus 80 plus x as a maximum for the

Continued on page 3

A Baptist Woman Preacher

According to newspaper accounts some Baptist churches are very upset in the Memphis area: A woman is now serving as a pastor in one of the area churches. She entered the pulpit in "a brand-new, tailor-made, royal blue minister's gown. . ." We wonder just where the scriptures authorize "a minister's gown." Could it be that denominational ministers have borrowed the idea from the Catholic practice as set forth by their priests and the Pope??

The woman pastor -- "Rev." Nancy Sehested -- says, "I have been praying for divine intervention." But false teachers [nearly] always claim to have divine intervention (?) no matter how unscriptural their notions and practices may be. Tennessee's Shelby Baptist Association, representing 120 Baptist churches in the Memphis area opposed selecting "Rev." Nancy Sehested as pastor for the Prescott Memorial church. Do they claim "divine intervention" too? If so, would that not mean that God is supporting two contradictory positions?? Who can believe it??

What the good lady needed was not "divine intervention," but a passage or passages from the Holy Bible. Just what passage authorizes women to serve as preachers or pastors?? "Pastors" in the New Testament, refers to elders or overseers or bishops of the New Testament church (Ephesians 4:11-13; I Timothy 3:1-7), not to the pastor of a denominational church, whether Baptist or some other.

Paul, Peter, Matthew, James, et al., were never called "pastors" of the church; neither were they ever addressed as "Reverend" Paul, "Reverend" Peter, and the like. . . (Should the reader know where such passages are found, please let us know)!

We have read of John "the" Baptist, but we have never read of any sort of "a" Baptist church, whether north or south or east or west. John the Baptist was not "a Baptist" preacher, as strange as it may seem to some. John was the baptist --not "a" baptist. The is a definite article which points out the work John did -- he baptized others. It is like "Matthew the publican" (Matthew 10:3), "Philip the evangelist" (Acts 21:8), or "Elymas the sorcerer" (Acts 13:8) or "Jeremiah the prophet" (Jeremiah 38:10), and many other like examples can be cited. Which John was Matthew writing about? The answer: The John who did the baptizing. There were many Johns in those days, but just one John who baptized. Don't you see? And so it was with the other examples cited.

Since "the Baptist church" is not a New Testament organization, it can formulate its own rules for pastors, or for any thing else. The Baptist church -- its creed, its name, its form of government, its terms of membership, its rules and regulations -- cannot be substantiated by the New Testament. There is not a word addressed to denominational churches, per se, in the Holy Bible. What a book the Bible would be if it endorsed and supported



W. A. Holley

all the different, conflicting, contradicting teachings and doctrines of all denominational churches!! One reads in vain looking for a direct reference to "a Baptist church" or "a Methodist church" or "the Roman Catholic church," and the like . . . in the Bible!

What the "Rev. Nancy Sehested" has shown, when she became the pastor of the Prescott Memorial Baptist Church in Memphis is that she does not believe the Bible, the New Testament, the very Scripture she claims to preach. We know that this charge is a serious one; but it is a true one. Listen to Paul the apostle: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (I Timothy 2:11-12). The word teach in the above quoted verse means to "deliver didactic discourses" (Thayer). Women are prohibited from teaching and exercising authority "over the man." In other situations women may teach other women, or her children, her grandchildren, children in Bible schools. Priscilla and her husband taught Apollos the way of the Lord more perfectly (Acts 18:26; Titus 2:3-5). The word silence as used in I Timothy 2:11-12 means silence as far as delivering a didactic discourse -- a sermon -- is concerned. Hence, women are not permitted to teach "over the man" nor to exercise authority "over the man." According to Titus 2:15, evangelists are to teach and rebuke "with all authority;" hence, women cannot be evangelists (Cf. Acts 21:8).

As a matter of fact, there are other requirements of the Lord which the Baptist church rejects. We shall name only a few: Baptism "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:36-38); the Lord's Supper each Lord's day (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-30; 16:1-2); the possibility of apostasy (I Corinthians 11:23-30; 16:1-2); the possibility of apostasy (I Corinthians 9:27; 10:12); salvation by faith that obeys (James 2:14-26; Romans 5:1-2; 6:3-4; Mark 16:16); and the operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion through the word (Ephesians 6:17).

The Baptist churches and other denominational churches reject the aforementioned cardinal points, as well as many others, simply because they do not believe what the Holy Scriptures say (Cf. Hebrews 11:6; John 8:21-24).

The truth is: If women truly believed the Holy Bible, they would not wrest the scriptures trying to justify their desire to be pastors (II Peter 3:16). The word wrest means to twist, to pull, force, or move by violent wringing or twisting movements. Why torture the Scriptures?? Why not believe and obey it? This approach is by far the safest course to follow. Why spend a lifetime trying to circumvent what God has said so plainly?

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

**Give Thanks
To The Lord,
For He is Good....**

Psalms 107:1

Restoration Wives

(No. 2)

Fanning

The first marriage of Tolbert Fanning was a brief one. He married Sarah Shreve of Nicholasville, Kentucky in 1835. In a very short time Sarah died. On Christmas day, 1836, Fanning married Charlotte Fall. There were no children in either of the two marriages.

Charlotte Fall was born near London, England, in 1809, and her family immigrated to America when she was a child.



Dabney Phillips

After her parents died, her eldest brother, Phillip Fall, became a foster father to her. Upon reaching adulthood, Charlotte taught in Nashville Academy, which at that time was the most popular and best school in the south. The year following her marriage to Tolbert Fanning, they opened a school in Franklin, Tennessee. There were more than one hundred students the first year, and the school continued for three years.

Tolbert Fanning bought a farm called Elm Crag, five miles east of Nashville, and began Franklin College in 1845. The school was named after the philosopher, Benjamin Franklin. Charlotte Fanning operated Minerva College for girls on the grounds of Franklin College. The Civil War closed their schools. After the war, Hope Institute opened, but it failed in a short time. Charlotte was a talented teacher. She taught

five foreign languages: Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German, and French. Charlotte also taught negro youths who became leaders in the community and in the church.

Tolbert Fanning died in 1874. In 1884 Charlotte opened Fanning Orphan School for white girls. She was able to teach all day, and (when necessary) to iron all night! Charlotte abounded in good works, such as helping the students, and caring for ill neighbors. This godly woman worked with her mind, tongue, and pen.

Charlotte died in 1896 and was buried beside her husband at the beloved Elm Crag. The orphan home and school property was sold in 1942 to make room for the Nashville Airport. Funds derived from the sale were used to establish a scholarship to educate worthy girls in Christian colleges. Thus the influence of Tolbert and Charlotte Fanning continues in a positive way. Alexander Campbell called Charlotte "Tolbert's accomplished lady."

Lipscomb

The sacrificial spirit of the wives of the first generation of Restoration brethren prevailed also among the second generation wives. David Lipscomb married Margaret Zellner on July 23, 1862. Lipscomb was not known as a handsome man, but Margaret looked at his character and made her choice. One son, Zellner, was born to this union, but unfortunately he died in nine months. Although without other children of their own, the Lipscomb home was seldom without children, for the children of relatives lived with the Lipscombs.

"Aunt Mag" as she was affectionately known, made most of David Lipscomb's clothes. With much persuasion she once was able to get "Uncle Dave" to sit for a picture.

Upon observing the picture in the presence of John T. Lewis, "Aunt Mag" commented, "It may be interesting to you to know that everything Mr. Lipscomb is wearing I made, except his shoes and suspenders." "Uncle Dave" was convinced that too much ado was made over external appearances.

After Lipscomb had a stroke, Margaret sat by his side until he passed away on November 11, 1917. When David Lipscomb died at 10:50 a.m. on Sunday, the faithful Margaret said, "Lord Jesus, receive his spirit."

Harding

Like many of his Restoration colleagues, James A. Harding was married twice. Carrie Knight was the first wife of brother Harding. She was the eldest daughter of a well-known attorney and a prominent member of the church in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. The wedding occurred in 1871, and she passed away five years later. Three children were born to this union.

Harding later married Patti Cobb, in 1878; and to them six children were born. Patti directed the food services at the Nashville Bible School, and at the Potter Bible School Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Patti would appear cheerful when Harding would leave for one of his gospel meetings; but then she would fling herself across her bed and cry -- despite her faith in God's providence. She firmly believed (along with her husband) in God's special care for his people. Several years after her husband's death, she wrote, "My children have married good men and good women, and they have been lovely to me; and my grandchildren and great-grandchildren have been lovely to me always. I love them all!"

Patti died in 1945 at the age of 92 at the home of her daughter in Atlanta, and was buried beside her husband in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Like her husband, Patti Cobb Harding lived an unselfish and courageous life.

Larimore

The talented T. B. Larimore first married Esther Gresham in 1868. This marriage was blessed with seven children. After her death in 1907, Larimore married Miss Emma Page. Emma frequently wrote for the Gospel Advocate, and she authored the biography of Charlotte Fall Fanning.

Conclusion

Unquestionably, these great men of God were ably assisted and encouraged by their faithful wives. A large number of Restoration wives died young in life. Often they became the mother of numerous children but lacking proper medical care, their lives were shortened. It is wrong to forget the love and sacrifices of these women of the Lord.

— 3953 Elm Ave., Montgomery, AL 36109.

A Question Of Chronology

Continued from page 2

sojourn in Egypt, which clearly cannot be 430 years . . . If we take "x" to be cir. 47 . . . we shall have the sojourn in Egypt equals 215 years, which added to the previous 215, will make the required 430.9

This exegesis would thus prefer the reading of the Septuagint and its corollaries to that of the Masoretic text.

Those who wrestle with textual difficulties well know that in the transmission of numbers we encounter many problems.

J. W. Haley in his classic *Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* observes: that there are discrepancies resulting from the confounding of similar numeral letters. Obviously, in those cases where questions of time are involved, the liability to errors of the above kind becomes an element of prime importance. Taking this factor into account . . . the use of different methods of reckoning time, and the grouping of events not chronologically, but upon the principle of association, and we are unable to solve with facility such cases . . . relative to time.¹⁰

CONCLUSION

May we always be found among those friends of God who hold a high regard for the sacred Word. Believing that the original autographs were God-breathed and therefore perfectly harmonious, we look for, and expect to find, satisfactory answers to all such textual

problems.

Let us love and respect the living word, defend it against all enemies, and hold it up as the word of life to a confused and bewildered world.

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

ENDNOTES

1R.C.H. Lenski. *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians*, Minneapolis, Augsburg Pub. House, 1961, p. 157.

2Ibid.

3Ibid., p. 158.

4Ibid., p. 163.

5J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, Andover, Warren, & Draper, Pub., 1881, p. 257.

6Ibid., p. 257.

7Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews*. 2.15.2, trans. by William Whitson (Chicago: The John C. Winston Company, n.d.), pp. 83-84.

8Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament. II Corinthians and Galatians*. Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1955, pp. 391-92.

9Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament* (revised by E. F. Harrison), Chicago, Moody Press, 1968, Vol. III, Galatians-Philemon, p. 31.

10J. W. Haley, *Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible*, Sprindale, PA, Whitaker House, n.d., p. 392.

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

*Let us thank God for all
the blessings that he
has bestowed upon us!*

Workshops At Freed-Hardeman College

President E. Claude Gardner recently announced a series of workshops related to Bible school, teaching methods, materials and other factors designed to improve the effectiveness of the teaching programs of the church.

These workshops are sponsored by the Freed-Hardeman College Bible School Literature and Supply House, and are coordinated by Joe Glisson. The workshops will be held on Saturdays from 9 a.m. until noon in the Duncan Room of Pruett Book Center on campus. There is no cost for attending. Reservations will be limited and taken on a first-come basis.

Rosemary W. McKnight, author of *I Love Me, I Love Me Not* and *Mustard Seeds*, and a lecturer on women's retreats and ladies day programs, will do a workshop for ladies on Jan. 30, 1988. The thrust of the workshop will be the principles and techniques necessary to have a successful ladies class. Materials and methods will be considered

This workshop will be useful whether you are teaching a teenage girls class or an adult class.

Spring workshops are being planned. Dates and subjects will be announced later.

For further information contact Joe Glisson, Freed-Hardeman College, Henderson, TN 38340; (901) 989-6771.

"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Let all the people say, 'Amen!' 'Praise the Lord!'"
(Psalm 106:48).

Missionary

Every time your heart beats, it has a mission. Your heart is pumping blood which sustains life in your body. Each time a person reaches with an open hand he has a mission. Whatever object that person reaches for is a part of the goal. When our eyes are focused on an object, they have a mission; to clearly view and see that which is focused upon. When our feet march, they march carrying us forth on a mission.



Trent McCluskey

Our physical body has different members working together in order that the body may accomplish the desired mission. The church is the spiritual body of Christ. "And [God] hath put all things under his [Christ's] feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22-23). Christ is the head of the church. "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Colossians 1:18). There is just one body. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Ephesians 4:4). "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office . . ." (Romans 12:4).

The lungs take in air, the heart sends blood, and the body is working together. The members of the Lord's body MUST work together. "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 17:21). "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the previous ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore" (Psalms 133:1-3). The body is reaching forward to achieve a goal. The members separately appear to furnish blood, oxygen, and other necessities to the body. The members cooperatively are seeking to accomplish a mission.

Whether you clean the church building, or preach each Lord's day, hopefully our mission is the same as the body as it works together. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that thy might be saved" (Romans 10:1).

—103 Bradford Dr., Fayetteville, GA 30214.

Talebearing

Randall J. Medlin

"A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter" (Proverbs 11:13).

Recently I drove 42 miles with my eyes closed. That's correct. You heard right. Talk about drunk driving . . . I'm the one who's the real danger on the roads, right?

Well, maybe not. Allow me to explain. The 42 miles I drove with my eyes closed was the combined time of all my blinking. That is, the average blink lasts about 1/5 of a second. If I drive 55 m.p.h. for ten hours, blinking at the average rate per minute, I'd spend 42 miles with my eyes closed. Doesn't sound so perilous now, huh?

Yet, what you don't know CAN hurt you --or me, if that is whom you wish to discuss. How careful we need to be that our exercise plan doesn't include "jumping to conclusions."

Talebearing, however, can be, and is being, largely practiced throughout the church today. How sad. "I wasn't sure if this was true, but I wanted to repeat it to be on the safe side!" said Mr. Gossip. Even if it is true, sir, and it is told with malicious intent, it is still GOSSIP. Paint it. Sugar-coat it. Give it another name - it is still the same critter. And Christians MUST NOT be guilty of it!

"Don't let any rotten word come out of your mouth. Instead, say something good to build up what is missing. Then it will be a blessing to those who hear it" (Ephesians 5:29, S.E.B.).

"Just the facts, Ma'am," says Joe Friday of television's *Dragnet*. Fact-gathering doesn't seem too important to the talebearer, though. A generation born and reared on *The National Enquirer* syndrome has to be particularly careful that we do not become dispensers of verbal garbage.

The temptation to gossip is almost a daily thing. The beer cans in the Christian's garbage can; Did he empty them himself? or, did he pick them up from where they had been discarded in his yard? The fellow lunching with a strange woman -- is it his mistress?

or a secretary receiving a well-deserved meal at the boss's expense?

Well, you get the point. So, in the words of the TV sergeant, "Hey, be careful out there!"
—Avondale Church of Christ, 4017 Memorial Drive, Decatur, GA 30032.

Drifting

Judy Epperson

Great numbers now are lost!

Yes -- from the church today.

Lost because they're drifting!

They've wandered far away.

This was not their intent;

It did not cross their mind

To drift away from God,

And leave his church behind.

At first it was unnoticed.

But it began to take it's toll.

Old Satan started his vicious fight

To gain for himself another soul.

The process was so gradual

When drifting they did begin!

First they missed a service

Just "every now and then."

Numerous others do they affect:

Those who're out of God's fold;

Those in the church; Their own kin;

And --most of all: their own soul.

But, Glory! God gave us a cure!

His antidote is not new:

We by faith must do all

His word directs us to do.

—Rt. 1, Box 243, Bear Creek, AL 35543.

Sunday School

DON'T MISS IT!



(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 25

FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 1988

NUMBER 4

Paul's Ministry

Men who assay to serve Christ as gospel preachers would do well to analyze the ministry of Christ's most successful preacher, Paul, in order to learn how to serve acceptably. Elders and congregations should make the same study to know what they should expect of their minister. In his speech to King Agrippa we have a brief synopsis of Paul's ministry that supplies us the needed information (Acts 26:19-23).



JOHN WADDEY

I. What Was The Driving Force Behind His Work?

Paul was motivated by the heavenly vision of the risen glorified Savior. The great Isaiah had seen a similar vision which propelled him into his career as a prophet (Isaiah 6:1-5, 8). The vision of Christ, branded on Paul's heart, kept him going, regardless of the obstacles. He wrote: "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep, in journeyings often, in perils of rivers. . . robbers. . . from my countrymen. . . from the Gentiles. . . in the city. . . in the wilderness. . . in the sea. . . among false brethren, in labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" (II Corinthians 11:24-28). Yet in the face of all of this he wrote: "for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel".

Although we will not see an actual "heavenly vision," we must come to see Christ as the Lord of our lives (Romans 10:9) and ourselves as his bondservants (Romans 1:1). Only then will we be driven as he.

II. What Was The Extent Of His Ministry?

He "declared both to them of Damascus. . . and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judea. . ." A faithful evangelist of Christ must have a world vision for the Lord. We must labor to preach the gospel to "every creature" in "all the world" (Mark 16:15). Our work can know no geographical, social, or racial boundaries.

III. What Was The Message Of His Ministry?

Paul proclaimed that the Messiah predicted by the prophets has come (Acts 26:22). He boldly declared Christ's suffering, death and resurrection (26:23). He announced that Christ has brought light not only to the Jews, but the Gentiles as well (26:23). The faithful preacher of our day will likewise preach Christ and him crucified (I Corinthians 2:1-2). The good news is Christ's death for our sins, burial and resurrection (I Corinthians 15:3). Our gospel must set forth Christ as the light of the world (John 8:12) and we must preach without respect of persons (Acts 10:34-35).

Paul called upon all men to "repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance" (Acts 26:20). Preaching repentance is a minister's greatest challenge. Other lessons will be easily delivered and happily received; but in branding sin, and calling upon men to forsake it and reform their lives, an evangelist's mettle is tested. The preaching of the apostles abounded in the call to repentance (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30); so should ours today.

IV. What Were the Hardships Of His Ministry?

Paul was a man refined by the fires of hardships and persecutions. Like fine steel, his mind was tempered by his fiery trials (Hebrews 5:8-9). There were dangers and toils encountered on his distant journeys. Hostile enemies dogged him at every turn (Acts 26:21), yet he was not discouraged (II Timothy 1:12). Only a man of heroic spirit and unfeigned faith could have endured the rigors and sufferings that befell Paul (II Corinthians 11:23-28). Those of us who aspire to serve in the ranks of Christ's evangelistic army should examine ourselves, asking what kind of metal are we made of (II Corinthians 13:5)? Have

we counted the cost? are we willing to pay the price (Luke 14:27-33)?

V. What Was The Secret Of Paul's Endurance In His Ministry?

To the young King Agrippa, Paul revealed the ingredient that made him keep on keeping on in the face of incredible obstacles: "Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day..." (Acts 26:22). He reminded the Corinthians, "By the grace of God I am what I am" (I Corinthians 15:10). "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me," he told the Philippians (Philippians 4:13). Herein is the ingredient that strengthens the stumbling, fainting soul. Without such faith no man will be able to stay in the thick of the fight. With it, all the devils of the infernal realms will never dislodge him. In the words of an old hymn,

"Here I raise my Ebenezer,
Hither by Thy help I'm come!
And I hope by thy good pleasure
Safely to arrive at home."

From around the world the calls come for men of strength and character who will volunteer for the Lord's great rescue mission. Those who would enlist for this mission of mercy will be helped in their life and work by a study of Paul the apostle. May God raise up thousands of his tribe for our day.

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



Preach The Word
II Timothy 4:2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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— Acts 26:25

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The Christian Race: Hebrews 12:1-2

Dabney Phillips

Few things are more disheartening than to be involved in a lonely struggle. There are times when no one seems to care. The Grecian games were common in the first century. The Jews rejected them due to immodesty and their being bloody. Analogies can be made between those ancient games and the Christian life.

TRAITS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

First, entrance requirements must be met. We enter the "Christian race" by the new birth process as described by our Lord in John 3:3-5. Jesus is the right man with the right plan. We do not enter the race by obeying the Old Testament, nor by our own morality.

Another comparison is that we must follow the infallible rule book. The race is marked out by God's word. Study the rules (James 1:25; II Timothy 3:16-17).

The Christian race is characterized by intense activity. It is a RACE -- not a leisure stroll, nor even a slot trot! It is a race of service, suffering, faith and patience.

There is a goal to be attained in this race. The goal is to become and be like Christ, which means possessing priorities which are spiritual.

The race is a brief struggle. Note carefully James 4:14 and Psalms 90:10.

The race is a public spectacle. We run this race before the world, the devil, Christ, and our fellow Christians.

CONDITIONS OF SUCCESSFUL RUNNING

A good start is helpful, but is no guarantee that you will win. "Ye did run well. . . ." (Galatians 5:7) is exemplified in Demas (II Timothy 4: and Judas. Another condition to running well is to lay aside weights (Hebrews 12:1-2). Extra things can impede our running -- such sins as unbelief, pride, indifference, and worldliness.

Do not become weary in the race (Galatians 6:9). Problems may discourage either on a personal or congregational level.

Remember that ALL can win in this race.

Continued on page 3

May We Never Take Our Religion Lightly

Children have ways of saying things that are tremendously unique and usually very simple. Sometimes, the explanations they give overlook the real purpose for which a thing was intended. Consider the following essay on anatomy written by a young boy.

"Your head is kind of round and hard, and your branes are in it and your hair on it. Your face is the front of your head where you eat and make faces. Your neck is what keeps your head out of your collar. It's hard to keep clean.

"Your shoulders are sort of shelves where you hook your suspenders on them. Your stummick is something that if you do not eat often enough it hurts, and spinage don't help it none.

"Your spine is a long bone in your back that keeps you from folding up. Your back is always behind you no matter how quick you turn around.



Edsel Burleson

"Your arms you got to have to pitch with, and so you can reach the butter. Your fingers stick out of your hand so you can throw a curve, and add up rithmatick.

"Your legs is what, if you have not got two of, you cannot get to first base, neither can your sister. Your feet are what you run on. Your toes are what always gets stubbed.

"And that's all there is of you except what's inside and I never saw that."

This portrays, in principle, the idea many church members seem to have of the body of Christ. Rather than a close and abiding relationship with God being understood, with numerous functions to characterize each one, a vague concept of "doing some things" is held.

Paul said, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but, when I became a man, I put away childish things" (I Corinthians 13:11). We must approach our relationship with God in all seriousness and maturity.

Too often, man has accepted the philosophy of the how-to-win-friends expert who said, "Always be sincere, whether you mean it or not." May we never take our religion lightly!

— 420 7th St. S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

"Do Not Thou This Folly"

II Samuel 13:12

PEGGY T. CRUMP

Sexual permissiveness in our country is growing day by day. Things of an immoral nature are being looked upon as things common. Women are not as chaste as they once were. They are not even ashamed nor do they know how to blush (Jeremiah 6:15). Purity is a virtue God wants all to have.

The record in II Samuel 13 is very fitting for our times. There were Amnon and Absalom, half-brothers, and Absalom's sister Tamar. All were born of the same father, but not of the same mother. They were probably all in their teens. Amnon fell "in love" with Tamar. "Amnon was so vexed that he fell sick for his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin" (verse 2).

Faking an illness, he begged his father to allow her to prepare some special food for him; this his father did. Tamar prepared this for him—BUT Amnon refused to eat! He ordered all his attendants to leave, and then called Tamar into his chamber. She did as she was asked, but Amnon did not want to talk to her about food: "he took hold of her, and said unto her, Come lie with me my sister" (verse 11). She answered him, "Do not force me; for no such thing ought to be done in Israel; DO NOT THOU THIS FOLLY" (verse 12).

But read farther, beginning with verse 14: "Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her." Amnon's "love" for Tamar turned to brutal hatred, so much that he raped her!

"Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he loved her" (verse 15). He then ordered her to leave the house. She begged and pleaded for a milder treatment; but he just added more pain by pushing her out, and bolting the door after her

(verse 17).

By this action, all the people would believe her to be the guilty party. Having nothing to do with her was a worse hurt than the thing he had done to her.

Tamar was a princess, distinguished for her beauty, modesty, tenderheartedness, and her purity. So fair and pure had she gone forth on an errand of mercy; but with so much pain had she returned. Even Amnon's servants treated her as a common woman. She put ashes on her head, rent her clothes, which is a mark of extreme pain, grief, and humiliation, and went forth crying. She told her brother, Absalom, what had happened. He understood, took her into his house where she remained ALONE.

Tamar was innocent but reaped the loneliness, heartbreak, and pain of a male's lust. The world to which we are exposed now tempts more and more to accept values which will not bring ultimate happiness. Inward chastity is the answer to these temptations. We sometimes stand alone in Biblical faith that what is right must be. This faith that right is right will sustain in the darkest hour of decision. Inward strength is the answer to temptations the world presents.

Do not give away a life of purity for what seems a moment of pleasure—not only in sex, but also in drugs, drinking alcoholic beverages, etc. Do not suffer the shame as Tamar did. She was innocent, but carried the scar the rest of her life. The people thought her to be guilty because Amnon would have nothing to do with her. So-called "friends" will forsake, but the Lord is always there to those who seek him and his righteousness first. Dare to be different! "Do not thou this folly."

— Rt. 11, Box 454-B27, Gadsden, Alabama 35903.

Obedience: Is It Important?

"We Must Obey God Rather Than Men"
(Acts 5:29).

Throughout the ages of human history, God has required man to obey him, and he has always punished those who have disobeyed him. Adam and Eve, through their disobedience, brought physical and spiritual death into the world (Genesis 2:17ff; 3:1-6, 14 ff). The antediluvians, because of their disobedience, brought the great flood "upon the world of the ungodly" (II Peter 2:5; Genesis 6:1ff). The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because ten righteous persons could not be found within their borders (Genesis 18:23ff; 19:1ff). With comparatively few exceptions man's history has been one of rank disobedience against God Almighty (Romans 10:21; Titus 1:16; I Peter 2:7-8).



W. A. Holley

WHO SHOULD OBEY?

Jesus Christ died for all men (Hebrews 2:9). The gospel of Christ must be preached unto all nations (Mark 16:15-16). Both Jews and Gentiles need the power of the gospel in their lives (Romans 1:16). Both men and women heard and obeyed the gospel in apostolic times (Acts 8:12; 16:14; 17:4, 12). Various classes who obeyed the gospel in New Testament times are: murderers, persecutors, jailors, business women, soldiers, treasurers, sorcerers, Samaritans, Jews and Gentiles. Hence, the gospel of Christ is addressed to every human being on earth who wishes to escape the bondage of sin.

What Is The Meaning Of Obedience?

One is the servant of him whom he obeys. If we obey God, then he is our master; if we obey Satan, then he is our master (Romans 6:16-18). Jesus declared: "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34). No one can serve the devil and please God at the same time (Matthew 6:24). To obey God means to do as God has commanded!!

One Should Obey Whom? And What?

One must obey God and his gospel. We quote: "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). How does one obey God? Not by obeying the doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 15:9). It is necessary to obey the gospel of God (I Peter 4:17). Those who refuse to obey God are certain to remain in their sins, and be lost (II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Obedience involves more than "the doctrine of salvation by faith only" (James 2:24; John 6:28-29; 12:42-43).

The scripture says: "... And a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7; Cf. Romans 1:5; 16:26). Such obedience as the Lord requires includes: faith, repentance, confession of Jesus' name, and baptism. Where can references showing these commands of the Lord be found? (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; Romans 10:9-10; 6:3-4; Acts 2:36-38). In all examples of conversion in the book of Acts, these elements were always present. To this rule there is no exception!!

After one becomes a Christian it is necessary for that one to remain faithful unto death, if one wishes to enter into life eternal

(Revelation 2:10; II Timothy 4:6-8).

Why Should One Obey God?

"... Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them" (Revelation 14:13). This passage refers to a proper relationship with the Lord. One can "die in the Lord," according to the verse quoted. The new birth (John 3:3, 5) is involved. If one is "IN Christ, he is a new creature" (II Corinthians 5:17). How does one obtain such a wonderful relationship? Those who "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus," are those who have been baptized into Christ, baptized into the death of Christ and its benefits (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27). Jesus' blood was shed in his death (John 19:33-34); and in baptism we reach the cleansing power of the precious blood of Christ. No, it is not the water that saves; but in water baptism (which seems ridiculous to unbelieving men), we contact the blood of Christ which washes away sins (Revelation 1:5; 7:14; Acts 22:16; Hebrews 9:14; I John 1:7). No blessing is pronounced upon those who die OUT of the Lord. Those who fall asleep in Jesus shall not perish, and those who sleep in Jesus will be brought back by the Lord at his coming

(I Corinthians 15:20-24; I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

If One Obeys Not, What Are The Consequences
The wrath of God shall fall upon the disobedient (Colossians 3:6). More, "Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 5:6).

The disobedience of Nadab and Abihu, of Ananias and Sapphira, of King Saul, of Judas, et al., led to their downfall. It should be understood that sins of omission are just as damning as the sins of commission (Matthew 25:31-46). "... To him that knoweth to good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). "This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole [duty] of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, ASV.)

"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (I Peter 3:12).

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Is It Really A New Year?

A look at the calendar will reveal that a new month and year has begun. On Thursday evening, December thirty-first, hundreds of thousands of people waited for the final countdown, as together across the world they chanted out the ending of the old year and the beginning of the new.

Now I realize that we are living in the new year of 1988. I hope that this year brings the best of life to all. But how can a new year really be new when all of the old sinful habits of 1987 are carried over in 1988? In the words of Edwin Raymond Anderson, "Can it be called a new year, when the sins and the sorrows of last year are carried over the threshold from December thirty-first to January first? If one is spiritually lost, guilty and under condemnation, has anything basic actually changed?"

Is it really a new year when man's iniquities still separate him from his God (Isaiah 59:2)? Is it a new and fresh year when man makes no resolution to "seek after the Lord... and find him" (Acts 17:16)? Can it really be seen as new when man prays for family blessings and prosperity, but does not pray as David when he asked, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit with me" (Psalm 51:10)?

What is new about Christians who had "once escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" and have now become entangled into the old life of sin again and continue in that estrangement from Christ and his Church (II Peter 2:20)? They are just as lost as they were



Don Williams

previously when they ceased following Christ and doing his will.

When does a person really become new spiritually? When an accountable person believes in Christ (Romans 10:17), repents and turns from his life of sin (Luke 13:3), confesses his faith in Christ as the Son of God (Romans 10:9, 10), and is baptized for the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38), then a new relationship with Christ has begun. Paul puts it this way when he writes, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). When an erring child of God comes back to Christ and the church, repenting and confessing his sins, then the Bible promises that Christ "forgives us our sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

When one stands in a right relationship with God and his church, then and only then, can the new year be new in the fullest sense of the word. Think about the freshness of such a life. Here is one who has committed his works unto the Lord, so that his thoughts may be established (Proverbs 16:3). Here is one who has the greatest assurance that anyone has to offer -- that hope of Heaven beyond the grave (Titus 1:2). Here is one who can now use the new year to the glory of God, using his life as a light to draw men unto God (Matthew 5:16).

Say... What about your life? Will 1988 be a **TRULY NEW** year for you?

Rt. 2, Box 713 Guin, AL 35563.

The Christian Race Hebrews 12:1-2

Continued from page 2

We receive much more than an olive crown (I Corinthians 9:24-26). Faithfulness and not fleetness is what counts (Revelation 2:10). Do not let a faster runner deter you. Use YOU talents for the glory of God. Leave off any contraband that would hinder your race.
—3953 Elm Ave., Montgomery, AL 36109.

Some Outstanding Characteristics Of A Lost Man

In Acts chapter ten we have the record of the conversion of Cornelius and his household. As we read the account and the events leading up to his conversion, we note that Cornelius was an outstanding man prior to his becoming a Christian.

He was a military commander, "a centurion of the band called the Italian band" (Acts 10:1). It is rare indeed to find one of such importance interested in spiritual things. Yet the record shows (verse two) that he was "a devout man." He was devoted to God and things of a spiritual nature, although he was not yet a Christian. We need more people today who are devoted to God. So many in our time are devoted to worldliness (I John 2:15-17; James 4:4).

Cornelius "feared God with all his house" (Acts 10:2). Not only was he (personally) concerned about himself, but his family as well. He was the head of his household and



GUY F. HESTER

recognized his responsibility to lead them in the paths of righteousness. "The husband is the head of the wife" (Ephesians 5:22-24). He is to have his children "in subjection" to him (Ephesians 6:1-4). We do not have enough fathers who bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

He was benevolent. He "gave much alms to the people" (Acts 10:2). He was not stingy nor covetous, but gave "MUCH alms." God demands liberal and cheerful givers (I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 8:1-5).

Cornelius was a man of prayer. He "prayed to God always" (Acts 10:2). He understood that prayer is man's only means of talking to God. A great deal is being said about prayer in school; but I am more concerned about prayer in homes! If we had more praying fathers, we would have more pious children. We are instructed to "pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:16-18). However, God will not hear a sinner's prayer who regards iniquity in his heart, and who turns away his ear from hearing the law (John 9:31; Psalm 66:18; Proverbs 28:9).

Another outstanding characteristic of this man was that he was interested in the spiritual welfare of others. He "called together his kinsmen and near friends" (Acts 10:24). We today need to show more interest in others

regarding spiritual matters, especially relatives and friends.

When he learned that he was not right religiously, he acted immediately to learn the truth. He said to Peter, "Immediately therefore I sent for thee" (Acts 10:33). When we learn that we are in error religiously we need to act NOW to make the necessary corrections in our lives. "Behold now. . . is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2).

No one could question the fact that Cornelius was a good man (Acts 10:1-2). But, he was not saved by his goodness. He was not saved by prayer although his prayers came "up for a memorial before God" (Acts 10:4). He was not saved by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This was to convince Peter and his Jewish brethren that the gospel and salvation are for the Gentile as well as for the Jew (Acts 10:44-48). He and those of his household were saved when they obeyed the command to "be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48; Mark 16:15-16).

Those who are unsaved today can be saved just like Cornelius and his household were saved. Upon hearing "all things that are commanded thee of God" (Acts 10:33), you today must believe and "be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48).

— 1101 Airport Circle, Jasper, AL 35501.

The Sin Of Omission

Trenton McCluskey

God's people have a tremendous responsibility. It seems that some have wanted to accept the blessings that are in Christ and neglect the responsibilities of Christianity. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus UNTO GOOD WORKS, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10). Over the years we have stressed, and rightly so, that Christianity is not a religion of faith only. "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone, Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith BY MY WORKS" (James 2:17-18). Notice: "I will shew thee my faith by my works." The conclusion is obvious: A faithful Christian is a working Christian.

Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:13-16). Not "busy work" but "good works!" "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, AND DO GOOD; let him seek peace, and ensue it" (I Peter 3:10-11). "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. HE THAT DOETH GOOD IS OF GOD: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God" (III John 11). What good are you doing? What am I doing? Then what are we doing? We must be doing good if the world is going to be evangelized. Listen to I Peter 2:12, "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that,

whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by YOUR GOOD WORKS, WHICH THEY SHALL BEHOLD, glorify God in the day of visitation." We need to do good works. Read Titus 1:16: "They profess that they know God; BUT IN WORKS THEY DENY HIM, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." The term "they" refers back to verse 10. Are we different from those "unruly and vain talkers and deceivers" mentioned in verse 10? In what respect? Am I different? We must apply that which we know to do!

Paul wrote the Corinthians and said, "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may ABOUND TO EVERY GOOD WORK" (II Corinthians 9:8). Paul told the Christians at Colosse, "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, BEING FRUITFUL IN EVERY GOOD WORK, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:10). In his second letter to the saints at Thessalonica Paul said, "Comfort your hearts, and STABLISH YOU IN EVERY GOOD WORD AND WORK" (II Thessalonians 2:17). Paul wrote to Timothy that Christian women should adorn themselves with that ("which becometh women professing godliness) WITH GOOD WORKS" (I Timothy 2:10). Women are involved with good works. "Concerning widows we learn that they also shall be "WELL REPORTED FOR GOOD WORKS; IF SHE HAVE BROUGHT UP CHILDREN, IF SHE HAVE LODGED STRANGERS, IF SHE HAVE WASHED THE SAINTS' FEET, IF SHE HAVE RELIEVED THE AFFLICTED, IF SHE HAVE DILIGENTLY FOLLOWED EVERY GOOD WORK" (I Timothy 5:10). Then Paul also says that the office of a bishop is a "good work:" "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, HE DESIRETH A GOOD WORK" (I Timothy

3:1).

Listen to the words of II Timothy 2:21, "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, AND PREPARED UNTO EVERY GOOD WORK."

God gave his son for us. We should commit ourselves to the many tasks that are before us. We need to:

1. Be ready to work. "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be READY TO EVERY GOOD WORK" (Titus 3:1).

2. Maintain good works. "And let ours also learn to MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful" (Titus 3:14).

3. Abound in work. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always ABOUNDING IN THE WORK of the Lord, inasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58).

4. Provoke others to work. "But TO DO GOOD and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Hebrews 13:16). "Make you perfect IN EVERY GOOD WORK to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Hebrews 13:21). "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to GOOD WORKS" (Hebrews 10:24).

As we realize there is much to be done, we need the strength to accomplish. We need to understand that whether rich in this world's goods, or in poverty, "I CAN DO all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

"THEREFORE TO HIM THAT KNOWETH TO DO GOOD, AND DOETH IT NOT TO HIM IT IS SIN" (James 4:17).

—103 Bradford Dr., Fayetteville, GA 30214.



(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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The Commandments Of The Lord

"If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (I Corinthians 14:37).

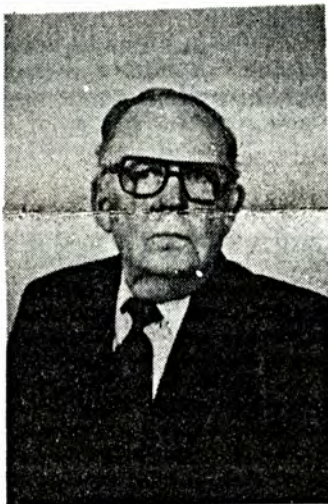
The foregoing quotation represents a test which Paul applied to all false teachers. Those preachers or teachers who differed with Paul were false preachers. There were many false teachers in Paul's day.

Hence, Paul wrote, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual" but refused to admit Paul's authority to speak by divine authority, thereby shows himself to be a false teacher. All preachers who do not acknowledge the things Paul wrote or spoke were divinely inspired messages from God, are false teachers, even today!

The apostle Paul did not write his opinions into the text of the Bible, but he did write the truth of God, which was given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (II Timothy 3:15-17; I Corinthians 2:9-16). Yes, the commands of the Lord are authoritative; the Lord has no non-essential commands which man can safely ignore (Galatians 1:6-9; Hebrews 5:8-9).

In our investigation, we should recognize that there are countless commands of men (Matthew 15:9). We need but to read Mark 7:6-13, to see that the commandments of men make the commandments of God of non-effect. It is a fact that millions now prefer the commandments of men to the commandments of God. We suggest that II Timothy 4:1-5 be imprinted into the minds of all preachers and teachers.

What are some of the commandments of men now being advocated? What about joining the church of one's choice? What scripture



W. A. Holley

teaches salvation by faith only? Where is scriptural authority for sprinkling or pouring as Bible 'modes' of baptism? What passage authorizes the use of an organ or piano in Christian worship?

Jesus Christ issued a new commandment. We quote: "A new commandment I have given have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another" (John 13:34-35, A.S.V.). The key to this passage is that we are to love one another, just as Jesus loved us. Jesus loved us fully, completely, without reservation: we should love one another in exactly the same way. The proper application is stated: "For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Galatians 5:14-15, A.S.V.). We here-with suggest that Psalms 15:1-5, be read. Always use the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12).

"Go . . . preach the gospel" to "all nations" contains another of the commandments of the Lord (Matthew 28:18-20). Here, clearly stated, is our foremost duty. The church is the pillar and ground of God's truth (Acts 8:4; Ephesians 3:9-11; I Timothy 3:14-15). The gospel is God's power to save the lost (Romans 1:16). If we fail in our duty to preach the gospel to every creature, the blood of those who might have been saved is certain to be upon us (Acts 20:26-27; Ezekiel 33:11, 31-33).

The Lord commands us to believe his word. "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment" (I John 3:23). No one can please God who does not believe (Hebrews 11:6). But "faith" comes by hearing God's holy word (Romans 10:17). One cannot be saved by "faith only" (James 2:14-17, 19, 24-26). One is saved by faith when that faith leads one to obey God Almighty (Romans 5:1-2; 6:3-4). To try to be saved by faith

alone is to try to be saved by a "dead" faith (James 2:26).


The confession of Jesus' name is another of the Lord's commandments. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33). To "confess" Jesus is to confess his name -- not our experiences, our feelings. The eunuch declared, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). Romans 10:9-10 shows how important confession of Jesus is. In the Bible no one ever confessed: "I feel that God for Christ's sake has pardoned my sins."

The Lord has commanded all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30-31). What is repentance? Repentance involves a change of mind which results in a reformation of life. This change of mind of which we speak involves both a turning from sin and a turning to God. A fine illustration of what repentance is can be found in Matthew 21:28-29. Read the story and you will see. Repentance is a condition of remission of sins, but not the only condition (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19). Repentance is one of the more difficult commands to obey because it involves the human will. Many simply WILL not change their way!

The last command we wish to discuss is baptism: "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord . . ." (Acts 10:48). "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). ". . . 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). Baptism puts one into Christ, into his death, where one's sins are washed away by the precious blood of Jesus Christ (Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-4).

Dear reader, do not stumble over the Lord's commands.

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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—Acts 26:35

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The Wounds Of Jesus

Then saith he to Thomas; "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing" (John 20:27). In this verse Thomas had to see for himself the scars of Jesus and even feel them before he would believe. My friends, we cannot see the scars of Jesus, but believe me, they were there!



Don Williams

Have you ever thought about the wound that a spike driven through a hand or a foot might cause? Think about the pain that Jesus must have felt as they pierced his skin. Think of the pain as they hoisted him up and suspended his body between heaven and earth. Think of the blood that flowed from such wounds and the desire to touch and to soothe that which he could not touch. Yes, the pain of the cross was real!

And yet, there is a pain that is still prevalent to Jesus today. It is a pain so terrible that in the Bible it is described as similar to the pain of the cross: those who "fall away" "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Hebrews 6:4-6). As if the pain of the cross were not enough, the writer tells us that Christ suffers all over again when children of God, those who have been forgiven of sin by the blood of Jesus, surrender their faith (Luke 8:12), turn away from Christ, and refuse to return unto the straight and narrow.

Brethren, let us realize what we do to Jesus

Continued on page 3

52nd Annual FHC Bible Lectureship

E. CLAUDE GARDNER
President, Freed-Hardeman College

"Love" is the theme word this year at Freed-Hardeman College. It is appropriate for our annual Bible Lectureship to give emphasis to this grace. Focus will be on "Love For God And His Word," and emphasis will be given to our relationship to God and his will. Last year the lectureship centered on "Grace," which reflects God's deep love for man. In 1988, it is appropriate to show what man's response should be— "Lover Or God And His Will."

Thousands will converge from most of the states and a few foreign countries. The lectureship is always the first full week in February; this year: February 8-12.

Housing in Henderson and Jackson is ample to take care of the large crowds.

The lectureship has topics for all workers in the church. Preachers benefit, and so do Bible school teachers, song leaders, youth ministers, church secretaries, missionaries, high school and college students, and all Christians. Few lecture programs offer as full and complete an array of challenging topics as we schedule each year. F.H.C. is rendering a valuable service to the brotherhood.

On Monday at 5:00 p.m., the annual Appreciation Dinner will honor preachers who are 80 years old and older. Among them will be L. O. Sanderson, E. R. Watson, Gordon H. Turner Sr., Wilburn Hill, D. Ellis Walker, George S. Benson, C. W. Brannam, Charles L. Houser, Emerson J. Estes, Amos Gardner, Carlos Gunter and others. Some others, such as G. K. Wallace, will be unable to attend because of health. Earl I. West will pay tribute to these worthies.

Another highlight of the week is our plan to present Hugo McCord's translation of the New Testament which he has given to Freed-Hardeman College. McCord is one of the leading scholars and preachers in the brotherhood, and his translation is eagerly anticipated. He lecture will deal with the "only begotten," literal translations, etc.

It is good for congregations to defray the travel and housing expenses, and the cost of meals, for their elders, ministers and other members to attend this spiritual banquet. Many educational seminars cost several hundreds of dollars; but there is no charge for this tremendous spiritual feast.

Missionaries have a special place on the program in the Mission Forum. Many nations and states will be featured.

Alan E. Highers, gospel preacher and respected judge, will again conduct the Questions and Answers Forum. Franklin Camp, a long-time yearly participant, is always a popular speaker. The renowned Guy N. Woods will speak on Tuesday night at 7:30 and V. E. Howard will conduct "Sing-Song" on Thursday night.

Youth and Parents Night will again be on Thursday, with David Sain as the featured speaker. Prior to the lecture, the choruses from Columbia Academy and Crowley's Ridge Academy will sing.

Imogene Siburt, Mrs. Willie Bradshaw, Betty Underhill, Rosemary McKnight and Elsie Huffard will conduct classes for ladies.

A newcomer to our series is Leroy Brownlow, well-known preacher and author. He will speak on Wednesday evening on "Preaching What We Practice."

Last fall our Church Workers Forum had a discussion of the Multiplying Ministries with Al Baird, Steve Johnson, Winford Claiborne, and Earl Edwards as the participants, with 1,500 in attendance. (Audio and video tapes

are still available from our recording services). The video of this forum will be shown during the week. Also, we have invited Buddy Martin of Cape Cod, MA, (located 70 miles from the Boston church) to lecture on the "Discipling Movement."

Regular features of the yearly lectureship will continue, such as book reviews, "show-us-the-way" congregations, song leaders, personal work, and classes on relevant themes.

The opening program will begin Monday at 10:30 a.m. in chapel, with George Goldtrap discussing, "Love for God: The First Commandment." The first evening speech will be given by Dowell Flatt on "Why We Love The Bible."

The Bible book selected for study is First John, which will be taught by James Toller-son.

Other worthy presentations will be on the inspiration of the Bible, archeology, evolution, gambling, alcohol and drugs, estate planning, denominational dogmas, silence of the Scriptures, computers in church work, retirement adjustments, expository preaching, translations of the Bible, etc. Beginning each day at 7:30 a.m., Winford Claiborne, lectureship director, will discuss "God's Pattern for the Home."

We always look forward to the great gathering of Christians from far and near. We believe those who attend in 1988 will love the Lord more, and will have a greater reverence for the Scriptures. Freed-Hardeman College, and its annual Bible Lectureship, are having an impact for good in the brotherhood and in our society.

Empty Benches

GUS NICHOLS (1892-1975)

My ever-present empty benches:

For a long time I have thought of preaching to you, but I have been unable to find a suitable text. So I have decided to preach you a textless sermon.

There are many things for which I wish to commend you. I commend your faithful attendance at all services of the church. You never miss a service, even though you are not wanted. The fact that you are neglected, does not offend you. (PEOPLE are different: the least slight, or neglect, will keep THEM away)!

I have noticed, too, that you are always on time. Occupied seats are often late; but you? I have noticed also that when the Tardy family arrives, you still keep your back toward the rear. YOU have never been known to turn around and stare at those who come late. And you never become disturbed if a baby cries out, or if someone else is naughty.

You are always quite. You are a well-polished group. I have never seen one of you going to the worldly movies, boxing matches, and other places of questionable propriety. You abide in a holy, religious, atmosphere. You "ABSTAIN FROM EVERY APPEARANCE OF EVIL" (I Thessalonians 5:22). There is not a dram-drinker, much less a drunkard, among you. I have never heard an evil report against any of you.

I admire your quiet, peaceable dispositions. You never quarrel among yourselves, nor talk about one another. I have never known one of you to get mad at another bench and quit the

Continued on page 4

Preaching For A Modern Generation

Advancing science and technology make most things obsolete in a matter of years. People have come to think that everything needs updating and modernizing -- including the proclamation of God's word. Anything man makes or originates can always be improved upon. But the things of God **NEED NO REVISION** or improvement.



John Waddey

I. The good news of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection (I Corinthians 15:1-4) cannot be improved upon. This gospel is God's power to save sinners who believe (Romans 1:16-17). It is the "glorious gospel" (II Corinthians 4:4). It is the everlasting gospel (Revelation 14:6).

II. The Bible cannot be improved upon. It is "inspired of God, (and) is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (II Timothy 3:16-17). How can fallible, finite man improve on a work of perfection from the infinite and perfect God? Every attempt to do so has resulted in folly or disaster.

III. Sinners have the same needs as always. All "fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Sin still separates men from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). Sin is like a tyrant: it dominates and ruins the lives of all it controls (Romans 6:16-17, 23). Man is yet unable to free himself from sin's dominion without divine help. Good works, along with human wisdom, and human effort, are still useless to rid one of sin (Isaiah 59:1-2; Titus 3:5). Works of law-keeping are of no more value now than in ancient times (Romans 3:20). Modern man needs the same Savior that Jews and Greeks alike needed in the first century. With Paul we cry, "O! wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver us out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 7:24)!

IV. The plan of salvation was given "once for all" (Jude 3). The God against whom we sinned, and who freely offers us salvation, has set forth terms for forgiveness: Faith in

his Son, repentance for the wrongs done, and immersion in water in Christ's name bring remission of sins (Acts 2:38). No one has yet found another successful way to receive forgiveness. Salvation being God's gift for him to impart, man can only humbly meet his terms.

V. The church of Christ needs no modernization. The blueprint of the church originated in the mind of God before the world began (Ephesians 3:9-11). It was purchased by the blood of Jesus on Calvary (Acts 20:28); and was set up and organized by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). The divine nature of the church makes it "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; . . . holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27). We can always improve on our personal lives, and the effectiveness and zeal with which we do God's work -- but the church is a work of perfection that is always marred when

It was a sad situation in Israel when Amos wrote, "Woe unto them who are at ease in Zion" (Amos 6:1). The church today in many places is worse off than that! We are **ASLEEP** in Zion! While we sleep some drastic changes are taking place in the Lord's church as well as in our homes and families.

Jesus taught some lessons in Matthew chapter 13 that need to be heeded more than ever today. In verses 24 and 25 he speaks of the man sowing the good seed. But while men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares among the good seed. The enemy is identified as the devil in verses 37 through 39. The same thing is happening today, while men sleep!

While we sleep, the devil is stealing the very souls of our children. Everything in the world is pulling them away from spiritual values. The public schools, TV, trends in our society, and the majority of the people they associate with are leading them away from God. They are not receiving the necessary fortification in their homes and churches to combat this assault of Satan. If we don't wake up soon, we will lose a whole generation of

men try to 'improve' it.

CONCLUSION

All the above being true, men are needed who believe the Bible, and who teach it faithfully without addition or subtraction; men who love the church, and work to promote her welfare and spread her borders: men who are set for the defense of the gospel and of the Lord's holy bride (Philippians 1:16). We need men who love the souls of lost sinners, and who are willing to pay any price, fight any battle, to bring them safely to the Savior.

Our goal and mission at the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions is just that. Send us young faithful men whom we may train to be good soldiers of Jesus. Give us the support of your prayers and purses, and together we will send forth a mighty army of men dedicated to the cause of Christ.

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

"Asleep In Zion!"



Douglas Sims

our young people.

While men "sleep," Satan is stealing our churches, our schools and a very large portion of our brotherhood. Secular humanism is being taught in our so-called Christian schools that once were well-known, noted for the most conservative stance on spiritual matters. The men who founded some of these schools would disown them if they were alive to see what they have become! What will we face when the last of the "Old Soldiers" of the cross are gone? I shudder to think of it!

While men sleep the sleep of contentment with our material prosperity, Satan is robbing us of the treasures of heaven. "Idolatry" in the church is worse than in the times of Israel of old. We are so wrapped up in the "things" we possess, that the kingdom of God is more like a hobby than the "vocation wherewith we were called" (Ephesians 4:1).

While men sleep, ignorance abounds! The average member of the Lord's church ought to be blissfully happy if ignorance brings such to us. You can't even get Christians to read their Bible daily, much less **STUDY** it! They can't defend what they believe, because they don't really know what they believe, or why! More and more we see people drawn away into false teachings that involve emotionalism and personal "feelings," instead of an informed faith due to study and meditation.

While men sleep, the Lord's church is being turned into a denomination! That is the obvious goal of many in the church today, some of which in the past were the most ardent defenders of the true gospel. If this generation is satisfied with being a denomination like all the churches around us, then that is where we will eventually wind up.

Some clear advice is found in God's Word to remedy the situation. Paul said "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Ephesians 5:14). Again in Romans 13:11, he stated: "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

Elders, preachers, and individual Christians must wake up before it is too late. An old saying is surely true, "**SATAN ROCKS THE CRADLE OF SLEEPING CHRISTIANS.**"

—330 East Ave. Cedartown, GA 30125.

The Wounds Of Jesus

Continued from page 2

when we stray from his will! Let us never hurt the cause of Christ and may we never cause him pain again, by living lives not in keeping with his will.

Several months ago, I read an old article about a General who had been in public office. The elderly man had fought long and hard for his country, and bore an ugly scar upon his face from an injury he had received in battle. On this occasion, the statesman was being confronted by angry politicians who wanted him out of office. They met to vote to ouster the General out of office. One of the politicians against him was a former soldier who had served under him. The ouster proceeding began. One by one,

the various politicians came and cast their ballots against the General. Finally one last vote was needed, and the former soldier had to cast his ballot. As he walked to the ballot box, his eye caught the face of the old General, who was in the upper chamber of the room watching the proceedings. Seeing his battle-scarred-face made him reconsider. Finally, tearing up his ouster ballot, he cried out, "I can't do it! I can't vote against him when I see the scars!"

My friends, remember the "scars" of Jesus! Do not vote against him by living ungodly lives! See the wounds, see his shed blood -- and continue to live for him who died for you!

—Route 2, Box 713 Guin, Alabama 35563.

The Incorruptible Crown

Down through the centuries the crown was worn by the rulers of nations who had the power of life and death over their subjects. Christ offers a crown to those who serve him and their fellow man.

Paul used the crown of the athlete to illustrate the crown the faithful believer will receive. He said, "Do you know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way to get the prize" (I Corinthians 9:24 N.I.V.). All who run correctly will win the prize in God's service.

To Timothy Paul said, "Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules" (II Timothy 2:5 N.I.V.). Where do we get a copy of the rules? Jesus said, "There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word I spoke will condemn him at the last day" (John 12:48 N.I.V.). This would include the writings of the inspired men of the first century. Paul stated, "If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command" (I Corinthians 14:37 N.I.V.). Jesus promised the apostles would be guided "into all truth" (John 16:13 N.I.V.). Therefore the New Testament is the rule-book for the follower of Christ. It must be followed by those who would win the "incorruptible crown."

In the Greek games, no one could contend in the games unless he was a Greek citizen. No unsaved person can participate in the service of the Lord for rewards. One must experience the new birth to get into the kingdom of Christ. To Nicodemus, "Jesus answered, 'I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'" (John 3:5). The Spirit begets the Christian through the word. Peter confirmed, "Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth. . . For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of the imperishable, through the living and enduring word" (I Peter 1:22-23). Baptism is a burial and a resurrection to new life (Romans 6:3-4; Philippians 2:12). Peter says, as water pushed Noah's ark above the waters of the flood, baptism in water saves us (I Peter 3:21). The begetting of the Holy Spirit by the word and baptism in water completes the new birth. When one is saved he is added to the church and translated into the kingdom by the Lord (Acts 2:41, 47; Colossians 1:13).

The Greek games had hard and fast rules for all participants. The New Testament contains the rules for the believers who would enter the spiritual race to win the "incorruptible crown."

The believer must deny himself of anything that would weigh him down and hold him back. The writer of Hebrews said, ". . . let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us" (Hebrews 12:2 N.I.V.). The believer must



W. Edwin Kearley

keep his eyes fixed on Christ. He must not turn to the right or to the left.

The strength of the believer is in the Lord. Paul taught, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power; put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes" (Ephesians 6:10-11 N.I.V.).

The believer must place his all upon the altar of the Lord. The sacrifices are spiritual, not animal. Paul said, "Therefore I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God -- which is your spiritual worship (Romans 12:1-2 N.I.V.).

The believer must, by faith, refuse anything that would stand in the way of spiritual

progress. Let Moses illustrate. He would not substitute Egypt's "throne" or its riches, for his faithfulness to God and his oppressed people (Hebrews 11:24-29).

While facing the guillotine for his faith, Paul said, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award me on that day -- and not only me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing (II Timothy 4:7-8 N.I.V.).

May seeking that "incorruptible" be the highest priority of our lives!

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

Empty Benches

Continued from page 2

church! You are so careful that you never offend one another.

Another thing for which I commend you is: You never get offended at my plain Bible preaching. I have never known of your making any effort to get rid of the preacher when he condemned sin and worldliness from the pulpit. Unlike many PEOPLE, you are, negatively, a fine set.

But, positively, and affirmatively, you are a failure! Your bad qualities overbalance your good ones. You are a dumb, listless, bunch; and therefore my sermons do you no good. However careful and prayerful my preparation, when I arise to speak, and look down into your expressionless faces, your empty gaze freezes my very soul for my sermon. You render it of little benefit to any one. You intimidate me, and make me lose confidence in my ability as a preacher and a soul-winner for Jesus Christ.

You never respond to a thing I preach. Though I prove by the Holy Book that you are wood for the furnace, you are listless as ever. To preach to you is like casting pearls before swine (Matthew 7:6).

I should like to see you cast out, and occupied benches brought from the by-ways

and slums to take your places! You are a dead, inactive outfit. Your presence is of no benefit, except to fill empty, hollow space.

You are a prayer-less group—like some PEOPLE, you never pray for me, nor for any other members of the church. Neither do you pray for the advancement of the church. For you are not interested in the fulfillment of its mission to the community and to the world. It is a well-known fact that you do not support the church. Not a dollar has ever been received from you empty benches! No songs, nor encouragement, ever came from you.

Your presence discourages the faithful who do come. Visitors (seeing your emptiness) refuse to come again—ever! Oh! You do nothing benches! To preach to you is like preaching to a negative, pessimistic church whose sins are those of omission — A COLD, COMFORTLESS, STRAIGHT-BACKED, DEAD-WOOD, CONGREGATION!

I call on you who may read this sermon, to join me in an effort to eliminate the empty benches from our sacred assemblies, and to so live that some happy day we can sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in heaven, where there will be no empty benches.

God, bless us every one.

The Whole Counsel Of God

Weldon Langfield

Some congregations still demand strong, Biblical preaching. They sincerely desire straightforward teaching on the one true church, baptism, proper worship, and the dangers of religious error. Courageous elderships remain who will not settle for anything less from their ministers.

The teaching of Paul included 1 of the above topics. Yet it dealt with other matters as well. Paul told the Ephesian elders, "For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). The apostle did not boldly teach only truths on which almost everyone agreed; he boldly taught all the truth. It has been said that any preacher can labor twenty years in one place and, if he desires, never preach on certain topics. Yet the one who endeavors to preach "the whole counsel of God" must patiently, yet clearly, deal with delicate problems in the congregation.

Let us consider John the Baptist, for example. Had John preached a steady diet of "Judea is the one true nation of God," he would have had no problems. But he boldly

dealt with the sin eating away at the Jewish leadership. He said to them, "Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Matthew 3:7). He warned them that being Abraham's children in no way compensated for their personal corruptness. John reminded them that at the great spiritual harvest of the last day, the chaff among God's people will be burned up "with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:12).

The honest gospel preacher, then, will not simply deal with general truths about the church, baptism, love, Christ, hell, and heaven, with which most members of sound congregations will agree. Rather, preaching in love, he will sometimes deal with passages of scripture that bring to light sensitive and even explosive shortcomings and sins. Someone might ask, "Can't a preacher avoid those sermons?" Yes, but he wouldn't be preaching the whole counsel of God and he wouldn't be honest.

—2913 Brock Way, Bakersfield, CA 93306.



(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 25

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1988

NUMBER 6

"We Ought To Obey God Rather Than Men"

The above caption is taken from Acts 5:29. These are the words of Peter who spoke as the Spirit instructed him (Acts 2:1-4).

The words **obey** and **obedience** are words frequently used throughout the Bible. Some treat these words as if they were bad words; words to be ridiculed and scorned. The "faith only" people and the "grace only" people tend to ignore and to make fun of Bible obedience.

In more than 50 years of preaching, this writer has often met denominational people who thought obedience is something to be rejected. Such people think that God does everything for the sinner, and that the sinner can do nothing to be saved (Acts 2:36-38, 40; I Timothy 4:12-16).

We shall permit the Bible to speak. At the marriage feast in Cana, Mary said of Jesus, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it" (John 2:1-11). After his disciples fished all night without catching any fish, Jesus told them to "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." Peter tried to explain to Jesus why they had failed, but then said, "... Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net" (Luke 5:1-11). Other passages which illustrate the principle which we are discussing are: "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 7:21-23). Hence, the only way to obey Jesus Christ is to hear and obey his commands (Cf. Luke 6:46).

We shall now notice a few areas in



W. A. Holley

which obedience is absolutely necessary.

Acts 5:29 says, "We ought to obey God rather than men." To obey men is to abandon God. Men speak with many voices, but God speaks with only one voice. The doctrines and commandments of men make the commandments of God void (Mark 7:6-13).

We ought to obey Jesus Christ. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:8-9). How does one go about obeying Jesus? Well, one hears what Jesus has said (John 6:44-45), believes what Jesus teaches (Mark 16:16), repents of all sins (Luke 13:3), confesses Jesus' name (Matthew 10:32-33), and is baptized into Christ "for the remission of sins" (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38; Romans 6:3-4). Anything less than what Jesus has commanded is not obedience, in the Bible sense. We read, "... Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath rejected thee from being king," said Samuel (I Samuel 15:22-23).

Another way of stating this matter is that one must obey the truth of God. "But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness and wrath..." (Romans 2:8). It is a sin to refuse to obey the truth (James 4:17). Hear the apostle Peter: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (I Peter 1:22-23).

Furthermore, it is necessary for one's faith to express itself in obedience. "... And a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7). "By whom we have re-

ceived grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name" (Romans 1:5; Cf. 16:26). The only way one can show his faith is through acts of obedience (James 2:14-19). A faith that will not obey is a dead faith (James 2:24, 26).

The "gospel of Christ" (which encompasses all the demands of the gospel), must be obeyed. "... What shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God"? (I Peter 4:17). The answer to the question just quoted is found in II Thessalonians 1:7-9. It reads, "... The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47 furnishes a wonderful example of what it means to obey the gospel. Read and be wise.

One must obey the word of truth. "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:30-32). "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). "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21). Where salvation of sinners is concerned, nothing is more powerful than the word of God. "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 discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

Hence, read the word, learn what the Master's commands are, believe and obey them, and your soul will be saved.

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26: 25

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FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Editor
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Time

I want to speak to you about a four-letter word found in most people's vocabulary. You might be shocked to learn that Jesus used it, as found in our English translations of the Bible. (In Greek, it is a five-letter word). People talk about losing it, finding it, saving it, being short on it, having it on their hands, or killing it. I am talking about T-I-M-E, time. Paul said, "Redeeming the time because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16).



Ray Hawk

Several years ago, in Gadsden, Alabama, during the days before Christmas, an elegant, well-dressed lady was downtown shopping. She had left her watch at home. Not wanting to be late, she asked another lady standing next to her, waiting on the signal light, if she had the time. The woman asked her to hold the four or five packages she had in her hand. The elegantly dressed lady complied by holding the packages. The woman reached into her purse for something. She closed it, stuck it under her arm, and retrieved her packages. She held out her hand to the elegantly dressed woman and placed a dime in her hand. She thought this lady was asking her for a "dime!" The elegant, well-dressed woman was embarrassed because the woman had misunderstood her. She did not want to embarrass the woman, so she accepted the dime, thanked her, and walked away. All she had done was asked, "Do you have the time? Do you have the time?"

In 1973, Roy Clark had a hit called, "Yesterday, When I Was Young."

"Yesterday when I was young, the taste of

Continued on page 3



The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Words Of Truth

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Origin

More than twenty-five years ago brother Jay Thornton, then publisher of The Northwest Alabamian at Haleyville, Alabama, directed the singing in a revival where my father, the late Gus Nichols, preached. Brother Thornton repeatedly urged Dad to start and edit a religious paper. My father explained that he did not have time to look after the "thousand-and-one details" of subscription lists, printing, addressing, sorting, mailing, renewals, address changes, etc., etc., which such a paper would require. Brother Thornton responded that The Northwest Alabamian had the equipment and staff for such a job, and proposed that his company would be the publisher. He knew how to take care of all such matters. He stressed that the only thing Dad would have to do was to "edit" what went into the paper. Before that revival closed, plans were being laid which eventually resulted in the origin of this paper. The first issue was dated December 6, 1963, and it has been published continuously. Although brother Thornton later sold his publishing business, The Northwest Alabamian continues to print and mail this paper WORDS OF TRUTH.

Do you know another paper to which you can subscribe and receive four (some months, five) issues before it is paid for? You get to read the articles and reap the benefit of increased knowledge, strengthened faith, and spiritual growth — before the bill is sent to the treasurer! The members have already gotten their money's worth! If a bundle were available at services for distribution, some families would 'forget' to get a copy. Or, two (or more) in one family might pick up copies, leaving none available for some other families. By having it mailed to each family, each week, if one issue is laid aside unread, next week there will be another one in the mailbox. After the numerous articles in all four (or five) issues for that month have been read, the bill is sent to the treasurer of the church, who pays only 22¢ per week per family.

Many families who read this paper probably grow in knowledge of the truth, in their love of God, and in their liberality so that they increase their annual giving far more than enough to pay for their subscriptions. Other families who have been habitual absentees are repeatedly admonished to attend regularly: they thus give more regularly --and probably more liberally too! In such cases, Words Of Truth is a fiscal "asset," not a financial "liability!"

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Words Of Truth

P.O. Box 430

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"Now Where Have I Heard That Before?"

Charles Huff

[Editor's Note: The following was submitted by brother John Waddey. He writes that the author "spent 17 years preaching for the Church Of God Of The Union Assembly. The last 17 years have been spent working in the Lord's vineyard. From his background he offers the following critique of the Boston Multiplying Ministry Church. His observations are relevant and needed." With this I agree, and commend this article to you. --The Editor].

My wife and I recently marked the seventeenth anniversary of our "New Birth." Our conversion from denominational error to the body of Christ came about after much study, prayer, and the patience of brethren and family. They loved us enough to rescue our souls from a fate worse than physical death.

You see, for more than 17 years I preached denominational error. Since the day of our salvation, we have never looked back toward such confusion, but have been happy to be just "Christians." It is exciting to be a member of the church for which Jesus died! And it is a wonderful privilege to serve in his kingdom, proclaiming his gospel.

We became members of the church of Christ in December 1970. Over the years since then, I have observed many changes in the churches of Christ. Some of these, I consider improve-

Continued on page 4

Time

Continued from page 2

life was sweet as rain upon my tongue.

I teased at life as if it were a foolish game, the way the evening breeze may tease a candle flame.

The thousand dreams I dreamed, the splendid things I planned, I always built to last on weaken shifting sand.

I lived by night and shunned the naked light of day, and only now I see how the years ran away.

Yesterday, when I was young, so many happy songs were waiting to be sung.

So many wild pleasures lay in store for me, and so much pain my dazzled eyes refused to see.

I ran so fast that time and youth at last ran out, I never stopped to think what life was all about.

And every conversation I can now recall, concerns itself with me and nothing else at all.

Yesterday, the moon was blue, and every crazy day brought something new to do.

I used my magic age as if it were a wand, and never saw the waste and emptiness beyond.

The game of love I played with arrogance and pride, and eery flame I lit, too quickly, quickly died.

The friends I made all seemed, somehow, to drift away; and only I am left on stage to end the play.

There are so many songs in me that won't be sung! I feel the bitter taste of tears upon my tongue.

The time has come for me to pay for yesterday, when I was young."

Time. Youth doesn't comprehend it. The elderly see it running out on them. Busy people don't have enough of it. Convicts are bored with it. Lazy people abuse it. And, popular songs often capture the idea of it.

Time is precious. One minute of it costs thousands of dollars when purchasing prime time on TV. It costs between 17 to 22 cents a second on local prime time radio. But, time is more precious than dollars and cents.

Time with your spouse is precious. Time with your children is precious. Time with your aging parents is precious. Why? Because you can't stop the hands of time. All too soon our children grow up and leave home. All too soon our parents have long since passed away. All too quickly time passes, and you and I and our spouses will only be history, remembered by our children -- and their's -- through old family albums. Why do we let something so precious slip so easily and carelessly through our fingers?

How often have you had the time to tell those special people in your life, who are very precious to you, that you love them, but you have allowed those opportunities to slip away, and have left unstated what needed to be said? The failure of a moment could lead to a lifetime of regret.

How often do you promise your children you are going to do something with them, but some adult event puts that promise on the back burner, time and time again? When is the last time you dated your wife? That's right, I said "Dated your wife"! When is the last time you told your Mother and Father that you love them and let them know how much you care for, and appreciate, them? If your grandparents are still living, when was the last time you called them? Oh, I know, you and I are going to get around to all of those important things when we have time. Right? Time is so

precious and we misuse it so foolishly. Time is so precious and we act as if it will never run out!

If you have young children, you may think the time will never come when they will grow up. You may scream at them from time to time, "Why don't you grow up?" All too soon, they have! That first child, first day home from the hospital, first sleepless night, first diaper change, first tummy ache, first tooth, first Christmas, first birthday, first school, first broken bone, first tooth fairy, first boy or girl friend, first night away from home, first puppy love, first broken heart, first suit or formal wear, and first time to leave home and go off to college will come and pass too quickly with time.

Some people wish their time away. Kids wish they were five years old so they may start to kindergarten. Then, those same children wish for summer vacation so they can hurry and get out of school. They want to hurry up and be teenagers. They want to hurry up and get their driver's licenses. They want to hurry up and reach the dating age. They want to hurry and reach 21.

Are we adults any different? Workers wish the week-end would hurry up and get here. We wish vacation time were already here. We wish retirement would hurry and come. Haven't you wished some of these things?

Some think they have plenty of time. "Tomorrow" is the catch-all word of the procrastinator. Students will study tomorrow.

They will write their term papers tomorrow. Workers will do that job that should have been done today, tomorrow. The church drop-out keeps putting off getting started back until next Sunday. One is always going to start on his diet right after Thanksgiving, or Christmas, or New Year's Day, or Easter, or summer vacation, or after the next office party. One is going to get his life straightened out, tomorrow. There is always tomorrow -- or, is there?

Time ran out for more than 50 people who were driving during the last Thanksgiving holiday. Time ran out for 11 Americans in that recent plane crash. Time ran out for the 56 and 35 year-old fellows who died last week of heart attacks. Time ran out for that 26 year old who died of cancer last Saturday. Time ran out for that 15-year-old hunter when he was mistaken for wild game by a 12-year-old hunter.

Time is precious! In one minute you can tell those near and dear to you that you love them. In one minute you can thank God for so many things that you enjoy which most of the world has never experienced. In one minute, sixty seconds, you could breath your last and go into eternity, guilty of wasting your time on this earth during the few years God blessed you with. **Are you making the most of your time?**

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalm 90:12).

—90 McDaniel, Jackson, TN 38305.

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"Now Where Have I Heard That Before?"

Continued from page 3

ments toward the goal of restoration of the New Testament church. Other trends I regard as dangerous. Some of the recent developments remind me of our former denominational ties.

CASE IN POINT: The Boston Church of Christ. Please read on and you will see what I mean. That denomination which we left has one central earthly headquarters. All decisions for the churches in that "assembly" or organization come down from the headquarters church. All evangelists, pastors, and deacons must be approved and trained to be "ordained" by the denominational hierarchy. Any who dares to disagree with the "head honchos" are sternly rebuked, held in ridicule, and are eventually driven from the fellowship unless humble repentance and "boot licking" are manifest.

All preachers must be trained in the methods and attitudes of those who set the church policy. Preachers are classified as either "evangelists" or "pastors," and are moved about as "chess pawns" at the whim of the denominational "general overseer." If it be observed that one is drifting away from their grip, he is called into headquarters for additional "brain-washing" or discipling. Complete loyalty and submission to human authority in the hierarchy is mandatory, and rebels against such will not be tolerated.

Because all the preachers are to be held in close check, frequent "ministers meetings" are held and attendance is required, with any absentees subjects for discipline. Thus all the churches can be constantly monitored by the "Headquarters Church." That organization has a pyramid-type policy. It has a "General Overseer," an "Assistant General Overseer," a "Supreme Council," and a "National Board of Elders." At the state level there are "State Overseers" and their assistants, then local "Pastors" and their assistants. Under the local pastor serve the deacons. Pastors are delegated local authority over the church and the deacons. The state-overseers are the "ecclesiastical enforcers" or "storm troopers" who keep the pastors in their state in line with organizational policy, rules, and doctrine. They possess delegated authority to remove any preachers, deacons, etc.

Churches in that cult are constantly harassed to increase their giving. They have been also drawn into several money-making schemes, even some huge real estate investments, farms, and businesses on a national level. They are also persuaded to involve each member and his children in fund-raising by selling candy, food flavorings, household notions, etc. All these monies are forwarded to the national headquarters to fill the coffers. There the "Elite" (most of them of the same family), live a life of luxury, driving expensive cars, boats, campers, and even private airplanes -- often taking lavish vacations at the expense of the organization. At one time members were asked to sell their homes and property to give to these "prophets of profit."

No member dares to question the use of funds raised. One who even hinted a question was sternly rebuked in public and held in disfavor among all. Offerings are taken multiple times in meetings, whether local, regional, or national. Often members are asked to make special pledges; sometimes an amount up to "one day's wages per week" has been exacted. Often special pledges were for buy-

ing one of the "head honchos" a new luxury car. By the way, one of their Lincoln Continentals was driven by this scribe, until he fell out of favor with the "leader" because he questioned the use of the church's money for a motel investment.

All plans for evangelism, expansion, congregational development, building, etc., must have "headquarters" approval. If some of the "elite" preachers are not involved in evangelistic efforts, little recognition and limited support can be expected from the hierarchy. But, when certain ones are involved from among the "leaders," everyone is expected to "drop everything and come a-running" to such work.

Please do not think this article is "sour-grapes." I have much remorse and regret, but no bitterness. I regret all the many good years of my life that I wasted in such stupid error. I also regret the many honest souls that I led into such error, and all the churches that I helped build for them. There has been limited success in converting members of that cult; however some of our brethren and I have

baptized a few over the years.

You who read this may not see as vividly as I the comparison of the "church of God of the Union Assembly" which I have described, with the Boston Church of Christ. Both of them teach the same thing about congregational autonomy, cultic loyalty to human authority, and the Boston church now has a Wednesday night contribution.

Again and again I thank God for delivering me and my family from this erroneous cult, and for placing our feet on the foundation of Bible truth. Thanks to all the instructors of the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions who through their patience and love have taught me "the way of the Lord more perfectly" (Acts 18:26). Thanks to the churches which have allowed us to work with them, who put up with us, and supported our efforts. Brethren, let us spend and be spent for the cause of Christ. Jesus loves his church. It has no equal. It is God's only way from earth to heaven. Let us love her, pray for her, and defend her to the end.

—Harrogate, TN 37752.

The Cost Of Becoming A Christian

Several years ago this very shocking article appeared in the "Plateau Visitor."

"The examination was just over and my gangmates planned that we go on an outing. I was preparing my suitcase when a letter arrived from my father. I was shocked upon reading that he wanted me to change my family name and not to show my face to any member of the family and to stop going home. The worst part was to consider myself no longer a member of the family. Furthermore, he told me that it would have been better if I had not been born.

"I hurried to the dormitory where my sister was boarding to show her the letter. When I was yet far off I saw my father, who had been visiting her. I approached him and asked why he had written that terrible letter. He did not say anything, but I saw him flushed with anger and his hands were trembling. The next thing I knew he was gone. I tried to call my sister but she never showed her face. When I regained my strength, I went back to the dormitory where I was boarding and phoned my sister. When she recognized my voice she banged down the receiver.

"My allowance was all spent and my letters to my parents were unanswered. Usually, I had received my allowance every first week of the month. This time the second week was already past, but my money had not come, so I decided to go home. Upon nearing our house I heard a peculiar noise, and my mother shouted "NO!"

"When I was at the door I saw my mother grabbing a gun from my father. I was so terribly scared that I did not have the courage to enter. After awhile I regained my composure and went back to the dormitory. I could not cry, but felt my body seem to part into pieces.

"After three days I saw my name on the



EDSEL BURLESON

bulletin board to report to the office. There I was told that I had gotten first place in the examination, and was selected as one of the Filipino scholars to go to the States. My papers were ready except the signature and approval of my parents. My teachers wrote them to come, but they never came and did not answer the letters. The principal sent a telegram, but my parents did not reply. My gangmate, who got the second place, then became the representative of the school to go.

"I was awfully discouraged and so I quit my schooling that same year. Later I found out that I was cast out of my family because I had become a member of the church of Christ. Not being able to return to school because of lack of financial support, I was fortunate to find work under a Christian missionary who was our matron in our dormitory where I lived.

"Today I live in another dormitory and work under a missionary who is matron here. Until now there were many things that I did not know how to do, such as preparing certain kinds of foods, but I have also learned many things. Presently I am taking Bible subjects and am looking forward to the time that I shall be able to return to school and complete the year I lacked graduating from high school.

"It has been three years since my father cast me out. Although I am happy, yet that which happened still haunts me every now and then, and makes me sad."

/s/ Alice Pulao,"

(Editor's note: Jesus said, "The brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: . . . And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:21-22). He also said, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matthew 5:10-12)].

— 420 7th St. SW., Birmingham, Alabama 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

VOLUME 23

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NUMBER 7

"The Disciples Of Christ"

Adron Doran

One of the great problems which some advanced history students encounter when writing on some aspect of the Restoration Movement in liberal denomination theological seminaries is the tendency on the part of their major professors to endeavor to influence the students to identify the corporate group which emerged from the Movement as "Disciples of Christ." This choice places the student in a vulnerable position, though he may be able to proceed to otherwise trace the Movement from the early 1800's. However, one who accepts the claim that the "Disciples of Christ" constituted the original group apt to accept and justify some of the later liberal learnings of the "Disciples."

It is true that Alexander Campbell preferred to use the name "disciple" to apply to the individual reformers among his followers, while on the other hand Barton W. Stone chose to call the individuals who with him left the Presbyterian Church by the name "Christian." Rice Haggard, Ruben Dooley, John Rogers, Walter Scott, John T. Johnson and Raccoon John Smith all agreed with Stone in this matter. In fact, the corporate body of disciples/Christians was referred to as the "Church of Christ" and/or the "Christian Church." Most of the local congregations which were established and organized during the early period of the Restoration Movement were identified as "Churches of Christ." Local historians and the records in many of the county courthouses indicate that the transfer of land sites on which church buildings were erected were sold or given to trustees of the "Church of Christ." It seems to have been a common practice to use the phrase "trustees of the Church of Christ" in the property deed.

Typical examples of this practice will suffice. In 1807 pioneers from North Carolina moved into Oconee County, Georgia, and established the "Antioch Church of Christ." Ralph Wharton also points out that as early as 1810 the "Old Republican Church of Christ" was

founded in Warren County, Tennessee.

In 1823 six disciples including T. M. Allen, and his wife, constituted the "Old Union Church of Christ" in Fayette County, Kentucky, and signed the following statement: "We whose names are hereunto annexed agree to unite together as a Church of Christ, taking his word as the only rule of faith and practice, the name Christian as that by which to be called. Done at Union Meeting-house, Fayette, County, Kentucky, this 23rd of June, 1823."

Phillip Slater Fall and Jacob Creath led the brethren in organizing the "Church of Christ" in Frankfort, Kentucky, with the following statement:

"The Church of Jesus Christ at Frankfort, Kentucky was Constituted on Lord's Day, December 2, 1832 . . . they agreed to take the Holy Bible, and it alone, as their rule of life."

Following the union meeting of the Campbell followers and the Stone followers in Lexington, Kentucky, on January 1, 1832 at the old Hill Street church the united groups purchased property and deeded it to the "trustees of the Church" on which the Main Street church building was erected in 1841.

The marble shaft which marks the burial place of Barton Stone bears the following inscription:

The Church of Christ at Cane Ridge and other generous friends in Kentucky have caused this monument to be erected as a tribute of affection and gratitude to Barton W. Stone, Minister of the Gospel of Christ . . ."

The writer has been unable to find a single case where a local congregation was either formally or informally referred to as the "Disciples of Christ." Campbell merely referred to the congregation which succeeded the Washington Christian Association as the Brush Run Church, as did M. C. Kurfees to the two congregations in Louisville, Kentucky, for which he preached for forty-five years.

The American Christian Missionary Society was organized in 1849 and instrumental music was introduced into the worship in 1859. Subsequent to these dates more and more of the congregations, which introduced an organ and affiliated themselves with the Missionary Society, called themselves "Christian Churches," while the non-organ and non-society congregations continued to call themselves "churches of Christ." The Federal Bureau of the Census recognized these differences and in 1906 began to list the "Churches of Christ" and the "Christian Churches" separately.


By 1927 the differences between the conservative element and the liberal element within the Christian Church resulted in a division and the organization of the Independent Christian Church, and the formation of the North American Convention. However, the Independent Christian Church continued to practice the use of instruments of music. Following a period of study and discussion the liberal element of the Christian Church adopted the "Provisional Design" in 1968 and became the "Disciples of Christ," another denomination among denominations.

If we are seriously endeavoring to return to the New Testament pattern in faith and practice we will adopt the ancient order and refer to the corporate body of Christians/disciples as the "church of Christ." We can claim both Biblical and historical precedent for doing so.

—Lexington, Kentucky.

Give Thanks
To The Lord,
For He is Good....

Psalms 107:1



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Judging

The word "judge" is used in more than one sense in the New Testament. A lack of this knowledge has caused confusion on the subject.

Jesus said, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust



W. Edwin Kearley

in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:1-3 N.I.V.). This passage contains a condemnation of hypocrisy. The people under consideration are only interested in condemnation, and in bringing the other person down to their level of living.

In the same chapter, Jesus speaks of the tree and its fruit. He warns, "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them" (Matthew 7:15 N.I.V.). This calls for knowledge and decision.

There are those today who say one cannot know anything for certain -- except they are certain one cannot know anything for certain! It does not take a Solomon to see the absurdity of such a declaration. We can know by sight, touch, smell, taste, hearing, and intellect.

In order for one to "know" anything spiritually, he must have a perfect standard of authority. The Bible claims to be that standard. Jesus affirmed, "There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day" (John 12:48 N.I.V.). Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them by the truth;

Continued on page 3

Where Is The Passage?

Those who claim to teach the Bible have an obligation to give a "thus saith the Lord" for everything that they teach in religion. The teacher must be able to back up his teaching with the Bible. Peter said, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (I Peter 3:15). He must "speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11).

Not only is the teacher obligated to back up his teaching with the Bible, but hearers are obligated to demand that every thing which we hear taught be supported by the Scriptures. When we hear that which is contrary to the things that we previously have believed, we should ask, "Where is the passage that teaches it?" If it is taught in the New Testament I will accept it as truth. If it is not taught in the New Testament I will reject it as false.

Where is the passage that teaches that we should have and use human creeds? Almost every denominational church has a creed-book written by some man or group of men. But the Bible teaches that the word of God thoroughly furnishes us "unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16, 17) - It further says that God has "given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3). It tells us that we will be condemned if we go beyond that which is taught in the word (II John 9).



Guy F. Hester

If a creed-book contains MORE than the Bible it contains too much. If it contains LESS than the Bible, it contains too little. So why not be satisfied with just the Bible?

Where is the passage that teaches that we can follow men in religion? The Bible does not teach that our authority comes from the Pope, our "pastor" nor any other man. The Bible condemns human doctrines (I Corinthians 1:10; Matthew 15:9; Galatians 1:6-9). It also teaches that we are not to seek to please men (Galatians 1:10). In Matthew 23:18 Christ claims "all authority." Paul said (Colossians 1:18) that Christ has "the pre-eminence" in all things. What authority does that give the "Pope," "Pastor," or "Presiding Elder?"

Where is the passage that teaches that one name is as good as another in religion? The Bible teaches that salvation is only in the name of Christ (Acts 4:12). The name Christian is a "worthy name" (James 2:7). The only way that we can glorify God is through the name Christian (I Peter 4:16). So why risk your soul by wearing some other name instead of, or, in addition to, the God-given name, "Christian" (Acts 11:26)?

Where is the passage that teaches that the kingdom of God is future? The Bible says that the obedient are already citizens of the kingdom (Colossians 1:13). The apostle John was in the kingdom of his life-time on the earth (Revelation 1:9). Instead of Christ establishing his kingdom at his return, he will then cease to reign and turn the kingdom back to God the Father (I Corinthians 15:24-26).

Where is the passage that teaches that one can be saved as well out of the church as in it? The Bible teaches that the saved are added to the church (Acts 2:47). It further teaches that Christ is the savior of the church (Ephesians 5:23). In view of this, how could anyone say that one can be saved without being a member of the church?

—1101 Airport Circle, Jasper, AL 35501.

An Old Man Sinned

Reader, please open your Bible to II Samuel 11:1-27, and peruse these tragic verses.

David already was an old man when he became involved in his relationship with Bathsheba. He had already several wives, and did not need another wife. His foolishness brought tragedy upon David, and upon his whole family.

Today, in some quarters, such relationships are accepted and highly praised; but such was sinful then, and it is sinful still. Adultery has ever been wrong (Matthew 19:3-9; Genesis 2:21-25). The most beautiful terminology cannot cover such an awful sin. Adultery by any other name is still adultery.

(1) The text says, "David tarried at Jerusalem" (verse 1). Under normal circumstances, David would have been with his army. For whatever cause, he remained behind. Indolence and selfishness are great sins. Duty comes first (Matthew 6:33). David



W. A. Holley

found himself in the right situation to get into trouble.

(2) David had too much time on his hands. He walked upon the house top. I Thessalonians 5:22 teaches that one should avoid the appearance of evil. To say the least one should never go looking for sin.

David saw a woman, a beautiful woman bathing herself in full view. She may have wanted to entice a man. To "entice" means to persuade or allure. What more explicit was there could she have gone about gaining her desires?

Jesus taught that it is a sin to look upon a woman "to lust after her" (Matthew 5:27-32). Job is a splendid example for all men today. He said, "I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?" (Job 31:1).

(3) David sent for her. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man: but each man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then lust, when it hath conceived beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown bringeth forth death" (James 1:13-15, A.S.V.). Lust is strong; sin is alluring, powerful.

So far as we know Bathsheba came to David

Continued on page 4

Concerning Hell

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (I Peter 4:17). Christ died for the church "that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish"



Trent McCluskey

(Ephesians 5:27). "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). "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). In spite of all this, many are lost.

As we enter our study concerning "Hell," we need to understand that God has done his part to save mankind. It is now up to mankind to respond.

NOT THE SUSTAINER OF FAITH

Each reader needs to understand that I do not advocate that our faithfulness relies solely upon a fear of hell. I do believe the Bible doctrine of eternal punishment serves as a motivator; but is not the only factor which sustains our faith.

HELL

"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). Hell is a place where "both body and soul" shall suffer.

"The Son of man shall send forth his angels,

and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 13:41-42). Hell is the destination of "them which do iniquity." Hell is described as a "furnace of fire." If you have ever heard "wailing," you know the feeling of unrest which lingers after the sound has vanished. In hell, there shall be "wailing!" The unnerving sound will be accompanied by "gnashing of teeth." **NOBODY DESIRES HELL FOR A HOME.** No one desires to suffer in "both body and soul." No one seeks to be cast "into a furnace of fire" to take up residence. No rational person would want eternity to be filled with the unrest of "wailing and gnashing of teeth!"

Hell is a place of captivity and darkness. "Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 22:13).

Hell is the destination of losers, the cursed, and the unprofitable. "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:30). "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

Hell is a place where the unfaithful burn. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15:6).

Hell is a place where people reap what they have sown. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection damnation" (John 5:28-29). Jesus Christ "will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immoral-

ity, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile" (Romans 2:6-9). The apostle John wrote: "I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any man was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:12-15, A.S.V.). "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Corinthians 5:10). "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7-8).

Hell is a place designed for people who **DO NOT** know **GOD** and **DO NOT OBEY THE GOSPEL**. "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense . . . to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (II Thessalonians 1:6-9).

Hell is the destination of the fearful, the unbelieving, the abominable, murderers, whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters and liars. "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). These people will be among others of their kind. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (I Corinthians 6:9-10). "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). "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Ephesians 5:3, 5). Consider that neighborhood for eternity!!!

The cross of Jesus pleads with mankind like a stop-sign at an intersection . . . STOP!

Judging

Continued from page 2

your word is truth" (John 17:17 N.I.V.). Concerning the written word, John said, "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:30-31 N.I.V.). Jesus had declared, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matthew 28:18 N.I.V.). Our hope of eternal life is vested in the authority and perfection of Jesus Christ.

Can we know the mystery of Christ? Paul says we can. "Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ . . ." (Ephesians 3:3-4 N.I.V.). Yes, we can know. We also can know when another is, or is not, doing God's will.

Judgment must be identifying factual acts. Jesus said, "Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment" (John

7:24 N.I.V.). We must be concerned about maintaining truth and leading humanity to the truth. "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (John 3:17 N.I.V.). To lead men to the truth is to lead them to Christ. "Jesus answered, I am the way - and the TRUTH and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6 N.I.V.).

Though no one lives perfectly the will of Christ, those who teach others must strive to live as close as they can to the perfect pattern. Paul taught, "You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at what point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass JUDGMENT DO THE SAME THINGS. Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth" (Romans 2:1-2 N.I.V.).

May we be sure, when we say an action is right, or wrong, that our statement is based on revealed truth. Also may all of our efforts be to help, and not to destroy.

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

Continued on page 4

Causes And Consequences Of Fornication

The term "fornication" denotes all unlawful sexual activity. Pre-marital sex, extra-marital sex, bestiality, and homosexuality are all properly classified as acts of "fornication."

The sin of fornication is not uncommon in America. Many have embraced existentialism, which says that fornication (or any other sin) may be right in some circumstances.



Barry Cunningham

Sadly, fornication is becoming more prevalent among members of the body of Christ.

Why do people commit fornication? What are the possible consequences of engaging in this sin?

Some people commit fornication because of lust. Lust is an unlawful, controlling desire. According to II Samuel 11:2-4, David "saw" Bathsheba; "enquired" regarding her; "sent" for her, "took" her, and "lay" with her. This is a classic case of looking and lusting, which Jesus condemns (Matthew 5:27-28).

Experts say that men are more easily stimulated by sight than are women (read Proverbs 6:23-29, 32-35). Men should be careful what they view; women should be careful what they allow men to view!

Some commit fornication because of seduction. Potiphar's wife apparently made

repeated efforts "day by day" (Genesis 39:10) to seduce Joseph. She asked him to commit fornication with her! Joseph was strong; many are not. Hence, one should be careful lest he allow some temptress to seduce him. Seduction is not limited to either sex! A man can be seduced by a woman (Proverbs 6:24-26); and a woman can be seduced by a man!

Some commit fornication because of love. The love is probably genuine; but outside the bonds of marriage, the expression of love in a sexual manner is sinful and wrong.

The unlawful expression of love is especially a problem with those in the late 'teen years. Decades ago, young people matured more slowly biologically than they do now, and married at younger years! Today, young people mature physically at a much faster rate, and wait much longer to marry. In the meantime, they are committing fornication. This does not make it right; but it does help explain why it is happening so much.

Other reasons for committing fornication include: boredom, loneliness, the profit motive, excitement, marriage problems, and the need for affection.

What are the risks of fornication? Why is fornication forbidden? What do those who commit fornication stand to lose?

Those who commit fornication risk their standard of living. One may not be effected directly because of fornication. But since "none of us liveth to himself" (Romans 14:7), all of us are effected indirectly through the fornication of society. When impoverished youth bear several children from the same, or from different, men, society pays. Often, impoverished youth bear impoverished youth,

who bear impoverished youth. Society pays. You and I have to pay. The national debt could probably be paid if the consummate costs of fornication were eliminated!

Those who commit fornication risk their health. A recent article in the Gadsden Times tells of a young college student who "slept" with 30 men! If his second partner had a contagious virus, he could have transmitted it to the other twenty-eight. Viruses can be transmitted; and today, they can kill. One who "sleeps with" another, "sleeps with" every other person that person has slept with!

Those who commit fornication risk their consciences. One cannot have a clear conscience (I John 3:20-21) when he knows right, but does wrong. Many people who seek "happiness" in sin discover only the MISERY which sin produces.

Finally, those who commit fornication risk their souls (Matthew 16:26). It is still sinful to commit fornication. Galatians 5:19-20; I Corinthians 6:9; and Hebrews 13:4 teach that impenitent fornicators "shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

God made us to be sexual beings; and he permits us to express our sexual nature in the marriage relationship (I Corinthians 7:1-11). But all other expression of sexuality - pre-marital, extra-marital, bestiality, homosexuality, etc. - is wrong.

What is the cure for fornication? "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body" (I Corinthians 6:9).

-1711 Taylor Road, Glencoe, AL 35905.

An Old Man Sinned

Continued from page 2

willingly. No evidence exists which indicates that she offered any protest. She may have been flattered by the overtures of King David. The two, David and Bathsheba, committed adultery. David had a wife; and Bathsheba had a husband! A few days afterward, she knew she was pregnant. Something had to be done! She told David. Sin has a way of revealing itself! Each reader should read Romans 6:23 and Galatians 5:19-21.

(4) David went to extremes trying to cover his sin. Bathsheba's husband (Uriah) was ordered home from the battle-front; but he refused to see his wife. Verse 13 shows that Uriah was made drunk hoping that he would visit his wife, but to no avail. When all else failed, David wrote a letter ordering Joab to see that he was slain in battle (II Samuel 11:15-17). It seems that within a few days afterward David and Bathsheba were married to cover their sin. What a sordid story!! Only the precious blood of Christ Jesus can wash away sin (I Peter 1:18-19). Jesus shed his blood in his death (John 19:33-34). To contact the cleansing power of Jesus' blood one must be baptized "into his death" (Romans 6:3-4). This cleansing by the precious blood of Christ involves faith (John 3:16, 36), repentance (Luke 13:3, 5), confession of Jesus' name (Matthew 10:32-33), and baptism in the name of Jesus for remission of sin (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Galatians 3:26-27).

(5) What about sins' consequences? There is a law of sowing and reaping (Galatians 6:7-8). Read it and take warning.

Nathan the seer came to David for the

purpose of showing David the error of his way. After telling him the story of a rich man and a poor man and the ewe lamb, no words were minced: "Thou art the man," said Nathan. Let it be remembered: --if you sin, you are the one! You will be held accountable unto God! Joseph said, "... How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? (Genesis 39:9).

David repented of his sin, but still had to suffer the consequences of his foolishness. "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife . . ." (II Samuel 12:10-12). It is a shame that David became involved with another man's wife. Listen, "David did that which was right in the eyes

of the Lord . . . save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite" (I Kings 15:5).

David's grievous sin caused the clouds of misfortune to gather about him. His daughter Tamar was ravished by her brother (II Samuel 13:1-18); Absalom rebelled against David the king (II Samuel 15:1-10); David's wives were abused (II Samuel 16:20-23); Amnon, David's son, was murdered; a three days' pestilence followed David's double crime -- Adultery and murder. And Adonijah and his conspiracy gave David much trouble.

We close with a quotation from the New Testament: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

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

Concerning Hell

Continued from page 3

DON'T GO TO HELL. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16-17). "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy:

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

God has done his part, now it is up to mankind. DON'T GO TO HELL.

-103 Bradford Dr., Fayetteville, GA 30214.

Thank God For All The Blessings He Has Bestowed Upon Us!



(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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Heed The Word Of Christ

Mike Winkler

The purpose of the epistle to the Hebrews is to assist Christians in being true or loyal to Christ and to prevent their apostasy from the faith. Throughout the epistle, the inspired writer warns his readers of apostasy by showing how Christians can drift from (2:1-4), and finally defy, God's word (10:14-29).

The objective of this brief article is to study the inspired admonition found in Hebrews 2:1-4 to, "... pay close attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it" (NASV).

I. The Admonition To Christians (Hebrews 2:1-3)

Succinctly put, the inspired writer admonishes his Christian readers to "pay much closer attention to what they have heard..." (v. 1). That which the Hebrew Christians had heard was the simple gospel of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:3-4). Included in the gospel message proclaimed to these Hebrew Christians was heaven's plan of salvation and the divine blueprint for living a faithful Christian life (Hebrews 13:1-6).

II. The Dangers Facing Christians (Hebrews 2:1, 3)

It is very possible, if not probable, that the recipients of this letter were in peril of turning their backs completely on the gospel of Jesus Christ and, therefore, their eternal salvation (cf: Hebrews 5:12 - 6:9).

Consequently, the inspired penman cautions his readers against neglecting the gospel message. Inspiration inquires, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation" (Hebrews 2:3)? The term "neglect" (Greek: analeo), carries the idea of being careless or apathetic (Matthew 22:5). Therefore, the inspired warning found in the context does not address an outright REJECTION of the gospel, but rather a CARELESS or CASUAL ATTITUDE toward it, resulting in NEGLECT.

Today, it is just as easy for God's children to take the word of God for granted, and thereby unintentionally neglect it. Christians

can faithfully attend the Bible classes and worship services of the Lord's church for the express purpose of reading and hearing the word proclaimed, and, yet, still neglect it by failing to personally and properly apply it (Romans 2:21).

The writer of Hebrews also cautions his brethren about "drifting" or "slipping" away from their commitment to Jesus Christ. The text reads, "... we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it" (Hebrews 2:1, NASV). The term "drift" or "slip" (Greek: parareo) means to float past or glide by. It is a marine term used of a ship that has been carelessly allowed to drift past a port because the sailor has forgotten to allow for the wind or tide.

Today, because of neglect or carelessness in the lives of many Christians, drifting occurs, until one day the port of safety (the church) is no longer in sight. The drifting is, and was, accidental, and not by design. Yet, nevertheless, it happened! (cf: I Corinthians 10:12).

III. The Consequence Of Slipping As Christians (Hebrews 2:2-3)

The consequence of the Christian's neglect and his subsequent drifting is identified simply as a just or fair recompense (v. 2). The term "recompense" (Greek: misthapodosia) means a reward or payment of wages (Hebrews 10:35; 11:6, 26).

It is often asked what is a "fair reward" for the Christian who "neglects" and "drifts from" God's word? To this question the inquirer is invited to turn to the words of Jesus in Matthew 7:21-23 and observe the divine rejection resulting from neglect. Too, the reader's attention is directed to Matthew 25:14-46 where heaven declared that eternal punishment is the "recompense" of negligence.

CONCLUSION

If, as Christians, we are committed to NOT drifting, we MUST "pay closer attention

to the things which we have heard!" That is, we -individually- must appreciate, and personally apply, the inspired word of God.
—P.O. Box 1106, Bay Minette, AL 36507.

Conditions Of Scriptural Prayer

God speaks to us through his message contained in the Bible; we (his children) speak to him through prayer. In prayer we should speak plainly --if leading the prayer -- loud enough to be heard -- ever remembering that we are talking to God, not to the people.


What are the conditions of scriptural prayer? We shall note--

(1) We must be children of God. The devil has his children (John 8:44), and God has his children (I Peter 3:12; I John 3:10). God is the Father of his children only. His children are those who have been born again, born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:3, 5). The author of these words is aware that God created the whole human race; but a special relationship is involved wherein one is called out of the world into the one body, the body, which is the church (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47;



W. A. Holley

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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Decline In Church Growth

(No. 1)

Psalm 9:17 says: "The wicked shall be turned into hell (Sheol), and all the nations that forget God." History abundantly proves this inspired statement. Because the people forgot God in the early centuries of the human race God brought the great flood upon the earth and destroyed all but eight persons (Genesis 6-8). Centuries later Israel



Roy J. Hearn

became a great nation and because they forgot God, national Israel was destroyed in the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. Later in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies (A.D. 70), the temple and all its rites and ceremonies were destroyed. The godless nation of Rome finally fell (476 A.D.) Germany, whose philosophers have done so much to fight the Bible and true religion, has twice fallen in this century. A desire to worship God without interference is what brought the Pilgrims to this country. Belief in God is what has before made this nation great. Now, what shall be the future of this once great nation?

A country that used to believe strongly in God, as a whole, is now a nation that is forgetting God. The following information is taken from The WIN ARN GROWTH REPORT, published by the Institute for American Church Growth, 709 E. Colorado Blvd., Suite 150, Pasadena, Calif. 91101. This is a 1986 report.

—AMERICA THE MISSION FIELD

Presently, the United States has a population

Continued on page 3

Conditions Of Scriptural Prayer

Continued from page 1

Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18, 24; Ephesians 4:4-6). Only those who have God as their spiritual Father can rightfully address him as "our Father" in heaven (Galatians 3:26-27).

(2) Prayer to be heard must be properly addressed. A letter improperly addressed ends up in the 'dead letter' office. A Christian must address his prayers to God, not to Mary, not to Peter, nor to any other human being (Romans 10:1; Matthew 6:9-13). One does not pray to Jesus, for he said, "I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you" (John 16:26).

(3) Our prayers must be offered unto God in the name of Jesus. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17). To pray "in the name of the Lord Jesus" is to pray by his authority. It is sinful to pray for something Jesus has not authorized. Before Pentecost the disciples asked nothing in Jesus' name (John 16:24); but since Pentecost all prayers must be in his name.

(4) Scriptural prayer is always asked in faith. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord" (James 1:5-7). How does one obtain faith? In answer to prayer? Not at all! Faith come by hearing God's word (Romans 10:17). And without faith one cannot please God (Hebrews 11:6). Hence, a sectarian prayer asking for saving faith is an absurdity!

(5) Scriptural prayer involves the possession of the spirit of humility. The haughty, the arrogant, the proud, can never have their prayers reach the "Throne of Grace." In Luke 18:9-14 Jesus speaks a beautiful parable regarding two men: a Pharisee and a publican. The Pharisee was proud and egotistical, boasting of his excellence and superiority; while the publican earnestly prayed: "God, be merciful to me a sinner." Jesus said the publican went down to his house justified rather than the Pharisee. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).

(6) In our prayers there must be the spirit of obedience. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination" (Proverbs 28:9). Never ask God to save you contrary to his will. When one prays for God to save him at an altar of prayer, one is asking to be saved contrary to Jesus' will. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . ." Jesus did not say, "He that believeth and prayeth shall be saved." Peter did not say, ". . . Repent, and pray," but he did say, "Repent and be baptized . . ." (Cf. Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Listen to the apostle John: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us" (1 John 5:14).

(7) Erring children of God must repent and confess their sins before they have the right to pray unto God Almighty (James 5:16; Acts 8:21-24; Psalms 66:18). There is no need to ask God to "forgive our sins" unless we are willing and ready to quit our practice of sin.

(8) It is necessary for us to cooperate with our prayers. What does that mean? We shall

illustrate: if we pray for bread, we must work to earn it (II Thessalonians 3:10-15). If we pray for the lost, we must preach the gospel unto them (Mark 16:15-16). If we pray for the sick, we must see that they have medical services necessary (Luke 5:31). What Jesus is saying is, "The healthy person does not need a physician, but a sick person does."

(9) Many prayers can be -- and are -- rebellious prayers. Many people want to be saved in answer to prayer rather than to obey Mark 16:16. The Israelites were commanded to march around the city of Jericho (Joshua 6:1-6); but suppose they had decided to pray instead. Would the walls have fallen down? Could prayer have been substituted for dipping seven times in Jordan, in Naaman's case? (II Kings 5:1-11). Would it have been proper for the blind man to pray, rather than to wash in the pool as the Lord commanded? (John 9:1-12). Why do denominational preachers wish to substitute prayer for baptism in such passages as Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Galatians 3:26-27; I Peter 3:20-21)?

As important as prayer is to humanity, it cannot be substituted for any other command of God.

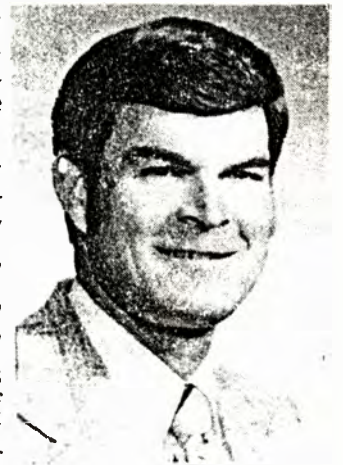
—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Computers In The Church

(No. 1)

Why A Compatible?

Computers are becoming standard equipment that churches will not be able to be without. However, when an individual, or congregation, gets ready to buy a computer, what do they buy? What is "hardware?" What is "software?" Through the kindness of the editor of this paper, perhaps I can answer some of those questions.



Ray Hawk

What Is "Compatible?"

Most people think one computer is "compatible" with all others. That is not the case. IBM is a trade name, like Commodore, Apple, or Radio Shack. IBM computers use MSDOS (Micro Soft Disk Operating System) or PC DOS. When we say "IBM compatible," we mean a computer that is not manufactured by IBM, but is "compatible," because it will use MSDOS or PC DOS, and will run software programs that work on an IBM computer. Programs, such as Word Perfect 4.2, Dbase III Plus, Word Star, or Lotus 1,2,3 are written to work on IBM computers. A "compatible" will also operate these programs. These programs are called "software." The computer, with its peripherals,

Continued on page 4

The Proper Working Of Every Member

Paul frequently likened the church to a human body: Christ the head and each of us together forming the various members of the body (Ephesians 4:15-16). "When each part is working properly, (it) makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself . . ." (Ephesians 4:16, RSV). Thus there is a "proper working" that God desires of every member of the body or church of



John Waddey

Christ. In the human body, each member has a job to do, and a given level of efficiency at which to function; so in the spiritual body each Christian has a sphere of labor, and a level of quality to maintain. We ask, "How does the Lord expect us to function?"

By Father's Will

We must function according to the will of God (Matthew 7:21). It is not enough to just be religious, to prophesy, or to do good works; we must do the Father's will! Whatever we do in word or deed must be done in the name of the Lord Jesus (Colossians 3:17). That will is recorded on the pages of your New Testament.

In Proportion To Our Faith

We must function according to the measure of our faith and ability. Paul writes that all the

members have not the same office, ". . . and having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith . . ." (Romans 12:4-8). Not everyone can be a preacher or an elder. Someone must follow and do the "lesser" jobs. But whatever our gift or talent, we must do the best we can with it. We are only expected to give of our income as we have been prospered (I Corinthians 16:2). If however we fail to do our best, whatever that may be, we will be judged with that "wicked and slothful servant" who for fear buried his one talent in the ground (Matthew 25:14-27).

Zeal

A properly working member will serve with zeal and devotion. Christ gave himself for people who will be "zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). Even Christian slaves were instructed to "work heartily, as unto the Lord" in whatsoever they did (Colossians 3:23). If slaves were to serve their masters "heartily," how much more should we so serve our Jesus! Scripture knows nothing of lackadaisical, indifferent, lukewarm discipleship -- except condemnation (Revelation 3:15-16). Be "fervent in spirit" (Romans 12:11).

In Love

We must serve out of love and loyalty to God and his Son. The greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Matthew 22:37). It is proof of our love that we keep his commandments (John 14:15). Ours must be a "labor of love" in order to be proper (I Thessalonians 1:3).

To Please God

A properly-working member will never seek to please men above God. Paul preached the gospel, "not as pleasing men, but God who proveth our hearts" (I Thessalonians 2:4). If we should be striving to please men, we should not be servants of Christ (Galatians 1:10). It was this sin that led so many brethren in the last century to introduce instrumental accompaniment to their gospel singing. It was common for them to cite what their neighbors thought of their "poor, unskilled singing" as a justification (?) for organs, pianos, choirs, and choruses. May we never be so motivated.

Not For Praise Of Men

We should never serve to receive the praise of men. Jesus taught us not to pray (as the Pharisees did) "that they may be seen of men." They received the sum total of their reward when men praised them. Rather, he taught us to pray in secret and our Father will recompense us for it (Matthew 6:5-6). There is a universal human weakness that craves recognition and honor. But that is not the proper working for a member of the body.

Not To Earn Blessings

When we serve God, it must be with no thought of "earning" or "meriting" salvation thereby. Our salvation is by grace through faith. It is not of our own attainment. It is a "gift" from God, lest anyone should glory (Ephesians 2:8-9). Being baptized does not put God into our debt. We still don't deserve anything but punishment for our sins. However, because Jesus has already died in our place, God in his great love and mercy is willing to save us. That he has placed conditions for receiving the gift of salvation does not make it any less a gift. Paul put no stock in a righteousness of his own. He sought to be made righteous by God through faith in Christ (Philippians 3:9). The day we think we can earn our salvation, we are cut off from Christ (Galatians 5:4).

Work By Faith

Without trusting faith it is impossible to be a properly working Christian (Hebrews 11:6). Christians must "walk by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7). This is far more than simply believing the facts about God and Christ. It means trusting, loving, serving the Lord with the whole heart. We believe every promise he has made, and we trust him to lead us safely home at last. With Paul, we "live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God."

In The Local Church

A properly-working member of the body will be part of a local congregation. When the newly-converted Paul returned to Jerusalem, "He assayed to join himself to the disciples . . ." (Acts 9:26). We are reminded to "consider one another to provoke unto love and good works: not forsaking our own assembling together . . ." (Hebrews 10:24-25). God's word knows nothing of the drifting, "at-large" member of the church. To be faithful, I must be identified with a congregation where I live.

Under The Shepherds

I must be willing to work under the supervision of elders. We are specifically instructed to "obey them that have the rule over (us), and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of (our) souls . . ." (Hebrews 13:17). A certain type of disciple finds it difficult to submit himself to the oversight of anyone,

Decline In Church Growth

Continued from page 2

of 240 million. Ninety-six million (or 40 percent) have no religious affiliation; 73 million (or 31 percent) of the total population are "Christian" in name only, but make no effort at practice. This makes a total of 169 million, or a total of 71 percent of the population of the United States that makes practically no pretense at religion. This report involves all religious bodies that have ever embraced any "form of Christianity" in the United States. Many churches that used to be "evangelistic" in nature, no longer are. Many churches that fifty years ago used to hold "protracted meetings" every year, no longer do so. They have become largely social organizations. They no longer even hold to moral standards that were held important. In a word, many churches that used to claim to believe the Bible, no longer do so.

In an article in *World Christian Encyclopedia*, David Baratt suggests that Protestantism is shrinking from two-thirds of the population to one-third, from 1900 to the end of this century. Between 80 percent and 85 percent of all churches in America have plateaued, that is, have reached their peak in growth and are stagnant, or are declining. The figures show that in 1900 there were 27 churches for every 10,000 population, but in 1985 the number had decreased to 12 churches for every 10,000 persons in the United States. It is also reported that between 3,500 and 4,000 churches of various kinds die -- cease to exist! -- every year. Of course, any church that does not uphold the cardinal doctrine of the Bible ought to die. Without doubt there are many infidels of different types occupying

pulpits of American churches today. A report by Edward Dayton in *Unreached People* estimates that churches of all kinds are losing 2,765,000 members a year to nominalism and unbelief. (NOMINALISM is a theory that there are no universal essences in reality, and that the mind can frame no single concept or image corresponding to any universal or general term (-Webster). Hence, one can not frame a concept of God.

THE DEMISE OF CHURCHES PREDICTED
While this writer was hospitalized July 20, 1986, he observed a television interview with Dr. W. A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist church in Dallas, Texas. That church has 10,000 members. Dr. Criswell decried the liberal efforts to destroy faith in the cardinal doctrines of the Bible: Such as the creation, virgin birth of Christ, resurrection, atonement, verbal inspiration of the Bible. When asked about the future of the largest Protestant denomination in the United States, he stated that in time it would be gone, cease to exist. He did not give a time schedule, but strongly recognized the inroads being made by liberal tendencies to destroy them. If this can happen to the strongest denomination in the United States, what about the weaker ones? It is not alone. **THE SAME PREDICTION HAS BEEN MADE CONCERNING THE CHURCH OF CHRIST;** and this information, as planned, will be given in another article. Then, an effort will be made to show what is causing all of this.

—Former Director, Memphis School of Preaching, 4035 Barron Ave., Memphis, TN 38111.

Continued on page 4

Spiritual Clothing And Spiritual Living

Paul taught, "Rather clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature" (Romans 13:14, NIV).

For "clothe" the King James Version uses the phrase "put ye on." To the Galatians Paul said, "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Galatians 3:26-27, NAS). Being "clothed" is the process of being saved. The things which involve being saved are not found in just one passage of scripture. Salvation of the alien sinner requires more than a mental assent that Jesus is the Son of God. All of the conditions God has set for the alien sinner must be met for one to be saved.

Paul said, "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?" (Romans 10:13-14). "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Before one can "call" upon God he



W. Edwin Kearley

"must believe" in the Christ as taught in the word of God (Hebrews 11:6). "Calling" involves more than crying from the house-top. Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21, 20th Century N.T.). The believer must repent of his sins (Acts 17:30). The penitent believer must confess his faith in Christ before men (Romans 10:9-10; I Timothy 6:12). Baptism is the final act to which one must submit to be "clothed," "put on Christ," or "be in Christ." Paul said to the Romans, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4). This is water baptism (Acts 10:47). Luke says this is "calling" upon the Lord. Saul was told, "Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16, Moffatt).

When one arises from the watery grave, he

must "not make provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." He becomes a citizen of the kingdom (Ephesians 2:19). He becomes a member of the church, which was purchased with Christ's blood (Acts 20:28). To the Galatians Paul stated, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:24-25). The Christian grows in the fruit of the Spirit. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control."

The spiritual person worships regularly each week, visits the sick, cares for the needy, is hospitable, visits those in prison, etc.

Though Christians need to brace themselves against lust within and evil forces without, the greatest defense is to be busy doing things that are right.

If you have not been clothed, may we urge you to be clothed. If you are a Christian, may we encourage you to be filled with spiritual service, worship, and make no provision to fulfill your lusts.

—103 Elena Ct., Bay St. Louis, MS 39520.

The Proper Working Of Every Member

Continued from page 3

including God's elders. Such a man cannot be pleasing to God.

Must Pray

Properly-working members are devout in prayer. Paul writes, "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be known unto God" (Philippians 4:6). Too many brethren are fretful, worried, and defeated. Their lack of prayer leaves them powerless, and discouraged. We sing: "Take it to the Lord in prayer." The Holy Spirit says, "Be ye thankful." "Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17-22), if you would be faithful. Let no one pray more than New Testament saints.

Unto Death

We must be faithful for the duration of our earthly life. Only those who are faithful unto death will receive the crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

Conclusion

Let each of us resolve to faithfully serve our Master as properly-functioning members of his body, looking for and earnestly desiring the prize of the high calling in Christ.

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

Computers In The Church

Continued from page 2

is called "hardware."

Another way "compatibles" are compatible is with one another. That is, one may buy what is called a "bare bones" computer, and build what he wants with generic parts, ordered from a mail order house (which usually offers the best price). I own a Silent Partner XPC II. It came with 256 K of memory on the motherboard. I ordered 384 K of memory chips for about \$50.00 and carefully installed them myself, bringing the memory to a full 640 K. This means the computer will operate a program that contains 512 K of information with enough memory left over to operate the needed functions of the computer. If your computer only had 265 K of memory, it could not operate a program like Word Perfect 4.2 or many others. You would not have enough memory.

Later I needed a "hard drive." The differences between a "hard" and a "floppy" drive are several: First, "floppies" are disks that you buy in a box of ten. They are formatted and will contain about 360 K of information. If you have a computer with an A and B drive, you would put the Word Perfect 4.2 Word Processor on floppy disk No. 1 in drive A, and the Word Perfect Spelling Program on floppy disk No. 2 in drive B. However, if you wanted to use the Word Perfect Thesaurus program, you would have to remove disk No. 2 from drive B and insert disk No. 3. You must be careful not to damage the floppy disk. This becomes a hassle after a while. It is also time-consuming. A hard drive may contain 10-60 megabytes of space to store programs and files. The most popular on the IBM-PC or compatible is the 20 "megabyte" hard drive. "Megabyte" means one million bytes of information. Therefore, a 20-megabyte hard drive would contain 20,000,000 bytes of information.

I ordered the Seagate ST225 from the mail order house with the best price. Within five

days it arrived, and by following the enclosed instructions, I installed it in less than 15 minutes. I loaded all my programs on to the hard drive. Now, when I turn on the power, the computer automatically loads my main menu which shows all my programs. I select a program by hitting one key. The program is loaded from the hard drive. I do not have to hunt for the floppy, put it in drive A and then wait (for what seems like minutes) for it to load. The hard drive works in milli-seconds.

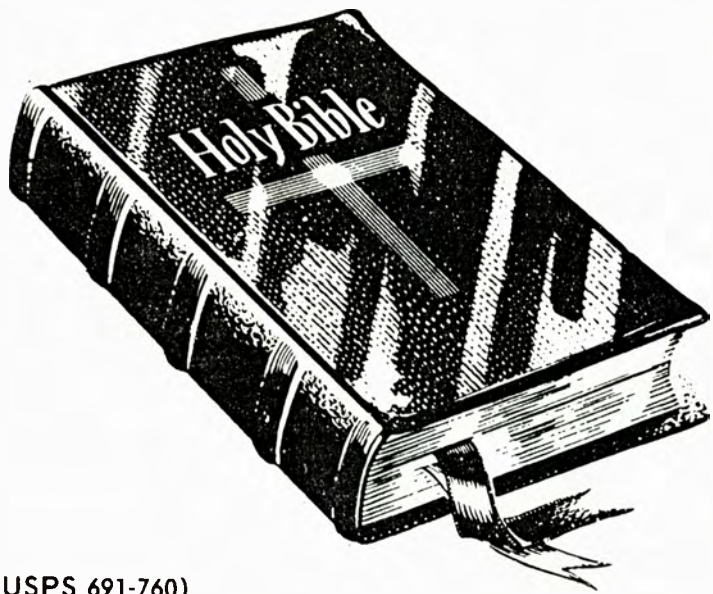
"IBM compatible" also means that boards in my computer will interchange with other compatibles. It does not make any difference whether the compatible is made in the USA, Korea, Japan, or Taiwan. All computers, whether IBM or "compatibles," are made up of a motherboard, a "mono" (or monographics board) to drive your monitor, a floppy and hard disk control board, and a multi-purpose board (a multi-purpose board usually contains a parallel and serial port for your printer, and a clock with a backup battery). If a board becomes inoperable, which one it is can be determined by taking that board and inserting it into any compatible computer. If the same problem occurs, I know the board is bad. I can then purchase another. Since prices continue to plummet, most boards are now between \$30-\$75. If you take the computer to the service department of a computer store, they might be able to repair it in one-to-three days; but it would probably cost you two to three times the amount of a replaceable board from a mail order house. (If you have more money than time, take it to a service department!)

In my next article, I will cover the subject of which computer to buy.

—90 McDaniel, Jackson, TN 38305.

Sunday School

DON'T MISS IT!



Words Of

"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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NUMBER 9

Computer's In For The Church

(No. 2)

If you (or the church where you worship) are interested in a computer, you need to determine what your needs are, and how much you want to spend. Computers are rapidly changing. What was up-to-date a year ago is now relatively obsolete. A computer which sold for \$2,500-\$3,000 two years ago now costs less than \$700. Two years ago, the IBM PC or compatible, with its 8088 CPU (Central Processing Unit), was the computer to buy. However, with its 4.77 MHz speed, it is like buying a Model T, when you can now get a sports car. Of course, if you don't care about speed, you can buy an IBM PC compatible with a 20 megabyte hard drive for less than \$500 at a mail order house, if you can find one. You may call some of the houses on their 800 number and ask if they have one in stock. Most houses are simply upgrading the chips in the PC and making it into a PC/XT.



Ray Hawk

A year or so ago the PC/XT was introduced. It would run 2 or 3 times faster than the PC. The XT can now be bought, with a 20 megabyte hard drive for less than \$750. One company even offers an Epson dot matrix printer with an XT at less than \$800!

Now the XT has been replaced with the IBM AT and compatibles (IBM has discontinued the AT and replaced it with an entirely new line of computers. These computers are not any faster than the AT compatibles). This machine has an 80286 CPU. There are several AT-type machines. The older models will run at 8 MHz. The newer ones will run at 10-to 16-MHz. The higher the MHz, the faster it will

process information. Of course, the higher the MHz, the more money you have to pay. A newer machine has been introduced by those who make IBM-AT compatibles. This computer has an 80386 chip which has a 16-20 plus MHz rating. These machines are about \$1,200 higher than the 80286 CPU machines.

A person can buy an 80286 AT "Compatible," 10- or 12-MHz computer with one or two 1.2 megabyte floppy drives, a 44 megabyte hard drive, a Hercules Monographics card and monitor, 1,000 or 1,024 K memory on the motherboard, an 84 or 102 key keyboard, and MSDOS 3.2 with GWBasic for around \$1,800-\$2,400. This would be through mail order. At your local dealer, this same configuration would be about \$2,800-\$3,500.

When you buy a computer, make sure it has the following equipment. First, ask how much memory it has on the motherboard. If it is a PC or PC/XT "compatible," make sure it has 640 K. Second, get one with two floppies. It makes it easier to copy files from one floppy to another. Third, if you want a monochrome monitor, make sure the computer has a monographics board in it. If not, your monitor will not show graphics. Fourth, get a 20 megabyte hard drive installed in the computer. Most 20 megabyte hard drives are rated at 65 ms access time (milli-seconds). If you want one that is rated 28 ms, it will cost more. The faster they access information, the more money they cost. Fifth, make sure it has a clock and backup battery. Sixth, ask if it has a parallel and a serial port. You will want both ports. Ask how many internal slots on the motherboard it has. If it has less than 6, you may want to get one with a larger motherboard. Some compatibles are in small cases which means you cannot add many extras, like a phone modem, bus mouse, or extra memory board.

If you are interested in an AT compatible, get one that has 1,000 or 1,024 K of memory on the motherboard. Second, make sure it has at least one 1.2 megabyte floppy. [Some may

offer the old 360 K floppy]. Two (2) 1.2 floppies would be better. Third, get one that has a 40 megabyte hard drive (actually they format out to about 44 megs). Ask what speed the hard drive accesses information. The Seagate ST225 40 megabyte hard drive is rated at 39 ms. Some will try to sell you a 40 meg hard drive that has an access time of 65 ms. It is sufficient, but why settle for 65 ms when you can get 39 ms at the same price from another vendor? Besides, the 65 ms drive is cheaper than the 39 ms one. So, don't let them palm off something on you because they hope you will be ignorant of a few facts. Make sure it has a clock and backup battery, parallel and serial ports, and at least 6 internal slots for an add-on. Some AT compatibles come with a 102 key keyboard. If you prefer the larger keyboard, get it. Which type of compatible should you buy? If you don't care about speed, a lot of memory, nor are interested in a computer that will keep up with the advances being made, get a PC compatible. Of course, they do have add-on boards that will improve the speed of a PC to 8 MHz for about \$250. Who knows: they may soon come up with one that will go to 10, 12, or 14 MHz. They also have a board that gives you memory above the old 640 K limit. That too sells for about \$250.

You can buy a PC/XT compatible that has the faster speeds. You can add memory boards. But, both it and the PC compatible have the old 8088 CPU chip. There is just so much that chip will do.

The AT compatible with the 80286 CPU, running at 10 or 12 MHz is a good buy. It has speed, and will run the new OS/2 (Operating System/2) which will replace MSDOS. One may add up to 16 megabytes of memory through add-on boards. With computers advancing so quickly, in a few years, I am sure this machine will be obsolete. However,

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

—Acts 26:25

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"Strange Things"

"I have written unto him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing" (Hosea 8:12).

For centuries God, under the law of Moses, had but one altar, and decreed that it should be where God's name was recorded (Deuteronomy 12:5-14). Ephraim (Israel) was determined to worship his way, so he built altars in honor of the calf and of Baalim. Note that one can be religious, but religiously wrong. One can be sincere, but sincerely wrong. Saul of Tarsus, before his conversion to Christ Jesus, represents such a man (Acts 23:1; 24:16; 26:9-11; I Timothy 1:13).

Why was God's law counted "a strange thing?" Because it had been forgotten by the people. God does not want his law (word) to be forgotten (Jeremiah 2:32). "All nations that forget God" and his word are certain to be punished (Psalms 9:17). Another verse says: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee . . . seeing thou hast forgotten the law of God, I will also forget thy children" (Hosea 4:6). Jesus wants all nations to be acquainted with the law of his word (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). To gain a knowledge of his word we must read and study it (II Timothy 2:15). In that way it will not be "strange" to us.

To many people, the facts of the gospel are "strange," indeed. For example: (1) The Bible is the only standard of authority in religion (Revelation 22:18-19). (2) The gospel is God's power to save the believer (Romans



W. A. Holley

Continued on page 3

Peter's Mother-In-Law

Little-known people are soon forgotten, but a few are remembered because of some unique or unusual event in their lives. This is the case of Peter's wife's mother, who was healed by the Lord (Matthew 8:14-16).

Peter's Home

Peter and his family made their residence in Capernaum on the northern coast of the Sea of Galilee (Luke 4:31, 38). Being a fisherman's house, it would most assuredly have been an humble dwelling. His was a godly home. Peter felt comfortable in having the Lord visit him which would not have been the case if sin had been their lifestyle. His was a hospitable home, and ours should be as well (I Timothy 3:1). We need to be reminded why God has so graciously given us our homes and property: they are to be used for his honor and glory in serving his people.

Peter's Family

Roman Catholicism has exalted the practice of celibacy, i.e., an unmarried priesthood: yet they claim Peter as their first Pope. But Scripture makes it clear that Peter was a married man while serving as Christ's apostle. Paul notes that Peter's wife sometime accompanied him on his missionary travels (I Corinthians 9:5). Of course, she was a believer, i.e., a Christian. Peter identifies himself as an elder of God's church (I Peter 5:1), and elders must be married men who have their children in subjection (I Timothy 3:2-4). The Holy Spirit who inspired the scriptures seems to have anticipated and demolished false doctrines even before their genesis.

Peter's Mother-in-law

This woman found a welcomed haven in the house of her son-in-law. It is tragic that there is hostility between in-laws in so many families. This should never be the case among Christians. Those were the days of the extended family. Paul admonished "If any woman that believeth hath widows, let them relieve her, and let not the church be burdened" (I Timothy 5:16). The modern nuclear-age family has much to learn from the past. What our parents did for us as children, we should be willing to do for them in their declining years. Luke, the physician, describes her condition with a doctor's insight. He reports that she "was holden with a great fever" (Luke 4:38). Holden means "in the grip of," a medical term for someone laid up with a sickness. She had a "great fever." The ancient physicians distinguished between a slight and a high fever. She was so ill that they "besought" the Lord to help her (Luke 4:38). This suggests that her family was greatly concerned about her condition. We know that Capernaum was surrounded by marshes and continually plagued with malaria. This may well have been her problem.

The Great Physician

Christ had already demonstrated his power to heal "all manner of disease and all manner of sickness" (Matthew 4:23). The family was confident he could help their loved one as well. He came and stood over her, according



John Waddey

to Luke 4:38. Mark says he took her hand (1:30). With a word he rebuked the fever and it left her immediately (Luke 4:38). Our Lord needed no crowd to work a miracle, nor did he work in secret. There is no evidence that he asked for or demanded faith on her part, as do modern "faith healers." He sought no contribution or "love offering" for what he did. His genuine miracles provided instant healing, not gradual recovery, as today's self-proclaimed "healers" do. The difference in the Biblical miracles of healing and our 20th century healers is as great as light versus darkness, genuine versus counterfeit.

Lessons to Remember

May our home be such that Christ would always be a welcomed guest.

Let our homes be havens of hospitality, for such is a hallmark of a Christian's home (Romans 12:13).

Each must strive to love the family of his mate, and make them welcomed in his home (Romans 12:18).

May you who are mothers of daughters succeed as did this woman in rearing fine daughters to serve by the side of godly servants of the Lord.

When healed, this lady immediately set about ministering to the Lord and to others present. She understood that she was saved to serve. She obviously did not enjoy being upon the bed and being served, as some folk do. "Serving others" is the meaning of Christian discipleship.

One who would serve Christ as an elder or preacher has every right to take a lawful mate in scriptural marriage. Marriage is honorable before God (Hebrews 13:4).

Christ is able and anxious to bless us in soul and body, both in spiritual and in temporal things.

Like Peter's family, we must learn to take our needs to the Lord. "Take it to the Lord in prayer" is not only a beautiful hymn; it is sound advice for every saint!

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

Computers For The Church

Continued from page 1

it should have the speed and memory to keep you happy.

If you want to get into the future of things, buy the 80386 CPU AT compatible. The thing that keeps me away from these machines at this time are compatibility problems that may appear between it and some of my software. However, for a new buyer, this should not pose much of a problem. Keep in mind that the 80386 computer is the most expensive of the lot.

In my next article, I will discuss mail ordering.

—90 McDaniel, Jackson, TN 38305.

"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Let all the people say, 'Amen!' 'Praise the Lord!'" (Psalm 106:48).

Shirley MacLaine And Neo-Hinduism

(Part I)

Shirley MacLaine is best known as a actress. She won an oscar for her work in "Terms of Endearment" in 1984 and has appeared in films for at least three decades. She is also an accomplished dancer, singer and all-around entertainer. She has been politically involved in feminist movements and is widely traveled, especially in Africa and India. Her avid interest in spiritual matters has



Charles Cook

motivated her to look into many religions and cults, and to apply as many of their ideas as are suited to her life style. In recent years she has produced four volumes about her quest into the spiritual/mystical world, and has developed her own philosophy about the meaning of life. What she now propogates in her books is a kind of Neo-Hinduism . . . a convenient mysticism for modern yuppies and other affluent people.

Her basic premise is that "she is God." All cults work from this premise to some degree; but she boldly affirms it to be so. People like the Mormons and other cults somewhat come in the backdoor before they out-and-out tell you that they believe "man is God." Or, that we have the potential for Godhood. But MacLaine boldly preaches, "I know that I exist, therefore I AM. I know that the God-

source exists. Therefore IT IS. Since I am part of that force, then I AM that I AM" (Dancing In The Light, p. 404).

Her latest book, *Dancing In The Light*, is a chronicle about her life following her fiftieth birthday. She uses this convenient format (and she's not a bad writer) to convey her religion. Howbeit, she proclaims several times in the book that her religion is not evangelistic by nature, but is a "self-realization" or experiential religion that each person must discover for himself. Shirley said she learned it via "metaphysical literature (meta-meaning beyond)" during her travels (p. 104). The book opens with Shirley arising from sleep the morning following her fiftieth birthday party. While bathing and exercising she muses about "truth and reality . . . and reincarnation." Her conclusion is that reincarnation is a fact and that "truth and reality were relative" (p. 6). All the way through the book she dumps these religious 'insights' on her readers, and we suppose people are soaking it in as gospel truth. She propogates that "truth is relative" and people believe it to be a fact!

While she bathes further insights are shared; "is pain real?" (p. 7). On each corner of her bathtub Shirley has installed a quartz crystal just in case there is something to the theory that there is inherent power in crystals. Animists and Hindus have practiced this kind of "cover-all-the-bases" religion for years. Hindus incorporate anything and everything that smacks of mediating powers, just to be on the safe side. That's Shirley's practice too.

Along with her "holy bathing ritual" Shirley routinely says her "Hindu mantras." As she meditates on her mantras (no one can know

what mystical words another uses for his mantras) "a white light flows through her blood-stream" (p. 9). This she claims is a source of divine power being called into her body. Her testimony is: "I don't think I would have continued with these techniques if I hadn't gotten practical, functional, concrete, solid results from them." (If this isn't propogating one's religion, I don't know what is!)

This esoteric, mystical experience is designed to teach people how to call upon, and to use, the invisible energies of the universe to their best advantage. Shirley ends her religious service by listening to yoga tapes about the twenty-five postures that, as with the mantras, put one in tune (?) with the energies of the universe. All this Miss MacLaine does before she faces the world each morning. She is a faithful Hindu.

Throughout the book MacLaine develops her belief in the karmic principles of Hinduism and especially reincarnation. She is persuaded that she has lived many times before, and that we all are a part of a great cosmic life-cycle. She has a keen awareness of the spirits that she thinks pervade her atmosphere. She is through-and-through one of those mystical, metaphysical types who lead (?) people into the unknown, the occult. She is a spiritual guru.

Miss MacLaine is certain (though neither she nor anyone else has ever produced any concrete evidence) that we have all lived before, and that "the soul energy of man is eternal and infinite" (p. 41). When asked if she believes reincarnation is preordained, she answers, "Yes, and not by God, but by each of us" (p. 43). You see, it's all fixed as part of the karmic cycle: "whatever will be, will be" (p. 49). "We pass over to the spiritual dimension where we remain until WE DECIDE to reincarnate again. Our souls (the real us) never die. They are eternal" (p. 76). Eternality is an attribute of God only, and when applied to man it makes him equal with God. Shirley does not believe we are "created beings" having no end, but that we are all a part of the absolute and eternal universe. And so, when you understand all this, "You are dancing with God. You are dancing with yourself. You are dancing in the light" (pp. 96, 97). This is essentially Hindu pantheism.

All this has given Miss MacLaine "much inner peace" (p. 98), and even though she is committed to being non-evangelistic with her discoveries, she has been compelled to produce four books and one television movie about her spiritual experiences. And, as a side benefit, she is becoming more famous and more wealthy than ever before. She is presently riding the crest of America's newest religious movement, The New Age Movement (NAM). Shirley is a Hindu!

It is through MacLaine and others of her special status that Eastern Mysticism and the Occult are becoming a permanent part of American culture. A few years ago only "the hippies" and other socially out of touch people experimented with the philosophies of the Far East. But thanks to Shirley and a few others, it is becoming acceptable to the upper-class of the West. Humanism has made America fertile soil for teaching that "humanity is God." Now the public is buying her books and learning from Shirley that what people always wanted is, after all, true: "man is God" (p. 404).

"Strange Things"

Continued from page 2

1:16-17). (3) Baptism is essential to salvation (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4). (4) Baptism is administered on simple confession of faith in Christ (Acts 8:37). (5) Those whose baptism is unscriptural must be baptized again (Acts 19:1-5). (6) We should work and pray for unity (John 17:20-23). (7) Sectarianism and denominationalism are sinful (Psalms 127:1; Matthew 15:13-14; I Corinthians 1:10). (8) Those who obey the gospel of Christ claim to be Christians only and only Christians (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Peter 4:16). (9) All should speak as the Bible speaks (I Peter 4:11). (10) The Lord's supper should be observed each Lord's day (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2). (11) Christians should sing, and not play a mechanical instrument in worship (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). (12) Christians must oppose all religious institutions not authorized in the New Testament (I Corinthians 1:10, 12-13). (13) Elders are the overseers of the local church, not the Pope, nor the like (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-12; I Peter 5:1-4).

As "strange" as it may seem there are some members of the Lord's church who think that many of the Lord's requirements are indeed "strange!"

That the Lord requires attendance at the services of the Lord's church is "strange" to many of our members (Hebrews 10:25). Such members want to be absent at their discretion. Some think it "strange" that the Lord requires them to give liberally, as prospered, and as they purpose (Acts 11:29; II Corinthians 9:6-7; I Corinthians 16:2). Many

think it "strange" that personal work is required of them -- "Let the preacher do it," is their refrain. Others think the preacher is the pastor and that he should run things.

Others think it "strange" when we insist that they make a personal investigation of the Bible (Isaiah 34:16; I Timothy 4:13; II Timothy 3:15-17). Do we think that others should read God's word for us? Some refuse to assume any responsibility for the growth of the church, since -- according to their notion -- the elders and the preacher are totally responsible for all growth, both numerical and spiritual (I Corinthians 3:9; II Corinthians 6:1). Some members think it is "strange" when they are urged to maintain their best influence before others (Matthew 5:16). Is it "strange" when the Lord requires his children to teach and win souls to his cause? (Hebrews 5:11-14; Proverbs 11:30).

Again, it is "strange" to some church members to think that they should never sow discord, strife, contention, and dissension among the brethren (Proverbs 6:16-19; Romans 2:6-11). The work of cooperation should not be considered a "strange" activity among the people of God (Philippians 1:27).

Dear reader, beware! It is possible to permit our hearts to become so hardened -- our conscience so seared till we can never be led to repentance. Do not become a stranger to truth and righteousness (Hebrews 3:7-13; I Timothy 4:1-5)

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580

—P.O. Box 803, Kailua-Kona, HI 96745.

“Let Us Put On The Armor Of Light” (Roman 13:12)

Paul said, “The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light” (Romans 13:12). The dawning of a new day brings new opportunities. It opens new perspectives. At that time we accept new challenges.



W. Edwin Kearley

First, we must “cast off the works of darkness.” Involved in doing away with “darkness” is obeying such commands as: “Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet . . .” (Romans 13:9).

Other actions men need to put away include rioting and drunkenness (Romans 13:13). An

American Broadcasting Company’s Television program called “Nightlight” August 14, 1986, had an authoritative person who stated: “At least one parent in 28,000,000 American homes is an alcoholic. Those who think drinking alcohol is an innocent thing, need to think again. Before the speeding up of fermentation with hops, etc., Solomon said: “Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of thy eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thy upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women and Thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that tieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of the mast. They have stricken me, I was not sick. They have beaten me and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again” (Proverbs 23:29-35).

I knew an alcoholic. He would drink until his stomach was a sore. He would drink to

‘kill his pain’ for three hours. This process would last until he was dehydrated. He would then be taken to the hospital. Almost as soon he was home the same process would begin again. He lost his family; but finally he came to himself and quit his sinful habit. This story could be multiplied by millions -- except most never really quit.

Those who are drunkards have no hope of heaven (I Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:21). Such is commonly called “sickness” by today’s society. The inspired writers of the Bible call it “sin.”

If ten drinks makes one drunk, one drink makes a person one-tenth drunk! May we hear Paul: “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18).

Driving while drunk is not the only danger which alcohol provides. The whole family suffers. Children often suffer effects for their entire lifetime.

Let us awake to the dangers of this scourge both for time and eternity. Put off the darkness and put on the armor of light!

—103 Elena Ct., Bay St. Louis, MS 39520.

Murmuring Displeases The Lord

Have you ever known anyone who was dissatisfied with everything, and with almost every body? Whatever happens to them is never good, they think. Whoever happens to cross their path is certain to become a target for criticism. Truly, “into each life some rain must fall;” but it is also true that “every cloud has a silver lining.”



Edsel Burlison

These same people will regularly find many things to criticize about the church.

Paul warned the Corinthian church to take heed lest they become complainers as Israel had been. He said: “Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed by the destroyer” (I Corinthians 10:10). The Lord has always been greatly displeased with murmurers. Concerning Israel Moses wrote: “And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord: and the Lord heard it: and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp” (Numbers 11:1).

Murmurings are as arrows shot at God, which will not hurt him, but will wound US. It is such a destructive thing to constantly complain. The poet summed it up very accurately when he said:

Sez I to myself,
As I grumbled and growled:
“I’m sick of the church!”
And then how I scowled:
“The members aren’t friendly:
The sermon’s too long:
In fact, it’s my opinion

The preacher’s all wrong.
I don’t like the singing--
It’s all a disgrace,
And signs of neglect
Are all over the place.
I’ll just quit going;
I won’t give a dime;
I can make better use
Of my money and time.”
And then sez my conscience,
“Alas,” sez he,
“The trouble with you is,
You’re too blind to see

That the church reflects you,
Whatever it be.
Come now, quit your talking,
And serve cheerfully;
Stop your fault-finding
And boast the church strong,
You’ll find yourself happy
And proud to belong.
Pray for your brother
And sing while you work,
For a church isn’t built
By members who shirk!!”
—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

VOLUME 25

FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 1988

NUMBER 10

Computer's For The Church

(NO. 3)

Buying Mail Order

Should you buy a computer from a local computer store, or by mail order? What are some of the advantages of buying locally? First, you can take the computer back and have it serviced immediately, if they have the part or board in stock. Second, it gives some a sense of security to have someone they can take it to, just in case something needs to be done to it. Third, the store may give you a loaner while your computer is being repaired.



Ray Hawk

What are some of the disadvantages? Mostly cost. You can save between \$500 to \$1,000 by ordering through mail order. Of course there are some disadvantages in ordering through the mail. First, it may take 5-7 days to get your order. Second, there is always the possibility that whatever is sent to you may get broken in shipping, and more time is spent waiting for what you have ordered. Third, if something breaks or stops functioning during the warranty period, you have to call, get a return merchandise (RM) number, and ship the equipment back. This takes time; and they do not supply a loaner while you are waiting. Fourth, you may have someone in ordering to fowl up, and this costs you another two or three days of waiting. Yet, in spite of these disadvantages, I prefer saving money, and buy mail order.

If you are interested in mail order, buy **Computer Shopper**. It may be purchased at most bookstores for \$2.95 an issue. A year's subscription is \$21.00. A novice may be confused by the myriad of ads. One company may offer a 12 MHz AT compatible for \$450. Before you break your neck ordering, either look to

see if it is a "barebones;" or, ask the company you call. A "barebones" means it has the computer case, motherboard (sometimes without any memory chips -- usually defined as "OK"), and keyboard. You can't do much with that! After looking at the price, check to see if it has (1) 1,000 or 1,024 K memory, (2) parallel and serial ports (sometimes referred to as an I/O board), (3) clock and backup battery, (4) one or two 1.2 megabyte floppies, (5) monographics board, (6) monochrome monitor, (7) keyboard, (8) hard drive, and (9) MSDOS.

Go through the ads slowly, marking down everything offered, page number, and price. Once you have finished, you ought to be able to go back through your list and see which company has what you need at the best price. Also see if they have an 800-telephone number; and note what size ad they have. The larger the company, the bigger their ad usually is; they usually can offer the best prices because of the volume of business they do. When you call, pay attention to the kind of reception you receive. If the folks are rude, or if you have difficulty getting the person to understand what you want, thank him/her -- and try someone else. A friend of mine stays away from any company in New York. From one company in that state I received very fine service; but I have had difficulty with another one. So, you make up your mind on that one.

I always order using my credit card. If I don't like what I have received, or the service is bad, I can call Visa and complain. Most mail-order businesses don't like having trouble with Visa, Mastercard, or any other card company. That is how they make their money!

If you order something that does not work, such as an add-on board, be sure to read the instructions carefully before calling the company. On three different occasions I have called back to tell them they had sent me a bad board. Each time they were courteous and gave me an "RM" (Return-

ed Merchandise) number, and asked me to return it through UPS. Before returning it, I went back and re-read the instructions -- and found what I had not done. The board worked perfectly as soon as I placed the right switch in the correct position.

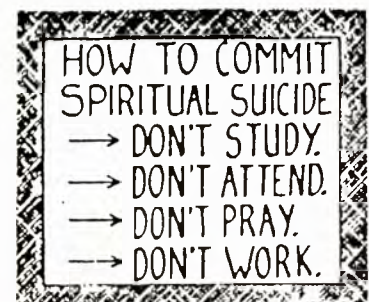
If you do return an item, be sure to return it by UPS. First, UPS automatically insures a package up to \$99.00 without charging extra. Second, if lost, it is easier to trace or get your money back. Third, it is usually quicker than the U.S. Post Office.

Once you buy a computer, you will want a good printer. I bought my first printer, a Star SG-10 dot matrix for \$205.00. The same printer sold for over \$300 at the local computer stores. Recently I bought another dot matrix printer which is an improvement over the SG-10. It is the Star NX-10. It cost \$169.00 through mail order, 6 months ago; now, that same printer sells for \$145.00! So, look at the different printers: see what they will do, and order one that will suit your taste and the job you wish it to do.

If the printer you buy does not have a printer cable, be sure to find one and order it through mail order. The average cost for a 6-foot cable is \$7.00. If bought from a local dealer, it would cost \$29.95 to \$39.95! You don't believe it? Call your local dealer and ask him for the price.

In my next article I will discuss computer programs.

—90 McDaniel, Jackson, TN 38305.





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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Decline In Church Growth

(No. 2)

The Bible, the greatest Book ever written, gives the only reliable account of the world's greatest organization, or organism, or institution, which is the church, the spiritual body of Christ, which he established on the first Pentecost after his resurrection from the dead (Acts 2). The hope of the world yet rests with Christ and his church, perpetuated by the gospel (Romans 1:16). Observe a few pertinent points about the church.



Roy J. Hearn

1. Its phenomenal growth in the first century. The second chapter of Acts reveals that on the day of its beginning about 3,000 souls were added to the church. Believers repented and were baptized (Acts 2:36-41), and the Lord continued to add daily those that obeyed. Acts 4:4 shows that the number of men who became Christians was 5,000, not to mention women. Acts 6:1, 7 shows the number multiplied greatly. Some estimate that soon there were 50,000 to 100,000 Christians in Jerusalem.

2. Growth in spite of obstacles. Opposition to the preaching of the gospel is first noted in Acts 4, and thereafter continued. The apostles were beaten and imprisoned (Acts 5 and 12). The Apostle James was put to death (Acts 12:2) Saul of Tarsus, before his conversion, wrought havoc with the church, causing some to blaspheme and others to be killed. On Paul's first missionary tour, after his conversion, he met great opposition, being followed from city to city by unbelieving

Continued On Page 3

Restoring The Erring

(NO. 1)

From a Bible point of view, only those who have become Christians can be restored to their "first love." Unto the church at Ephesus, the Lord said, "I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which do evil: and hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast



W. A. Holley

patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted" (Revelation 2:2-3).

All that is said in the foregoing quotation is true; but there is another sad story to be told. Read on: "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" (Revelation 2:4-5). How tragic!! How deplorable!! How lamentable!! Here are those who have been washed in the blood of the lamb -- their sins all washed away -- but now they have gone back into their sinful practices!

What is their relationship to God? We quote, "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. 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). With words a more repulsive picture arousing total aversion or disgust could not have been painted. The dog and the sow represent the child of God who has gone back into sin. How dirty! How filthy!

The books of Proverbs, Jeremiah and Hosea use the words "backslider," "backsliding," and "backslidings," seventeen times. In each instance these words refer to children of God who have turned their backs to God and have determined to walk their own way regardless of what he demands of them.

These words are not used in the New Testament, but there are many New Testament passages which indicate that children of God may fall from grace, and thus may be eternally lost -- unless repentance is manifested in their hearts. Sometimes we find those who have their hearts set on backslidings -- they simply will not repent of their sins (Hosea 11:7). Oftentimes backsliding becomes a terrible spiritual disease which the Lord God would heal, if one could but repent of his/her sins (Hosea 14:4).

We shall note a few passages which indicate the possibility of apostasy: (1) "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of

temptation fall away" (Luke 8:13). (2) "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12). (3) "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4). (4) "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Hebrews 6:4-6).

God would freely forgive those who have fallen from grace provided they repent of their sins (Luke 13:3, 5; II Peter 3:9; Acts 17:30-31). Ah, that's the problem!!

Among individuals who fell by the way-side are Judas and Demas (Matthew 26:14-15; II Timothy 4:10). Hymenaeus and Alexander made shipwreck of their faith (I Timothy 1:19-20). Peter denied the Lord, but soon was restored to his favor (Matthew 26:69-75; John 21:15-17).

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1).

To be continued.

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.



The Right To Pray

One of the greatest privileges God gave to man is the right to pray with the assurance that a loving God will hear and answer his child. One of the most foolish blunders a Christian can commit is to fail to pray. Failure to use this great gift may cause us to lose it!

Brother L. O. Sanderson penned these words many years ago in a song entitled, "Pray All The Time:"

"The world has lost the right of prayer,
And Saints have failed to pray;
What loss sustained beyond repair;
How blind of heart are they."

Daniel of old lived in a time when prayer was made illegal. He prayed to God anyway, and was thrown into the lions' den. His right to pray to God was more precious than life itself. How important is prayer to you? Would you continue to pray if it meant certain persecution? We had better be thinking about it, because it may not be long until we face such a problem.



Douglas Sims

Georgia

One county school system is in
Continued on page 4

Fruitful For Christ

In the parable of the barren fig tree, the owner was determined to cut it down because it bore no fruit for three years (Luke 13:6-9). He had planted that tree for a purpose -- he wanted figs, and expected the tree to produce them! The tree was not there for ornamental purposes. It had no natural rights, nor any claim to a place on the man's property. Being fruitless, it forfeited its right to be there.



John Wadley

In like manner, Christ has appointed us that we should go and bear fruit, and that our fruit should abide (John 15:6). In the allegory of the true vine Jesus taught that "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away; and every branch that bear-

eth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit" (John 15:2).

Without dispute every Christian must bear fruit for Jesus. The question is: just what is the nature of the fruit? Some among us teach that the fruit which God demands is bringing souls to Christ. While no one would question this to be a part of our fruit, it is certainly not all.

(1) We are expected to bear "the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (Philippians 1:11). "Righteousness" means "right-doing." James reminds us that "the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, for them that make peace" (James 3:18). A hostile, factious person can never bear the fruit of righteousness. This fruit comes from the "blessed" peacemakers (Matthew 5:9). When we live faithfully as Christians, walking in the light of God's word and doing right, we are bearing a desired fruit for our Master!

(2) We must yield the fruit of a sanctified and holy life for Christ. Paul wrote: "But now being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sancti-

fication, and the end eternal life" (Romans 6:22). Without "sanctification" (or holiness) no man will see God (Hebrews 12:14). Since we have the promise of heaven before us, we must "cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Corinthians 7:1). That humble disciple whose only achievement is a pure and godly life is not without fruit for God. Without this fruit all the other accomplishments would not matter.

(3) Every true Christian will bear the "fruit of the Spirit" in his life: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control . . ." (Galatians 5:22-23). A careful look indicates that these fruits are all aspects of one's personality. They are attitudes that are expected of us as Christians that will affect every level of conduct, whether public or private. To successfully and consistently yield these fruits, one must have the Spirit of God in his heart. Paul argues "they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:8-9). The indwelling Holy Spirit will also help us to mortify the sinful deeds of the body (Romans 8:13). In fact if one does not have the Spirit of Christ within, he does not even belong to Christ! (Romans 8:9). As the rising spring "sap" causes the sleepy tree of winter to burst forth in bloom and later to bear its fruit, so God's Spirit causes us to be fruitful for the Father.

(4) We offer up the fruit of our lips in our worship to God. The writer of Hebrews exhorts: "through him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name" (Hebrews 13:15). In our songs and prayers of public and private worship we are being fruitful Christians. Conversely, a prayerless, praiseless Christian is like a barren tree.

(5) Paul prayed that brethren would bear "fruit in every good work and increase in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:1). We must be zealous of good works done for God (Titus 2:14) and maintain them with our involvement and financial support (Titus 3:14). Not all men have the capacity to bear all these fruits in the same degree. One man's greatest talent may be to support good works done by others. Yet he is bearing fruit for Christ.

(6) Teaching the lost and bringing them to the Lord is a fruit we should bear. Paul longed to travel to Rome "that (he) might have some fruit in (them) even as in the rest of the Gentiles." Later he wrote reminding the saints that they were married or "joined . . . even to him who was raised from the dead (Jesus) that (they) might bring forth fruit unto God" (Romans 7:4). Like Legion, from whom the Lord cast out the demons, we need to go and tell family and friends "how great things the Lord hath done for (us) and how he had mercy on (us)" (Mark 5:19).

Some in their zeal for training soul-winners have mistakenly taught that converting the lost is the ONLY FRUIT acceptable to God. While this is important, it is not the only fruit expected of us. It is wrong to lay a burden of guilt on a brother or sister who is not successful as a soul-winner. Talents, training and opportunities differ for all. What is needed is exhortation that urges each disciple to bear all the fruit of whatever kind he is capable

Decline In Church Growth

Continued from page 2

Jews. He was stoned and left for dead at Lystra (Acts 13 and 14). In spite of all this, the church continued to grow; and the gospel within a generation from Pentecost had been "preached to every creature which is under heaven" (Colossians 1:23). Be reminded that they had no newspapers, magazines, radio, television, not the modern means of transportation that we have today; yet they gave the whole world an opportunity to hear the gospel. Persecution from without never stopped church growth.

3. **Apostasy came.** Predictions were made that the church would fall away (Acts 20:28-31; I Timothy 4:1-3; II Thessalonians 2:1-12). This was brought about by false teachers within the church, as men became dissatisfied with God's plan. Then ensued a period of spiritual darkness, "The Dark Ages," which lasted more than 1,200 years. Finally there came an awakening, and a turn back toward religion.

4. **Efforts at RESTORATION.** In the latter part of the 18th and first part of the 19th centuries, a number of contemporary efforts were made to RESTORE the church as God planned it and as it was in the first century, in name, origin, doctrine and worship. For decades this effort was highly successful and this movement spread over the world. By 1965 the church of Christ was tenth in size among churches in the United States, and was for a number of years classed as the fastest growing church in the nation. But within the next twenty-one years, something has happened.

5. **Decline in growth among churches of Christ.** The following information comes from "Why Churches Grow," by Flavil R. Yeakley, Jr., and is given by permission. From 1965 to 1976 the church of Christ had dropped from first to twelfth place in church growth. In 1975 fewer than 136,000 were baptized, with a total membership of 2,750,000. That year there was only one baptism per 20 members. Children of members make up 75 percent of that number and half of them drop out. Now the church is baptizing only one

convert per year for every 80 members, and half of those become unfaithful within five years of being baptized.

Some local churches are growing, but not by new conversions. On the average, 75 percent of those added to local memberships are transfers from other congregations; hence, some churches are growing smaller, while others grow larger at their expense.

7. **"A Perspective on Future Trends."** Brother Yeakley observes that from Adam to Christ (with a new start after the flood) the world's population reached only one quarter of a billion. It took almost 1,600 years for it to reach one billion. Then within two centuries it doubled. By 1976 the world's population had reached four billion. It is estimated that by 1990 there will be six billion, and by A.D. 2000 -- fourteen years from now -- world population will be 20 billion, unless population trends are reversed.

8. **THE SAD PICTURE.** In view of the decline over the past 20 years, brother Yeakley states that by the time the world population reaches 20 billion, total membership in the church of Christ will be ZERO. For a number of years some of the ablest men among us have predicted that the church will be in total apostasy within a generation, unless there is a reversal of present-day practices within the church. In 1975 brother Yeakley posed the question: "What would happen if the church of Christ were to start with its present membership in the United States, and experience for the next few years the kind of growth that was experienced in the early church? The gospel of Christ could be preached to every person on earth by 1990. By the year 2000 the church could have a total membership of over one billion. . . . By the time the church is 2,000 years old, it could have a membership of almost 10 billion.

What are some of the causes of these declines? Or, would you rather not hear or read about it? See our next installment!

—Former Director, Memphis School of Preaching 4035 Barron Ave Memphis, TN 38111

Continued on page 4

Shirley MacLaine And Neo-Hinduism

(Part II)

In PART I we began a review of Shirley MacLaine's book entitled "Dancing In The Light." Therein she promotes The New Age Movement, which turns out to be Hinduism, Pantheism, and a mixture of other Eastern Philosophies with "Christian" concepts. In other words, another cult!

Nothing short of accepting what the Bible teaches about man's identity and destiny will counter-balance this New Age Movement. MacLaine and others who are heading it up seem determined to promote their neo-Hinduism. Whether for fame, fortune, or some kind of spiritual identity, we cannot tell. Their motives likely range from greed to sincerity. Those motives will have to be judged by God. But the doctrine itself can presently be examined in the light of God's Word. And, it stands in opposition to it!

Shirley MacLaine tells her millions of readers that she has been through the karmic cycle many times and that she is sure that reincarnation explains everything (Dancing In The Light, p. 76). The doctrine called "reincarnation" among Hindu writers is often referred to as "transmigration." It is the way of purging oneself of mistakes and sins of past life. One must work off past sins by a successive cycle of life, death and rebirth. What one gets in the reborn state is called "karma," the accumulation of good and bad acts in past lives. Philosophical Hinduism considers rebirth into the physical world (Samsara) undesirable, and at the same time an illusion (Maya). The idea is to so live as to escape from the bondage of the karmic cycle and to have one's soul united with "the great absolute, the universal self," in other words, to become nothing, a non-existent, non-entity of the universe. Hinduism is spiritual monism, or pantheism.

Now, what does the Bible teach about the destiny of man? Are we to become a part of the great absoluteness? Or, were we created in the image of a personal God, and has he communicated his love and intent for us?

The work of Jesus Christ completely refutes the idea of reincarnation. Karma teaches that we must keep coming back to 'work off' our debts. The Bible says that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him will not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Salvation in God's Son is free (Romans 6:23). It is "not of works" and no man can boast of elevating himself to God (Ephesians 2:8). Our salvation is sustained by "walking in the light" of God's word, and thus by having fellowship with the godhead (I John 1:7-10). God deals with man only through "his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:1-4). This is not the way of karma; it is the way of grace!

The inspired writer says, "But this man (Jesus), after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12). Reincarnation has



Charles Cook

The inspired writer says, "But this man (Jesus), after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12). Reincarnation has us coming back again and again until we work off our own sins. But Colossians 1:20 pictures Christ as making peace between man and God through "the blood of his Cross" for everyone forever. We are justified by trusting him, and not through a series of births, deaths, and rebirths -- until we have so lived and worked until we 'pay' for our mistakes ourselves.

The Bible declares there is a personal God who has communicated with us through his beloved Son and a legacy called the word of God. This very fact condemns spiritual monism, which says that "God is all, and all is God" (Pantheism). The very idea that God transcends and stands apart from his own creation shows us that the very premise of Philosophical Hinduism will not work! The Bible teaches that man is the creation of a personal

creator, rather than a part of an impersonal absoluteness or nothingness. God, our creator, loves us! An impersonal nothing could never love us. Shirley never speaks of a personal God in her books. That is because she and those of her persuasion want to play God themselves.

Finally, the word of God makes it clear that man is not trapped in an endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. It states, "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment . . ." (Hebrews 9:27). We will not one day be dissolved into the great 'universal absoluteness;' but we will rather "appear before the judgment seat of Christ . . ." (II Corinthians 5:10). Hinduism, whether the ancient or this modern variety, will irrevocably lead men away from truth. This warning sign belongs on every copy of Shirley MacLaine's books: "WARNING, THIS MATERIAL IS DEADLY TO THE HUMAN SOUL."

—P.O. Box 803, Kailua-Kona, HI 96745.

The Right To Pray

Continued from page 2

court now because of a lawsuit to stop prayers before football games. The final decision will have very far reaching effects throughout the nation. Thus we may lose a right to pray in this one specific place. Where will it be next?

What could possibly cause a Christian to forsake the right to pray? I am sure there are many causes I have never thought of, but here are some I believe to be part of the problem today:

1. **PROSPERITY!** We have just about everything we want. We have little or no need (?) for God. Things are going so well we don't even have time to consider the source of all our blessings (James 1:17).

2. **TOO BUSY.** There is so much to do -- and so little time! The world is spinning at a dizzy pace, and we must keep up with it -- or be left behind. People are so wrapped up in enjoying the lusts of the flesh, that prayer just won't fit into the schedule. It would really be out of place anyway.

3. **WORLDLINESS.** One can't love God and the world at the same time (I John 2:15). Prayer has no more a place in the life-style of a worldly-minded person than a pearl necklace around the neck of a hog! One wallowing in the gutters of the world will find no occasion to pray.

4. **UNBELIEF.** I don't think it would be hard to find members of the Lord's church today who really don't believe in prayer. Some boldly say they don't think prayer will have any real effect on the events of our life. Sin has a hardening effect on the most sincere and well-meaning heart. We have been warned what can happen (Hebrews 3:12-13; 4:11). Strong, dedicated, hard-working Christians can fall into a state of doubt and unbelief. Failure to pray regularly can be a beginning place for apostasy in the life of any Christian!

5. **PRAYING ONLY WHEN IN TROUBLE.**

I wonder how God receives such a prayer? It seems to me it might just make him sick! It must be a delight for the Lord to hear prayers of praise and thanksgiving without endless requests for the things we think we must have. There is a great need for more such prayers in the lives of all of us.

Jesus saw the great need for prayer. I personally doubt that Jesus lived a day on earth, after being old enough to do so, without being in prayer to his father. On at least one occasion he spent an entire night in prayer! He taught his disciples to pray, and how to pray. How could one be "Christ-like" and not be regular in prayer?

If we do not pray, we may as well not have the privilege to pray. And if we do not use the privilege, we may just lose it . . . Think about it!

—330 East Ave., Cedartown, GA 30125.

Fruitful For Christ

Continued from page 3

of. We do not rebuke a vine for yielding no apples. If it yields no grapes that is a different matter.

Nature teaches us that vines and trees must be pruned regularly if they are to be fruitful. All hinderances to fruit-bearing must be removed (John 15:2). So must we purge from our lives any and all things that hinder our service to Christ: be they bad habits, desires, actions, or companions. Sometimes a favorite recreation, past-time, or job must be renounced if it interferes with our purpose for being. The fig tree in the parable was planted in order to bear fruit for the husbandman. So Christ has saved us to glorify his name in the fruit we bear (John 15:8).

The rewards of fruit-bearing are eternal and glorious -- a home with God in heaven (John 14:2-3)!

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—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 25

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NUMBER 11

The Church

(NO. 1)

Matthew records, "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, who do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; 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 art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:13-18).



W. Edwin Kearley

How very prominent and important is this passage! In it we have the first appearance of the word "church." It means "the called out." The "church" is the band of Christian believers, the Lord's house, or the Lord's family. As we ponder the passage, a number of pertinent points arise.

FOUNDATION

First, we consider, THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH: "UPON THIS ROCK," etc. This makes for the solidity and security of the church. The church was not built upon the man (Peter). It was built upon the truth he confessed. Jesus said, "Thou" (second person) "art Peter." The Greek word for Peter is *Petros*. *Petros*, in Greek, is masculine for stone. Then Jesus said, "Upon this" (third person) "rock" (*Petra*, feminine for bed-rock) "I will build my church." Peter was a foundation stone, but the truth that Jesus is the Christ is the bed-rock. Paul stated, "For

other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 3:11). Paul said to the Ephesians, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephesians 2:19-20). The "apostles and prophets" were inspired by the Holy Spirit to proclaim and record the gospel of Christ. They hazarded their lives to spread the gospel to their fellow-man.

The fact that Jesus is God's Son makes the

foundation unshakable.

The churches of men are built upon the creeds of men. The creeds of men are the doctrines which originated in the minds of men mixed with enough truth to make it palatable to the glibble. Glibble indeed are those satisfied with doctrines which appeal to the emotions, but have no Biblical basis, and with doctrines which make God a respecter of persons, etc.

ONLY THE TRUTH WILL MAKE MEN FREE (John 8:32).

(More to follow).

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

Burden Bearing

The cursory reader might wonder if certain passages in God's word clash. The skeptic is sure they do. The devout student seeks to rightly divide, and properly understand the sacred message, assured that what God has spoken is harmonious with itself.

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ . . . For each man shall bear his own burden" (Galatians 6:2, 5).

As rendered in our standard English translations these lines seem to contradict each other. Closer study, however, reveals the harmony thereof.

When seeking to properly understand and reconcile difficult passages, it



John Waddey

is always a wise rule to consider the context in which the problem rests. Along with Lenski, I would divide the last two chapters in Galatians at 5:26. Thus it would read:

Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another. Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone, and not of his neighbor. For each man shall bear his own burden (5:23-6:5).

Analyzed, we see the following points set forth:

I. A warning against envy, vainglory and provocation (5:23).

II. A charge to gently restore the fallen

Continued On Page 3



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Misplaced Pity

Weldon Langfield

Nadab and Abihu, priests of God and sons of Aaron, rebelliously offered strange fire to the Lord. As a result they were immediately "devoured" by fire from God (Leviticus 10:1-2). Notable are the words of Moses to Aaron, "Let not the hair of your heads go loose, neither rend your clothes; that ye die not, and that he be not wroth with all the congregation; but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which Jehovah had kindled" (Leviticus 10:6). Mourning on the part of Aaron and his two remaining sons would have appeared as a challenge to the divine sentence; a public display of pity would have to be left to others. Likewise today misplaced pity can prove extremely damaging and is often counter-productive to God's wishes. Let us consider some areas in which this can occur.

Misplaced Pity for Denominational Worshipers. Misplaced pity for denominational adherents clashes with God's will. How many times have brethren failed to kindly but firmly "lay it on the line" to their denominational friends because they 'felt sorry' for them? Instead of boldly wielding the "sword of the Spirit," cutting out sin and error from the lives of those around us, we may find ourselves compromising with their doctrines and ways. All need to be reminded that there is no middle ground. Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth" (Matthew 12:30).

Knowing that compromise follows on the heels of pity for those steeped in error, God commanded the Israelites, "And thou shalt consume all the peoples that Jehovah thy God shall deliver unto thee; thine eye shall not pity them. . . ." (Deuteronomy 7:16).

Misdirected Pity for Idolators. John wrote "Little children, guard yourselves from idols" (I John 5:21). Idolatry goes beyond simply worshiping a graven image; it includes anything that secures devotion rightfully belong-

Continued on page 4

Restoring The Erring

(NO. 2)

Backsliding members of the Lord's church are very common. In many large cities where the church is said to be strong, there are dozens who were once faithful members, but they no longer attend the services. In small towns, and in rural areas, many members of the church can be found who no longer make any effort to attend the Lord's day assembly.



W. A. Holley

Were we to keep all those who have been baptized into Christ, we would indeed be a force to be reckoned with! Absenteeism has ever been a church problem. "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; Cf. Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2). Thus, in apostolic times, the "manner," the custom, the practice, of some was to forsake the Lord's day assembly.

Just try to imagine how much good could be accomplished if all the talents, time, ability, and enthusiasm of our backsliders had been available to the Lord's cause!! When members backslide they carry all their talent, time, ability, and enthusiasm with them back into the world. Backslider friend, look what you have cost the church in turning away from the right way of the Lord! (Cf. Matthew 25:14-30). Read what Jesus spake of an unprofitable servant who was bound for hell.

What are some of the causes of backsliding? (1) Mixed marriages contribute to the problem of backsliding. If you don't think so, read I Kings 11:1-8. To please his wives, Solomon entered into the promotion of their false religions. "Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no kings like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin" (Nehemiah 13:26).

The Lord's rule for his children is to marry only in the Lord (I Corinthians 7:39; 9:5). If both husband and wife are not Christians, then the principles of I Peter 3:1-7 are to be applied.

(2) Sometimes the love of money is a cause of backsliding. When one falls in love with money, one falls out of love with the Lord. One cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24). Judas was a victim of the dominance of money in his life (Matthew 26:14-25). Ananias and Sapphira lost their lives because they lied about money (Acts 5:1-11).

(3) Some backslide reverting by reverting to former sinful practices, as in instances where one returns to drinking, or to stealing, et al.

(4) Some return to false religious practices, as did the Galatians (Galatians 1:6-9).

(5) Bad associates lead many away from God. Those who are not strong enough to resist evil companionships are certain to fall (I Corinthians 15:33).

(6) If one's love for the world is too strong, one is certain to backslide (II Timothy 4:10;

Cf. I John 2:15-17).

(7) Self-satisfaction contributes to apostasy, as in the case of the church at Laodices (Revelation 3:14-22). These members were neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm. Such members may desire a 'little' religion, but not 'too much.' Of course, we can never arrive at perfection, but we can grow toward it (II Cor. 7:1; Hebrews 6:1-3).

Backsliding is a dark and gloomy picture. It may be caused by threats of persecution, secret sins, negligence, Sunday work, and ignorance of Bible teaching on this subject. Can it be that our elders and preachers have failed to stress the dangers of falling from grace?

To church leaders we offer these suggestions: never leave new converts 'on the banks of the river' to 'root for themselves.' Give them supervision, or else they are in danger of returning to their old pursuits. See that they are properly fed with the word of God. Provide them with work, or activity. Those who have nothing to do get into trouble. Make certain that the elders keep in constant and close contact with them (Hebrews 13:17).

What are some of the signs of spiritual decline? How can a child of God recognize that he is sliding back into the world? "the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself" (Proverbs 14:14). When one thinks that he can live without God, he is sure to become a backslider. A backslider, when in company of faithful Christians, does not like to be reminded of his faults. Such an one can miss the Lord's day assembly and feel no twinge of conscience. Children of God who have lost their allegiance to Christ may be extremely concerned about a clean environment, but a corrupt heart concerns them not at all. (Do you feel compelled to apologize for the plain preaching of the truth of God)?

How can a backslider be reclaimed? It is a simple matter: If such an one with all his heart, will repent of every sin, confess them before God, and ask in prayer to be forgiven and restored to the fellowship of the Lord's church, it shall be done. We can trust God to keep his promises. We suggest that these scriptures be read; Acts 18:18-22; James 5:16; I John 1:6-10; Matthew 18:15-17.

To Be Continued.

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

AVOID ABSENTEEISM...



...IT COSTS
EVERYBODY!

The Nature Of The Church

(NO. 3)

Its Relation To The World

In every phase of the church revealed in the New Testament, Christ holds first place. Relative to government, he is King over the kingdom. To the body, representing organization, he is Head. As to the term "church" he is Saviour and Deliverer.

The word "church" is translated from the Greek EKKLESIA. EK, means "out," and KALEO, "to call." Therefore, the church are those called out of the world of sin by the gospel of Christ. That Greek word (EKKLESIA) is derived from the Greek KURIAKOS, meaning "belonging to the Lord." This form of the word "Lord" is found only two times in the Bible. In First Corinthians 11:20 it refers to the



Roy J. Hearn

Lord's supper, and in Revelation 1:10 John is speaking of the "Lord's day." In both instances the word shows possession. A conclusion from this, therefore, is that the church is "a called out body of people belonging to the Lord."

1. Use of the Term in the New Testament

The word "church" is used about 115 times in the New Testament. It is used in singular number 76 times, in the plural 36 times, and three times it refers to an assembly. Jesus used the term two times (in Matthew 16:18 and 18:17). "Church" as applied to the Lord's people is used in two senses: universal, as embracing all Christians over the whole world; and local, relative to the church in a particular place, city or country -- e.g., the church in Ephesus, the church in Macedonia, or the churches of the Gentiles (Revelation 2:1; II Corinthians 8:1-2; Romans 16:4). This does not refer to different kinds of churches as exist today in the denominational world, but to the same kind of church in different localities and racial combinations. All held the same views in doctrine, practice,

and worship; and this is what God intends today. God "calls" all by the same gospel (I Thessalonians 2:14).

2. Nature, Manner and Purpose of Calling

Ours is a divine calling according to God's plan and purpose (Romans 8:29-30). It is a heavenly calling: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling..." (Hebrews 3:1). First Peter 1:15 says, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye also holy..." Therefore, it is a holy calling. The purpose is that all who obey the Lord's terms are called to be saints, sanctified, set apart from the world to service to God (I Corinthians 1:1-2; Romans 1:7). The method God uses to call souls from sin to salvation is through the gospel of Christ, not the creeds of men. Of the salvation of souls, Paul said, "Whereunto he called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thess. 2:14).

3. Result of the calling

Acts 2:38-47 shows that the first converts

Continued on page 4

Burden Bearing

Continued from page 1

brother (6:1a).

III. A warning to be alert to temptation (6:1b).

IV. An imperative to bear one another's burdens (6:2).

V. A warning against self-deception (6:3).

VI. An exhortation to prove one's own work rather than his neighbor's (6:4).

VII. The moral: "each man shall bear his own burden" (6:5).

The situation pictured seems to be that some because of vainglory and envy were filled with false pride, thinking themselves to be something when they really were nothing spiritually. Those spiritual dwarfs were measuring themselves by other weaker children in God's family, and then congratulating themselves on how superior they were. They actually seemed to find satisfaction in the fact that some weaker brother had fallen into sin. Since they had not so fallen, they 'felt' superior.

The apostle's rebuke is masterful. He shows that a truly spiritual man finds no delight in a brother's failing. Rather, he seeks to restore him back to his proper place in the Lord's kingdom. Helping a weaker brother who is struggling with the burdens of life is the essence of the law of Christ, which says that we treat a brother as we ourselves would want to be treated (Matthew 7:12).

Having reminded them that each man's life must be measured by the divine standard rather than by the failings of another brother, he then asserts that each man shall bear his own load.

The expression "bear" one another's burdens comes from the Greek *bastazo* and means to shoulder a heavy burden.¹ We imagine a man struggling with an unreasonable load. A spiritual man will rush to aid him even as Simon of Cyrene helped our Lord to carry his cross (Mark 15:21).

The word *burden* in 6:2 is the Greek term

barē and means "heavy burdens -- those that are more than a man should carry."² Such burdens are those which oppress man spiritually, and threaten to break him down. "It denotes any weight which presses heavily on the body or the mind, as toil, suffering, responsibility, anxiety."³ "Weakness, ignorance, inexperience, difficult surroundings, grief, affliction, etc., are some of these burdens. This is the blessedness of Christian fellowship that each is not left to bear his load alone, others will help him to bear it."⁴

Albert Barnes writes: "The sense is, that every man has peculiar temptations and easily besetting sins, which constitute a heavy burden. We should aid each other in regard to these, and help one another to overcome them."⁵

J. A. Beet observes, "Verse 1 suggests that Paul refers chiefly to loving and intelligent sympathy with a fallen brother, making his spiritual loss our own loss and sorrow, and using our powers to raise him when pressed down under a consciousness of his own sin."⁶ The term "bear" used in 6:5 is a different Greek word from that in verse 2. It is the word *phortion*. This is the common word for the pack which a soldier is expected to carry without complaint.⁷ Thus, J. B. Phillips renders it "every man must shoulder his own pack." In Acts 27:10 it is used of the cargo of a ship which the vessel was designed to carry.

On this verse, Barclay writes, "There is a duty which none can do for us, and a task for which we are personally responsible. There are things which no one, however kind, can do for us, and which, however much we want to, we cannot push off on to someone else."⁸

Burton Coffman identifies three classes of burdens we face in life:

1) "Burdens that may be shared with others."

2) "Burdens one must bear himself."

3) "Burdens so heavy that we must cast them upon the Lord (Psalms 55:22)."⁹

Every individual must answer for his own conduct (Romans 14:12). Each one must work out his own salvation (Philippians 2:12). A man must personally resist the devil (James 4:7), and take up his cross and follow Jesus (Matthew 16:24).

Rather than clash, Galatians 6:2 and 5 set forth two great truths of the Christian system. The first declares the duty to love my neighbor and to do all I can to help him get to heaven. The second affirms the great truth of individual, personal responsibility for what one does with his life.

ENDNOTES

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²J. M. Boice, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 10, Frank E. Gaebelin, Gen. Editor, Zondervan Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, 1976, p. 502.

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

Does God's Grace Extend Universal Salvation?

W. Edwin Kearley

The Universalists have long proclaimed universal salvation. They either do not believe evil exists, or they believe God does not hold man accountable for his sins. Either way, Christ came and died on the cross for no reason!

Many seem to think one is unloving to suggest that anyone will burn in Hell. They cannot conceive of a God who loves, and will also condemn. Paul taught, "Behold the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Romans 11:22). They would be cut off from God's favor.

In recent months I have met some in the church who have an unscriptural concept of God's grace. They seem to see a conflict between God's grace versus God's law. They declare we are not under law, but grace. They are under the impression that when the law of Moses was fulfilled, ALL spiritual law was abolished. (Colossians 2:14-15, Ephesians 2:11-16).

The truth is, there is law under grace. That law is the law of Christ. Paul wrote to Titus, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, TEACHING us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12). The grace of God "teaches." --What

is the purpose of this teaching? John said, "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God" (II John 9). In the American Standard version the word "doctrine" is translated "teaching." If failing to obey the teaching of Christ results in the loss of favor from the Father and the Son, the consequences are the consequences of violating law.

Paul said to the Galatians, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). To the Corinthians Paul said, "To them that are without law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ) that I might gain them that are without law" (I Corinthians 9:21). The Gentiles were not given the law of Moses. However, they were under the law of Christ. Paul tried to conduct himself so as to appeal to the Jew, and he so conducted himself as to appeal to the Gentile. All are subject to the law of Christ. James called the law of Christ the "law of liberty" (James 1:25). Many see law as bondage. There are two masters. One master gives freedom from the bondage of sin. However, he has rules one must meet as an alien sinner to be free of sin and be translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear son (Colossians 1:13-14). The other master is Satan. He cries, "there is no law!"

Those who yield to his proclamation become enslaved to sin. The result is degradation of both soul and body.

If there is no law, there is no sin. Concerning the law of Moses Paul stated, "What shall we say then, is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Romans 7:7). We have shown the grace of God gives us instruction. Also we noted Paul and James declared we are under the law of Christ. The reality must be that we are under the law of grace.

Grace is given to all men (Titus 2:11). The writer of Hebrews tells us, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste of death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). Then in just a few chapters we see that the grace of God is conditional on obedience. The writer informs us, "and being made perfect, he (Christ) became the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9).

The grace of God is available to all who will obey Christ.

—419 Polk St., Montgomery, AL 36107.

The Nature Of The Church

Continued from page 3

were ADDED to the church when they obeyed the gospel. Their obedience included belief in Christ (Mark 16:16), repentance from sinful practices and doctrines, and being immersed in water in order to gain forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). Note (1) the baptized were added; but (2) the saved were added; (3) therefore the baptized were the saved. At the point of obedience souls are translated, transferred from the devil's kingdom into the Lord's kingdom (Colossians 1:13). Galatians 3:26-27 teaches that those who enter the church become "children of God," (showing whose children we are), "by faith" (indicating how we get to be God's children), "in Christ" (shows where). But how is getting into Christ accomplished? Verse 27 says: "For as many of you as have been BAPTIZED INTO Christ have put on Christ."

The calling by the gospel leads one to lay aside all past claims to greatness, and anything that separates him from the Lord, and to move on toward perfection. This is like Paul, who said: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14). Further, the child of God, the "called out" one, is to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith [he is] called, with all lowliness and meekness" (Ephesians 4:1-3). In the church one is called "To an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (I Peter 1:4).

The Church Not a Material Structure

Acts 5:11 says: "Fear came upon all the church." And we read "then tidings of these things came to the ears of the church" (Acts 11:22). Since a material building does not have literal ears with which to hear, and cannot be made to fear, having no emotions, a physical building is not the

"church," though many are inclined to so classify it. Acts 20:7 reveals that the church met in an upper room, and Romans 16:5 shows that the church met in the house of Priscilla and Aquilla.

CONCLUSION: The church revealed in the

New Testament is composed of a body of believers who have been called out of the world by obeying the terms of the gospel commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ. Are you among that number?

—4035 Barron Ave., Memphis, TN 38111.

Misplaced Pity

Continued from page 2

ing to God. Covetousness, for example, is idolatry (Colossians 3:5). Idolatry in various forms is sapping the lifeblood from many congregations. Greed has sunk its sharp claws into the hearts of many brethren. Drinking and carousing has replaced quiet devotion to God. Worldliness has been substituted for work. Yet, too often, when faithful messengers of the truth straightforwardly attack this sin, the sinner is pitied -- and the preacher persecuted. A twenty-one-year-old woman, a member of prominent family in the congregation she attended, was taking young teenage girls to R-rated movies, claiming she was their legal guardian to get them admitted to the theater. The preacher who pointed out this problem was reprimanded for so doing! Too often, cries for scriptural withdrawal of fellowship from hardened idolators result in withdrawal of support from faithful ministers of Christ.

While we do not EXECUTE transgressors in the Christian age, we can still learn much from God's command to Israel. "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, that is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods . . . thou shalt not consent unto

him, nor hearken unto him, neither shalt thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shall thou conceal him: but thou shalt surely kill him" (Deuteronomy 13:6-9).

Misplaced Pity for Liars. Paul urged "Lie not to one another." It is tragic that some Christians, when under even slight pressure, will lie to "protect" themselves or defend their cause. In his book, *Caring Enough to Correct*, Jimmy Jividen sadly points out on page 47, "I have learned through the years that you need witnesses in talking to some people. They are not truthful, and they bear false witness. They will say you said soemthing you did not say." Yet when chronic liars are exposed, too often the result is pity for them. God instructed Israel in the proper attitude toward false witnesses. "And thine eyes shall not pity" (Deuteronomy 19:21).

In spite of the fact that Nadab and Abihu were his sons, Aaron was objective enough to see in their deaths the justice of God. Instead of wrongfully pitying those who rejected God's will, he "held his peace" (Leviticus 10:3). Let us follow his righteous example.

—2913 Brock Way, Bakersfield CA 93306.



(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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Restoring The Erring

(NO. III)

How does backsliding occur? Obviously, it usually comes through a gradual process. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them" (Hebrews 2:1-2, A.S.V.). "Haply" means to carelessly, unconsciously, drift away from the church and the truth of God. A foot-note in the King James Version, says, "Run out, as of a leaking vessel." A small hole in a gasoline can will soon cause it to become empty. To "drift" means to be carried along by surrounding evil influences.



W. A. Holley

Some have false ideas which need to be corrected. One may think that before he/she can be restored to God and to the fellowship of the church, it is necessary to be living a sinless and perfect life. But no one can live a sinless and perfect life! Such an idea is ridiculous in the extreme. If one could live a sinless and perfect life, what sins would he have to confess of which to repent, and of which to pray for forgiveness?

Please don't stop reading! Read the following passages of scripture. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1). Notice, this verse stresses the words "fault" and "restore." Thus the person under consideration is not sinlessly perfect!

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed" ("sins should be forgiven," Mark 4:12; Cf. Matthew 13:15). "The effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much. . . Brethren, if

any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:16, 19-20). In these verses, brethren had faults which they should confess, if their souls are to be saved.

Another passage germane to the proposition which we are discussing is: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. 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).

Learn well the lesson here taught: The people addressed had escaped a sinful world, through the knowledge of the truth; but they have now returned to their lost state, where they are in a worse condition than before they were converted to Christ. How can one be in a "worse" situation?? The dog and the sow represent Christians who were once cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ, who have now backslidden -- fallen from grace -- and are "worse" than before they were converted to Christ!!

Another scripture: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). One cannot hide or conceal his sins from God Almighty. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3).

In the light of the foregoing quotations, what can the individual backslider do?

- (1) He can "examine" himself to see if he is in the faith (II Corinthians 13:5).
- (2) He can attend faithfully the various services of the church (Hebrews 10:25; Acts

20:7).

(3) He can work hard at adding the Christian graces (II Peter 1:5-11).

(4) He can pray unto God each day (I Peter 3:12).

(5) He can permit God, through his word, to say something to him (Matthew 4:4).

(6) He can do something for God each day (Matthew 25:31-46).

(7) He can let God do something for him each day (Acts 14:27; 15:4).

(8) He can stand for truth and against wickedness. "Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way" (Psalms 119:127-128).

May God Almighty through his word lead all lost sheep back to the fold (John 10:16).

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

The Church

(NO. II)

Built By Christ
THE BUILDER OF THE CHURCH MUST BE IDENTIFIED. Jesus said, "I will build my church." In the Bible the church is spoken of as a building. Peter wrote to the church saying, "Ye also, as LIVELY STONES, are built up a SPIRITUAL HOUSE . . ." (I Peter 2:5).

The Christian is to study to show himself "approved unto God, a WORKMAN that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy



W. Edwin Kearley

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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Should We Marry?

Next to your decision to become a Christian, nothing is more important than your choice of a marriage partner. God intends your marriage to be for a lifetime (Matthew 19:6). Marriage will strengthen, weaken, or maybe even destroy your religious convictions. Your choice can mean happiness and joy, or misery and sorrow. It will not only affect you, but your children as well. "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of Jehovah" (Proverbs 18:22).

Such a momentous decision merits our most careful investigation and reflection. The following questions are extremely important when selecting a mate. These are taken from the book *Secrets of a Happy Marriage* by Taylor G. Bunch. Since the author has four daughters, he will address the matter from the girl's viewpoint. Boys would simply apply the point to the masculine perspective.

I. Has your prospective mate reached the point where he is willing to limit his romantic friendship to you alone . . . and to let that be openly known? Be sure there are no divided affections. One is not ready for marriage unless he is prepared to cleave to his mate alone (Matthew 19:5). The play-boy type does not make a good mate.

II. Can he discuss controversial questions without becoming upset? boisterous? angry? If not, that same disposition will be carried right into your marriage. Should you quarrel frequently in courtship, you will likely do



John Waddey

I have been in located work for several years. I perceive the number one problem in the church to be, that we don't do anything about our problems. The New Testament never neglects sinful problems. It deals with every kind of trial and sin which we face. The Scripture deals in principle with these things through statements, commands, examples, and admonitions. But it does not neglect them.

So many times local churches get themselves into serious situations simply because the elders, and sometimes the evangelist, won't deal with problems. Only the elders have the oversight (Acts 20:17, 28; Hebrews 13:17). But the evangelist has the authority to preach the word, and that position is to be exercised in problematic times, too (I Timothy 5:20). Some preachers are willing to forgo what they know they need to say, and do, saying, "It is up to the elders." I am speaking, not of expedient things, but doctrinal. For example, preachers who are not speaking out and warning brethren of the many liberal trends and movements in the brotherhood, are NOT carrying out their responsibilities (I Timothy 4:6; II Timothy 4:3-4). Too many influential men are remaining silent while the church is drifting away.

This lack of dealing with problems on the influential level and the pulpit level breeds neglect in the elderships and pews. In the New Testament when there were problems, the Holy Spirit through men dealt with the problems. Acts 6:1-6; Acts 15:1-35; Galatians 6:1; I Corinthians 5:1-13; II Corinthians 8-9 (and other passages) show that when problems arose, they were dealt with in God's way. We have God's way today in the written word (II Timothy 3:15-17). There is no reason why we should not deal with problems, whether they be on the individual level, family level, congregational level, or the brotherhood level.

Problems on the congregational level which are not dealt with and/or solved will only get worse (I Corinthians 5:6). I have actually seen elderships sit back and allow such things as the "Crossroads Movement" get a toe-hold in the congregation. When such evil gets rooted, it will bloom and bear fruit. Stopping any sin after it was a grip on the church is very difficult. But why does it ever get to that stage? Simply because men who are supposed to be shepherds of their flocks are not watching or guarding their sheep (Acts 20:28-31). This condition is worsened (and maybe even caused) by a watered-down pulpit. Elders are like any other members of the church, and they need encouragement and the word of God to be strong (Acts 20:32).

I am going to list some of the problems which nearly every local church faces, and then list some reasons why these problems are not dealt with by leaders. There are different degrees of these problems among local churches. Some churches because of their location, age of membership, past soundness, and other things, may be affected by these things more than other congregations. Some of the potential problems every local church faces are: liberal preaching, liberal leadership, perverted translations, "Crossroadism," atheism, the false unity

movement, not being informed about brotherhood problems, radical leadership, indifferent living, ungodly living among the members, no discipline in the local church, a false teacher in the Bible school, et al.

Why don't we do something about these problems when we see them developing in the church? The first and possibly the primary reason may be because elders do not believe they can solve the problem. But this is not true. Often the problem is not solved, not because of impossibility of solution, but because of negligence. The Lord was up against the most difficult problem that ever existed: he had to become the solution for the sins of the world (John 14:6). Did he believe that it could be done? Yes. Passages like John 14:1-4; 4:34; Matthew 16:18 and others show that the Lord knew that, since it was God's will, the greatest problem that ever existed could be solved. We need to imitate Christ, and believe that we can indeed solve our problems.

Some leaders don't have enough confidence in themselves and others. Leaders are never to over-estimate their abilities (I Timothy 3:6; I Corinthians 10:12); but at the same time they need to believe in themselves. In Galatians 6:1 Paul instructs those who are spiritual to restore erring Christians. A spiritual individual, i.e. one with spiritual values and objectives rather than temporal (Matthew 6:18-19; Colossians 3:1-2), will have the Bible sense of security (I John 3:19-21). Sometimes a lack of confidence in others will delay a solution. Elijah's biggest problem (I Kings 19:10) was a lack of confidence in God's people. A lack of confidence in God's people will cause one to shy away from Christians, and especially when serious problems arise. Leaders need to believe in the human side of the church. This does not mean that the human side will not miserably fail sometimes; but it is to say that God's people often are more willing than we give them credit to do what is right.

Some erroneously imagine that if we let it alone, the problem will go away. What if men in scientific research had this idea about smallpox, rabies, or any other deadly disease? Some problem may slow down after it has done so much damage it can't do much more; but these kinds of problems do not go away. They stay and stay and stay, until someone deals with them. It is sad for one to think a problem has been solved, when really all it has done is just run out of souls to consume, at least for a while. It is not only sad, but it is unscriptural. Paul did not think the problems at Corinth would just go away. The Spirit through Paul deals with all of the problems there, one by one. The word of the Lord dealt forcefully with the division (I Corinthians 1:10-16); carnality (3:1-3); immorality (5:1-13); personal problems (6:1-8); and worship problems (11-14). The Lord wants us to deal with some of the very same problems today in the 20th century just like they were dealt with in the first century. Dealing with these problems begins with realizing that they won't just go away.

Some problems are not dealt with is because the authority of the scriptures (Colossians

Dr. Graham's Plan Of Salvation

Dr. Billy Graham is a man of influence and power. Countless thousands follow him. We do not wish to misrepresent him even in the slightest. We shall do our best to be fair with him and the doctrinal position which he espouses.



W. A. Holley

In *The Birmingham News*, November 12, 1987, a young woman asked Dr. Graham about the forgiveness of her sins. Ephesians 1:7-8 was quoted:

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence . . ."

The first words tell us that forgiveness is located "in Christ." The above-quoted verses are wonderful in deed; but they do not tell us how one enters Christ, where one does obtain "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins . . ."

Are one's sins forgiven in answer to prayer? Alien sins (sins of those who have never become children of God) are never forgiven in answer to prayer (John 9:31; Ephesians 2:12-13). Jesus did not say, "He that believeth and prayeth shall be saved." Jesus did say, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Peter did not say, "Repent and pray for the forgiveness of sins." Peter did say, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Ananias did not say, "Keep on praying and your sins shall be washed away." Ananias did say, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). In this verse one calls on the name of the Lord by doing what the Lord has commanded.

How different Dr. Graham's message is when compared to the teaching of the Bible!! Listen to Dr. Graham's instruction for the young woman: "Right now get on your knees, tell God you're sorry for your sins, and ask Christ to forgive you and come into your life." Dear Reader, do you know where such teaching can be found in the Holy Bible? I do not!

Other avenues are argued by Baptist preachers in efforts to circumvent the Lord's command of baptism. They tell us (1) Salvation is by faith only (Cf. James 2:14-26). Yes, the sinner is saved "by faith" --but not by faith alone. When is the sinner saved "by faith?" When the sinner believes and obeys the Lord's commands (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38; Romans 5:1 with 6:3-4)

(2) Some, in an effort to get around the Lord's command or baptism, assert that the sinner is saved "by grace alone." If one will but read Ephesians 2:8-9, one will see that GRACE and FAITH are joined together in bringing about salvation. To divorce "grace" from "faith" would be blasphemy. We must not separate what God has joined together (Matthew 19:3-9).

(3) Others claim that sinners cannot be saved by any kind of "works." But Jesus (John 6:28-29) teaches that FAITH is a "work!" Of course, one cannot be saved by one's own works (Jeremiah 10:23); nor can one be saved by observing the works of the Law of Moses

(Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:16; 3:10-13). However, sinners can "work the works of God," through their obedience to the gospel of God (I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-10).

(4) And then there are those who contend that sinners are saved by the "direct" operation of the Holy Spirit, separate and apart from the word of God. Such a fantastic theory puts the responsibility upon God! -- If sinners are not saved, it is God's fault!! According to such a theory the sinner has no responsibility at all. Yet, Jesus demands obedience on the part of sinners (Mark 16:16; Cf. Acts 2:36-38). Conversion is not a miracle wrought by God Almighty (Acts 3:19). If it were, God would save all men (I Timothy 2:5-6).

Salvation is located "IN Christ" (II Timothy 2:10). In fact, Dr. Graham quoted Ephesians 1:7-8, which shows that "redemption . . . the forgiveness of sins" is "IN Christ." This passage is true beyond any doubt!

But, how does one, according to the scriptures, enter Christ? The answer is simple: one by faith, repents of his sins, confesses the name of Christ, and is baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (John 3:16, 36, ASV; Luke 13:3; Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 2:36-38).

In support of the above-stated proposition, we shall now quote a few passages of scripture: As a matter of fact, Dr. Graham's proof-

text (Ephesians 1:7-8) refers to those who had been baptized into Christ! We shall quote: "And when they heard this, they were baptized INTO the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5, A.S.V.; See the whole context -- verses 1 through 7).

Jesus instructed his disciples to teach all nations, . . . "Baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19, A.S.V.). Could Jesus have been wrong in his teaching?

"Or are ye ignorant that all who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4, A.S.V.). Hence, one is justified "by faith" when one is "baptized into Christ" (Romans 5:1-2; 6:3-4). Baptism is a burial -- not sprinkling or pouring. Paul's sins were washed away when he was baptized into Christ (Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Cf. Hebrews 10:22).

Another passage: "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Galatians 3:26-27, A.S.V.). So wrote the great apostle Paul! Dr. Graham can never set aside God's plan of salvation! --P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

The Number One Problem In The Lord's Church

Continued from page 2

3:17) is not honored. When such authority is honored, we will do what the Bible teaches. We need a complete return to what the scripture says, and also to carry out what the scripture commands. The great reforms of Josiah were brought about because there was an unyielding spirit of return to the authority of the Book. When we listen to and observe the word of the Lord with the sincerity and zeal with which Josiah did, then we will see many of our problems solved.

Another reason for not dealing with problems is that the problem is reduced (?) to a minor one. No problem should ever be considered too small to be concerned about. Eldershops have been guilty of reductionism when it came to the "Crossroads Philosophy." They didn't think it would really amount to much -- but it did! We cannot and must not underestimate

the power of any sinful problem (I Corinthians 15:33). Reductionism leads to negligence. Instead of reducing problems, we need to face them and work with them.

In the face of problems, leaders should do three things: First, they should consult the word of God for their authority and to learn God's solution. Secondly, they need to pray about the problem. Thirdly, they need to take action -- do something about the problem. Maybe times such as we now are in have created more problems than the church faced forty years ago. So this means that there is a call for leaders to be more alert, watching, and working. Remember, our greatest problem may be that we are not doing anything about our problems.

--P.O. Box 233, Cherokee, AL 35616.

TEEN COMMANDMENTS

1. Don't let your parents down; they brought you up.
2. Choose your companions with care; you become what they are.
3. Be master of your habits or they will master you.
4. Treasure your time; don't spend it; invest it.
5. Stand for something or you will fall for anything.
6. Select only a date who would make a good mate.
7. See what you can do for others; not what they can do for you.
8. Guard your thoughts; what you think you are.
9. Don't fill up on this world's crumbs; feed your soul on the Living Bread.
10. Give your all to Christ; he gave his all for you.

**Thank God For All
The Blessings
He Has Bestowed
Upon Us!**

Should We Marry?

Continued from page 2

so in marriage. Many have discovered too late that "It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a contentious" mate "in a wide house" (Proverbs 21:9). Such bad personality traits tend to grow worse through the years, rather than better. Solomon warns "make no friendship with a man that is given to anger. . ." (Proverbs 22:24). That is good advice in choosing a life-partner.

III. Can he bear to have his faults mentioned without resentment? Remember: most folk wear their BEST manners during courtship, only to revert to their real selves after the ceremony. Such an attitude of 'touchiness' is rooted in vanity and false pride (I John 2:16).

IV. Does he receive advice in a kindly and gracious spirit? "The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall" (Proverbs 10:8). Does he ever acknowledge that he is wrong? To confess one's faults is God's way -- and it makes for healthy human relationships. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to be happy with an egocentric mate who cannot accept advice.

V. Has he a tendency to insist on having his way in everything? Such a personality will likely be dictatorial in marriage. To be "head" of the family does not warrant the man's being a tyrant. A husband should love his wife "as Christ loved the church" (Ephesians 5:23). Such personality traits can make a mate's life miserable and wreck a marriage. Before saying "I do" is the time to detect these serious flaws.

VI. Is he conservative, stable, and well-balanced emotionally? Is he extreme and fanatical in religion? politics? health? cleanliness? Such a person can make life intolerable for a mate. Do not marry a fanatic unless you share his fanaticism . . . in the same areas. "Zeal without knowledge" is a destructive force (Romans 10:2).

VII. Under normal circumstances, is he cheerful, happy, and optimistic in disposition? Or, is he inclined to be gloomy, morose, critical, and pessimistic? "A glad heart maketh a cheerful countenance; but by sorrow of heart the spirit is broken" (Proverbs 15:13). It is hard for happiness to exist in a negative, sour atmosphere -- even if it is your mate who has the problem.

VIII. Are you proud to introduce him to your friends and relatives as your prospective mate? Are you glad to be seen with him anywhere? Do you feel he is your equal or superior? Do you ever feel the need to apologize for his language, manners, and conduct? If so, chances are that your embarrassment will increase, rather than vanish. In entering marriage, one does not dissolve present familial and social relations: he merely adds to them.

IX. Is your prospective mate naturally cooperative in working with others? Does he have problems holding a job? Is he always "into it" with fellow workers? Is he a "loner"? If he has any of these characteristics, he will most likely have the same problem(s) in the home relationship. Such problems will make it difficult for a man to hold a job and make a living. Amos wisely asked: "Can two walk together, except they have agreed?" (3:3).

X. Does he faithfully meet his responsibilities? is he lazy? always avoiding the challenge? always looking for the easy way out? Industry and hard work are essential ingredients in a successful life and home. "As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes,

so is the sluggard to them that send him" (Proverbs 10:26). The lazy, irresponsible soul does not make a good mate for life.

XI. Is his background, living environment, social, and financial status similar to yours? The more different two people are, the more adjusting there is to be done. Such changes are difficult and painful for most. You marry not only the person, but his family and background as well. Animals unequally yoked find it difficult to work together -- so do couples unequally yoked in marriage (Deuteronomy 22:10).

XII. Does he expect you to keep on working after marriage? Do you fully understand and agree? For many, this really means TWO jobs for the woman. For the Christian woman, her first responsibility is to be a keeper of the home (Titus 2:4-5). Especially when children come is she needed there on a full-time basis. Does he share this view?

XIII. Is he careful with finances in meeting obligations and saving for the future? Do not be deceived by lavish gifts and fancy dates during courtship. Conflict about money ranks high among marriage problems. A wise mate is one who works hard, honors debts, and lays up for the future (Proverbs 6:6-11).

XIV. What will be his attitude toward his parents after marriage? Is he tied to mother's apron strings? Can he make his own decisions independently? Is he prepared to leave Mom and Dad and cleave to YOU -- making a new, independent home? No one is ready for marriage who is unprepared to LEAVE and CLEAVE (Genesis 2:24).

XV. Is there any physical defect, health problem, or past experience that might bring embarrassment, or make problems in marriage? Some physical defects might be passed on to offspring. Some diseases might

disable a mate so he cannot function adequately. Was there a previous marriage? or, some scandal, such as imprisonment? or drug involvement? Such things will not remain hidden forever (Numbers 32:23). Can you live with the consequences?

XVI. Having seen and recognized the faults of your mate, can you love him for a lifetime -- in spite of them? Are they the kind of problems that can be overcome? It is possible for true love to "cover a multitude of sins" (I Peter 4:8), but you must be absolutely sure.

XVII. Is he eligible for marriage? Is he divorced? If so, did he have God's permission to do so? Only the innocent victim who puts away his mate because of her fornication is free to enter a second marriage (Matthew 19:9). This is a major problem in our modern society. Be sure you know all the facts, lest your marriage be adulterous before God.

XVIII. Is your beloved a genuine Christian? God has always wanted his children to marry "in the faith" (II Corinthians 6:14). A mutual or common faith is a strong bond in marriage. To marry a non-Christian is to invite heartache and problems, and possibly to lose your own soul.

XIX. Have you diligently prayed to God for wisdom and help in your decision? Everything should be done with prayer and supplication (Philippians 4:6). Since no decision is more crucial, seek the divine wisdom of God (James 1:5).

May God help each of us to make the right choice and to have a long, prosperous, and Christian marriage.

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

The Church

Continued from page 1

2:15). Paul stated to the Corinthian church, "For we are laborers together with God; ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (I Corinthians 3:9). In the same chapter (verse sixteen) he said, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Zechariah prophesied that the Messiah should "build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory" (Zechariah 6:13). Jesus claimed this prophecy as having been spoken of him. He is at once the foundation, and the builder. He is the DIVINE carpenter, and no longer the carpenter of Nazareth.

"My Church"

WHO IS THE POSSESSOR OF THE CHURCH? "I will build MY church," said Jesus Christ. If Christ is (1) the foundation of the church, and (2) the builder of the church, it follows that the church must be his. The church must belong to Christ, for (under another figure) the church is Christ's bride. John heard a voice saying, ". . . come hither, I will show thee the bride, the lamb's wife" (Revelation 21:9). Also we read, "And the Spirit and the bride say, come . . ." (Revelation 22:17).

The church is also said to be Christ's spiritual body. Paul wrote concerning God who "hath

put all things under his [Christ's] feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22-23). May we emphasize the fact that Christ is the head of the church. The head directs the church.

The church is the flock of God, over which Christ is the "Chief Shepherd" (I Peter 5:4). It was purchased with the precious blood of Christ (Acts 20:28).

In today's world, the ownership of the church is much misunderstood. Religious societies call their religious institutions by the names of men and movements. It is evident that they think of their churches as their property with the right to designate them with names of their choosing. Also they think that they can operate them as they see fit. But the church purchased with the blood of Christ must be directed by Christ.

Therefore, the Lord's church bears his name. Surely, the bride of Christ and the body of Christ and the flock of God (or Christ) should honor the Christ by wearing his blessed name! Paul said to the Romans, ". . . The churches of Christ salute you" (Romans 16:16).

(More to follow)

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



(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 25

FRIDAY, MARCH 25, 1988

NUMBER 13

The Church

(NO. 3)

What is the safety and security of the church? Jesus said concerning the church, "And the gates of hades shall not prevail against it." "Hades" is the unseen world, the abode of disembodied spirits. Death is the entrance into hades! Therefore, the word "gates" denotes death itself. Death cannot destroy or conquer the church Jesus built.



W. Edwin Kearley

Here we are reminded of the following: Death did not hinder the establishment of the church. Ordinarily, the plan for building is interrupted or forgotten when the builder dies. When Jesus was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane, the disciples fled. Peter denied Jesus in the courtyard of the building where Jesus was being held. They thought that all was lost. However, the crucifixion of Jesus did not thwart the plan of God. Jesus arose from the dead! He conquered death and hades. The crucifixion of Jesus did not invalidate or conceal the promise of Jesus to "build my church." After the death of Jesus, the church was firmly established.

The apostles were miraculously set in the church. Those converted were added to them (Acts 2:47). Peter's sermon which converted the first converts is recorded. He declared the crucified Christ could not be held by death. Peter declared Jesus to be the fulfillment of David's prophecies. Jesus now sits on David's throne. He sits on the right hand of God. Peter declared, "Therefore, let all the houses of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have

crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). When they realized that they had crucified the Christ, they wanted to know, "what shall we do?" They were told by 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 Ghost" (Acts 2:38). This promise was to them and their children, and to "as many as the Lord would call," including "them that are afar off" (the Gentiles). Three thousand responded to the message. "They that gladly received his word were baptized" (Acts 2:41). After the death of Jesus the church was firmly established.

The church shall not become extinct because of the death of its members. Death

comes only to the body; the spirit lives on. Solomon tells what occurs after death: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was. And the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7). In spite of death, the church lives on and on.

Death shall not take from the members of the church the bliss of eternity. Christ is "the savior of the body" (Ephesians 5:23) which is his church. The dead shall live again.

Seeing the safety and the security of the church, why not become a member of it? Why not live and work in it, showing forth the excellencies of him who built the church, who bought it, and who will save the church?

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

Questions About Preaching

John P. Weekley

Every gospel preacher needs to consider Bible questions and Bible answers regarding preaching. Questions such as what to preach? how to preach? and why preach? are proper questions and they need proper answers.

To receive correct answers there are some places the gospel preacher cannot turn. He cannot turn to weak brethren. Weak and ignorant brethren never have the proper perspectives on biblical preaching (II Timothy 4:3-4). One cannot turn to the world for the right answers to the above questions. The world doesn't even believe in preaching the gospel (I Corinthians 1:21; John 3:19); let alone proper preaching. Seldom can one turn to his biological family (Luke 9:57-62; 14:26-27). It is difficult for family members to understand why their son, brother, grandson, etc., must endure the afflictions of an evangelist (II Timothy 4:5). Emotional involvement and/or prejudicial vision often block proper reasoning and understanding (John

8:15).

The only place to which one can turn for correct answers is the Bible. The Bible tells the gospel preacher WHAT to preach. He must preach what is Truth (John 8:32). He must preach what is pure (Philippians 4:8). He must declare the unsearchable riches of Christ (Ephesians 3:8). He must expose that which is evil (Ephesians 5:11). He must deal with that which is unpleasant (I Timothy 5:20). In short, he is to preach the gospel (Romans 1:15-16).

The world's answer to "what will I preach?" is: humanism, evolution, the new morality, a social gospel, philosophy, and situation ethics. The world doesn't think right nor live right; therefore it cannot answer right. The world depends on its' own wisdom; and such wisdom leads downward in the spiritual and moral realms (Jeremiah 10:23; Romans 1:21-32).

God did not leave it up to the church to

Continued on page 4



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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—Acts 26:35

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Do You Evaluate?

We have all heard the horror stories of congregations spending mega hours studying the feasibility of a change so small that it is of little or no significance. During a question/answer period at a recent lectureship I heard an elder asking how to decide what drapes to buy for the auditorium without causing a major problem in the church where he was an elder. Now, I don't know this



Dale Jenkins

brother and did not take the time to find out where he was "shepharding;" but he highlights a basic problem we seem to experience. We are, for the most part, fearful of change. It is a learned dread. We are not born fearing change. As a child we long for it. In fact we live our youth wishing for change. We hardly are old enough to talk when we start wishing for another birthday. The five-year-old can't sleep a month before Christmas. The nine-year-old wants to be "double digit ten." The twelve-year-old can't wait till he's a teenager. The fourteen-year-old wants that "Learner's permit," so he dreams the hours away wishing to be fifteen. The fifteen-year-old can't wait for sweet sixteen. And most seventeen-year-olds want to be eighteen, where they believe nobody can tell them what to do any longer. Then suddenly we are twenty-nine wishing we had not spent so much time wishing to be older, and now trying to look younger! And . . . we become afraid of change. Change begins to mean, I'm getting older, or my children are going to be wanting

Continued On Page 3

Purposes Of Marriage

It will be well for our readers to consider the teaching of Genesis 2:18-24. Here we have the beginning of marriage. God never intended for man to have more than one wife, nor woman to have more than one husband. Strangely, God did permit concubinage and divorce in the Old Testament; but they were never in his will (Matthew 19:3-9).



W. A. Holley

One purpose of marriage is to find a "help meet" for man. "And the Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18). All the animals were made to pass by before Adam, but . . . "there was not found an help meet for him" (verse 20). To supply Adam's need, God caused a deep sleep to fall upon him, took out a rib, fashioned it into a woman, and gave her to the man to be his wife (Genesis 2:21-24). Obviously, she is a "fit" companion for man. Adam understood the sacredness of this special relationship, for he said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." God then said, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Since marriage exists for the perpetuation of the human race, homosexuality and lesbianism represent sins which are contrary to purpose and will of God, and to the nature of man. God said to Adam and Eve: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth . . ." (Genesis 1:28; Cf. Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Deuteronomy 23:17; Romans 1:26-27).

When boys and girls reach the age of maturity, they have a God-implanted desire for a special companionship within the bounds of holy marriage (Hebrews 13:4). Through this wonderful arrangement God expects a man and a woman to find peace, pleasure, achievement and contentment in each other. Here God has made it possible for the holy desires of the flesh to find fulfillment, legitimately, morally, and scripturally. It is when this rule is broken that immorality begins to reign supreme. (We suggest that Proverbs 5:19; I Corinthians 7:1-5, be read and digested).

Verily, God's purposes for marriage involve far more than the procreation of children. Parents of children must see that they are properly guided, instructed, and nurtured. We read, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:1-4).

The principles of truth and righteousness must be instilled into their minds. Read to them from the Holy Bible (Genesis 18:19; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; II Timothy 1:5; 3:15-17). Carry them to worship services! Set the finest examples before them: no cursing, no alcohol, no tobacco, no drugs, no child abuse, et al.

One woman, after hearing a sermon on child rearing, said, "I have a son five years of age; when should I begin teaching and train-

ing him?" The reply was, "Rush home now, begin now! -- You are already five years late!" A child's mind must be conditioned from the first day of its life -- don't wait until the child is grown before you try to guide it in the right way of the Lord. Never, never, turn this great responsibility over the TV, or day-care centers, or to public school teachers.

Jesus taught wonderful lessons regarding the responsibilities of marriage. Jesus taught that adultery is far deeper than the overt act. "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:27-28). A man whose "look" is not checked with restraint, and who forms the impure purpose of lusting after her, is only waiting for an opportunity to occur. Adultery is a disease of an unholy heart (Matthew 5:8).

Our day is one of easy divorce. The law of the land will grant a divorce for almost any grounds. For example, one man obtained a divorce from his wife of 30 years because she insisted on keeping in her room a canary bird which sang off-key. As a matter of fact, some have married and divorced so many times they are proud of their record. One young girl explained: "I don't have any brothers or sisters, but I have three daddies by my first mamma, and four mamas by my last daddy."

When Jesus was asked, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" --Jesus cited the purpose of God in creation (Genesis 1:27; 2:24). Because God's holy purpose called for man and wife to be one flesh; any disruption of the holy bonds of matrimony violates his holy will. The Pharisees asked Jesus: "Why then did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so" (Matthew 19:7-8). The only exception to God's marriage law is the sin of fornication or adultery (see verse 9).

But, one may ask, 'What if the marriage becomes intolerable because of religious abuse or cruelty? Must a husband/wife endure such a marriage -- no matter what?' The answer is simple. "And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife" (I Corinthians 7:10-11).

The word love can solve most marital problems. Listen to Paul. "Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself: for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the church" (Ephesians 5:28-29).

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Invite A Friend
To Attend Services
With You On
Sunday

Faulkner University Appoints New President

On March 4, at a special meeting of the Faulkner University Board of Trustees, Dr. Billy D. Hilyer was appointed president of the institution, effective immediately.

"We march forward from today," Hilyer said to faculty and staff members upon taking office. "I can promise you that we are going to work very hard to become one of the best teaching institutions in this part of the country."

Hilyer is no stranger to Faulkner. He has distinguished himself as an outstanding administrator with the University for fourteen years, achieving a reputation for dedication, vision and integrity in every position he has held. Hilyer most recently served the university as acting president in the eighteen-month absence of a regular appointment in that office. He has also served as executive vice president, vice president for campus affairs, registrar and director of student services. His experience includes several years of service as president of Mobile Christian School and twenty-four years as a minister and missionary in the Church of Christ.

Hilyer has served as a member of various organizations, including the Montgomery Civitans, the Alabama Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the Southern College Personnel Association and the Southern Association for College Student Affairs.

Hilyer unveiled his dream and primary goal as president to the press to see Faulkner University develop into one of the finest teach-

ing institutions in the Southeast.

"I believe that in this day of technology, we have lost sight of one of the most vital ingredients in the educational process -- a good teacher," said Hilyer.

"Faulkner University can provide students with an excellent educational experience in a wholesome environment, where the development of character as well as the development of the mind is important," Hilyer said.

Hilyer outlined a plan to achieve this goal that includes specific objectives for academics and development. Numbered among the academic measures to be taken are:

1. Increase faculty salaries to a level that is commensurate with those paid by other area independent educational institutions.

2. Build an exceptional learning environment composed of the finest in facilities, equipment and teaching resources.

3. Make provision for the regular academic refreshment of all faculty members.

The new president plans to become involved in the area of development immediately. "I am committed to increasing our base of support," he said. "Our army needs to be counted in the thousands." Related to this, Hilyer counts it as a top priority to strengthen relations with alumni and friends, donors, individual Christians and members of the community. "I want to build a bond between these groups and the university," Hilyer commented, "increasing their awareness of how, when we mesh together as a team, Faulkner benefits from their support

and they benefit from the services the school provides."

Hilyer was appointed to the position of president by the board in response to popular demand, according to board presidential search committee member Louis Lester of LaGrange, Georgia.

"In the course of our committee deliberations we met with a strong insistence from the faculty, staff and trustees that Billy Hilyer was the best man for the job," Lester said in a telephone interview.

The board called a special meeting on March 4 to discuss, among other things, the appointment of a president. Hilyer emerged as the favorite. "Dr. Hilyer has worked many years for Faulkner University and has earned this honor," Lester explained.

University faculty and staff members were pleased at the board's selection. Faulkner University co-founder Leonard Johnson said, "Billy Hilyer has a talent for working with people. In addition, he is conservative, decisive and farseeing. I predict steady growth in all phases of our work under his administration."

Hilyer is married to the former Kay Gafford of Georgiana, Alabama. He has three children, the oldest of whom attends Faulkner University.

Benefit Dinner

Magnolia Bible College's Seventh Annual Benefit Dinner raised over \$30,000 for the school's general operating fund, according to Cecil May, Jr., president of the college.

The fund-raising dinner brought in approximately \$48,000 to \$50,000 and after all expenses are paid the school will net \$30,000 to \$35,000.

740 people, including political and community notables, heard Gene Stallings, head football coach for the St. Louis Cardinals. Andy Childs performed a medley of Fifties and Sixties hits.

Paul and Phillip Gaunt of Vicksburg were recognized as MBC Volunteers of the Year by Marlin Ivey, chairman of the board.

Do You Evaluate?

Continued from page 2

more independence. Maybe, it will mean the economy isn't going to be stable (something we never concerned ourselves with when we were younger), or maybe it will mean a new job. Possibly change will mean moving, leaving good friends, or losing old ones. So "change" becomes a dirty word to us!

The Christian's perspective must, by his very nature be different (I Peter 2:9). Our lives are to be spent evaluating and changing (II Corinthians 13:5). We are to be pressing on; and that means new horizons and new responsibilities (Hebrews 5:11-6:1; I Peter 2:2). As we learn more about the God we serve and seek to become more like him (Matthew 5:48), we will experience change. In fact the better our learning the more necessary our change. When we cease to change we cease to strive toward perfection (Colossians 1:28), which (we must always admit) we have not yet reached (Romans 3:10). The changed life is often the most powerful testimony of the gospel (I Peter 4:3-4; Acts 9:20-21; I Corinthians 6:11). Paul said, "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection" . . . "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" . . . "Be ye followers of me as I also am of Christ" (I Corinthians 9:27; Philippians 3:14; I Corinthians 11:1). Christ's letters to the seven churches in Asia were in fact his evaluation of them and command to them for them to change what was necessary (Revelation 2-3). Every dedicated leader in the church is constantly striving to change this world we live in. Holy Writ says "The love of Christ constraineth me" (II Corinthians 5:14). Our hearts' desire must be that those living in sin

will change their lives. And is not that part of the plea of the restoration movement? To change the religious world?

Within the church we must never change the glorious old message we preach (Galatians 1:8-10); we must keep it fresh by the way we live and speak (II Corinthians 3:2; Colossians 4:3-6). Yet, we must ever be open to change in other areas. Change keeps us fresh and helps us avoid stagnation. We must evaluate our motives and methods constantly. Why have a gospel meeting? Why does your Bible school meet each Sunday? What is our means of real outreach to this community? What are we doing in the mission fields? What do we hope to accomplish by this program? Where do we want to be ten years from now, and how are we going to get there? Why are we converting the number of people we are each year? Why are we keeping/losing our young people? How can we better involve the members in the work? Why are some worship services to the Most High cold? How can we improve our effectiveness?

Brethren, we see the need to evaluate in every thing else we do. In our business we see the necessity of a good look at the future to chart our path. We recognize the potential of failure if we do not plan. Why then in the church are we so very fearful of change in areas where we will only suffer if we do not re-evaluate? We need to come to terms with this. Let us keep the gospel message clear and unchanging, but be always ready to be creative in our methods.

Hamilton Cross Roads Church of Christ
Route 2 Box 311-AA Brundidge, AL 36010

QUOTES.....

The only things we can be sure of accomplishing are the things we do today.

Blowing out someone else's light won't make yours shine any brighter.

The Bible never suffers from neglect; it is only those who neglect it who suffer.

A hammer sometimes misses its mark - a bouquet never.

HOW TO COMMIT SPIRITUAL SUICIDE

→ DON'T STUDY.

→ DON'T ATTEND.

→ DON'T PRAY.

→ DON'T WORK.

Faulkner University New Board Chairman

On March 4, 1988, a special meeting of the Faulkner University board of trustees was called, at which Jimmy Faulkner resigned, and Dr. Marlin Ivey, well-known businessman and supporter of Christian education, was unanimously named as chairman of the board.

"I'm very excited to have the chance to step into this position," said Ivey. "Faulkner University has had some difficulties in the past, but I intend to take advantage of the tremendous opportunities I now see before us. This institution can go to the very top."

Ivey served as executive vice chairman of the board under brother Faulkner. He also is the chairman and chief executive officer of Ivey's Incorporated, a national mechanical contractor listed in the top 25 mechanical contractors in the United States.

Ivey is an active member of the board of several Christian institutions, including International Bible College, Sunnybrook Children's Home and Magnolia Bible College, where he is also chairman of the board. The new board

chairman has also served on the board of several other associations, among them the Board of Associated Builders and Contractors in Washington, D.C., the Mississippi Economic Council, the Merchants and Farmers Bank and the University of Southern Mississippi Foundation. He has acted, as well, as president of the Mississippi Association of Builders and Contractors. Ivey is an elder of the Church of Christ in Kosciusko, Mississippi.

Ivey's vision for Faulkner University is largely based on his faith in those associated with her: board members who can bring the university's potential to fruition, educators who are "second to none," and a president who can "provide the stability we need."

"Under Billy Hilyer's leadership and guidance, we can make Faulkner University into the institution it needs to be," said Ivey.

Ivey also cited the "strategic location" of Faulkner as a reason for optimism.

"We have every opportunity to be a giant

success," Ivey concluded, "we must capitalize on our opportunities."

Ivey is only the third individual in the forty-five year history of the school to hold this position. He succeeds Dr. Jimmy Faulkner who was chairman for 24 years and will continue to serve on the board.

Faulkner's tenure is known as a time of great growth for the school. Under his leadership the school moved from Ann Street to her present location. Satellite campuses were established in Birmingham, Mobile, Huntsville and Florence. The school moved from a two-year to a four-year institution, and received accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The institution honored the Faulkner family in 1984 by taking their name as her own: Faulkner University.

Ivey is a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi and holds an honorary doctorate from Freed-Hardeman College. He is married, and has two children, both of whom are married.

Questions About Preaching

Continued from page 1

tell preachers what to preach. If the church were deciding, many needed topics would be completely avoided. The church as a whole does not see and detect the dangers in false movements within the body of Christ. It takes teaching and instruction from the word of God to bring such to light (Psalm 119:105). Good preaching does not depend on the church; the church depends on good preaching. (II Timothy 4:6).

WHEN to preach is not always the easiest question to answer. The Bible gives many guidelines to find the right answer. One should preach when (1) he realizes the great need (John 4:35); (2) he is faithful himself (II Timothy 2:2); (3) when he is capable (II Timothy 2:2); (4) when he is zealous and not afraid (II Timothy 1:7-8); (5) when he realizes the great reward involved (I Thessalonians 2:19-20; Hebrews 12:2; Matthew 25:20-23).

Some are waiting to preach when the time is right. But when is the time just right? The apostle Paul said, "... behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2). Would it not, at least in principle, be just as appropriate to say "behold now is the day to preach"? Is it not sinful to put off any part of the will of God? "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

HOW should the preacher preach? He is to preach with conviction (Titus 2:15). Weak or feeble preaching destroys conviction and feeds compromise. The preacher is to show that he believes what he is preaching. For the audience to have a like conviction as the speaker, then there must be a common ground for that conviction. The common ground on which the preacher and audience are to stand is the word of God (I Corinthians 1:10). During a sermon all the brethren know where a preacher stands physically; but do they know where he stands spiritually? They have no problem knowing where he stands physically because they can see it. But can they see just as plainly where he stands spiritually?

HOW should the preacher preach? He is to preach with wisdom. "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time" (Colossians 4:5). "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt . . ." (verse 6). Wisdom is common sense. Common sense is the ability to see harmony in things that agree and unlikeness in opposites. Sometimes being wise in a world that is filled with so much foolishness is difficult.

He is to preach strongly and firmly. Some of the most loving and dedicated servants of God did some of the hardest preaching. Strong and firm preaching was done by John the baptizer (Matthew 3:7-10). Strong and firm preaching was done by Christ the Son of God (Matthew 23:1-33). The apostle Peter told the people on Pentecost that they had "wicked hands" (Acts 2:23). Stephen full of the Holy Spirit said to those people, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51). Strong and firm preaching got the apostle Paul into trouble more than once. And to think that some would contend that soft preaching is biblically based!

He is to preach, taking heed unto himself. The worst enemy of the preacher could be his neglected self (I Timothy 4:16). Paul did not neglect himself (I Corinthians 9:27). When the preacher preaches on giving, he must ask himself the question, "Am I giving as I should?" When the preacher preaches on a good conscience, he needs to find one in himself. A gospel preacher should never overwork the word "you" in the pulpit, but always include "we" and "us."

WHY preach? One Bible answer is found in I Corinthians 9:16 when Paul said, "... yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" Paul was preaching because he knew that he was obligated to preach. He knew and wrote by inspiration that he would be lost if he didn't preach. One should preach the gospel when he believes that he will be lost if he doesn't. Another reason for preaching is given in II Corinthians 5:11, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men . . ."

One should preach because he believes that others will be lost, and by preaching he can help save some. One should preach because "the love of Christ constraineth us . . ." (II Corinthians 5:14). The example of Christ's love and self-denial is compelling to any faithful Christian. When a faithful Christian man is considering whether or not to preach, let him consider the love of Christ.

One should preach because of the many rewards. Working as an evangelist is not an easy task. But when put in the balances, it is not found wanting in the area of rewards. The faithful evangelist will have persecution (II Timothy 3:12). Some of the persecution will come from weak brethren who should know better. But when one is a faithful proclaimer of the word, he will find respect and love with encouragement from the faithful few. I would rather have favor with God's sheep any day than to have the praises of the multitudes of the devil's goats. There is the reward of having part in bringing someone to Christ (I Corinthians 3:13-14). When that person grows and matures in Christ and aspires to leadership, this is a reward. One of the best reasons to preach is because a Christian man can afford opportunities for his family that otherwise might not exist. His children have opportunities to be around faithful members of the Lord's body. His wife, being a help "meet for him," is part of anything that the preacher accomplishes. When he works with a congregation and helps bring it to maturity, she also will enjoy blessings, not only in this life, but in the next to come. When a faithful Christian man surrenders many things in life in order to preach, he knows that he is doing all that he can to serve his Lord and Master; this is a reward. Too many Christians have shallow religion because they have shallow service.

These are questions that the evangelist should answer and questions the faithful Christian man should answer while he is considering one of the greatest works and challenges in life -- being a gospel preacher.

—P.O. Box 233, Cherokee, AL 35616.



Words Of Truth

"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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Gospel Meetings

Every gospel preacher is honored when invited to conduct a gospel meeting for a church. Such an invitation suggests that the church believes you have something worthwhile to say, and that you have talent enough to say it well.

The visiting preacher, as well as the congregation, is blessed when he holds a meeting and does his job effectively.

He is privileged to meet a multitude of new brethren who will enrich his life. He often can learn much from the work program of the host church. He will be edified and strengthened by his fellowship with the local preacher and elders. It will provide him rest and respite from his labors in his home field of work. Of course, there will usually be some financial reward, but this should be the last thing considered.

In training men concerning the preacher's work, I offer the following suggestions about preaching in meetings:

1. Remember the purpose of your being invited to preach is to save souls. Do not allow social, recreational, or personal activities to interfere. Make yourself available to reach the lost, and pursue all prospects.

2. Plan your sermons to build a teaching pattern for the week. They should be designed to teach a totally "new" prospect who knows nothing of Christianity.

3. Study! Be prepared beforehand! Then review your lessons each day prior to the services. Do not allow yourself to be swamped with social life, and thus be caught unprepared. Choose the best of your previous sermons for your meetings.

4. Get enough rest to do your best. Take along extra sermons in case you are asked to fill a



John Waddey

special appointment.

5. Send a glossy picture and resume at least six weeks ahead of the date.

6. Send a letter of encouragement to the church, urging a good preparation, and ask for their prayers.

7. For small churches without much leadership, volunteer to help in advertising; prepare a news release for them.

8. If arranged far ahead, write to reconfirm dates, and times, and directions, etc. Do not "take off," assuming all is lined up. Many a man has done so to his embarrassment.

9. Do not inject yourself into "personal," or "local" problems among brethren. Especially is this important when you have heard only one side of the question. Remember that you were invited to preach the gospel, to save souls. If invited by the leadership, and if you are qualified, then present a needed lesson on the problem. There may be some problems of a serious nature that are not just local, or personal, in nature. You do need to deal with such.

10. Try to learn the people's names, including the children's. Be friendly and personable.

11. Encourage people to invite the local preacher and his family when you eat with them.

12. Do not allow yourself to be overfed. Not only is it unhealthful, but it also will adversely affect your delivery.

13. Try to encourage and help the work of the local preacher and elders.

14. Do not demand "special treatment" for yourself (whether in your host's home or in other accommodations).

15. Do not "set a price" on your services.

16. Always be ready to hold "free" mission meetings.

17. Do not be discouraged if you are not invited to hold meetings right away. Such invitations will come as you grow in experience, ability, and influence.

18. Do not try to hold too many meetings; that will create problems where you live and work.

19. Be sure to send a note of appreciation to the elders who invited you and to those who

showed you hospitality.

In recent years we have heard of men who place a fixed price-tag on their preaching services. We are told of visiting speakers who expect \$100 per sermon, first-class airfare, a room at the best hotel and with all miscellaneous expenses paid. Such a mercenary spirit is no credit to a man of God! Perhaps it suits the politician, the comedian, or the philosopher -- but not the disciple of the Nazarene. I cannot imagine Jesus, or the apostles, so doing. Jesus "gave" himself (Ephesians 5:25), he did not "price" himself. He told the apostles: "Freely ye have received, freely GIVE" (Matthew 10:8). Hirelings could be expected to put a price-tag on their labors, but not a man after God's own heart. The late brother Gus Nichols related that his practice was to accept meeting invitations on a first-come basis and to never set a price on his services. His experiences was that over-all, brethren are fair and generous -- and exceptions were few and far between. His noble example is commended to all.

A true man of God will preach the gospel to any interested souls, at every opportunity -- whether he is paid or not. If there were no congregation to reward him, he would "preach the word" where he had opportunity because it is God's will (II Timothy 4:2), because he loves Christ and his church, and because of his compassion for the lost.

The man who preaches only if there is money to be had, should not preach at all! His selfish, greedy attitude is a detriment that will do more harm than his preaching could ever offset. Godliness must not be thought of as "a way of gain" (I Timothy 6:5).

"Preach the word" (II Timothy 4:2)! "Seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10). Be a "faithful servant" (Matthew 5:21). Do "not be greedy for filthy lucre" (Titus 1:7).

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



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(USPS 691-760)

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Ephesians

(NO. 2)

Gary C. Hampton

Chapter 1 Verse 1. An "apostle" is one sent; and Paul was one specially chosen and sent by the Lord himself (Acts 9:10-16). A "saint" is one sanctified, or set apart, for God's service (I Corinthians 6:11). So long as we are on this earth, sanctification is an ongoing process (II Corinthians 7:1), which is completing in us (I Thessalonians 5:23). "The faithful" would be the same group of people as the "saints." Notice: their location is "in Christ Jesus," an expression which is used thirty-six times in this epistle. Since the Lord adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:47), we conclude being "in Christ" is synonymous with being saved, or with being in the church, which conclusion is supported by verses 22-23.

Verse 2. "Grace," or some form of it, was the typical Greek greeting, and "peace" was the normal Hebrew greeting. The "Father" is the source of unmerited favor for lost mankind; and that grace produces both an inner peace and a desire to live in peace with others (I Peter 5:10; Hebrews 13:20; Philippians 4:6-7; Matthew 5:43-48). God's grace, and the peace it brings to us, is extended to man through his Son, so Paul appropriately says it is from God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 3. We owe God thanksgiving and praise because of all the spiritual blessings we have in his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. The expression "in heavenly places" occurs four other times in this epistle (1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12). Here, it is qualified by the words "in Christ" which suggest "the church, which is his body" (1:22-23). Thus, to be in the church is to be in Christ's body; and to be in Christ is to be in heavenly places. The church is the home of the saved on earth, and its Lord is in heaven; so we are in "heavenly places" in two senses (Acts 2:47, 32-36). The church is Christ's kingdom (Matthew 16:18-19).

Verse 4. If I want to be one of God's chosen

Continued on page 3

Prayers Of The New Testament

(NO. 1)

Tom Kelton

The student of the Bible who desires to do a thorough study of prayer must consider the prayers that are prayed in the New Testament as well as all else that is said about prayer.

The following listing of the various prayers is given in hope that it will be of benefit in such a serious study.

The amount of time you spend studying these different prayers will determine how much good this material will be of benefit to you.

I pray that every one who studies this will dig deep into the riches which can be found here and "always pray and never lose heart."

Matthew:

1. Prayer and the necessity of forgiveness (Matthew 5:22-26; 6:12, 14, 15).

2. Prayer and hypocrisy (Matthew 6:5-7; Luke 11:1-4).

3. Prayer as taught by Christ (Matthew 6:9-13).

4. Prayer as specified by Christ (Matthew 7:7-11).

5. Prayer for laborers (Matthew 9:37-39; Luke 10:2).

6. Prayer of Christ's gratitude to God (Matthew 11:25-27).

7. Prayer on a mountain (Matthew 14:23).

8. Prayer of two or more (Matthew 18:19-20).

9. Prayer of faith (Matthew 21:18-22; Mark 11:22-26).

10. Prayer of pretense (Matthew 23:14, 25; Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47).

11. Prayer in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:26, 36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46).

12. Prayer at Calvary (Matthew 27:46; Luke 23:34, 46).

Mark:

1. Prayer habits of Christ (Mark 1:35; 6:41, 46).

2. Prayer and fasting (Mark 9:29).

Luke:

1. Prayer of Zacharias (Luke 1:8, 13, 67-80).

2. Prayer at baptism of Jesus (Luke 3:21, 22).

3. Prayer as escape from popularity (Luke 5:16).

4. Prayer and choosing of the twelve (Luke 6:12, 13, 20, 28).

5. Prayer and the transfiguration (Luke 9:28-29).

6. Prayer in parable form (Luke 11:5-13; 18:1-8).

7. Prayer of the Pharisee and the Publican (Luke 18:9-14).

8. Prayer for Peter (Luke 22:31-32).

9. Prayer in Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-46).

10. Prayer and the risen Lord (Luke 24:30, 50-53).

John:

1. Prayer of thanks for hearing Christ (John 11:41, 42).

2. Prayer with a double aspect (John 12:27-28).

3. Prayer for the Spirit (John 14:16).

4. Prayer in the name of Christ (John 14:13-15; 15:16; 16:23-26).

5. Prayer of all prayers (John 17).

Acts:

1. Prayer in the upper room (Acts 1:14).

2. Prayer for a successor to Judas (Acts 1:15-26).

Prayer and worship (Acts 2:42-47).

4. Prayer in the temple (Acts 3:1).

5. Prayer for boldness (Acts 4:23-31).

6. Prayer and ministry of the word (Acts 6:4-7).

7. Prayer of Stephen (Acts 7:55-60).

8. Prayer for Samaritans and Sorcerer (Acts 8:9-25).

9. Prayer of Saul (Acts 9:11).

10. Prayer for Dorcas (Acts 9:36-43).

11. Prayer of Cornelius (Acts 10:2-4, 9, 31).

12. Prayer for Peter in prison (Acts 12:5, 12-17).

13. Prayer when Barnabas and Saul chosen (Acts 13:2, 3).

14. Prayer with fasting (Acts 13:2, 3; 14:15, 23, 26).

15. Prayer at the riverside (Acts 16:13, 16).

16. Prayer in a prison (Acts 16:25, 34).

17. Prayer with Ephesian elders (Acts 20:36).

18. Prayer in a shipwreck (Acts 27:23-35).

19. Prayer for the fever-stricken (Acts 28:8, 15, 28).

Romans:

1. Prayer for a prosperous journey (Romans 1:8-15).

2. Prayer and the Spirit (Romans 8:26-27).

3. Prayer for Israel (Romans 10:1).

4. Prayer to be constant (Romans 12:12).

5. Prayer for likemindedness (Romans 15:5, 6, 30-33).

6. Prayer of doxology (Romans 16:25-27).

II Corinthians:

1. Prayer as a benediction (II Corinthians 1:2-4).

2. Prayer for removal of thorn in the flesh (II Corinthians 12:7-10).

Ephesians:

1. Prayer for perception and power (Ephesians 1:15-20).

2. Prayer for inner fullness (Ephesians 3:13-21).

3. Prayer for all the saints and Paul (Ephesians 6:18, 19).

Philippians:

1. Prayer as a request for joy (Philippians 1:2-7).

2. Prayer and peace of mind (Philippians 4:6, 7, 19-23).

Colossians:

1. Prayer as praise for loyalty (Colossians 1:1-8).

2. Prayer for a sevenfold blessing (Colossians 1:9-14).

3. Prayer fellowship (Colossians 4:2-4, 12, 17).

I Thessalonians:

1. Prayer of remembrance (I Thessalonians 1:1-3).

2. Prayer for a return visit (I Thessalonians 3:9-13).

3. Prayer, praise and perfection (I Thessalonians 5:17, 18, 23, 24, 28).

II Thessalonians:

1. Prayer for worthiness of calling (II Thessalonians 1:3, 11, 12).

2. Prayer for comfort and stability (II Thessalonians 2:13, 16, 17).

3. Prayer for the word and protection (II Thessalonians 3:1-5).

II Timothy:

1. Prayer for Timothy's ministry (II

Continued on page 4

The Representative Work Of Jesus Christ

Introduction

The purpose of the book of Hebrews was to prevent apostasy among the Jewish Christians by setting forth the superiority and saving power of Jesus Christ. Because of this deterrent purpose, the author of Hebrews exhorts his readers to "consider Jesus" (Hebrews 3:1). The term "consider" (Greek: *katanoeo*) means to observe something or someone carefully, resulting in an appreciation for, and an understanding of, that person or object. If Christians ever mature so as to understand God's will (Hebrews 12:5-14), it will take more than a half-hearted, disinterested, GLANCE into his word. Rather, it will require a concentrated inspection or GAZE into heaven's revelation to glean its teaching, and a determined effort to make personal application. In complying with the exhortation to "consider Jesus" it will be our objective in this article to study the representative work of Jesus Christ as outlined in Hebrews 3:1-6).

THE WORK OF JESUS AS AN APOSTLE (Hebrews 3:1)

The term "apostle" (Greek: *apostolos*) identifies one who is sent forth by another. Contextually, it is used of Jesus to describe his being sent by God into this world (John 17:3; 3:17; 5:36; 7:29; 8:42). The purpose of Jesus' descension from heaven was to "seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). In classical Greek, *apostolos* was frequently used to refer to an ambassador. The office of ambassador is representative in its nature, in

that, one acts on the behalf of another, Too, in this office of representation, the ambassador possesses the authority of the one who sent him (Matthew 28:19-20), and serves also as his voice.

Therefore, as an "apostle," having been sent by God, Jesus represents God to men, expressing to man the perfect will of Jehovah (John 12:50; 14:10). Accordingly, as Christians, we would do well to humbly bow in compliance to every teaching of Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:21; II Thessalonians 2:7-9).

THE WORK OF JESUS AS A HIGH-PRIEST (Hebrews 3:1)

The term "Priest" is from the Latin word *pontifex*, meaning, a bridge builder. The responsibility of a priest, like that of an ambassador, was representative in its nature. However, unlike the ambassador who represented God to man, the priest represented man before God (Hebrews 4:15; I John 2:1-2).

In the Aaronic order, the high priest in "building bridges" was responsible for the annual atoning for man's sins (Leviticus 23:26-44). Accordingly, Jesus Christ, as our sacrificial lamb and high priest, has atoned for our sins (Hebrews 9:22; Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 10:4, 10-12; I John 1:7), and thereby has "bridged" the gap between man and his creator (Isaiah 59:1-2; Galatians 4:4-7). Today, to benefit from his atoning sacrifice, man must come in contact with his shed blood. This "contact" and its subsequent

benefits are realized in baptism (John 19:31-34 with Romans 6:3-4; Acts 2:38; I Peter 3:21).

THE RESULTS OF CHRIST'S REPRESENTATIVE WORK (Hebrews 3:6)

The results of Jesus Christ's representative work is identified by the Hebrews writer as giving man "confidence and hope." The term "confidence" (Greek; *parresia*) conveys the ideas of courage, boldness, or fearlessness (especially in the presence of people of high rank). Therefore, because of Christ's representative work, the Christian can have confidence in: (1) prayer (Hebrews 4:16; I John 3:21-22; 5:14; I Peter 3:12); (2) the gospel of Jesus Christ (I Timothy 3:13; John 8:32; Romans 1:16); and (3) the day of judgment (I John 2:28).

The term "hope" (Greek: *elpis*) identifies the possession of both (1) a desire and (2) an expectation (Romans 8:25). Because of his confidence founded in and upon Christ, the Christian should, can, and does possess a confident hope (desire and expectation) in that great and final day, the day of judgment (Titus 3:7; Hebrews 6:11; Romans 8:25)!

CONCLUSION

When a Christian carefully consider the representative work of Jesus Christ, and its subsequent results, he will truly appreciate and better understand its benefits. Thereby, he will be less likely to become unfaithful.

Ephesians

Continued from page 2

ones, I must be in Christ, for God chose those who would meet his requirements for being "in him."

Before God laid down the foundation of the world, he planned a means of saving man if he should sin. As Hendren notes, buying band-aids and keeping them in the cabinet does not make one's child receive a scrape or cut; but it does prepare us for such an eventuality. God's plan provided a means for those in Christ to be set apart for his service without any lack. The love here mentioned could either be God's love in choosing a means for us to be holy in Christ (John 3:16), or the love that motivates us to obedience so that we might be made holy by the Father (John 14:15; I John 5:3).

Verse 5. Under Roman law, a Roman citizen could take one not his child by birth and make him his child through a legal act witnessed and attested to, and thereby the child would gain all the rights and privileges of a son in the family. Similarly, those who (because of their sinfulness) were children of the devil, can become children of God through the work of Jesus Christ (Galatians 4:4-7; Romans 8:1-17). All of this was, and is, accomplished in accord with what is pleasing to God. It should be noted that an adopted child is especially chosen, never becoming a son without forethought on the part of the father.

Verse 6. We become God's adopted sons with the express purpose of praising and glorifying the Father and his great grace (Matthew 5:13-16). The words "hath made" are in the past tense, which indicates God, in a one-time act, made provision for our acceptance (Hebrews 9:28). Jesus' death stands as a one-time sacrifice for our sins, and can make us

accepted in Christ Jesus, "the beloved" (Galatians 3:26-27). This can only happen "in him."

Verse 7. A redemption price is paid to buy something back. Lipscomb says in this case, redemption is to rescue from bondage to the devil. It is "in Christ" and "through his blood" particularly, that we find release from, or forgiveness of, sins (Hebrews 9:22; I Peter 1:18-20; Matthew 26:28; John 19:31-34; Romans 6:3-4). Coffman notes the word here used for forgiveness means "letting go" and is used elsewhere only in Romans 4:7 and Colossians 1:14. This is done through the great wealth of God's unmerited favor ("grace") bestowed upon sinful man.

Verse 8. Out of the riches of his grace, God went beyond our need and provided wisdom, on the full knowledge of the divine plan of salvation, and prudence, which is the understanding of it.

Verse 9. The plan was a "mystery" because it was covered or hidden (II Corinthians 3:9-18). The mystery was uncovered in Christ as it pleased God.

Verse 10. God was not rushed, nor delayed, in the carrying out of his purpose. Instead, when the time was ripe (full or ready), God sent Jesus to die, shed his blood, be buried, and be raised. Then, all the things that had been divided by man's rebellion could be united in Christ. Several things we can think of might be included in the time being readied for the Lord. The Jews had seen their inability to live sinless lives, and that the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin (Romans 3:10, 23; 7:7-25; Hebrews 10:1-4). The Gentiles had seen the failure of their wisdom and their downward spiral into a depraved

existence which had resulted from ignoring God and exalting man's wisdom. The Greek language had become the near-universal language of the common mass. Rome had brought peace to much of the world through its conquests, and had opened up highways for relative ease in travel.

Verse 11. Paul now shows the gathering together of the previous verses includes the Jews, who had been God's chosen ones under Moses' law; thus he, uses "we." The word "worketh" means God continually works. Notice, again it is those "in" Christ who will be a part of God's pre-arranged plan. Any Jew who does what is necessary to be "in" him will be a part of God's scheme.

Verse 12. Man was created to glorify God (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Faithful Jews had long hoped for the coming of the Messiah because of the prophecies God had made (Luke 2:22-39, especially 25 and 38). This is what Paul refers to when he speaks of those who had "first trusted" (or "hoped," as the margin says) "in Christ."

Verse 13. If the "we" of verse 11 is the Jews, then, the "ye" of this verse is the Gentiles. They too trusted in Christ once they heard the gospel preached and believed. In John 3:36, the American Standard Version has, "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." By this very accurate translation, we are able to clearly see the word "believe" suggests obedience. Once that obedience is completed, God places his mark of ownership on those who are now "in Christ."

—2576 Pleasant Valley Road, Mobile, AL 36606.

A Preacher's Work

The finest instruction ever given to preachers is found in the books of First Timothy, Second Timothy, and Titus. Gospel preachers should read these books often. Special attention should be given to II Timothy 1-8. Some churches want a preacher who is "out of this world!" But, like other Christians, there are no perfect preachers.



W. A. Holley

The Lord's requirements of preachers are wonderful; but, let us not set standards so high that none can reach them.

THINGS THE PREACHER SHOULD NOT TRY

1) The preacher should not try to be a professional entertainer. The preacher's business is to preach the gospel (Mark 16:16). Paul's instruction reads as follows: "Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 4:2). It is "in season" when people like it, and will obey; but it also must be preached when it is unpopular, or is "out of season." (II Timothy 4:2). He is to "preach the word."

The preacher should not attempt to do all the work of the church. Should he try to do all the work that needs to be done, he destroys himself, and spoils and robs the members of the church of many blessings which come from doing their duty. A preacher needs time for Bible study, meditation, and prayer. If he becomes too busy, he will have nothing to say when he stands in the pulpit.

The preacher must not spend all his time visiting the sick. Of course, he must, as a Christian visit, but visitation is not the exclusive duty of the preacher. Other members of the church (all) are required to fulfill their obligations here (James 1:27).

It is not the preacher's duty to become a dictator in the Lord's church. It is contrary to God's plan for one man, one elder, one deacon, one woman to seek to "run" the church of God. Diotrephes was such a man, but he was rebuked by the Apostle John (III John 9-11). God has put elders -- bishops -- overseers -- in charge of the church (Acts 10:17, 28; Philippians 1:1-2).

Gospel preachers must avoid being used by others to accomplish their selfish purposes. Cooperate? yes! But have your own mind -- do what you think is right -- stand on your own two feet.

Preachers should never become involved in factionalism. Promoters of heresy do great harm to the people of God. Schisms are always sinful (I Corinthians 12:25). Usually those who are withdrawn from because of their heretical teaching end up establishing their own church or religious group.

THERE ARE SOME THINGS A PREACHER SHOULD DO

What are they? A gospel preacher should be a preacher of the word or the gospel of Christ (II Timothy 4:2; Mark 16:16; Romans 1:16). If a preacher has any business in the pulpit it is to preach the word. One cannot "preach the word" without preaching the word! Preachers should not talk about the scripture; they should preach the scripture (I Peter 4:11). Preachers should never carry their

personal problems into the pulpit with them. Endeavor to be filled with enthusiasm -- but not with apathy -- as you proclaim God's wonderful message.

A preacher who is dispirited, aggravated, grieved, and emotionally upset cannot do an acceptable job preaching the gospel of Christ. Furthermore, maintain a good, wholesome relationship with your wife and children. To do otherwise is to fail.

Preachers should keep in close contact with the elders. As a rule, if a preacher is considerate of the elders, they will also be with him. Elders are the overseers of the church -- remember that! Do not try to run away from the elders. It is necessary to learn that one (the preacher) cannot have his way all the time. Peter and Judas, James and John made mistakes. It is far easier to be a wrecker than it is to be a builder.

Gospel preachers should be aware that the world is watching them (Matthew 5:16). Practice honestly, be fair in your speech and your dealings with others, seek to be tactful and well-mannered, dress neatly, but not gaudily, ever striving to make the best impression possible upon others. Whatever

you do, never permit pride and arrogance to stand in your way.

Permit this writer to address a few remarks to members of the church of Christ: Encourage your preacher. A few compliments for your preacher's efforts are always in order. Jesus never flattered any one, but he did compliment those who deserved such. (Cf., Matthew 8:5-10; Luke 7:1-10). In this manner you can make your preacher's work much easier.

Another suggestion: Pay your preacher a decent salary; support him with your attendance at each service; look for ways to help spread the gospel and build up the church; don't be professional fault-finders -- a proof-reader looks only for mistakes -- never learning what the printed matter really says. Be kind, warm, and friendly toward a fellow-brother and servant of Christ.

Kind Reader, the foregoing remarks are written against the background of more than 54 years of preaching. Verily, if I had my life to live over I would spend it preaching the gospel of Christ.

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Prayers Of The New Testament

Continued from page 2

Timothy 1:2-7).

2. Prayer for the house of Onesiphoros (II Timothy 1:6-18).

3. Prayer for false friends (II Timothy 4:14-18).

Hebrews:

1. Prayer for mercy and grace (Hebrews 4:16).

2. Prayer and the ministry of Christ (Hebrews 5:7, 8; 7:24, 25; 9:24).

3. Prayer for perfection (Hebrews 13:20, 21).

James:

1. Prayer for wisdom (James 1:5-8, 17).

2. Prayer that is amiss (James 4:2-3).

3. Prayer that prevails (James 5:13-18).

I Peter:

1. Prayer in the married state (I Peter

3:7).

2. Prayer-watch (I Peter 4:7).

3. Prayer for Christian stability (I Peter 5:10, 11).

Revelation:

1. Prayer as golden incense (Revelation 5:8; 8:3).

2. Prayer of the martyred host (Revelation 6:10).

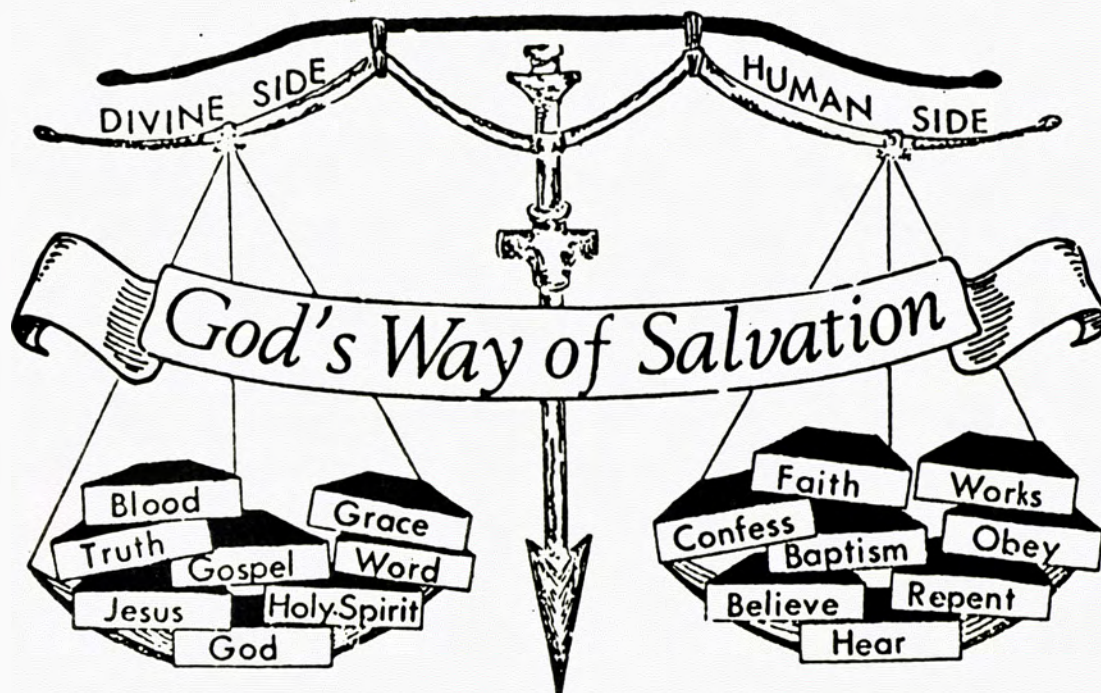
3. Prayer of a great multitude (Revelation 7:9-12).

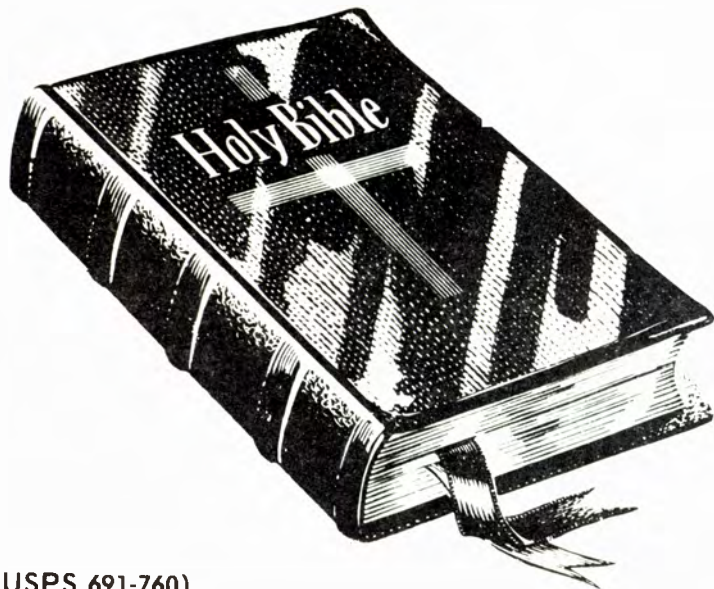
4. Prayer of the elders (Revelation 11:15-19).

5. Prayer of people in heaven (Revelation 19:1-10).

6. Prayer ending the New Testament (Revelation 22:20).

—Box 152, Pharr, TX 78577.





(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I a
Wor

forth the

-Acts 26:25

VOLUME 25

FRIDAY, APRIL 8, 1988

NUMBER 15

A Contented Life

"But godliness with contentment is great gain: for we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out; but having food and covering we shall be therewith content" (I Timothy 6:6-7, A.S.V.).

"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content" (Philippians 4:11, A.S.V.).

"Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5, A.S.V.).

We do not suggest that one should not try to improve one's lot or state in life; but one can bring oneself to the point where he is not disquieted, or disturbed by excessive desires, even though not every wish is gratified or obtained. There is no real reason why a Christian should live a discontented life!!

Even though man has a built-in desire to excel, to progress, to achieve, man can learn to be contented in whatsoever state he may find himself. Just here the reader should open the book of Philippians and peruse its sacred pages.

One can learn to make the best of one's circumstances, whether in prison, or poverty, or sickness, or whatever one's physical handicaps may be. This is exactly what the great apostle Paul practiced. Do not waste your energy through worry (Philippians 4:4-7, 11-13, 19, A.S.V.). A disease that cannot be cured must be endured. Life's shadows will come -- we must somehow learn to live with them.

Jesus taught that we must learn to live life a day at a time (Matthew 6:9-13). Bread



W. A. Holley

for the day is all the bread you need. A true application of the lessons taught in Matthew 6:31-34 will keep us from borrowing trouble. That makes one miserable! A little faith, a little trust, a little common sense works wonders! Forget the past, and look to the future (Philippians 3:13-14). It is always, "now," "today!" Abraham Lincoln, of Civil War fame, when asked what he was going to do, said, "I am like the old preacher in a crowded coach, nearing a raging river -- I never cross a river till I get to it . . . And, besides, many rivers are placid; and the lions along the way are chained, anyway."

Christian friend, where is your faith? The habit of worry needs to be overcome (Matthew 6:24-30). One person had become so accustomed to worry that he could not remember what he was worried about. For shame!

One should never be afraid to try. Success often follows failure! Peter said, "Master, we have toiled all night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless, at thy word, I will let down the net" (Luke 5:5). Excuses are worth nothing. Jesus said, "Launch out into the deep." They then caught more fish than the net would hold. Of course, Peter had to do something about it. Nothing ever succeeds if one never tries! You can control the way you think (Proverbs 23:7).

If one wants contentment, one must develop the correct view of life. We live in the REAL world, not in the IDEAL world. Life cannot be all fun and leisure. Life is pain, struggle, sorrow, toil, and hardship -- as well as success and accomplishment. In fact, life is a mixed bag of things good and bad. There is no easy way through our world. Paul stated, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (II Corinthians 4:8-9; Cf. II Corinthians 11:24-28).

One can increase his measure of contentment by taking time to count his blessings. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of

lights, with whom there is no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning" (James 1:17). Acts 14:17 says, ". . . That he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

You may think you have nothing for which to be thankful; but, just suppose you lost the little you now possess. We sing a song:

"When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed;

When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,

Count your many blessings, name them one by one,

And it will surprise you what the Lord has done."

Have you ever had to beg for bread? (Acts 20:35).

Perhaps the greatest contributing factor to real contentment is a deep and abiding faith and trust in Almighty God. Anxiety possesses us when we doubt our beliefs and believe our doubts. Can it be our nerves crack because our faith has already broken?

Faith in God comes by hearing his word (Romans 10:17). Is our faith shattered because we no longer read his word? Philippians 4:19 says: "My God shall supply all your need . . ." Do we believe this promise?? Philippians 1:12 reads: "The things which have happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel." Can we say, "Amen?"

In Deuteronomy 33:25 God promised the Israelites: ". . . As thy days, so shall thy strength be." The Psalmist wrote, "I will fear no evil: for thou art with me" (Psalms 23:4). Jesus declared, ". . . And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:20).

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

—Acts 26:25

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God's Great Love

(NO. 4)

God's great love gave the spiritual drink: . . . should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). The love of God has a twofold purpose. The first is negative: "Should not perish." God loves us that he may restrain us. Jesus said, "I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). Peter wrote, "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). Paul inquired, "Or despiseth thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance, and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (II Peter 3:9). Each individual must respond to God's love in turning away from those things to which Christ is opposed. He must change his affections from the world to Christ. John urged, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world" (I John 2:15-16). God refuses to accept a divided allegiance. James said, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

The second purpose of God's love is positive:

Continued On Page 3



W. Edwin Kearley

Put The Bible Back Into The Bible School

The church exists to teach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). An expedient tool in frequent use is the Bible school. By definition the "Bible School" is a school where people study the Bible, the word of God.

A visit to some of the liberal Protestant churches in your neighborhood would reveal that there can be a so-called "Bible School" which does not teach God's

book. But a closer look would also reveal that they are dying churches with dwindling attendance and an uncommitted worship.

Lest we be proud, we should take a long, hard look at OUR classes. More often than we wish to admit, a child can attend our Bible classes for years and still be virtually illiterate in Scripture knowledge. The reasons are many, but some causes are:

- 1) untrained teachers who know neither how, nor what, to teach;
- 2) unprepared teachers who fail in their duty to their pupils;
- 3) poor literature with insufficient and/or inadequate teaching aids which have little Biblical content, and/or poorly present God's truth;
- 4) a Bible school program in disarray and confusion;
- 5) unmotivated students, who come to class unprepared, and manifest no interest in learning;
- 6) uncaring parents who make no effort to help their children learn at home or be prepared for their Bible classes;
- 7) irregular attendance, with frequent absences and tardiness.

This problem is usually reflected in ill-kept classrooms, literature not available on time, teachers not present when classes assemble, and no discipline in the classroom.

Such a situation is a recipe for an educational disaster. As overseers of the church who bear responsibility for the souls of the flock (Hebrews 13:17), elders must see that such a scenario never occurs in their congregation.

If it has already happened, elders should immediately post an "all-hands-on-deck" alert, and take all necessary action to rectify the situation.

- 1) Make an immediate inspection to determine the extent of your problem.
- 2) Re-shuffle your workers to see that competent people are put in charge of repairing the damage already done.
- 3) Mount the pulpit and tell the flock how important the Bible school is, and emphasize their need to be actively involved in it.
- 4) Meet with your teachers. Let them know that you expect their best efforts if they are to teach.
- 5) As supervisors, attend the various classes. Observe what is being taught, and how effectively it is being done. Don't hesitate to give specific suggestions to your teachers for improving their work.
- 6) Speak to the students. Tell them the value of their class. Urge them to be good students.



John Waddey

7) Have your preacher deliver meaningful lessons on the value of Bible Study, the privilege and duty of teaching, the need for faithful attendance and participation in Bible Class.

8) Plan a program, and have a drive for increasing Bible School enrollment and attendance. Set some challenging goals.

9) Pray for God's help and guidance in safely leading your flock from here to eternity, that souls in your charge will truly grow in grace and knowledge (II Peter 3:18).

10) Insist that every one involved in your Bible School program exalt God's word! Encourage each student to bring his Bible, to study it, memorize it, learn its practical lessons, and how to live them. Make it clear that Bible class hour is not for play, not for entertainment, not for baby-sitting, but for learning!

Let 1988 be the year when we put the Bible back into the Bible School!

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

Galatians

Gary C. Hampton

Verse 1. Paul is here continuing his defense of his apostleship, and is further proving that it did not come from men. He omits mention of the visit to take the collection for the needy saints to Jerusalem, likely because such a brief visit would not allow for him to learn much. This is especially true since James was beheaded, Peter imprisoned, and the other apostles were in hiding (Acts 11:27-12:25). The visit Paul now mentions is very likely the one to the Jerusalem council (Acts 15). It occurred after fourteen years, which we again assume is dated from his conversion. Clearly, Titus was in the group of "certain other" mentioned by Luke (Acts 15:2).

Verse 2. This trip to Jerusalem was both by revelation from the Holy Spirit, and appointment by the church at Antioch (Acts 15:2). Upon his arrival in Jerusalem, Paul sought and obtained a private audience with the leading men of the church there, likely the apostles and James and, perhaps, others. This was to set before them the gospel that he preached, not only when with the council, but also as the Galatians letter was written, as the present tense verb "preach" would indicate. It could have been devastating to be in a public assembly and be questioned in such a way that others could misconstrue what was said to the point of making it appear that Paul disagreed with the other apostles. How wise they were to confer beforehand and answer any questions in private.

Verse 3. Titus may have been the test case Paul brought with him because of the controversy in Antioch. Even if he were not, he, as an uncircumcized Gentile, proves the rule that one does not have to submit to circumcision to satisfy the demands of Christ; because Titus was at the conference, and was not compelled to be circumcized.

Verse 4. False brethren are mentioned in only one other place in the New Testament (II Corinthians 11:26). They were the ones who pressed for Titus to be circumcized. They had been sneaked into the meeting, and possibly also the churches, to spy out, which Thayer says means, "to inspect, view

Continued on page 3

Josiah, the Mistaken King

Following the entrance of Israel into the land of Canaan it was God's divine purpose to govern them through Judges. These were 15 in number -- Othniel being the first; Samuel, the last one.

In the course of time the people became dissatisfied with God's way of ruling them and demanded a king to rule over them. We read, "When Samuel was old, . . . he made his sons judges over

Israel. Now the name of his first/born was Joel; and the name of his second, Abijah: They were judges in Beersheba. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted justice" (I Samuel 8:1-3).

The conduct of Samuel's two sons represented no weakness or fault of God's system of government; but it did show a marked and shameful disregard of his will. When elders, deacons, preachers, and other members 'mis-live' their high calling, it does not mitigate the will and way of the Lord. The Lord's law is right, even if all the members of the church go wrong!

The people of Samuel's day demanded a king to rule over them. "We will have a king over us, that we may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles" (I Samuel 8:19-20). How foolish! Instead of God's ruling over them, they wanted a king. In our time many are dissatisfied with God's way (the New Testament way), but desire a Pope, or denominational machinery to rule over them. Such wish to be "like all the nations."

In due time a king was granted them. Saul, David, and Solomon reigned for 120 years. Then the kingdom was divided: Two tribes, Benjamin and Judah, became the Kingdom of Judah, with Rehoboam their first king. The other ten tribes, under Jeroboam, became the Kingdom of Israel -- a rebellious kingdom. In these kingdoms some rulers were good, and some were bad. Idolatry and apostasy became the order of the times.

It was during one of the darkest periods of Jewish history that Josiah King of Judah was born. He was a subject of wonderful prophecy: "And behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of Jehovah unto Bethel: and Jeroboam was standing by the altar to burn incense. And he cried against



W. A. Holley

the altar by the word of Jehovah and said: O altar, alter, thus saith Jehovah: Behold a son shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he sacrifice the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee. And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which Jehovah hath spoken: Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out" (I Kings 13:1-3).

Here is one of the most remarkable prophecies in the Bible. This prediction was about 350 years before the event took place. The child to be born was "Josiah" whose name was called 350 years before his birth! How could the "man of God" have known? The answer is found in that he spake by the inspiration of the Spirit of God (Cf. II Timothy 3:15-17; II Peter 1:20-21).

The prophecy mentioned in I Kings 13:1-3 finds its fulfillment in II Kings 23:15-16. Josiah was on the throne of Judah. He came to Bethel, the right place. The Bible says: "Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, even that altar and high place he brake down; and he burned the high place and beat it to dust, and burned the Asherah. And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount; and he sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and defiled it, according to the word of the Lord, which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these things."

Josiah made war against idolatry throughout the land. He destroyed every/where high places, groves, images and all outward signs and relics of false worship. He restored the Temple, finding therein the book of the law of Moses, which he endeavored to impress afresh upon the minds of his people. Perhaps, his greatest day was the celebration of the Passover (in his 17th year) which had long been neglected. He was a great reformer!

What was Josiah's mistake? He was a meddler. He became involved in affairs which were not his own. Pharaoh-Necho was on his way to wage war against Assyria, but Josiah attempted to intercept him, and was slain in battle near Megiddo. We suggest that our readers turn to II Chronicles 35:20-27, to learn of the sad fate of Josiah. Josiah seems to have been 'spoiling for a fight;' he should have known that it is never right to intrude into the affairs of others.

But Josiah would not listen when he was told to stop his efforts to interfere in the affairs of Pharaoh: "What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house where-

with I have war; and God hath commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not" (II Chronicles 35:21). Despite the foregoing warning, Josiah would not control himself: "Nevertheless, Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight against him, and hearkened unto the words of Neco from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo" (Verse 22).

In the battle that followed, Josiah was mortally wounded (verses 23-24). Here is a man who should not intrude into the affairs of another. Should we not learn from this incident?

"He that passeth by, and vexeth himself with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears" (Proverbs 26:17). In the New Testament we read: "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men's matters: but if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name" (I Peter 4:15-16).

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Galatians

Continued from page 2

closely, in order to spy out and plot against" the liberty Christians have in Christ. Note, "in Christ" we are free from the law of Moses. Their evil intent was to subject all Christians to that law, which would be like enslaving a recently freed man.

Verse 5. Paul would not yield on the circumcision of even one man, Titus, just to appease for even an hour. To have done so would have negated the truth of the gospel for the Gentiles, and would have necessitate their submitting to the law of Moses, and being Jews.

Verse 6. Paul has just finished with the false brethren, who might be called "no-what." Now, he takes up those thought to be "some-what" because of their position and relationship to Jesus: James, the Lord's half-brother, Peter and John, who were of that special inner circle of three disciples (verse 9). God does not pay special attention to a man's position. It is the message that is important, and not the messenger (I Corinthians 3:4-8). These men of prominent position in the eyes of men did not add anything to the gospel Paul preached. Instead, Paul informed them of the work being done among the Gentiles (Acts 15:12).

Verses 7-9. Instead of imparting knowledge to Paul, the three who were called, by men, "pillars" of the church, gave him public endorsement as a partner in the spreading of the gospel. They could see that the Holy Spirit was behind Paul's work just as much as he was Peter's (Hebrews 2:3-4). Peter had been given a special assignment to the Jews: and Paul, to the Gentiles. This does not preclude Paul's preaching first in the synagogue wherever he went, nor Peter's being called to the house of Cornelius. Instead, they primarily worked in the land of the Jews, in Peter's case; and Gentiles, in Paul's. It is interesting to note that James is named first of the three, and it was he that evidently 'chaired' the conference (Acts 15:13-21). How could this be if Peter had been given supremacy?

Verse 10. Remembering the poor, especially in Judea, would keep a bond of fellowship and love between all Christians. Paul

Continued on page 4

God's Great Love

Continued from page 2

"but have eternal life." Love and life are associated. It is love that gives life. The stream of love is untouched by death. "Eternal life" is more than eternal existence. Who desires to live forever in the misery of the present evil world? The life we seek is a life of unending bliss.

Because God loves us, we ought to love him (I John 4:19). We ought to love him with our entire being. Jesus quoted Deut. 6:5, "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" (Mark

12:30). Love, we need to remember, is an expressive thing. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). The one who has never become a Christian must believe in Jesus as God's son, repent of his sins, confess faith in Christ before men, be buried with our Lord in baptism, and arise from the watery grave to walk a new life (Romans 6:3-5).

WILL YOU RESPOND TO GOD'S GREAT LOVE?

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

Galatians

Continued from page 3

had already taken one gift to the needy saints at Jerusalem (Acts 11:28-30), and had helped collect another and delivered it on his final visit to Jerusalem (Romans 15:26-27; Acts 24:17).

Verse 11. Since Paul was in Antioch both before and after the council, we cannot positively say when this incident occurred. Peter was used to deliver the gospel to the Gentiles at Cornelius' house (Acts 10:11-16) and would have known better either before or after. It was obviously a desire to please men that drove him to make such a terrible error. In contrast to his accusers, Paul withstood Peter to the face, and that in public. False teaching must be stopped immediately (Titus 1:9-11). This verse clearly sets forth Peter's fallibility, and the proper way to oppose those in error.

Verse 12. Some had claimed to be sent by leaders in the Jerusalem church when they were not; and this may be the case here (Acts 15:24). Peter had defended his eating with Gentiles once (Acts 11:1-8), and obviously knew better than to act in such a prejudiced way (Acts 10:34-35).

Verse 13. The word translated "dissembled" is the same one translated **hypocrisy** in other places (Matthew 23:28; Mark 12:15; Luke 12:1; I Timothy 4:2; I Peter 2:1). It describes the acting of a stage player who pretends to be something he is not. How sad to see that this wave of pretentious actions should sweep over all the Jewish converts at Antioch, captivating even Joses who had been named "Barsabas, (which is, being interpreted, the son of consolation,)" by the apostles. He had been with Paul on the first missionary journey and had been instrumental in the conversion of many Gentiles. To see him fall prey to wrong actions because the majority was being swept away, causes us to realize that even the strongest can err from the truth. (I Corinthians 9:27; 10:12; Hebrews 3:12; II Peter 1:10; 2:9-22).

Verse 14. Peter had violated plain teachings of truth by withdrawing his fellowship from the Gentile Christians. His actions taught that they must live as Jews and submit to the law of Moses to be worthy of his association. Yet, Peter, who was himself a Jew, had been unable to keep the law of Moses perfectly (Romans 7; Psalms 143:2). Why then should he require of Gentiles what he, a Jew, could not keep?

Verses 15-16. Peter and Paul were born Jews, but they sinned under the law and could find no means of forgiveness (Romans 3:10, 23; Acts 13:38-39; Hebrews 10:1-4). Instead, they had to turn to Christ for the solution to their sin problem. It took "the faith of Christ," which describes his complete faithfulness to and obedience of the will of God in his sacrificial death, to free man from sin (Hebrews 10:5-10; 9:11-14, 22-28; Philipians 2:5-11). Then Jews like Peter and Paul had to believe in him that they might be pronounced free from guilt because of Christ's faithful sacrifice. The works and sacrifices of the law of Moses did not free them from guilt, as we have seen; but Christ's faithful service can, if we have an obedient faith (Romans 1:5; 16:26).

Verse 17. When the Jews turned to Christ to be pronounced free from sin, they learned that they were sinners (Romans 3:9-23). If they then turned away from Christ, he would merely be the one who made them aware of their sins. Paul strongly opposes any such thought.

Verse 18. If the Jews now turned back to the law that had been torn down because it could not take away sin, and in so doing turn away from Christ and his obedient sacrifice, they made themselves hopeless sinners with no way to overcome their sin.

Verse 19. The law has its natural end in Christ. He came to fill it full (Matthew 5:17-18). Its purpose was to bring man unto Christ and the salvation that is found in him (3:24-25; II Timothy 3:15; John 5:39). Shepherd says, "To die to a thing is to cease to have relation to it, so that it has no further claim upon or control over one" (Romans 6:2, 6-7; 7:1-4). The law of Moses made one aware of his sins without showing him a way out of sin. When a Jew died to that law and the sin it made known, he could then live to God.

Verse 20. To overcome sin, Paul had to come into contact with the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 9:22; Ephesians 1:7). To contact the blood of Jesus, Paul had to contact his death because that is where he shed his blood (John 19:31-35).

This could only be done by burial into death with Christ in baptism (Romans 6:1-11; Colossians 2:12-13). Jesus' death brought to an end the time for the law of Moses to be in

force and ushered in the new era when his will would be the law of the day (Hebrews 9:11-17). Thus, when we die, or are crucified, with Christ, we die to the law of Moses and the ordinances which pointed out our sins -- but could not remove them (Colossians 2:14-16). We are dead with Christ to sin and the law. Therefore, we should be ready to live with Christ, or, as Paul says it here, let Christ live in us because his faithful service has set us free from the bondage of death. Note: just as verse 16 spoke of the faith of Jesus, this verse speaks of the faith of the Son of God. We are only able to overcome sin because of his faithful sacrifice. So, Paul goes on to speak of the great act of love performed by Christ when he gave his life for us (John 15:13).

Verse 21. Paul believed Christians are saved by the grace of God in Christ, and not by works of the law. In saying that he was dead and Christ lived in him, Paul did not invalidate the grace of God. Such could not be said of the Judaizing teachers, nor Peter, if they were turning back to the law for their hope (Romans 11:6). If one could be saved by the works of the law, then Christ died to save men when men did not need his death to be saved!

—2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, AL 36606.

The Prayer Life Of Jesus

Tom Kelton

Jesus' life was filled with prayer. "In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard for his godly fear" (Hebrews 5:7 R.S.V.).

A careful reading of the prayer life of our Lord will convince us of the necessity of praying ourselves. If the Son of God realized the necessity of praying, we should realize how desperately we need to pray.

The following outline is intended to be an aid to those who want to study Jesus' prayer life in detail.

I. Some prayers of Jesus:

A. Christ began his earthly ministry praying after his baptism (Luke 3:21).

B. Christ prayed during his early Galilean ministry (Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16).

C. Christ prayed before he chose the twelve apostles (Luke 6:12-13).

D. Christ was praying before Peter made the good confession (Luke 9:18-20).

E. Christ was praying when the disciples asked him to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1).

F. Christ taught his disciples to pray (Matthew 6:5-15; Luke 11:2-4).

G. Christ prayed after feeding the 5,000 (Matthew 14:23).

H. Christ prayed at feeding the 4,000 (Mark 8:6).

I. Christ prayed at the transfiguration (Luke 9:28-29).

J. Christ prayed when he raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:42-43).

K. Christ prayed at Bethany (John 12:27).

L. Christ prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-45).

M. Christ prayed at the last supper (Matthew 26:26).

N. Christ prayed on the cross (Luke 23:34).

II. Observations about some of Christ's prayers:

A. Christ prayed before great events and crises of his life (Luke 3:21-22; Luke 6:12-13; 9:18-21; Mark 1:35-38).

B. Christ prayed after achievements and important crises (Matthew 14:23; John 6:15).

C. Christ prayed before the great temptations of his life (Matthew 26:36).

D. Christ prayed when life was unusually busy (Luke 5:15-16).

E. Christ prayed in time of deep joy (Luke 10:21-22).

F. Christ prayed in time of deep anguish (Mark 14:33-42).

G. Christ gave thanks when food was served (Matthew 14:19; 26:26; Mark 8:6; John 6:11).

H. Christ prayed early in the morning and late at night (Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12).

I. Sometimes Christ prayed with his disciples but mostly alone (Luke 9:29; Mark 6:46; Luke 9:18; Matthew 14:23).

III. Some persons and things Jesus prayed for:

A. Jesus taught prayer was necessary on the part of his disciples for them to cast out evil spirits (Mark 9:29).

B. Jesus taught his disciples they ought to pray always and not lose heart (Luke 18:1).

C. Jesus prayed for the Comforter to come (John 14:16).

D. Jesus prayed for Peter (Luke 22:31-32).

E. Jesus prayed for himself, his disciples and those of us who believe through their word (John 17:1-26).

F. Jesus tells us to pray the Lord of harvest to send forth reapers (Luke 10:2).

Jesus continually prayed and he knew that the Father heard him when he prayed (John 11:41-42). He and the Father were in constant communication. He truly prayed always and never lost heart (Luke 18:1).

We Christians should have as our primary purpose in life to be like Christ. He has "left us an example that we should follow in his steps" (I Peter 2:21). We should do as he has done (John 13:15) and walk in the same way in which he walked (I John 2:16).

We are not like Christ unless we pray the way he did!

I hope you will carefully study these scriptures on the **Prayer Life of Jesus**, and purpose to make prayer more a part of your life.

—Box 152, Pharr, TX 78577.



Words Of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

(USPS 691-760)

VOLUME 23

FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 1988

NUMBER 16

Ananias And Sapphira, Partners In Deceit

Satan never grants the church rest until he has it under his evil power. Even when the apostles were yet upon the earth, he sought to subvert, corrupt and destroy Christ's people. A notable example is that of Ananias and Sapphira, a couple who sought to deceive their brethren, and thereby incurred the wrath of Jehovah (Acts 5:1-16). "They sold a possession, and kept back part of the price . . . and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet . . ."



John Waddey

About Our Subjects

Ananias and Sapphira were members of the Jerusalem congregation. This tells us that they had heard and obeyed the gospel in becoming Christians, even as we also have. Since Pentecost all who hear the gospel, believe and are baptized are saved (Mark 16:16), and are added by the Lord to the church (Acts 2:47). They were "church-going" people. Thus they enjoyed the respectability that goes with being disciples of Jesus. These folk were privileged to hear some of the world's greatest gospel preaching as members of the Jerusalem church. They had witnessed the miracles and signs wrought through the apostles by the Holy Spirit. The fact that they had land to sell tells us they were rich -- for only the wealthy were landowners in this age. Their names seem terribly inappropriate: "Ananias" (Hanaiah) meant "to whom Jehovah has been gracious;" "Sapphira" (from Sapphire) meant "Beautiful."

Background of Their Sin

In their zeal and dedication, many of the Jerusalem saints sold their property and gave the proceeds to the Lord for the benefit of the poor (Acts 4:32-36). Doubtless, praise and recognition were given to those generous saints, such as the compliment given to Barnabas by Luke (Acts 4:36-37). Our subjects

evidently craved this attention for themselves, but lacked the liberal spirit of others. Their Awful Sin and Judgment

From the sacred record we see a number of sins which combined to form the rope which hanged them. There was deceit in their plotting and pretense before the apostles. There was hypocrisy in pretending to be what they were not. We see their false pride in seeking the praise of men. Avarice is evident in their unhealthy desire for and attachment to money. Their concept of God was faulty in that they believed they could succeed in such a trick. They were guilty of sacrifices in lying while engaged in an act of worship to God. They despised the Holy Spirit in lying to him (Acts 5:3). They had not resisted Satan's temptation when the first thought of deception came to mind.

Why Such A Severe Punishment?

Luke reports that when Ananias heard Peter's rebuke he "fell down and gave up the ghost" (Acts 5:5). The same drastic sentence fell upon his conspiring mate. It is not uncommon for students to ask why God dealt so harshly with this couple. Paul tells us that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Thus they got what they earned. It was a just action on God's part. It was important that an evil practice be nipped in the bud. If their bid for glory had gone unchecked, then other weak brethren may have been tempted to try the same. A little leaven will soon leaven the whole lump (I Corinthians 5:6). It was a necessary action in order to counteract the adverse effects such a lie would have on those without the church. A hostile community was eager to find some flaw in the conduct of the disciples. Such hypocrisy would have been paraded as typical of all their good deeds. God did what had to be done to protect his infant church from serious harm.

The Effects of the Judgment

As the word spread through the congregation and community, "great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things" (Acts 5:11). Each brother and sister was made keenly aware of the need for honesty, truthfulness, and sincerity (Philippians 4:8). They saw the awful fruit of hypocrisy and deceitfulness (Romans 1:28). No doubt a "sifting" (Luke 22:31) occurred

wherein the insincere and unconverted distanced themselves from the brethren, while the righteous feared God with reverential awe (Hebrews 12:28-29). Sinners with unholy motives dared not seek membership where such judgments prevailed (Acts 5:13). In the next breath the author informs us that "believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts 5:14). The results were like sunshine after a rainstorm.

Why Preserve This Unpleasant Story?

No one doubts that this is a true historical event in the life of the young church. If we are to have a correct, balanced picture of those early days, we need the bad news as well as the good. It is helpful for us today to know that there have been rascals in the church from the beginning. This should keep us from being too discouraged when we discover their modern-day counterparts in our midst. The death of Ananias and Sapphira forever sounds a warning against the evil sins of greed, hypocrisy and lying. The story in its completeness contains sunrays of hope that the church can survive the failures of her members. More importantly it reminds us of the need for discipline in every congregation. The first church learned directly from God that flagrant sin can not be tolerated. So today we must "mark them that cause divisions and occasions of stumbling . . . and turn away from them" (Romans 16:17). We must "withdraw ourselves from every brother that walks disorderly" (II Thessalonians 3:6). (Few commandments are as universally ignored as is this one. We do so to our own hurt and undoing).

Lessons To Remember

Remember that "lying lips are an abomination to Jehovah, but they that deal truly are his delight (Proverbs 12:22). Now (as then), "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Timothy 6:10). Ananias and Sapphira were not compelled to give all their wealth to God, but they were expected to tell the truth. We cannot trifle with truth and escape un-

Continued on page 4



Words Of Truth

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Ephesians

(No. 3)

Gary C. Hampton

Verse 14. The Holy Spirit is like a down payment or guarantee that the Christian will be allowed to enter heaven. Paul now uses "our" because this guarantee is for all "in Christ," both Jew and Gentile. The "redemption" Christians still look forward to is that of our bodies from the tomb. When we come forth, it will of course be to the glory of God.

Verses 15-16. We have already seen that Paul worked among them and so knew of them firsthand. Perhaps he had not seen any of them since he saw the elders when he called them to Miletus (Acts 20:17ff). However, he was thankful that he had heard of their faith and love of all the brethren, whether of high or low social standing, rich or poor, etc.

Verse 17. The prayer Paul started in the previous two verses is continued here. Lipscomb notes that Bible writers often refer to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; but Paul now calls him "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ." He is also the Father who by his glory raised Jesus from the dead. Of that Father, Paul requests for the Ephesian brethren the ability to apply the knowledge they have received, and to fully understand the revelation they have been given.

Verse 18. Paul further prays that wisdom and revelation will touch a sensitive cord in the inner/most "man" of each Ephesian Christian (Acts 26:16-18). Instead of being blind to the truth (Matthew 13:13-15), Paul wanted them to realize the wonderful blessing they had in the forgiveness of sins and fellowship with Christ on earth, and an eternal home in glory with the Father and the Son (I Timothy 1:13-15; II Timothy 1:12; I John 1:3; I Peter 1:10-11).

Verses 19-21. To show God's ability to accomplish his purpose, Paul uses six different Greek words in describing God's power.

Continued on page 3

Prayer

(No. 3)

Tom Kelton

God speaks to us in the Bible; we speak to God in prayer. One reads the Bible to discover God's will; he prays in order that he might receive power to do that will.

Bible study and prayer are interdependent. Unless we know what God's promises are, we will not be able to pray the way we should. Unless we pray, we will not have the disposition of heart that keeps us studying.

The following teachings on prayer are presented so that you will always pray and not lose heart (Luke 18:1, R.S.V.). Please study these passages very closely because they will make you want to pray by faith.

I. Jesus And Prayer

Prayer played a very important part in the life of Jesus. The words pray and prayer are used at least 25 times in connection with our Lord in the four brief records of his life.

Jesus prayed before the great crises of his earthly life. (Luke 6:12-13; 9:18, 21, 22; 3:21-22; Mark 1:35-38; Luke 22:39-46).

Jesus prayed not only before the great events and victories of his life, but he also prayed after its great achievements and important crises (John 6:15).

Jesus gave time to prayer when life was unusually busy (Luke 5:15).

In the days of his flesh Christ offered up prayer and supplication with strong crying and tears (Hebrews 5:7).

Prayer is an important part of the present ministry of our risen Lord (Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34).

II. The Apostles and Prayer

The apostles devoted themselves to prayer (Acts 6:4). They regarded prayer as one of the two most important works of their lives.

Much of Paul's time, strength, and thought was given to prayer (Romans 1:9; Ephesians 1:15-16; Colossians 1:9; I Thessalonians 3:10; II Timothy 1:3).

III. Prayer and the Early Church

The church devoted themselves to prayer (Acts 2:42). The church lifted their voices together to God (Acts 4:24).

Prayer without ceasing was made by the church (Acts 12:5).

IV. Prayer Is To Be Made For All

1. "For all the saints" (Ephesians 6:18).
2. "For all men" (I Timothy 2:1). All men and women need our prayers. We should pray for those in authority, those in need, those preaching the gospel and all that are alone. We should pray for those we love and those that are our enemies. There isn't any one who doesn't need our prayers.

V. Prayer Is To Be Made In Everything

1. "In everything . . . let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6).
2. "Pray every where" (I Timothy 2:8).

There isn't anything too big, or too small, to pray for. From our daily bread, to the direction of our lives, we need to talk to God and depend on him to hear us. All of our problems should be talked over with him.

VI. Prayer Is To Be Made Continually

1. "Pray at all times" (Ephesians 6:18, R.S.V.).
2. "Pray always" (Luke 21:36).
3. "Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17).
4. "Be constant in prayer" (Romans 12:12, R.S.V.).
5. "Continue steadfastly in prayer" (Colossians 4:2).

These passages make it plain that we must always be in an attitude of prayer and that we must pray much and often. These prayers do not have to be long, formal prayers. They can

be brief sentence prayers spoken as we go through our busy daily lives. The important thing is to have communication with our Father continually on our minds.

VII. Prayer Is To Be In The Name Of Christ

Read John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-24. These three promises of Jesus tell us if we will ask the Father in Christ's name, then: -- first, "He will do it"; second, "He will give it"; and third, "we shall receive it."

VIII. We Must Pray By Faith

Mark 11:24; I Timothy 2:8; James 1:5-8; Hebrews 11:6; Matthew 21:22. Faith is definite specific, asking for and expecting the things for which we ask. Prayer must be free of doubt. We must believe that what "He saith shall come to pass."

Prayer is the highest expression of faith. You no longer let yourself be bound by the visible, but let yourself be guided by the invisible. Unbelief 'believes' what is seen; faith sees what it believes.

If we are to have real faith, we must study the word of God and find out what is promised, then simply believe the promises of God. Trying to believe what you 'want' to believe is not faith. Believing what God says in his word is faith (Romans 10:17). If I am to have faith when I pray, I need a specific promise of God on which I can base my faith. The most wonderful thing is that such promises are always to be found.

No matter how positive any promise of God's word may be, we will not enjoy it in actual experience unless we confidently expect its fulfillment in answer to our prayers.

We must act as if our prayers have been heard long before we actually receive, or realize, the answer.

Faith does not grow discouraged because prayer is not immediately answered; faith takes God at his word, and lets him take what time he chooses to fulfill his purposes. Faith knows there will be delays in answering prayer, and regards such delays as times of testing.

Faith knows that he who has promised is faithful (Hebrews 10:23).

IX. We Must Keep God's Commands For Prayer To Be Answered

I John 3:22; James 5:16; I Timothy 2:8. The one who expects God to do as he asks him, must do whatever God bids him do. If we give a listening ear to God's commands to us, he will give a listening ear to all our petitions to him.

His commands are not grievous (I John 5:3). In all the scriptures there is not a single instance recorded where God commanded any man to do a thing beyond his power.

If we will obey him, God will answer our prayers.

X. Prayer Must Be According To God's Will

I John 5:14; Mark 14:36. God has revealed his will in his word. When something is definitely promised in the word of God, we know it is his will to give that thing.

When we have a specific promise in the word of God, if we doubt that it is God's will, or if we doubt that God will do the thing that we ask, we make God a liar.

God has made his will known in his word. By diligent study we can know that will (John 7:17).

What we ask of God must be in accordance

Continued on page 3

Ephesians

Continued from page 2

The words "exceeding" and "greatness" come from the Greek **huper-ballo** and **megethos** respectively. According to Thayer, they mean "to transcend, surpass, exceed, excel" and "greatness." The word "power" comes from the Greek **dunamis**, which Thayer says is a power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or inherent power. "Working" is from **energeia**, describing superhuman power at work. **Isxus** is the Greek word for ability, strength, and might, and is translated "mighty." The next "power" is from the Greek **kratos**, and is often translated "dominion," because it suggests a power that rules. All of this power is directed toward the salvation of those who believe. It was actively worked out through the sending

of Christ.

God's power was shown in Christ in a three-fold manner: First, he raised Christ from the dead (Romans 1:4). Second, God seated Jesus on the throne of power (Acts 2:24-36). Third, God gave Jesus authority over all other authorities both in this present world and the one to come (Matthew 28:18; Philippians 2:9-11; Colossians 1:18).

Verses 22:23. This might be said to be a fourth way God showed his power in Christ, or an extension of the third. Jesus was made the ruling head of the church, with all phases of it being under his direction and authority (I Peter 5:4). That "church" is synonymous with Christ's body. The church makes Christ full, because it was his ultimate purpose to

establish the church (Matthew 16:13-20). Further, in his coming and establishing the church, Jesus fulfilled all God's great purpose in all that he did, especially the redeeming of man.

CHAPTER 2

Verse 1. Just as God did all those things in Jesus through his power, so he has made alive those of us who were spiritually "dead," or separated from God, in our trespasses and sins (Isaiah 59:1-2). That making alive is accomplished through the gospel by our being buried with Christ by baptism and being raised up, or made alive, to walk in a new life (Romans 1:16; 6:3-4).

Verse 2. These regenerated ones had once lived as the worldly do, controlled by the devil, who is the ruler over all the evil forces that surround the earth like a dark mist. (Compare II Corinthians 4:4; John 14:30; 16:11). Satan works his evil through those who allow worldly thinking to control them.

Verse 3. It may be that verses 2 and 3 refer to the Gentiles and Jews, as in 1:12-13. In any case, Paul is indicating that, prior to yielding to Christ, all men lived according to their fleshy desires and thoughts (Romans 3:10, 23). Wicked ways were followed to the point that they became second nature. Such living for self makes one a child of the devil, because he exhibits the characteristics of him, and calls for God's wrath (Romans 6:23, 1:18-32). Those who act in a godless way can only expect to receive God's wrath, which such actions call for.

Verse 4. The previous three verses pictured sinful man's inevitable destruction, if his position be not altered. Just as God's justice and righteousness called for wrath upon such men, his abundant mercy flowed out of his multi-faceted love toward us, and caused him to make provisions for us.

Verse 5. This provision was made when Jew and Gentile were "dead," or spiritually separated from God, in sin. The word "quicken" means made alive. We are made alive with Christ when we are buried with him in baptism and raised with him to walk in a new way of life which is not dominated by sin (Romans 6:3-4). Thus, God bestows upon us his unmerited favor, and we are saved, in one action, described here by Paul as an already completed act, from our sins. "Salvation" is spoken of in several senses in scripture. It is spoken of as in the future and based upon our compliance with the Lord's will (Mark 16:16). It is spoken of in the present as an act recently completed (Acts 2:47). In that case, Luke makes it clear that they were saved from their past sins by calling on the name of the Lord in repentant baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:21, 37-38, 41). Salvation is also spoken of in a way that refers to our future home in heaven as the ultimate salvation (I Thessalonians 5:8-10; Hebrews 9:28). Because of these varied uses, one can be spoken of as being a part of those who have been saved from past sins by a one-time action now completed, as in this verse; and yet subsequent actions need to be taken to see that he will ultimately be saved in heaven (I Corinthians 5:1-5; Acts 8:18-24). This also explains the "if" clauses that appear in scripture in reference to our continuance in a saved state, or looking forward to a final reward (I John 1:7; 2:24; II Peter 1:10-11;

Prayer

Continued from page 2

with his revealed will and not just our desires. We must ask for what he wants us to have, not just what we want.

We must always be assured God will hear us when we ask according to his will.

XI. Importunate Prayer

(Ephesians 6:18). Importunate prayer never faints nor grows weary; it is never discouraged; it is sustained by a hope that knows no despair, and a faith which will not let go. Importunate praying has patience to wait and strength to continue.

XII. Persevering Prayer

These passages of scripture clearly set forth the truth that prevailing prayer must persevere. We must ask, and keep on asking without growing tired or wavering. We must have the courage to so fix our purpose in mind to such an extent that we will not give up.

If we do this we will be heard.

XIII. Prayer With Thanksgiving

Philippians 4:6-7; I Thessalonians 5:17-18; Colossians 4:2. In approaching God to ask for new blessings we should never forget to return thanks for blessings already granted.

One of the reasons we have so little faith when we pray is because we take so little time to meditate upon and thank God for blessings already received.

To pray like we ought to pray we must be thankful and express our thanks continually to the Father.

XIV. Spirit Helps Us When We Pray

When we pray, both Christ (Hebrews 7:25) and the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:26) make intercession for us. The Spirit helps us even when we do not know all we should pray for.

This promise gives us assurance, that, when we pray, our needs will be met. The prayers that we should pray are taken to our Father. We know that all our prayers will work together for good and that we will be heard.

XV. Blessing Of Two Agreeing In Prayer

Matthew 18:19 shows the power of Christians' joining in prayer. We should pray with and for one another. We should tell our prayer needs to other Christians, and request them to join with us in praying for these needs.

The church has the power to move the world if we will only join together in concentrated prayer.

XVI. God Is Able To Do Above All We Ask Or Think

Ephesians 3:20; Romans 8:32; Luke 1:37. The only limit to prayer is the promises of God and his ability to fulfill those promises.

We must believe that God is able to do all he has promised and that he has proved by giving his Son that he will fulfill these promises.

Our challenge is to meet the requirements that he has made of us in our prayers.

XVII. We Can Know We Have Received What We Ask

I John 5:14-15; Mark 11:24 (NASB). No matter how positive any promise of God's word may be, we will not enjoy it in actual experience unless we confidently expect its fulfillment in answer to our prayer.

Act and speak as if you have already received all your desires. Make your desires real in your mind and pray based on the promises of God. Accept them as realities when you pray.

XVIII. Additional Promises For Prayer

Hebrews 4:16; John 16:24; Psalms 145:18; 91:15; 55:17; 138:3; 21:2; 34:17; 37:4-5; 50:15; 86:7; II Chronicles 7:14.

XIX. Hindrances To Prayer

James 4:2-3; Isaiah 59:1-2; Proverbs 21:13; James 1:6-7; Mark 11:25. These hindrances can cause us not to receive an answer to our prayers. If we are going to be blessed by our prayers we must be certain that we avoid all these hindrances.

Conclusion

Almighty God answers prayer. He hears and answers every and all prayer where the true conditions are met. Either this is so, or it is not. If not, then there is nothing in prayer! It is just the recitation of words, a mere verbal performance, an empty ceremony.

There are great possibilities in prayer. It is far reaching in its scope and wide in its range. Prayer can lay its hand upon God and move him to do great and wonderful things.

His promises are for all of us. He means to do for all of us who pray just what he says he will do, "For he is faithful that has promised."

Make prayer a vital part of your life. "Pray without ceasing" and you will be more than a conqueror. You will be able to meet every problem that arises in your life. God will be with you and help your every need. You will have strength and encouragement when you are low, and a friend you can always turn to.

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you!" (Matthew 7:7).

—Box 152 Pharr, TX 78577.

Continued On Page 4

Reproaches Removed

We sincerely request that Nehemiah 2:9-20, be closely scrutinized. Because of their rebellion against God, the Jewish people were in Babylon as captives. Artaxerxes the king saw Nehemiah's sorrow of heart, and desired to know its cause. Nehemiah then told him of the shameful conditions which characterized the city of Jerusalem (Cf. Nehemiah 2:1-8).



W. A. Holley

Why did Nehemiah wish to return unto Jerusalem, his native city? He wished to "build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach" (Nehemiah 2:17). What does the word reproach mean? Here the word means "shame, disgrace, a cause or an occasion of blame . . ." Hence, Nehemiah wished to make necessary correction.

Members of the church of Christ oftentimes make great and high claims, but they sometimes fall far short of the Lord's standards (Galatians 5:4; II Peter 2:20-22). If we have ceased to speak as the Bible speaks, if we have ceased to conduct ourselves as the Bible demands, if we have brought shame and disgrace upon the Lord's church, we must labor to have these (and all other) reproaches removed. It is through repentance, confession of sin, and prayer, that restoration can be made (Acts 8:21-22; James 5:16). We should know that a good name and a good reputation represent two of our greatest assets (Proverbs 22:1; Ecclesiastes 7:1).

There are two kinds of reproaches. Some reproaches are deserved. Sin always brings reproaches. If one is reproached for drunkenness, adultery, strife and division, et al., it is one's due. Others must suffer reproaches for righteousness' sake (Cf. I Peter 4:14-16; Matthew 5:11-12).

The Lord's church needs all reproaches

Ephesians

Continued from page 3

Revelation 2:10).

Verse 6. As already noted, we are raised from spiritual death when we come up out of the waters of baptism with Christ (Colossians 1:12-13). As we noted in 1:3, the church is God's heavenly kingdom on earth. Once again Paul emphasizes the thought that being "in Christ" is being in the church, or heavenly places.

Verse 7. God's ultimate design for those "in Christ Jesus" is to show them clearly the great wealth of his grace in heaven. The "ages to come" appear to this writer to refer to the eons we will spend in heaven. Throughout that unending span of time we will be constantly reminded of God's great unmerited favor for us, by the joys that surround us.

Verses 8-9. Notice salvation is not by grace, nor faith, alone. There is no way man can earn his salvation; so it is said here to be by the unmerited favor of God. God's grace is extended to all men who will accept that which is offered (Titus 2:11; II Peter 3:9; Revelation 22:17). Man's acceptance comes through faith. Coffman suggests this actually may be "the faith." Since "faith cometh by

removed from its pathway. At the very best, the church already has enough difficulties which serve as obstacles to truth and righteousness (Titus 2:11-12).

(1) "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). Of the church, it is written: ". . . Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (I Peter 2:9). The only way for the church to shine is for its members to shine (Matthew 5:16). Has your lamp gone out? (Matthew 25:1-13).

(2) Nothing brings greater reproach upon the church than those elders, preachers, and deacons who bring shame and disgrace upon his holy cause through their misconduct (II Timothy 2:22-26). All Christians are under the same obligation to live soberly and righteously. Dear Christian friends, never cause the way of truth to be blasphemed! (I Timothy 1:20; Romans 2:24; I Timothy 6:1; Titus 2:5).

(3) Disorderly services are very unfortunate. Too much talking, too much noise, too much coming in and going out, disrupt the Lord's services. One passage talks about decency and order (I Corinthians 14:40). Reverence should characterize all our services (Hebrews 12:28). "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him" (Psalms 89:7).

(4) All forms of internal dissension, consisting of partisan and contentious quarreling, must be laid aside. Peace and unity should be the order of the day (I Corinthians 1:10-13; Ephesians 4:1-6; Philippians 1:27). "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth. As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife" (Proverbs 26:20-21). A house divided cannot stand (Matthew 12:25-26).

(5) Christianity 'mis-lived' is a dark stain upon the body of Christ which is certain to hamper the progress of the church. We bring

reproach upon Christ and the church when our lives deny our profession (Philippians 2:12-18). One old brother said, "How can I hear what you say, when what you are is forever ringing in my ears?" The church needs men and women of sterling character, because character is the beginning and the end of all things. The measure of one's character is what he would do if he knew he would never be found out!

(6) Stinginess with regard to our time, talent, and money, is another reproach which should be removed. How many Christians spend far too little time, talent, and money, in the service of the Lord? Lost time is never found again (Ephesians 5:16). Any talent that is buried is lost forever (Matthew 25:14-30). It is not money, but the "love of money" that is "the root of all kinds of evil" (I Timothy 6:10, A.S.V.).

What is the future of the Lord's church? It can be bright, or dismal, -- as we make it. It can have the best and most efficient leadership, if we want it. The church can be united, peaceful, and workers-together with God, as we desire it.

The influence of the church for good can be an ever-widening circle till it encompasses the whole earth. Let us work to remove all reproaches, and go on to eternal victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Ananias And Sapphira,

Partners In Deceit

Continued From Page 1

punished. Our sin will find us out (Numbers 32:23). Sapphira learned that helpers in sin must be sharers in judgment. Nothing else will shake the confidence of friends more than a lie found out. Nothing else shatters one's self-respect as a lie -- whether he be exposed, or not.

May all of God's children speak the truth and lie not (I Timothy 2:7).

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

HOW CAN I

CONVERT MY HUSBAND?

This question was asked of a preacher in a large city. His answer was: "You can't convert your husband as long as you dance, drink and smoke as much as he does. As long as you are deliberately unfaithful in those things which you are supposed to consider as important, and to which you are supposedly desirous of converting your husband, you can't expect him to make a change. No, you'll NEVER convert your husband until YOU are completely converted yourself." Those who are really interested in converting their companions should study I Peter 3:1-6 and then put it into practice.

... Selected

"TREAT EVERY PERSON WITH KINDNESS AND RESPECT, EVEN THOSE WHO ARE RUDE TO YOU. REMEMBER THAT YOU SHOW COMPASSION TO OTHERS NOT BECAUSE OF WHO THEY ARE BUT BECAUSE OF WHO YOU ARE."

hearing, and hearing by the word of God," we conclude that "faith" is God's gift to man, whether it is the sum of all that is believed, or whether it is the response to what God has said (Romans 10:17). Therefore, it is not by works of merit that we are saved; we have no reason for a feeling of personal accomplishment in our salvation. Our salvation was procured by the death of God's Son on Calvary, and we must do God's will to receive it. God outlined the actions we are to perform to receive his great gift. Clearly, we do not act so as to save ourselves, but to satisfy the Father's requirements.

Verse 10. It is through God's working that we become Christians. We are made new creatures in Christ to perform the good works he has designed for us to do. He prepared "works" for Christians to do even before the first Christian was created in Christ. If we want to be what God intended for us to be, we must do his bidding (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). A living faith is a faith that works (Galatians 5:6; James 2:17-18).

—2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, AL 36606.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am
Word:

orth the
cts 26:25

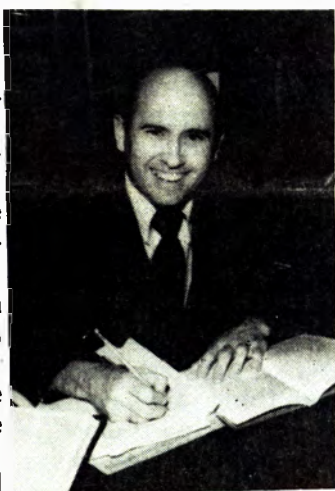
VOLUME 25

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NUMBER 17

The Kingdom Of Darkness*

In revealing his will to us, God chose words and concepts that vividly contrast truth and error. Among the descriptions most commonly used are light and darkness. John writes: "God is light and in him is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5). In salvation we are "delivered out of the power of darkness" (Satan's domain) and "translated into the kingdom of God's Son" (Colossians 1:13). Throughout our New Testament darkness stands symbolically for the opposite of God's way.



John Waddey

The Christ-less life is one of darkness. Before becoming Christians we "were . . . darkness, but are now light in the Lord" (Ephesians 5:8). Christ made the darkness of sin, ignorance, error and superstition to vanish away (I John 2:8). Christians "are all sons of light, and sons of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (I Thessalonians 5:5).

Darkness is hostile to the light. This is true in the material realm, and more so in the spiritual. Christ "was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended" (or overcame) "it not" (John 1:4-5). Jesus said, "Everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reprov'd. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light . . ." (John 3:20). As Christians, our "wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the world rulers of this darkness" (Ephesians 6:12). This mortal conflict between truth and life will never cease till the victorious Christ banishes darkness (Revelation 22:5).

Darkness symbolizes the ignorance of a life

apart from Christ. Without light one is soon confused and lost in the darkness of a literal night. So is the spiritual realm. Jesus said, "Yet a little while is the light among you. Walk while ye have the light, that darkness overtake you not: and he that walketh in the darkness knoweth not whither he goeth" (John 12:35). Jesus is the guiding light by which we make our journey successfully to our eternal home (John 8:12). Even as Israel was provided the glorious light to lead them from bondage to Canaan (Exodus 13:21), so Christ leads us. Whoever believes on Jesus does not abide in darkness. Those who reject him are like a blind man groping along in the darkness.

Darkness describes the chaos of life without God. Paul writes, "It is God that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II Corinthians 4:6). He alludes to God's first act upon the dark chaos of the unfinished creation (Genesis 1:23). Only after God brought forth light was he able to make the earth suitable for living things and man. As the physical world would be chaotic without the SUN, so without the moral light of his SON the world would be in moral, spiritual chaos.

The immorality of the Christ-less life is depicted as darkness. Romans 13:12-14 reads: "The NIGHT is far spent and the DAY is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of DARKNESS, and let us put on the armor of LIGHT. Let us walk becomingly, as in the day; not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." "Works of darkness" are most often pursued in the darkness of night - such as wild partying, drunkenness, adultery, and abandonment. People whose deeds are evil love the darkness, like the doleful creatures of the nocturnal realm. They frolic in the shadows and then hide themselves when the light appears (John 3:19). So a

does the criminal element.

Darkness is always unfruitful. Paul speaks of "the unfruitful works of darkness" (Ephesians 5:11). Without light, growing things soon wither and die. So there can be no fruit of the spirit in a life lived in the darkness of spiritual ignorance and sin (Galatians 5:22-23).

Lack of love and hatefulness always accompany darkness. John warns: "He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother, is in the darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light . . . but he that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes" (I John 2:9-11). Love is like the warm, life-giving sunshine; hatred, like the cold dark night. How sad to see some who profess Christ, yet harbor hatred toward a brother. Such actions are contradictory and mutually exclusive.

Darkness is the abode of Christ's enemies, and is the final destiny of the wicked. Satan's domain is "the power of darkness" (Colossians 1:13). Apostate disciples are like "wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved forever." Wicked angels are "kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment" (Jude 6). The Lord will consign the wicked to "outer darkness" where they will be forever punished (Matthew 22:13).

Conclusion; Jesus gave his life to deliver us from the power of darkness (Colossians 1:13). Today God is calling us out of darkness into his marvelous light (I Peter 2:9). Faithful Christians must continually walk in the light of Jesus' blessed gospel (I John 1:6-7). We must also have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather ever reprove them (Ephesians 5:11-12). As Israel followed their guiding light to their land of freedom and rest, so may we follow Jesus, the light of the world!

*The author is indebted to William Barclay for the heart of this lesson.

-6608 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.



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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Prayer

(NO. 4)

Tom Kelton

Quotations From The Book
Of Psalms On Prayer
(The Living Bible)

5:3 "Each morning I will look to you in heaven and lay my requests before you, praying earnestly."

6:8-9 "The Lord has heard my weeping and my pleading. He will answer all my prayers."

17:1 "I am pleading for your help, O Lord; for I have been honest and have done what is right, and you must listen to my earnest cry."

17:6 "Why am I praying like this? Because I know you will answer me, O God."

18:6 "In my distress I screamed to the Lord for his help. And he heard me from heaven, my cry reached his ears."

22:21 "Yes, God will answer me and rescue me."

27:6-7 "Oh, praise the Lord, for he has listened to my pleadings! He is my strength, my shield from every danger. I trusted in him and he helped me."

31:22 "I spoke too hastily when I said, 'The Lord has deserted me,' for you listened to my plea and answered me."

34:4 "For I cried to him and he answered me! He freed me from all my fears."

34:15 "For the eyes of the Lord are intently watching all who live good lives, and he gives attention when they cry to him."

34:17 "The Lord hears the good man when he calls to him for help, and saves him out of all his troubles."

40:1 "I waited patiently for God to help me; then he listened and heard my cry."

55:17 "I will pray morning, noon and night, pleading aloud with God; and he will hear and answer."

66:20 "blessed be God who didn't turn away when I was praying, and didn't refuse me his kindness and love."

69:33 "For Jehovah hears the cries of his

Continued On Page 3

Ephesians

(NO. 5)

Gary C. Hampton

CHAPTER 3

Verse 1. Paul begins a prayer in this verse, but immediately digresses and does not return to his prayer until verse 14. Because Jew and Gentile were built together on the one foundation, Paul was ready to give thanks to the Father. He identifies himself as "the prisoner of Jesus Christ" because it was in Christ's service that he was taken captive. Further, that captivity was being used by God to advance the cause of Christ, particularly in the Gentile world (6:20; Philemon 13; Acts 20:22-24; 21:13; 28:20).

Verse 2. The word "if" here would be better rendered "since," or "seeing that." The Ephesians knew Paul's commission from Christ particularly pertained to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; Galatians 2:7-9). He was God's ambassador to tell of the wondrous grace available to all in Christ.

Verses 3-4. Christ revealed both the plan of salvation, and his plan for Paul to tell others about it (Galatians 1:11-17; Acts 26:15-18). When he says he wrote a "few" words before about the mystery, Paul may be referring to his earlier mention of the mystery in this book; or he may refer to another letter which we do not have (1:9). Paul's purpose in telling them about the plan of salvation, which once was covered, but now had been revealed, was that they might understand the ultimate meaning of the inspired writings when they studied them.

Verse 5. God uncovered his plan part by part. The Spirit-inspired men who received God's Old Testament messages longed to know their full meaning, but that was reserved for those of the Christian age (I Peter 1:10-12). The apostles and prophets of the New Testament were inspired by the same Holy Spirit. They knew of God's plan to save all men, both Jews and Gentiles, through Jesus Christ.

Verse 6. The Jews had long considered themselves God's people. Now that the "mystery" was made known, Paul could also tell the Gentiles who obeyed Christ that they too are God's people in Christ Jesus. In fact, this truth was a great part of the "mystery" revealed to the inspired apostles and prophets. "Fellow heirs" means the Gentiles are now considered part of God's family. Of course, the "body" is the church, which we have already observed in 1:22-23. The great "promise" in Christ is a new life because of his shed blood which purchased the remission of our sins (Romans 6:3-4; Acts 2:38).

Verse 7. Paul considered his mission to the Gentiles a special favor bestowed upon him by God (I Timothy 1:12-17). This came about by the working of God's power both in saving Paul and in giving him the needed strength to carry out his work.

Verse 8. Paul felt unworthy of his great mission, especially because he had persecuted the church (I Corinthians 15:8-9; I Timothy 1:12-17). The riches of salvation in Christ are so vast they cannot be mapped out or fully explored.

Verse 9. The gospel is truly for all men without respect to race, color, or sex (Matthew 11:28-30; Mark 16:15; Acts 10:34-35; Galatians 3:28; Romans 1:14-16). Each man's share or partnership of the mystery may have to do with the salvation each is offered in Christ. Or, it may refer to the partnership we all, Jews and Gentiles, have in the church. God's greatness is certainly seen in his creation by Jesus Christ of all we see and

know. He is such a great God who lovingly planned for our redemption and kept that plan ready until the time was right to unveil it!

Verse 10. God's wisdom is many-sided, and can only be understood as he reveals it. This is true for angels, as well as for men. At the time of Paul's writing, God's great plan for the redemption of man had been made known to men and angels in the church.

Verse 11. God's eternal intent was at last taken to completion in Christ Jesus, the master of the church. No last-minute revision is found in Paul's thinking. Instead, God's plan unfolds just as he intended before the worlds were formed.

Verse 12. In the margin of the American Standard Version, we have "through the faith of him." Jesus faithfully followed the will of the Father when he gave up his life on the cross of Calvary (Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 10:5-10; 9:11-14, 22-28). His faithful sacrifice gives us boldness, which Summers says means "freedom to speak," and "access," which he says, "may also be translated 'introduction.' The Greek term expresses the idea of one's being led into the presence of another. It was used in Paul's day of one who was introduced into the presence of royalty." Jesus' sacrifice gives us freedom to speak in the very presence of God through prayer (Hebrews 4:14-16; I Timothy 2:5-6).

Verse 13. Paul was willing to suffer the hardships of Roman imprisonment if the gospel could be furthered by his chains (Philippians 1:12-14). He did not want the Ephesian brethren to give up because of his suffering, especially since more Gentiles were being given an opportunity to learn -- because of his bonds -- of God's great plan. Also, as the last verse would indicate, though he was chained, Paul was still free to approach God's throne.

Verse 14. Now, Paul resumes the approach to God's throne which he had begun in verse 1. The things that caused him to bow in prayer are especially those of chapter 2, such as the grace of God toward lost man, reconciliation between Jew and Gentile, and reconciliation of both to God, and the great privileges the Gentiles now have under Christ's law. On the bending of ones' knee, note that one of the words for "worship" in the New Testament is *proskuneo* and suggests making obeisance, or bowing, or even to kiss the ground toward one. Others knelt in prayer to show their respect for God (Luke 22:41; Acts 9:40; 20:36; 21:5). [However, such is not the only position for prayer mentioned, I Timothy 2:8; Luke 18:13; Acts 16:24-25]. Paul's prayer is directed to the Father in heaven, in accord with Jesus' model (Matthew 6:9).

Verse 15. The whole family of God would seem to include angels, faithful men of the past, and faithful on the earth. They are sons of God.

Verse 16. The outward man is the body everyone can see which gradually grows old. The inward man is the soul that will live eternally (II Corinthians 4:16). All of us are made new through the washing of the new birth, or baptism, which the Holy Spirit caused to be written about in the Bible (Titus 3:5). The Spirit can further strengthen us as we feed on the milk and meat of the word (I Peter 2:2; Hebrews 5:12-14). Paul prayed they would be granted the latter strength.

—2576 Pleasant Valley Road, Mobile, AL 36606.

Zacchaeus (NO. 1)

Bible characters provide one with an interesting background for Bible study. In the study of the characters of the Bible, one sees not only the actual precepts of the scriptures, but he has the added advantage of considering the practical application of these teachings in human lives. Greater insight into the meaning of Bible truths can be obtained through character studies. Real-life situations help us to place ourselves in the framework of revelation.



Jerri Manasco

One of the most interesting persons encountered by the Lord during his earthly ministry was Zacchaeus whose meeting with Jesus is recorded in Luke 19:1-10. According to this text Zacchaeus was a publican (a harvester of taxes). Because of his profession he was a social outcast and was considered a religious reprobate (verse 7). Though a man of small stature, Zacchaeus had a keen curiosity that proved to his advantage, as we see in the unfolding of the narrative of his meeting with Jesus. His determination to see Jesus and the ensuing results are impressive.

A primary lesson we may gain from this study is that this publican did not allow either natural or imposed limitations to hinder him from seeing Jesus. A number of things **COULD HAVE** kept him from his goal, but they did not do so.

First, his wealth could have kept him from seeing Jesus. Luke says that Zacchaeus was rich (Luke 19:2). Generally we do not associate wealth with an intense interest in the spiritual pursuits. Though this may be true in many (perhaps most) cases, it is not true in every case; there are exceptions. There are cases where wealth is the great hindering cause. Of these Jesus says, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! . . . Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:23-24). Some folks are so busy adding another dollar mark to their bank account that they have no time left for God.

Zacchaeus was different from some of his class. He took time to run ahead of the crowd so he could get a glimpse of the wonderful Man of Galilee. There are many who run **WITH** the crowd, but this man ran **AHEAD** of it. Wealthy Christians can take note

from this: they **CAN** find time for God if they **WOULD**. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (I Timothy 6:17-19). Their wealth is not condemned unless it tends to slow their pace in the Christian race. There is an irony here that deserves our attention: some people think themselves too rich for God, while some others hide behind the excuse that they are too poor to afford God!! It is a shame that many haven't learned that God accepts us regardless of what we have (II Corinthians 8:12).

Second, his stature could have hindered him from going out to see Jesus; but he did not allow that physical trait to stop him. He overcame this obstacle by climbing a tree in order to rise above the others (verse 4). In our times are those who hide behind the excuse that they "just don't fit in" and that this hinders them from making any serious attempt to be Christians. The excuses vary, but all are just smoke-screens. "I'm too sickly." "I'm too ugly." "People at that church make fun of me." "My clothes are not what the people at church expect people to wear." Etc., etc. The problem is that these people are pretending that it matters what other people think about them! There may be natural impediments of speech, or some peculiar physical distortion; others may mock; but let the "unfortunate" one know that **GOD, NOT MAN, IS GOING TO BE THE JUDGE OF ALL SUCH THINGS IN THE LAST DAY!!** One who mocks your misfortune is certainly not a Christian! Don't allow those hypocrites to keep you from Jesus! Zacchaeus rose above his obstacle, apparently caring little of the crowd's estimation of him.

Third, Zacchaeus could have permitted his social status to serve as a nice, convenient excuse to keep him away from Jesus. Being a publican placed him at a distinct disadvantage in the eyes of the people. He was a "sinner" (verse 7). The possibility that one could be a publican with good character never entered into the thinking of the Jews. Furthermore, the possibility that even a wicked publican could repent and be a better person seemed not to have occurred to these "good" people! What is so impressive is that this publican did not allow the common prejudices of the day to hinder him from seeing Jesus. Whatever might have been the public opinion of this man, it is clear that he manifested a disposition that satisfied Jesus. "Be-

hold, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" (Luke 19:8). It is immaterial whether Zacchaeus is implying that this had always been his practice, or, that it shall become his practice from now on; what is important is that he showed a spirit that was contrary to the hostile estimation that others had of him. Anyone can become a better person if he wants to.

The case of Zacchaeus reminds us of others in the Bible who would not allow themselves the luxury of being hindered by their limitations. Enoch, for example, though living in a time when immense evil made it difficult to be righteous, was able to maintain a godly life-style. "And Enoch **WALKED WITH GOD . . .**" (Genesis 5:22, 24). "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Hebrews 11:5). Noah likewise was righteous before God in a generation of increasing wickedness (Genesis 7:1; 6:1-9). Lot's "righteous soul" was vexed with Sodom's corruptions (II Peter 2:7-8). Wicked times did not provide these men with excuses for not serving God. Paul could have allowed his own circumstances to hinder him from being with Jesus; but when he learned the truth, Paul refused to let his former viewpoints to become an obstacle to his obedience to his Lord. He turned from Judaism to Christ; and in doing this he was turning also from family and friends to become a follower of the despised Nazarene! He turned from persecuting Christians to suffering with them; he turned from personal advantage to eternal reward (Philippians 3:1-10; Acts 9:1-16; 22:1-16).

The example of Zacchaeus (and others of kindred spirit) should impress us with the sense of determination to rise above our obstacles and circumstances to "see" Jesus for ourselves. When we begin to waver from our course, consider Zacchaeus of Jericho. Ponder the examples of others who, though living in environments not conducive to righteous living, were committed to their Lord. There are no reasons for not serving God; only excuses.

—Rt. 5 Box 224, Boaz, AL 35957.

When Loyalty Becomes Idolatry

Part II

Tom L. Bright

In a previous article we stated that loyalty was commendable when evidenced in anyone's life. Without doubt, it elicits respect and admiration from our fellow man, even when we may not agree with the object of that loyalty. But when "loyalty" becomes blind idolatry and "worship" of man or things of man, then our admiration changes to disdain and our respect to scorn. This concept is evidenced in our great brotherhood, especially in the area of our "Christian Colleges."

It is our conviction that when an institution operates under the auspices of being one of "our" colleges, it has a responsibility, not only to the present and former students and their parents (as well as those of the future), but also to the brotherhood in general. I say this because of the very nature of what a

Prayer

Continued from page 2

needy ones, and does not look the other way." 102:17 "He will listen to the prayers of the destitute, for he is never too busy to heed their requests."

116:1-2 "I love the Lord because he hears my prayers and answers them. Because he bends down and listens, I will pray as long as I breathe."

118:5-7 "In my distress I prayed to the Lord and he answered me and rescued me. He is for me! How can I be afraid? What can mere man do to me? The Lord is on my side, he will help me."

119:160 "O, Lord, listen to my prayers; give

me the common sense you promised."

120:1 "In my troubles I plead with God to help me and he did!"

138:3 "When I pray, you answer me, and encourage me by giving me the strength I need."

142:5 "Hear my prayer, O Lord; answer my plea, because you are faithful to your promises."

145:17-20 "The Lord is fair in everything he does, and full of kindness. He is close to all who call on him sincerely. He fulfills the desires of those who reverence and trust."

—P.O. Box 150, Pharr, TX 78577.

Continued on page 4

When Loyalty Becomes Idolatry

Continued from page 3

'Christian College' should be and that for which it should stand. One of the strongest arguments made for these schools is that a much better environment is provided for our young people because they have the occasion to associate with other young members of the church, a strong diet of Bible, and Christian 'teachers.'

The truth of the matter is, that the influence of our 'Christian Colleges' has become so dominant in many areas, that many people feel that unless one has a college degree, he cannot be a preacher of the gospel of Christ. It goes without saying that many congregations are literally dominated by the influence that a particular 'college' wields upon it because of the allegiance of its students. Nor can it be denied that some of the schools of preaching also carry such weight. As I stated in a previous article, many members of the church will allow you to denigrate and demean any and everything until you begin to question their 'school.'

I do not believe that a person should be standing and waiting with eager anticipation for the first negative thing to be said about a 'Christian College,' and then pick it up and 'run with it.' Nor do I believe that members of the body of Christ should have such allegiance to their alma mater that they become blind, even to the point of refusing to consider charges of a most serious nature, and then participate in a cover-up which is second to none. Such, we feel, has happened relative to the recent evolution controversy at Abilene Christian University, in Abilene, Texas.

In our estimation, there are many questions left unanswered by the 'Abilene Christian University Institutional Statement.' This was, of course, an official response to the charges leveled at ACU by brother Bert Thompson in his book *Is Genesis Myth?*, relative to Theistic Evolution being taught in the Science Department of ACU.

As far as we know, no attempt was made to question the contradictory positions affirmed by one of the charged professors over a period of approximately two months. To our knowledge, none of the people referred to in brother Thompson's book, other than the professors charged, were ever questioned or contacted.

Based upon the actions of the University officials, it is clear that they do not intend to give an accounting of this evidence, but rather to participate in a cover up that will cause the Watergate scandal of a decade ago to pale into insignificance. Moreover, when we begin to try to grasp the inestimable harm that such teaching can, and will, do to the church in future generations, it makes our hearts heavy with grief.

Consider please, a letter from ACU President William J. Teague, addressed to an individual who desires to remain anonymous. This letter is evidently in response to a letter written by the person on May 12, 1986, asking for an explanation as to why they had received the 'ACU Institutional Statement' in the mail. In the letter, dated May 22, 1986, which is on ACU stationery, Dr. Teague states:

"Thank you for your letter of May 12.

"The mailing that you received from ACU was sent to individuals who have been a part of the *Herald of Truth* mailing list. The elders at the Highland Church of Christ, that oversees this ministry, felt that the matter was of such great importance that they made the list available to us. Our desire

in mailing the report to the more than 80,000 persons on that list was so that the truth of this situation could be known by all Christians.

Dr. Teague further states that the ACU students have spoken with resounding affirmation that they have never been taught theistic, or any other kind of evolution. He then states that many of brother Thompson's statements in the book were originally made in the context of the classroom, and understood by all of the students in that context, except the one who had taken the original complaint to brother Thompson.

If indeed, there were only one who understood that theistic evolution was being taught, then what about brethren McLeod and MacLeod who, in a personal letter to President Teague, affirmed that they had been taught evolution while at ACU? What about the daughter of brother and sister Jerry Loble of Texline, Texas who told her mother that she was 'confused' about evolution (their daughter graduated magna cum laude from ACU in 1984).

It makes us stop, and with perplexed gaze, look upon such situations that transpired on Wednesday evening, January 22, 1986, in Abilene, Texas. On this date, there was a meeting between ACU officials and the elders/ministers of the Abilene area, conducted at the University. At the conclusion, one elder asked C. G. Gray that, in light of the present evolution controversy, would the biology department be using any creationist materials to supplement their instruction? The answer was: 'Absolutely not!'

Brethren, does this not give us a hint of what is happening? Have we become so blind that we cannot see what is transpiring right before our eyes? It is evident that the ACU officials have decided upon a course of evasion, subterfuge, and cover-up so stupendous in its implication, that if such is successful, it literally 'boggles' the mind.

What happened to the young man who first corresponded with brother Thompson, in bringing this information to light? In late December, 1985, this student was notified that unless he signed a University prepared document, he would not be allowed to enroll for his final semester -- the consequences of which would be that he would not be able to graduate. He refused to do so because he found the conditions stated therein to be unbearable. Notice what they were: (1) His class schedule would be arranged for him by Dr. C. G. Gray, Vice-president of Academic Affairs; (2) He must seek counseling from an ACU-designated official; (3) He must immediately cease 'harassing' his professors; and, (4) He would be on probation until his graduation in May. That, dear brethren, is the way a 'Christian College' chose to treat a 27-year-old college senior!!

What Can We Look For Next?

Although I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet, I would like to suggest some of the things that we might watch for in the future, as it pertains to this present controversy.

First of all, I would suggest that an attack against brother Thompson, and those closely associated with him, will be mounted. We all know that it is a common trait of humans to attack the man himself when you cannot answer his arguments. When the testimony of a witness destroys his client, the lawyer will detract from the character of the witness, attempting to show that he is not credible. An old debater's trick is, if you cannot answer your opponent's arguments, divert the

attention of the audience by attacking the man. Concerning this present controversy, it is already happening.

It is sad, but nonetheless true, that innuendos, insinuations, and rumors, which is nothing short of a whispering campaign, are now circulating about brother Thompson. These tactics, borrowed from the world, touch just about every aspect of his life, in both the secular and spiritual realms. And even more sad is it that some of these rumors have been documented as having their origin with those affiliated with ACU. This, brethren, we abhor! Certainly we are made to wonder why these innuendos and insinuations have surfaced ONLY after brother Thompson began to take issue with what was being taught in the Science Department of this college.

Secondly, I predict that we will see a classic example of 'intellectual snobbery' become even more pronounced in our brotherhood. By this, I simply mean that concerned Christians will be looked down upon as inferior, less than intelligent, simply because they do not have the 'degrees' to wave before the brotherhood. I have never held the view that one must have a 'degree' to recognize error when it was being taught. Nor that one must have a 'major' in Bible before he is qualified to call 'professors' in question about a view which they might hold.

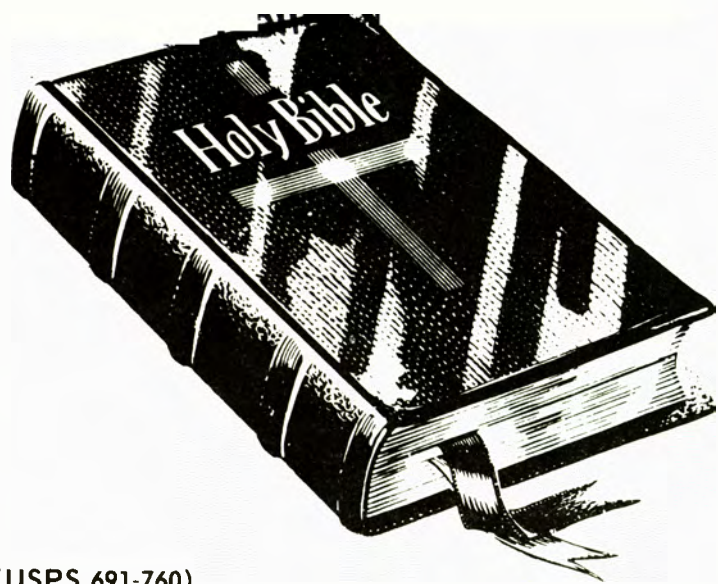
Thirdly, the breach will be widened. Those whose loyalty to a college supercedes their loyalty to Christ will strive even more to justify and defend such, regardless of right or wrong. On the other hand, doubts that many hold relative to the Bible departments of 'our' schools will be multiplied, distrust and suspicion will increase, and confidence will deteriorate.

It is a shame that one more item has arisen which will affect our brotherhood negatively. But, of course, those whose loyalties to alma mater rise above loyalty to the truth will attempt to paint those who are not satisfied with the feeble cover-up, those who will not blindly accept the ipse dixit of the ACU administration, as being unkind, unloving, unchristian, sectarian, church-splitters, and maybe even 'brotherhood watchdogs.' But those who wanted, and were going to have their mechanical instruments of music at all costs, used (and are using today) the same tactics. But we were not deterred then; and we will not be today. Those who demanded that they be allowed to preach the ungodly doctrine of Premillennialism have made the same arguments, but we did not apologize then and we will not apologize now.

With so much at stake over this issue, why is the administration unwilling to make a proper accounting of this issue? Why do they not simply manifest to this great brotherhood that they are willing to show beyond a logical and legitimate doubt that the charges are baseless and unjustified. If, however, the charges are shown to be valid, then let them take the proper steps to correct it, even if it takes an old fashioned 'house cleaning,' beginning at the top and working down.

Brethren, there is no excuse for this issue to ever have been raised. We call upon the ACU administration and board of trustees to work toward reassuring this great brotherhood that such will not be tolerated. And then let us get on with the Father's business of taking the gospel to a lost and dying world.

—111 S. Curry, West Plains, MO 65775.



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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, APRIL 29, 1988

NUMBER 18

Sixth Avenue Has New Minister

Flavil H. Nichols

On April 1, 1988, brother David Wade began his work with the Sixth Avenue church of Christ in Jasper, Alabama. He grew up in this congregation, where his parents are yet members, and where his father long served as an elder.



David Wade

A 1964 graduate of Freed - Hardeman College, brother Wade also earned his B.A. Degree (with a major in Bible, and a minor in Speech), and his M.A.R. degree (with a major in church growth) from Harding University and Harding University Graduate School respectively. He and his wife (nee: Helen White, of Lake, Mississippi) have three sons: Bill (14 years old), Shane (7), and Ryan (5). Two of Helen's brothers (Ed White, of Hackleburg, Alabama, and Sidney White, of Tupelo, Mississippi) also preach the gospel.

Brother Wade came to Jasper from Amory, Mississippi, where he preached for five years. During his service there the average Sunday morning attendance increased from 193 to 250. From 1976-1983 he helped establish Magnolia Bible College, Kosciusko, Mississippi, to train workers for mission fields in Mississippi and throughout the world. He served as Registrar beginning in 1978, and was a full-time instructor in Bible and related subjects. Previously at the Northside Church of Christ, Meridian, Mississippi, (1973-1976) he helped establish a bus ministry with an average of 70 riders. Their first elders were appointed in 1975, and attendance increased from 125 to approximately 225 on Sunday mornings. Prior to that he had preached in Heber Springs, Arkansas three years, during which time the congregation became self-supporting, and approximately 20 were baptized.

At Canton, Mississippi, about 30 were baptized while he preached there (1967-1970). From 1965-1967 he was associated with the Capitol Street church, Jackson, Mississippi, in their youth work and in personal evangelism.

His church-related involvements have included a daily radio program (9 years), serving as a youth camp Counselor (6 years), and as bus director (5 years). He has been involved in visitation programs, and in home Bible studies programs. He preaches in an average of 2 gospel meetings per year, and conducts about 2 singing schools per year. In 1985 he preached in a gospel campaign at Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands British

West Indies.

At Jasper his responsibilities include both pulpit and radio preaching, and involvement in the overall church programs.

This Editor joins our readers in welcoming brother Wade to Sixth Avenue, with prayers for "good success" (Joshua 1:8). His coming permits me to schedule more revivals and other preaching and speaking engagements as I may be invited. This will also give me more time for editing **Words Of Truth**, and to direct the annual Gus Nichols -- Words Of Truth Lectureship here at Sixth Avenue. I also hope to do more writing, and to publish some materials left by my father, the late Gus Nichols.

Zacchaeus

(NO. 3)

In two previous articles we noted some lessons from an incident in the life of a publican named Zacchaeus. Luke tells us of this little man with great determination (Luke 19:1-10). From the information gleaned from Luke, we gained some truths that will assist us in our own studies of the Bible. First, we considered the refusal of Zacchaeus to allow his limitations to prevent him from seeing Jesus. He overcame obstacles which would have hindered a lesser man. He allowed neither his small stature, nor the public's opinion of him, to keep him from Jesus; what a lesson we have in this! Second, we learned that Zacchaeus went where Jesus



Jerri Manasco

could be seen. If we would find the real Jesus, we must not depend on the theological speculations of others, and we must not look in the creeds of men. Only by careful personal study of the scriptures can we find the real Jesus. In this present study, consider how one's immediate and true response to Jesus is amply rewarded.

Zacchaeus responded to Jesus without delay. "Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully" (Luke 19:5-6). If this man had not responded positively to Jesus, then all his other efforts would have been in vain. He would have been so near the great blessing, but then he would have missed it. Joyful response to the Lord obtains plentiful blessing from him. On Pentecost they that gladly received the word were baptized (Acts 2:41). They certainly received the blessings that were attendant upon their obedience (verse 38).

Not everyone is as quick to receive the truth

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 26:25

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FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Editor
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Ephesians

(NO. 6)

Gary C. Hampton

Verse 17. Hendren says the "verb 'dwelling' is intensive, meaning 'settle down.' Christ needs to settle down and take up permanent residence in our hearts." If we grow in strength because of feeding on the word, as the previous verse suggested, Christ will reside in our hearts because of the faith that comes by hearing the word of God. Paul's prayer was also that they would become well-rooted and stabilized. Hendren suggests these participles are written so as to suggest a rooting and grounding had already taken place, and needed to continue taking place. The love here must be that of God and Christ which opened the way of man's salvation.

Verse 18. Further, Paul wanted them to completely understand, in all its measures, some thing, or some things. It may be the love spoken of in the previous verse, or the mystery spoken of earlier, or the church he is showing to be supreme in this letter. Perhaps it is all we have cited, plus the many other things making up the complete revelation of God's great will. However, since love is the focus of the verse preceding and the verse following this one, this writer thinks it is love Paul wants us to fully know.

Verse 19. He really wants his readers to come into an intimate, or personal, relationship in the arms of Christ's love. Christ's love goes beyond man's understanding, because it was extended at Calvary to rebels against his Father's throne, and involved the sacrifice of his life. Paul prayed for them to also be full of the love of the Father. A Christian grows up in love, which is the one identifying characteristic Christ gave for his disciples (John 13:34-35).

Verse 20. Some may have thought Paul asked for too much in his prayer; but his requests were directed to the Omnipotent one. God can greatly exceed what man thinks of, or can request. He accomplishes his working through

Continued on page 3

Prayer

(NO. 5)

Tom Kelton

Pray In The Name Of Christ

Jesus says: "Whatsoever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; if you ask anything in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13-14). "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you" (John 15:16).

To pray in his name is to ask by his authority; and to ask by his authority is to ask in accordance with his will as revealed in his word.

If we read through Acts and the Epistles, and notice how the expressions, "in the name of the Lord," "For his name's sake," (and similar phrases) are used, we will see this very clearly.

Baptism is in the name of Jesus Christ -- that is by his authority (Acts 2:38). To the lame man Peter said, "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth rise up and walk." The apostles said they did this by the authority of Christ (Acts 3:12-16).

They prayed "when let go," that "signs and wonders may be done by (or in) the name of the Holy Child Jesus" (Acts 4:30). Preaching was in his name. Forgiveness was offered only through his name. Demons were

cast out in his name.

In the Epistles valid discipline was "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (I Corinthians 5:4), and forgiveness was to be extended to the repentant offender "in the name of Christ," or by the authority of the Lord (II Corinthians 2:10). Evangelists went forth "for his name's sake, taking nothing of the Gentiles (II John 7).

To these instances might be added many more examples, all proving clearly that "In my name" implies "By my authority."

To present a prayer and then to add the phrase: "in the name of Christ," is not necessarily to "pray" in his name. To truly pray "in his name" we must ask by his authority -- ask in accordance with his will.

God has made known his will in the Scriptures, the word of God (John 10:35). If I would know his will I must study his book. Those who would pray "in the name of Christ" must know the Scriptures.

Go through your Bible and learn what God's will is. Really, actually pray "in the name of Christ," by his authority: and he will do for you exceeding abundantly above all you ask or think (Ephesians 3:20).

—Box 152, Pharr, TX 78577.

In Times Like These When False Teachers Are Being Encouraged By Christians

Part IV

James Meadows

What Are Some Truths That Must Be Recognized In Dealing With False Teachers And False Doctrines?

I. We must recognize the different reasons why men speak things contrary to sound doctrine.

First, some are more concerned about their own traditions and ways than the truth of God. "For laying aside the commandment of God ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:8-9).

II. Some are teaching merely for selfish reasons, and not because of their interest in lost souls. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:17-18). "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you . . ." (II Peter 2:3).

Third, some handle the word of God deceitfully in order to deceive. "For we are not as many which corrupt ("deal deceitfully with," margin) the word of God: but as of sincerity,

but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ" (II Corinthians 2:17). "But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully . . ." (II Corinthians 4:2).

Fourth, there are those who do not love the truth. "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved" (II Thessalonians 2:10).

Fifth, some are "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (II Timothy 3:7).

Sixth, there are those who resist the truth. "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith" (II Timothy 3:8).

Seventh, some are honestly mistaken, but don't know it.

Second, we must recognize the characteristics of false teachers. William Woodson lists six characteristics of those early opponents of the faith and the same qualities are displayed today. First, "they creep in alongside, craftily infiltrating the saints while pretending to be something they are not (Jude 4). Second, they are men of impure, unholy

Continued on page 3

Ephesians

Continued from page 2

the gospel and the Christ of the gospel (Romans 1:16; Philippians 4:13).

Verse 21. Our purpose is to glorify God, which is done through bearing fruit (John 15:8). To bear fruit to God's glory, we must be in Christ, in the church, which is the same thing (John 15:5). God deserves to be glorified in every generation on the earth and will continue to deserve such when this life is over (Psalm 45:17; 72:17; Revelation 5:13).

CHAPTER 4

Verse 1. Because God has given such great blessings to those in the church, and can provide even above what we may ask or think, Paul pleaded with the brethren at Ephesus to live a life that is suited to our great calling. Our calling came from the gospel and is directed to the glory of Jesus Christ (II Thessalonians 2:14). This verse begins Paul's call for unity, and suggests to us the need for the proper people to have such.

Verse 2. The call for unity continues with the need for the proper attitude. For division to truly end, we must have a self-emptying mind. Those who are "lowly" minded are like minded, that is, putting the needs of others in the forefront of our thinking where we usually put the needs of self (Philippians 2:2-8). Of course, Christ is the perfect example of one who put aside self and sacrificed all for the good of others. Summers says the word "meekness" was used in Paul's day to describe a wild horse that had been tamed. "The horse still had all of its old power and fire and determination, but these were yielded to the controlling hand of his master who held the reins. He was a 'meek' horse. Meekness then meant surrendered power, obedient power." God suffered long with the sins of men (Romans 2:4; 9:22; I Timothy 1:16; II Peter 3:15). If it were not for this characteristic of God, none of us could hope to be saved. We, in turn, need to be patient with one another's weakness and failings. Of the word "forbearing," Coffman says: "In a word, this means that a Christian should accept his place with other Christians, having an attitude that grants to them the same 'right to belong' which he claims for himself."

Verse 3. Proper authority is also needed to have unity. The Bible is a Holy Spirit-given book that is God's only basis for unity. The bond the Bible forms between believers who yield to its instructions does not merely lead to peace, but is peace. We must submit to the Spirit's direction so we can achieve unity and have peace.

Verse 4. To have unity, we also must have a plan. The Spirit's message will cause us to realize there is only one body, or church (1:22-23). There is only one Holy Spirit to give us life and peace through his message. Our one hope is eternal life in heaven with God, and it serves as an anchor during life's troubling storms to sustain our lives (Hebrews 6:19).

Verse 5. If there is to be unity, there can only be one master. For the church, that master is the Lord Jesus Christ (1:22-23; Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:36; 10:36, 43; Romans 10:12; I Peter 3:22). It seems to this writer, the one faith is the sum of all that is believed. However, it should also be noted there is only one faith that saves and that is an active faith (James 2:17-18). Only an active, obedient faith would cause one to be in the one body and under the one Lord (Galatians 5:6). Only

baptism in the name of Jesus, for the remission of sins is able to put off the old man of sin and bring us into a new life (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4).

Verse 6. There is but one God, the great creator, who is over all things. There is nothing that exists without him or is outside of his authority. He rules, even now, in all the universe and we are sustained through his power (Colossians 1:15-17; Acts 17:24-28). All of the statements of this verse may have special reference to the Christian and his relationship to the Father. If not, it appears this last does because God can only be said

to dwell in the lives of his purchased people (I Corinthians 6:19-20).

Verse 7. In a few verses Paul is going to deal with special miraculous abilities given to some in the early church to sustain it until God's word could be set down in inspired writings. This verse may refer to those gifts. However, it could safely be said each Christian has been given ability by the Father and should put it to work in a particular area of the church. All tasks in the church are equally important (compare I Corinthians 12:12-26).

—2576 Pleasant Valley Road, Mobile, AL 36606.

In Times Like These When False Teachers Are Being Encouraged By Christians

Continued from page 2

motives (Jude 4). Third, they are most indignant in the presence of proper authority (Jude 8-10). Fourth, they are destructive and willing to compromise (Jude 11). Fifth, they are hidden dangers, making progress by false promises (Jude 12-13). Sixth, they use others for their advantage (Jude 16).

III. We must recognize the eternal disaster of false doctrines, both within and without. Souls are lost. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). The gospel "is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16), but it must not be changed. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8). Men are made infidels by the many doctrines being taught today (cf. John 17:20-21).

IV. We must not try to force the truth upon those that don't want it. "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Matthew 7:6). The truth is too precious to try to give it to those who don't want it. Furthermore there are too many people begging for it, to waste time with those who do not appreciate it.

V. One must always speak the truth "in love!" "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up unto him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Ephesians 4:15).

VI. One must be gentle, meek, and patient in teaching those who oppose themselves. "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (II Timothy 2:24-25).

VII. Christians must not encourage false teachers in any way. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (II John 9-11).

VIII. We must, when they refuse to change

their course that is contrary to sound doctrine, mark them and refuse fellowship with them. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Romans 16:17). "A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself" (Titus 3:10-11). "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).

CONCLUSION

The challenge is clearly before us. Will we accept the challenge? Brother E. R. Harper wrote: "It is my firm conviction that we are sinning away our 'days of grace' by the divided condition of our people and the watering-down of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have let this permissive age that has captivated the world, especially our precious and lovely young people, make cowards of too many of us. There is entirely too much compromising with this permissive element, both in the world and in the church" (Gospel Advocate, August 31, 1972, p. 549).

Paul said, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong" (I Corinthians 16:13). "Error is crouched in countless forms concealed. Christ calls for vigilance -- 'watch ye.' But when error has been flushed out of the hiding, and forms into advancing columns against the church, Christ calls for courage -- 'stand fast in the faith.' Then when the lines are drawn tight, surging issues of truth and error are locked in the grim struggle for mastery -- Christ calls for valour -- 'quit ye like men.' Perform like a Christian soldier, worthy of the name! Finally, when the crisis has come in the conflict of the faith, heroism, the heroism of faith -- 'be strong,' 'hold the line'" (Foy E. Wallace, Jr., *God's Prophetic Word*, "The Faith Once Delivered," 1946, p. 42).

—P.O. Box 203, Jackson, TN 38302.

A Classic Sermon

Considered one of the most marvelous sermons of all time, Paul's speech on Mar's Hill is a classic lesson on the grace of God. In Acts 17:16 we learn that the great apostle was stirred within as he viewed the idolatry of the city. Those who loved to hear and tell any new thing would soon be stunned by the tremendous challenge of the glorious gospel of Christ (Acts 17:21; I Timothy 1:11).



Johnny Ramsey

Though the Athenians were considered highly intelligent they would soon hear brilliant and eternal truths. There are four major points in the exciting dissertation Paul delivered on that day so long ago that are, nevertheless vibrant, fresh and needed in our period of time. (1) Idols or temples do not impress God. (2) All men stand on level ground before God. (3) Jehovah no longer will overlook sin. (4) One day all shall give account to the Maker.

God's gracious provisions for our daily sustenance can be seen in the remarkable statements Paul delivered that day: God that made the world and all things therein...

... he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; ...

... he be not far from every one of us:

For in him we live, and move, and have our being; ...

For we are also his offspring.

Yea, verily, we owe all that we are and ever hope to be to the divine storehouse of infinite grace and mercy.

O Thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.

Jehovah has conveyed precious promises in our direction and deeply desires our salvation (Acts 14:17; I Timothy 2:4). There is no prejudice from heaven toward or against any color, race, tribe or nation (Romans 2:11; 10:12). Paul made it clear that of one blood the Creator made us all (Acts 17:26). When we handle the gospel message in a biased way we do greatly err (James 2:1-10). In the final Judgment it will be sad for those who would not preach the glad tidings to the poor, their political enemies, or those of a different color. Christ died for all (Hebrews 2:9) and commanded us to tell every creature the sweet story of redemption (Mark 16:15).

Where sin has gone must go His grace;
The gospel is for all!

Another major point in Paul's exclamation of grace in Acts 17 deals with the universal accountability of every person to the demands of the gospel. Each one shall give account unto God for the deeds done in his own body (Romans 14:12). The grace of the Lord has appeared unto all (Titus 2:11) and, therefore, the universal nature of Judgment Day is chronicled in this graphic speech.

Someday you'll stand at the bar on high,
Someday your record you'll see;
Someday you'll answer the question of life,
What will your answer be?

Even our secret sins shall be made known (Romans 2:16) when we stand before the Searcher of hearts (Acts 1:24). May we strive diligently to be ready for that awesome moment!

Is it not strange, in view of concepts today, that Paul included very practical, pertinent, and even demanding points, when he preached "the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24)? If we would be true and loyal servants today this will be the thrust of our

preaching also!

The gracious heavenly Father, before whom we shall one day stand, challenges us to live soberly, righteously and godly (Titus 2:12). Let us never waver from the loyalty for truth that Paul manifested in Athens long ago. It is true that some mocked him that day but the Lord was glorified. That is what counts -- for time and eternity!

—Central Church of Christ, Lakeland, FL.

Zacchaeus

Continued From Page 1

about Jesus. "He was in the world, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:10-11). God sent Jesus to his people, but they "denied him in the presence of Pilate . . . and desired a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of life. . . ." (Acts 3:13-15). It is interesting that Zacchaeus, who was so despised by the Jews, is one who received Jesus freely! Because of his acceptance of the Lord, the reward was his. "This day is salvation come to this house, forso-much as he also is a son of Abraham" (Luke 19:9).

The Bible affords us other examples of people who readily accepted the Lord's way. Those who heard Peter's Pentecost sermon responded with the cry, "What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). The answer was immediately provided; "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . ." (Acts 2:38). They that "gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (verse 41). Saul of Tarsus also, having heard the message of salvation, accepted it without delay. "And now thy tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). The Philippian jailer and his household were baptized "the same hour of the night . . . straight-way" (Acts 16:33). The eunuch of Acts 8:34-39 was baptized as soon as he heard the truth. Like Zacchaeus, these were ready for the Lord's bidding.

There are several cases in which people were not quick or ready to respond to the Lord.

Pilate, having the rule of law and justice at his disposal, washed his hands of the matter of Christ's death (Matthew 27:24). In such light fashion he supposed that he could so easily excuse himself from any definite choice relative to the Lord. Some of the Athenians who heard Paul preach wanted to wait for another time to hear more about his message (Acts 17:32). Felix shrugged off Paul's fearful appeal with his famous "convenient season" statement (Acts 24:25). King Agrippa, so near to the truth, was "almost" a Christian (Acts 26:28). How many are there even now who will not take advantage of the opportunity to know the Lord!

Churches have their abundance of members who are negligent in their duties as Christians. Delay of services is one of the most tragic sins of our time. James deals with this when he points out that NOW is when we must do our good things, for life is too short to wait for tomorrow (James 4:13-17). Zacchaeus' haste in answering the Lord's call is not imitated enough today.

Perhaps one reason why more today don't immediately accept the call of the gospel is that, rather than seeing it as a joy, it is looked upon as a great burden, a "cross" to bear. Zacchaeus, on the other hand "received him joyfully." Nothing is more conducive to joy than a full reception of Jesus into one's house! Zacchaeus knew this, and he was a despised publican! No doubt this man will be one of those witnesses who will rise up in the judgment against the "good" people of our own generation.

—Rt. 5 Box 224, Boaz, AL 35957.

The Three Religious Ages

PATRIARCHAL	JEWISH	CHRISTIAN
Eden to Cross	Sinai to Cross	Pentecost to End
PATRIARCHS Acts 7:8-9	ISRAELITES Josh. 3:17; 13:6	CHRISTIANS Acts 11:26; I Pet. 4:16
HEAD — ADAM I Cor. 15:22	HEAD — MOSES Deut. 4:44-45; Jno. 1:17	HEAD — CHRIST Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18
ANIMAL SACRIFICES Gen. 4:4; Heb. 11:4	ANIMAL SACRIFICES Heb. 8:5; 9:1-6	BLOOD OF CHRIST Matt. 26:28; Eph. 1:7
NOAH'S ARK Gen. 6:8; Heb. 11:7	TABERNACLE — TEMPLE Heb. 8:5; 9:1-6	CHURCH OF GOD Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28
FAMILY SYSTEM Gen. 12:3; 18:19	NATIONAL SYSTEM Exo. 19:6; 33:12-13	UNIVERSAL SYSTEM Mk. 16:15; Acts 10:34
GOSPEL IN PROMISE Gal. 3:8	GOSPEL IN PROPHECY Rom. 1:1-3	GOSPEL IN FACT I Cor. 15:1-4; Acts 2: 1-42
NO LAW OF SABBATH Deut. 5:14-15	SABBATH GIVEN Exo. 20:8; 31:16-17	FIRST DAY OF WEEK Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2
ENDED AT CROSS Eph. 2:11-15	NAILED TO CROSS Heb. 7:18-19; Col. 2:14	NOW IN FORCE Heb. 9:15-17



(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, MAY 6, 1988

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Religious Indifference

Gus Nichols (1892-1975)

One of the greatest hinderances to the progress of the gospel is religious indifference. The masses of the people do not seem to care whether the gospel be true or false. They seem to have little interest in what the Bible teaches. They do not seem to care whether they themselves are saved, or their families and friends. Though the Bible says "All have sinned," (Romans 3:23), and that the world is wicked and lost, they do not seem to care. They appear to have no interest in the Bible question: "What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37-38). They seem to say, "I don't care what the Bible says one must do to be saved, for about all I know is that I am determined not to do anything about it . . . at least, not now."



GUS NICHOLS

In the Church

Even among those claiming to be Christians, it seems many are wholly indifferent. They are not interested in the lost world around them. Neither do they care whether the gospel is ever preached unto the lost or not. They seem not to care whether the church is made the light of the world, or is held in reproach in the community (Matthew 5:13-16; Philippians 2:15). They are neither hot nor cold, but are only "lukewarm," as was the church at Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-19). They that are not interested in the meetings of the church, nor in the work of the Lord in the community. They care nothing for the Sunday morning Bible-school work, Bible colleges, nor in the local effort to train leadership. They buy all sorts of books and take many kinds of papers, but are not interested in reading good religious books, and religious papers. Just take a look at their books, and

see what trash they feed upon. Examine their papers and all their reading matter. Try to catch them reading the Bible. They simply don't care. They are not interested. They are indifferent toward their children and their neighbor's children. They feel no responsibility toward the work and service of Almighty God. Perhaps at least a fourth of those claiming to be true Christians are not dependable. They have no proper conception of the truth of the gospel. They are not aware of the simple truth that they are against the Lord, and are his enemies (Matthew 12:30).

Causes of Indifference: Infidelity

Infidelity and general unbelief are causes of indifference. It is but natural for unbelievers to manifest general indifference to that in which they do not believe. Modernism is getting its deadly influence into the very heart of the nation. The wild assertions of modernists and their high-sounding claims are bearing fruit . . . evil fruit. They have attacked the inspiration of the Bible, and the Sonship of Jesus Christ, thus striking at the very root of Christianity. Unbelief has poisoned all the avenues of approach to the human heart. Every inch of gospel progress must be contested and won by hard work. The forces of evil and unbelief stand ready to block every approach to a solution of the problem.

"He that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16).

Denominationalism Causes Unbelief and Indifference

Religious divisions and denominationalism cause indifference and unbelief. Jesus knew this would be true, and prayed that his disciples might be "one" so that the world may believe" that the Father sent him (John 17:20-22). Humanly-devised churches are no part of Christianity. They are a curse, and not a blessing. People see all the divisions and confusing contradictions in the teachings of the denominations, and supposing the Bible teaches all such, they decide that the Bible is not from God, else it would not contradict itself. The result is indifference. They try

to wash their hands of the whole affair, by having nothing to do with any of it. Various denominations have taught the masses that one does not have to belong to their churches to be a Christian while he lives, nor to go to heaven when he dies. They have finally believed it, and decided to "do right" and have nothing to do with their "CHURCHANITY" and just take the short cuts to heaven. Regardless of what the Bible says on any point, they have heard some "smart" man explain it all away. The commands of God are plain, but somebody has made them indifferent by the doctrine that "one church is as good as another" and one does not have to obey the Lord to be saved, any way. They have been made to believe that "faith only" and "honesty" are just as good as FAITH THAT OBEYS. They have been made to believe that they have a right to their choice in matters of religion somewhat like choosing between the various kinds of cars to be offered in the markets. They think one doctrine is as good as another, or at least will save as well as the other. Hence, they don't care what is "true."

Sinful Habits, Worldliness in the Church

Another cause of general indifference is the deep-rooted habits of sin, and general worldliness in the church . . . and everywhere. Men have sinned and sin has become so prominent and general . . . has been galvanized into such respectability . . . that it is hard to turn from all sin. Hearts have been hardened and consciences so seared, that it is difficult to get one interested in purity of heart and life. Many rather die without hope, than to wrestle with pet sins, and deep-seated habits. They are indifferent to the gospel because the Bible is against their conduct. They often hate whatever is against their present lusts. If they profess anything, it is only surface religion. They would prefer a substitute to the real thing. Hence, there is indifference, and the masses of the people

Continued on page 4



Words Of Truth

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—Acts 26:25

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Ephesians

(NO. 6)

Gary C. Hampton

Chapter 4 (continued)

Verse 8. Christ ascended up to heaven from the earth as a conqueror. Men had lived in bondage to, or fear of, sin and death prior to Christ's coming because there was no means of escape. When Jesus was raised from the dead, man's freedom was purchased and those righteous of the past, who had submitted to God's will, and those of Christ's own time, who would submit, gladly followed him out of captivity.

Verse 9. For God to ascend from the earth, he would logically have had to descend to the earth first (John 3:13). The earth would be the "lower parts" in reference to heaven where Jesus had been abiding. However, it also could be that Paul here has in mind Christ's burial in the heart of the earth. Either thought is certainly true, and both remind us of Christ's great sacrifice.

Verse 10. Jesus ascended as King of kings and Lord of lords to rule over all from his throne, thus fulfilling God's great plan (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:29-36). He is above the heaven in which the birds fly, above the heaven the stars and planets are in, and is over the heaven where God resides as a ruler.

Verse 11. As ruler over all, particularly in the church, Jesus set "apostles and prophets" in the church to reveal his will to man. They were able to do this because of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the miracles he empowered them to work (Acts 1:6-8; John 16:13-14; Hebrews 2:1-4). "Evangelists" are men who carry the good news to a lost and dying world. Coffinan says, "The omission of 'some' before 'teachers' indicates that the meaning is teaching-pastors, or pastor-teachers." Their job would be to shepherd the flock by feeding them on God's word and confronting false teachers (1 Peter 5:1-4; Titus 1:9). Evangelists and pastor-teachers may have been strictly a reference

Continued on page 3



The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Some Lessons From Israel (NO. 1)

Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

2And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

3And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that

spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

5But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

6Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

7Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

8Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

9Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

10Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

11Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

12Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. (1 Corinthians 10).

God told Abraham that his seed would sojourn in a "strange land" (Genesis 15:13-16) where they would be mistreated; but that he would deliver them. This prophecy was fulfilled in their bondage in Egypt (Exodus 1-14). As they were servants of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, so the sinner is in bondage to sin and the devil. The apostle Paul wrote: ". . . to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (Romans 6:16). He then affirms that "ye were the servants of sin" (verse 17). As Israel did the bidding of Pharaoh (Exodus 1:11-13), so sinners do the will of Satan. Jesus said, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do" (John 8:44). But just as God promised deliverance to Israel (Genesis 15:13-16), so our Lord assures us: ". . . the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

Moses Like Christ

Anticipating the coming of Jesus, Moses wrote: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy



Flavil H. Nichols

brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deuteronomy 18:15). Peter quoted this prophecy (Acts 3:22-23), and applied it to Jesus. Consider some ways in which Christ is like Moses.

In his mercy, God sent Moses to deliver Israel, appearing to him in a burning bush (Exodus 3:9-10). Similarly, God sent his only begotten Son on a mission of mercy and grace to save sinners (John 3:16-17).

In order to save Israel from Egyptian bondage, Moses gave up the palace of Pharaoh; he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter . . ." (Hebrews 11:24-28). But Christ made a far greater sacrifice: he gave up heaven! He was "up" there before he ever was down here (John 6:62). Prior to the virgin birth, he, ". . . being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Philippians 2:5-11). The American Standard Version reads: ". . . thought being on an equality with God not a thing to be grasped," or to be clung to. Hence, the apostle Paul wrote: ". . . though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (II Corinthians 8:9).

God enabled Moses to work miracles to make the people believe God had sent him (Exodus 4:1-10, 17, 23). Moses and Aaron reported what God said, and "did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed . . ." (Exodus 4:30-31). Similarly, the purpose of the miracles of Christ and his apostles was (and is) to "confirm" the word" (Mark 16:20). Once revealed and confirmed, the gospel needs no new "confirmation," just as it needs no new "revelation." It "was confirmed unto us by them that heard him" (Hebrews 2:3). The Holy Spirit knew we --you and I-- never would SEE any miracles, in this lifetime; so he said those RECORDED miracles (in the New Testament) "are WRITTEN that ye might believe . . ." (John 20:30-31).

Of the Israelites we read: "And the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped" (Exodus 4:31). As they believed that God had sent Moses, so we today must believe in Jesus Christ. "For if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). Later he affirmed: "He that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

However, 'Faith ONLY' did not save Israel from bondage. After they believed God had sent Moses they were still in Egypt, and were still in bondage. So it is today: sinners are saved "by faith" (Ephesians 2:8-9), but they are not justified "by faith only" (James 2:24). It is by an obedient faith (Galatians 5:6).

Israel had to have enough faith in Moses to turn from Egypt, and follow Moses (Exodus 12:37-42). And today the sinner must have enough faith in Christ to repent, and to follow Christ. Jesus said, "Verily I say unto thee,

Continued on page 3

Ephesians

Continued from page 2

to miraculous offices in this passage; but we should remember both these are non-miraculous offices today. In either case, they would be obligated to proclaim and defend the inspired word of God.

Verse 12. The word for "perfecting" here comes from a word which suggests setting a bone that has been broken, or mending a fishing net. The thought is of getting ready for service. One means of getting Christians ready for use is getting them ready to serve, or perform even the most lowly physical task. Further, there is the work of building up the body through teaching.

Verse 13. Our goal as individual Christians is to practice the things of the preceding verse until we become perfect like God (Matthew 5:48). To have any hope of reaching such perfection, we must be united in the faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Perfection is not measured by comparing ourselves with ourselves but by stretching to become like Christ.

Verse 14. Again, to be perfect, we have to quit being childish (I Corinthians 14:20). Children are gullible and will often believe whatever was last told them. Like a cork on the waves, such would be unstable, drifting wherever the wind is blowing at the time. Unfortunately, there are those false teachers who will take advantage of every possible means to mislead such childish ones. They use such to ambush the young or weak in God's flock (Acts 20:28-31; II Timothy 4:1-5; II Peter 2:9-22).

Verse 15. Paul wanted the Ephesian brethren to be closely joined like a body; and to be united, or knitted together, like the re-joining of a broken bone. (I Corinthians 12:13, 20). Each member has a work to do, thus supplying the body with some essential (I Corinthians 12:21-26; Romans 12:5-8). Effectual working takes place only when each member gives all he is capable of giving. All of this will promote the growth of all, and the body will be strengthened by love. The Ephesian church evidently failed to heed Paul's instructions here because Christ was prepared, in Revelation 2:4-5, to remove their candlestick for leaving their first love. The church can only grow unto perfection if it grows in love.

Verse 17. If the church would grow to the perfection of Christ, it must turn from walking in the ways of the world. Particularly, they could not pursue selfish ways.

Verse 18. When man follows his own desires, he fails to understand the way of righteous-

ness, and God's way become foreign to him. He is ignorant, not because God failed to make knowledge available through inspiration's pen, but because of his own willfulness. Ultimately, God gives such a man ample opportunity to harden his heart and turn completely away from good (Romans 1:18-32; II Thessalonians 2:3-12).

Verse 19. When one ignores righteousness long enough, his conscience quits hurting, and he runs wild in sin (I Timothy 4:1-2). He involves himself in lustful activities, with his only purpose being to fulfill his own desires, without any shame whatsoever.

Verse 20. Paul knew they had been taught the truth and would know such a lifestyle is not Christ-like (Acts 20:17-21, 25-27).

Verse 21. Paul did not have any doubt about the teaching they had received. Instead, he is preparing to remind them of Christ's teaching and the life they should live after accepting it.

Verse 22. The old Gentile way of living should be cast aside like a worn out garment. This old man was sin-dominated, as described above.

Verse 23. The mind should then be Spirit-directed through the truth (Romans 12:1-2).

Verse 24. In place of the cast-away lifestyle, the Christian will put on the new man. To put on the new man, one must be in Christ, which can only be accomplished in baptism (II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 3:26-27). In place of pursuing lusts, the new man lives in accord with God's will and strives to keep himself pure.

Verse 25. The old man would not hesitate to lie if it would help him fill one of his uncontrolled desires. The new man always tells the truth, especially to his brethren because we are all members of the same body.

Verses 26-27. The old man would allow anger to run wild and the devil to gain control of him. The new man gets angry, but keeps it under control so that he does not involve himself in sin. A means of doing this is not to allow anger to remain in us past the end of one day. Resentments tend to build and fester into a putrifying sore. The devil is an enemy to every Christian, and must not be allowed to have a toe-hold in our lives through anger harbored in the heart.

Verse 28. The old man would steal to acquire wealth and the things his heart desired. The new man will work to earn money to purchase the things necessary to provide for his own needs. Additionally, he will use what God

gave him to help those in need. In other words, a Christian will work so others can benefit from his prosperity.

Verse 29. The old man would tell suggestive stories and allow foul language to be an integral part of his vocabulary. The new man uses his speech to teach saint and sinner alike the way of the Lord. Those who will heed his instructions will thus have access to God's glorious grace (Colossians 3:8; 4:6; Matthew 12:36-37).

Verse 30. Any involvement of Christians in the activities of the "old man" would grieve the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 63:10). Whenever we reject the teaching of the Bible, we are rejecting the Holy Spirit, thereby giving him great sorrow (Psalm 78:40; 95:10-11). Remember, the Holy Spirit is the seal, or guarantee, of our ultimate salvation in heaven (1:13). None should risk giving him cause for sorrow since that would lead to our eternal sorrow.

Verse 31. Now, Paul goes into a series of actions the old man might have been involved in that the new man must avoid. A bitter man has resentment built up in him that causes him to see only mud and no stars. The anger here is uncontrolled, explosive in nature and leads to rash actions such as murder. Wrath is another description of such anger. If you have ever seen two, (or more) people in a shouting match, you have seen "clanor." The word for "evil speaking" could also be translated blasphemy, and suggests speaking against God or man. Our word "sadistic," which describes one who enjoys inflicting pain on others, could be used in place of the word "malice."

Verse 32. In place of the attitudes listed in the previous verse, Paul would encourage the Ephesian brethren to show others "kindness." Also, they are urged to have "strong bowels," or "compassion," and a "forgiving" spirit toward others. Christians are forgiven because of Christ's loving sacrifice (Matthew 6:14-15; 18:21-35). Clearly, all who have been forgiven of sin ought to be prepared by that forgiveness to forgive others (Romans 6:23).

—2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, AL 36606.

Saved By Blood

Upon hearing that a member of his Sunday School class was permitting a gospel preacher to conduct an open Bible study in her home, a member of a large protestant church warned, "Be careful! Do not permit him to convince you that water can save you!"

It would be easy to dismiss such a statement with the charge that the man who thus spoke was acting from ulterior motives, deliberately misleading his friend regarding the things taught by our brethren regarding the gospel plan of salvation. But the



R. W. Gray

Some Lessons From Israel

Continued from page 2

Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3, 5). He also said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24).

Israel was saved from Egypt after they were "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (I Corinthians 10:1-3). They crossed the Red Sea "by faith," (Hebrews 11:29), and God then saved them from bondage. "But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea. . . Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians" (Exodus 14:29-30). This is a picture of the sinner who believes in Jesus Christ, repents of his sins, and then is "bap-

tized . . . for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). This brings him to the point where he can claim the promise of Jesus who said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). As Israel was saved from bondage AFTER -- not before -- they crossed the Red Sea, so the sinner is promised salvation AFTER -- not before -- he is baptized.

The apostle Paul clearly shows that we are saved after baptism. The "DOCTRINE" of Christ includes his death for our sins, his burial, and his resurrection (I Corinthians 15:1-3). We are not promised salvation until we from the heart obey a "FORM" of this doctrine. In repentance we die to the love and

Continued on page 4

Continued on page 4

Saved By Blood

Continued from page 3

truth is that a great many are laboring under the delusion that churches of Christ minimize or dismiss the blood atonement. While much of this misunderstanding may stem from deliberate and/or ignorant misstatements by those outside our fellowship, we should not overlook the fact that we sometime contribute to this false impression by our approach to the subject.

In the past we have assumed that many in our audiences were completely conversant on the theme of the blood atonement, and our efforts were in the direction of assisting them in understanding "how" the blood is applied. And while the need still exists to correct the gross errors in the land in regard to the latter, one is mistaken who assumes that the former is still the case.

Many living in the "Bible Belt" know precious little about the wonderful plan of grace that necessitated the shedding of the precious blood of Christ. Many who have been introduced to the great theme have an inadequate concept of it, and remain vague in their perception of its implications for their lives.

We would do well to reverse our emphasis. The firm foundation must be laid that a tried and tested stone has been placed in Zion, that a fountain has been opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for cleansing and for sin (Isaiah 28:16; Zechariah 13:1). It was the thought that Jesus loved him, and that he gave himself for him, that wrought a radical change in the life of Paul (Galatians 2:20). Perhaps no New Testament writer reveals more as to the "how" when it comes to applying the blood of Christ to our needs than did Paul, and yet he insists that his constant theme in preaching was "Jesus Christ and him crucified" (Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-7; I Corinthians 2:1-4).

It is certainly necessary that we continue to demonstrate from Holy Scripture that an essential relationship exists between the blood of Christ and our obedience to the gospel, our membership in the body, and even every act of worship in our assemblies. It is good to teach that Christ sealed his testament in his blood, and that failure to conform thereto is to demonstrate a lack of appreciation for that blood (Colossians 2:12-13; Hebrews 9:15-17; I Peter 3:21; Hebrews 10:24-32; I Corinthians 10:16; Acts 20:28). But we will more nearly approximate apostolic preaching if we first establish the absolute necessity of grace (Hebrews 9:21-22; Ephesians 2:8-9).

Like Paul we, too, become Christ-intoxicated, Christ-infatuated, Christ-motivated men and women when we absorb the profound truth that "he loved me, and gave himself for me." It is the lifted-up Christ that is God's drawing power to salvation (John 12:32). We must never allow any group on earth to give greater emphasis to John 3:16 than do those who "speak where the Bible speaks." While others deal with death-bed stories, let us be heard telling men about the blood that stained "the old rugged cross."

The saddest thing the mind can imagine is the realization that many who have talked a great deal about the atoning blood of Christ have been failing to instruct men Biblically as to how that blood is to be applied. We must not follow their tragic methods; but we will more effectively advance the good cause we love if we learn to place things in their

proper perspective.

Men must hear the whole truth, and it is our duty to see that they hear it (John 8:31-32; Mark 16: 15). Let us tell men of their need

for salvation by blood, and then let us instruct them in the God-appointed way of receiving the grace thus provided.

—563 McGukin Rd., Bremen, GA 30110.

For Whom Should We Pray?

No. 6

Tom Kelton

The scriptures teach that we should pray for others as well as for ourselves. "I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made for all men. . . (I Timothy 2:1).

Some For Whom To Pray

Secular Leaders: I Timothy 2:2 specifies we should pray for secular leaders: "For kings and all that are in high places; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity."

We must also pray for officials on a more local level.

All Christians: ". . . with all prayer and supplication in all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints" (Ephesians 6:18). "We give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you" (Colossians 1:3). "I thank my God always, making mention of thee in my prayers (Philemon 4). Additional prayers for Christians are found in Philippians 1:9-11; Ephesians 1:16-19; 3:14-19; Colossians 1:9-11; 4:12; I Thessalonians 1:2; and Romans 1:9-10.

Spiritual Leaders and Ministers of the Word: Paul continually requested the prayers of the saints.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me" (Romans 15:30); "Ye also helping together on our behalf by your supplication" (II Corinthians 1:11); "Brethren, pray for us" (I Thessalonians 5:25); "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified, even as also it is with you; and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and evil men; for all have not faith" (II Thessalonians 3:1-2). Also Colossians 4:2-3.

Gospel preachers and shepherds need our prayers the same way Paul needed the prayers of the saints.

The Sick: "Confess therefore your sins to one

Some Lessons From Israel

Continued From Page 3

practice of sin, and then by faith in the crucified and risen Lord we are buried and raised in baptism (Romans 6:1-6). The apostle Paul said that such a buried "dead" man is "free from sin" (verse 7). He further said that one who has "obeyed from the heart that FORM of doctrine" is "THEN MADE FREE FROM SIN" (verse 17-18).

Just as God was the savior of Israel under the leadership of Moses, so God is our savior under the leadership of Jesus Christ. God did not save them until they obeyed; and he has not promised to save us until we obey (Hebrews 5:9). We urge each reader to obey the gospel without delay, trusting in God to save you when you thus obey.

another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed" (James 5:16).

This passage teaches that we should pray for those who are sick.

The Lost: Included in the "all men" we should pray for are those who are lost. Paul prayed for the Jews: "My heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved" (Romans 10:1).

In Matthew 9:36-37 Jesus was moved with compassion when he saw the lost multitude and commanded us to "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest."

We must pray for the lost.

Enemies: "Ye have heard that it was said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. . .'" (Matthew 5:43-45).

One never comes closer to being like Christ than when he prays for his enemies. It is impossible to hate any person if we sincerely pray for him.

We must pray regularly for our Secular Leaders; all the Saints; Spiritual Leaders and Ministers of the Word; the Sick; the Lost and Our Enemies. Prayer should be made for "all men!"

—Box 152, Pharr, TX 78577.

Religious Indifference

Continued From Page 1

are lost, and don't care (Luke 8:11-15).

The Remedy

Many ingredients enter into the remedy. But the trouble can not be removed without plain Bible preaching . . . without the pure gospel in all its condemning and saving power. (Romans 1:16).

Stop all compromising with error.

Attack infidelity, unbelief, worldliness, and all forms of evil. "Reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long suffering and doctrine." (II Timothy 4:2-4).

Spread the truth by radio, literature, and by private contacts.

Live the gospel before the people in order that they, and we, may be saved at last.

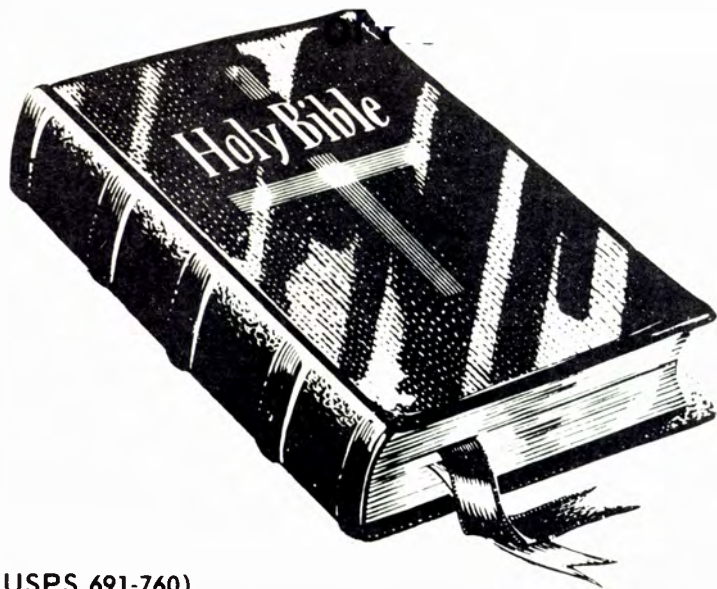
Keep the church united, zealous and courteous to all. But do not compromise with the world.

Stand for the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God.

In heart and life be thoroughly Christian.

Bring the people back to God, back to Christ the Son of God and only Saviour, and back to his church, his doctrine, his name and his way.

Here is the power and the remedy.



Words Of T

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

—Acts 26:25

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Ephesians (Chapter 4)

(No. 7)

Verse 1. Paul's reference in the previous verse to our forgiving as God forgives us led him to encourage us to imitate, or mimic, God in all we do. Just as children like to do what mom and dad do, Christians should strive to do what their Father in heaven does (Matthew 5:44-48).

Verse 2. All that the Father and Son have done for us is motivated by love, so we should let our lives be directed by love (John 3:16; Romans 5:6-8; I John 4:7-10).

Christ's great sacrifice for us, which was made out of love, went up before the Father as a sweet smelling sacrifice just as all sacrifices motivated by a proper spirit and offered in accord with his will (Genesis 8:20-22). Jesus' sacrifice was all the more pleasing because it was sufficient to pay the price for sin (Hebrews 10:1-10).

Verse 3. If our lives are directed by love, we will not indulge in any uncontrolled lusts, whether sexual or monetary in nature. In fact, we should not even talk about such because thoughts stimulate actions (Proverbs 23:7).

Verse 4. Immoral actions and words have no place in a Christian's life. We need to beware of suggestive stories and jokes that may use double meanings and innuendo to get a laugh. These usually center in the areas of conduct already forbidden by Paul in verse 2. Instead, a Christian should use his mouth to give thanks to the Father for all his great blessings (Philippians 4:6; Luke 17:11-19).

Verse 5. Those involved in unlawful sexual acts, unclean thoughts and actions, or greedy,



Gary C. Hampton

selfish desire for more, will not have a part in heaven. Paul is convinced the Ephesian brethren are fully aware of the wrongfulness of these acts and the resulting loss of heaven as an inheritance. Notice, Paul says covetousness is idolatry, thus indicating anything that is more important in our lives than God is an idol we worship. (Colossians 3:5).

Verse 6. The things just listed have brought God's wrath on people down through the ages in the form of conquest by their enemies and will incur his wrath in judgment. Some tried, and are trying, to persuade the brethren they could practice such things and still go to heaven but their words were empty. Those who disobey God will be punished.

Verse 7. As Lipscomb says, "If they partook of their sins, they would necessarily partake of their punishments." Therefore, Paul says to avoid the practices of the false teachers.

Verse 8. The Ephesian brethren had been involved in the wicked ways of darkness before they obeyed the truth. In Christ, they were light because sin had been put away, so Paul admonished them to live like the children of light they now were (Matthew 5:14-16; II Corinthians 4:4-6).

Verse 9. Light is a necessary ingredient of plant growth and fruit bearing. It is also important for a Christian to stay in the light so he can bear the fruits of goodness, righteousness and truth.

Verse 10. Walking in the light will cause a Christian to be living proof of what is "well-pleasing" (A.S.V.) to the Lord. Such proof will result from careful prayer, study of God's word and the transformation of mind that comes from it (I Thessalonians 5:17; II Timothy 2:15; Romans 12:1-2).

Verse 11. Nothing good, in the spiritual realm, is grown in darkness, thus no good fruit is produced there. Those in Christ cannot be in partnership, or anything in common, with such works but must expose them (John 16:8-11). This can be done through preaching and the way in which we live (II Timothy 4:1-5; I Peter 2:11-12).

Verse 12. In the worship of pagan gods, there were many immoral acts committed in

secret places under the cover of darkness. God's children would blush even to talk about them.

Verse 13. When the light of the gospel falls on things in darkness, they become enlightened. This had already happened to the saints of Ephesus who once lived in sin but now served God in the light. This good result should challenge us to spread the gospel light wherever we can.

Verse 14. In this verse, Paul gives us the words of God, either the Father or Son, just as Old Testament prophets quoted God. The gospel light will bring back to life those who have been dead in sin (2:1). God is appealing for those dead in sin to arise and let the light of the Son make them light.

Verse 15. Fools hear the sound of Jesus' voice but do not do the things he says (Matthew 7:24-27). Even Christians must live carefully, or accurately, so as to obey the Lord's commandments and be considered wise.

Verse 16. Therefore, Paul urges the members of the church to make the most of the time they have, especially since the time in which he wrote was so full of wickedness.

2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, AL 36606.

Preservation Of The Bible

G. F. Raines

The book of God, the Holy Bible, has been preserved for us through many turbulent centuries in (1) manuscripts (copies in the languages in which it was originally written); (2) versions (translations of the Scriptures into other languages); and (3) quotations from the Bible in the extant writings of the early church scholars.

It is said that if every copy of the Bible were to be destroyed, it almost could be reproduced from the ancient quotations alone. Let us consider a few examples.

Theophilus: "Thus he teaches those that do good not to boast, that they be not pleasers

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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Preservation Of The Bible

Continued from page 1

of men. 'Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.' " (Matthew 6:4).

Tatian: "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made" (John 1:3).

Clement of Alexandria: "'Behold,' says Paul, 'the goodness and severity of God'" (Romans 11:22).

Tertullian: "Paul himself writes to the Philippians, 'If by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead'" (Philippians 3:11).

Irenaeus (a pupil of the apostle John): "And on this account the apostle, in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, speaking thus, 'May the God of peace sanctify you wholly; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ'" (I Thessalonians 5:23).

We should be very grateful to God for the preservation of the sacred writings, because, "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).

Jesus says: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

Peter says: "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord abideth for ever" (I Peter 1:24-25).

"Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
When looking in, I saw upon the floor,

Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

" 'How many anvils have you had,' said I,

'To wear and batter all these hammers so?'
'Just one,' said he; then said with twinkling eye,

'The anvil wears the hammers out, you know.'

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

For ages skeptics blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,

The anvil is unharmed -- the hammers gone."
—Newton, MS 39345.

The Words I Speak

Peggy T. Crump

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a network of silver" (Proverbs 25:11). A word spoken to the right person at the right time has prevented and will prevent many disasters! Words can give encouragement, they can give strength to discouragement, they can lighten the load of burdens. Above all, they can save souls (John 6:68; James 1:21)!!!

Every Christian can be an influence to lead others to Christ. Some teach in Bible classes, some in home studies, in letter writing, courteous and concerned phone calls, by use of their automobile, their homes. But most of all by manner of life. To teach, or not to teach, is not a choice for a sincere Christian; it is a "must" thru love (John 3:16; Matthew 28:18-20). It is essential for the saving of our own soul, but a bigger "must" for the saving of others.

It is sinful to be ignorant of the Bible. God's prophet said long ago, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). Some do not keep God's command to teach as they should because they do not study as they should. The command to teach implies a command to learn. We cannot teach that which we do not know anymore than we can return from a place where we have never been. Someone has said, "Where one will read the Bible, ten will read books about it." We need to STUDY the Bible, not just read about the Bible. The Bible is its best interpreter. It explains itself. It contains its own key to unlock what God has put there.

There are many ways to study the Bible. One way is book by book, concentrating on that one book for the present. It may also be studied by topics, such as prayer, love, prophets, faith, church, altar, tabernacle. Or, by characters, such as David, Moses, Tamar, Peter, Paul, etc. Word study is one of my favorites. Words like sin, heaven, hell and God's MARVELOUS GRACE! The subject of "angels" is very

interesting; and "singing" should inspire us because it will be with us in heaven.

We may choose our own method of study, BUT we must choose to study! God commands it (II Timothy 2:15). He tells us to give heed to reading (I Timothy 4:13). He also tells us we can understand what we read in John 7:17, Ephesians 3:4 and other passages.

The apostle Paul said, "I am debtor . . . So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel" (Romans 1:14). What does he mean by "Debtor?" So indebted to Christ for the gift of eternal life (Ephesians 2:8) that he was willing to show his love for God by teaching others. "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21; also check Romans 20:12; I Corinthians 3:8; I Peter 1:17). We will be judged according to the works we have done. In America, we have freedom of speech, of assembly, of pen and paper. We have a vast number of people always at hand, family, friends and neighbors.

Every day is a new day, a new opportunity. The Lord's mercies are new every morning (Lamentations 3:23). Why not let works and words be new every morning? Work -- "for the night cometh when no man can work" (John 9:4). Why not give words (Acts 11:14) whereby others can be saved.

Thomas Gibbens once said:

"The man may last

But never lives

Who much receives

and nothing gives."

Some of us have been fortunate enough to have had the word of God all our life. I am such a one. Some are not so fortunate, the words of eternal life come too late. Yes, THE WORDS I SPEAK will make a difference in my salvation and the salvation of others.

—Rt. 11, Box 454-B27, Gadsden, AL 35903.

Are We Under Any Law?

George W. DeHoff

God's children have always been under law. During the Patriarchial, Mosaic, and Christian dispensations, there have been commandments to obey. Those who obeyed those commandments were blessed of God; those who rebelled were punished. In every age and in every dispensation, God's grace has been extended to men who were humble -- willing to trust and obey.

Grace and Gospel

"The law came by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). There was "grace" and "truth" in the Old Testament. "Grace," the loving favor of God, provided a system of sacrifice for Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel. Noah found "favor" - "grace" - in the eyes of God. Without God's grace, no Old Testament person would have been saved. Every word that God spoke from the beginning was "truth." The truth of the gospel came only with Christ, and we have blessings more abundant than during the Old Testament dispensation. "Grace and truth" in the superlative degree came with Christ.

God's grace reaches us through his gospel. Everything which the Bible says God's "grace" does for us, it also says God's "gospel" does it. This means that grace reaches us through the gospel. We are saved

by grace (Ephesians 2:5); we are saved by the gospel (I Corinthians 15:2). We stand in the grace of God, but we also stand in the gospel of God. Paul, in Galatians 1, uses the words "grace" and "gospel" interchangeably. The Galatians were moved from the "grace" of God unto another gospel." God's "grace" which brings salvation appeared "teaching" all men what to do (Titus 2:11-12). There is no "truth" we know today except what we have learned from the written word of God. All the "grace only -- faith only" boys know nothing which is the "truth" unless it has been learned from the "word" of God - the law of God. All the "umbrella-of-grace" people know nothing of "grace" except what they have learned from the Bible! God's "grace" reaches us through his "word."

Are We Under Any Law Today?

The notion that because the Old Testament law is abolished (Colossians 2:14), we therefore are under no law at all, is ridiculous. Paul said, "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). The "law of sin and death" was the Old Testament law! The "law of the spirit of life" in Christ Jesus is the New Testament law.

Paul became "to them that are without law,

Continued from page 1

The Missionary Society: What It Was; Why It Was Wrong

The American Christian Missionary Society was established in Cincinnati in October of 1849. This, along with the introduction of instrumental music in worship, created such a furor that our brotherhood divided, which condition prevails to this day.

Observation suggests that most members of the church have no idea what the Missionary Society was. Even among our preachers, probably not half could tell wherein is the sin of the Society.



John Waddey

What It Was

A look at the founding documents will give us an idea of the nature and purpose of the Society. The following resolution was adopted by the Delegates of Cincinnati:

Resolved, that the "Missionary Society," as a means to concentrate and disperse the wealth and benevolence of the brethren of this Reformation in an effort to convert the world, is both scriptural and expedient.

The constitution adopted began with the following articles:

1. "This Society shall be called the American Christian Missionary Society."
2. "The object of this Society shall be to promote the spread of the gospel in destitute places of our own and foreign lands."
3. "The Society shall be composed of annual delegates, Life Members and Life Directors. Any church may appoint a delegate for an annual contribution of ten dollars. Twenty dollars paid at one time shall be requisite to constitute a member for life, and one hundred dollars paid at one time . . . shall be required to constitute a director for life."
4. "The officers of the Society shall consist of a President, 20 Vice Presidents, a Treasurer, a Corresponding Secretary, and a Recording Secretary . . ."
5. "The Society shall also annually elect 25 managers, who together with the officers and life directors of this Society, shall constitute an executive board, to conduct the business of the Society . . ."

The delegates selected Alexander Campbell to be the first President, and D. S. Burnett the First Vice-President.

Wherein It Was Wrong

The delegates selected Alexander Campbell to be the first President, and D. S. Burnett the First Vice-President.

Wherein It Was Wrong

From the beginning serious objections were raised. Among the criticisms were the following:

1. Since delegates, membership and officers were all limited to those who paid the set fees, therefore the Society was built on a money basis, and that was wrong.

2. It was argued that God's word "knows nothing of a confederation of churches in an ecclesiastical system, culminating in an earthly head, for government, or for any other purpose . . ."

3. It was a dangerous precedent, a departure from the principles for which we have always contended . . ."

4. Many feared "that the Society would grow into an oppressive ecclesiasticism . . ."

Among those who led the opposition to the Society were Jacob Creath, Jr., Tolbert Fanning, David Lipscomb, and Benjamin Franklin.

The church in Connelsville, Pennsylvania, issued a public statement in opposition to the Society which encouraged many other congregations to join them rejecting it. Among their objections were these:

"We consider the Church of Jesus Christ, in virtue of the commission given her by our blessed Lord, the only scriptural organization on earth for the conversion of sinners and sanctification of believers."

" . . . Conscientiously, we can neither aid nor sanction any society, for this or other purposes, apart from the church, much less one which would exclude from its memberships many of our brethren, and all of the apostles . . . because silver and gold they had not."

"We consider the introduction of all such societies as a dangerous precedent -- a departure from the principles for which we have always contended . . ."

"We also consider them necessarily heretical and schismatical, as much so as human creeds and confessions of faith, when made the bonds of union and communion."¹

In the *Gospel Advocate*, David Lipscomb and others brought additional charges against the Society. They said:

1. That it was a substitute for the church, that it was a human invention and without divine authority. When the society did its evangelistic work it was usurping the rights of the church.
2. That societies were built on the assumption that the Lord's church cannot or will not do the work assigned to it. The founders must therefore assume that their plan can do the job better than God's.
3. That the church of Christ is the Lord's Missionary Society. He is its head, and every member a life member and director.
4. That the Society had its origin in a desire to be like the denominations around us.
5. That to do its announced job the Missionary Society would have to assume power or control over the churches who were the source of its income and the fruit of its efforts.
6. That the Society was the cause of division and conflict in the brotherhood.
7. That the Society was a poor investment of God's money since the operating overhead consumed most of the money.
8. That there was no scriptural authority for the creation and existence of The Mis-

sionary Society, therefore it was unscriptural, unauthorized and condemned.²

History tells us that the majority ignored the warnings and accepted the Missionary Society to be their organization for evangelism. After a shaky start, it grew in power and followed a steady course away from God's word. The "Disciples of Christ" denomination is the modern heir of that decision.

A wise man observed that he who does not remember the lessons of the past is doomed to repeat the mistakes of history. The prevailing ignorance about the Missionary Society leaves us vulnerable to those who would propose their human systems to do the work of the church.

Be thankful to God for those faithful soldiers who stood and fought to save the church from the corruptions of these human schemes. May we, their children, never forget the battles fought and the price paid for our freedom in Christ.

¹Homer Hailey, *Attitudes and Consequences of the Restoration Movement*, second edition (Rosemead, CA: Old Paths Book Club, 1952) pp. 148-78.

²Earl West, *Search For the Ancient Order*, vol. 2 (Indianapolis: Religious Book Service, 1950) pp. 51-71.

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

Are We Under Law?

Continued from page 2

as without law (being not without law to God but under the law to Christ)" (I Corinthians 9:21). He told us in Galatians 6:2 to "bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." In Hebrews 7:12 we read, "For the priesthood being changed there was made of necessity a change also of the law." It would be interesting to hear those who insist we are under no law at all explain that verse! James has well said, "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25). The "perfect law of liberty" is simply the law of Christ, the New Testament.

Our Lord has well said, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

We cannot "preach Jesus" (Acts 8:35) without preaching his commandments. We cannot preach the grace of God without preaching the word of his grace. Grace in its supreme and ultimate form is reached in Christ. In his New Testament.

"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). In all the Bible, no person ever received any blessing on account of his own faith until that faith had expressed itself in some bodily action. Hebrews 11 is God's 'honor roll' of faith. In every case it took faith plus action, faith plus obedience, to receive the blessing. Let no one claim he enjoys the grace and favor of God while rejecting his commandments. Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

—Bellwood Church, P.O. Box 1093, Murfreesboro, TN 37130.

From Judaism To Christianity

Stephen Rosenzweig

I grew up in New York City and was reared in the Jewish religion. My father sent me to Hebrew school for religious training from the time I was seven years old until I was thirteen. After my Bar Mitzvah at the age of thirteen, I came of age according to Jewish teaching. I attended Sabbath services faithfully until through peer pressure and lack of support at home, I fell away from the practice of the religion of my youth. In the years following, I acknowledged God's existence, but had no conviction or direction concerning this belief. In 1971, I moved through the New Testament. I was impressed with the teaching of Jesus but had never met anyone who seemed to live in accordance with his teaching and I filed it away as I did the religion of my youth.

For the next ten years I was involved in the Chinese Martial Arts and through my interest in them, I became familiar with the religions of India, Japan, and China. I had always been seeking the truth, and to some extent, found some solace in these to satisfy the longing in me to know my God. My wife and I owned and operated a Martial Arts School for three years under the supervision of a Chinese master of the art.

It was on a late summer day in 1985 when a young married woman walked into our school. She was looking to improve her health and learn some self-defense. In the weeks following, the three of us established a rapport. We told her about Chinese philosophy and she listened with interest. We didn't know at the time, but her interest did not stem in Chinese philosophy, but in how to bring the truth to two people who were seeking it. For weeks I observed our new student. She was a shining example of positive attitude, friendliness, being helpful to others and honest concern. One day I couldn't stand it any longer, and I asked her "What makes you so good?" Taken back, she thought for a moment, and replied, "Have you ever read the Bible?" I answered with the story of my childhood religion and my short excursion into the New Testament while in Israel. Then I added "No, I had not read one recently enough to remember much about it, and I don't even own a Bible." Within a few days our new student and friend brought a Bible and gave it to us. She told me that even though it had been many years since I had read it, the passing of years might give me a new perspective on it. I agreed, and made the commitment to my self to read the entire Bible cover to cover. As I began reading, it became harder and harder to put it down. Everything seemed to fall into place and I could see a central theme woven through each book. I had never before read any of the prophets and was astounded by their teachings and the prophecies made and fulfilled. Before long my wife had to go and get her own Bible. The only discussion I had with our friend was during class time at our school when I commented that I had noticed how particular God is about the way we worship and obey Him.

During this time, our friend had been extending an invitation for us to come over to her house to get to know her and her husband, who was often out of town on business. We started visiting and our socializing invariably turned to discussing the Bible.

One afternoon in December, I stopped by her

house with the news that after reading the entire Old Testament and Matthew and Mark, I was convinced I had found the Messiah spoken of by the prophets of old. She was truly amazed because she had never offered any direction for me to come to that conclusion other than to encourage me to study.

This was a turning point in my life. From that point on, I realized that I was starving for knowledge about Jesus. I knew he was the Messiah, but I didn't understand the implications. My wife and I had so many questions concerning God's will for us, that we sought answers from any and all sources: "Christian" radio, denominational people, as well as our friend. There seemed to be some conflicting viewpoints. When we questioned our friend about these things, she advised us, "Don't take anyone's word for anything concerning your beliefs, not mine, or any one's. Read it in the Bible for yourself." With this sound advice, it was not long before I could discern the truth apart from the many conflicting viewpoints I had been listening to. If I had a question for our friend (for example, What about baptism, faith, worship, or the church, etc.), she would get a concordance and tell me, "Let us let the Bible explain itself."

Before we had ever discussed baptism with her, I had concluded that in order to obey God in the particular manner that he required, and receive remission of sins, my wife and I needed to be baptized. The only questions we had for our friend concerning this was what is baptism and how does one go about getting baptized, "Could she do it for us?" Again, she grabbed the concordance and let the Bible explain itself. After three nights of study and two nights of cold feet on my part, my wife and I visited our friend on our way home from work at 11:00 p.m. and studied until about midnight. At 1:00 a.m., we were going to go home and be baptized the next day. Our friend would not let us leave. She assured us that she could call a friend of hers who would be more than joyful to get out of bed and meet us down at a church building where there is a baptistry. He truly was more than joyful. Shortly after 1:00 a.m. he baptized me, and I baptized my wife.

My years of searching, and trying to fill that empty spot in my heart had been satisfied. Our friend had never established that anything my wife and I had learned on our own (directly from the Word of God) was a doctrine of the church of Christ where she worshipped. Our only doctrine, as well as hers, is the Bible. She told us how thrilled she is to see "that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith" (Romans 1:16-17). She said that it built her faith to see that the seed, the word of God, produces New Testament Christians without any additional information needed.

I realized how indebted I am that someone had taken the time and effort to bring my wife and me to the Good News. I could relate to Paul who "was circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin" (Philippians 3:5). He was "a debtor, both to the Greeks and to the

barbarians: both to the wise and the unwise." So, as much as was in him he was "ready to preach the gospel . . ." (Romans 1:14-15). I realized that I was not prepared to preach the gospel, but, as much as was in me, I was ready to learn. Within one year, I sold my business back to my teacher and began attending the Florida School of Preaching in Lakeland, Florida. I now preach for our Lord in Bushnell, Florida, while continuing my second year in the Florida School of Preaching.

The grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

An Open Letter

Dear High School Seniors,

It seems like only yesterday we remember the excitement, fears and doubts you had as you began grade school. You were so young and eager to learn that you didn't seem to be discouraged at the prospect of the next twelve years of school. Days turned into weeks, and weeks into months -- and years. You grew and progressed as time seemed to pass so slowly. Looking back it seems as only a brief moment!

Now you have entered the threshold of young adulthood and are approaching one of the great milestones of your life -- your graduation from high school. The routine and regimen of the past few years are suddenly broken. No longer do you automatically know what you will be doing next year. It seems to bring back some of your childhood excitement, fears, and doubts. Things are radically different now. Daddy and Mother are not making your decisions anymore. You must decide whether you will stay at home, move out, seek a job, go to college, or get married. "Oh, decisions, decisions! What shall I do with my life?" you ask.

We stand as spectators on the sidelines. We're proud of you. We're rooting for you. We wish for you the best of everything. We want you to succeed. We pray that you will fulfill all of your righteous hopes, dreams, and aspirations. And yet, we are more than spectators for we, to some degree, have also been an influence in your life. Please forgive the faults you see in our lives, and do not practice them. Remember the good you see in us and emulate that.

If we have given you anything, may it be said that we have given you roots, and wings. May these roots reach deeply into God's word, Christian living, honesty, truthfulness, and love. May these wings cause you to soar above the mundane, and the curse of sin, and help you to catch a lofty vision of your goals, your purpose, and your eternal destiny with God.

We are grateful that you are numbered with us as members of the Lord's church. Always remain true to your spiritual commitment. Learn to serve, and remain humble; and God will ex-hault you now and forever. And remember, there are little eyes and little feet that will follow your path.

Our congratulations and love,

Your brothers and sisters in Christ
(Written by David Wade) 6th Ave.
Church of Christ, Jasper.



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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VOLUME 23

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NUMBER 21

Ephesians (No. 8)

Chapter 4 (continued)

Gary C. Hampton

Verse 17. The unwise, as noted previously, hear the Lord but do not obey. In contrast, Paul talks about the understanding ones who hear the Lord and try to incorporate what He says into their lives. (Matthew 13:18-21, especially 19 and 23; Job 28:28; Proverbs 9:10).

Verse 18. Paul uses the words here that are linear or describe a durative process here. Thus, he is saying, "Be not being drunk," or "Do not find yourself in the process of being intoxicated." Drunkenness leads to excess, or riot, which is a complete lack of control. Instead of being filled with intoxicating liquids, Paul would have the saints be filled with the Spirit. While alcohol is merely a temporary escape, the Spirit shows us the means of overcoming through the word.

Verse 19. Another way to sing was given to the church at Ephesus and was written so as to direct individual Christians to teach each other through spiritual, vocal music. (Matthew 26:30; Acts 16:25). Hendren says, "The participle 'speaking' is plural, suggesting all sing." The word for "making melody" is *psallo*. It describes a plucking but no instrument inheres in the word, so one must go to the context to discover the strings to be plucked. Paul instructs them to pluck the heart strings while they sing. Every Christian must sing truthful songs from the heart to satisfy the demands of this verse. To use any other instrument to accompany our spiritual singing would violate God's command (Colossians 3:16).

Verse 20. A part of our singing should be dedicated to thanksgiving for all the wonderful blessings we enjoy. This thanks should be directed to the Father by the authority of Jesus Christ our master.

Verse 21. Each follower of Christ is to place himself under the control of fellow followers. This service is to be performed for others out of reverent respect for God who caused his Son to submit to death in our behalf.

Verse 22. In yielding to her Lord, a Christian wife will place herself under the control of her husband. This is just one application of verse 21 and is limited to service that can be per-

formed while maintaining a proper respect for the Lord.

Verse 23. In every organization of two or more people, someone must be the head. God's arrangement for the family is that man should be the head (Genesis 3:16). This arrangement in the family foreshadowed the relationship of Christ to the church. Christ is the head of the church and she must place herself under his control. Christ came to give his life for the church, just as the husband should provide for, protect and defend his wife. Notice, church and body as used interchangeably here as 1:22-23 would tell us they should be.

Verse 24. The church readily falls in line behind Christ like soldiers behind their commander because he has done so much for her. His great love, as shown in Calvary's sacrifice, makes him worthy of being followed. Husbands should be followed in the same way.

Verse 25. If the husband exhibits the love talked about in this verse, most wives would readily submit to him. The love a husband is to have is not erotic or passionate, but intellectual commitment to the best interests of his wife. Christ is the perfect example of such love in his sacrificial death on the cross for the church. Husbands are urged to imitate Christ's self-sacrificing nature in their relationship to their wives.

Verse 26. Christ gave his life to set the church apart from the world through the cleansing his blood provides (1:7; Acts 20:28). The means for the church to reach that blood is through the baptism of each who would be a part of that sanctified body. There is a cleansing which takes place when one is lowered into the watery grave in obedience to the word (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Peter 3:21).

Verse 27. Having purchased the church with his own blood, Jesus is ever working toward its perfection (4:15-16). His desire is also for her purity that she may be ready to be taken home by her bridegroom in the great day of judgment (II Corinthians 11:2-3). The perfection of the church can only be attained

through constant and faithful teaching of the truth (Colossians 1:28; I Peter 2:2). The church will not be fully ready for presentation to Christ until her members have put on immortality and stand purified before him because of having completed their walk in the light where Christ's blood kept them pure (Revelation 19:6-8; 21:2; I Corinthians 15:5-57; I John 1:7). Christ's bride will be pure and without the spot of sin.

Verse 28. Christ actually put the love of the church above the love of his own body when he died on Calvary. In marriage, man and woman become one, thus when the husband loves his wife, he loves himself (Genesis 2:24).

Verse 29. Men generally try to take the best possible care of their own bodies and keep them from injury. We pamper ourselves and should do likewise to our wives, just as the Lord bestowed tender love on the church.

Verse 30. As Adam could say Eve was bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, Christ can say individual Christians are part of his body, flesh and bone.

Verse 31. Husband and wife are to be faithful to one another until death separates them. The church must remain faithful unto Christ so that it can have the ultimate union with him in heaven.

Verse 32. The importance of the marriage relationship is highlighted by its being a foreshadow of Christ's relationship with the church. God's great concern for the salvation of man is likewise seen in the fact that it was planned so long ago and was being foreshadowed in the beginning of time.

Verse 33. Based upon all that has now been said about the marriage union, Paul again calls for husbands to love their own wives and wives to respect their own husbands.

—2576 Pleasant Valley Road, Mobile, AL 36606.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

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A Man's Gift

G. F. Raines

Solomon said: "A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men" (Proverbs 18:16).

In the days of King Croesus of Lydia, the ability to tell a good story spontaneously at a court dinner was regarded as a mark of nobility. A slave named Aesop, now famous throughout the world for his fables, had for a long time amused the nobles with legends embellished with sharp wit. One day the king was so impressed by the ability of Aesop that he said: "You have the earmarks of nobility, and now you shall belong to nobility and no longer be a slave."

The fact that Aesop's gift which he used to the best of his ability lifted him from slavery to nobility perfectly illustrates the great biblical truth that "A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men."

God has given to most people a gift (talent), and also the responsibility to develop it and use it in doing good unto all men. The apostle Paul says: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10).

Jesus related the parable of the talents to illustrate our responsibility to use our ability in faithful service (Matthew 25:14-30). Even if your ability is very small in your own eyes, you must use whatever ability you have to the glory of God; for, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10). Paul says that "if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (II Corinthians 8:12).

James says: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

—Newton, MS 39345.

The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Lessons From Israel (No. 2)

We have seen that the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage illustrates the deliverance of sinners from the service of sin (Romans 6:16-18). Guided by the Holy Spirit, the apostle Paul wrote: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea . . ." (I Corinthians 10:1-2). He also wrote: "Now all these things were our examples, . . ." and "All these things happened unto them for ensamples" (verses 6 and 11).

By his wonderful grace, God sent Moses to lead them out of Egypt. Likewise, God --by his amazing love and grace (Ephesians 21:8-10) -- sent Jesus to bring us out of sin. Those Israelites who were in bondage had faith in Moses, that God had sent him (Exodus 4:31). Sinners must believe in Jesus Christ, that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Their faith in Moses made them lay down their tools and quit working for Pharaoh; they "by faith" turned from Egypt to follow Moses. Similarly, the sinner's faith in Christ makes him quit working for Satan. By faith he repents, and follows Christ, who said: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). He said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24).

The only way God led them out of Egypt was right through the Red Sea. Read the Bible description of their passage through it:

And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these; so that the one came not near the other all the night. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.



Flavil H. Nichols

And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And it came to pass, that in the morning watch, the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians. And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them. But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. And Israel saw the great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians; and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses" (Exodus 14:19-31).

All who were in bondage in Egypt had to pass through the Red Sea to be delivered from that bondage. We read of their crossing the Red Sea in Exodus 14:29, and the next verse says, "Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians." And the scriptures say they "were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (I Corinthians 10:2). Now note the comparison: As they had to cross the Red Sea to be saved from Egypt, sinners must be baptized to be saved from sin. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

I had been preaching three years before entering Freed-Hardeman College. The late brother N. B. Hardeman asked me in a Bible class if I preached that their salvation from Egypt was a picture of our salvation today. After I responded that indeed I do, he inquired if I had baptized any babies? --for there certainly must have been many infants in the vast multitude of Israelites, who probably numbered from three million to five million people! I pointed out that truly their babies did have to cross the Red Sea; but that infants are not subjects for gospel baptism. All who were in Egyptian bondage had to cross that Sea to be saved from

Continued on page 4

Sound Preaching

In his epistle to the young preacher Titus, Paul urged him to speak "the things which befit the sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). This verse reminds us that Christianity involves doctrine as well as worship, practice and life-style. Our salvation depends on our abiding in Christ's doctrine (II John 9), for only then do we enjoy the fellowship of the Father and the Son. The word that Jesus spoke will be our standard of judgment in the last day (John 12:48). Doctrine is important. There is a sound, healthy doctrine; and there is doctrine that is unsound and sickly.



John Waddey

Only Christ's Doctrine Is "Sound"

We must teach Christ's doctrine, but no other. Timothy was to charge certain men not to teach a "different doctrine" (I Timothy 1:3). So serious is the matter that we are forbidden even to encourage those who teach a different doctrine: "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).

The consequences of teaching some other gospel are awesome. Paul warns: "If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema" (Galatians 1:9). To be able to preach sound doctrine, we must study and learn it beforehand. Faithful saints will give heed to Bible reading, and to their teaching, that their words be pleasing to God (I Timothy 4:13-16). At the same time they will seek always to be obedient to the word of the Lord. Only those who "obey from the heart" are truly Christ's disciples (Romans 6:17). Devout Christians will strive to "adorn the doctrine of God . . . in all things" (Titus 2:10).

Sound Preaching

There is a kind of preaching that befits or becomes sound doctrine. Sound preaching reflects the teaching of Christ and the apostles (Acts 2:42). It proclaims "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:20, 27). There is no room for traditions of men in sound preaching (Matthew 15:6-9). Personal opinions, or compromise of truth, are not part of sound teaching. We must not go beyond what is written (I Corinthians 4:6). Sound preachers deliver their message with a spirit of love for their hearers (Ephesians 4:15). They preach from pure motives: with "love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience and faith unfeigned" (I Timothy 1:5). No respect of persons is shown (Jude 16).

Sound preaching is always balanced for the need, the occasion and the audience. "Milk" is provided for babes, and "strong meat" for the mature (I Corinthians 3:1-2). It will exalt Christ, the church, and the Scripture but never the spokesman (Philippians 1:20). It always edifies the hearers (I Corinthians 14:26). Sickly preaching on the other hand will be shallow, unthought-out, vindictive, hateful, self-promoting, one-sided, bigotted, discouraging, and full of

men's words and ideas rather than God's.

Sound Living Must

Accompany Sound Preaching

Paul writes, ". . . in all things showing thyself an ensample of good works; in thy doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned . . ." (Titus 2:7-8). The effective preacher couples his message with a demonstration. Aristotle wrote in his *Rhetoric*, "Persuasion is achieved by the speaker's personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible. We believe good men more fully and more readily than others . . ." Hendriksen says "Doctrine and life must harmonize."

Sound preachers will resist the temptations of promoting self rather than Christ; of seeking power over others; of measuring one's self by the wrong standard (II Corinthians 10:12). They will never think that godliness is a way of gain (I Timothy 6:5).

Sound men will conduct their ministries with gravity or dignity (Titus 2:7). Preaching is serious business. It must not be treated in a light or flippant manner if respect is desired. Gravity is the opposite of aloofness, arrogance and pride. It leaves no room for pettiness, grudge-bearing, bitterness, touchiness or rashness. Filthiness, foolish-talking and jesting do not become a sound preacher (Ephesians 5:4).

W. T. Moore wrote "A preacher should be "grave," but not "grave-yardy." . . . He ought to be an example of dignity, earnestness, and sobriety. But he need not be morose, sour, or necessarily distasteful to a reasonable cheerfulness. Indeed, he ought to be the happiest of men, but this happiness cannot

properly manifest itself through a coarse levity -- an unseemly humor. Genuine wit should not be despised, for if judiciously used, it may add to the preacher's influence; but the preacher can never be a buffoon, jester, or a trifler without decidedly impairing his permanent usefulness." (*Preacher Problems* p. 21).

Faithful preachers will let their "manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ . . ." (Philippians 1:27). With Paul, they will glorify their ministry (Romans 11:13).

We must live so as to silence our opposition. Always there will be hostile souls searching for some flaw to criticize in our work. Charles Spurgeon warned his students "we are watched by a thousand eagle eyes; let us so act that we shall never need to care if all heaven and earth and hell swelled the list of spectators." In the words of Peter, have "your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (I Peter 2:12).

Conclusion: In all our study, preaching and work, remember these words of the gifted Richard Baxter, "God never saved any man for being a preacher, nor because he was an able preacher; but because he was a justified, sanctified man, and consequently faithful in his master's work." Therefore "take heed to thyself and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee" (I Timothy 4:16).

—6608 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN.

Roll, Jordan, Roll!

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him" (Matthew 3:13).

The River Jordan is the most famous river on earth. However, it does not owe its fame, like the Mississippi or the Tennessee, to its great length or to the rich commerce that flows upon its bosom; for the Jordan is not very long, and no boat for commercial transport purposes ever floated upon its waters. It does not owe its fame like the Nile in the pre-Aswan Dam era, to the fact that its annual overflow makes fertile a land which would otherwise be a barren waste, for its waters in the past were not used for irrigation purposes. Neither does it owe its fame, like the Tiber, Seine, or Thames, to the fact that some great city like Rome, Paris, or London, has stood on its bank; for not even a village was ever built beside the Jordan until within the last few years. Yet again: it does not owe its fame, like the Amazon, to the width of its magnificent expanse; nor, like the Hudson, to its sublime scenery; for neither condition characterizes the Jordan. To what, then, does



Levi Sides

it owe its fame? Its famousness is due to its peculiar physical characteristics, to historical events connected with it, and to the association of thoughts connected with it.

The Jordan River has three sources: the melting snows of Mount Hermon, the great springs at Dan, and at Banias. The course of the river is almost directly south. It may be divided into three sections: from Mount Hermon to Lake Merom, about forty miles; from its entrance into Merom to the Sea of Galilee, fifteen miles; and from the northern end of that lake to the Dead Sea, seventy-nine miles --making its direct length 134 miles; though by its winding it is 200 miles long. In its progress it falls over 3,000 feet, an average fall of over twenty-two feet to the mile. It varies in width from 80 to 180 feet, and in depth from five to twelve feet.

This strange and beautiful river is entwined with all the great threads of our religious and spiritual life. Here Christ was baptized (Matthew 3:1-6; 13-17); here he lived and preached; and here he began his last journey to Jerusalem (Matthew 19:1). The river's gray-green water was a witness when he fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fishes (John 6:1-15). Its waters parted to allow Joshua and his army to cross over "to trumpet" down the walls of Jericho (Joshua 4:14-17). From a mountain peak near the Jordan, Moses saw the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 34:1-4). Lot pastured his flocks here (Genesis 13:11). John the Baptist did much of his preaching

Continued on page 4

Lessons From Israel (No. 2)

Continued from page 2

Egypt. (Even all their flocks and herds, their horses, cattle, and sheep, that were in Egypt with them, had to cross the Red Sea to be delivered from the dominion of Pharaoh). Similarly, every person who is in SIN, must "repent and be baptized . . . for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). But little babies are not sinners! Only those who are LOST must "believe and be baptized" to be SAVED (Mark 16:16). Infants are not LOST, and therefore do not need to be "saved." Jesus said, "Of such is the kingdom of HEAVEN" --not, "of such is the kingdom of HELL!" (Matthew 19:14). He teaches that accountable people must become "as a little

child," or else we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Instead of being born sinners, and thus guilty and lost, the Bible says, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee" (Ezekiel 28:15). Just as God created Adam upright, and pronounced him "good," and "very good," yet he yielded to temptation, and sinned; so a child enters this world guiltless and innocent, but becomes guilty by his own transgressions. "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). Adam became a sinner by sinning; so do we.

As only those in Egyptian bondage had to follow Moses across the Red Sea to be saved from Egypt, so only those who are "servants of sin" are to be baptized to be saved from sin (Romans 6:16-18).

God did not make it optional whether they passed through the Sea or not. The only way he led them went through it. Likewise, the only gospel plan of salvation for the world of lost sinners was announced by Jesus Christ: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Have you obeyed our Lord Jesus? If not, do so today -- right now!

Watch Those Erroneous Statements!

We have all heard remarks that immediately struck us as erroneous. Nowhere are they more often made than in religious circles. (Politics might be a possible exception!)

On national television America's most widely known and popular evangelist regularly states: "Accept Jesus into your heart, and join the church of your choice." The statement sounds



Charles Cook

good to those untrained in Bible doctrine, but in the light of the holy scriptures it is a false teaching. You cannot "join" the church of Christ, the one true church mentioned in the Bible. Further, according to the Bible, "accepting" Jesus into one's heart is a different process than that suggested by today's popular evangelists.

In New Testament times people did not "join" the church; they rather "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you" (Romans 6:17). On Pentecost Day, when Peter and the apostles delivered the teaching (doctrine) of Christ regarding salvation, the Jews in Jerusalem were cut to their hearts and obeyed Christ. Acts 2:47 records that they were then "added to the church." The Lord has only ONE church, and he adds people to it upon their obedience to his doctrine. It is absolutely erroneous to say "go join the church of your choice." There is only one true church; and it cannot be joined. It is promised in scripture that the Lord himself will add obedient believers to his church. Since there is only one church, then there are no "choices" for men to make -- except to obey Christ.

Another evangelist, while teaching people on the subject of "How To Get To Heaven," stated: "You can get to heaven without money, friends, church membership, and a lot of other things." On the surface this sounds like a knowledgeable remark, and was obviously made to provoke thought, but it is plainly unscriptural! Yes, you can go to heaven without money, or friends and a lot of other things . . . BUT YOU CANNOT GO TO HEAVEN WITHOUT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP! The evangelist cited the thief on the cross as an example of one going to heaven without church membership and baptism. Again, the problem is Bible ignorance! The

thief lived and died under the Old Covenant. He did not live in the New Testament age where baptism, which puts one into Christ, and results in church membership, is a requirement for salvation (Mark 16:16).

When Jesus gave marching orders for his followers in the New Testament age, he commanded baptism as a condition of salvation (Mark 16:15-16). When Peter preached the first gospel sermon in the church age, by inspiration he commanded men to be baptized for forgiveness (Acts 2:38). Those respond-

ing were then added by the Lord to his church (Acts 2:47). In I Corinthians 12:13 Paul said that Christians are "baptized into the one Body . . ." In Ephesians 5:23 Paul clearly teaches that only those in the church, the body of Christ, will be saved and go to heaven. Church membership is a must!

Irresponsibility in religion is rampant. We should all be very careful how we hear (Mark 4:23-24), and what we speak (James 3:1).

—P.O. Box 803, Kailua Kona, HI 96745.

The Truth About Instrumental Music

Weldon Langfield

The most obvious difference between the church of Christ and man-made religious bodies is the absence of instrumental music in our worship. Some conclude that we can't afford organs or pianos; others feel we just don't like them. Actually, the reason for their non-use is that God doesn't want them in the worship of his church. Why?

Because of the authority principle.

The Bible teaches, simply stated, that whatever is not authorized by God is disallowed. This principle is found throughout the word of God. Solomon wrote, "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee and thou be found a liar" (Proverbs 30:6; see also Revelation 22:18-19). John wrote, "Whosoever goes onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ hath not God" (II John 9). Paul likewise wrote, "That in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written" (I Corinthians 4:6). We, then, must remain within the limits of what the scriptures authorize.

Because of the kind of music God wants.

In each instance of musical worship on the part of followers of Christ in the Bible, only singing was practiced. Before the crucifixion, the Bible says of Christ and the disciples, "And when they had sung a hymn they went out into the Mount of Olives" (Matthew 26:30). Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also" (I Corinthians 14:15). Both the Ephesian and the Colossian congregations were commanded to simply sing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). James exhorted, "Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise" (James 5:13). It is no more correct to add instruments to Christian worship than to add cupcakes to the Lord's Supper. God has authorized only vocal music in worship to him.

What about instrumental music in the Old Testament?

Careful Bible students realize that God both authorized and commanded the use of instrumental music in Old Testament times. Psalm 150 is one of many passages which indicate this. There Israelites were commanded to "Praise him with trumpet sound . . . psaltery and harp . . . timbrel . . . stringed instruments and pipe . . ." etc. Yet in the Old Testament, the burning of incense, a physical priesthood, and animal sacrifices were all necessary to please God.

It must be remembered the Old Law was nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14). We are under the New Testament now, and must obey its precepts.

—2913 Brock Way, Bakersfield, CA 93306.

Roll, Jordan, Roll!

Continued From Page 3

here (Matthew 3:1-6).

This is a sacred river. Its virtues have been celebrated in a thousand hymns sung by millions of voices. The immortal words from heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17), uttered on its banks have influenced the course of mankind for millenia.

On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,
And cast a wishful eye
To Canaan's fair and happy land,
Where my possessions lie.

(School of Biblical Studies, Faulkner University, Montgomery, Alabama)



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

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—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 25

FRIDAY, MAY 27, 1988

NUMBER 22

"The Power Of God"

The New Testament mentions three things as "the power of God" regarding our salvation. (1) **Christ**: "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I Corinthians 1:24). (2) **The gospel**: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). (3) **Preaching**: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (I Corinthians 1:18). These three things, each of which is said to be the "power of God," are closely related.



Joe E. Galloway

Christ

Christ is God's power to save! The justice of God demanded death for sin (see Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 18:4ff; Romans 6:23). All responsible people sin (Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:23). No man could be wise or powerful enough to oblige God to forgive (Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 16:25). Christ left heaven, lived in a human body, was subject to all temptations and problems of humanity, yet did not sin (Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 4:15; I Peter 2:22). He then gave his life to pay the penalty for our sins (Galatians 1:4; I Peter 2:24; I John 2:2). This satisfied the demands of God's justice that sin be paid for by death (Romans 4:24-26). This gave Christ the right to give us conditions to obey for our salvation (Hebrews 5:8-9).

The Gospel

This brings us to the part the gospel has as

God's power to save. "Gospel" means "good news!" The gospel is the good news that God's grace has resulted in his sending Jesus to this world to provide the only way of salvation (John 3:16). The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ for our sins is termed "the gospel which I preached unto you" by the apostle Paul (I Corinthians 15:1-4). This good news includes the conditions given man for his salvation. Mark 16:15 relates Christ's instructions to preach the gospel to all creation. Then verse 16 shows that man's need to believe and be baptized to be saved is included in this gospel. Romans 6:1-4, along with verses 16-18, show that our obedience to these commands is a "form" of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Preaching

Preaching

Preaching is also said to be "the power of God" because this is God's means of getting the good news of salvation to the lost world. Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Corinthians 1:21). Christ's provision for the salvation of the world does not benefit the lost world unless the world learns of it. The first century world heard the good news regarding salvation within approximately thirty years of Christ's death and resurrection (Colossians 1:23). This was possible because the apostles, along with those they taught, labored incessantly to see that every person heard the gospel. "Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (Romans 10:18).

Denying God's Power?

Sometime we are accused of denying God's power when we insist that one must obey the gospel, including being baptized, in order to be saved. The "reasoning" goes something like this: "You are limiting God's power by saying that one must be baptized to be saved. Do you not realize that God can do anything? God can save any way he pleases!"

Actually, who is guilty of denying the power

of God? Is it the one who believes the Bible and teaches what God has revealed? Certainly not! When we teach that one must believe and be baptized to be saved we are teaching what Jesus said in Mark 16:16. Certainly we who believe and teach this are not denying God's power; rather, we are affirming it by upholding what God has revealed in his gospel, which is his power! The fact is, it is those who deny that one must do all that God said do, and only what God said do, who are denying God's power! They are denying that God was right in limiting the way he will save. They deny that God will keep his word! We need to remember: "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself" (II Timothy 2:13).

Our God is a powerful God! "He is able to save to the uttermost" those who come to him through Christ (Hebrews 7:25). To come to him one must believe and obey his will (Hebrews 11:6; Matthew 7:21). Yet, none will come to him by obeying his gospel unless they are first taught (John 6:44-45). This emphasizes the important task all we who are Christians have. We must teach the gospel to those who are lost!

218 Pinecrest Drive, Greeneville, TN 37743.

The Ecumenical Movement

G. F. Raines

During the past several years I have read a great deal about the "ecumenical movement." Much that I have read has been childishy naive and utterly unrealistic.

Our Lord Jesus Christ prayed for unity (John 17:20-21). The apostle Paul admonishes us to endeavor to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). But there is a vast difference between scriptural unity, versus the union that so many people are striving for today.

To bring about the unity of all sincere wor-

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

—Acts 26:25

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The Ecumenical Movement

Continued from page 1

shippers of God, we must reject everything as being a part of the worship and service of God that rests upon opinions, wisdom, and authority of men; and we must observe only what is authorized by Christ and the inspired apostles in the New Testament.

Jesus says that those who worship according to the commandments of men worship "in vain" (Mark 7:7), and that unauthorized traditions make "void" the commandments of God (Matthew 15:6). He also warns us that, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13).

Paul, not willing that our faith should "stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (I Corinthians 2:5), says: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17). To do all "in the name of" Christ is to do everything by his authority. We have a complete record of all that Christ has authorized us to do in the gospel (New Testamentized us to do in the gospel (New Testament). By "the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue," in the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, God "hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3).

The apostle John says: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (II John 9). "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18-19).

—206 Cherry St. Newton, MS 39345.

Jesus The Master



Levi Sides

"... for one is your Master, even Christ" (Matthew 23:10)

There are many titles -- some one hundred and three in all -- in both Old and New Testaments which apply to Jesus. Each has a special significance. Some of them are: Son of God, Savior, Messiah, Lord, King, Prince, High Priest, Lamb, First Born, The Truth, The Light, The Door, The Head, The Vine, and others.

One title which is unique is "Master." "Master" means one in authority, who has subjects to his will. Jesus is appropriately called "Master."

Jesus is master and Lord. To the disciples he said, "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am" (John 13:13). As "Lord" he is a ruler; as "Master" he is one in authority with subjects to his will. As "Lord" and "Master" he was in the appropriate position to become "the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:23). His greatness is exemplified by his works of power (John 14:11); his birth of a virgin, by his ability to perform (John 3:1-2); his mission, by his teaching (Matthew 7:24-29); his humility, by his deeds (John 13:14-16); and his love, by his death (John 15:13; I Peter 3:18), and by his resurrection (Romans 1:1-4).

Jesus was "Master" of occasions. As a wise counselor, no situation found Jesus wanting for a solution. He always knew the answer. To the wicked men who brought the immoral woman, he said, "He that is without sin

among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (John 8:1-11). When the Jews questioned his authority, he replied, "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven? or, of men?" (Matthew 21:25). In the case of paying tribute money to Caesar he said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21).

Jesus was "Master" of the elements (Mark 4:36-41). Jesus was sleeping in the lower part of the ship when a storm arose at sea. The disciples awakened him: "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" And he arose and rebuked the wind and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm."

Jesus was "Master" of the body. Whatever it might be: leprosy, palsy, an issue of blood, a cripple, a maniac, a dumb man, a deaf man, a blind man -- he was able to heal. No obstacle of human frailty was too difficult for the curing power of the great "Master" physician.

Jesus was and is master of cold dismal death. At the fall and punishment of man, he was promised as a deliverance through the seed of woman (Genesis 3:15). Jesus walked daily beneath the shadow of the cross (Mark 8:31). Sins made necessary his death (II Corinthians 5:21; Luke 24:46). His divine power made necessary his resurrection (John 11:25; Revelation 1:18). Being the first-begotten from the dead to die no more, he is now the complete "Master" of the grave and the resurrection (I Corinthians 15:12-23, 53-57).

Dear Reader, he wants to be your "Master," Hear and obey him (Revelation 3:20).

—School of Biblical Studies, Faulkner University, Montgomery, AL.

The Gospel Of Christ

Jesus commanded his apostles to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15-16). The gospel of Christ is God's power unto salvation of sinners (Romans 1:16). The book of Revelation talks of "... the everlasting gospel ... the gospel which shall be here when the world is on fire" (Revelation 14:6).

There is a gospel which is not truly a "gospel," according to Paul (Galatians 1:6-10). The gospels of Roman Catholicism and denominationalism are not "the gospel" as revealed in the Holy Bible! Read the creeds and catechisms of men and you will observe the difference between them and the Bible.

We shall not notice some pointed lessons which we trust our readers will discern with an open mind:

(1) Acts 20:24 tells of "the gospel of the grace of God." Thus the gospel is a product of God's marvelous grace. God's grace and man's faith meet together in the salvation of the sinner (Ephesians 2:8-9). "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our



W. A. Holley

Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2). But, when is the sinner justified by faith to share in God's grace? It is when he has been baptized into Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 6:3-4). Neither the doctrine of "faith only," nor the doctrine of "grace only" is taught in the Bible (James 2:14-26).

(2) "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things" (Romans 10:15). The word peace is used to describe the harmonious relationship that should exist between God and men. This amazing work is accomplished by the power of the gospel (Acts 10:36). Peace can be found in Christ only (John 16:33). When does one come to share the peace which is in Christ? It is when one hears, believes and obeys the gospel of Christ (I Peter 1:22-25; Romans 6:3-4).

(3) Furthermore, says Paul, "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel" (I Corinthians 4:15). Thus, when the gospel seed is sown, when it germinates and brings forth fruit, a child of God is the result (Galatians 6:7-9). "The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). In apostolic times the seed, the word of God, never produced Roman Catholicism nor

Continued On Page 4

Ephesians Chapter 6

Verse 1. Literally, Paul says children are to keep on obeying their parents. This is restricted by the expression "in the Lord" which means a child may refuse to obey his parents if they ask him to do something that is wrong in God's sight. Obedience is not only a good thing, it is right in God's sight.

Verse 2. This is the fifth commandment written on tables of stone at Mount Sinai. It is the first, or primary, commandment for children and, if obeyed, carries with it the promise of the next verse.

Verse 3. Obeying and honoring one's parents helps to develop a character well suited for a long life on earth. Such takes self-control, a teachable spirit, self-discipline and recognition of authority, which are necessary ingredients for living on this earth (Deuteronomy 5:16).

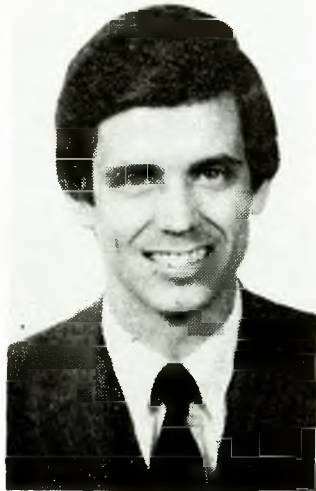
Verse 4. To facilitate the child's obedience, Paul commands fathers not to provoke their children to wrath. Discipline is an important part of the parent-child relationship (Hebrews 12:5-11). Yet, harsh discipline can cause a child to want to strike back. Also, being inconsistent in discipline, by laughing about something today and spanking for it tomorrow, can lead to outbursts of anger. A child is not a piece of property or tool, but a young man or woman needing molding and training (Proverbs 22:6). The word "nurture" is from the Greek *paideia* which includes the whole training and education of children," according to Thayer. "Admonition" is from *nouthesia* which would mean to admonish or exhort. Notice it is the "admonition of the Lord," which is a loving reproof or encouragement to do what is right. As in the verses in Hebrews listed above, God's correction is always given out of love for the one corrected with the purpose of yielding righteousness as its fruit. Our motivation needs to be the same as his.

Verse 5. Christ and his apostles did not violently oppose slavery, but set in motion the principles that would destroy it. Paul tells Christian slaves to have proper respect for their master's authority and serve him sincerely, with no hidden motives. All of a Christian's acts are performed in service to Christ because he is the master of our lives (Galatians 2:20).

Verse 6. Some perform their tasks to be visually pleasing but will not meet the test of a thorough inspection. Others only work when someone in authority can see them. Either of these two is wrong because it is eye-service designed only to please men. Christ's servant will put his heart into his labors because he is working for God first (Compare Matthew 5:14-16).

Verse 7. Instead of giving grudging service, the Christian slave will serve with kindness, again because he is ultimately Christ's slave.

Verse 8. Though the earthly master may be impossible to please, Christ will see our good works in his service and will reward us in



Gary C. Hampton

the day of judgment. Christ's rewards extend to all men equally. There is no class or distinction in Christ (Galatians 3:28-29).

Verse 9. Masters are to act toward their slaves with the same respect for God which slaves were commanded to have. Christ does not threaten his followers; and neither should they threaten those who work in their service if they would truly be like him (I Peter 2:21-24). Christian masters were commanded to remember that they were slaves to righteousness in Christ (Romans 6:16-18). The Master has no respect of persons and his followers must not either (Acts 10:34-35). It is such a change of heart that will bring slavery to its knees.

Verse 10. At the conclusion of this letter, Paul wanted to remind the brethren of the battle they were in and stress the importance of being prepared for it. A Christian's true strength is in the Lord and our power comes from his great might (Philippians 4:13).

Verse 11. Again, if we are to win this battle, we must put on the Lord's armor, not some of our own making. The devil, like any enemy commander, has a strategy for victory. He seeks out areas of weakness and tries to exploit them to our destruction (I Corinthians 7:5; II Corinthians 11:13-15).

Verse 12. Of the term translated "wrestle," Summers says it, "was the word for 'hand-to-hand encounter.' It might be used of two wrestlers in hand-to-hand struggle or of two soldiers who in the midst of battle faced off one against the other for a very personal nature of this battle for every Christian. The gravity of the battle should be seen in the nature of the opponent, who is not a man. We are fighting the devil and his whole organization of darkness (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; II Corinthians 4:3-4). Wickedness is organized in its fight to overthrow Christ's army. The "high places" would describe things beyond the ordinary on natural battlegrounds we might think of. Satan and his forces cannot challenge God in heaven because they have been cast down but they will fight us in ever other place including the church (II Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Acts 20:29-31). It is vital that we take all of this personally since it is a personally hand-to-hand combat and the devil is trying to capture anyone he can, including me (I Peter 5:8; II Timothy 2:23-26, 16-18; II Peter 2:17-22).

Verse 13. We need to put on God's armor and stand our ground because the forces of evil are going to attack (I Corinthians 15:58; 16:13). The "evil day" is a day of crises when the fight is on. One must prepare for a battle before it comes, not during the attack.

Verse 14. Soldiers in Paul's day girded their loin with a belt to hold things in place and allow freer movement. The truth is God's word and will make us free (John 17:17; 8:32). The breastplate protected the vital organs of the chest region. "Righteousness" is the word of God, specifically his commandments (Psalm 119:172).

Verse 15. To hold his ground in even the worst conditions, the Roman soldier wore hobnailed sandals. The Christian is prepared, or ready, for the battle when he has his gospel shoes on. Actually, we can take the fight to the enemy with the good news that Jesus died to make men free (Romans 1:14-16; Mark 16:15-16).

Verse 16. Lipscomb says the shield was two

and one-half feet wide and four feet high made of wood covered with thick leather on the outside. When the enemy fired flaming arrows, they bounced off the tough leather and dropped harmlessly to the ground. Faith, which is our shield, is produced by hearing God's word (Romans 10:17).

Verse 17. Lipscomb describes the Roman helmet as "a cap made of thick leather or brass, fitted to the head. It was used to guard the head from a blow by a sword, a war club, or a battle-ax." To learn the way of salvation, we must study the God-breathed, or spoken, word which is only found in scripture (II Timothy 3:15-17). The sword was a defensive and an offensive weapon, being used to deflect blows and pierce the opponent. God's word, as delivered by the Spirit, is our sword (Hebrews 4:12). Jesus knew its value and used it to turn aside Satan's assault in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11). Only through study can the Christian soldier learn how to properly handle this important weapon (II Timothy 2:15).

Verse 18. To be completely prepared, the Christian soldier must pray in addition to putting on his armor. Prayer should be more than occasional (Luke 18:1; I Thessalonians 5:17). We need to endure in it during good times and bad. It should be used in behalf of all we know in the Lord because they fight the same battles and face the same dreaded foe.

Verse 19. Paul felt the same need for the prayers of the saints that any other Christian feels. Particularly, he felt the need for courage in preaching that he might fully proclaim God's message. It is only through complete preaching of the truth that one can be free from the blood of his hearers (Acts 20:26-27; Ezekiel 3:17-19).

Verse 20. Ambassadors carry the messages of the leader of their nation. Paul was the Lord Jesus Christ's messenger to the Gentile world (Acts 9:15-16; II Corinthians 5:17-20). At the time of this writing, Paul was in bonds, apparently on his way to Rome. God's intent was to use those bonds to the furtherance of the gospel, but it would only work to that end if Paul fully proclaimed the truth with courage.

Verse 21. Tychicus was a Christian from Asia (Acts 20:4) who carried this letter as well as the one to Colosse (Colossians 4:7). He may also have born the letter to Titus as well as doing some further work in Ephesus (Titus 3:12; II Timothy 4:12). Paul's love for him and reference to his faithfulness as a Christian servant would certainly commend him to any church.

Verse 22. Since Tychicus would be the one bringing the letter to them, Paul could tell the Ephesian brethren he had sent him.

Verse 23. Paul's desire for them was the peace that passed understanding (Philippians 4:7), the love of the gospel which would keep them in the obedient path (John 14:15; I John 5:3), and faith that is so necessary to please God and sustain us in service (Hebrews 11:6). All of these things come from the Father and his beloved Son.

Verse 24. Paul also prayed God would bestow upon them his favor, which was unmerited by them. Further, he desired this grace for those who had an incorruptible love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

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Continued On Page 4

Genuine Loyalty To Christ

G. F. Raines

There is no truth that needs to be stressed more emphatically today than the fact that real loyalty to Christ involves "a definite change of mind, heart, and will involving the whole of life and all our affections and intentions."

Jesus says: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22). "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

In Galatians 5:4, Paul says that when one ceases to be loyal to Christ, he severs himself from the Lord and falls from grace. The "law" referred to in this passage is the

law of Moses which had been abrogated (Romans 7:4; Colossians 2:14-17; Hebrews 10:9-10).

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews, writing to "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling" (Hebrews 3:1), said: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12). When a person departs from God, he forfeits his salvation (I Chronicles 28:9; II Chronicles 15:2; Isaiah 12:2).

Robert Shank has well said: "The Christian, to be sure, begins his new life in Christ as a babe. He needs time and nurture for development. He has much to learn in his new life. He lacks understanding and may stumble frequently, displaying spiritual immaturity in

many ways. But the windows of his heart will be open toward the Sun of Righteousness, and the basic orientation of his life will be toward God."

Peter says: "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:17-18).
—P.O. Box 97, Newton, MS 39345.

"Not Forsaking The Assembling Of Ourselves Together As The Manner Of Some Is" Hebrews 10:25

The Gospel Of Christ

Continued From Page 2

Denominationalism -- rather, it produced Christians, members of the churches of Christ (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Peter 4:16; Romans 16:16).

(4) The gospel of salvation is clearly revealed in the Bible (Ephesians 1:13). The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ are FACTS to be believed (I Corinthians 15:1-4). In addition to these facts, there are COMMANDS to be obeyed: (1) believe that Jesus is the Christ (Mark 16:16); (2) repent (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 2:38; II Peter 3:9); (3) confess Jesus' name before men (Matthew 10:32-33); (4) and baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16). And then there are THREATS to be feared if one neglects to respond to God's demands (Mark 16:16; II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Hence, the gospel of Christ saves only those who obey the Lord!!

(5) The apostle Paul referred to "the blessing of the gospel" (Romans 15:29), to the "afflictions of the gospel" (II Timothy 1:8), and to the "bonds of the gospel" (Philemon

Ephesians No. 6

Continued from page 3

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13). The thought is that it costs something to follow the demands of the gospel; but it also brings rich rewards (Luke 14:23-33; II Timothy 4:6-8).

(6) No Christian should be moved away from "the hope of the gospel" (Colossians 1:23). 'Once in grace, always in grace,' is a doctrine not taught in the sacred scriptures. We shall now quote Sam Morris, a noted Baptist preacher of years past: "We take the position that a Christian's sins do not damn his soul. The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul . . . 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 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 a man lives has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul." In the light of Galatians 5:4; II Peter 2:20-22; I Corinthians 10:12; Luke 8:13; Hebrews

6:4-6, what do you think of the above quotation? Is it true or false??

(7) "The gospel of the kingdom" occupies an important place in New Testament teaching (Colossians 1:13-14). The "church" and the "kingdom" are one (Matthew 16:18-19). John the Baptist and Jesus Christ spent much time and effort in preaching "the kingdom of God" and the "kingdom of heaven." (Cf. Matthew 6:33 and Matthew 5:3, 10). The Colossian brethren, the brethren addressed in the Hebrews letter, and John the apostle are all said to have been in the kingdom (Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 1:9).

The notion that the kingdom of God has never been established, that Jesus will sit on a literal throne of David, that he will reign over the earth from the city of Jerusalem for 1,000 years is false to the core. The Bible (your Bible) teaches that one cannot be in the church and out of the kingdom at the same time (Acts 2:36-38, 41, 47; 14:22; 28:23, 31).

We sincerely urge our readers to hear and obey the gospel of Christ today (I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Time is of the essence. Don't wait until it is too late.

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Bibles Cost More

Elders, Mansfield, TX

The church in Mansfield, TX is the sponsoring congregation for Pat McGee as he teaches and preaches in Indonesia and S.E. Asia. Besides preaching and teaching, Pat also trains local brethren to preach the gospel, and writes tracts and other material in the Indonesian language.

For about a year, funds were collected by this congregation to have 10,000 Bibles printed in the Indonesian language. The Bibles were ordered, paid for, and (we thought) were being printed. In the middle of March, the printers sent word to Pat that an additional \$5,000.00 was needed in order to complete the printing of the Bibles. This was due to the devaluation of the U.S. dollar and inflation in S.E. Asia. The \$5,000.00 was sent, but as a result, Pat's working fund was depleted.

The congregation here gives \$600 monthly to

ward this fund, and extra as needed. We are asking for help in getting the \$5,000.00 back into Pat's working fund. So far, we have received about \$2,300. Any help will be greatly appreciated. Please send contributions to:

Asian Evangelism Fund Elders, Mansfield Church of Christ, 201 E. Broad St. Mansfield, TX 76063.

"TREAT EVERY PERSON WITH KINDNESS AND RESPECT, EVEN THOSE WHO ARE RUDE TO YOU. REMEMBER THAT YOU SHOW COMPASSION TO OTHERS NOT BECAUSE OF WHO THEY ARE BUT BECAUSE OF WHO YOU ARE."



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

Speak forth the

—Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 24

A Tale Of Two Prophets

A wise person will learn from the vices and virtues of others and avoid making the same mistakes. Scripture records incidents for our profit, and we do well to heed their lessons. First Kings 12:26-13:32 contains a fascinating story of two prophets from which we can glean numerous lessons.

Background of the Episode

Jereboam rules as head of the recently-established northern Kingdom of Israel (I Kings 12:20). He was a wicked man who did evil more than all who were before him (I Kings 14:9). He regarded neither Jehovah nor his law.

The events occurred in and about the ancient city of Bethel. Bethel had been a sacred place since the days of Jacob who saw the vision of the ladder into heaven there (Genesis 28:12-13). It was called the house of God and the gate of heaven (Genesis 28:17).

Jereboam had appointed Bethel and Dan as national shrines of worship, lest his people be drawn to the temple of Jehovah at Jerusalem and be tempted to revert to King Rehoboam of Judah (I Kings 23:26-29). He placed a golden calf at each shrine as objects of worship. It does not seem that he sought to introduce a new god; he only would change the form and place of Jehovah worship to keep his people away from Jerusalem, and loyal to him (I Kings 12:26-29). Such adjustments were condemned however, because God had warned "thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath . . . thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them . . ." (Deuteronomy 5:8-9). Jeroboam sought to link his calf symbols to the God who had brought them forth out of Egypt. He failed to point out that Jehovah had severely punished those Hebrews



John Waddey

of the Exodus for their golden calf (Exodus 32:1-10). The king also set up a priesthood of men not Levi's descent (I Kings 12:31). Even he himself dared officiate at the altar (13:1). In this he also transgressed God's law (Numbers 3:6, 10). Moses was the great law-giver and founder of Israel. Jereboam was the law breaker and destroyer. "Jereboam drove Israel from following Jehovah, and made them sin a great sin" (II Kings 17:21).

The event of our study took place on the day of a great harvest festival designed by the king to compete with the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. He scheduled his in the eighth rather than the seventh month (12:32-33). Jereboam led the pagan procession and mounted the altar to burn incense. In all of this we see his presumptuous arrogance.

The Confrontation

Suddenly out of the crowd stepped forth the man of God, fearlessly speaking words of condemnation and judgment against that evil ruler. He is unnamed and unknown, save for this one event. His title, "man of God," conferred by inspiration, is greater than any king could bestow upon him. He was a prophet, for he spoke for God (Exodus 7:1). He hailed from Judah where David's dynasty yet reigned, where Jehovah's temple and worship were yet honored and God's word was still heard.

He spoke words of doom on Bethel's altar and its illegitimate priesthood (13:2). That altar would be rent as a confirmation of his prophecy. Jereboam stretched forth his hand ordering his immediate arrest. How dare anyone speak such impudence! But as the words left his lips, his arm withered and the altar collapsed, spilling its contents on the ground. The sinner was helpless before the offended Lord. Terrified, Jereboam pleaded with the prophet to pray for his healing . . . which he did (13:6).

In gratitude the humbled king entreated the young prophet, "Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward (13:7). But the man of God steadfastly refused. God had said, "Eat no bread, drink no water in this place." Half the king's wealth would not tempt him to violate his commission. That royal temptation was resisted by remember-

ing God's word. The same formula will work for us today (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10). So, he departed home according to his divine instructions.

The Other Prophet

Among the witnesses of the events at Bethel were the sons of another prophet, an older man who lived nearby. They rushed home to relate the remarkable happenings of the day. This prophet had been content to stay in the corrupt and rebellious kingdom when others fled south (II Chronicles 11:13-14). He had adjusted to living in the midst of idolatry and moral corruption without protest. He was like the proverbial dumb watchdog that could not bark, therefore worthless (Isaiah 56:10). Once he had known the way of truth and walked in it. Now he just stayed at home. But notice that his sons had attended the heathen festival!

The Tragic Ending

Hearing their story, the old prophet hurriedly pursued the brave young man to invite him into his home to eat bread. No doubt he admired the young prophet who did what HE should have done. But the young man was steadfast in his refusal, for he said, "It was said to me by the word of Jehovah" (13:16-17). The old man was not easily discouraged. Being determined to win his way, he insisted, "an angel spake unto me . . . saying, Bring him back with thee into thy house . . ." (13:18). Without a blush, he spoke the lie. The man from Judah pondered that point. To eat with a prophet in Bethel did not seem as bad as to eat with an idolatrous king. No temptation is so dangerous as that which comes shrouded under a veil of holiness and claiming authority from God. He believed the lie, crossed the forbidden line and went with the deceiver. Those who tempt us to disobey God are Satan's agents, whether they know it or not! Perhaps Paul had this very example in mind in Galatians 1:8 when he warned, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema." Surely the false

Continued on page 2

"I'd Rather Do It My Way"

There seems to be an over-abundance of people who insist on having their way in everything. Most of the difficulties between children would be avoided if this attitude could be overcome. The problems in society are often traceable to this disposition. And, with few exceptions, both parties are unwilling to "give a little" here and there.



Edsel Burleson

Sometimes, the disposition to argue is the spark that ignites a forest of misunderstandings. The disagreement can be relatively minor, but the plot thickens as each endeavors to defend his position.

Ivan Demetrius and Mischa Petrovitz loved to argue. Standing on a street corner in Moscow, they watched an infantry regiment marching by.

"Do men grow upward or downward?" asked Ivan.

"Why, downward, of course," replied Mischa.

"How do you know, Mischa?" asked Ivan.

"Because," replied Mischa, "once when I outgrew my overcoat, it became too short for me at the bottom."

"No, Mischa," replied Ivan, looking on at the marching soldiers, "men grow upward." "Why do you say that, Ivan?"

"Because," replied Ivan, "you will see that our brothers marching out there are all even at the bottom, but uneven at the top."

A simple solution to most disagreements is found in Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth. He said, "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (I Corinthians 13:4-7).

The problem is world-wide! It has been called by someone "plain old unvarnished selfishness."

The poet explained it this way:

"I had a little party this afternoon at three:
Twas very small -- three guests in all,
Just I, MYSELF and ME.

Myself ate all the sandwiches,
while I drank up the tea.

"Twas also I that ate the pie
and passed the cake to ME." Hmmm...

—420 7th Street S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

A Tale Of Two Prophets

Continued From Page 1

prophet is the most plausible and dangerous of all tempters. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1).

"As they sat at the table . . ." the awful judgment was announced. Through the very mouth of the deceiving prophet the word came. Because you have disobeyed God, "thy body shalt not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers" (13:20-22). What may seem a trivial act of disobedience can have devastating consequences. The sanctity of his office did not protect him from sin or punishment. He had forsaken the plain command of God for the word of a man. He had sinned, and the wages thereof is death (Romans 6:23). Jesus said the man who knows his lord's will and does it not will be beaten with many stripes (Luke 12:47-48).

With a fallen countenance and a heavy heart, he mounted his ass and began his fearful journey home. But judgment did not linger. "A lion met him by the way, and slew him" (13:23-25). How can a sinner hope to escape God's judgment when even the beasts are used by him? Someone has well said, "It was the old prophet's lying tongue rather than the lion's paw that killed him."

In his death, the hand of God was evident, for the lion which killed him did not devour him, nor did it harm the ass. Normally such would never happen. The fact that the ass stood calmly in the presence of his deadly enemy was also a sign of God's providence at work.

Lessons To Remember

This sad story offers us numerous lessons to remember. Perhaps the first in importance is ". . . let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12). It is not a momentary, but a lifelong battle we

wage. The tempter knows his best opportunities. He often assails us at the moment we are confident in duty done. Remember, too, that temptation is most dangerous when it assumes a religious disguise.

Another important lesson is expressed by Paul. "Let God be found true, but every man a liar" (Romans 3:4). We must be dedicated to honoring and obeying the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). Other voices must never be allowed to replace the word of God; not nature, conscience, reason, public opinions, or even the church. "God . . . will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able to bear" (I Corinthians 10:13). Disobedience is inexcusable, even when the divine reasons are not understood.

"With such a one, no, not to eat" (I Corinthians 5:11). It is important with whom we eat and drink in fellowship. Evil companions corrupt good morals (I Corinthians 15:33). Like that young man, thousands have wished that they had never accepted that invitation to disobey God.

We see the fallacy of the prevailing notion that in religion it does not matter what you believe if you are sincere. Those who believe not the truth will believe a lie and be judged (II Thessalonians 2:11-12). When the blind lead the blind, they both will fall into the pit (Matthew 15:14). How many good people have believed the lie that one religion is as good as another; or that there is plenty of time to attend to one's salvation; or just trust the Lord and you will be saved?

May the sad lessons of this man of God ever live in our hearts and help us not to believe a lie.

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

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 Servant Of The Lord

Ken Tyler

"So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord" (Deuteronomy 34:5). "And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old" (Joshua 24:29). These verses emphasize the most important aspect of our existence: being prepared to meet God. Moses and Joshua died, each as "the servant of the Lord." No greater statement could have been made about these men.

The reason Moses and Joshua died as God's servants was because they lived that way. It seems that some people live wrong, and then expect(?) to die right. It just doesn't work like that. You cannot be a servant of the devil, and expect God to say, ". . . well done, thou good and faithful servant . . ." (Matthew 25:21).

One of the great accomplishments of the devil is to cause lost people to think that God will accept them as they are. All of us must understand that we are to conform ourselves to God's will, instead of changing God's will to fit ourselves. This is the great challenge every individual faces.

Now, what is your spiritual condition? Are you a "servant of the Lord?" Please don't live one way, and expect to die another! A great new Testament passage says, ". . . Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labor; and their works do follow them" (Revelation 14:13). The only approved way to die, is ". . . in the Lord . . ." We may "die" in the Lord because we live that way. Our greatest need is to be right with God. I want to plead with you to live as a servant of the Lord; then when death comes, all will be well.

—P.O. Box 376, Arab, AL 35016.

We Can Live It

Clifford Dixon

Some do not make commitment to deny self, and take up the cross and follow Christ (Matthew 16:24-26) because they have the 'feeling' that they cannot live the Christian life. To help us all realize that we CAN live the Christian life with God's help, the following reasons are put forth.

1. We can live the Christian life because **God will help us**. He said, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:5-6).

2. We have the light to walk in, with the promise that if we walk in it we will be cleansed of all sin. "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).

3. When we sin we have the promise that if we will repent of our sins, and confess them, the Lord will forgive us. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

4. We have an "Advocate," which means that Jesus is our lawyer of defense, who is pleading our case to the heavenly Father. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (I John 2:1-2).

5. When we become Christians we become sons of God and as sons we have the promise that some day we will be like him; and this is a motive to purify our lives. "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. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purified himself even as he is pure" (I John 3:1-3).

6. We can be more than conquerors of any habit, any difficulty, and persecution, or calamity, *through him who loves us*. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35-39).

7. We have God as our helper and nothing is impossible with God. Jesus' disciples once asked him, "Who then can be saved?" and Jesus answered, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:25-26). This is the God we serve when we become Christians.

8. God will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear if we lean on him. "There hath no temptation taken you but

such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13).

9. We also are promised in I Corinthians 10:13 a way of escape from the temptation, provided by the Lord. Jesus used the word of God to overcome Satan's temptations (Matthew 4:1-10). He taught his disciples to pray to be delivered from evil (Matthew 6:9-14).

10. We are encouraged to be faithful by the men of faith who have lived before us. Hebrews 11 points out a number of these men and what they endured; but they were successful, and so can we be successful. Hebrews 12:1-3 states: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

11. According to verse three (of Hebrews 12 quoted above), we have Jesus to look to as we live the Christian life. He lived a sinless life and died a martyr's death; and striving to follow his example we can also live a successful Christian life.

12. We can set our affection on things above and thus destroy old sinful habits, attitudes, and words. Read Colossians 3:1-5).

13. We also have prayer as a wonderful privilege of Christianity. Paul told the Philippian brethren to "stand fast in the Lord" to "be of the same mind in the Lord," to "rejoice in the Lord," and to "let your moderation be known unto all men" (Philippians

4:1, 2, 4, 5). Then he told them how these things could be accomplished: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

14. We can live the Christian life by leaning on Jesus, our sympathetic high priest. "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. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16).

15. We can live the Christian life because we can do all things through Christ. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

16. We can live the Christian life because we have yielded our bodies as the temples of the Holy Spirit and thus we have the motive to keep our bodies and hearts clean. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:19-20).

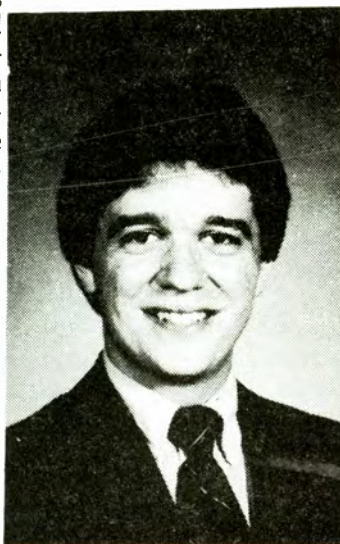
The conclusion is: we have faith in the Lord, in his word, in his church, and confidence in the future; and, "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world; even our faith" (I John 5:4)!

—P.O. Box 507, Jay, FL 32565.

Shall We Publicly Stand Against False Teachers?

In recent months much has been said about attitudes toward those who teach false doctrine. A disturbing fact is there are some sincere people with good intentions who seem to think that public confrontation and direct criticism of doctrine in writing or speeches are contrary to what our Savior would have done; furthermore, they also claim that it emits from an unloving, hateful spirit. I disagree.

On several occasions, Christ launched scathing direct attacks upon those who taught and practiced error. One should recall his tirade against the Pharisees (Matthew 23). He rebuked the Jews for refusing to hear him, and said that they were of their father, the devil (John 8:44). The Pharisees were offended at his teaching, and many of his disciples refused to follow him afterward.



David W. Hester

The Christ spoke the truth in love. However, Peter says that Jesus became a "rock of stumbling and a stone of offense" to those who rejected him (I Peter 2:8). The Lord knew that evangelism often demands specific teaching and, yes, personal confrontation.

Jesus did not adopt an unloving attitude when he told Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan . . ." (Matthew 16:23). Paul did not violate brotherly love when he confronted Peter at Antioch (Galatians 12:11-14). In fact, Paul confronted him before many brethren! Both John and Paul used the names of people when identifying those who were wrong (III John 9; I Timothy 1:19-20; II Timothy 2:17-18; 4:9).

We must, of course, avoid personally attacking a brother. But we must not avoid confronting false teachers and standing against their doctrine in public. We also cannot bid them Godspeed (II John 9), but must mark them (Romans 16:17-18). This should be done out of a spirit of love and concern for the souls of both the false teacher and those he influences. Let us all be willing to stand unflinchingly for truth and against error. If the church is to remain pure, this must be done. Christ demands it of all of us.

—Rt. 2, Box 227, Jasper, AL 35501.

"Kids Say Rape OK In Some Cases"

The above caption comes from **The Birmingham News** (May 3, 1988). It refers to a survey taken of 1,700 boys and girls from the 6th grade through the 9th grade. The survey was conducted by the Rhode Island Rape Center.

What does the survey reveal? "Nearly a fourth of the boys, and one out of every six girls, responding to a survey on rape said it was acceptable for a man to force a woman to have sex with him if he had spent money on her" (**The Birmingham News**, 5-3-88).

We ask, Where did these boys and girls get such an idea? In Sunday School, where the Bible is taught? No!! But such ideas are freely presented on daily TV programs! Are our parents permitting TV to teach and guide their children? How many children never attend a single church service? It is true that countless thousands of parents have no real interest in Bible teaching (Ephesians 6:1-4).

Another shocking statement is: "65 percent of the boys and 47 percent of the girls in the seventh through ninth grades said it is acceptable for a man to force a woman to have sex with him if they have been dating more than six months."

Again, we ask, where do such thoughts originate? In most schools the Bible cannot be taught. In many instances sex education has become a "how-to" proposition rather than a "don't do it" proposition. Verily, it seems that sex has become a sort of toy, or game, with the "now" generation. Could such teaching explain the rapid spread of AIDS? In many circles, the word **abstinence** has become a dirty word; but this is exactly what the God of heaven teaches (Genesis 2:21-25; Matthew 19:3-9).

Another offensive quotation is: "87 percent of the boys and 79 percent of the girls said rape is OK if a couple is married." What is rape? Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines rape as, "Sexual intercourse with a woman by a man without her consent and chiefly by force or deception." This is woman-abuse! Such sadistic mental and physical pain suffered by any woman would be extremely horrifying.

Women, like men, were created in the image of God. Men are commanded to love their wives as they love themselves (Ephesians 5:25-31). Where has the "Golden Rule" (Matthew 7:12) gone? What has become of the law of morality? No man has a right to mistreat or abuse a woman, even if she is his wife.

Again, we quote from the survey: "31 percent of the boys and 32 percent of the girls said it would not be improper for a man to rape a woman who has had previous sexual experience." How did these children come up with such outlandish notions? Can it be that these ideas reflect the educational philosophy which they have received? When children are taught **HUMANISM** and **EVOLUTION** -- that human beings are no more than cats and dogs -- how can they reverence the rights, whether spiritual or



W. A. Holley

physical, of others? In a very true sense, one is the product of one's teaching. When God is left out of children's teaching, there is nothing left to rightly guide them.

David sinned against his son (Adonijah) when he allowed him to grow up unchecked and undisciplined (I Kings 1:6). Both Eli and Samuel made similar mistakes (I Samuel 2:12, 22 ff; I Samuel 8:1-5).

"50 percent of the students said a woman who dresses seductively and walks alone at night is asking to be raped," the survey reports. They probably are right!

Nudity is one of the great problems facing American women. The TV screen is filled with women wearing nothing but three "band-aids." The movies have gone even farther in removing women's clothing. Pornography is a first-rate seller throughout the nation. Such nudity corrupts the minds and hearts of little girls. Mothers should see that their daughters are protected from such exposure.

True Christianity implies a different standard of dress from that of the world. We quote I Timothy 2:9-11: "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."

There must be something wrong with women who do not understand that nudity can excite, arouse, and stimulate strong sexual feelings in a man which can cause serious problems for them. God Almighty made clothes for Adam and Eve, and he expects modern women to clothe themselves properly.

In most instances, parents are not tough enough when they are bringing up their children. Parents are far too lenient; they need to put their feet down and lay down the law. "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Proverbs 13:24; Cf. 19:18; 22:15; 23:13; 29:15,).

It is high time for women to take warning: "National statistics state that at least 25 percent of the girls in the United States will be sexually assaulted before they turn 18." How sad!

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

All Authority

"All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth . . ." (Matthew 28:18).

Jesus had lived on the earth. He had been crucified on the Roman cross. He had been buried in Joseph's new tomb. He had been raised by divine power. Unto his witnesses he had given ocular, tangible, and audible proof of his resurrection. And now, before his ascension to the Father,

Jesus says, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth . . ." (Matthew 28:18).

In the great moral and spiritual realm, Christ is supreme. In matters pertaining to religion, his word is final, his teaching alone should be heard. Unto his authority every word, deed, and thought should be brought into captivity (II Corinthians 5:10).

Unto Jesus "all" mediatorial authority has been given. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5). In the Christian era, it is the privilege of every child of God to go directly and immediately to the throne of grace in the name of Christ, without the aid or assistance of a human or angelic mediator (Hebrews 4:16).

Unto Jesus "all" legislative authority has been given. Since he has "all" authority to legislate or make laws for God's people, there is no such authority left for any man or any group of men. "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God



Levi Sides

may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work (II Timothy 3:16-17). Biblical instruction is all-sufficient as a guide in the moral and spiritual realm.

Unto Jesus "all" executive authority has been given. He is the Lord of lords, and the King of kings. He alone has the divine right to rule and to reign in the hearts and lives of the sons of men. And since the risen Christ possesses "all" ruling and reigning authority, there is no such authority left for any man upon the earth or any angel in heaven.

Unto Jesus "all" judicial authority has been given. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22). He alone has the divine right to sit in judgment on the souls of men and to determine their eternal destiny.

Unto Jesus "all" authority over death and Hades has been given. When the glorified Christ appeared to John on Patmos, he said unto him: "I am the first and the last, and the living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and Hades" (Revelation 1:17-18). Having "the keys of death and Hades," Christ has all authority over death and Hades.

Since "all authority" has been given unto Jesus, it is evident that no such authority is left for any man or group of men. Jesus has all mediatorial, all legislative, all executive, all judicial authority, and all authority over death.

—(School of Biblical Studies, Faulkner University, Montgomery, Alabama).

WORSHIP



(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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A Roman Catholic Ceremony

According to newspaper reports a ceremony of earth-shaking importance was held in Birmingham, Alabama, March 26, 1988. But, as measured by the Holy Bible, it falls far short of scriptural demands.

Raymond J. Boland was ordained as a bishop. Did he meet the qualifications of a bishop as set forth in the Bible? Indeed, he did not! I Timothy 3:1-7 demands that bishops have a wife and children; but Mr. Boland has neither.



W. A. Holley

"Archbishop Oscar H. Lipscomb of Mobile conducted the three-hour ordination in the packed cathedral, resonant with the sound of three choirs and fragrant with incense" (Birmingham Post-Herald, March 26, 1988) Where does the Holy Bible authorize any such practice? We sincerely ask: What New Testament passage refers to choirs and incense?? In what passage does one read of a "bishop's miter?" And, where is the Bible authority that gives Pope John Paul II, the divine right to appoint any bishop? We know of the qualifications of bishops (I Timothy 3:1-7), but does Mr. Boland meet the scriptural requirements? We think not!

"A gold-plated volume of the gospels is symbolically held over Raymond Boland's head during his ordination . . ." (Ibid). The question is: Will this man preach the gospel message without addition or subtraction? Does he have the courage to preach the truth about Mary's other sons and daughters? (Matthew 13:55-56; Mark 6:3). What scripture will he read to show that Mary the virgin was immaculately born free of original sin? (Actually, the doctrine of hereditary total depravity is unknown to the Bible, Ezekiel 28:15; Acts 17:29; Luke 3:38). Will the bishop preach the truth as contained in

Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47??

"While the cathedral's huge pipe organ played before the ceremony, Boland's mother quietly said a rosary in her pew" (Ibid). We sincerely ask, Where, in the New Testament, does one find authority to use a pipe organ? We also ask for a Bible verse which mentions the rosary?

The vocabulary of Roman Catholicism is amazing when compared to the New Testament. We notice: Cardinal, Archbishop, Auxiliary bishop, Reverend, Father et al. No one can use these terms, and follow I Peter 4:11; Matthew 23:6-12. We respectfully challenge any one to find the New Testament passage which uses the word pope. "Tradition" in religion is a dangerous word (we know the word is sometimes used in a good sense, II Thessalonians 2:15; Galatians 1:14). But the "traditions" and "doctrines of men" are always condemned (Matthew 15:6-9; Mark 7:6-13). As used in the New Testament the word tradition usually means laws and regulations handed down orally from one generation to another without written instruction. The Roman Catholic church can always invent "tradition" to support any thing they may desire.

Verily, saving faith comes from God's written word, not from human tradition (John 20:30-31; Romans 10:17).

"Nearly 1,000 Roman Catholics from around the world gathered in St. Paul's Cathedral yesterday to witness the ordination of Raymond J. Boland as bishop of the Diocese of Birmingham" (Ibid). The Catholic Church is good at embellishing numbers and exaggerating geography in their efforts to claim superiority over the whole earth. There are other religious bodies in Birmingham. Are they to submit to Catholic rule? Does the reader know that the Pope claims that "the supreme teacher in the Church is the Roman Pontiff; union of minds, therefore, requires together with a perfect accord in the one faith, complete submission and obedience of will to the church and to the Roman Pontiff as to God Himself" (Great Encyclical Letters, 193). Furthermore, "We hold upon

this earth the place of God Almighty" (Great Encyclical Letters, 304). It is no wonder, then, that Mary Callahan, one of Mr. Boland's admirers said, "He's the greatest boss in the world," for that --boss!-- is exactly what he is expected to do!!

The truth is: Jesus possesses all authority (Matthew 28:18-20). He is the head of all things to the church which he built (Ephesians 1:22-23; Matthew 16:18-19). Jesus has not surrendered any of his authority to the pope, nor to any other man or ecclesiasticism. It is often said that the pope is the vicar of Christ. What does vicar mean? The word means "one serving as a substitute." But Jesus Christ needs no substitute!!

Jesus' church was established on the first Pentecost after his resurrection (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-42, 47; Colossians 1:13). The Roman Catholic Church is an apostasy which grew out of the New Testament church, and was not fully organized until about 606 ad.

The terms of membership in the New Testament church are clearly set forth. They are faith, repentance, confession of Jesus' name, and baptism (immersion) (Cf. Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:36-38).

The manner of New Testament worship is set forth. The day to worship is first day of the week (Acts 20:7). The scriptural items are these: the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread (Lord's supper), and prayer (Acts 2:42). Another item of worship is singing (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19). Here is the way Jesus commanded his followers to worship God:

Acceptable service and worship of Almighty God must be offered to him "in spirit and in truth." We read, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24).

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Is It True That The Churches Of Christ Don't Have Music?

No. The dictionary defines music as "the art or science of harmonic sounds; harmony or melody." Churches of Christ recognize music as a very important part of their worship. The key is, what kind of music has God commanded and authorized in the church? The music in churches of Christ is singing. It is called a **capella** singing. A **capella** music is singing without accompaniment by a mechanical instrument of music. The term a **capella** literally means "like the church," because it is like the singing of the early



Bob Prichard

church. The fact that Christians sing a **capella** does not mean that the church is without "music."

Instrumental music has been used in many churches for many years. Most people readily accept it, and find it strange that anyone would exclude the instrument from worship. Those who favor the instrument are quick to ask where the scriptures forbid the instrument. But the burden of proof lies on those who demand the instrument in worship. Every scripture in the New Testament which speaks of the worship of the church speaks of **singing** as the only music authorized. Do the scriptures authorize the instrument?

Some say, "God approved David's instruments, so why not use them today?" David did use mechanical instruments in worship, and apparently was pleasing to God. But does this authorize their use today? By his death, Christ was "blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Colossians 2:14). Christ fulfilled the old law, and took it out of the way. If the old law is the justification for using musical instruments in worship, then every other part of the old covenant worship, including burning incense, and animal sacrifices, would also be authorized. If animal sacrifices and the burning of incense are not included in the doctrine of Christ, then neither is instrumental music.

Others say instrumental music in worship today is justified because there will be musical instruments in heaven. Revelation 15:2 says, "I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast . . . stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God." But Revelation is a figurative book; and if the harps are literal harps, then the "sea of glass mingled with fire" should be literal too. But "harps" in heaven have nothing to do with worship today. Jesus said, "In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven" (Matthew 22:30). Does no marriage in heaven mean there should be no marriage today?

We cannot go back to the Old Covenant, nor go to the future in heaven, to authorize instrumental music in the church today.
—P.O. Box 269, Elba, AL 36323.

—P.O. Box 269, Elba, AL 36323.

Peace And Submission

G. F. Raines

Islam, the religious philosophy taught by Mohammed (570-632 A.D.), erroneously purports to be the goal toward which Judaism and Christianity led. The word "islam" itself is said to mean "peace and submission," and is usually interpreted to mean "peace through submission to God."

Although I certainly do not subscribe to any of the doctrines which are peculiar to Islamism, I wholeheartedly agree that people enjoy genuine peace of mind only through unfeigned submission to God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ says: "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).

Isaiah, the "prince of prophets," says in God's Book:

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength" (26:3-4).

"And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (32:17).

"But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (57:20-21).

—P.O. Box 97, Newton, MS 39345.

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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Can We Find The Lord's Church?

There is today a frightening disrespect for the church of our Lord. Some youths have said, "I love God, but hate the church." Recently at a state college where 150 students are members of the church of Christ only TEN reported the church of the Lord as their preference!

One can find an object if there is (1) sufficient description, and (2) a serious effort is made to find the object.



Dabney Phillips

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

The church is the called out (Colossians 1:13; II Thessalonians 2:14). It is the body of people "called out" of the world. The church consists of the saved (Acts 2:47). The church of our Lord is produced by the word of the Lord (Luke 8:11; John 16:13). The church is not a recreational society, nor is it a political society.

FALSE PRINCIPLES IN SELECTING THE CHURCH

A "church" should not be selected because it is conveniently located. This may be true of a bank or store, etc. Another false principle is to select the church that has the largest membership. Millions can be wrong. In Noah's time only eight (I Peter 3:20) were saved from the world-wide destruction. Others select a congregation due to the fact that they like the preacher. This could have some bearing in selecting a doctor, or mechanic. Even the recommendation of parents, spouse, or neighbor is the improper way to identify the Bible church.

CORRECT PRINCIPLES IN FINDING THE CHURCH

One must first go to the right source, and in religion this is not the almanac, nor World

Book, et al. The New Testament is the textbook of salvation today. One must in the word of God seek for identifying marks, both internal and external identifications. Internal marks are love, benevolence, discipline, and missionary zeal. External signs are the organization, worship, plan of salvation, doctrine and the work of the church.

WHAT KEEPS PEOPLE APART RELIGIOUSLY?

Religious tradition provides a dividing wedge. We have inherited doctrines that are not found in the New Testament. Ignorance is a prime problem, and some folk just accept the preacher's word without question. There is a difference between "faith" and "opinion." There is one faith (Ephesians 4).

THE CHURCH IS IMPORTANT

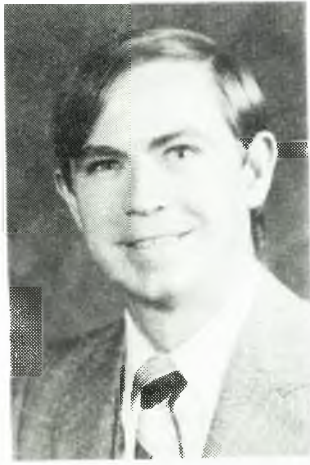
Mankind is reconciled to God in the one body (Ephesians 2:16). We are to give God the glory through the church (Ephesians 3:21). The church is the pillar and ground of the truth (I Timothy 3:15). Jesus died for the church (Ephesians 5:23-25).

Dear reader, you are urged to search with diligence the word of the Lord, as it does involve your salvation (John 12:48).

—3953 Elm Ave., Montgomery, AL 36109.

The Joy Of Service

The world measures the worth of a man by the number of employees and assistants serving him. Christ values a man by how much he serves others. He said, "Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister" (Matthew 20:26). Deep joy comes to him who is willing to serve his fellows. Of the Son of God, who ministered to humanity through his crucifixion, it is written, "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2). What joys come to him who devotedly



Weldon Langfield

serves God and others?

1. **The Joy of Using One's Talents.** One of the most discouraging conditions a person can face is under-employment -- having a job at which he cannot fully use his talents. Studies show that eighty percent of the American work force is less than enthusiastic about their occupations because of under-employment. What percentage Christians suffer from spiritual stagnation simply because they have settled for under-employment in the Lord's work?

An abiding satisfaction comes to him who seriously endeavors to identify, develop, and use his talents in God's kingdom. In the parable of the talents, Christ permanently connected joy and the use of abilities. Two faithful servants who wisely used that which was entrusted to them were told by their Lord, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matthew 25:23). The satisfaction which comes with trying to be the best we can be is also available in the here-and-now as one determines to expand his life to the maximum,

and live "the abundant life" (John 10:10).

2. **The Joy of Living in Harmony with the Universe.** Jesus summed up the necessity and value of his death by pointing to a common natural phenomenon: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die it beareth much fruit" (John 12:24). While Eastern mystics have advanced contemplation and the worship of non-human life as means by which one can 'harmonize' with the universe, Christ cites sacrifice as the key to that harmony. Truly, the entire universe is centered around the principle of sacrifice. The earth provides, through plant life, food for animals, which in turn provide nourishment for man. The sun, by giving its heat and light, provides energy and warmth necessary to living things. Parents must contribute a sizable amount of time, energy, and money in order to rear a family, and thus perpetuate the human race.

When one expands himself for Christ, he adds a dimension of deep joy to his life. Burying oneself in the soil of sacrifice brings a special sense of contentment, for one has truly harmonized his life with the universe.

3. **The Joy of Imitating Christ.** When one serves in God's cause fully, his life is enriched by an undercurrent of deep satisfaction stemming from the knowledge that he is an imitator of the Son of God. Christ urged all to follow his example of making great sacrifices for the sake of righteousness and goodness. He said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). Following in the footsteps of God's Son filled Paul's life with purposefulness and gladness. The apostle wrote, "But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6:14). For all Christians, from the time of Paul to the present, a deep sense of joy accompanies service to God.

When laboring sacrificially in God's kingdom, we may be tempted to self-centeredly focus on the time and energy we are expending for the sake of Christ. Such thinking can lead to weariness, and ultimately to discouragement. God never intended for work on his behalf to be a source of continual heaviness; rather it is designed to produce delight. When, with strong, unwavering faith we give of ourselves, we will suddenly discover that we are following more fully Paul's admonition: "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4).

—2913 Brock Way, Bakersfield, CA 93306.

Coercion IS NOT Conversion



You Have The Reputation Of Jesus In Your Hands!

There is a tendency for each of us to sell ourselves short when we consider the matter of influence. "Nobody cares what I do," or, "It isn't anyone's business what I do" are frequently-made statements. I must daily realize it IS the business of every person whose life touches mine what I do. It is the business of every person whose life touches yours what you do.



Edsel Burleson

Several years ago, Howard Butt told a story of a young lady in Chicago, who worked for a large company with offices in the Loop. One year, when it came time for her annual vacation, she took a trip to the southern part of the United States.

While on her vacation she came in contact with a religious group. Their teaching and manner of life made a great impression on her and she began to rearrange her thinking and her life.

As her vacation came to a close, she could hardly wait to return to Chicago and tell her friends and fellow workers about her experience.

The first day back at work she was quite busy the early part of the morning. She had no time to visit until it was time for the morning coffee break.

A number in the office left together to go to the coffee shop on the ground floor. Finally, after placing their order with the waitress, she turned to her friends and proudly asked, "Did you know I'm a Christian now?"

One of the number replied, "Oh yes, we heard

-- and don't think we're not watching!"

A few days later she wrote to a friend and told of this disturbing experience. In the letter she made this very profound statement: "For the first time I realized that I have the reputation of Jesus Christ on my hands."

Each of us is expected, by the Lord, to have the kind of influence that others would "see Christ in us." Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth:" and "Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13, 14). Only when we realize that "we have the reputation of Jesus on our hands," will we let our "light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven" (verse 16).

God has set before each one special opportunities. These are pretty much like our fingerprints: no two are the same. The particular swirls and grooves may be very similar, but they are never identical. So with our responsibilities: there may be similarity, but opportunities differ. Rather than trying to determine responsibility on the basis of another's action, just remember this formula: ability plus opportunity equals responsibility.

It is a sobering thought to realize "if I fail to do what I should, it will not be done." Others cannot act for me; they have their own responsibilities. No one can have a good influence for me. I am a representative of the Master. Paul told the Corinth church, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ" (II Corinthians 5:20). I have the reputation of Jesus on my hands.

Someone said it this way:
"My life shall touch a dozen lives before this day is done, Leave countless marks for good or ill ere sets the evening sun. This is the wish I always wish, the prayer I always pray; Lord, may my life help others lives it touches by the way."

—420 7th Street S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

The Whole Law Fulfilled In One Word

In a day when some pervert the glorious gospel of God by teaching doctrines unknown to the apostles (Galatians 1:6-8), and others bite and devour in their zeal to preserve the truth (Galatians 5:15), we need to study Paul's marvelous epistle to the churches of Galatia.

The great apostle Peter noted that brother Paul wrote some things hard to understand. Lest we

be as the ignorant and unsteadfast who wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction, we need to carefully research Paul's words to ascertain their proper meaning (II Peter 3:15-16).

"For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Galatians 5:14).

The context: Paul writes to correct and reclaim those Galatian disciples who had gone back to seeking justification by the works of Moses' law (Galatians 3:1-3). He forcefully shows them that man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:16). He reminds them that the purpose of the law had been to bring men to Christ, even as the tutor brought the student to the teacher. Now, however, that Christ has come and given us salvation by faith, "we are no longer under a tutor" (Galatians 3:23-26). Using the allegory of Hagar and Sarah he demonstrates that the old law was like Hagar the slave girl, and its adherents were like her son Ishmael; but Christ's system is like Sarah the freewoman, and Christians are like her son Isaac (Galatians 4:21-31). The fifth chapter opens with a ringing declaration: "For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage" (5:1). That yoke of bondage to be avoided was Moses' law.

Knowing his readers and their tendency to extremes, he hastens to remind them that freedom from Moses' law did not mean license to sin (5:13). Rather, the law of Christ restrains us morally, and enjoins upon us service, even as did Moses. Thus he warns:

1) "Only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh" (i.e., to indulge one's sinful appetites).

2) Rather "through love be servants one to another" (Galatians 5:13).

Since they were clinging to their old law, he then shows them that the last point was the very essence of Moses' system. He cites Leviticus 19:18. There Moses said, "Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Jesus made the same application on several occasions (Matthew 7:12; 19:19; 22:34ff; Luke 10:25).

The Jews delighted in summarizing the 613 demands of their law with a shorter, general listing that could easily be remembered. David summed up man's duty under 11 specific obligations (Psalms 15:1-5). Isaiah found 7 obligations that were the essence of the law (Isaiah 33:15-16). Micah's fundamentals were three: "To do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God" (Micah 6:8).



John Waddey

When the Lord was questioned as to "which is the greatest commandment in the law," he followed the ancient tradition of selecting that simple statement of duty that summarized the whole: "And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39).

We are not, however, to conclude that by such summarization any one of these inspired men discounted even one jot or tittle of God's holy law. Jesus specifically condemned that man who would do so (Matthew 5:17-19). Rather, they taught the obvious truth that if one loved his neighbor as himself he would be diligent to not only respect his neighbor's rights and property, but also to fulfill all of those positive obligations owed to his fellowman which the law specifically enjoined.

The law said, "Thou shalt not steal" (Exodus 20:15). If I love my neighbor as myself, I would not take his property, because I would not want someone to take mine. Again, the law said that every Hebrew slave had to be set free in the seventh year (Deuter-

onomy 15:17). Since I would want to be emancipated if I were enslaved, then I should gladly comply with that duty. This is but another way of stating the great "golden rule" of Christ: "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto me, even so do ye also unto them" (Matthew 7:12). He immediately added, "For this is the law and the prophets."

So today all the duties of the Christian to God and man are summarized in the commands to love God wholly, and one's neighbor as himself. For if we love God we will observe every instruction he has given. Jesus said it well, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). If we love our neighbor as we love ourselves we will be anxious to honor every obligation we have to him. Thus these summary statements of the law do not depreciate even one small obligation that God's word enjoins. Rather, they remind us of our commitment to love God so thoroughly that we should eagerly do that which he requires of us -- whatever it may be.

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

Does The Bible Really Condemn Abortion?

Bob Prichard

While neither the Old nor the New Testament specifically mentions "abortion," many Biblical principles speak to the issue of abortion. The principle that life, all life, is a gift from God, is very important. Paul said, "He giveth to all life, and breath" (Acts 17:25). Human life, including the unborn child, is made "in the image of God" (Genesis 1:27). Human life is raised above all other life, because human life shares a special kinship with God. God told Noah, as he was commissioned to replenish the earth, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man" (Genesis 9:6).

Jesus Christ demonstrated the sacredness of life in offering himself as an atoning sacrifice for men. "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). Because Jesus counted every life precious, he told his disciples to "preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

The Bible makes no distinction between the child before birth, and after birth. God told Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5). What if Jeremiah's mother had aborted the child? When Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, greeted Mary the mother of Jesus, "the babe leaped in her womb" (Luke 1:41). The Greek word *brephos*, used to describe the baby John the Baptist, is a word that is used to describe a baby either before or after birth. John the Baptist was not some lump of protoplasm before his birth. He was an unborn child.

Many arguments are made in favor of abortion, such as the fact that the child might be deformed, or unloved, or unwanted. Most

abortions, however, are performed primarily for the convenience of the mother. The purpose of abortion is to kill the unborn baby. Though those favoring abortion prefer the term "fetus" to describe the unborn baby, that which is unborn is still a human child, life created in the image of God. Almost any argument that can be made for killing the unborn child by abortion can be met with the argument that the same goals could be met by killing the newborn infant. The unwanted, or unloved child can be killed much more easily outside the womb, than inside the womb. But the law, as well as God's word, calls this murder.

And the Bible also recognizes abortion as murder. Solomon wrote of seven things the Lord hates, which are an abomination to him. One of these is "hands that shed innocent blood" (Proverbs 6:17). Abortion is the shedding of innocent blood, the blood of defenseless babies.

—P.O. Box 269, Elba, AL 36323.

WORD of GOD

But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

Remember Lot's wife.

Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.

Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Luke 17:29-36



(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 26

A Church That Continues

In this treatise we shall be contending for the New Testament church -- the church you can read of in the Holy Bible (Matthew 16:18-19).

What does the word **continue** mean? The definition, according to Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, is: "To remain in existence . . . to maintain without interruption a condition, course, or action . . ."

Many churches have ceased to exist. The seven churches of Asia, once strong, growing, vibrant congregations of the Lord's people, have ceased to exist (Revelation 1:11).

In Rome there was a strong church of Christ to which Paul addressed the book of Romans; but it has long since vanished from the earth. In its place, there is an apostate church, which bears no resemblance to the church of Paul's day (Romans 1:7; 16:16). What we here said would apply to the whole area of early New Testament Christianity.

We suggest to all Christians that they, in whatever community they may live, do all in their power, in harmony with the teaching of the Holy Bible, to keep the light of the Lord ever burning -- Don't put the light out, and don't let it go out (Cf. Leviticus 6:12-13; Matthew 5:16). All Christians should rededicate themselves to the perpetuation of the Old Jerusalem Gospel (Galatians 1:6-10).

We shall offer a few Bible directions which will help us to achieve our noble and holy goals --

(1) Our aim must be to continue in the word of God. "Jesus said to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you



W. A. Holley

free" (John 8:30-32). Pep-talks, liberalism, psychology, and modernism in the pulpit cannot get the job done. It is high time for us to look into the "perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25). God's word is powerful indeed (Hebrews 4:12; Romans 1:16). From the beginning of the church the disciples "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine . . ." (Acts 2:42). We are duty bound to continue to preach Mark 16:16, Acts 2:36-38, Romans 6:3-4, no matter how unpopular these and other verses might be. "Preach the word," said Paul (II Timothy 4:1-5).

(2) According to Acts 14:22, we should continue in faith. We must not be moved away from the faith (Colossians 1:21-23). The faith that saves comes from hearing God's word (Romans 10:17). Many, as Hymenaeus and Alexander, have made shipwreck of their faith (I Timothy 1:19-20). We can become so enamored with riches, cares, and pleasures until our faith wanes and dies (Luke 8:12-13). An "evil heart of unbelief" cannot carry one to heaven (Hebrews 3:12-13).

(3) If the Lord's church is to survive we must practice goodness, self-discipline, and morality. Hence, we must return to the standard of right as set forth in holy scripture (Titus 2:11-12). Wrong is wrong, no matter how we may try to rationalize it (Romans 3:3-4). Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Romans 11:22). It is high time that we should return to practicing "pure and undefiled religion" (James 1:27).

(4) Of course, we should fight the devil and all his cohorts, for he is the adversary of God and man (I Peter 5:8). Satan perverts the scriptures, opposes God's work, hinders and progress of the gospel, works lying wonders, and is the father of lies (Matthew 4:6; I Thessalonians 2:18; Matthew 13:19; II Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 16:14; John 8:44). Instead of fussing and fighting and quarreling among ourselves, we should fight

the real enemy -- the devil (Romans 12:20; 14:19). Following the Golden Rule is always in order (Matthew 7:12). "For he that would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile" (I Peter 3:10).

(5) Remember always those great Bible lessons you have heard and learned. "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (II Timothy 3:14). Think of the many wonderful sermons which you heard from the lips of brother Gus Nichols, N. B. Hardeman, Foy E. Wallace, et al. "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2). Should we not bequeath to oncoming generations the same reverence, the same faithfulness to the church, the same dedication to God's will and way which we received from our benefactors??

(6) The church that continues is the church that continues to worship God according to his holy will. There is a special day involved -- the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 10:25; Revelation 1:10). There are certain items or acts of worship which must characterize the worship service. They are: singing (Ephesians 5:19), Bible study (Acts 2:42), prayer (James 5:16), giving (Acts 11:29-30), and the Lord's supper (I Corinthians 11:23-28). One must worship God in the right "spirit" and according to his "truth" (John 4:23-24). It is possible for one to worship God, but in the wrong way. This is exactly what the people of Athens did (Acts 17:23; Cf. Matthew 15:1-9; Colossians 2:20-22).

Worship is not an exhibition whereby we come together to show off our new clothes, new cars, or expensive jewelry. We should remember that we are in the presence of God, and he knows why we have assembled together.

—P. O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

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Daniel's Prophecy of the Messiah

G. F. Raines

During the first year of the reign of Darius, the viceroy of Babylonia under Cyrus founder of the Persian empire (Daniel 6:28; 11:13; II Chronicles 36:22), the angel Gabriel said to the fourth of the major prophets:

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times" (Daniel 9:25).

Concerning the seventy weeks of Daniel 9:24, Cruden's Concordance (unabridged) says: "... it is agreed that these are weeks of years and not of days. They consist of seven lunar or Hebrew years: by which reckoning the seventy weeks make up four hundred and ninety years. This way of reckoning years by days is not unusual in the sacred writings." (See Leviticus 25:8; Ezekiel 4:4-5; Revelation 12:6; 13:5).

From the going forth of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem by king Artaxerxes Longimanus (Nehemiah 2:1) to the baptism of Jesus and the beginning of his public ministry (Matthew 3:13-17) has been calculated as being 483 years, or 490 years in even units. This is one of many prophecies which establish the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

—P.O. Box 97, Newton, MS 39345.

Destroying The Enemies

ABRAHAM LINCOLN was once taken to task for his attitude toward his enemies.

"Why do you try to make friends of them?" asked an associate. "You should try to destroy them."

"Am I not destroying my enemies," Lincoln gently replied, "when I make them my friends?" — Selected.

What Can The Christian Do About Abortion?

A baby is killed by every twenty seconds in America! Christians must take action. The Supreme Court decision of Roe vs. Wade (January 22, 1973) made abortion on demand legal in the United States; but it did not make it moral, or right in God's sight. Since God hates "hands that shed innocent blood" (Proverbs 6:16-17), Christians must act. Paul tells Christians to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11). Abortion is an "unfruitful work of darkness."

Repentance is the beginning place for the Christian, whether the Christian has had an abortion, been involved in advocating abortion, or has just been apathetic toward this vital issue of human rights. God is a loving Father who wishes to forgive those who turn to him in repentance, assuring salvation or remission of sins to those who obey Christ (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

It is also essential that the Christian become educated on this issue, and do all that he can to educate others to the teaching of the Bible concerning the sanctity of life and the need to protect unborn life. Most thinking people would be opposed to abortion on demand if they knew what the Bible teaches,



Bob Prichard

and knew that abortion is not merely a medical procedure, but is in fact infanticide.

Jesus likened Christians to the "salt of the earth," and "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13-16). This implies that the Christian must be involved in his world, including being a good citizen. As a good citizen, he is obligated to exercise his rights of citizenship. That includes voting his conscience in elections, and supporting candidates who are pro-life. He should contact his congressmen to encourage them to support pro-life issues, and a pro-life amendment to the constitution.

Christians must do more than talk about the issue of abortion, but must become actively involved in the struggle by supporting financially and in other ways groups such as AGAPE, and Right to Life. When the Christian advises a young woman to avoid abortion, he should be compassionate enough to offer her the help she needs to be able to avoid abortion.

Abortion has become an easily-practiced "after the fact" birth control method. To some, abortion is the only answer to the tragic result of adultery, or fornication. But the tragedy of a baby conceived out of wedlock should not be compounded by punishing the one innocent party -- the unborn baby -- by death through abortion.

James said, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). The conscience of every Christian should be stirred up so that he will fight to protect the lives of all unborn children. Pray that this ugly blot on the soul of America will cease. —P.O. Box 269, Elba, AL 36323.

Are You In Numbers Or Acts?

Many are the exhortations by inspired writers that we be busy in the interest of those that are lost. The marching orders of the Master instruct us to "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:18). If we would be followers of the Master we would be seeking the lost. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

The burden of the erring children of God also lies upon our shoulders. Paul said, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1). James put it this way, "Brethren, if any of you do err



Edsel Burleson

from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20).

It is such a sad situation that so many in the church are "hauling" around the very thing needed to save the lost. It is not that we do not have the truth, the problem is, we are not using it.

Edwin McDonald in his book of illustrations tells this amusing and thought-provoking story. One day a truck driver had to stop his truck in the middle of downtown traffic in a large city because a rear wheel was red hot and in danger of catching on fire. He pulled over out of traffic and waited for the wheel to cool off so he could do something about it. Finally he started removing the wheel.

A man standing nearby began to ask questions, "Truck broke down?"

The driver patiently answered, "Yes." "What's wrong?" he asked.

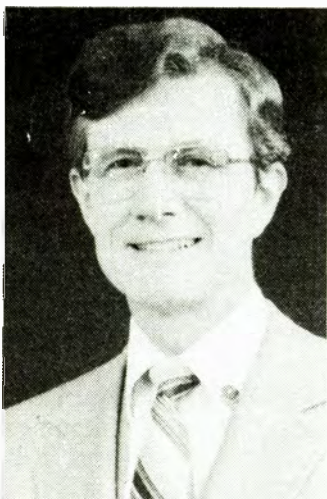
The truck driver told him that a wheel bearing had burned out.

Next the questions was, "What caused it

Continued On Page 4

Review Of Moffitt - Billingsley Debate

On February 19-20 brethren Jerry Moffitt and Dan Billingsley engaged in a public oral debate as part of the second annual SHENANDOAH LECTURES, conducted by the Shenandoah Church of Christ in San Antonio, Texas. The issue debated was the amenability of alien sinners to the law of Christ. Moffitt affirmed (and Billingsley denied):



Dub McClish

"The Bible teaches that, as is the Christian, the alien sinner is under law to Christ and is amenable to the whole new law." Billingsley affirmed (and Moffitt denied): "The Bible teaches that, as is the Christian, the alien sinner is under law to Christ, but is not accountable to the whole new law until baptism." At stake are such matters as whether or not alien sinners are accountable to Christ's marriage law (Matthew 19:9).

Moffitt demonstrated that the law or covenant of Christ (the new covenant) is simply the gospel. He pointed out that since the Gospel is addressed to all men (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15), all must be accountable to it. He further stressed the authority of Christ over all men (Matthew 28:18), and that he exercises his authority through his law (the new covenant, the gospel). He argued forcefully that all men who have lived since the cross (including unbelievers) will be judged by the words of Christ (the new covenant, the gospel) (John 12:48), and that men will not be held accountable at the judgment for that to which they were not accountable in life.

In response Billingsley taught that the only part of the gospel to which alien sinners are accountable is the plan of salvation, and that they become accountable to "covenant law for the church" only upon being baptized. He argued that if alien sinners were under the law of Christ as a whole, this would mean they should partake of the Lord's supper (I Corinthians 11:23-28) as aliens. He accused Moffitt (and others who have opposed his views) of teaching that alien sinners must partake of the Lord's supper. He asked where the Bible ever speaks of Christ as "King of the world," rather than king of his kingdom, the church.

Moffitt replied that no such terminology or concept exists in the New Testament as a "covenant law of Christ" only for the church, and a separate body of teaching only for aliens. He showed that it does not follow that if aliens are under the new covenant as a whole, they must therefore partake of the Lord's supper as aliens -- and that neither he nor anyone whom he knew had ever believed or taught such a doctrine. He illustrated this by showing that if Billingsley's argument had any merit a Christian man (one under the new law as a whole, conceded by Billingsley) must be silent in the church (I Corinthians 14:34).

Moffitt then emphasized that while Christian men are under all of the New Testament, there are parts of it that do not directly apply to them (such as I Corinthians 14:34, which directly applies only to Christian women).

He then pointed out that in the same way aliens can be (and are) amenable to the new law as a whole, while not directly amenable to particular commandments until certain prerequisites are met. He stressed the essentiality of observing Christ's laws in Scriptural sequence (e.g., Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, and for an alien to partake of the Lord's supper would ignore the Lord's sequence); and that observing this sequence (by their not partaking of the Lord's supper) does not remove from accountability to the law of Christ as a whole. Moffitt applied Galatians 5:3 with force: when one is under a part of a law system, he is under that law system as a whole.

In response to Billingsley's "King of the world" challenge, Moffitt referred to Christ's being "far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion" (Ephesians 1:21) and "ruler of the kings of the earth" (Revelation 1:5). Furthermore, he cited Matthew 13:37-41 where Jesus called the world his "kingdom" in applying the parable of the tares.

An effective tactic Moffitt used in the debate related to Billingsley's doctrine concerning an alleged "Great Moral Law," separate from and independent of God's revealed will. (Billingsley affirms that this "law" is innate in all men apart from God's revelation, and that those since the cross who die in rebellion to

God will be judged by this "Great Moral Law" rather than by the Gospel. This concept is practically identical with the "Law in the Heart" concept propagated by brother James D. Bales.)

In his first speech Moffitt asked Billingsley to place a copy of his "Great Moral Law" upon a tray provided so that we could read and learn what is in it. He continued calling for it in every speech. This obviously made Billingsley uncomfortable. His inability to produce his "law" dramatically demonstrated that neither it nor the doctrines built upon it exists. As a climax to the debate, in the very last minute of the debate, brother Moffitt had arranged for his moderator to place a specially prepared book on the aforementioned tray. The handsomely bound book was imprinted thusly: *The Great Moral Law*, "Translated by D. Billingsley." After feigning surprise that such a book existed, Moffitt opened it for all of the audience to see that every page was blank, graphically demonstrating the emptiness of the doctrine it represented!

This good study of the "amenability" issue is available on audio and video tape from Tom Gardner, 2229 Lotus, Fort Worth, TX 76111.

—312 Pearl St., Denton, TX 76201.

"If Any Man Be In Christ"

"If any man be in Christ . . . all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).

One day I ate a meal in a certain restaurant and was greatly disappointed. The tablecloth was not clean, the waitress' uniform was dirty, the service was poor, and the food was poorer. I resolved not to go back to that restaurant. Some months later I saw a sign on this restaurant door saying,



Levi Sides

"Under New Management." I decided to try it again. As I entered the door a nice looking man greeted me and showed me to a seat. The tablecloth was clean, the waitress was neat and courteous -- and the food was excellent. I was greatly pleased with everything. What had happened? The restaurant had a new manager. He had set everything in order. It is like that when a man comes to Christ and obeys his word: He gets a "new manager." Jesus comes into his life and changes all of it for the better. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).

If a man be in Christ, he does not enjoy sin any more. A worldly man delights in sin; he enjoys it. Then one day he 'meets Jesus' and falls in love with him. He finds out how Jesus feels about sin, and that sin nailed him to the tree. After that, the newborn Christian can not enjoy sin any more. Here is the difference between a lost sinner and a saved sinner. When a lost sinner sins, he enjoys it and stays in it. But when God's man sins, he is sorry

about it. He weeps over his sins and cries out for forgiveness.

If a man be in Christ, he loves the gospel message. The gospel message is the "good news" about Christ's death for our sins, his burial and resurrection (I Corinthians 14:1-3). He knows that this is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). He never gets tired of hearing it preached.

If a man be in Christ, he loves to see others respond to heaven's call. He remembers that once he was lost, and he remembers the joy that came to him when he obeyed the word of God. Now he wants others to have the same joy. The born-again man feels a burden for lost souls.

If a man be in Christ, he has a different attitude toward others. He has love for all people. This is a proof of his salvation. Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, because ye have love one for another" (John 13:35).

If a man be in Christ he has learned the joy of giving. Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." We want to get all we can; but Jesus is simply saying that it is better to give than to get. Those who gripe about giving have never learned the joy and the blessing of it.

Who is managing your life? If Jesus does not have full charge, open the door and say, "Come in and take first place. Take over my life, my home, my business, my money. Come in and manage for me."

—School of Biblical Studies, Faulkner University, Montgomery, Alabama.

Give Thanks

**To The Lord,
For He is Good....**

Psalms 107:1

The Blood Of Christ

From early human history, God is represented as considering blood sacred. The blood of Abel, which was shed by Cain, is described as crying out to God for vengeance (Genesis 4:10). We are told that life is in the blood, or the blood is the life (Leviticus 17:11, 14; Deuteronomy 12:23). Both the Old Testament and New Testament forbid the eating of blood (Genesis 9:3-4; Acts 15:20, 29).

The scriptures say, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" (Genesis 9:6). Animal blood used in sin offerings under the Old Testament was typical of the vicarious suffering of the Great Messiah who was to come (Hebrews 9:19-28). Many events of the Old Testament were a "... shadow of good things to come" (Hebrews 10:1-4; 8:5).

In delivering Israel from bondage in the land of Egypt, God instituted the Passover. The Israelites were to take a lamb, slay it, prepare it for food. Its blood was to be put on the lintel over the door of each Israelite's house, and on both door posts (Exodus 12:3-10).

The instruction is clear and plain: The blood is to be put over the door and on each side post of each home of the Israelites. Would it have been proper to have put the blood on a barn? or some other structure? One reason why both Denominationalism and Roman Catholicism are sinful and wrong is because they (per se) have not been covered by the blood of Christ. Jesus purchased only his church with his blood (Acts 20:28). The Israelites were required to stay in their houses, which had blood on them, if they wished to be saved from death (Exodus 12:13-17). In like manner, we must remain faithful members of the church, which has the blood of Christ on it, if we would be saved eternally (Acts 20:28).

Just here we raise a question: Instead of putting the blood on the two door posts and on the lintel above the door, as commanded, would it have been right to have substituted prayer instead?? No doubt many modernists would say, "Yes." But, not so! The Lord say, "... When I see the blood, I will pass over you ..." (Exodus 12:13). Suppose some Israelites had said, "We don't want to mess up our houses with animal blood -- we will pray at a mourners' bench instead." Would such have been right? No indeed! Hear God's word: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination" (Proverbs 28:9). Never add to, substitute for, nor subtract from, God's holy word (Revelation 22:18-19; Jeremiah 26:2).

Everything in the Old Covenant was dedicated with the blood of animals when the book was sprinkled with blood (Exodus 24:3-8 with Hebrews 9:11-28); the New Testament has been dedicated with the blood of Christ (Matthew 26:28 with Hebrews 10:26-29). Whatever is included in the New Testament does not have a drop of the blood of Christ on it! Instrumental music in Christian worship is



W. A. Holley

sinful because it is not dedicated by the blood of Christ. Christian people should see and know the difference (Ezekiel 22:26; 44:23; Hebrews 5:11-14). It is just as sinful to add instrumental music to the worship of the Lord's church, as it was for Nadab and Abihu to add strange fire, "which he commanded them not" (Leviticus 10:1-2).

Jesus' precious blood speaks of better conditions and promises than did that of Abel. We have come to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Hebrews 12:24). Abel's blood cried out for vengeance; but Christ's blood offers mercy and pardon to all (Genesis 4:10; Hebrews 2:9).

It is true that Jesus shed his precious blood for all men (Hebrews 2:9; I John 4:14); but the wonderful benefit of his blood is received conditionally. The atonement of Christ is not limited to a certain few, as Calvinism argues, but is a universal one. Jesus died for all (Hebrews 2:9). The gospel is to be preached to every creature (Mark 16:16). Man is a creature of choice (Revelation 22:17). Only those who resist God's will are damned (I Peter 4:17), and heaven is promised to all who hear and obey the will of the Lord (Revelation 22:14).

Some for whom Jesus died, can be lost (I Corinthians 8:11; Romans 14:15). Hence, the notion that the number of the redeemed "is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished" is false!!

Jesus shed his blood "for the remission

of sins" (Matthew 26:28). Repentance and baptism are "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Therefore, one is cleansed by Jesus' blood when one believes and obeys the gospel (Hebrews 5:8-9; John 3:16, 36, A.S.V.).

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins ..." (Ephesians 1:7). When does one contact the blood of Jesus? The answer is simple. It is when one by faith, repentance, confession of Jesus, and baptism, that one is baptized into Christ's death (Romans 6:3-4).

Jesus shed his blood in his death (John 19:31-34). Your Bible teaches that one is "baptized into his death" (Romans 6:3-4).

According to the Bible, one is washed in Christ's blood, when one is washed in the water of baptism (Revelation 7:14; Acts 22:16).

Jesus purchased the church with his own blood (Acts 20:28). Jesus would not have purchased a non-essential church, nor would he have built a non-essential church (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2:47). The Bible teaches that one is baptized into the one body, which is the church (I Corinthians 12:13).

For church members also, the cleansing power of the blood is conditional. "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). If we keep on walking in the light of truth, his blood keeps on cleansing us from sin.

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Are You In Numbers Or Acts?

Continued From Page 2

to burn out?"

The truck driver told him that it was because of lack of grease. The man then looked at the side of the truck and saw the sign "Mobil Oil Company Lubricant Division." To which he remarked, "Hmmm, you burned out a bearing hauling grease!"

Paul asked, "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?" (teacher) (Romans 10:14). Let us never be guilty of just "hauling" around the gospel. It must be TAUGHT to produce believers.

Too many church members are in the book of Numbers instead of the book of Acts: they spend more time "counting the sheep" than they do "seeking the lost."

—420 7th Street S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.



I'LL BE LIKE YOU

"His little arms crept 'round my neck
And then I heard him say
Four simple words I shan't forget—
Four simple words that made me pray.
They turned a mirror on my soul,
On secrets no one knew;
They startled me; I hear them yet;
He said, "I'll be like you."



The Lord be with you as you walk
Along your homeward road.
In silent thought, in friendly talk,
May you be near to God.
The Lord be with you as the night
Enfolds your day with rest.
Be He in every heart the light,
In every home the guest.

Author Unknown



(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 27

What Is Baptism?

Baptism has been throughout the centuries a controversial doctrine, but it should not be; the Biblical teaching is very clear.

What does Bible baptism require? We shall be extremely cautious to state exactly what the Bible clearly teaches, with no effort to muddy the waters.

Bible baptism requires water: "I indeed baptize you with water" (Matthew 3:11). Many preachers and churches do their best to remove water, arguing that the Holy Spirit is the element. Paul in Ephesians 4-5 teaches that "there is one baptism," not two. This means that Holy Spirit baptism had ceased by A.D. 64, when the Ephesian letter was written. Was Paul in error??

Bible baptism requires much water: "... John was baptizing in Aenon ... because there was much water there ..." (John 3:23). Sprinkling or pouring does not require "much water." Baptism, according to the Bible, requires going to the water: "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36).

Furthermore, baptism requires going into the water. "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him" (Acts 8:38).

Baptism is a burial. "Buried with him in baptism ..." (Colossians 2:12). Again, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4). In sprinkling or pouring there can be nor burial or resurrec-

tion.

Bible baptism necessitates a coming up out of the water. "And when they were come up out of the water ..." (Acts 8:39).

Again, Bible baptism requires the administrator to handle the subject, not the element, water. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them ..." (Matthew 28:19).

In the light of these scriptures, baptism cannot be sprinkling or pouring!!

What is baptism? Beyond any doubt, baptism is a "burial," according to Colossians 2:12 and Romans 6:3-4. We shall now quote Adam Clarke, a renowned commentator of great academic accomplishment, commenting on Romans 6:4: "It is probable that the apostle here alludes to the mode of administering baptism by immersion, the whole body being put under the water, which seems to say, the man is drowned, is dead; and, when he came up out of the water, he seemed to have a resurrection to life; the man is risen again; he is alive." (Clarke's Commentary, Vol. VI p. 76). It must be borne in mind that Adam Clarke was a Methodist, and that he does try to support sprinkling and pouring as modes of baptism; but, when his scholarship comes to the fore he goes back to the original meaning of the word "baptism" -- immersion.

Factually, the first authenticated instance of sprinkling occurred about the middle of the third century (A.D. 250). Hence, the practice of pouring or sprinkling came too late to be Bible baptism. Those who sincerely wish to follow the teaching of God's holy word can never submit to sprinkling or pouring as modes of Bible baptism!

Bible baptism involves a washing, which can never be true of sprinkling or pouring. Here we suggest that Hebrews 10:22, Titus 3:5; Ephesians 5:26, and Acts 22:16, be carefully read.

Who should be baptized? Should infants be baptized? Many say, "Yes." But the Bible says, "No." In the first place, infants do not need to be baptized. They are not sinners! The doctrine of hereditary total depravity is a false doctrine -- the doctrine that babies are born sinners is as black as Satan himself!! The King of Tyre was "perfect in thy ways

from the day thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee" (Ezekiel 28:15). Sin is a transgression of the law (I John 3:4); it is the soul that sins that dies (Ezekiel 18:28); babies have never sinned! Any sin mentioned in Psalms 51:5 would be on the part of the mother, not on the part of the child. Read this passage and you will see!!

It is impossible for infants to be taught the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20); they cannot believe (Mark 16:16); they have no sins of which to repent (Acts 2:38); they are not capable of confessing Jesus' name (Matthew 10:32-33); they have no sins to be remitted (Acts 2:38). Hence, these verses do not apply to infants!

What is the design or purpose of Bible baptism?

Bible baptism is not a 'church ordinance' (as taught by denominational preachers); rather, Jesus commanded baptism even before the establishment of the church (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:36-38, 47).

One is to be baptized because it is a part of the New Birth (John 3:3, 5). On Pentecost those who believed in Jesus, repented of their sins, and were baptized, were born again, born of water and of the Spirit (Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47). Mark 16:16 teaches that it is the baptized believer who is saved.

One is to be baptized "for the remission of sins ..." Jesus shed his precious blood "for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). Did Jesus die for those who were already saved? No person in the New Testament was ever baptized because he was already saved (Acts 2:38). The phrase in these passages -- "for the remission of sins" -- are identical.

One is to be baptized in order to have one's sins washed away (Acts 22:16; Cf. Ephesians 5:26). I Peter 3:21 teaches that "... baptism doth also now save us ..." Who will deny it?? It is baptism that puts one into Christ or his body which is the church (I Corinthians 12:13; Romans 6:3-4; II Corinthians 5:17).

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.



Words Of Truth

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

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

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Making, Watching, Or Wondering?

Someone has said that every congregation is made up of three classes of people: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who do not know that anything is happening.

Those who do things and get things done, make things happen. They are the working force. These are the people referred to in Nehemiah 4:6: "and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work."

Those who watch things happen have assumed the spectator role and can see every mistake made, or even assume some were



Edsel Burleson

made because they were too far removed from the action to know what really happened. Such was the situation with some of the disciples in Matthew 26:6-13. They wondered, "To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for so much, and given to the poor."

Far too many do not know that anything is happening. They see no opportunities for service to God or man. Jesus said, "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not" (Matthew 25:42-43).

Most could take a lesson from the old tramp, who, early one morning, came into a country town. He stopped in front of the cross-roads store, then gave a yell of delight. "Here it is, I have found it," he cried.

"What is it? What is it?" asked the natives, crowding around to see. The old tramp answered joyously, "The Great Soup Stone. Get a kettle, someone get a fire started, someone else get some water! We will all have soup in a jiffy."

One man brought a kettle, another lit a fire. A third brought some water. The tramp tossed in the stone and stirred it mightily. "Now," he cried, "bring an onion, someone, to flavor it. Oh, yes, someone get a bone from the store. Who has a potato? They will all help."

The townspeople brought the onion and some potatoes, and carrots, and a bone. Pretty soon the tramp announced, "The Great Soup Stone has done its work. The soup is ready, except the salt, who will bring the salt?" The storekeeper spoke, "This man is a fraud! We have supplied everything for the soup, his stone did nothing. We supplied the meat and fire and water and the vegetables. What did he supply? Only a stone!"

"You are wrong!" smiled the tramp. "You had no soup before I came. Now you have. I supplied the enthusiasm and willingness to work together to a common end. Educated men call it cooperation. I call it The Great Soup Stone. Let's eat!" -- And they did.

"Having the church building full of members is like having the woodbox full of wood -- it is nice to have, but neither will do any good until they catch on fire."

—420 7th Ave. S.W. Birmingham, AL 35211.

Thoughts Concerning Sympathy

G. F. Raines

Dr. Arthur J. Gates in his book, *Educational Psychology*, says:

"Sympathy the human species universally craves. The child eagerly displays his injury; or even inflicts a cut or bruise in order to reap abundant sympathy. For the same purpose adults . . . show their bruises, relate their accidents, illnesses, especially details of surgical operations. 'Self-pity' for misfortunes real or imaginary is, in some measure, practically a universal practice."

No person in history has ever been as genuinely sympathetic as Jesus of Nazareth; and Paul says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5).

"To him that is afflicted, pity should be shewed from his friend" (Job 6:14).

"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (Romans 12:15).

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (II Corinthians 1:3-4).

Someone has well said: "The heart that has passed through the deep waters of tribulation is the most tender; the voice that has cried with pain is the most gentle; the hand that has suffered is the most soothing ministrant in the chamber of sorrow. The best sympathizer is the one who has partaken of the same suffering."

—P.O. Box 97, Newton, MS 39345.

"Uncertain Sounds"

The word "sound" is an important Bible word. Any teaching contrary to "sound doctrine" is sinful (I Timothy 1:10). According to II Timothy 1:7, all Christians need "the spirit of a sound mind." Paul urges us to "hold fast the form of sound words . . ." (II Timothy 1:13). Some are unwilling to "endure sound doctrine . . ." (II Timothy 4:3). It is by "sound doctrine" that the faithful are to convict false teachers (Titus 1:9, ASV). There is such a thing as "sound speech" (Titus 2:8). Only in following the complete word of God



W. A. Holley

can we be "sound in the faith" (Titus 2:2).

The Bible also mentions "uncertain sounds" (I Corinthians 14:7-11). Read these words and you will see that there must be a distinction of sounds; otherwise it would be impossible to correctly understand what is piped or harped. The sound of a trumpet, in all ages, has been used to direct armies either to advance, or to retreat, as the situation might indicate. Likewise, voices or languages which teach different doctrines can never gain the approbation of God Almighty because he speaks with one voice!

Isaiah the prophet wrote, "To the law and to the testimony! If they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them" (Isaiah 8:20). "Every word of God is tried" (Marginal note, "purified"): "he is a shield unto them that take refuge in him. Add not thou unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Proverbs 30:5-6, ASV).

We shall now listen to the apostle Paul: "If any man teach a different doctrine, and consent not to sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is puffed up, knowing nothing, but doting" (marginal note: "sick") "about questions and disputes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness is a way of gain" (I Timothy 6:3-6, ASV).

Only those preachers who "preach the word," who "speak as the oracles of God," and who "abideth in the teaching of Christ," are God's spokesmen here on earth (II Timothy 4:2; I Peter 4:11; II John 9-11). All preachers who do otherwise are to be rejected (Galatians 1:6-10).

What are some of the "uncertain sounds"

Continued on page 4

Galatians: Chapter 3

VERSE 1. The word here translated "foolish" is also used in verse 3, and in Luke 24:25. It carries with it the idea of one without understanding, or unwise. It does not suggest the inability to understand, so much as it does the failure to see something that should have been very plain. Paul had held Jesus up before the Galatians' eyes like one would write on a placard and place it before someone. The crucified Christ was central to Paul's gospel and had been plainly set forth as the only means of salvation (I Corinthians 2:2; 15:1-4; Romans 1:16).

VERSE 2. A point is often better made by asking an individual a simple question about his own experience and letting his own answer persuade him. The gift of the Holy Spirit is promised to all who repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38-39). We know this because the promise extends to all the Lord calls; and he has called us by the gospel (II Thessalonians 2:14). Also, the Holy Spirit is promised to all that obey him (Acts 5:32). Since all receive the gift of the Holy Spirit through obedience to the gospel, it seems likely that it is this non-miraculous measure that Paul is speaking of here. Obviously they had not received the Spirit through obedience to the law of Moses; but through the "hearing of faith," or "instruction concerning the necessity of faith" (Thayer).

VERSE 3. They had begun a new life with all of its attendant blessings "in the Spirit." How foolish to try to grow to maturity by obedience to the fleshly ordinances of the law of Moses.

VERSE 4. Along with many other Christians of their day, the Galatians had evidently been persecuted for their faith. Such persecution came at the hands of the Jews and would be unnecessary if Judaism were right (Acts 9:23; 13:44-50; 14:2; 21:27-28). Of course, Paul's hope was that they would turn back fully to Christ, and their suffering would not be in vain (Matthew 5:11-12).

VERSE 5. God is the "He" that ministered the Spirit to them through his laborer, Paul. Paul had worked miracles at Iconium and Lystra (Acts 14:3, 8-9). Those miracles were not done because they obeyed the law of Moses, but to show God's approval of what was said, and to encourage them to obey the gospel (Hebrews 2:4).

VERSE 6. Neither was Abraham called righteous because he obeyed the law of Moses. He was called righteous because he had left the home of his fathers after God's direction, and had given tithes to Melchizedek, priest of the most high God (Genesis 12:1-4; 14:16-20; 15:6). That faith was tested in the offering of Isaac and he proved faithful through his obedience (Genesis 22:1-12). Note that God knew he feared him when he obeyed.

VERSE 7. Thus, all who act by faith based upon obedience to God's command are the "children" of Abraham. The word "children" suggests one who partakes of the nature of another.

VERSE 8. Since scripture was delivered by



GARY C. HAMPTON

inspiration, it is not surprising that it would "foresee" an event hundreds and even thousands of years before it took place. Just as the Jews were justified by obedient faith (verses 1-7), the Gentiles are also justified by obedient faith. God had given this important part of gospel truth to Abraham in the long ago (Genesis 12:3; Romans 1:1-2, 15-17).

VERSE 9. We can then conclude that all the faithful, whether Jew or Gentile, will be justified by their obedient faith, like Abraham.

VERSE 10. The curse is recorded in Deuteronomy 27:26. It points out the fact that to keep the law imperfectly was to stand under the curse of sin. Since there is none righteous (Romans 3:10; Psalm 14:1-3), and the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin (Hebrews 10:3-4), anyone who relied upon the law was under the curse of sin.

VERSES 11-12. The prophet Habakkuk (2:4) said that to live in accord with God's will one must live by faith. The law did not require such faith. In fact, Paul quotes Leviticus 18:5 to show that it encouraged one to keep the precepts of the law and live. But, as we have already seen, no man could perfectly do that, save Christ. Since the law did not require the faith that is necessary to please God, obviously it is not our hope for salvation.

VERSE 13. Thayer says the word "redeem" means, "by payment of a price, to recover from the power of another." Certainly the Jews were under the power of the curse of the law. Jesus, though perfect and not under that curse, was made by God to be a curse, that he might save those who were under it (Acts 2:23; II Corinthians 5:21; Isaiah 53:4-6). Because he was crucified on a tree, the law that Jesus perfectly followed pronounced a curse upon him (Deuteronomy 21:23).

VERSE 14. Jesus also hung upon the tree that the Gentiles could receive the blessing promised to Abraham (verse 8). This was done so that all might receive the promise of the Holy Spirit, both Jew and Gentile, through the faith. In Greek, the article appears before the word faith, and should be in any good translation of this verse.

VERSE 15. Men, in their dealings with one another, consider a covenant sacred once it has been agreed upon by both parties. No one can cancel the agreement, or make additions to it.

VERSE 16. The promise to Abraham was repeated by God several times, but this verse seems obviously to refer to Genesis 22:18. God promised all nations would be blessed through Abraham's seed, which Paul argues is singular, not plural; therefore this clearly, is a reference to Abraham's very special "seed", Jesus the Christ. The promise had not been made in a manner that would indicate God planned to bless the world through the nation of Israel, nor the law of Moses.

VERSE 17. God first ratified the covenant with Abraham while he was still in Ur of the Chaldees (Genesis 12:1-4). If men would not annul or change a ratified agreement, surely God would not annul or change his agreement, with Abraham (Hebrews 6:13-18), Moses, law came 430 years later (Exodus 12:40) and certainly did not modify God's covenant with Abraham.

VERSE 18. The "blessing" promised to all nations, which is salvation and ultimately a home in heaven, was like an inheritance which had been promised to come through the "seed" of Abraham. The law did not change that promised inheritance in the least.

VERSE 19. If the promise to Abraham concerning the blessing of all nations could not come through the law of Moses, some would wonder what purpose the law served. Paul says it showed man as a sinner and served only until the "seed" that is Christ, should come that the promise might be fulfilled. This verse, in agreement with others (Acts 7:53; Hebrews 2:2), shows that Moses did not receive the law directly from God, but it was conveyed through angels as God's ministers (Deuteronomy 33:1-2). Further, Moses was a mediator to bring the message of God to the people (Exodus 20:19; Deuteronomy 5:5). Instead of using angels or a mediator, God spoke directly to Abraham, which shows the superiority of the promise. Further, Moses could only be a mediator temporarily, because he had an appointment with death; while God is eternal.

VERSE 20. McGarvey says there are more than three hundred different thoughts as to the meaning of this verse. Let us, therefore, just note some truths the verse calls to our minds. A mediator goes between two parties rather than the parties meeting face to face. Yet, God personally gave the promise to Abraham and sent Jesus, who is one with the Father (John 10:30; 12:44-49; 14:9; 10; 17:8, 20-21), to deliver to us the message of promise.

VERSE 21. The law is not against the promise because it could not do that which the gospel can do in giving us the promise. Thus, the law is not rival to the promise nor the gospel of promise.

VERSE 22. The law of Moses showed all men as prisoners in the jail of sin, which is the symbol presented by the word "under". The promise is made available by the obedient faith of Jesus Christ to all who have an obedient faith in him (Philippians 2:8; Hebrews 5:8-9).

VERSE 23. Continuing the figure of verse 22, Paul describes those under the law of Moses as being held in jail until Christ would come and give them a means of being set free.

VERSE 24. Here Paul changes from the figure of being under bondage to that of being under a tutor. A tutor was a slave charged with the safe-keeping of a boy in his daily activities until he reached manhood. Particularly, this would involve such duties as safely conducting him to and from the schoolhouse. Similarly, the law was meant to safely conduct the Jews to the Justification which is only available through the faith, or the sum of that taught and believed.

VERSE 25. Just as a grown man would no longer need a slave to watch for his safety, the Christian does not need the law of Moses now that the faith has been revealed.

VERSE 26. So, all, Jew and Gentile, become sons of God, thus heirs of the promise, by the faith and in Christ Jesus. The next verse is going to tell how they, and we, got to be in Christ.

VERSE 27. According to Thayer, the words "gar" (translated "for") "adduces the cause or gives the reasons of a preceding statement." This verse tells us that our having been baptized into Christ is the cause of our being a child of God. Verse 26 contains present tense verbs, while verse 27 contains verbs in the past tense. In verse 26, Paul is telling the Galatians that they are (presently) the sons of God, while here he is saying that they became sons of God (in the past) when they put on Christ in baptism. Paul's statement that they were baptized "into" Christ clearly demon-

Continued on page 4

The Great Physician

“... They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick” (Matthew 9:12).

In the ancient world the physician had a unique honor among men. Not only was he well respected for his profession, but he also was considered as the leading citizen of the community, and was often referred to as the “great one.”

In order to fill this prestigious position, one had to possess the proper qualifications.



Levi Sides

He must have the proper endorsement, sympathy for the sick, knowledge of the disease, health -- a preventive, and a remedy. Jesus, the “Great Physician,” possesses each of these qualifications perfectly.

As the physician for sin-sick souls, Jesus possesses (1) the endorsement of heaven. The goodness of his life; the lessons he taught; the miracles he performed; and his victory over death, all testify to his divine Sonship. At the Mount of Transfiguration God gave a ringing endorsement of Jesus when he said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him” (Matthew 17:5).

(2) Jesus possesses a sympathetic attitude. He heard the cry of distress and came (Matthew 9:36-38; 11:28-29; Luke 9:51-56). He suffered with and for mankind. His death on the cross was an expression of his matchless love (Isaiah 53:4). He possesses the same

sympathetic attitude toward his twentieth century children.

(3) He has knowledge of the disease afflicting mankind, and knows the moral and spiritual health to conquer it. No man has so understood human life and its problems (John 2:25). Though never afflicted with the malady of sin, he knew all about it (Hebrews 4:14; I Peter 2:22). He points out the cause of it (Matthew 15:18-19), the symptoms of it (Matthew 12:34), and the consequences of it (James 1:15).

(4) Jesus has the remedy, his word (Isaiah 1:18; 53:3; Romans 1:16; James 1:21). The remedy is of proven worth. By it countless numbers have been saved from spiritual death, and prepared to live in a better world. Though the remedy is infallible, restoration to health is conditional on the patient's attitude toward it. He may spurn it, or neglect it -- the results are the same. Faith in the Physician and willingness to follow his instructions are necessary (Matthew 7:21; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 17:30; I Peter 3:21).

My friend, sin is most deadly. The moment has come for you to call the “Great Physician” and appropriate his remedy. Delay allows sin to fasten a firmer grip on life, and lessens the hope of recovery. “Today if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your heart” (Hebrews 3:15).

The Great Physician now is near,
The Sympathizing Jesus;
He speaks the drooping heart to cheer;
I hear the voice of Jesus.

— School of Biblical Studies, Faulkner University, Montgomery, Alabama. —

Galatians: Chapter 3

Continued from page 3

states that prior to baptism they were outside of Christ. Thus, this verse shows the essentiality of baptism by saying it is necessary to make one a child of God and to place one in Christ.

VERSE 28. No matter what distinction—racial, social, or sexual—there may have been, it is erased in God's plan to save man. The Jewish converts were the ones claiming superiority in this case and demanding that all be circumcized; but it might have been free men that said they held the high position in God's eyes; or men who said they were better than women. Actually, God makes no distinction, “but in every nation be that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:35). In Christ, we are all one body under one head (Ephesians 4:4-6; 1:22-23).

VERSE 29. In verse 7, Paul had said they were children of Abraham by faith. Now he has proven that point and is ready to say the promise is theirs by inheritance. Shepherd notes Christ is the “seed” of Abraham (verse 16) and says, “union with Christ constitutes the true spiritual descent from Abraham, and secures the inheritance of all the Messianic blessings by promise, as against inheritance by law.”

— 2576 Pleasant Valley Road, Mobile, Alabama 36606.

"Uncertain Sounds"

Continued from page 2

which can be heard today?? We shall note--

(1) In some quarters and in some publications there seems to be a special fascination with the idea of bringing the Independent Christian Church into full fellowship with the church of Christ. Some seem to be willing to unite with that denomination at almost any cost. Compromise seems to be the order of the day!! To such brethren the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship of the New Testament church is of minor importance, if any at all. Unity is the goal of all New Testament Christians, but not with the compromise of New Testament principles (John 17:20-23; I Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:1-6). Such is a sin before God!!

(2) Another “uncertain sound” is that women should be permitted to be elders and preachers of the church of Christ. According to this psychology, the New Testament church is outdated, outmoded, and needs to be restructured, and be brought into the twenty-first century. Verily, the power of women's equal-rights movement is being felt in the various churches, including the church of Christ. Television, radio, newspapers, and magazines are full of such propaganda. Now, despite scriptural restrictions (I Timothy 2:11-12), many women are ready to trample the word of God under their feet, and climb into the pulpit and into the eldership, even though they have been strictly forbidden to do so. Let women joyfully accept the role God Almighty has given them and all will be well (Genesis 2:21-25; I Corinthians 11:7-15; Titus 2:1-7).

(3) More “uncertain sounds” include what some call “open membership.” What is that? It means some are ready to receive any person into membership of the church whether that one has obeyed the gospel of Christ or not. In New Testament times only those who heard, believed, repented of their sins, confessed Jesus Christ, and were baptized in Jesus' name were added to the church (Acts 2:36-38, 41, 47). Some have “modernized” the church so much as to receive into its membership those who have been sprinkled or poured (not baptism in the Bible sense), or have taken others in on their denominational baptism. Denominational people are saved (?) before they are bap-

tized. Some of our brethren teach that one need know that one must understand that baptism is “for remission of sins.” Yet this is exactly what Peter taught (Acts 2:38)! Jesus put baptism before salvation (Mark 16:16). Paul was taught that baptism comes before the washing away of sins (Acts 22:16). Paul taught that baptism is a burial -- immersion -- and has a resurrection in it (Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:3-4). We ask: Are those who are saved (?) at the mourners' bench eligible for membership in the church of Christ?? Are those who were saved (?) before they were baptized eligible to be received into the Lord's church?? Shame, shame, shame!!!

(4) The uncertain sounds of denominationalism are more and more being incorporated into the speech of members of the church of Christ. For example: “Our pastor,” “our church,” “our ministers” -- ministers of visitation, youth ministers, singles ministers, THE minister, minister for the young marrieds, and the like. All these expressions are foreign to the teaching of the Old Jerusalem gospel. Read I Peter 4:11: “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.” The Holy Spirit says, “Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (II Timothy 1:13, A.S.V.).

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

The only things we can be sure of accomplishing are the things we do today.

Blowing out someone else's light won't make yours shine any brighter.

The Bible never suffers from neglect; it is only those who neglect it who suffer.

A hammer sometimes misses its mark - a bouquet never.



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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VOLUME 23

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Galatians: Chapter 4

Verses 1-2. Paul used the figure of a tutor responsible for the well-being of a child. Now, he turns to the figure of the child himself. The child can not inherit until he reaches the age of manhood. This would even be true of the heir to the throne. Until he reaches manhood, his estate is under the direction of servants and guardians, as appointed by his father's will. He is thus in no better position than a household servant.



Gary C. Hampton

Verse 3. The King James has the word "rudiments" in the margin as an alternative reading to "elements." As Coffman says, the "world" is here the world of men. Prior to the coming of the gospel, Jew and Gentile were under the most elementary, or rudimental, system of religion and were held in bondage, like the son before his manhood had been reached. I believe Paul is here referring first to the law of Moses and then to the patriarchal law the Gentiles would have been under. Verse 8 demonstrates that Paul also intended the false religions.

Verses 4-5. At the time God had appointed, his Son was sent forth to complete his plan to redeem man and fulfill the promise (Mark 1:15; Ephesians 1:10). It is hard to understand how anyone could believe that God carefully worked out a plan to save man, and waited through history until the precise moment to send his Son, and then allowed the Jews to turn aside his will -- as Premillennialism suggests. Paul's statement that "God sent forth his Son" obviously refers to their being together in heaven, and the incarnation of Deity (John 1:1-14; Philippians 2:6-8). Christ agreed to come to earth through the agency of the virgin birth and allowed himself to be

placed in subjection to the law, not because he needed it, but for man's sake. Particularly, he came that man might be set free from bondage to the law. This will be done through our adoption as God's sons.

Verse 6. Since we become sons by the obedience of faith, God gave us the Holy Spirit of promise into our hearts, and he helps us to respectfully recognize God as our Father.

Verse 7. Thus, all who believed and obeyed, passed from the days of being like a servant (because of still being under tutors) to the days of full sonship. This is accomplished through Christ, the Son of the Father. Notice that we experience the joys of sonship through Christ.

Verse 8. The Gentiles, particularly, did service to the lifeless gods of idolatry, which were no gods at all (I Corinthians 8:4). As idol worshipers, they did not know, or have, an intimate relationship with God at all. Of course, this would apply to the Jews, too, who worshiped idols.

Verse 9. Christians know, and (more importantly) are known of God. Since the Gentiles had known the barren existence of life without God in idolatry, it is amazing that they would so easily turn to ritual, thus making it a new form of idol worship. Having Christ the true type to worship made worshiping under the laws of the shadow nothing less than idolatry.

Verse 10-11. McGarvey says, "the Jewish calendar corresponds to Paul's list, for they had Sabbath days, and new moon festivals each month, the great feasts in their seasons, and Sabbatical years." When we read Colossians 2:16 in conjunction with this, we reach the conclusion that the Christian is not required to keep the Sabbath. If apostasy is impossible for one who is in Christ, why was Paul worried about his labor being in vain? Obviously they were concerned with the ritualism of the Mosaic law, and were becoming indifferent to Christ. The terrible end would be their losing their souls.

Verse 12-13. Paul had given up the laws and customs of Judaism to become a Christian.

Thus, in the eyes of Jews, he had become like a Gentile. Paul did not do this because of some special requirement of the Galatian brethren. Instead, he did it to please God. This enabled him to more freely speak to Gentiles, but they had done him no harm (Philippians 3:4-8). How did an infirmity, or sickness, cause Paul to preach to the Galatians? Did it cause Paul to prolong his stay? Did he go there to recover? What was this sickness? Our questions go unanswered.

Verse 14. Not only had they done him no wrong, but they actually had heard him when they might have been repulsed by his illness. They had greeted him a special messenger from God, or, even as the Lord himself. Sheherd sees this as a fulfillment of the Lord's promise (II Corinthians 12:9-10).

Verse 15. Paul asks what had happened to that treatment he had received at the first? They would have, at that time, sacrificed even their eyes for the apostle. [Some have speculated that this gives clear indication of the nature of the thorn in the flesh!] It seems likely that this was a proverbial expression used in those days; but would it have included "and have given them to me?"


Verse 16. Now, it appeared that they had run away from intense love for the apostle, and to hate, because he told them the truth about the false teachers and their acceptance of them.

Verse 17. The false teachers sought the affections of the Galatians with great zeal, but not to a good end. They wanted to turn the Galatians from pure Christianity to observance of Moses' law. This would have excluded them from Christian fellowship, and would have made them turn to the false teachers for their assurance -- because Paul and the gospel could no longer give such to them!

Verse 18. Zeal is good if it has a proper object (Romans 10:1-3). Paul was not jealous of the zeal the false teachers had motivated them to, but was distraught at the thought of their having zeal in the pursuit of error.

Verse 19. Paul thought of those he had helped

Continued on page 4



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(USPS 691-760)

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—Acts 26:25

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FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Editor
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The Attraction Of The Ages

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself" (John 12:32).

No person has ever influenced the lives of so many people for such a long period of time like Jesus Christ.

"Nineteen centuries have come and gone, and today he is the central figure of the human race and the leader of mankind's progress. All the

armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man on this earth as this one solitary life."

Why is this so wonderfully true? Surely, not because of ancestral, political, or social prestige. Despite the fact that Jesus was the foster son of a lowly carpenter in despised Nazareth; though there was no room for him in the inn, and though the first cries of this newborn infant were heard only by his parents and the stable animals, and despite the statement of the scriptures that he "hath not where to lay his head," still our Lord is the attraction of the ages!

What was the amazing reason for the attractiveness of our Lord? What magnetic drawing power did he possess? How did he by his tragic death on Calvary know that he would draw all men unto himself? What other marvelous qualities did this meek, kind, compassionate, and lovable man of Galilee have that so pulled mankind away from sin and worldly things, and prompted



Levi Sides

Continued on page 3

"I Just Can't Stand It Any Longer!"

Someone told the story about a man in rumpled clothing, needing a shave, and with bloodshot eyes, who came into a certain preacher's study and announced, "Preacher, I'm going to kill myself. I just can't take it any longer."

The preacher asked the man to sit down, handed him a sheet of paper and a pencil, and said, "Draw a line down the center of the page. Up at the top of the left column write the words, 'Things that are wrong.' At the top of the right column write, 'Things that are not wrong'."

The man looked puzzled, but did as he was directed. "Now," continued the preacher, "In the first column write 'I have neither food, clothing nor shelter'."

"But, I have all of these," the man confided.

"Wonderful!" replied the preacher; "then you can write it in the righthand column. Now, put down in the left column, 'My children are in reform school'."

"That's ridiculous," the man shouted. "My



Edsel Burleson

boy and girl are fine youngsters. I will match them against anyone's children!"

"That's great," answered the preacher! "Write it down in the right column."

They had not gone very far until the man began to smile at himself, at how foolish he had been. Life had not been a long day without some disappointment; but he had forgotten the sunshine while searching the heavens for possible clouds.

Each one has those times in his life when it seems everything has gone in reverse. Too frequently, these situations can cause despondency to the point that one may well decide he does not want to live any longer.

The Christian is not promised a life free from heartache and disappointment, but we are promised strength sufficient to withstand. Paul assured the Corinthians, "There hath no temptation take you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13). To the Romans he said, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

We can praise our Heavenly Father that sorrows and disappointments are not meant to disfigure, but to transform us.

—420 7th Street S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

"Tell Us Plainly"

"The Jews therefore came round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly" (John 10:24).

At the time of this statement, there was division among the Jews (John 10:19).

The Jews wanted him to "tell (them) plainly," whether or not he was the Christ.

But Jesus had told them: "But Jesus

answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me" (verse 25).

The truth is: If the Jews had but believed their own scriptures, they would have recognized Jesus as the Messiah (John 5:39-47). Also, the marvelous works done by Jesus were proof that he came from God (John 3:1-2; 9:16; Acts 2:22).

We do no violence to the scriptures when we apply the expression -- "Tell us plainly" -- to other areas of divine truth: We shall note--

(1) "Lord, tell us plainly" about baptism. Baptism requires "much water" (John 3:23). Therefore baptism is not sprinkling or pouring. Scriptural baptism demands going down into water, and coming up out of it (Acts 8:26-39). Baptism is immersion (Romans



W. A. Holley

6:3-4; Colossians 2:12); for we are "buried with him in baptism." Baptism is to save us, to remit our sins, and to initiate us into Christ (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:26-27).

(2) "Lord, tell us plainly" of the one true church. 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, 41-42, 47). The church or kingdom existed during the lifetime of the apostles and early Christians (Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 1:6, 9). Jesus purchased the church with his own blood (Acts 20:28), reigns over it as its head (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4-6), and is its Saviour (Ephesians 5:23). The church which Jesus built is not composed of denominations, for the Lord's church existed hundreds of years before denominationalism ever disgraced the pages of history. In the Bible there is no 'joining the church' of one's choice; the Lord added the saved to his church (Acts 2:49).

(3) "Lord, tell us plainly" how one must live so as to inherit heaven and immortal glory. After one becomes a Christian one keep himself unspotted from the world, living a sober, righteous, and godly life (James 1:27; Titus 2:11-12). The impossibility of apostasy is never taught in the Bible (Galatians 5:4; I Corinthians 10:12; Hebrews 6:4-6; II Peter 2:20-22). Eternal life is in the world to come, awaiting the arrival of the faithful (Mark 10:30; Revelation 2:10).

(4) "Lord, tell us plainly" of the assembly.

Continued on page 3

"Tell Us Plainly"

Continued from page 2

(Acts 20:7; Hebrews 10:25; I Corinthians 16:1-2). Is it on the Sabbath day? No, it is the first day of the week. On this day we are to assemble to worship God. The items of worship are clearly set forth in the scriptures (Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:19). It is in this manner we worship God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24). The "whole church" should assemble together (I Corinthians 14:23).

(5) "Lord, tell us plainly" of the kind of music required in Christian worship. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God" (Colossians 3:16, A.S.V.) Another verse, Ephesians 5:19, reads: "Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord" (A.S.V.). Other verses which authorize singing are Hebrews 2:12; James 5:13; Romans 15:9; I Corinthians 14:15. None of these verses, nor any others, teach the use of instrumental music in Christian worship. The New Testament authorizes singing, but not playing.

(6) "Lord, tell us plainly" of the contribution. Christians are taught to give as they purpose, as they prosper, and according to their ability (II Corinthians 9:6-7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Acts 11:29-30). It is God who gives us power to earn money (Deuteronomy 8:17-18). Actually, we give only of that which God has given us (I Chronicles 29:14). Faithfully make your contribution to the Lord each first day of the week. Rob not God.

(7) "Lord, tell us plainly" of the dangers of worldly pleasure. One's spiritual vitality can be "choked with cares and riches and

The Attraction Of The Ages

Continued from page 2

them to rise up and follow him?

Jesus is attractive because of the things he said. His teaching is so different, so revolutionary, so extraordinary, that even those sent to arrest him, exclaim of him, "Never man so spake" (Matthew 7:28-29).

Jesus is attractive because of the things he did. His supernatural feats, miracles, and wisdom, have attracted -- and continue to hold -- men in perpetual wonder. Never man performed the works that Jesus did.

Jesus is attractive because of his actions toward others. He wept with the sorrowing, rejoiced in the happy society of his day, prayed for his enemies, and healed the sick and suffering. Such marvelous actions had never been so fully demonstrated before.

Jesus is attractive because of his life. He lived the perfect life. Not once did he succumb to the pride and lust of power that was common to his day. Never did he seek vengeance against one who sought to do him evil. His life was a life of absolute guiltlessness. His accusers could not point out a single sin in his life.

The attractiveness of Christ -- what a subject!

—School of Biblical Studies, Faulkner University, Montgomery, AL.

pleasures of this life" (Luke 8:14). One becomes an enemy of God when he falls in love with the world (James 4:4, A.S.V.). "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15-17). Moses refused all the honors and treasures of Egypt that he might enjoy the heavenly rewards of God Almighty (Hebrews 11:24-26). Satan offered Jesus all the kingdoms of earth; but Jesus turned him down, flat (Matthew 4:8-9).

(8) "Lord, tell us plainly" of that great heavenly reward. Jesus has gone to prepare a mansion for the faithful (John 14:1-6; Revelation 2:10). Those who do his commandments have a right to enter through the gates into the city (Revelation 22:14). Those who become children of God and "die in the Lord" rest from their labors (Revelation 14:13).

Now, we suggest that our readers turn to II Timothy 4:6-8, and reflect upon their meaning.

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

The Art Of Laughter

"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine . . ." (Proverbs 17:22).

Laughter has its value. A noted psychiatrist said, "Woe unto the man who loses his sense of humor, for laughter is the finest antidote for the acidity that eats ulcers in the stomach." The wise man of the Old Testament said: "A cheerful heart is a good medicine" (Proverbs 17:22).

Laughter is one of life's greatest shock absorbers. Many of the things at which one laughs would be very annoying if he does not think them funny; and laughter is nature's device for taking up the jolt.

Laughter is a better response than annoyance to a horde of petty irritations that dog our heels. A bit of laughter is better than a lot of sarcasm.

Laughter is a source of strength. Men endure and achieve as they learn to break the monotony of routine work with laughter. The burdens of many lives are beyond the normal power and endurance of human beings. There are various sources of strength for such; and one of them is laughter. Abraham Lincoln during the dark days of the Civil War is credited with having said that laughter kept him from breaking beneath the load.

Even in the face of an impossible situation, laughter is a better response than despair. In early English history, an invader, driven from the island, complained that he had beaten the Britons three or four times but



Levi Sides

they did not have sense enough to know it, and so they would not stop fighting. No man is beaten until he despairs. So long as he can laugh, the way of success is not closed to him.

Laughter is a magnet that draws friends. It may be a very quiet, unostentatious laugh, perhaps not more than a twinkle of the eye; but if it is the expression of a kindly, cheery soul that has looked life squarely in the face, seen its worst, and still has found good, it is the key that will unlock the hearts of men. Trouble may awaken kindness to action and so reveal friendship to us, that after a time of trouble people say, "I never knew I had so many friends;" but the friendship itself is a response to a courageous, cheery soul, not to despondence and complaint.

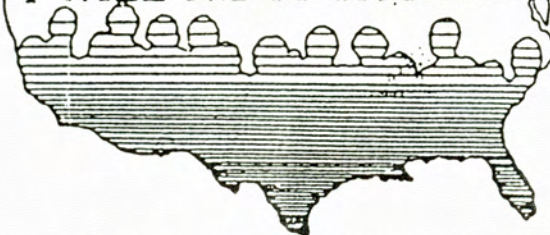
Laughter is essential to maintain one's balance in life. There are lives so burdened with care or hardship that observers would grant them the right to be bitter; but most complaining souls are not among these. Many gamblers are simply people who have forgotten to laugh. They have lost the balance of life, and hence can see only bitterness -- and utter complaints.

Only one statement of caution: A laugh costs too much when bought at the expense of virtue, or when brought about by the misfortune of another. "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth" or (American Standard Version) "is overthrown" (Proverbs 24:17).

Good laughter is a principle of life, one's contribution of cheer to the world. It is the expression of a noble courage, a genuine love for mankind, and a deep and abiding faith in God.

(School of Biblical Studies, Faulkner University, Montgomery, Alabama)

"IF MY PEOPLE WILL HUMBLE THEMSELVES AND PRAY, I WILL HEAL THEIR LAND"



(from I Chron. 7:14)

Joshua Explains Salvation By Grace

"Grace" means "unmerited favor." It refers to that which is not ours by "right," nor what we justly deserve. Paul said of the church at Ephesus, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). Many honest people are confused about the matter of grace and works.



Edsel Burleson

They think that one eliminates the other -- that

It's Not Easy...

TO APOLOGIZE
TO BEGIN OVER
TO ADMIT WRONG
TO KEEP TRYING
TO TAKE ADVICE
TO BE UNSELFISH
TO BE BENEVOLENT
TO FACE A SNEER
TO AVOID MISTAKES
TO PROFIT BY MISTAKES
TO BE CONSIDERATE
TO KEEP OUT OF A RUT
TO FORGIVE AND FORGET
TO THINK BEFORE YOU ACT
TO MAKE THE BEST OF THINGS
TO CONTROL A BAD TEMPER
TO SHOULDER THE BLAME
TO SEE THE SILVER LINING...

... BUT IT ALWAYS PAYS!

You'll never know
how much good
you can do
until you do it.



MAKE
BIBLE SCHOOL — A FAMILY AFFAIR
EACH ONE BRING ONE

there is no room for both in God's plan of salvation.

Truly, salvation was provided apart from any works of righteousness which any one of us may have done. God's free gift of salvation does depend upon man's complying with the conditions of obedience for obtaining the gift.

The 6th chapter of Joshua tells us how God gave the city of Jericho to the people of Israel. Note verse 2: "And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour." The city was a gift of God. But there were many conditions and the grace of God was not manifested in the deliverance of the city until these conditions were met. Verse 16 informs us that "Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city." God's specified instructions had been carefully met before he delivered the "gift."

The Hebrews writer later tells us, "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days" (Hebrews

11:30). It was a gift of God received by a people whose faith trusted in God to the full obedience of his commandments.

"By grace are ye saved" (but not grace alone), "through faith" (but not faith only), "and that not of yourselves" (you did not devise the plan and conditions of salvation) "it is the gift of God" (not earned or merited): "Not of works" (of man's righteousness, but the keeping of God's righteousness), "lest any man should boast."

An old Indian preacher was faced with the problem of illustrating that both the grace of God and the obedience of man had a part in salvation. He placed a bug on a bare spot on the ground, surrounded him with leaves and set the leaves on fire. There was no way of escape for the poor bug. When it seemed the bug was going to perish in the fire, the preacher lifted him to safety. "See," he said, "Me hold stick, him climb on, him safe."

Likewise, with our salvation. We can not escape. God's grace has provided the salvation; yet, it is up to us to "climb" on the "extended stick" to be saved from eternal destruction.

—420 7th Street S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

Galatians: Chapter 4

Continued From Page 1

teach as his children in the gospel (I Corinthians 4:15). Acts 13 and 14 record some of the pain and sorrow Paul went through to teach the Galatians the truth. He compares it to the suffering of a mother at the birth of her child. At the time of this writing, Paul was experiencing pain again as he tried to help them reform the image of Christ in their lives.

Verse 20. Paul wished he could be with them at the very moment of his writing, that he might observe their actions and be moved by those actions to change his tone of voice. Either he wished the reports were exaggerated, or he wished to see them moved to a change by his words. He loved them and did, not, as any other parent does not, enjoy having to correct these loved ones.

Verse 21. Evidently, the Galatians were turning to the law of Moses because it looked good. Paul urges them to listen to the law as well as look at its ceremonies.

Verse 22. The Judaizers were emphasizing that they were sons of Abraham. Paul notes that Abraham had two sons: Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael was the son of Sarah's maid Hagar; thus he was a slave by birth. Isaac was the son of Sarah, Abraham's wife; thus he was free by birth.

Verse 23. Ishmael was born after the normal order of children born to men. Isaac was born according to the promise of God to parents who would not ordinarily have been expected to bear children (Hebrews 11:11-12).

Verse 24. In an "allegory," the main subject is dropped out and one similar in qualities and circumstances is put in its place. Hagar represents the old covenant given at Mount Sinai. All children born to Hagar would be born in slavery; and so would all those under the law of Moses be in bondage.

Verse 25. "Sinai" is the same as the fleshly Jerusalem that was in existence in Paul's day. She was in bondage to Rome; but more particularly she was in bondage under the law and all children born to her were also in

bondage (John 8:30-34).

Verse 26. Heavenly Jerusalem is the church, which is represented in the allegory by Sarah. In the allegory, all Christians are children of the church. Those who would say, "Jesus, yes; but the church no!" run into a real problem here. The Lord shed his own blood for the church and he adds the saved to the church (Acts 20:28; 2:47).

Verse 27. The quotation is from Isaiah 54:1. For a time, it appeared that Hagar had taken the wife's role, because Sarah was barren. Abraham loved Ishmael and was grieved when Sarah wanted him cast out (Genesis 17:18; 21:9-12). But Isaac was the son of promise and would inherit the son's share. Similarly, for a time Moses' law had appeared to be the bride of salvation; but the church, when Paul wrote, had assumed its rightful place. The sons of the church would outnumber the sons of the Law.

Verse 28. The gospel produces the children of promise.

Verse 29. Just like Ishmael persecuted Isaac, the Judaizers and those who followed the law persecuted the church.

Verse 30. Just as God told Abraham to follow Sarah's wish and cast Ishmael (the son of the bondwoman) out of camp, so God was telling the Galatians to cast out the law of Moses. Paul also looks forward, in this verse, to the day when fleshly Israel would clearly be cast out by God. This was an event that was far from plain to the eyes of people who were still nearly 20 years away from the destruction of Jerusalem. The Jews and Judaizers were sons of Abraham; but they were sons of the bondwoman! Christians are the true heirs of God's promise because they are of the church, or freewoman!

Verse 31. Logically they should (1) recognize the church as God's freewoman, (2) cast out the law of Moses, and (3) inherit the great blessings of the promise.

—2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, AL 36606.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am
Words of

truth the

ts 26:25

VOLUME 23

FRIDAY, JULY 8, 1988

NUMBER 29

When Men Disappoint Us

All of us are discouraged at times by the actions of others. It is difficult to bear when someone who is a very good, close friend has let us down. Or, it may be that someone in the church whom we have highly regarded for his teaching, leadership ability, or his seemingly exemplary life is found to be morally corrupt.



Joe E. Galloway

Sometimes such a respected person may even begin teaching error and completely turn his back on the Lord and his church. Our disappointment in such brethren may cause us to want to quit trying. At such times we need to consider a number of things:

(1) Others in the church have had similar disappointments in men. When the apostle Paul was facing death as a prisoner in Rome he wrote: "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia" (II Timothy 4:10). He then wrote: "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me" (II Timothy 4:16). Yet this great apostle, although disappointed, continued steadfastly faithful to God.

(2) There are still many good, faithful Christian men and women who have not yielded to the pressures and temptations of this world. Many are still morally and doctrinally pure! Luke had stayed with Paul when the others forsook him (II Timothy 4:10). There were many others who were faithfully working, often under similar persecution, in other parts of the world, and who had not defiled themselves by yielding to temptations. So, when some influential member is found to have been leading a double life we need to remember that there are still many who are not hypocrites, but are genuine Christians!

(3) The Lord has not -- and will not! -- let us down! After telling of the brethren who had disappointed him, Paul wrote:

"Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me . . . and the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom" (II Timothy 4:17-18). Even if everyone in the church were to become corrupt (and that is far from being the case) the Lord will still stand with us, and will eternally bless us if we continue to stand firm for truth and right.

(4) We need to continue to pray for the one who has disappointed us, along with other good brethren and the Lord. Concerning those who had forsaken Paul, he wrote, "I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge" (II Timothy 4:16). Maybe the sinning brother can be brought to repentance and will be able to again regain his useful place in the Lord's work. We should work and pray to that end! Peter was a disappointment to our Lord when he cursed and swore that he had never known him. Yet, a few weeks later he had so repented that we have all been thrilled with his courageous stand for the Lord's truth in the face of persecution (Acts 4:19-20; 5:27-29). Few brethren have committed moral actions more extreme than the adultery, deception, and murder in which David

engaged. Yet David was restored to a place of honor in God's service! Perhaps we can help restore our brother who has been overtaken in a fault (Galatians 6:1).

(5) Our faith must stand in God, not in any man (I Corinthians 2:5; I Peter 1:21). The apostle Paul warned, "Let no man glory in men" (I Corinthians 3:21), and "not to think of men above that which is written" (I Corinthians 4:16). When we put too much confidence in men we are setting ourselves up for disappointment. Even the best of men make mistakes. A candid appraisal of self should show us the fickleness of human beings. God is constant, being unchangeable in his holiness, goodness, and truth. Only God is worthy of our complete and unwavering confidence and trust!

Let each try to be a good example in every aspect of life (I Timothy 4:12). Let us encourage others to live as they should, and (in the proper spirit) try to help them recover when they stumble. Then let us completely trust and follow our Lord who is unchangingly faithful (Hebrews 13:8; II Timothy 2:13).

—218 Pinecrest Dr., Greeneville, TN 37743.

Lovers Of Pleasure

G. F. Raines

All people need some recreation. But inordinate love of pleasure is sinful, although, apparently, most people in all nations love pleasure excessively.

Paul says (in I Thessalonians 5:22) that there are some pleasures which we must abstain from completely. Other forms of pleasure are wrong only when they are indulged in intemperately. Walking, gardening, and reading good books are some of the best quiet forms of recreation.

H.G.J. Adam has well said: "Pleasure must first have the warrant, that it is without sin; then the measure, that it is without excess."

Paul says that some people are "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God"

(II Timothy 3:1-5).

According to *Parade* magazine (February 14, 1965), "Ten years ago if you were the typical American, you spent 4 hours and 46 minutes in front of the little box (the television). Today that figure has jumped to 5 hours and 25 minutes a day, or 1,977 hours a year."

No wonder we do not have enough time to abound in the work of the Lord! Please read John 15:8; I Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 6:9, 10; Ephesians 5:14-16; Colossians 1:10; Titus 2:14.

Solomon observed that, "He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth

Continued On Page 4

History Repeating Itself

Adron Doran

We observe unusual church organizational patterns emerging, strange procedures developing to produce loyalty on the part of individual believers, cells of believers involving one another, and emphasis being placed on obedience to selected and designated superiors. Some are apt to conclude that the process constitutes a new phenomenon. Some who have adopted and followed such a system as conceived by Chuck Lucus while he was minister of the Crossroads Church of Christ in Gainesville, Florida, and delicately refined by Kip McKean in Boston, endeavor to justify the practices as being apostolic. However, their claims for 'Crossroadism' rest in a manual written by Robert E. Coleman, titled **The Master Plan of Evangelism**. It could well be that Coleman had been exposed to the practice and teaching of Ignatius Loyola, who wrote a treatise titled **Spiritual Exercises**, during the early 1500's.

Ignatius Loyola, a Spanish priest, was born in the Basque province of Genpuzcoa, in 1491, and died July 31, 1556. His early life was spent in the military, during which he was severely wounded in battle. While recovering from a leg injury, Loyola spent his time reading and studying Catholic literature, which drastically reshaped his manner of thinking and living. He composed and published his **Spiritual Exercises** as a guidebook for those whom he desired to bring into what he called "a closer relation with Christ in mind and heart."

Loyola drew to himself six young students from the University of Paris, who joined together in a retreat on August 15, 1534, according to the principles and procedures of his handbook. The members of his group bound themselves together by the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Loyola called the Catholic order of religious men the "Society of Jesus." By John Calvin, the members of the Society were given the name "Jesuits." The religious order, based on a document drafted by Loyola, was eventually approved by Pope Paul III on September 27, 1540.

The objectives of the Society of Jesus were to: (1) resist the inroads which the reformers, Luther, Calvin and Zwingli, had made into the Roman Church by their efforts to reform corrupt practices, and (2) to modify the personal pattern of behavior of the members of the Society. Loyola proposed specific innovations in, and discontinuance of, many of the medieval practices of the apostate church. These changes included regular penance, obligatory fasts, and choral recitation of the liturgical office. One of the more important innovations was the adoption of a highly-centralized form of authority, with the Pope as the head, and superiors designated from within the ranks. Later the Jesuits were divided into twelve administrative units which were called "provinces" in France, Portugal, Italy, Spain, Germany, India, and Brazil.

E. H. Broadbent, in his **The Pilgrim Church**, published in 1931, wrote:

He [Loyola] placed each member of his society under the guidance of a man, his confessor, to whom he pledged to make known the most intimate secrets of his life and to yield implicit obedience. The plan was that of a soldier, each one was subject to the will of the one above him and even the highest was controlled by those appointed to observe every act and judge every motive.

The careful choice and the special training of the Jesuits, during which they were taught entire submission of their own will to that of their superiors, made them a weapon by which not only the Protestant Reformation was checked in Europe but a "counter-reformation" was organized. As the "General," Loyola exercised, through his subordinates, complete control over the minds and activities of the members of the Jesuit order. He always maintained perfect loyalty and obedience to the Pope in Rome. It is claimed that the **Spiritual Exercises**, upon which the Society of Jesus was organized and operated, has molded twenty-seven "canonized saints."

Brethren, in our efforts to organize and develop the pattern for a system by which members of churches of Christ engage in evangelizing and discipling the unsaved and the saints, it is important that we do not stop in "Rome" on our way back to Jerusalem!

—111 Woodland Ave., Lexington, KY 40502.

The Five Looks

"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread . . ." (Acts 20:7).

A portrait in oils by a great artist may be viewed in different lights. To the utterly unartistic eye it may be esteemed or valued according to the cost of the frame, the paint, and the canvas. A farmer once exclaimed when told of the value of a certain picture: "Why, I could paint all the fences and buildings on my farm at one-tenth the amount." But the artistic eye sees in the picture beauties that fill his soul with rapturous delight. So to the unspiritual, the Lord's Supper is mere bread and fruit of the vine -- and so little of it that as nourishment it is worthless. But the spiritual eye sees the portrait of Jesus, not only the bodily form, dying on the cross; but the loving heart of the Redeemer is laid bare to view as it is nowhere else.


The Lord's Supper is a monument, a commemoration, and a communion. To many people, it is seemingly a small thing; but it is meaningful. When Balboa, the Spanish commander, discovered the Pacific Ocean, he took from his pocket a soiled, worn banner and waved it over the water; claiming all the land it touched. This was a seemingly insignificant thing, but full of meaning. Only eternity will reveal the value and the true significance of the Lord's Supper for the Christian.

On the first day of each week, the Christian views this God-appointed item of worship in five different directions.

He looks upward in gratitude. Jesus set the example: for when he established the supper, he gave thanks for the bread and the fruit of



Levi Sides



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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Parents - God's Special Tutors

"Train up a child in the way he should go . . ." (Proverbs 22:6).

When the first child was born Eve exclaimed, "I have gotten a manchild with the help of the Lord" (Genesis 4:1). When God placed the first baby into the arms of Adam and Eve he was giving this child a special set of tutors.

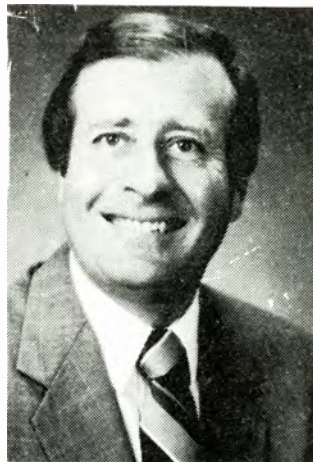
Though parents do not have any experience, and may not have any special education, they will be the most significant force in the child's life. It has been estimated that from the time a child is born until he graduates from high school, he is awake one hundred five thousand hours.

The child spends nearly ten thousand hours in school from the time he starts in the first grade until he graduates from high school. If this child is taken or sent to Sunday School every week, he will spend about twenty-one hundred hours in Sunday School.

However, during his one hundred five thousand waking hours, parents have him under their direct influence and supervision for approximately ninety-three thousand hours.

If a child is lost, parents are more to blame than either school teachers or Bible School teachers, because the parents have so much longer time to influence him than these others.

Fathers and mothers have the awesome responsibility of building character into the child. There are four building blocks which both parents needs to use in developing



Levi Sides

Galatians: Chapter 5

Verse 1. The American Standard Version has, "For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage." Christ came to set men free from the yoke of bondage they had known under the law. Paul pleads with the Galatians not to go back into that bondage.

Verse 2. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, was about to make a clear pronouncement on this most important issue.

Circumcision, if it were looked to as a source of salvation, would nullify the sacrifice of Christ, because the individual was looking to the law of Moses for saving power.

Verse 3. Circumcision was a symbol of submission to the covenant God had with Israel. When one was circumcized, he was yielding to the whole law and agreeing to observe all its commands. No wonder Paul was so emphatic in the previous verse.

Verse 4. By turning to the law of Moses as a source of salvation, they nullified Christ's sacrifice and the grace by which it was bestowed (Titus 2:11-12). Thus, one has fallen from grace, and is lost because he is without it.

Verse 5. The sword of the Spirit is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17). The Spirit uses that sword to prick us in our hearts and move us to obedience (Acts 2:37). Then, we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and are enabled, by that gift, to wait for the rewards of righteousness, which come by the faith, not by the law of Moses.

Verse 6. God does not show special favor, in the Christian age, on circumcized Jew, nor on uncircumcized Gentile. Instead, he favors a faith that is motivated by love to work. Paul three times speaks of neither "circumcision nor uncircumcision." In Galatians 6:15 he says all that matters is "a new creature," which comes about when one gets into Christ through baptism (II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 6:3-4). In I Corinthians 7:19, he says both of those states came about in keeping God's commandments, which emphasizes that it is the doing of God's will that matters. Of course, here Paul emphasizes the way to please God is through a working faith (John 4:15; Hebrews 11:6).

Verse 7. The word "hinder" comes from a Greek word which suggests the breaking up of a road. They had been running the Christian life; but some enemy had torn up the road, and had stopped them from faithfully obeying the truth.

Verse 8. This work-stoppage did not come from God. The false teachers were not his agents.

Verse 9. While it may have been only a few who were following this course back into bondage, Paul warns that a small amount of leaven will leaven the whole lump if it is not purged (I Corinthians 5:6).

Verse 10. Paul had confidence in the Galatian brethren and knew they would see the danger of the leaven of false teaching, and would



Gary C. Hampton

purge it. The false teacher, or teachers, would have to bear their judgment against him, as well as being severed from Christ, and fallen from grace (see verse 4).

Verse 11. Evidently, some thought Paul was charged with preaching the necessity of circumcision, perhaps because he had Timothy circumcized. While the false teachers might have misconstrued his actions in this way, the Jews did not. Instead, they continued to persecute him. If Paul had gone back to the teaching of the necessity of circumcision, or being a Jew, the cross of Christ would have become of no effect in his preaching; and it would have been removed as a stumbling-block from the path of the Jews (I Corinthians 1:18-25).

Verse 12. Paul wishes the false teachers were not only circumcized, but also amputated from the body of the Lord.

Verse 13. Just because the Galatians were free from the law of Moses, he did not want them to think they were freed to do wicked things. Instead, Christians should be motivated by love for others (Matthew 7:12; John 13:34-35). When people are so motivated, they cannot abuse their liberty for fear of the damage it would bring to one they loved.

Verse 14. The law of love, which is the law of Christ, is summed up in this verse. Jesus had considered this law to be second only to the love for God with all one's heart, soul, mind and strength (Mark 12:29-31).

Verse 15. If they refused to follow the law of love, and instead followed a hateful course toward one another, they should know such biting and devouring would eventually result in their consuming one another. When a negative spirit is allowed to run wild, it will eventually kill all the good a church has been doing and leave it to suffocate on its own critical breath.

Verse 16. To avoid the tragic end already described, Paul urges the Galatian brethren to follow the teaching of the Holy Spirit. There are two different desires within man, which are represented by the spirit versus the flesh (Romans 7:22-23). Fleshly desires must be controlled if we are to please God (Genesis 6:5-6; Proverbs 6:16-19, especially verse 18; Romans 1:21; II Corinthians 10:5).

Verse 17. Evil imaginations are in continual conflict with our desires to follow God's will. When they are in control, we will not do the good we would like to do.

Verse 18. When man was under the law, he was subject to sin because of yielding to fleshly desire. There was no sacrifice capable of taking away sin, thus man was under the penalty of death. Now, if a man will let the Spirit through the word direct his actions, he is not subject to that law nor under its penalty (Romans 8:1-14).

Verses 19-21. It is obvious when one is following the ways of the flesh, because of the things he does. The word "adultery" occurs in several passages (John 8:3; Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21) and describes unlawful relations with another's mate. "Fornication" includes all illicit sexual relations, some of which are described in Romans 1:26-27 and I Corinthians 5:1. "Uncleanness" encompasses the impurity of wildly extravagant and lustful living. Thayer defines the word translated "lasciviousness" as, "unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence." All of these words describe a complete lack of restraint. The worship of false gods, or any-

thing other than the true God, would be "idolatry." "Witchcraft" was usually practiced with idolatry and involved magical arts used to deceive people (Acts 8:9-11). "Hatred" often leads to "variance," which is contention or wrangling; and "emulations" are jealous rivalries. "Wrath" suggests impulsive outbursts of anger. Those who would use even low means to set themselves in a higher position are users of "strife." Division or dissension would be described as "seditions." These would be caused by differences in opinion or aim, in other words, "heresies." Naturally, division into parties genders ill feelings which may linger on, looking for revenge; and this is called "envyings." Such might, sadly, lead to "murders." Intoxication, or "drunknesses" leads to "revellings," or wild displays at extended drinking parties. People involved in the sins listed, as well as others of a similar nature, will not enter heaven's gate.

Verses 22-23. There are many "works" of the flesh, but only one "fruit" of the Spirit, with nine different facets. This fruit would have to be produced by the seed of God's word (Luke 8:11). The Spirit speaks through the written word (II Samuel 23:2; Acts 1:16; Hebrews 3:7-11 quotes Psalm 95:7-11). Love, joy, and peace come out of our relationship with God. If one is a child of God, he will love (I John 4:7-8; Matthew 5:43-48). Joy is ours at the release from past sins, and should be a constant product of our being in Christ where we are constantly cleansed from our sins (Acts 8:39; 16:34; Philippians 4:4; 3:1; John 15:9-11). We have inward peace, no matter what the outward circumstances, because God is guarding our hearts (I John 5:4; Philippians 4:6-7; Romans 5:1; Isaiah 26:3). Longsuffering, gentleness and goodness are things needed in our relationship with other men. God is longsuffering toward man because he does not want to see him lost (II Peter 3:9). We need to be like him as we deal with others, knowing we need the same to reach heaven (I Corinthians 13:4). The word translated "gentleness" here is translated "kindness" in II Corinthians 6:6. It describes a sweetness of demeanor that causes one to be a ready servant of others (I Corinthians 13:4; Ephesians 4:32; John 13:1-17). "Goodness" is shown in our treatment of others. It is the service that comes out of readiness to serve (Romans 15:14; Galatians 6:10). Faith, meekness, and temperance are things we need in ourselves. All Christians need a belief in God and his determination to reward those who diligently seek him (Matthew 10:22; Luke 9:62; Revelation 2:10). James Meadows, in *A Study of the Holy Spirit*, says the word "meekness is associated with lowliness (Ephesians 4:1-2), a quiet spirit (I Peter 3:4) and gentleness (Titus 3:2)." Self-control is the same as "temperance." We must exhibit self-control if we are to go to heaven (Philippians 2:1-8; I Corinthians 9:24-27; II Corinthians 10:5; Proverbs 16:32). Neither man, nor certainly God, has a law against these good works that are the "fruit" of the Spirit.

Verse 24. The Christian has crucified the flesh with its passions, and lives for Jesus because he is Jesus' possession (Romans 6:1-11; I Corinthians 6:19-20).

Verse 25. Christians are alive in God (I John 4:11-16). Since we are alive in God, we should also let God live in us (I Corinthians 3:16;

Continued on page 4

The Wrongness Of Abortion

Weldon Langfield

Abortion is an increasing problem. Adolph Hitler, perhaps the most notorious villain in the world's history, killed Six million Jews; more than Nineteen million fetuses have been legally killed in the United States. Several years ago, a noted preacher observed, "We'll soon owe Hitler an apology!" America, the time to apologize has passed! Several polls of recent years have indicated that abortion on demand has support among the American public.

Corinth has frequently been cited as demonstrating that the church is often greatly influenced by the world. This being true, we can expect a loosening of attitudes toward abortion within the Lord's church as its practice becomes even more accepted by our society. In fact, this doctrinal weakening is already occurring in some places. In one congregation a so-called "gospel preacher" has actually taken a "pro-choice" position both publicly and privately. As on all other topics, the only way to maintain the truth is to aggressively, and repeatedly, teach what the Bible reveals on the subject. Let us consider some reasons why abortion is sinful.

First, abortion is wrong because it involves contempt for human life. Man is the "crown of creation." That which is in the womb is destined to be in the image of God himself (Genesis 1:26). Only the most irreverent person would willingly terminate that life as a

Parents - God's Special Tutors

Continued from page 2

their children as God wants:

1. **Parental Love.** Children need to be touched, cuddled, held, kissed, etc., so that they will grow up knowing love. Paul told the older women to teach the younger ones how to love their children (Titus 2:4).

2. **Parental Discipline.** Love is no substitute for discipline. The greatest social disaster of this century is the belief that abundant love makes discipline unnecessary. (See Proverbs 3:11-12; 13:24; 19:18).

3. **Parental Instruction.** At the beginning a child is unable to distinguish between the voice of God and the word of parents. The child is fortunate when the parental voice is synonymous with God.

4. **Parental Example.** The most often-asked question is, "Should I force this child to go to church?" The answer is, Yes. Other habits that are needed, at times have to be forced. That which makes a child rebel is not being forced to go to church; but rather, it is seeing parents at home who are hypocritical. When that which the parents enforce is not consistent with their example, their children will grow up hating the church. In II Timothy 1:5 Paul knew the kind of man Timothy was because he knew the example of his mother and grandmother.

May God give us parents who realize their responsibility as special tutors. Your children's souls will be influenced by how well you perform as a parent.

—School of Biblical Studies, Faulkner University, Montgomery, AL.

matter of convenience.

Second, abortion involves murder. Through the "Roe vs. Wade" decision, the United States Supreme Court "decided," in essence, that life begins at birth. Is God bound by that? Certainly not! The same human tribunal has favored pornography, homosexuality, and evolution in several other decisions. That human tribunals ascertain heavenly truth is patently absurd.

The Bible plainly teaches that, at some time during pregnancy, the developing child possesses a soul. Of John the Baptist, the Bible says, "He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15). Certainly, to have had the Holy Spirit, John had the capacity to possess a human spirit. The humanness of the fetus is further illustrated in the fact that Jacob and Esau had personalities in the womb (Genesis 25:25-26). God's skill, power, and thoughts all go into the making of a human (Psalm 139:13-17). Can man destroy a developing child without guilt?

Third, abortion is wrong because it is a cold, wanton act. Women are divinely equipped both by physical and emotional attributes to carry children. Mothers who willfully destroy the fruit of their womb are certainly numbered among those who are "without natural affection" (Romans 1:31).

Fourth, abortion is wrong because it violates the "Golden Rule." Jesus said, "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them" (Matthew 7:12). Which one of us would want his/her mother to have had an abortion? Those living by the law of Christ owe their developing offspring the same concern and protection.

Fifth, abortion is wrong because it frequently violates the conscience. Women, particularly those with strong conservative religious backgrounds, suffer from substantial guilt and stress following an abortion. This fact alone rules out abortion as a possibility for Christians. The Bible teaches plainly in I Timothy 1:19 that we are to maintain "a good conscience."

As tragic as it is that even some among us tolerate abortion, it should come as no surprise. The Corinthian congregation was infected with the licentiousness of that city (I Corinthians 6:15-20). The Laodiceans were influenced by the wealth of their environs (Revelation 3:15-18).

Let us realize that the best defense against

Galatians: Chapter 5

Continued from page 3

Romans 8:11).

Verse 26. Christians recognize the things they do are done because of God's being in us, and by his power (John 5:19; Philippians 4:13); therefore they do not become involved in promoting self, nor provoke others to jealousy.

—2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, AL 36606.

**BRING A FRIEND
WITH YOU
TO CHURCH SUNDAY!**

the sin of abortion, as with other transgressions, is to vigorously teach the word. No truth is learned by osmosis; rather "Belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

—2913 Brock Way, Bakersfield, CA 93306.

The Five Looks

Continued from page 2

the vine. The communicant should thank God for the bread and for the fruit of the vine; but he should look beyond these emblems and give thanks for the wounded body and the shed blood of the Saviour.

He looks **backward** in memory of the suffering Son of God.

He looks **outward**, declaring to the world the Savior's dying love.

He looks **forward**, in anticipation. Christians are forward-looking people with a wonderful future. They entertain great expectation. They eat with their faces toward the land of the rising sun, whence comes light and hope.

He looks **inward**, in self-inspection. "Let a man prove (examine) himself and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup." Examination comes before eating.

What do you see when partaking of the Lord's Supper?

In memory of the Savior's love
We keep the sacred feast,
Where every humble contrite heart
Is made a welcome guest.

—School of Biblical Studies, Faulkner University, Montgomery, AL.

Lovers Of Pleasure

Continued from page 1

wine and oil shall not be rich" (Proverbs 21:17).

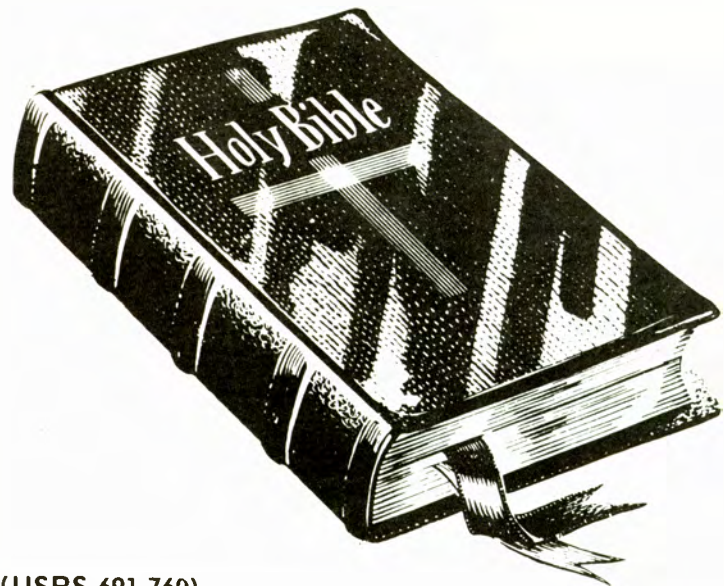
Those who inordinately indulge in pleasure "live after the flesh," and are "dead" while they live (I Timothy 5:6).

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13).

"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. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:7-9).

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1-2).

—Newton, MS 39345.



(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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"Not Specifically Prohibited"

Someone writes, "Whatever else may be said of instrumental music in worship, the scriptures do not specifically prohibit it."

The foregoing statement contains nothing new. Similar affirmations have been set out by advocates of the instruments for a hundred years or more. The only thing unusual about it is, that it is now being parroted by those who once stood



R. W. Gray

as stalwarts in "contending for the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). It signifies no more NOW than it has signified through the years. The most that may be said of such a hollow statement is, that the one who uses it has either surrendered the premise upon which faith is built; or, he has deliberately chosen to use faulty hermeneutics to placate those determined to serve their idol (Romans 10:17; II Timothy 4:3-4).

What is the design of such an affirmation? Is it designed to prove (?) that the innovator is justified in his employment of the instrument in worship? Or, is it used to imply that the sin of such an "addition" is minimized in view of the alleged absence of a clear-cut prohibition? Does it mean that those who oppose should extend fellowship to those who use instruments in worship? Are we making too much of the issue in the eyes of those who write such meaningless and misleading statements?

If by absence of specific prohibition one implies that the Bible does not state in precise words, "Thou shalt not use a man made-musical instrument in divine worship," the statement has some validity. But when such logic (?) is used the list grows endless of things not thus prohibited. Counting beads and

reciting the rosary are not thus specifically condemned; nor are we specifically forbidden to pray to Mary. Does this imply that such is either not so bad, or that we may join in fellowship with those bowing before Peter's statue?

The Bible does not specifically prohibit the sprinkling of babies as a substitute for New Testament baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:35-37). Is the error of such a practice minimized or excused on such grounds? Was God too harsh in his judgment of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-2)? Did God SPECIFICALLY prohibit Moses from smiting the rock at Kadesh? (Numbers 20:11-12)? Was Noah specifically forbidden to construct an ark of OAK wood (Genesis 6:14)? Where did God SPECIFICALLY prohibit the appointment of a priest from Judah under the law of Moses (Hebrews 7:14)? Do not these questions and examples underscore the absolute folly and emptiness of such an observation regarding the employment of instrumental music?

The scriptures absolutely teach that sprinkling of babies as a substitute for Bible baptism is forbidden. Nadab and Abihu were not at liberty to offer a "strange" fire before God which he commanded them not. This is why God devoured them in his wrath. Moses failed to sanctify God, as did Aaron, when he did something God had not authorized (Numbers 20:11-12). Had Noah substituted "oak" for the specified "gopher" wood, his actions would have found him in absolute disobedience. The inspired writer explains why Jesus could not serve as a priest under the law of Moses when he wrote, "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses SPAKE NOTHING concerning priesthood" (Hebrews 7:14).

God specifically prohibits any addition to or subtraction from, that he has commanded (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:6; II John 9-11; Galatians 1:6-9; I Peter 4:11; Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:13). Regarding the message of the last book addressed to his church, Jesus said, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophesy of the book, if

any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the word 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 that are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18-19).

It is a fearful thing to act out of presumption with God on any matter. It has ever been a principle with God that men should show special heed to his instructions regarding the acts of worship that bring them into his immediate presence (Leviticus 10:1-3; Exodus 19:22; Hebrews 10:19-23; 12:18-29; John 4:24). God will be "sanctified" in them that come nigh unto him (Leviticus 10:3). God's will must be assiduously regarded when we would draw nigh unto him as holy priests (Hebrews 13:15; 10:19-23).

Inasmuch as God has specified the kind of music acceptable in public worship, any music of another "kind" is prohibited. God commands us to sing. It is not a small matter when we assume he will accept our additions and/or substitutes (Genesis 4:1-7). God has no more authorized us to play an instrument in worship, than he authorized Noah to build an ark of OAK, or Nadab or Abihu to offer a fire he had NOT commanded. To play upon an instrument, therefore, is to do that which God has forbidden in that it constitutes an addition to that which he commanded.

In all things, whether we consider them weighty or light, we must be careful to follow the will of the Christ who is our head (Colossians 1:18; 3:16-17). His will is revealed in his word. We are seriously remiss in our duty when we fail to studiously deduce his desire concerning the worship we are to render him.

It has become obvious, to the present generation of those who identify themselves as "Conservatives" within the Christian Church, that the instrument cannot be shown to have authorization in the New Testament. Their

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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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

An Open Letter To A Brother Overtaken In A Fault

Dear brother ———,
I was, and am, shocked and grieved at your apostasy -- but hasten to remind you that God and Christ love you. I, along with your numerous faithful brethren everywhere, also love you. Personally, I want to go to heaven --and I want you to go to heaven with me!



FLAVIL NICHOLS

Furthermore, your deviation from the practice of the TRUTH does not nullify one iota a single TRUTH which you previously have taught.

In God and his word I trust you still have FAITH sufficient to motivate you to truly repent [if already you have not done so]. Just as baptism as an outward 'formality' [without genuine FAITH] will not save the alien sinner, so a mere 'formal' confession will not restore an erring brother. If it has not already done so, I pray that your FAITH will motivate you at once to sincere repentance and restoration. Without FAITH no man can please God (Hebrews 11:6); but with it we can OVERCOME (I John 5:4)!

You well know the scriptures which give us assurance of pardon! Salvation is GUARANTEED by the blood of Jesus Christ (I John 1:7-10)! Doubtless you recall Proverbs 28:13: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." My prayer is that you already have abandoned the sin in which you were overtaken. --If not, I entreat you to do so at once!

Our loving Father is "rich in mercy" (Ephesians 2:4). Our only hope hinges on "the great love wherewith he loved us." When one has been overtaken in a fault, after he repents and prays for pardon his soul is cleansed by the blood of Christ (I John 1:7-10). One who has been restored is as pure as when he was baptized into Christ!

Brother, it grieves me to hear rumors that you perhaps have even "quit the church!" If this be true, I plead with you to reconsider this matter!!! As one brother to another -- as a dying man to his fellow dying brother and friend! --I beg you to come back "home" to the loving Father's eager welcome and to the sincere welcome from your many faithful brothers and sisters.

Upon your repentance, confession, and prayer, not only does God forgive you, brother, but your faithful brethren in Christ forgive you also. We do this, not for YOUR

salvation, but for OURS!!! You can go to heaven whether we forgive you, or not --but WE can't! Jesus makes this plain: "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:15).

There may be consequences which no amount of repentance and prayer --no matter how SINCERE you are!-- will erase. Solomon wrote long ago that one who lies with his neighbor's wife is 'playing with fire' (Proverbs 6:27-29). He added: "A wound and dishonor shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away" (verse 33).

But I want to reiterate that your GUILT can be remitted by the blood of Jesus. You can be restored to the favor of God and to fellowship with all saints IF your faith will lead [or, has led] to your repentance, confession and prayer. The Holy Spirit said that some at Corinth "were" --past tense!-- adulterers, etc., but now they "are" --present tense!-- "washed, . . . sanctified, . . . justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:9-11).

To me it seems apparent that those in leadership roles must MERIT, or EARN, the respect of their brethren --but NOT THEIR FORGIVENESS! Of those who would be deacons, the Holy Spirit directed: "Let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless" (I Timothy 3:10).

Upon God's forgiveness, I trust you will [or, have] set about at once to rebuild the confidence in you which so many of us shared.

You cannot erase the past --even the forgiven events; but having obtained PARDON, you can forget the past, and press on toward the goal in Christ! Saul of Tarsus did not spend the rest of his life grieving over how foolish he had been. Instead, he obtained forgiveness by the blood of Christ (Acts 22:16), then pressed on to great accomplishments (Philippians 3:13-14). So can YOU!!!

I repeat that I love you, and I want you to go to heaven with me. My daily prayer is that you will be saved. If you have not already done so, please "Come back home, Brother!"

May none of us be unforgiving, like the prodigal's 'elder brother!' Give all of us an opportunity to show our love for you!

Be assured of our earnest prayers for you. If ever I can be of assistance, please call on me freely.

A loving brother in Christ,
Flavil H. Nichols, Editor
Words Of Truth

Faithfulness

A fable tells of Satan's garage sale. He had some of his tools displayed. Someone picked up one and asked the devil how much he wanted for it. "Oh no," he said, "That is not for sale. It is one of my favorites, and one I use often." When asked what this tool was, the devil replied, "Discouragement."

This story is imaginary, but it does illustrate the source of discouragement. We all have been discouraged, and have been hindered from doing what we know should be done.

Discouragement often comes from a feeling of failure and inadequacy. Who has not identified with Elijah who said, "I have been very zealous." "The Israelites have rejected your covenant." "I am the only one left." (II Kings 19:10).

Yet, who sets your standard for success. Too often the church has flirted with the world, and has adopted its standards. We may have come to judge the "church" by organization charts set up by businesses. Our preachers may be expected to be more like Dale Carnegie than John the Baptist!

We would do well to remember that the Lord's standard for success is not productivity, but faithfulness (Matthew 25:14-29). This parable teaches that the Lord would have been just as pleased with a servant who faithfully used one talent, as with the one who used five and doubled them! Paul did not place his hope for a crown on whom he had converted, nor how many sermons he preached. It was on his good fight for the faith.

Continued on page 3



Ancil Jenkins

"His Hour!"

Oh, to have been present in that upper room 2,000 years past and to have beheld all that those twelve witnessed! It pricks the mind to simply consider that night, as we look at it through the inspired text.

Jesus told Philip and Andrew, "The hour is come that the son of man should be glorified" (John 12:23). What a power-packed statement! It reveals so very much to man. Here is that hour, here is the time that

all time has been waiting for. Here is the moment that all the prophecies rest upon. Here is the act upon which we build our faith. Oh, to have heard it and know all we know now! It unveils at least three great truths about our Lord.

First, it tells us for certain of Jesus deity. He knew he was God's Son. He knew it was for this purpose that he had come into the world. On at least two occasions prior to this meeting, people had tried to take the Messiah, but they could not. "For his hour had not yet come" (John 7:30; 8:20). Now it is time -- and he knows it. Yes, he knows it; and that very fact adds to our assurance that he is "God with us"! Even the very speech-patterns of the Christ tell us something is about to happen. Notice, "... unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it . . . Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father glorify your name . . . And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to myself . . . A little while longer the light is with you . . . Now the son of man is glorified, and God is glorified in him . . . Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer . . . By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another . . . Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you shall follow me afterward . . . I go to prepare a place for you . . ." (John 12:23-24, 25, 27, 32, 35: 13:31, 35, 36; 14:2-NKJV). And we could go on and on with the beautiful meaningful "passion passages." The fact is, Jesus knew who he is. Chapter 13 begins with two statements that further bear this out, "... when Jesus knew that his hour had come that he should depart from this world to the Father . . ." and "Jesus, knowing that the Father had



Dale Jenkins

given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God, and was going to God . . ." (vss. 1 & 3). Our faith should be strengthened because he knew who he is, yet he went to the cross anyway!

Also, we marvel, second, at our Lord's determination. He knew the hour was come, and could have easily stopped the hour from coming; yet he went to the cross anyway. We see the determined Messiah, ready to face his own unjust death! Ample opportunity was given for our Lord to call the whole thing off. The upper room could have become his military headquarters; and the twelve, his captains. His words in that upper room could have been the commands of a crusading captain instead of those of a reassuring Lord. The garden could have been his turning point from the cross of Calvary to the earthly throne of David. He could have prayed God's aid in a military conquest instead of "not my will, but thine be done." Instead of replacing Malchus' ear (John 18:10), the swipe of Peter sword could have served as the first blow in a physical revolution. At the taunting cries of "he saved others, himself he cannot save" (Matthew 27:42), he still could have turned that hill into a hole! But,

no! Our Lord knew "his hour" had come! And with determination he pressed onward -- through the painful throes of denial, through the blood-like sweat of Gethsemane (John 18:1-12), and through the mock-filled air of Calvary!

Third: All this brings us to our final embodiment of his statement. In it we see Jesus' devotion. Jesus knew therefore he must go forward. He knew there is no other means of sinful man's salvation (Acts 4:12). He knew this was the moment all of time pointed to (Ephesians 3:8-12). And he knew that if the cross could not move man, nothing can. I suggest that he did in fact start a revolution, but it was a spiritual one. That he did become the military captain (Hebrews 12:1-2) of a band of "soldiers" who war not against principalities and powers, but of spiritual revolutionists whose battle cry is "Salvation," whose mission is to conquer the earth for their Royal King, whose territory is a land much fairer than this one, and whose dream is eternal.

Oh, to have been there and seen our Lord meet "his hour!" But there is a greater thought still: Has our hour come?

—Hamilton Crossroads Church, Hwy. 231 S, Brundidge, AL 36010.

A Sad Time: When God Laughs

"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh . . ." (Psalm 2:4).

Four times God is pictured in the Bible as the laughing God. Ordinarily we do not think of God as laughing. We associate laughter with trivial, foolish, silly things. Since we cannot think of God as being frivolous, silly, or trivial, we cannot associate laughter with God. But the Bible does picture God as laughing. In every instance where God is pictured as the laughing God, the context shows that it was a sad time in the history of the world.

God laughs at the futility of his enemies. "Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.



Levi Sides

He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision" (Psalms 2:1-4).

God laughs because he can see the end of his enemies. "The Lord shall laugh at him, for he seeth that his day is coming" (Psalms 37:13).

God laughs because of the security of his cause. "But thou, O Lord, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision" (Psalms 59:8).

God laughs because his cause is victorious. "But ye have set at naught all my counsel, and 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" (Proverbs 1:25-27).

What is it that would motivate God to laugh at man? He does not laugh because he hates man. He loves man (John 3:16). He does not laugh because he rejoices in man's impenitence. "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).

When an individual tramples the law of God beneath his feet and dies in that condition, then this book pictures God as laughing at that individual. Will you not obey his word so that God will not laugh at you, but will welcome you into eternal rest (Revelation 22:14)?

—School of Biblical Studies, Faulkner University, Montgomery, AL.

Faithfulness

Continued from page 2

and his finishing the course (II Timothy 4:7-8).

Which of these preachers would you rather have in your pulpit? One has been tremendously "successful," yet has what some call a "sorry, rotten" attitude. The other has been faithful and righteous, yet his converts have been few. Be careful which you choose. Would some prefer the one judged "successful" by the world's standards. We know both preachers. The first was Jonah and the second, Noah. With only seven converts in his career,

Noah is still called a "preacher of righteousness" (II Peter 2:5).

Discouragement is an attitude. It is something we choose, not something thrust on us by circumstances. Blame others if we will, we are still responsible for our attitude. A greater concern for pleasing the Lord, and much less concern for pleasing others, may help us develop the proper attitude toward discouragement.

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

*"We flatter those we scarcely know;
We please the fleeting guest;
Yet oft we deal a thoughtless blow
To those we love the best."*

The Dreadful Sin Of Envy

Weldon Langfield

The sin of "envy" has been around almost as long as the human race. In I John 3:12 we read, "Cain was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous." Here the first murder is discussed, and "envy" is what motivated it. "Envy" is one of the most despised sins of the Bible. In Galatians 5, for example, it is listed as a "work of the flesh" (v. 21). God has always considered "envy" to be a terrible sin.

What is a biblical definition of "envy?" W. E. Vine defines the Greek word, "PHTHONOS" as, "The feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing, or hearing of, the advantage or prosperity of others." (Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 37). It is similar in meaning to the word ordinarily rendered "jealousy," and is in complete contrast with the spirit of "love" to be possessed by every Christian. "Love" not only knows dismay over the good of others, but to the contrary, LOVE "rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (I Corinthians 13:6-7). "Envy" has been described as the "least-confessed sin," -- and this may be true. When one envies another, he is, in essence, admitting that the object of his "envy" is in some way better off than he himself is. This is perhaps why "envy" is also described as "the loser's emotion." A jealous person usually senses his own inadequacy and lack of accomplishment. The godless Philistines envied Isaac because of his superior blessings (Genesis 26:12-14), yet Isaac didn't "envy" them. The chief priests and elders of Judea, who saw their popularity eroding as their former admirers began to follow Christ, were "filled with envy" (Matthew 27:18). Christ, however, did not envy them. Few are willing to admit to the sin of envy: it is tantamount to admitting failure or inferiority in the area in which they are envious.

One of the saddest phrases in the vocabulary of the Lord's people is "preacher jealousy." It is not new, however. Paul wrote over 1900 years ago, "Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife" (Philippians 1:15). While the gospel can be preached for the wrong reasons, far more will always be accomplished by pure motivations than by sinful ones. Undoubtedly much of the sin, false teaching, and division that have plagued the Lord's church throughout the centuries has had its roots in envy. Preachers may envy elders because of their authority. Elders may envy preachers because of their influence. Older saints may sometimes envy younger ones because of their youth. There may be jealousy over material blessings or talent.

We must constantly be searching our hearts and examining our own deepest motives. Paul wrote, "Try your own selves, whether ye are in the faith" (II Corinthians 13:5).

On the positive side, an author once asserted, "I'm glad I'm not the best personal evangelist in the brotherhood. If I were the best, we'd be in bad shape." His point was clear: if he set the "high-water mark" for skill in evangelism, the mark wouldn't be very high. What a wonderful attitude! If we could learn to say, "I'm glad I'm not the best speaker, teacher, most athletic, wealthiest, prettiest," etc., how much we would grow, and how much strife would be eliminated from the Lord's church!

Just as God placed within the kingdom all the miraculous gifts he desired to aid early Christians with their development (I Corinthians 12:18), so the talents and opportunities necessary to the on-going of the truth have been placed in the church today.

Each of us has a vital role in the Lord's body. To the extent that we can rejoice in what we have been given and do our best with it, productivity, spirituality and a sense of satisfaction await.

—2913 Brock Way, Bakersfield, CA 93306.

An Especially Bad Habit

One man observed, "About the only exercise people get nowadays is running down their friends, side-stepping their responsibilities, pushing their luck and jumping to conclusions." That is being a little too hard on the human race; but in the case of some it obviously is true. The matter of jumping to conclusions -- about people, and things, and what we hear -- is an especially bad habit for anyone to fall into.



Charles Cook

I saw a cartoon where the coach said to his basketball team: "Well, men, here we are: . . . so far a perfect record . . . no games lost . . . in fact, never scored on . . . a perfect record!" -- and about to play our first game." Too often we are in the habit of jumping to a conclusion before we get all the facts.

A man was sitting at his window one evening and casually said to his wife: "There goes that woman Billy Smith is so terribly in love with!" Running from the kitchen, his wife dropped a plate, and knocked over a lamp, making her way to the window. "Where, where?" she cried. "There," he said, "that woman in the blue dress." "You idiot," she snapped, "that's his wife!" "Of course it is," he smiled! Too many of us are like this man's wife: we assume the worst, and are all too ready to jump to conclusions, before we get all the facts.

When we hear stories and rumors about one another, and automatically jump to the conclusion that whatever we have heard is true, are we really displaying a Christ-like spirit? Paul taught, "Be ye kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God also in Christ hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32). Would not Paul's admonition be a good discipline exercise for every one of us to follow? The very next time you hear some "juicy" information that instantly

appeals to your lower nature, take control of your thinking processes: take a deep breath . . . think it through . . . and believe the best, until you are forced to believe the worst! Put this into practice right now!

A man was driving his new vehicle up a curving mountain road. Suddenly a woman driver screeched from around the curve in the opposite direction. As she came past his pick-up she put her head out and screamed "PIG!" Angered by that, he screamed back: "BIG FAT COW." As he rounded the curve, he demolished his new pick-up in a collision with the largest pig you ever saw standing right in the middle of the road.

Don't Get In The Habit Of Jumping To Conclusions!

—P.O. Box 803, Kailua-Kona, Hawaii 96745.

WHO IS TO BLAME?

We read in the papers and hear on the air
Of killing and stealing and crime everywhere.
We sigh, and we say as we notice the trend,
"This young generation - where will it end?"
How can we be sure it's their fault alone?
Do they ask for bread and are given a stone?
Are we less guilty who place in their way
Too many things that lead them astray?
Too much money, too much idle time,
Too many movies of passion and crime,
Too many books not fit to be read,
Too much evil in what they hear said,
Too many parents who won't stay at home.
Kids don't make the movies; they don't write
the books.
They don't make the liquor; they don't run the
bars.
They don't make the laws, and they don't
make the cars.
They don't peddle the drugs that muddle the
brain.
That's all done by older folks greedy for gain.
Delinquent teen-agers, oh, how we condemn!
The sins of the nation - we blame on them.
By the laws of the blameless, the Saviour made
known,
Who is there among them to cast the first
stone?
For in so many cases it's sad and it's true;
The title "delinquent" fits older folks, too.

— Denise Haire

Via The Crossroads Bulletin

"Not Specifically Prohibited"

Continued From Page 1

determination to employ it, nonetheless, has driven their leaders to affirm that there are no guidelines whatsoever for worship within the New Testament. To them it is not possible that anyone may worship unscripturally, as to them there are no instructions given at all. To observe the extreme to which one is driven in an effort to "justify" (?) the instrument, should serve as an unforgettable warning to

all who would seek to follow their folly. God's will regarding worship has not changed simply because men among us have changed their 'views.' TRUTH does not fluctuate to accommodate the whims of mere mortals. May God help us to refrain from doing that he has not authorized us to do (Ephesians 4:14).

—563 McGukin Rd., Bremen, GA 30110.



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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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How To Make The Church Strong

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (Ephesians 6:10).

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all things be done with charity" or "love," A.S.V. (I Corinthians 16:13-14).

Thus, the Ephesian and Corinthian brethren were exhorted to be strong, "... be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."



W. A. Holley

When we urge the "church" to be strong, we have no reference to denominationalism, Protestant or Catholic. One reads in vain looking for any instruction addressed to either protestantism or Catholicism, *per se*.

One can read in the Bible of that church or kingdom which Jesus Christ established (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 41, 47); but where does the Bible mention the Baptist church, or the Methodist, or the Roman Catholic church, et al.? We do not wish to be offensive; but we must not be derelict in our duty to present the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as these lines are written (John 8:30-32; 17:17). "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" wrote the great apostle Paul (Galatians 4:16).

But, how can we make the Lord's church strong? We shall offer the following suggestions:

(1) Let all members of the church work for 100 percent attendance for all services: Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, and all services of any gospel meeting. Hebrews 10:25 urges church members not to forsake the Lord's assembly. The "whole church" should assemble together (I Corinthians 14:23). The day of assembly for specified worship is the first day of the week (Acts 20:7).

The easiest way to kill any church is to stay

away. When members refuse to assemble together, the church dies. Atrocious sins such as murder, adultery, or fornication can help destroy the church in any given location; but these are not the only sins that can close the doors. Verily, 'good' people can be instrumental in stopping the church in its tracks by just staying at home, or going elsewhere! There can be no church of Christ in any community unless it assembles! -- If you want the church to cease to exist, just stay at home!!

(2) A strong church must have the proper food and the proper exercise. The food is the word of God; the exercise is putting into practice those divine duties bound upon us as God's children (Matthew 4:4; I Peter 2:1-2; Hebrews 5:11-14).

We should make certain that we are free from all spiritual diseases. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (I Corinthians 11:23-30). False teachers and false doctrines can have no place in a strong church (I John 4:1-4; II John 9-11; I Timothy 4:1-5). We urge each member of the church to become a student of God's word (II Timothy 2:15; I Timothy 4:13-16). Memorize the scripture; you will need it in an hour of trial.

(3) No church can prosper without money. Many of our members do not appreciate sermons on the duty of giving; but they should. God has commanded it. Are we going to allow a few dollars to keep us out of heaven? Do we not know that the church has bills which must be paid? Where does the money come from, if not from our church members? How much should a Christian give? We shall answer according to scripture. We must give according to our ability (Acts 11:29). To put it another way, we must give as we have been prospered (I Corinthians 16:1-2). Again, we must give as we have purposed in our hearts (II Corinthians 9:6-7).

If each member gives as the Lord has commanded, we will have ample money to do what the Lord wants done. One hundred percent of our members giving as the gospel of Christ teaches will get the job done.

(4) Nothing can win more friends for Christ and the church than a real demonstration of

true Christian living. Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:13-16). True Christian living dispels, through a holy example, spiteful ignorance and prejudice, and recommends life's finest course. The apostle Paul, wrote: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. . . ." (Titus 2:11-12). Those who mislive Christianity bring shame upon themselves and the Lord's church (James 1:26-27; 4:4).

(5) If you wish to help make the church strong, assume your responsibility for its success. There is plenty of work for all (John 9:4; Philippians 2:12). Lead singing, teach a class, attend each service, give your moral support to the elders, the deacons, the preacher, to each member.

(6) Let there be no division among members of the church (I Corinthians 1:10-17). Always follow after those things that make for peace (Romans 16:17-18; Philippians 1:27). With no discord, no fussing; rather, help answer Jesus' prayer for unity (John 17:20-23).

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Stranger Than Fiction

It's very strange that rain on Sunday
Seems so much wetter than on Monday;
And our weekday pains that we ignore
On Sundays seem to hurt much more,
Till we decide to stay in bed
When we should go to church instead.

— Selected



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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Galatians: Chapter 6

Verse 1. The man described here has not intentionally sinned, but is surprised to find himself in its snare. All the "spiritual" (Thayer says, those who are "filled with and governed by the Spirit of God") are to seek to bring the brother back to his rightful place. McGarvey says the word "restore" carries a surgical connotation. Such restoration



Gary C. Hampton

should be attempted in the complete realization that the brother could also fall into a snare of sin (I Corinthians 10:12). Thus, a holier-than-thou attitude would be out of place.

Verse 2. In this verse, the word for "burdens" would indicate Paul is talking about sorrow for sin. Some just cannot forgive themselves, and need help to overcome the sorrow (John 13:34; I John 3:23). Generally, Christ's law can be summed up as the law of love, for it thinks of others above, or at least as equal to, self (Matthew 7:12; 22:39; John 15:12).

Verse 3. As we have already noted, all of us are subject to error and should not take the superior attitude when we are not better than others.

Verse 4. Instead of comparing our lives with those of other men with similar weaknesses, we should test ourselves against the perfect standard of God's word (II Timothy 4:1-2). This will keep one from being happy because of another's weaknesses, and will force him to strive for better service to find joy in his own manner of life.

Verse 5. Instead of sorrows (as in verse 2), the word "burden" here is one describing

Continued on page 3

The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

The Thief On The Cross

(No. 1)

The sinless suffering Savior of sinners was crucified between two thieves! We read: "There were also two other malefactors," [R.S.V.: "criminals"] "led with him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left" (Luke 23:32-33). Without specifying the nature of their crimes, John (19:18) states that they crucified "two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst." However, both Matthew (27:38) and Mark (15:27) tell us that they were "two thieves" [R.S.V.: "robbers"]. This fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy (Isaiah 53:9) that when he died he would be "with the wicked."



FLAVIL NICHOLS

Both of them "railed" on Jesus at first. The passerby, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders (Matthew 27:39-43) ridiculed Jesus, and "the thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth" (verse 44). "They that were crucified with him reviled him" (Mark 15:32). Luke (23:35) informs us that the rulers joined in the derision, and that the soldiers mocked him (verses 36-37).

"The beloved physician" (Colossians 4:14) then narrates that "one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? and we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss" (Luke 23:39-41). At first both thieves, and then only one of them, jeered at Jesus. Hence one of them evidently repented.

This penitent thief confessed his guilt and that of the other thief, acknowledging that their punishment was "the due reward of (their) deeds." But he attributed to Jesus no wrong, implying that any person who fears God should respect Jesus, who "hath done nothing amiss."

"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:42-43).

Many religious people imagine that this 'proves' that baptism is not necessary for salvation. In syllogistic form their argument

runs as follows:

Major Premise: Jesus promised salvation to this penitent thief.

Minor Premise: This thief never had been baptized.

Conclusion: Therefore one can be saved without being baptized.

I am willing to grant the Major Premise. However, I deny that the Minor Premise can be established or sustained. No man on earth can prove it! Look at the following facts:

(1) Of John the Baptist we read: "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins" (Matthew 3:5-6). Mark (1:5) records the same truth in these words: "And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins." Yet another historian speaks of "the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him" (Luke 3:7).

Bear in mind these facts: This thief was crucified in Judea, just outside its capital city, Jerusalem. But John had baptized "Jerusalem," "all the land of Judea," and "all the region round about Jordan" --as we have just seen. Is it not, therefore, even remotely POSSIBLE that this individual had been baptized by John the Baptist? --and that he later became a thief, and thus 'fell from grace'?

(2) Now read John 4:1-2 "... Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples) . . ." How can you (or anyone else) "know" that this particular thief was not one of Jesus' disciples? After all, if he were, he (regretfully) would not be the last disciple who became a thief!

Of course, no one would be so foolish as to suggest that the thief was released from the cross so he could be baptized that day! The soldiers would not allow that! But, I would like to see the color of the man's eyes who thinks he can prove that 'the thief on the cross' previously had not been baptized either by John, or by the disciples of our Lord under the 'Limited Commission' (Matthew 10:5-6). [Next: The Thief Received His Promise Under The Old Covenant].

Righteousness Exalteth
a nation:
But sin is a reproach
to any people.
Proverbs 14:34

Galatians: Chapter 6

Continued from page 2

an individual's responsibility for himself. No one can ease this load for me. I must answer for my actions. This is why we depend on Jesus' blood to set us free from sin.

Verse 6. Coffman sees this as further instruction upon particular aspects of the law of Christ. We help one another when in sorrow over sin, recognize our individual obligation in judgment because of sin, and share the good and necessary things of life with those who warn us of the dangers of sin, by teaching us the word (compare I Timothy 5:17).

Verse 7. In all those matters involved in Christ's law, we should not try to convince ourselves that we can ignore our responsibilities and get away with it. God cannot be outwitted by man; instead, we deceive ourselves. God created the world and set in order its laws, including the law of sowing and reaping, which is universally true.

Verse 8. The law of sowing and reaping also extends to the spiritual realm. If a man indulges in the sins of the flesh (5:19-21), he will reap the eternal destruction that is their fruit (Romans 6:23). If, on the other hand, a man sows the good fruit of the Spirit (5:22-23), he will reap the great spiritual blessing of everlasting life (Matthew 25:31-46).

Verse 9. Christians should not grow tired of sowing the good works of a Spirit-guided life. They should know that, if they do not quit sowing, there will one day be a harvest of the good seed sown. This should encourage us to keep on preaching the gospel, though we may not see visible results (Isaiah 55:10-11). Ultimately, of course this verse refers to the judgment and the great call to enter in (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43). We must not grow tired and stop our efforts, lest we lose that reward.

Verse 10. Because good deeds will one day be rewarded with good, we should avail ourselves of every chance to do good to any man, and should redouble our efforts to do good when a Christian is in need. Notice that this letter is written to "churches;" thus the obligation extends to churches and those individuals who comprise them.

Verse 11. At least two explanations have been offered for this verse. The one most common, in the books this author has read, is that Paul took the pen from the one he dictated to, and at this point began to write a personal ending to this letter in very large letters. Coffman shows the words used here could refer to the whole epistle, instead of the size of letters being used at this point, and would thus have Paul speaking of the large epistle he had written to the Galatians out of concern for their spiritual well-being.

Verse 12. Paul's concern, as expressed in verse 11, was in complete contrast to the Judaizers who desired to persuade people to be circumcized that they might make a great show out of the numbers they had converted. Also, they were ultimately trying to avoid the force of the preaching of Christ's cross and the persecution resulting from such a bold stand.

Verse 13. These false teachers did not try to persuade Gentile Christians to be circumcized out of a great love for the law. In fact, they did not keep the law themselves but sought to impress other Jews with their ability to get great numbers of Gentiles to be circumcized.

Verse 14. Before Paul believed in and obeyed Christ, he (like other Jews) viewed the cross of Christ as the ultimate symbol of God's

rejection of him (Isaiah 53:1-4). After he learned the truth of Jesus' Sonship, Paul saw the cross as the glorious place where God's Son died as an atonement for the sins of mankind (Isaiah 53:5-6). Then, Paul could say it was the world and its selfish, sinful ways he despised (Romans 6:6-12; 8:13; Colossians 3:1-8). Furthermore, the world counted Paul as dead because he had renounced worldly ways and things.

Verse 15. While once Jew and Gentile were enemies, nationality and heritage are no longer matters of importance. All that really matters is being a new creature in Christ so we might be justified and gain an entrance into heaven (II Corinthians 5:17-21).

Verse 16. Paul pronounces the great blessings of peace and mercy upon all those who walk after the spiritual law of Christ and are new creatures in him. McGarvey notes: "The word translated 'and' often means 'even,' and it has that force here, for it was Paul's constant contention that Christians were the true Israel of God, the bona-fide sons of Abraham." The kingdom was taken away from fleshly Israel (Matthew 21:43). Children of flesh are not any longer recognized as the children of God, but the children of promise are (Romans 9:8). The promise is fulfilled in Christ, the seed (Galatians 3:16). We are now children by faith and baptism (Galatians 3:26-29). This text also shows Abraham's seed is composed of neither Jew or Gentile. "Jews" today are those of spiritual, not physical, Israel (Romans 2:28-29). We are God's circumcision who worship in spirit (Philippians 3:3). Christians are a holy nation, the people of God (I Peter 2:9-10).

Verse 17. The Judaizers had troubled Paul by challenging his authority as an apostle, and by perverting the gospel, including Paul's teachings. Slaves were often branded (or marked) so they could easily be identified as the pro-

perty of their owner. Paul bore the marks of persecution for the preaching of Christ, which proved he was a slave of the Lord (II Corinthians 11:23-27). Clearly, he was an apostle, and had taught the true gospel, as these marks proved.

Verse 18. Despite all of the problems dealt with in this book, Paul still calls the Galatians his "brethren." It is interesting to note the blessing here prayed for is upon the spirit of these brethren, and not the flesh. These needed to turn their emphasis away from the flesh, and to the spirit.

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Steps Away From And Back To God

G. F. Raines

When God created Adam and Eve and gave them the beautiful garden in Eden (Genesis 2:15) as their home, he commanded them saying, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (verses 16-17).

But "the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty" (II Corinthians 11:3), saying, "Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4).

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (Genesis 3:6).

"Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Genesis 3:23-24).

The steps away from God were, and always have been, (1) doubt, or unbelief and (2) disobedience. The steps back to God are, and always have been, (1) faith and (2) obedience.

The Book of God says:
"Therefore being justified by faith, we have

peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2).

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:8-9).

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

"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).

"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

—Newton, Miss. 39345.

Moving The Fence

Illustrations cannot be used properly as evidence for a truth. The proper order is: first, allow the truth to be established; and second, then illustrate it. To the extent that the illustration represents the truth it is just as solid as the truth it illustrates and can be defended as readily. Moreover, the truth can be defended by defending the illustration.



Roger Jackson

One of the more prominent illustrations in common vogue is that of the priest who refused a couple of soldiers the right to bury their fatally wounded friend in his Catholic cemetery. They buried him instead just outside the fence around the cemetery. The next morning they came to view the spot and could not find it outside the fence. When the priest was questioned about the matter he said that he had spent half of the night worrying about his refusal, and the other half moving the fence. It is an emotional illustration designed to teach that we should enlarge the doctrinal boundaries of the word so as not to exclude honest men in error.

The first thing wrong with the illustration is that the priest was the authority regarding his fence, while God is the authority regarding the fences erected by the word (II Timothy 3:16-17; II John 9-11). When God places a fence in a certain location he means for it to remain there (Proverbs 22:28). Legalism seeks to move the fence inward, and exclude more than God excludes. Liberalism seeks to move the fence outward, and include more than God includes. It simply is not true that the fences which exist between the church of Christ and the denominations are mostly erected because of our opinions and traditions! And no man can prove otherwise. They exist because God put them there, and their limits are clearly delineated (John 8:32; 17:17; I John 2:3). The charge to the contrary is much easier to make than it is to prove. Those who make it, choose the "hit-and-run" tactic, that being the safer course. He who makes the charge and can sustain it is my friend, not my enemy. If it is true then, Come now and let us reason together . . . (Isaiah 1:18).

The second thing wrong with the illustration is that it proves too much. The inclusion of a dead person in a cemetery does not affect the condition of others in that cemetery. Dead men do not have fellowship; but living men do. The Bible warns in at least two places explicitly that bad men corrupt other men by their influence (I Corinthians 5:6; 15:33). One can bury anything or anybody in a cemetery and it makes no difference, except with regard to respect for the dead; but the church needs "gold, silver, and precious stones" in it (I Corinthians 3:12). The impenitent cannot enter the kingdom (John 3:5; I Corinthians 6:9-11). Excluding them is not hypocritical or arrogant unless God is guilty of those sins, for he is the one who excluded them.

The third thing wrong with the illustration is that the actions of the priest were insufficient. The soldiers did not want the fence moved; they wanted it eliminated. This is what the

illustration is intended to do anyway. Once the fence had been moved for one soldier, the same attitude would necessitate its being removed for any and all other aspirants. In such cases the fence loses its significance altogether. Why build a fence at all if it can be moved with impunity? Why even try to have a cemetery at all? Moving the fence once, lets down the flood-gate. God's fence around the church must stay intact (Acts 2:38, 47; John 3:3-5).

The fourth thing wrong with the illustration is that it recognizes no distinction between those who are in the cemetery and the man to be buried there. True, in life men are equal and

that is why the emotional appeal of the illustration is so great. However, spiritually this is not true, since those who obey the Lord are saved, while those who do not obey are not saved (Hebrews 5:8-9; Romans 6:17-18). It is not a matter of showing that one person is "just as good as" anybody else; it is a matter of whether or not he is saved by the blood of Christ through the gospel (Romans 1:16; 6:3-4).

Therefore, it is not true that we may set aside, or move, God's exclusions and restrictions, as the illustration intends to convey.

—940 Old Wood Rd., Oxford, AL 36203.

The Missing Body

"And they entered in and found not the body of the Lord Jesus" (Luke 24:3).

Foes, as well as friends of Christianity, agree that Jesus of Nazareth was buried; and, on the third day, the tomb was empty. What became of the body? To this pertinent question, four answers have been given:

1. Some say that Christ did not actually die on the cross, but simply swooned on the cross from the pain and torture. He was believed to be dead by all, both friends and enemies. He was buried; and on the third day he came to life, the stone was miraculously pushed back, and he appeared to his friends, who spread the report that he had risen from the dead.

This theory evades the facts of the record, and the historical customs of the time. He was being crucified by his enemies. According to the custom of the time, a person who was crucified was never taken down from the cross until it was certain that death had occurred. The body was always guarded closely until death took place. Now in the case of Jesus, his side, over his heart was pierced with a spear, forming a hole large enough for a hand to enter (John 20:27). The object of the piercing of his side was to rupture the heart and so cause death -- in case death had not already occurred. But death had already occurred for Jesus, as was proved by the blood and watery fluid which flowed forth.

2. Others say, "The disciples removed the body" (Matthew 28:13). But the disciples were too terrified to do this. Had they tried, their efforts would have been fruitless: they did not have sufficient police force to overcome the Roman soldiers who stood guard around the tomb.

3. Still others say, "The enemies took the body." If the enemies did remove the body, why did they not dispute Peter's language, or produce the body six weeks later when the apostles preached Jesus' resurrection (Acts 2:22-32)? Also, the arrangement of the grave clothes shows that the tomb had not been visited by robbers (John 20:6-7).

4. The angel of God said, "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come see the place



Levi Sides

where the Lord lay" (Matthew 28:6). That he was raised! is the testimony of the apostles and others. In proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus, they were neither deceived, nor were they deceivers.

They were not deceived, for the appearances of Jesus after his resurrection were too numerous. He appeared to certain women as they returned from the sepulchre (Matthew 28:1-10); to Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre (John 20:11-18); to Peter before the evening of the day of the resurrection (Luke 24:34; I Corinthians 15:5); to above five hundred brethren at once (I Corinthians 15:6); and on seven other occasions. Jesus subjected himself after the resurrection to every known test -- the people saw him, talked with him, walked with him, ate with him, and handled him with their hands.

The apostles were not deceivers. They began their preaching at the wrong place to be deceivers -- in the place where the resurrection took place! and where the enemies of Christ and his resurrection were strongest! . . . the city of Jerusalem (Acts 2). Their teaching was opposed to deception. How could deceivers give us such a book as the New Testament? And they were consistent -- they told the same thing under all circumstances. They would not recant for life, liberty or lucre.

Therefore, the Christians sing on this day and every day:

"Up from the grave he arose
With a mighty triumph o'er his foes;
He arose a victor from the dark domain,
And he lives forever, with his saints to reign:
He arose! He arose!
Hallelujah Christ arose!"

—School of Biblical Studies, Faulkner University, Montgomery, Alabama.



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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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He That Despiset The Word

"Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded" (Proverbs 13:13).

Zedekiah and his subjects despised God's holy word and, as a result the Babylonian captivity came upon them (II Chronicles 36:11 ff).

Jesus refers to those faithful servants of God whose righteous blood had been shed, from "righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias," by wicked men who had despised God's word (Matthew 23:29-39). Thus, the Old Testament contains a list of murderers who resisted the word of the Lord. The failure of the Pharisees to learn the lessons of history and to repent of their wickedness, which had characterized their forefathers, makes them equally guilty. Should one wish to live a long and happy life, let him reverence God's word (Proverbs 3:1-4).

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 is one of the finest quotations in the Old Testament: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

Those who despise God's word are certain to be lost. Adam and Eve serve as a wonderful example of this principle (Genesis 3:1-13). As a result of their sin, Adam and Eve were driven from Eden. Nadab and Abihu were destroyed because they "offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not" (Leviticus 10:1-2). The Laodicean church was lost because it was neither hot nor cold, but was lukewarm (Revelation 3:14-22). A lukewarm church nauseates the heart of God!

Denominational preachers despise Mark 16:16, or Acts 2:38, or Romans 6:3-5, because these passages do not agree with their denomi-



W. A. Holley

national doctrines. Such preachers have worked for several hundred years trying to eliminate these verses; but, after all their efforts, the Bible still reads the same way. How much better if they would but believe, obey, and teach these passages!!

Countless thousands despise what the holy scriptures say concerning the Lord's day (Revelation 1:10; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2). Such wish to observe what they call "the sabbath day." Only Jews were required to keep the sabbath (Deuteronomy 5:1-15). The sabbath law ended when Jesus died upon the cross (Colossians 2:14-17). Since that time no one is required to keep the sabbath!!

Others despise the Lord's teaching concerning the church of the New Testament (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-42, 47). In apostolic times those who should be saved were added by the Lord to the church. There was no 'joining' the 'church of one's choice.' The church is important even though thousands assert that it is a non-essential -- that one can be saved out of it as well as in it. Such ideas can never be found in the Holy Bible. (See Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4-6).

But he that fears and obeys the Lord's commandments shall be rewarded abundantly. For example, Enoch walked with God for three hundred years, and God took him (Genesis 5:21-24). How wonderful!! Noah built an ark according to God's specifications, thus saving himself and his family (Genesis 6-8; Hebrews 11:7).

Jesus pronounces a special blessing upon those who obey his commandments: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14). It is in this manner that "we know that we know him" (I John 2:3-4). Being obedient to Jesus Christ is far more than saying, Lord, Lord (Matthew 7:21-23).

In the Great White Throne Judgment, we all shall be judged by his word: "He that rejects me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the words that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last

day" (John 12:48). We therefore shall not be judged by the whims, notions, ideas, creeds, or feelings of men.

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books" (Revelation 20:11-12; Cf. Verse 15). Truly, in the words of a grand old song, "There's a Great Day Coming!" (Hebrews 9:27). Amos exhorts all to prepare to meet God (Amos 4:12) -- and meet him, we will.

Would you like to meet God in peace? How can the sinner stand justified before God? The answer is a very simple one. In I Peter 4:17 a very uncomplicated question is asked: "... What shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?" The answer to this most important question is found in II Thessalonians 1:7-9, which reads, "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

Sadly, some ridicule the idea of "obeying the gospel." Not the apostle Paul, who wrote, "But they have not all obeyed the gospel" (Romans 10:16). The gospel involves facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed, promises to be enjoyed, and threats to be feared (Cf. Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; I Peter 3:20-21).

As strange as it may seem to some, there is no mourners' bench religion taught in the Bible. No sinner ever "prayed through" in the Bible; no one ever "got religion" according to divine truth. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination" (Proverbs 28:9).

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

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Outdoing Each Other In Love

The speaker got my attention. He said, "There is only one fight God allows between Christians." His next words gave me much to think about. "The only fight God allows between Christians is: who loves the other the most." Suddenly his lesson became so clear. We are to strive to outdo each other in showing love. Accepting such a concept could revolutionize the home, the church, and every other relationship a Christian has.

Our first thought may be: "But I can't love like that." Our failure may come because we view "love" as a feeling rather than an action. It is possible for one truly to "love" another and have no feelings. Jesus teaches us "love" is not feelings, but action (Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-30). This concept is also clearly taught in other scriptures.

We are not to seek our own good, but the good of others (I Corinthians 10:24).

We are to seek to please even our weaker brother, and not ourselves (Romans 15:1). We are to honor others above ourselves (Romans 12:10). We are to treat others as we wish to be treated (Matthew 7:12).

Love is presented as the primary motive for our Christian actions. Just a superficial investigation shows our responsibilities. We are to walk in love (Ephesians 5:2). We are to abound in love (I Thessalonians 3:12). We are to bear with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2). We are to be knit together in love



Ancil Jenkins

Continued on page 3

The Editor's Pen



Flavil H. Nichols

The Thief On The Cross

(No. II)

Both Matthew (27:38) and Mark (15:27) tell us that Jesus was crucified between "two thieves," both of whom "railed" on Jesus at first (Mark 15:32). Luke writes that "one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? and we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss" (Luke 23:39-41). This makes it clear that at first both thieves, and then only one of them, jeered at Jesus. Hence one of them evidently repented.

This penitent thief acknowledged that their punishment was "the due reward of (their) deeds." But he stated that Jesus "hath done nothing amiss."

"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:42-43).

Many suppose this illustrates that one can be saved without being baptized. Here is a syllogism of their argument:

1. Major Premise: Jesus promised salvation to this penitent thief.
2. Minor Premise: This thief never had been baptized.
3. Conclusion: Therefore one can be saved without being baptized.

I understand that the Major Premise is true. However, no man on earth can prove the Minor Premise, as we saw last week. While none imagine that he was taken down from the cross, baptized, and then returned to the cross, it is altogether possible that this 'Thief' had been baptized either by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:5-6; Mark 1:5; Luke 3:7), or by Jesus' disciples (John 4:1-2). Therefore the conclusion does not necessarily follow at all.

The Thief Received His Promise Under The Old Covenant.

The notorious 'Thief On The Cross' is no example of conversion for us today -- for the New Testament was not in effect when Jesus promised him: "... today shalt thou be with me in paradise." The Old Covenant was still in force at that time.

Jesus did not terminate, or "take away," the Old Covenant at his birth, nor at his



FLAVIL NICHOLS

baptism, but at his death. The Holy Spirit reveals this: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Colossians 2:14). When his body died, the Old Covenant "died" also. He "abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances. . ." (Ephesians 2:15). Not until "his flesh" died did the law "die." The "enmity" is here identified as "the law of commandments contained in ordinances." But the next verse states that the "enmity" was slain by the cross. Therefore the Old Covenant was yet in effect till Jesus died.

Since Jesus was not yet dead when he made this comforting promise to the dying thief, the Old Testament was still in force when that promise was made to him. Therefore the 'Thief on the Cross' is no example of salvation under the New Testament!

No person's "Last Will and Testament" goes into effect until after his death. But Jesus was not yet dead when he told the 'Thief on the Cross': "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." Therefore Christ's "Will," or the New Testament, was not in force at that time. Consequently the 'Thief on the Cross' is not an example of conversion under the New Testament. Of Jesus it is affirmed that "he is the mediator of the new testament. . . 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 9:15-17).

One who makes a testament --so long as he lives-- may ignore or set aside the terms or conditions of the will. But upon his death, his "will and testament" goes into effect, and the court demands that its terms be respected. Likewise Jesus, during his lifetime, could dispense his blessings upon any conditions he chose --or, upon no conditions at all if he saw fit. But at his death, his will went into effect, and its terms must be respected. In his will he stipulated: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

[Next: The Kind of Faith the 'Thief' Had in Jesus Won't Save Now!]



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Unnamed, But Not Unnoticed

"For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name . . . shall not lose his reward" (Mark 9:41).

In any army hospital ward there were several World War II veterans reminiscing about their many "bouts" with death. One veteran stated, "I owe my life to a medic who treated me under heavy fire. Later that day he was killed in battle. I do not know his name, but I shall never forget him." Many heroes remain anonymous; but their deeds will always be remembered by someone.

Did you know that there are thousands upon thousands of unnamed people in the Bible? Many of them can be called "God's anonymous children." Too often we fix our attention exclusively on the greater characters of the Bible, yet the vast host of the inconspicuous and unnamed has been preserved by the pen of inspiration as being worthy of our meditation. The unknown saints -- unknown, that is, to human fame -- must not be passed by. While full consideration must be given to those God called into the limelight, we dare not ignore others who remain in the shadow of obscurity or anonymity.

The writer of Hebrews depicts a great company of noble believers who were stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword, afflicted, tormented, made to wander in mountains, deserts, in dens, and in caves, had trials of cruel mockings and scouragings, and bonds and imprisonment (Hebrews 11:36-40). We are told nothing else about them and they are simply referred to as "others" (Hebrews 11:37). Yet we can be certain that God knows who they were, and that some day he will honor them for their faith and their loyalty to the Savior.

The widow mentioned in Mark 12:42 was also unidentified by name. She may have hoped that no one would see the two mites she



Levi Sides

dropped into the treasury box, but Jesus noticed her and said to the disciples that she was the most generous of all the people who gave their offerings that day.

God does not measure a gift by the amount of money given; he measures the gift by the amount of money one has left after the gift is made. According to this standard, the widow had given more than all the rest, because she had nothing left on which to live.

Do you feel insignificant and almost worthless because you have not received public recognition, or your name has never appeared in a publication? Do not be discour-

aged! If you love the Lord and are doing your best for him, you can be sure that he takes special notice of your faithful service. Some day you will be rewarded, and he will acknowledge you personally. Though you may be "unnamed" here on earth, you will not go unnoticed in Heaven.

The world may not thank you or notice your walk.

Yea, few here may care when you die:

But Jesus will mark all your labor of love,
And give you his praise by and by.

—School of Biblical Studies, Faulkner University, Montgomery, Alabama.

My Son

When Solomon wrote the book of Proverbs, he stated in the first chapter,

"My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother . . ." (Proverbs 1:8).

Twice more in that chapter, Solomon states "My son." He begins chapters two, three, five, six, and seven with the expression. Solomon wrote these divine words of wisdom to

his son Rehoboam. It is good advice for anyone's son. It is good advice for all of us.

We have two sons. Donald Ray is the oldest. He was born on September 26, in Paris, France when we were there as missionaries in 1962. He was a joy to us. Mark Len came along two years later in Greenville, Mississippi on Friday, November 13th. They both were good babies. They both brought much happiness into our lives as well as the lives of their grandparents. They both were different as any two children are, but that contrast made them very special.

Don never met a stranger. He always had a smile on his face or was laughing. Mark was shy and would not speak to anyone, not even to his Bible class teachers. I remember when he was 5, one of his teachers came to us and excitedly said, "Mark said something in class this morning." Mark took up with an older couple at church, the A. B. Martins, but would not say a word to them until he was in their car, ready to go and spend the day with them. Even when he returned home and exited from their car, he would not tell them good-bye, even though he had been talking "up a storm" while he was in the automobile! Don, on the other hand, never stopped talking to people. All people. He would run here and there before and after church, talking to this one and then that one. In the second grade, he received a low mark for conduct on his report card. He was talking in class when he should not have been. When we talked to the teacher and told her we would put a stop to his talking, she said, "No. I don't want Don any other way. He is a joy to have in class." We never did figure that one out. If he were a joy because he talked out of turn, why give him a poor conduct grade? Oh well, that was a part of growing with our children.

Don obeyed the gospel at the very tender age of ten. He knew what he wanted to do. After



Ray Hawk

he became a Christian he wanted to preach. He got up his short, two or three minute speech with only a little help from his Dad. He delivered it on a Wednesday evening. He stood behind the table because he was too short to deliver his lesson from behind the pulpit lectern. When he turned and faced the audience, he froze. I will always remember those wide eyes. I got him started and he did quite well for a ten-year-old doing something like that for his first time. Stage fright got him forever, and he said he decided he did not want to be a preacher after all. I thought he would probably change his mind later. He was still young.

Mark was twelve when he decided to become a Christian. I had the privilege of immersing both sons into Christ. It was the thrill of my life. That's the reason I try to give Christian fathers the opportunity to immerse their own children, if they desire it and their children want it. The first thrill is being responsible for bringing them into the physical world. The second and greater excitement is bringing them into the family of God (John 3:3, 5).

Because Don was outgoing, he would take religious pamphlets to school with him and give them to his principal and teachers. He was involved with the young people and enjoyed attending church. He read his Bible every day without being told. We had no problem with his studying and having his lesson ready on Sundays and Wednesdays. Mark did too, but Mark was still very bashful. I still have a tape of Mark's first lesson, presented in his Bible class which the teacher used to train the young men. Mark would go on to overcome his shyness and hone his skills as a speaker. Today he works with the Rainbow church in Gadsden, Alabama as associate preacher and youth director.

As both boys passed from grade school into junior high and high school, each changed. Don became reserved whereas Mark became outgoing. As teenagers, neither gave us much trouble. They weren't perfect, but neither were they terrors or always into some trouble at school. One of the little things that caused both to roll their eyes and give out a slight, but audible sigh, was when their Mother would remind them, "Remember who and what you are," as they would leave the house. When Don went off to college and was gone for several weeks at a time, he would tell his Mother he missed her making that statement. Mark would too.

Mark remembered who and what he is. Don didn't. Don, as did the prodigal, went into his "far country" by moving to California in July, 1985. He decided, that since he was not going

Continued on page 4

Outdoing Each Other In Love

Continued from page 2

(Colossians 2:2). We are to work through love (Galatians 5:6). Our labor is to be a labor of love (Hebrews 6:10).

So often we are selfish when we come to love. We think, "If I act like that, how do I know that they will love me the same way?" This is not the purpose of such actions. We are to love with no thought of receiving anything back. "Love seeks not its own. . . ." (I Corinthians 13:5).

Our age is most competitive. We are urged to try to be number one, to reach the top, to seek to be first. This is not wrong, so long as it is a striving to outdo one another in the right thing.

Are you ahead of others in your love?

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

Worship God

In Revelation 22:8-9 John fell down to worship the angel who had been speaking to him. He was forbidden to do so; the angel responded, "See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." The final two words of this section contain a command in the imperative mood.



Roger Jackson

God's creatures are obligated (and privileged) to worship him.

"Worship" is "homage paid to one considered to be divine." The word comes from the Greek PROSKUNEO, which means literally "to kiss toward" (Vine, page 235). "Worship" is not everything we do -- or else the concept of authorized worship would be without significance (Matthew 15:9). If everything we do is worship, the counting of beads and lighting of candles would be worship; there would be no such thing as "forsaking" worship; and there would be no end to the additions to the worship of the Lord's day. The idea that the totality of life is worship fails to recognize the difference between worship and service (Romans 12:1). "Worship" is the union of the human spirit with the divine in order to express our praise and thanksgiving.

All of God's creatures are obligated to worship him. The Father desires that all men worship him (John 4:23). On Mars' Hill Paul

stated that all men must seek after God (worship him) though he is not far from us (Acts 17:25-27). According to Hebrews 1:6 even the angels in heaven worship God and the Son. Revelation 4, 5 and 7 picture a host that no man can number worshipping God in heaven.

In what manner are we obligated to worship God? May we select the means and expressions of our worship? And if we may, where will it end? Some among us falsely imagine that there are no such things as "authorized acts of worship," and there "are no restrictions regarding those acts named" in such places as Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:19; et al. The services, according to this point of view, would be characterized by spontaneity (another word for confusion!) and surprises. Somehow this is to make the worship more "spiritual" in spite of the fact that I Corinthians 14:40 condemns such falacious folly. If we have two songs, a prayer, another song, the Lord's Supper and preaching, we are "tradition bound," according to this concept.

We are obligated to worship God scripturally. There is such a thing as unscriptural worship. Our worship must be directed to God, the proper object. It must not be directed to Mary, the "saints," some creature (Romans 1:25) nor even take the form of a "memorial service" for anyone except Christ (Matthew 26:26-28). The communion is authorized for the Lord's day, i.e., the first day of the week (Acts 20:7), and that is all the authorization we have regarding it as respects the day. Our worship is expressed through (1) singing, (2) giving, (3) communing, (4) praying, and (5) teaching (preaching) (Colossians 3:16; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Acts 20:7; Acts 4:31; I Timothy 3:15). The right motive is extremely important. Many people go away from worship services stating they did not get any-

thing out of it. They have the cart before the horse. One comes to worship to give, not to get. If the worshiper gives his heartfelt praise to God, he will receive a blessing; but the motive must be to give unto God, not what we can get for our deed.

We are obligated to worship God **regularly**. Although our worship is not restricted to the Lord's day (except some expressions like communion) we cannot substitute a "worship in the heart" for the required assembly with the saints (I Corinthians 11:20). When our worship is a joyous expression of praise we will gladly assemble for that purpose as regularly as the opportunity is offered by wise and thoughtful elders (Psalms 122:1; Acts 2:42, 46; I Corinthians 16:1-2).

We are obligated to worship God **REVERENTLY**. The word "reverent" means respectful awe. Talking, jesting, writing, reading and sleeping in our assemblies (especially on the back rows of most congregations) indicates there is little respect for God among too many, and no fear. The disgrace is compounded when it is learned that visitors refuse to return because of this, and others leave because of it. Mothers and fathers need to seat misbehaving children (most in their teens) in front of them to observe their behaviour. It would be an "eye-opener." David spoke of the fear of God in Psalm 89:7, stating, "God is greatly to be feared [revered; R.J.] in the assembly of the saints . . ." Habakkuk said, "The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him" (Habakkuk 2:20). (It is not to be supposed that "temple" here refers to our buildings). In I Corinthians 14:23, 40 decency and order are to characterize our worship services.

We are obligated to worship God **enthusiastically**! I have always been opposed to comparing the Lord's church with a denomination, but I can understand the letdown experienced by a "Pentecostal" sectarian when he visits our services and sees the difference in disposition during our worship. It is true that they are tied to emotionalism and sensationalism; and no one is advocating that we follow their lead. But we can put a smile on our faces, sing out heartily, listen attentively, and stay in the worship in spirit. We need to let people know we **ENJOY** what we are doing, instead of giving the impression we have come to a place of misery for the purpose of suffering for our sins of the past week. In the days of the prophet Amos the people were so engulfed in the love of the world, and how to make another "dollar" (they didn't use dollars!) that they could hardly wait for the Sabbath to end and the feast days to be over so that the restrictions on work these feasts demanded could be lifted. It sounds a lot like some of us who cannot wait for the final "amen" so that we can get back to the ratrace. "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath that we may set forth wheat . . ." (Amos 8:5). Such pew-warmers are only fooling themselves if they think there is no such thing as "vain worship" (Matthew 15:9). To these people, worship has become like the service offered in Malachi's day: "Ye said also, Behold what a weariness is it . . ." (Malachi 1:13a). Jesus spoke of a people who worshipped God but whose heart was far from Him (Matthew 15:8).

May we all seek to worship him scripturally, regularly, reverently and enthusiastically, so that we may avoid this soul-damning error.

—940 Old Wood Rd., Oxford, AL 36203.

My Son

Continued from page 3

to follow the Lord, that we would have nothing in common with him, so he cut off all correspondence and communication. The last time my wife heard his voice was on Mother's Day, 1986. The last letter we had from him, which basically said, "Don't try to find me. Don't call me, I'll call you," was written in June, 1987. He lives somewhere in California.

If you are a Christian parent who has been successful in raising one or more children to faithfully serve the Lord, but have seen another fall away, you know the hurt that gnaws at our hearts. If you are a Christian parent that has tried your best to raise your children, but have seen that child or children fall away into sin, we know how you are hurting. We hurt with you. We know the hurt in the heart of David when he cried out, "My son" (II Samuel 18:33). It wasn't easy to write this. It will not be easy for Mary Nell to read it. However, it is best to be open and talk rather than hold things inside. We should not be afraid to open up and let others help us. We should not be afraid to open up so we can help others who are hurting. The healing hand of God works best when applied through sympathetic brethren.

Why did he fall away? Was there something we could have done differently that would have changed things? Why is one so faithful and the other so unfaithful? Unanswered questions. Plaguing questions. Burning questions. Now we can understand how the prodigal's father hurt. As he looked in the direction he had last seen his son go, hoping

to one day see him return, so we hope each time we go to the mailbox that a letter will be there. Each time the phone rings, we hope he will be calling home, even if it is only to tell us that he is all right. With David, we often ask ourselves and one another, "Is the young man safe?" (II Samuel 18:32).

He made his decision. He certainly is not listening to "the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." He admitted that his lifestyle now is not the way he was brought up. His reason for not staying in contact with us is, according to him, because he knows he isn't living right. What can we do? He is now 25 years old. What can we do? Physically, nothing. What can we do? Pray. That is all we do. We pray the prodigal will return. When he does, joy will flow again. When he does, tears of hurt will turn to tears of joy. When he does, we will kill the fatted calf, even if it is only a T-bone steak. When he does, we will thank God for hearing and answering our prayers and yours.

To our other son, Mark, we expressed our love and appreciation. You are our pride and joy. You have made all of this easier to bear. You are our treasure. You sustain us. You have made us proud, both you and your wonderful wife Amy. We give thanks to God and our Father for you every day. Thank you son. Our son. "My son."

Dad

—1490 Campbell St., Jackson, TN 38301.



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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 32-A

When Spiritual Leaders Stumble

(NO. 1)

"How has this thing with Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart affected ya'll?" A man inquired of me recently. That is a good question. I don't believe the "false doctrines" of either of them. Nor do I believe they have ever represented New Testament Christianity. Really, therefore, it has not affected us any. We should not shake a condemning finger at them too soon, telling our friends. "You see, that is where their groups will lead you." We should first realize that "we" are not immune to this sort of thing. These incidents underscore in my mind how often "spiritual leaders" within our own fellowship have stumbled.



Dale Jenkins

A Christian college administrator's wife's infidelity led to his resignation. A college president's problem with alcohol led to the deaths of two young women. A nationally-known youth minister was guilty of abusing numerous children sexually. A preacher of a large congregation on Mother's Day made a tearful and penitent confession of a drug addiction dating back to his college days, which had of late resurfaced. A talented college Bible-major drives about 100 miles to preach each Sunday, but stops off at a beverage store and buys a six-pack which he consumes on the way back to school. A youth minister commits suicide. One not-so-well-known preacher is addicted to prescription drugs -- he feels he needs them to stay on top with his personality. A deacon has embezzled church funds. A nationally-known preacher moves every two years because he has a "secret" (?) sin, which either the elders find out about, or he feels they will discover it. An elder has a spiritual problem that we all gasp at when it is uncovered. A pretty young

Sunday-school teacher got pregnant out of wedlock. And the heart-breaking list goes on and on!

I ache with these in their struggles, if they are striving to overcome them. Even if they do not, we empathize with their families whose ordered lives were suddenly, shockingly, and surprisingly hurled into disarray.

More than this, though, what about those whose faith is being tested, tried, and shaken -- because one whom they thought "had it all together" was only a charlatan, or (at best) could not finish the race?

This is no ordinary tremor that we can answer by a dignified "Well, you should not have put your faith in a man." For these are those who have stood four-square for the gospel, whom we have esteemed "for their works sake," who have received "honor to whom honor" was due. Rather, this is an earthquake of tragic proportions, where some may begin to wonder if we can ever again trust any "man of God."

Allow me a few thoughts to help those with shaken or shaking faith.

First and foremost, we must put our faith in the constant, "never-let-you-down" word of God! Men, good men, good elders, preachers, or other leaders, come and go; but when their names are washed from the memory of your mind, the scriptures still endure to give us "life" (II Timothy 3:16-17). We have become accustomed to television, where the best "performer" receives an "Oscar." So we begin to rate preachers based on the merit of their "performance" -- in the pulpit, or with our non-Christian friends, or in the community, or within the church. Sad, but true: a man may live a near-spotless life, but if he can't "keep us awake," it is time for him to go. We measure the preacher on a week-to-week "audience response" level. So, should it surprise us that some of our preachers have become simply "performers," "actors?" Actors, as you know, are only acting; it is not real; yet they are at their best when they can make it "look" and "appear" real. Rest assured an illustration will get old. An oft recited poem will lose something in time.

A "worn out" method will become non-effective. But the Holy Bible that man is proclaiming can be trusted -- even if the man cannot be!

Second, realize something which few (if any) of us have ever realized, something that goes against what you have heard all of your life: I can NOT "practice what I preach!" Now, don't throw this idea quickly aside, nor believe for one minute that I am condoning sinful living. But notice closely: David could not! The spiritual fall of the sweet singer of Israel is as famous as his spiritual depth. Paul could not (Romans 7:15-17). Peter could not. Once he submerged Cornelius under the cleansing water of baptism; then later he refused to eat with a Gentile (Acts 10:48, Galatians 2:11). Neither could Abraham. The Father of the faithful was guilty of lying about Sarah to save his own "faithless" skin. Solomon's wise Proverbs on the home amaze us; yet the stupidity of his home-life bewilders us. Noah was once the only righteous soul God could find on the whole earth; later the smell of strong drink was on his breath. We all have feet of clay. I can strive toward perfection, but I have not reached, nor will I reach, it.

Any minister, therefore, has two choices: one, he can soft-pedal sin, not preach against it (since he can't live it), in which case he becomes guilty of not proclaiming the whole counsel of God. Or, two, he can quit preaching -- and in that case, this paper will fold and so will every congregation across our land. Not only that, but every congregation in the first century as well would have ceased to exist.

Finally, we must provide more opportunities to see the good. Contrary to what some may think, not all preachers are "con" men waiting for the bomb to explode, the other shoe to drop, peering around every corner, darting here and there to cover their past (or present). There are hundreds of ministers who love God's divine word, who care deep-

Continued on page 4



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—Acts 26:25

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The Basis Of Happiness

G. F. Raines

Everyone desires happiness, but only a comparatively few people are genuinely happy. The Book of God tells us that the basis of true happiness is unfeigned obedience to the will of God: "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (Isaiah 32:17). "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isaiah 57:20-21).

To work righteousness is to obey God's commandments (Psalm 119:172).

Robert Owen, an infidel from New Lenark, Scotland, admitted that "moral excellence" is the basis of real happiness (Campbell-Owen Debate, page 1).

Robert G. Ingersoll, another atheist, said: "The way to be happy is to make other people happy."

Thomas Paine in his Age of Reason (page 3), said: "I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life. I believe in the equality of man, and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow-creatures happy."

Lloyd C. Lewis says:

"If you search for happiness
In a selfish sort of way,
Thinking only of yourself
And your own work or play,
Happiness will never come to you.

"But if you're always good and kind
To every one you meet,
Helping every way you can,
With head and hands and feet,
Happiness will find its way to you."

The apostle Paul said to the elders of the church at Ephesus: "I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

—Newton, MS 39345.



The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

The Thief On The Cross

(NO. III)

One of the two thieves crucified with Jesus (Matthew 27:38; Mark 15:27) repented, saying, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:42-43).

Some say they want to be saved "like the Thief on the Cross, and he was saved without being baptized." Here is their argument reduced to a syllogism:

1. Major Premise: Jesus promised salvation to this penitent thief.
2. Minor Premise: This thief never had been baptized.
3. Conclusion: Therefore one can be saved without being baptized.

I assume that this thief was saved, hence readily agree with the Major Premise. But it is impossible to prove the Minor Premise.

The man who can prove this has never been born -- and his mother is dead! John had baptized most of the population (Matthew 3:5-6; Mark 1:5; Luke 3:7) in the very region where this Thief was. So, the Thief may have been one of John's disciples who had become unfaithful. Furthermore, after John's imprisonment, "Jesus made and baptized MORE DISCIPLES THAN JOHN" (John 4:1-2), and the Thief may have been included in that number. Hence the assertion that he had not been baptized is simply a bald-faced assumption, incapable of proof. (No one imagines that he was taken down from the cross, baptized, and then returned to the cross!)

Since the Minor Premise is incapable of proof, the Conclusion does not necessarily follow at all.

We saw last week that the Thief received his promise under the Old Covenant. Hence he is no example for us today. The New Testament was not in effect (Hebrews 9:15-17) when Jesus promised " . . . today shalt thou be with me in paradise." The Old Covenant was still in force at that time. Jesus did not establish his will (or testament) while the first one was still in effect, so that it would overlap the old covenant. Instead, we read: "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). Jesus terminated, or took away, the Old Covenant at his death (Colossians 2:14).

Jesus was still alive when he promised a home in paradise to the dying Thief. Therefore the Old Testament was still in force when that promise was made to him. Clearly he is



FLAVIL NICHOLS

no example of salvation under the New Testament!

One's "will" or "testament" becomes effective after his death (Hebrews 9:15-17). But Jesus was not yet dead when he told the "Thief on the Cross:" "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." Therefore Christ's "Will," or the New Testament, was not in force at that time. Hence, the dying Thief is not an example of conversion under the New Testament -- under which we do live.

His Faith Won't Save Us

But now let us note that the kind of faith in Jesus the Thief had will not save people today! Bear in mind that this scene is at the cross of Jesus. Jesus and the two thieves are being put to death, but neither of them is dead yet. Specifically, Christ has not died, for he is talking to the thief. Consequently, he has not been buried, nor has he been raised from the dead at that time.

If the Thief had any faith at all in the RESURRECTION of Christ, it is something which will happen --three days from then! But that kind of faith will not save us today! The Holy Spirit requires us --before we are saved-- to believe "that God hath raised him from the dead!" Hear the scriptures:

"The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:8-9).

--The Thief on the cross did not believe that --for it had not happened yet!!!

So, the kind of faith that dying Thief had in Jesus Christ will not save me --whether he were baptized, or not! He is no example of how I can be saved, for I must BELIEVE something which he did not believe! My salvation is predicated on faith "that God HATH RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD" (Romans 9:10). This had not occurred when Jesus promised him a home in paradise, so it was impossible for him to have believed it! Whether he had previously been baptized, or not, doesn't matter at all today -- for faith in Christ's accomplished RESURRECTION is demanded of us, while it was not of him.

We know for certain that in order for us to be saved, we must believe that God "hath raised" Jesus from the dead (Romans 10:8-9). But the Thief on the cross did NOT believe this --for it had not happened! So, the kind of FAITH he had in Jesus will not save any sinner today!

We must believe in the crucified, buried, and RISEN Lord, in order to be saved! The Holy Spirit makes this clear:

"If . . . thou shalt be saved."

But "if" -- WHAT? Whatever it is, I cannot

Continued on page 3

The Sin Of Negligence

The Hebrews writer raises an important question: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation . . ." (Hebrews 2:1-4)? The entire context should be read.

To neglect salvation is to fail to show concern for it. To do nothing is to sin against God (James 4:17).

Perhaps, more people shall be lost because of their negligence than for any other one sin. Many sinners are heard to say, "I intend to obey the gospel some day, but not now -- I will, before it's too late . . ." For millions, that day never comes (Acts 26:27-29). "Almost persuaded" is not enough!

Some churches of Christ are guilty of NEGLIGENCE. We do not make the foregoing charge lightly. Many churches of Christ fail to preach the gospel (Mark 16:15-16; Romans 1:16). The business of the Lord's church is to edify itself, to aid the poor, and to "preach the gospel to every creature" (Ephesians 3:9-11; 4:12; James 1:27; I Timothy 5:9-16). We humbly suggest that entertainment, by choirs, quartets, and the like, are not (and have never been) a part of the work of the church. Some misled churches are incorporating humming, and hand-clapping, into their services in efforts to improve (?) the worship services. But the Lord's worship-service needs no improving, since the scriptures clearly authorize all necessary items of worship (John 4:24; Acts 2:41-42; Ephesians 5:19; Acts 20:7).

The addition of a piano or organ to the Lord's worship cannot 'improve' the singing. What such additions do is destroy the worship which God ordained (Leviticus 10:1-2). Great efforts in some quarters are being made to bring the Independent Christian Church into fellowship with the churches of Christ at almost any cost, including denominational baptism, et al. We suggest that Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; and I Corinthians 14:15 be closely scrutinized. Such a compromise as suggested would mean that the Christian Church would win (?) every thing, and the true, Biblical church would lose everything (II John 9-11).

Another area where negligence is apparent is our failure to restore the weak, backsliding members (Galatians 6:1-4). In far too many



W. A. Holley

instances the "lambs" have become "goats." According to reports in some areas, there are more backsliders than those who faithfully attend the Lord's services (Hebrews 10:25; II Peter 2:20-22; Revelation 3:14-22). Elders, deacons, preachers, and all other Christians, need to become God's missionaries at home, and should try to reclaim these "lost sheep." How long has it been since concerted efforts toward restoration of these erring members in your congregation have been made??

How long has it been since the church where you worship has given aid to the down-trodden? Often we preach a mighty good religion; but all-too-often, we do very little about helping the distressed. We urge our readers to turn to Deuteronomy 15:7-11, and study these verses. Now, read Romans 15:4, and make proper application. It seems that God has a special love for the poor (Matthew 26:11; John 12:8). Let us seek out those who need help and try to supply their needs.

Negligence, many times, can be observed with regard to the disorderly. Don't we know that a little leaven of the wrong kind, can, if left alone, destroys the whole local church? Is this not the lesson taught in I Corinthians the 5th chapter? The object is to exercise discipline that the offender's soul might be saved (I Corinthians 5:4-5; II Thessalonians 3:6, 10-15). In many churches prominent (both men and women) members are known to be rank sinners, but nothing is ever done about the situation. In the church today we still have our modern Judas', Diotrophes', et al. (See I Timothy 2:19-20; II Timothy 2:16-18; III John 9-11). The ungodly must not be permitted to lead and guide the church of God (Romans 16:17-18; I Tim. 6:3-5).

INDIVIDUAL NEGLIGENCE

Often, we as Christians neglect to spend time

in prayer to God (Colossians 4:2; Romans 12:12; Ephesians 6:18; I Thessalonians 5:17-18). Do you pray only when an emergency arises?

Christian friend, how long has it been since you read your Bible? A week? A month? Years?? Daily Bible reading is the order of the day for faithful Christians (I Timothy 4:12-16; Luke 9:23; II Timothy 2:15).

Many church members neglect the Lord's assembly (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 10:25; Revelation 1:10). Dear friend, how long has it been since you attended the Lord's day services? Have you been at the beach? on the river, or visiting Grandma, when you should have been in the assembly?? One man said that if he had not gone fishing, he still could not have gone to church, because his wife was too ill to leave her alone at home! How ridiculous can one be??

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee . . ." (Hosea 4:6; Daniel 9:13-15). Israel as a nation perished because it did not know God. When the church, God's nation, refuses to be led by God's holy word, it too shall suffer dire consequences (Galatians 16:16; I Peter 2:5, 9). Jesus is our great example; we must, therefore, walk in his steps (I Peter 2:17-21).

Do not permit negligence to hide your talents (Matthew 25:14-30). Visit the sick (James 1:27; Galatians 6:10); keep your heart pure (Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 15:18-20); and bridle your tongue (Matthew 12:36-37; James 3:1-11).

Those who have not become Christians, children of God, must not neglect to obey the gospel of Christ (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; Hebrews 5:8-9).

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

The Thief On The Cross

Continued from page 2

be saved without it!! " . . . IF thou shalt BELIEVE in thine heart that God HATH RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:9). No one can be saved today without faith in the resurrection of Christ -- but the Thief was! So, he is no example of salvation for us today.

[Next we shall note that the Thief lived and died before the great commission of our Lord went into effect].

" . . . And the beauty of old men is the grey head" (Proverbs 20:29).

There is much said about the young people these days. Many programs are planned around them and for them: workshops, camps, social events, etc. In fact, hardly a service goes by that there is not some special attention called to the fact that "the young people are doing this or that." And this is good!

It dawned on me that there is perhaps a segment of church membership that is being overlooked -- the "older" people. Actually, our senior citizens constitute a greater percentage of our population now than ever before.

Growing old is God's plan and is a natural process which should not be feared. To fear old age is like being afraid to look at the view after one has trudged carefully up the rugged mountainside.

Age has been compared to the top of the mountain, while youth is the valley, and adulthood is the mountainside. They view from the



Levi Sides

top is always better and more revealing. To want to remain young would be like limiting our view to only what can be seen in the valley around us.

Many have been the accomplishments of those who had lived the majority of their lifetime. Tennyson at 80 wrote "Crossing The Bar." Cato learned Greek at 80. At 50 Chaucer wrote "The Canterbury Tales." Noah Webster at 70 wrote his monumental dictionary. Observe some examples of "older people" who are still "living," and who are making noble contributions to his church and to society.

God can use the elderly. Our faith is strengthened when we study the lives of God's "older people" like Moses, Joshua, Abraham, and Paul. God can use you too!

God's "older people" are asked to instruct (Titus 2:1-5); to counsel (I Kings 12; Job 12:12); to set the good example (Titus 2:1-8); and to build for the future (Matthew 25:34-46).

The value of an older person's experience and influence is seen especially as he helps to temper the foolish ambitions of younger people. The younger person is to respect (Ephesians 6:2, 3); to support (I Timothy 5:4-16); and to consider the "older people." Too often "older people" get to feeling like they have outgrown their usefulness and are nothing but a burden to their loved ones. Whether an older person is a burden or not de-

Continued On Page 4

Religious Sinners

Christianity is a religion, but not all regions are Christianity. We have but to cite various religions as Hindu, Buddhism, Shinto, Moslem, and varying branches of Catholicism, to indicate that not all religions are the same.

It is possible for one to be religious, yet be religiously wrong. Paul is a perfect example of this principle. "Who was



W. A. Holley

before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (I Timothy 1:13). With the foregoing passage, we shall quote Galatians 1:13-14: "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it; and profitted in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."

Saul of Tarsus had a good conscience while he tried to destroy the Lord's church (Acts 23:1; 24:16; 26:9-11). The Pharisees and Sadducees were very religious, but their religion was characterized by rank hypocrisy (Matthew 6:1-8; 23:1ff). Their religion was vain because it honored the traditions of men (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:6-13).

How can one become a religious sinner? One way is worshiping the true God in the wrong way. Please read Acts 17:16-31. In Athens Paul found an inscription which read, "To The Unknown God. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." The Athenians were not Christians, even though they worshiped. They needed to be taught the truth of God." And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31).

Cain was a religious sinner because he failed to follow God's rule of faith (Genesis 4:1-7; Hebrews 11:4). The Jews of Paul's day were religious sinners because they tried to establish their own righteousness, but refused to submit themselves to God's will and way (Romans 10:1-4). Nadab and Abihu were religious sinners because they offered unto God what he had not commanded (Leviticus 10:1-2).

All who have not obeyed the gospel of Christ are sinners still, no matter how often they may worship. Cornelius, though a praying man and a liberal giver of alms, was a sinner until Peter preached the gospel to him, which instructed him what to do in order to become a child of God (Acts 10:1-3; 11:13-14; 15:7-9).

The Ethiopian Eunuch had traveled a thousand miles to worship (Acts 8:27), but he did not become a Christian until he heard and obeyed God's truth (Acts 8:32-39). Lydia (Acts 16:14-15) was a business woman who had gone out by the riverside to worship, but at that time she was a religious sinner; she became a Christian after she heard the

truth and obeyed it (Hebrews 5:8-9).

Many modern religious people are really religious sinners because they are determined to follow their own way -- not the Lord's way. For example: They are determined to "get religion" rather than do religion as taught in James 1:27. Some wish to join the church of their choice, but the Bible says nothing about joining the church of one's choice (Cf. Acts 2:36-38, 41, 47).

Others wish to "get saved," and then, because they are saved (?), be baptized. But the Bible teaches that Bible baptism is "for," or "unto," or "in order to" remission of sins. The phrase, "for the remission of sins" in both Matthew 26:28 and Acts 2:38, are exactly the same in both English and Greek. We raise the question: Did Jesus Christ shed his precious blood "because" sinners had already been forgiven?? How ridiculous!! Even so, Acts 2:38 teaches that sinners are forgiven in baptism. Be honest, now!!

Others are determined to use mechanical music in the worship, even though no New Testament passages authorizes its use in Christian worship (Ephesians 5:19;

Colossians 3:16). Jesus taught that true worshippers must worship God "in Spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24), but an organ, or piano, or a brass band, in Christian worship, is not in the truth (John 17:17).

Countless thousands of religious sinners are found among those who insist on being saved in answer to prayer. It is not enough to say, "Lord, Lord;" one must "do the will" of the Master (Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46). Jesus did not say, "He that believeth and prayeth shall be saved." Rather, he said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . ." (Mark 16:16). Peter did not say, "Repent and pray . . . for remission of sins." But Peter did say, "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). These two verses cited here do not sound like "mourners' bench" religion, do they?

Dear Readers, do not remain religious sinners any longer; rather hear, believe and obey the truth of God today (I Peter 1:22-25; Revelation 22:14).

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

The Older People

Continued from page 3

pend much on his own outlook on life and his attitude. Age generally does not bring about a change of character. It only solidifies, and magnifies those qualities that have been a part of his life for years.

Don't lose the spirit of adventure, and the desire to learn and grow. Keep a good sense

of humor, and you will make your loved ones and friends rejoice that God has spared you all these years so that they too can be blessed with your life and influence.

—School of Biblical Studies, Faulkner University, Montgomery, Alabama.

When Spiritual Leaders Stumble

Continued From Page 1

ly about the souls of men and women, and who will never shake your faith to its core! We often hear only about the bad; only the tragic makes the wire service; only the ugly comes into focus. Admire the thousands of good people who are trying to live right. Stop the gossip and negativism! Make the time to write some letters like Paul did, and commend God's faithful, God's clay-footed, but diligent servants, your fellow-strugglers. You already know that God's inspired letters to churches were read aloud to those churches. They must have at times beamed with pride, as they deepened the roots of true care for each other. No wonder we read of their thinking and acting as one, as we see the deep common love and bond that held them tight-knit, even through torture and death. No wonder they enjoyed such sweet fellowship (and I'm not re-

fering to a meal each fourth Sunday night)!

Some things must change, even in our pulpits: we are allowed to see Paul only rebuking Corinth, not rejoicing with Macedonians, or the Phillipians, nor John's love for and confidence in his brethren. At times inspiration even singled out those who were 'notable servants.' No, they were not perfect; they were making mistakes; yet, they were singled out and commended. Friend, if we see only the bad, we will become the bad. Let us find outlets to unveil the many grand servants in God's kingdom today, and thereby lift the fallen hands, and spur our hurting brothers and sisters on to heaven by the lost art of encouragement (Hebrews 3:13).

—Hamilton Cross Road Church, Route 2, Box 311-AA, Brundidge, AL 36010.

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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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When Spiritual Leaders Stumble

(NO. II)

In the first article of this brief series we examined and discussed how we should handle it when the spiritual leaders around us stumble and fall. Frequently we are faced with the pressure of seeing those whom we highly respect plummet to the earth. This should not come as too great a surprise, for when we put someone on a pedestal he may fall off it. We are in pain over the fact that the faith of many may be shaken by such cascades.



Dale Jenkins

In this article we will look more directly at elders and ministers, and note some things they need to incorporate into their lives to keep them strong.

First, the leader must be humble. God knows this, for he promises "Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and he will lift you up" (James 4:10). "God resisteth the proud . . ." (James 4:6; I Peter 5:5). Over and over again we see the pitfalls of pride. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18). The church at Corinth, riddled with problems of disunity and strife, seemed to have an inordinate problem with pride. Contrary to what some obviously believe, great preachers are not men who can "bring 'em down the aisle," nor who can move us from laughter one minute to tears the next; but great preachers are men who humbly preach the pure word of God from a heart of conviction, compassion, and concern. Noah was a great preacher, yet he never "filled the front four benches!" Stephen was a great preacher, yet his "jeans" were not "stone washed—" his skin was stone dented! Paul was a great preacher, but I imagine his prison record would scare off most modern "search-committees" with their requirements of a man who will "fit in well with the community." All of these, how-

ever, had in common the mark of humility. We must convert those who love the praises of men more than the praises of God (John 12:43).

Humility is not an easy trait for most preachers to cultivate. We get in a vicious cycle of wanting sermons to be what the listener needs, and we judge its success by comments of members as they leave the building. Please pray for your leaders that they will be humble. If they are upholding God's word, continue to let them know you believe they are doing a great job. They need your support, now more than ever.

Second, he must develop a life of study and prayer. Only God through his divine word can make us strong enough to overcome the pressures that are put upon preachers today. Someone has said that preachers used to be looked up to and respected, and now they must be looked after and inspected. This is not too surprising when women of a mind like Linda Ronstandt say (as it is attributed to her), that it is her desire "to seduce a preacher into bed."

What has happened to us is the same that happens in any sinful situation: we have allowed the "little sins" to creep into our lives, and before we know it we have fallen into grave sin that not only affects our lives, but every life around us. "Little" things, like gossip about elders or members, bad ethics, sheep-stealing, plagiarism, shady money-handling, must be avoided. --I know those things are not "little" things at all; but compared to the sins which they inevitably lead to, they are small.

We are so busy in the lives of others, that we forget our own personal spiritual needs. We are so busy developing sermons, classes, articles, visiting, and on and on -- we miss our own needs. We become so wrapped up in convicting others of the sins in their lives, that we neglect the ones in our own. Brother Gus Nichols used to tell young preachers that life is like a well that must be refilled over and over again. And he taught that this is especially true for preachers, who must constantly be putting out. Our stream for replenishing the well must be the word of God. We must dig deep for our own lives.

Third, avoid situations where you may be tempted. Liquor has never (to this point) been a temptation in my life; so let me illustrate with it. If it were my greatest temptation, I would need to "flee from it," not get into a situation, even if I am trying to help another in which I may be tempted to drink. I should refer that case to a fellow elder, preacher, etc.

Brother, do not counsel women behind closed doors. Refer those cases to older compassionate, experienced women, or at least have one there with you during the counseling. We must ever strive toward perfection. Sometimes this requires us to stay and fight evil; sometimes we must "resist the devil" and cause him to flee (James 4:7); and sometimes we must resist sin by (like Joseph) fleeing from it (I Corinthians 6:18; II Timothy 2:22).

Finally, I suggest that we not think for one minute that we are above the sins that we are hearing so much about among fellow leaders today. God warns, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12). I am weakest when I am strongest. When I begin to believe I can make it, the tendency is to assume that I can make it on my own! We must keep our lives pure (Titus 2:11-13). Contrary to what many believe, God DOES expect more out of preachers than others. He warned: "Be not many teachers, knowing ye shall receive the greater condemnation" (James 3:11). If we fall, we may take hundreds of souls who have followed us as we followed Christ, down with us. We may have been their "Bible." I know that it should not be that way; but it often is. Therefore, I suggest that if you are having temptations in your life which you believe are leading to your fall, get real help! Seek some Christian who can help you! And remember, study, and pray.

Oh, how the church has been hurt by good men whose lives have fallen apart! But today is not much different from the past: for years, spiritual leaders have stumbled. Satan is obviously going to work overtime on those whose lives are affecting others. So Leaders, make doubly sure of your personal humility,

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 26:25

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Related To The Devil

A non-Christian once told brother J. D. Tant. "Although I am not a Christian I am still part of the church. My wife is a member so that makes me a brother-in-law." Brother Tant replied, "If that makes you a brother-in-law to the Lord, it also makes your wife a sister-in-law to the devil!"

This is pretty strong language in an era that delights in toleration and indulgence. Yet, soft words do not change the facts of the relationships of those out of Christ. The teaching of Scripture is clear and direct. Paul mentions some of these facts in Ephesians 2:1-3. He shows the one who is out of Christ is: dead in transgressions and sins; -lives according to the ways of the world and of the devil; --gratifies the cravings of the sinful nature; --follows the desires of the sinful nature; -and is an object of the wrath of God.

Paul also speaks of those who claim to be wise, while being fools (Romans 1:22). They revel in freedom, while being a captive of the devil (II Timothy 2:25-26). Men without Christ think they were wealthy while they are really slaves whose only reward is death (Romans 6:16-23).

We should be saddened that so many are in this condition, and do not know it. Their ignorance however, does not excuse them of responsibility before God (II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Even more tragic are those in this condition, who are fully aware of their fate.



Ancil Jenkins



Flavil H. Nichols

The Thief On The Cross

(NO. IV)

To the penitent Thief crucified with him, Jesus said, "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). A common religious error supposes that this proves (?) one can be saved without baptism. Here is the argument reduced to a syllogism:

1. Major Premise: Jesus promised salvation to this penitent thief.

2. Minor Premise: This thief never had been baptized.

3. Conclusion: Therefore one can be saved without being baptized.

Jesus went to paradise, and promised the Thief would be "with me" in that place. Thus the Major Premise is easily established. But it is impossible to prove the Minor Premise. The man doesn't live who can prove it!

May Have Been Baptized

The Thief was in the very area where vast multitudes were baptized by John (Matthew 3:5-6; Mark 1:5; Luke 3:7). So, the Thief may well have been one of John's disciples who had become unfaithful. Furthermore, after John's imprisonment, "Jesus made and baptized MORE DISCIPLES THAN JOHN" (John 4:1-2), and the Thief may have been included in that number. Hence the Minor Premise is an unproven assumption. He very well may have been baptized prior to his arrest and crucifixion. Therefore to say he had not been baptized is an assertion without proof -- unproved and unprovable! Since the Minor Premise is incapable of proof, the Conclusion is unwarranted.

Not Under New Testament

Christ's "will" or "testament" did not become effective until after he DIED (Hebrews 9:15-17). But he was still alive when he promised the Thief a home in paradise. Therefore Christ's "Will," or the New Testament, was not in force at that time. Truly, that Thief is no example of conversion under the New Testament -- no example for people today.

His Faith Won't Save Us

Last week we noted that the kind of FAITH he had in Jesus will not save a soul today! The Thief could not possibly have believed God already had raised Jesus from the dead, when he had not died yet! If the Thief had any faith at all in the RESURRECTION of Christ, it was something which WILL HAPPEN -- three days from then! But that kind of faith will not save us today! Now, one who wants to be saved MUST believe "that God HATH RAISED him from the dead!" (Romans 10:9). The Thief on the cross could



FLAVIL NICHOLS

not possibly have believed that -- for it had not happened yet!!! So, it matters not if he were baptized or not --for I must BELIEVE something about Jesus Christ that he could not possibly have believed. The kind of faith he had in Jesus won't save me! My salvation is predicated on faith in the accomplished fact of Christ's resurrection --which thing the Thief could not possibly have believed, for it was not then a fact.

At the risk of being monotonous, I repeat: The Thief is no example of how I can be saved, for I must believe something which he did not --and could not! --believe! Whether he previously had been baptized, or not, doesn't matter at all today --for faith in Christ's accomplished RESURRECTION is demanded of us (Romans 10:9), while it was not of him. Hence, the kind of FAITH he had in Jesus will not save any sinner today!

Thief Not Under The Great Commission

The Thief lived and died before the great commission of our Lord was given, hence before it went into effect. After Christ "died for our sins" (I Corinthians 15:1-4), he was "raised for our justification" (Romans 4:25). Not until then did he claim "all power" (A.S.V.: "authority") "is given unto me, in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). He then ordered his apostles to "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in" (A.S.V.: "into") "the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost . . ." (verse 19). The Thief on the cross lived before this command was ever given. He was not under the great commission!

Mark tells about several appearances of Jesus to his disciples after he was raised from the dead. On one such occasion, "He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . ." (Mark 16:15-16). The Thief on the cross lived before this commission was given to them. He never heard this gospel preaching, and was not subject to it. He is no example of conversion today!

Luke tells us about the Thief in chapter 23; but in the NEXT chapter he records the resurrection of Jesus --in which one today must believe in order to be saved (Romans 10:9). Jesus told his apostles, "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-47). Never before had such preaching been done "in his name." Hence, the Thief was not subject to preaching in the "name" of Christ. After his resurrection, Jesus said the great commission would begin "at Jerusalem," which proves it had not previously started or begun with the Thief on the cross! Verily, he was not under the great commission!

Can One Afford Not To Be In Christ

"Salute Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also have been in Christ before me" (Romans 16:7).

Just here it would be profitable for the reader to give special attention to Romans 16:5-16, in order to give the use Paul makes of the expression "in Christ."

To be in Christ, and to be in the world, refers to two different relationships (Ephesians 1:6-7; I John 5:19). If one is in Christ, he is under the power and dominion of Jesus Christ, and is entitled to those blessings which are said to be in him. We quote: "Blessed be the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).

To be in the world, one is under the power and dominion of Satan, and is in danger of being cast into the condemnation of the devil (John 8:44; I John 3:10; I Timothy 3:6).

Hence, we conclude that all responsible persons are either "in Christ," or "out of Christ," for there is no middle ground (Matthew 6:24; Romans 6:16-18). That we may be able to consider candidly our relationship to Christ, or our relationship to the world, we submit the following remarks.

(1) If one does not wish to be eternally lost, one must be in Christ. The apostle Paul wrote, "But now in Christ Jesus, ye that were once far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both" [Jew and Gentile] "one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances;



W. A. Holley

that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace" (Ephesians 2:13-16, ASV). To be out of Christ is to be alienated from Almighty God (Ephesians 2:19).

(2) We must be in Christ, if we are to be a part of God's heritage. Paul wrote of God's determination to "sum up all things in Christ, the things in heaven, and the things upon the earth; in him, I say, in whom also we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will" (Ephesians 1:10-11, ASV). Of what significance is the term heritage? We have but to turn to the writings of Moses for a divine explanation. "Jehovah's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance" (Deuteronomy 32:9, ASV). Hence, those in Christ are God's "heritage," God's children, his possession. Those in Christ, in the church, are his special nation (I Peter 2:5, 9). Jesus adds the saved to his church (Acts 2:36-38, 47).

(3) One must be in Christ in order to establish and maintain contact with the cleansing blood of Christ. Listen to Paul, the apostle: "In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7). According to the scripture, one is brought into contact with the cleansing blood of Christ when one is baptized into Christ and into his "death" where the blood was shed (Romans 6:3-4; John 19:33-34). After baptism, if the Christian keeps on walking in the light, the blood of Christ will keep on cleansing him from sin (I John 1:6-7).

(4) One must be "in Christ" if one is to enjoy the blessings of redemption. "Who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love; in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13-14, ASV). It is evident, therefore, that if one is not in Christ, he is outside that relationship in which "redemption" is found. When one believes,

repents, confesses Christ, and is baptized into Christ, one's sins are forgiven -- and not until then (Galatians 3:26-27).

(5) Unless one is in Christ, one cannot be in that "one body" or church, of which Jesus is the purchaser, builder, head, and Saviour (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23). It is abundantly clear that no one can be "in Christ," and "out of the church" at the same time Acts 2:36-38, 41, 47).

(6) If one is not in Christ, one is not a "new creature." "Wherefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature . . ." (II Corinthians 5:17). Thus, those who have not been "born again" cannot become "new creatures" out of Christ, and are, therefore, without the promise of eternal life (John 3:3, 5).

(7) The scriptures teach that salvation is "in Christ." ". . . I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (II Timothy 2:10). Hence, for one to share the salvation which is in Christ, one must hear, believe, and obey the commands of the Lord. No one can be saved out of Christ.

(8) "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow them" (Revelation 14:13, ASV). One cannot die "in the Lord" if one is not in the Lord. Truly, one cannot die in the state of Alabama if one is not in Alabama. Romans 8:1-4 teaches that there is no condemnation in Christ, if one continues to walk after the Spirit.

We sincerely urge our readers to believe and obey the truth of God so that eternal salvation can be yours.

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

The Thief On The Cross

Continued from page 2

John's baptism was not "in his name." It was in no name at all, so far as I know. But gospel baptism, under the great commission, is "in his name," which means 'by his authority,' which means 'by his authority.'

Question: How did Jesus 'authorize' baptism to be done?

Answer: "Into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19, A.S.V.).

John tells us that after his resurrection, Jesus said to the apostles, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you . . . Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20:21, 23). The Thief was not privileged to hear the apostles bind on earth what Christ already had bound in heaven, so man can have his sins remitted. This began at Jerusalem on Pentecost day (Acts 2), a month and ten days after the Thief died! Again I say, the Thief was not under the great commission, as all nations are today. He is no example of how to be saved now.

"Thousands To Nothing!"

In the book of Acts, literally THOUSANDS were converted under the great commission,

which requires faith in the risen Lord, repentance and baptism in his name. Not one was 'saved like the Thief on the cross!' For example: on Pentecost, Peter convinced those who had crucified him that God has raised Jesus, and made him both Lord and Christ. He commanded them to "repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

--Not ONE of them protested, saying: 'I don't want to be baptized to be saved! --I want to be saved like the Thief on the cross!' Not ONE!!!

Instead, we read: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (verse 41).

Kind reader, I plead with you to believe that God has raised Jesus from the dead, and by faith in him to repent and be baptized in his name for the remission of sins. This began to be preached "in his name" in Jerusalem (Acts 2), and is for "every creature" (Mark 16:15) in "all nations" (Luke 24:46-49), and will last "unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Related To The Devil

Continued from page 2

They have chosen not to receive God's free gift of eternal life (Romans 6:23).

Man has the privilege of his own opinions. One may choose to imagine he will not be held accountable for his relation with the devil. Man's free will however also makes him accountable to God for what he chooses to believe.

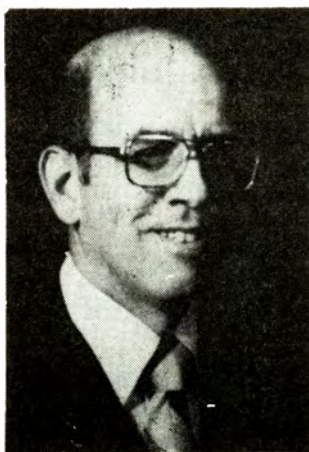
The state of these people should be a con-

tinual concern to us. We should add our tears to those of Jesus for people who are lost and will not come to him. How we need to see their condition as vividly as did Jude. He vividly pictured some lost men as being in a fire and in need of being snatched out (Jude 23). May we have a burden for those who are related to the devil; and may this burden never be lifted from our hearts!

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

God's Kingdom First

Jesus clearly showed how his people are to arrange their priorities when he said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). When one puts the kingdom first, he obeys the greatest commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:23).



Joe E. Galloway

This priority will assure our respecting the injunction to "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). Seeking first God's kingdom is equivalent to setting our "affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2).

All the problems that beset the church today, deterring proper growth, would be resolved if all would put God's kingdom first! Some examples:

Attendance

If we all were convinced of the need to put the kingdom first, we would not have the all-too-common situation of attendance dropping on Sunday evening to nearly one-half of those present on Sunday morning (with possibly a further drop on Wednesday evening). We would not have situations where the attendance of some congregations is much less than the total membership. Attendance in gospel meetings would not make us (and the Lord!) ashamed. Things we enjoy doing, such as going to sporting events, and watching TV, would not crowd out our being at the services of the church. Nor would we decide to use gospel service time for various odd jobs and pursuits of the material nature if our priorities were firmly established -- if we always put spiritual interests first.

Giving

Meeting our budget, and even having much more money to use in preaching the gospel locally and outside our area, would be no problem if all our members put God's kingdom first. In putting God first, each member would first decide what part of his income should be given, and set it aside, before spending it or obligating it on material desires.

Godly Living

Immoral actions will not be engaged in by those who first consider God's kingdom and

his righteousness. Immorality results from a basic attitude of selfishness: one does what he wants to do to satisfy his own desires! This is the opposite of the attitude of putting God first.

Maintaining Peace

Congregational problems, or problems among various individual members, always have wrong priorities as part of the contributing cause. Those who put God's will and kingdom first will not insist on having their own way. The first thing in their consideration will be, "What does God's word say about this?" If the matter under consideration is a matter of human judgment, instead of a matter of faith, they will then want to know what is best for others. So, they will give in to what is best for the entire congregation,

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Timothy 3:12).

It is an honor to have friends; but it is not necessarily a dishonor to have enemies. In some cases it is as complimentary to have enemies as friends. Just as you can tell a man by his friends, you can sometimes tell a man by his enemies.

It is no compliment to say that a Christian lived so many years and never had an enemy. This could not be said of Christ, nor of Paul. Every man has enemies if he has convictions. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Timothy 3:12).

There are many types of enemies; enemies without cause, enemies one makes, avowed enemies, and enemies by default.

The Psalmist said, "Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me; neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without cause" (Psalm 35:19). Yes, one may have enemies without cause! The truth is in their hearts. They need a "whipping boy" (i.e., someone to blame); and if one has been elected, one will be whipped without just cause.

While one may be innocent in having enemies he did not make, one may also be guilty of



Levi Sides

rather than insisting that decisions which are made be what they want (Philippians 2:3-4). Even elders as rulers of the congregation are not to be "self-willed" (Titus 1:7). This shows that their decisions must be made with the thought in mind, "What is best for the congregation as a whole?" When this is disregarded and decisions are made on the basis of individual preferences, what one's family wants, or what close friends want, peace will inevitably be disrupted in a congregation.

Putting God and his will first in our lives will do more to assure the advancement of the Lord's cause than all the methods and gimmicks we can ever use. It is a decision each of us can and must make, individually!

—218 Pinecrest Drive, Greeneville, TN 37743.

having enemies one does make. One's greatest and most spiteful enemies are those who consider him a personal threat in some manner to them: to their dignity, job advancement, popularity, social standing, or financial welfare. No doubt this was the reason Diotrefes refused to receive John -- he considered John a threat to his preeminence (III John 9).

Satan and all his helpers are avowed enemies to that which belongs to God and to righteousness. . . "Be sober, be vigilant; because you adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8).

Jesus speaks of enemies by default. They are those who refuse to take sides. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matthew 12:30). Pilate knew of the innocence of Jesus, but would not stand for him; and in so doing he became an enemy of Christ by default (Matthew 27:24).

What can one do about his enemies? He can (1) Do good unto them (Matthew 5:44; Romans 12:19-20); (2) Pray for them (Matthew 5:44-45); (3) Refrain from getting on the level of his enemies; (4) Rejoice not at the failings of his enemies (Proverbs 24:17); (5) Remember that it is through God's commandments that he can be made wiser than his enemies (Psalm 119:98) (6) Pray for deliverance from his enemies (Psalm 59:1) (7) Remember that God is stronger than his enemies and can care for him despite them (Psalm 23:5).

The best way to destroy an enemy is to make a friend of him.

—School of Biblical Studies, Faulkner University, Montgomery, Alabama.

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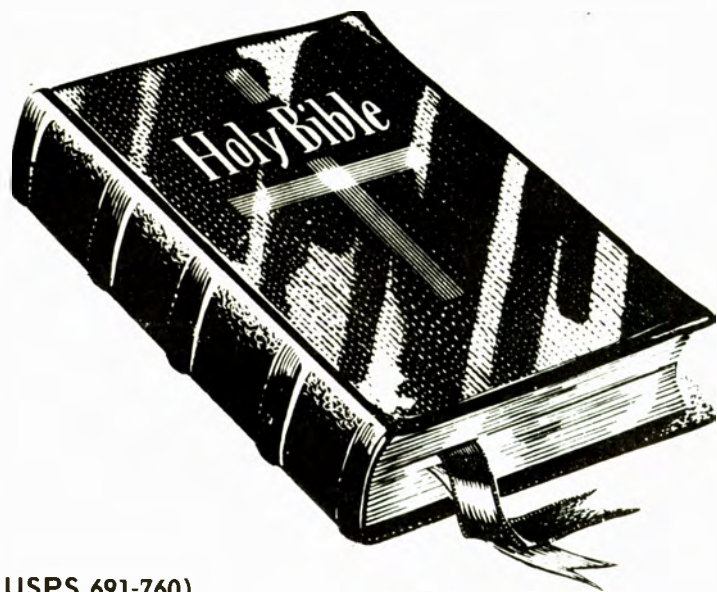
JASPER, ALABAMA

When Spiritual Leaders Stumble

Continued From Page 1

prayer, and Bible study, and the situations you find yourself in. Brethren -- both men and women, everywhere: pray for spiritual leaders. Pray like they may fall tomorrow, but treat them like they will always be strong.

—Hamilton Cross Roads Church, Route 2, Box 311-AA, Brundidge, AL, 36010.



(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, AUGUST 19, 1988

NUMBER 34.

Fruits Of Repentance

John the baptist was a great preacher of repentance (Matthew 3:1-11). John was called "the baptist" because God first gave through him the ordinance of baptism. John did not borrow this ordinance from the Jewish practice of proselyte baptism. John baptized his converts, but Jewish proselytes baptized themselves (Leviticus 14:9; Numbers 19:19; 8:7; Leviticus 15 and 16 chapters). Hence, the law required all unclean persons to wash or cleanse themselves. Hebrews 9:10 refers to "divers baptisms," or bathings.

John said to those sinful Jews of his day: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet" ("worthy of" ASV) "repentance" (Matthew 3:8). What John is demanding is proof of repentance in one's daily living.

Is it possible for ordinary people to understand what repentance is? Yes, indeed. Repentance is a change of mind which results in the reformation of life. It is doing an about-face, a turning from indulgence in wrong things, with sheer determination to follow truth and righteousness at whatever cost.

One of the finest examples of what repentance is, is found in Matthew 21:28-30. We quote: "But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterward repented himself and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, Sir, and went not." The man who repented is the person who first rebelled, but afterward changed his mind, and did what was commanded of his father.

What is repentance? Let us listen to Jesus: "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas:



W. A. Holley

and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here" (Matthew 12:41). What did the people of Nineveh do when they "repented?" We shall permit the Bible to answer. "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil ways; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not" (Jonah 3:10). So repentance involves a turning from evil ways.

Why should you repent of your sins? Because God has commanded you to repent: "The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31).

The Lord has been gracious unto you. He has extended the days of your life, thus giving you an opportunity to repent. We quote: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9). For the responsible person, it is repent or perish (Luke 13:3, 5).

Have you believed, repented of your sins, confessed Jesus' name, and have you been baptized into Christ for the remission of sins? If you performed these acts of obedience from your heart, you became a Christian (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Peter 4:16). But, have you since sinned against the Lord's church? Hear Paul. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God" (I Corinthians 10:31-32). Many have sinned, and do sin, against the Lord's church. What are some sins committed against the church? Sowing discord, fussing and fighting, absenteeism, division, refusing to give as the Lord has ordained. Immorality, such as drunkenness, adultery, and fornication are sins against the church. A lack of zeal and enthusiasm for the Lord's work is also. No church should be subjected to backbiting

or gossip, or meddlers in other people's affairs.

If you have sinned against a brother or sister, correct that sin at once. Luke 17:1-4 reads, "It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come. It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he be cast into the sea, than he should offend one of these little ones. Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him."


Again, "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" (Matthew 18:15-17).

Here Jesus shows how to act when offense is received. The fault is to be pointed out to the offender, but it is to be done for the purpose of gaining him, not to humiliate him. The offended is to seek the offender; and the offender is likewise to seek the offended (Matthew 5:23-24).

The lesson is: use other faithful brethren to help solve all problems. If such an approach does not work, then, involve the whole church. If the problem still cannot be solved, then such an one should have the fellowship of the church withdrawn from him.

These words are written for seekers of truth.
—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Set your affections on things above,
not on things on the earth. Colossians 3:2



Words Of Truth
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Attendance

Dana Watford


There is a tendency in the church for many members to be slack in their attendance on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights. I don't know what unfaithful person started such a trend, but I wish he or she had not done so. Maybe this tendency was just borrowed from some of our denominational friends, like some other things have been borrowed. (If that is where it came from, I wish we could give it all back!)

Oh! I know that there are a few Christians who simply cannot come on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights. But it grieves me when many members who apparently could come, seem to care so little about Christ and his church. Such an attitude of complacency and lack of love is detrimental to the church as a whole. It also damages the individual's soul who habitually misses these opportunities of worship and service. And such absenteeism also wields a damaging influence on their friends and loved ones.

What is the solution to this problem? What can you and I do to help eliminate this hinderance to the growth of the kingdom? There is not much you and I can do except pray for and encourage those who are unfaithful in their attendance, and lovingly discipline those who will not correct this sin. Another solution to the problem is, for those who continue to miss the services of the church, to begin to restore the love they once had for Christ, but which they evidently have lost. Yes, basically this is a love problem (or a lack of love) on the part of those who miss regularly on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights.

I am not trying to "judge" anyone's heart in this matter --I leave that to God; but I will judge their actions. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). One commandment of Jesus is: "Not forsaking the assembling to ourselves together" . . . and to encourage one another (Hebrews 10:25). Because Jesus did not specify which

Continued on page 3



The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

"My Daddy"

The following was written by this Editor to my father, the late Gus Nichols, for his forty-ninth birthday, January 12, 1941. Dad celebrated 34 (!) more birthdays after this, but these sentiments only intensified. He kept this framed poem in his study the rest of his life. At his death (November 16, 1975), neither of the eight children nor their spouses could recall one thing which we ever saw or heard Dad [--or Mother, either, for that matter--] DO or SAY, of which we were ashamed! --Flavil H. Nichols.



FLAVIL L. NICHOLS

"My Daddy"

My dear Daddy, you have helped me many a day
In the path of the Lord and Savior to stay.
Before me daily you have done all you could
To set an example of how to be good.

You have taught us children to reverence God
And in Christ's holy way to always trod.
We bring you our problems, and you treat us grand!
Your influence leads us to a better land.

Many know this is true, and seek your advice
When Satan has worked some wicked device.
You, Daddy, always give ear to their troubles
--And often they vanish like huge soap bubbles!

You have been faithful to sound out God's Word
In many weak places where it had not been heard.
You often have, both by word and by deed,
Caused many lost sinners God's truth to heed.

Regardless of where I may chance to stay,
I'll appreciate your influence to my dying day!
But there are two more words that I just must say
To you, Dear Daddy:

--"HAPPY BIRTHDAY!"

--Flavil H. Nichols, Jan. 12, 1941.

Great Lessons

From The Parable Of The Prodigal Son

Clifford Dixon

The account of this parable is in Luke 15:11-32, which we ask you to please read in your Bible. This parable teaches the same great principle that is taught in the lost coin and the lost sheep parables (which precede it): --that rejoicing goes on in heaven when a sinner repents. This parable of the prodigal son touches the hearts of all who read it, and gives hope to the sinner --no matter how far down in sin he goes. It also rebukes the hard-hearted 'elder brother.'

Let us notice some of the great 'side lessons' we can learn from this narrative.

1. We all have blessings which we have not earned, which are bestowed on us by loving parents, friends, and Almighty God. Happy is the child whose parents leave an inheritance that is his! But many children do not appreciate the sacrifices others have undergone for their benefit! Especially is this true of the blessings of God. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). Health, strength, intelligence, ability to earn a living, home, family, and friends are just some of the great blessings God has blessed us with!

Beyond this he has provided that perfect gift -- Jesus Christ. In James 1:18 we read, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." In I Peter 1:18-21 we read, "Forasmuch as ye know 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: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God."

In this parable, the father gave the son the "portion of goods" due him; and our heavenly Father freely bestows upon us abundant blessings --and then desires that we be cleansed in the blood of Christ so that the broken fellowship between himself and mankind can be restored.

2. Sin is a "far country" from God. The son "gathered all together" and went into "a far country" where he "wasted his substance with riotous living" (Luke 15:13). This repre-

sents a person's going into sin, depicting that such an one is: (A) Separated from God, so that God will not even "hear" him (Isaiah 59:1-2). (B) His prayers are an abomination to God because he has turned away his ear from God's law (Proverbs 28:9). (C) The face of the Lord is against him (I Peter 3:12). And, (D) he is without God, and without hope in the world (Ephesians 2:11-12).

In this far country of sin, one is "wasting" his life, his talents, his intelligence, his money, his health, and his soul by sinful living. There is nothing truly "good" about a life of sin. We see it glorified by this world, but if one just comes to his senses, he will realize that there is nothing good about it. All "good" comes from God (James 1:17), and the only good life to live is the life that God has laid out for us in his instruction-book, the Bible.

3. Before a person can get out of that far country he must "come to" his senses. When the prodigal son "came to himself" he began to talk to himself about his awful condition and what improvements he could make. He said, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" (Luke 15:17). There is a better way than living in sin, and there is a way to the Father (John 14:6). This son made a resolution, and carried it out. His resolution was, "I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants" (Luke 15:18-19).

The next verse says, "And he arose, and came to his father." Some make good resolutions but never do anything about them. Some say, "I will wait until I get my life straightened out, then I will come to God." These people need to realize that to MAKE a good resolution is worth nothing without rising up and going to the Father. Every day we wait to make commitment to God is another step closer to eternity without God and without hope!

4. The father saw him coming from "a great way off" --or, in other words, the father was looking and longing for his return. God is long-suffering and forbearing to us because he wants his wayward children to come to repentance. Paul asked the Jews, "Or despiseth thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the

goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Romans 2:4).

When the father saw this son coming, he ran to him and fell upon his neck, and kissed him. God has such an attitude toward the sinner who comes to repentance! The son began his confession --but the father interrupted him to put the best robe on him, and a ring on his finger, shoes on his feet, and provided a feast with much merry-making going on in that home (Luke 15:20-24). Fellowship was restored! And the past was forgotten! God promises us today that whosoever will, can come and take of the water of life freely (Revelation 22:17). Also: when we come to God through Jesus Christ he will be merciful to our unrighteousness, and our sins and iniquities he will remember no more (Hebrews 8:12).

God is ever looking for you, sinner friend, to come to him. He is ever ready to receive you with open arms. Won't you come to yourself, and come to God today? The plan of salvation is simple enough to understand as found in Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38. The plan for the erring child of God is clear enough as found in Acts 8:22 and James 5:16. You need to come to yourself and make the proper resolutions, then follow through -- and it will make you so happy --as well as everyone in heaven happy!

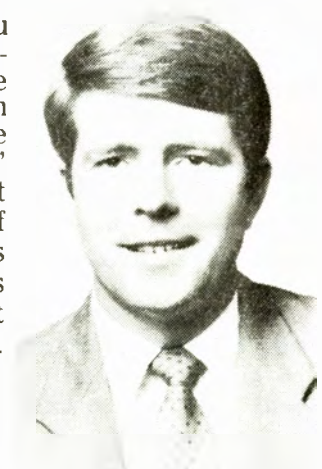
5. Since God cares for lost souls and has provided for their salvation through the blood of Christ, all Christians should have a deep concern for lost souls! We should be doing our part to bring such to the Savior. The unconcern, jealousy, and anger of the 'elder brother' in this parable, about the return of his erring brother, should never be the attitude of Christians. As Paul, we should use all available means to "win some" to Christ (I Corinthians 9:19-22). We should also realize that there is hope for everyone who can be touched and tendered by the gospel, and thereby be made sorry for his sins.

—P.O. Box 507, Jay, FL 32565.

"Perfect Peace"

Isaiah said, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3). Without doubt this is one of the great verses of the Bible. This verse speaks of what every life needs. Notice carefully: (1) perfect peace; (2) devotion to God; and (3) trust in God.

The man who enjoys perfect peace is the individual who keeps his mind on God. Yet, he cannot enjoy this peace unless he is



Ken Tyler

Attendance

Continued from page 2

"assembly," this should include any assembly of the church. This would include Sunday and Wednesday nights, any and every night of a gospel meeting, and other periods of "fellowship" (Acts 2:42).

Now, I know that we will not be rewarded in heaven on the basis of a perfect attendance record, but such reward will be given to those who act in faithful obedience to the instructions of God's grace (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 2:11-14).

We hope that you will give serious thought to this message, and that you will examine your

love for Christ and his church. I would like for you to imagine that the judgment is here: you are standing before God who has just asked you for the reason you missed church services on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights. Now, give HIM your excuse! Go ahead --give it to Him! --He is waiting!!! Sounded rather ridiculous, did it not? If it sounded ridiculous to YOU, think how it will sound to GOD on the real day of judgment! Isn't your soul worth more than a ridiculous excuse???

Sharp Church, Benton, KY.

Continued on page 4

The Bible And Homosexuality

Yarbrough Leigh

Increasingly, pressure is exerted upon politicians serving in high levels of legislation and law enforcement to legitimize homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle for all citizens, enjoying the full protection of law, and making it illegal to discriminate against homosexual individuals in any way whatsoever.

It is worthy of note that numerous current candidates for high office in this country have declared themselves to be in full support of the so-called "gay rights" movement. Efforts are being made to strike down the laws making "sodomy" a crime in many states, and to give free range of expression and indulgence to whatever form of sexuality may suit the individual.

In the light of all this, it may be of interest to see what the Bible has to say about this practice. This, we shall attempt in this article.

The word "sodomy," or "sodomite(s)" stems from the wicked practice of homosexuality by the people of Sodom. Because of the promises God had given to Abraham, and because Abraham's nephew, Lot, had made his home in Sodom, God revealed to Abraham the destruction planned for Sodom. "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know" (Genesis 18:20-21). After agreeing with Abraham, for Lot's sake, that if as many as ten righteous should be found there, the city would be spared, the divine representatives went to Sodom, to Lot's house, to warn him to take his family and flee. And what did they learn of the men of Sodom? They learned that the men of Sodom were not only homosexuals, they were also homosexual rapists, vicious and cruel! "The men of Sodom compassed the house round --young and old, all --from every quarter: they called to Lot, Where are the men which came to thee this night? Bring them out to us that we may know" (i.e., have carnal knowledge, or sexual knowledge, of them) "them?" (Genesis 19:4-5). So great was this crime, both against God and against nature, that Lot offered the unthinkable substitution of his own two virgin daughters (see Genesis 19:7-9). Therefore, from ancient Biblical times, the sins of anal sex, oral sex, and bestiality have been termed, euphemistically, "sodomy." Those who practice such have been termed "sodomites."

And what did the Old Testament have to say of such? The case of the people of Sodom, and God's destruction of both Sodom and Gomorrah, and all the cities of the plain, because of it, will suffice for the time before the giving of the law at Sinai.

The law of Moses condemns these sins in both men and women. Leviticus 18:22-25 reveals that these were among the crimes which had characterized the people of the land of Caanan before it was given to Israel. God said, "Therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants." Leviticus 20:13, 15-16 reveal that God decreed the punishment of death to both men and women who were guilty of these sins. I Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46 and II Kings 23:7 all reveal the urgency with which God viewed the need to rid the land of all Sodomites.

The New Testament is just as clear in its

condemnation of such practices. "For this cause God gave them up to uncleanness through the lust of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves." For this cause God gave them up to vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature; and likewise also the man, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which is meet" (Romans 1:24, 26-27). Again, the same inspired apostle wrote: "Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God" (I Corinthians 6:9-10).

Without squeemishness, embarrassment or restraint, both the Old Testament and the New Testament revelations of God's will to his people leave no doubt that sexuality was intended of God in the human race to be confined to the marriage relationship, and even in that sacred union, is to be practiced within the bounds of nature and decency. The writer of Hebrews noted: "Marriage

is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4).

This same revelation warns us, as Christians, that we "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).

Brethren and friends, sadly, we are daily bombarded through all the public media with enticements to throw off all restraints of modesty and decency and moral uprightness -- even to the point of being counted bigoted and Pharisaic if we teach Bible principles of righteousness pertaining to such things.

Let us always stand for what is right --right both Biblically and in keeping with nature itself. Let us never be afraid to be ashamed, and ashamed to be afraid, to hold to what is right!! Let us never encourage, either by word or vote, any who would rule over us who believe in, practice, or lend encouragement to, such views or practices. Let us ever make our influence known on the side of godliness and truth, both in word and in our own lives!

—Shades Mountain Church, Birmingham, AL.

Plans To Publish Russian New Testament

The World Bible Translation Center plans to complete translation of its Russian New Testament. Target date is December 1, 1988.

"This will be the first effort among churches of Christ to provide an easily-understood translation in the Russian language," said Dale Randolph, World Bible Translation Center President. "The current situation in the Soviet Union looks very favorable for the legal distribution of our text."

According to recent reports, the Soviet government has lifted import restrictions on the Bible and 3,500 other books. Bibles can now be mailed to Russian citizens who request one -- the first time Bibles have been allowed in the Soviet Union since 1917.

Negotiations are underway to obtain per-

mission to legally distribute as many copies as possible of the Translation Center's Russian text in that country.

"We are very excited to get our Russian text printed and distributed because it will get the Word of God into the hands of people who have lived in a closed society for many years," said Randolph. "Numerous reports tell us the Russian people are very excited to have Bibles in their native language."

The World Bible Translation Center is dedicated to providing Bibles in an easily-understood form to people throughout the world. This Version of the Bible is the most readable English text available today, according to major university studies.

—P.O. Box 18648 Fort Worth, TX 76118-9990.

"Perfect Peace"

Continued from page 3

willing to trust God. It is true that a person may be devoted to God and still not have peace, or at least the peace which God wants him to have, because he has not learned to trust. Notice how perfect peace, devotion, and trust are connected in this verse. They go together.

I now ask, does this describe your life? Every human being is looking for peace. How do you get it? Isaiah simply answers: Devotion to God, and trust. I am sure all of us would agree that he said a proverbial "mouth-full!"

Even with devotion, trust is very difficult at times. It is hard not to find something to worry about. The key is to realize whom we serve, and what he can do. God said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," and he means it. I hope all of us believe this!

It is my prayer that this article will be a great blessing to your life. Thank God for PERFECT PEACE! David said, "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" (Psalms 23:4). That is perfect peace.

—P.O. Box 376, Arab, AL 35016.

Invite A Friend To Church On Sunday!



(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, AUGUST 26, 1988

NUMBER 35

Ninth Annual "Gus Nichols - Words Of Truth"

LECTURESHIP

Ninth Annual
"Gus Nichols - Words Of Truth"

LECTURESHIP

September 25-29, 1988

Sixth Avenue Church of Christ
1501 Sixth Avenue - Jasper, Alabama 35501
Telephones: (205) 384-6446 and 387-1670
Lectureship Director:
Flavil H. Nichols (205) 221-9496

Other Ministers
David Wade (205) 387-0405
John Evans, III (205) 387-1218

Theme:

"MATURING IN CHRIST"

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1988

6:30-6:55 Congregational Singing
..... Various Directors
7:00-8:00 "Ye Must Be Born Again"
..... Foy W. Nichols

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1988-

9:00-9:45 "A Study of Words Relating
To Maturity"
..... Hugo McCord

9:50-10:35 "Maturity In Christ and
Church Leadership"
..... Franklin Camp

9:50-10:35
LADIES: "The Word ... That Ye May
Grow Thereby"
..... Lois McCord

10:40-11:25 "Maturity In Christ and
Beverage Alcohol"
..... W. D. Jeffcoat

10:40-11:25
LADIES: "On Unto Perfection"
..... Lois Duncan

[11:25-1:00 Lunch Break]

1:00-1:45 KEYNOTE ADDRESS:
"Maturity and the Cross:
Enmity Slain at the Cross"
..... Kelby Smith

1:50-2:35 "Essentials To Maturity:
Bible Study and Faith"
..... James W. Watkins

2:40-3:25 "Maturity In Christ:
Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage"
..... Roger Jackson

[3:30-6:30 Break For Dinner]

6:30-6:55 Congregation Singing
..... Various Directors

7:00-8:00 "Maturity In Christ:
Flee Fornication"
..... Bobby Duncan

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1988

9:00-9:45 "A Study of Words Relating
To Maturity"
..... Hugo McCord

9:50-10:35 "Maturity In Christ
and Personal Growth"
..... Franklin Camp

9:50-10:35
LADIES: "The Word ... That Ye
May Grow Thereby"
..... Lois McCord

10:40-11:25 "Maturity In Christ and
Beverage Alcohol"
..... W. D. Jeffcoat

10:40-11:25
LADIES: "On Unto Perfection"
..... Lois Duncan

[11:25-1:00 Lunch Break]

1:00-1:45 KEYNOTE ADDRESS:

"Maturity and the Cross:
Glory In The Cross"
..... Cecil May, Jr.

1:50-2:35
"Essentials To Maturity:
Prayer and Communion"
..... James W. Watkins

2:40-3:25
"Maturity In Christ:
Marriage, Divorce, and
Remarriage"
..... Roger Jackson

[3:30-6:30 Break For Dinner]

6:30-6:55 Congregational Singing
..... Various Directors

7:00-8:00
"Maturity In Christ: "Provide
For Things Honest"
..... Wendell Winkler

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1988

9:00-9:45
"A Study of Words Relating
To Maturity"
..... Hugo McCord

9:50-10:35
"Maturity In Christ
and Evangelism"
..... Franklin Camp

9:50-10:35
LADIES: "The Word ... That Ye May
Grow Thereby"
..... Lois McCord

10:40-11:25
"Maturity In Christ and
Beverage Alcohol"
..... W. D. Jeffcoat

Continued On Page 4



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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—Acts 26:25

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

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Choosing A Religion

G. F. Raines

Many sincere people have been caused by false teaching to believe that a person should choose a religion on the basis of convenience and preference -- like a housewife selects a loaf of bread, a cake of soap, or a washing machine. Many members of denominational churches admit that they selected a church because of its size, its popularity, its nearness to their residence, or its convenient parking lot.

Multitudes of people who would eagerly drive ninety miles to see a ballgame would not drive one mile to scripturally worship God, although Jesus says, "God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24; see also Acts 2:42; 20:7; John 17:17; II John 9).

Jesus did not build a multiplicity of churches in order to make it possible for every person to find a church corresponding with each one's own preference. This is what the Lord himself said: ". . . upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

The apostle Paul says: "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence" (Colossians 1:18).

"But now are they many members, yet but one body" (I Corinthians 12:20).

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:4-6).

In I Corinthians 9:24-27 and II Timothy 2:5, Paul plainly says that we must "strive lawfully" to receive the crown of life. To "strive lawfully" is to obey the gospel of Christ, which is "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16-17; I Corinthians 15:1-2; II

Continued on page 3

The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Saved By Grace Through Faith

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners . . ." (I Timothy 1:15). Man's believing, repenting, confessing Jesus, and being baptized, does NOT "merit" or "earn," his salvation. These are simply things which God requires -- which one must by faith obey from the heart (Romans 6:16-18).



FLAVIL L NICHOLS

Every unsaved man and woman must "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" in order to be saved (Acts 16:30-31). Every believer should "repent and be baptized . . . for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10). Then, like Saul of Tarsus, every believer who has repented and confessed Jesus as Lord, should "arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16).

Jesus was promising salvation "by grace" and "through faith" when he said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). When a believer is baptized, it is altogether grace that God gives the penitent sinner, because of his obedient faith. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Ephesians 2:8 is a precious passage of scripture. My brethren and I have believed and preached this cherished truth down through the ages. "Our beloved brother Paul" (II Peter 3:15) was guided by the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 2:13) to write Ephesians 2:8.

Our religious neighbors often misrepresent this scripture, claiming that it promises salvation before and without baptism. However, they overlook the fact that this text was addressed "to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 1:1). But how does one get "into Christ?" The same apostle Paul wrote that "as many of you as have been BAPTIZED INTO JESUS CHRIST have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). So, Ephesians 2:8 was written to those who had been baptized.

Truly, it was to baptized believers that Paul

wrote: "For by grace are ye saved through faith." In fact, SOME of the charter members of the church at Ephesus -- to whom this passage was penned -- had to be 're-immersed' (Acts 19:1-7) -- but all of them had been "baptized into Jesus Christ" (Romans 6:3; Ephesians 1:1).

I repeat: it was BAPTIZED believers to whom Paul wrote: "For by grace are ye saved through faith . . ." One will search in vain for such a text written to UNbaptized believers in Christ. This should demonstrate clearly that one's obedience to the gospel -- his believing in Christ, repenting, confessing Jesus as Lord, and his being baptized -- do not earn or merit salvation. Salvation is a "gift" of God. Such obedience does not constitute acts or "works" of merit, whereof one could "boast" (Ephesians 2:9).

The fact that one must "obey him" (Hebrews 5:9), or "do the will of (my) Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21), does not alter this truth. After his obedience from the heart, he is "THEN made free from sin" (Romans 6:17-18) -- by the grace of God!

"We Are All Going To The Same Place, Only We Are Traveling Different Roads"

Bill Dedmon

Many people have made the remark when engaged in a discussion about the church and the importance of being members in the church: "Everybody is going to the same place but we are not going on the same road." Generally speaking, they will explain how you could go to Memphis, or Panama City, or Atlanta by a number of different roads.

I used to reject this idea, but now I must confess that the aforementioned statement is valid. We ARE all going to the same place but we are traveling different roads. "As it is written, as I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God" (Romans 14:11). Paul said, ". . . we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ . . ." (II Corinthians 5:10).

It is true that we are all going to the same place: Judgment! We will all "go" to the same place, but we will not all "stay" in the same place. "Before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another . . ." (Matthew 25:32). A person can travel any road he chooses. In fact, the broad road is so broad that it will accommodate all philosophies of life. Every one following the board road will end up at the judgment. The narrow road also takes one to the judgment, but it is limited to only those things taught in God's word.

We must obey the will of God. Only in so doing will we hear: "Well done, good and faithful servant . . ."

—Ridgedale Reminder, 1005 Dodds Avenue, Chattanooga, TN 37404.

The Sin Of Making Laws For God

Most members of the church recognize the fact that God has commanded his people to "teach all nations," and "preach the gospel to every creature" in "all the world" (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16, 20). They understand that the church is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3:15). Furthermore, all should teach according to ability and opportunity (Hebrews 5:12). All Christians should be trained and eventually qualified to wield "the sword of the Spirit" -- the word of God -- in propagating divine truth (Ephesians 6:17; II Timothy 2:2). And all are to practice the truth which they teach (Romans 2:21). Finally, the church is to support its chosen teachers who give their time to teaching (Galatians 6:6; James 3:1; I Corinthians 9:14; I Timothy 5:17-18; II Corinthians 11:8).

MUST NOT MAKE LAWS FOR GOD

While it is of the utmost importance that we obey the commandments of the Lord, it is also important that we do not make laws where God made none. When man binds where God did not bind, regulates what God did not regu-

Choosing A Religion

Continued from page 2

Thessalonians 1:7-9).

I earnestly urge you to diligently study your Bible, especially Acts of Apostles and the epistles of Paul, Peter, John, James, and Jude. Adamantly refuse to embrace any religion except the nondenominational Christianity which is plainly described therein; because, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16-17).

The Book of God, by which all men will be judged in the last day (Revelation 20:11-15), plainly says:

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9).

"O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

Let us never forget that our Lord Jesus Christ unequivocally declared that, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13).

—Newton, MS 39345.



Gus Nichols
1892-1975

late, and speaks with authority where God is silent, he is actually adding to God's word -- adding his own law to God's law (Matthew 16:19; Revelation 22:18-19). God himself made all the laws we need. His law is "perfect," and it is presumptuous sin for man to try to mend God's law (Psalms 19:7; James 1:21-25; Psalms 19:13-14). We must do the thing the Lord commands us to do, and if he commands us to do a thing in a certain way, then the way to do it becomes a part of the divine law and must be respected, as well as doing the THING commanded (Matthew 28:20).

BUT WHERE NO LAW IS THERE MUST BE LIBERTY

When God commands the doing of a certain thing, but does not legislate as to how it must be done, this means he has left the way or method of doing it to human judgment, and it is a matter of expediency. No man may legislate for God where he is silent. Such human laws would be additions to God's word; and it is as sinful to make laws for God as it is to break the laws which God himself made.

APPLIED TO TEACHING

We must teach (Matthew 28:19-20). The law of the Lord demands that; and he did not regulate as to the place and methods to be used. When, therefore, we teach in Bible school, we are doing the exact thing the Lord said do -- without adding to or taking from his word. We are simply obeying the command to "teach." The same is true of the use of literature, visual aids, radios, T.V., blackboard, flannel board, etc. These are not additions to the word of God. They are simply aids, means, and methods of doing what is commanded, without addition or subtraction. But when the "Anti-Sunday-School" brother says we must stop such things, he is legislating where God did not -- is making laws for God -- is adding his unwritten creed to the word of God; and he is the cause of all the division which may grow out of his man-made laws (Romans 16:17-18).

APPLIED TO BENEVOLENCE

God requires the church and its members to practice "pure and undefiled" religion, which involves caring for the needy -- for widows, and the fatherless (James 1:27; I Timothy 5:16; I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:12-13; Galatians 6:10). While God has required the church to contribute to the poor and needy, **he has not authorized the church to function as a home.** God put elders over CHURCHES, and not over HOMES. We do not read about the 'elders of the home;' but we do read about "the elders of the church" (Acts 20:17, 28). Elders were to take the oversight of the CHURCH, and not of a HOME for the destitute (Acts 20:17, 28; I Peter 5:1-3). The church can do all the work which God commanded the church to do without trying to be a HOME, just as the home can do all its God-appointed work without trying to be a CHURCH. The CHURCH is to do its work in its own framework; and likewise the HOME is to do its work in its own framework. God put parents over the home (I Timothy 3:4-5). The church can support the home without trying to take over and run the home, just as the home can support the church without trying to take over the church and run it. These are two separate and distinct institutions. Yes, the home is an "institution;" and when the church contributes to a home it is contributing to an institution which is not the church. The "Anti-Orphan-Home" brethren argue that if the church gives to another institution like an or-

phan home it is giving to an institution that is not the church, and that such is "INSTITUTIONALISM." Well, if one of their churches were to contribute to a private home in need, then -- according to their own argument -- such would be what they call "Institutionalism." If not, why not? They start off arguing that the church is the only institution which can be involved in benevolence; then they end up by having two institutions involved: the church which did the giving, and the private home which did the receiving of the contribution made by the church.

A CHURCH AIDING A CHURCH IN SPIRITUAL MATTERS

Not only may a church aid a church in benevolence (Acts 11:29-30; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Romans 15:25-32; II Corinthians 8:1-5), but a church may also aid a church in spiritual matters. Churches can cooperate in both benevolence, and in teaching and preaching the gospel. "Anti" preachers have denied that a church may cooperate with another church and contribute to it by way of aiding it in its work of spreading the gospel. The Jerusalem church aided the Antioch church in spiritual matters on two different occasions (Acts 11:20-26; 15:22-32). Churches aided Corinth by cooperating in supporting Paul to labor at Corinth (II Corinthians 11:8). The church at Colosse was commanded to "cause" their letter to be read by the church of the Laodiceans, and then read their letter in return (Colossians 4:16). These two churches were thus commanded to cooperate with each other in spiritual matters -- which fact spoils anti-ism.

—via Glad Tidings bulletin, Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, Jasper, Alabama, November 17, 1961.

"True Happiness Found"

Dan Winkler

Has it ever seemed to you
That life is mostly gray and blue?
That future joy lies in its shroud
With every hour engulfed by clouds?

Are your days marked with despair
Do those burdens seem too hard to bear?
Have you wondered with disdain
As to your ability to sustain?

Is your life painted on the canvas of gloom
With every pastel having been consumed?
Have all earth's flowers lost their scent
Leaving your will broken and bent?

If in your life this holds true,
Then God has a message just for you:
"Rejoice in the Lord," is what he says,
"Rejoice in the Lord," yea, "always."

In Christ Jesus life is termed sweet;
In him anxiety is obsolete.
Lasting pain, sorrow, and tears,
Will never plague your days, your years.

So obey the Lord Jesus and do so today;
He is the truth, the life, the way.
In him alone is true happiness found,
In him alone is unhappiness bound. -- Selected

Ninth Annual "Gus Nichols - Words Of Truth" LECTURESHIP

Continued From Page 1

10:40-11:25
LADIES: "On Unto Perfection"
..... Lois Duncan

[11:25-1:00 Lunch Break]

1:00-1:45
KEYNOTE ADDRESS:
"Maturity and The Cross:
Take Up Your Cross And Follow
Christ: In The Business World
and in Unemployment"
..... Paul Tarence

1:50-2:35
"Essentials To Maturity:
Liberality"
..... Winfred Clark

2:40-3:25
"Maturity In Christ: Marriage,
Divorce, and Remarriage"
..... Roger Jackson

[3:30-6:30 Break For Dinner]

6:30-6:55 Congregational Singing
..... Various Directors

7:00-8:00
"Maturity In Christ:
Sound Speech Which
Cannot Be Condemned"
..... Herman Hedgepeth

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1988

9:00-9:45
"A Study of Words Relating To
Maturity"..... Hugo McCord

9:50-10:35
"Maturity In Christ and
Benevolence"..... Franklin Camp

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LADIES: "The Word ... That Ye May
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[11:25-1:00 Lunch Break]

1:00-1:45 KEYNOTE ADDRESS:
"Maturity and The Cross: In
Health, Illness, and Death"
..... Gary Bradley, Jr.

1:50-2:35
"Essentials To Maturity:
Love"..... Winfred Clark

2:40-3:25
"Maturity In Christ: Marriage,

Divorce, and Remarriage"
..... Roger Jackson

[3:30-6:30 Break For Dinner]

6:30-6:55 Congregational Singing
..... Various Directors

7:00-8:00
"Maturity In Christ and The
Temptation To Use Illegal Drugs"
..... Dick Weber

In Season

John Gipson

"Autumn to winter, winter into spring, spring into summer, summer into fall -- so rolls the changing year," said D. M. Mulock. We know the order, and we have accepted it. But suppose for a moment that every year it was different. What would happen if winter followed spring? Or spring followed fall? And everything was turned topsy-turvy again the following year? What chaos would prevail! Who would know when to plant, or whether he could even expect to reap?

How do you account for the regularity of the seasons? The answer is found in a promise that God made to man: "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease" (Genesis 8:22). God said it, and we should believe it.

Yes, I have heard it said that the time is coming when you will not be able to tell summer from winter, or spring from fall -- but I don't believe that. For that to be true, God would have to break his promise. You can mark it down: We will always have our seasons -- so long as the earth remains.

But did you notice the phrase, "While the earth remains"? There is a warning in that! This earth, which looks so permanent, is not going to be here always! "The heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up" (II Peter 3:10). One day it will be the "late, great planet earth."

But back to our text: God has kept his word about the seasons! Sometimes there are extremes in the weather; but the order remains. God has been so faithful to his word that even unbelievers have come to accept it as "law." We all look for the sun to come up in the morning, and the leaves to fall in autumn. We plant in the spring and wait. We trust the seasons, and act in faith. What if someone said, "I don't believe fall will come this year. I believe it will always be summer?" Just mark it down: he will be the loser for his lack of faith. Whether he be-

lieves it or not, it's going to be!

God is faithful. You can trust his word about the seasons. . . OR ANYTHING ELSE!

—Sixth and IZARD Church of Christ, Little Rock, AR.

A Successful Dad

I may never be as clever
As my neighbor down the street;
I may never be as wealthy
As some other men I meet;

I may never have the glory
That some other men have had;
But I've got to be successful
As a little fellow's dad.

There are certain dreams I've cherished
That I'd like to see come true;
There are things that I'd accomplish
Ere my working day is through;

But the task my heart is set on
Is to guide a little lad,
And to make myself successful
As that little fellow's dad.

I may never come to glory;
I may never gather gold;
Men may count me as a failure
When my business life is told.

But if he who follows after
Shall be manly, I'll be glad,
For I'll know I've been successful
As a little fellow's dad.

It's the one job that I dream of;
It's the task I think of most;
If I'd fail that growing youngster
I'd have nothing else to boast;

For though wealth and fame I'd gather,
All my future would be sad
If I failed to be successful
As that little fellow's dad. -- Selected

9TH ANNUAL GUS NICHOLS WORDS OF TRUTH LECTURESHIP

SEPTEMBER 25 THRU 29, 1988

THEME: "MATURING IN CHRIST"

Sixth Avenue Church Of Christ — 1501 6th Avenue
JASPER, ALABAMA 35501
205-384-6446 Or 387-1670



Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, m
Words of Truth and

th the

is 26:25

(USPS 691-760)

VOLUME 23

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1988

NUMBER 36

"Simplicity That Is In Christ"

We are living in a time when religious leaders of the denominations are perverting the gospel of Christ, and are presenting what is complex, mysterious, hard to be understood. They use big words in their sermons to impress the people with their great worldly learning. They quote from modern preachers of general world renown and recognition to prove they are following "One of the right ways to heaven," and that they are members of "One of the right religious bodies, or churches."



Gus Nichols
1892-1975

UNDER SATAN'S INFLUENCE

Paul said of the Corinthians, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (II Corinthians 11:3). Christianity is a "simple" matter of faith in Christ and obedience to him. It is not some complex system of such a nature that the less you know about it, the more certain you can see that it is right. Conversion is not a hypnotic tantrum, nor an epileptic-like experience. One does not have to "go crazy" in order to become a Christian. It does not require nine months for one to "be born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:5; I Peter 1:22-23).

God's command to mother Eve to not eat of the forbidden fruit was a simple and easily-understood command. There was nothing "deep" or "mysterious" about her duty in the case. "But the Serpent beguiled Eve, through his subtlety," and enticed her away from the "simplicity that is in Christ" (II Corinthians 11:3; Genesis 2:17; 3:1-19).

"SIMPLICITY THAT IS IN CHRIST"

Our text speaks of the "simplicity that is in Christ" (II Corinthians 11:3). Christ lived a simple life. His doctrine was so simple that "The common people heard gladly" (Mark

12:37). He was a master teacher because of his simplicity of instruction. He used parables to simplify his truth so men could understand it and apply it to their hearts and lives. Christ requires of men "simple, trusting faith" -- the faith which motivates men to do what he says, without question, and trust his promises (Luke 6:46). Christ said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Yes, his truth can be known, and can be so applied unto our hearts and lives as to make us free.

GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS SIMPLE

The gospel of Christ is the simple and beautiful story of Christ and his gracious provisions for our salvation. Its facts -- the death, burial, and resurrection, of Christ according to the prophecies of the scriptures, and for our sins -- is a simple, powerful, and saving message adapted to the needs of all men (I Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 1:16; Mark 16:15-16). The "exceeding great and precious promises" of the gospel are also adapted to our abilities to grasp them, and by them to be transformed into the likeness of the Master, and to make us "partakers of his divine nature" (II Peter 1:4). Three thousand believed and obeyed this gospel on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). They were converted by one sermon which was a masterpiece of simplicity.

SIMPLE TERMS OF SALVATION

The conditions of salvation, or forgiveness of sins, are very simple. Those who heard the gospel all heard the same truth, believed and obeyed it the same hour of the day, or same hour of the night; and all such were saved by the same Lord, and were by him added to his church. They had no divisions and denominations among them. They were just Christians, and Christians only. The word of God was their guide, their only rule of faith and practice. They wore the same names, and were one, were united -- as Christ and prayed that all believers might be (John 17:20-21). Faith, repentance, confession and baptism, were the conditions of forgiveness of sins, and were the terms of church membership and fellowship. The same steps taken to make them Christians, made them members of the church also. There was no such thing

as being saved at one time, and by one process of obedience, and then later becoming members of the church by some other terms or process (Acts 2:36-47).

"SIMPLICITY THAT IS IN CHRIST"

The church of that day was a simple church. There was the "church" in the general sense, which included all the saved (Ephesians 5:23-37; 2:16; Acts 2:47). Then there were the local congregations called "churches of Christ," "churches of God," etc. (Romans 16:16; I Corinthians 11:16). These local congregations had no ecclesiastical organization tying the congregations together under some human head, overseer, etc., with earthly headquarters. Each congregation was independent and autonomous (self-governing), under the oversight of its own elders and with its own servants, called deacons. They had no organization larger than local congregations, having its own congregations -- and yet smaller than the whole body of Christ, which was the "church" in the general sense of the word.

Denominationalism, and all its false teachings and divisions arose many hundreds of years later, and is all contrary to the New Testament teaching and practice.

SIMPLE WORSHIP

The "Simplicity that is in Christ" demands the utmost "simplicity" in the worship of the church. Simple, earnest, fervent prayers -- not memorized, not the same things over and over every time the same leader prays -- were uttered slowly, and were distinctly worded. Prayers should be spoken loud enough for all to hear and be able to say "Amen" at the close (I Corinthians 14:16). Prayer should not be repetitious just to make it a certain length. But an audience of believers needs leaders who will be able themselves to pray what James called "the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man" (James 5:16-18).

The singing also should be "simple-- such as will make it easy for the worshipers to obey the junction requiring "making melody in your heart to the Lord," and "singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). The songs should be led

Continued on page 4

God's Wonderful Book



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
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The City Of Damascus

G. F. Raines

Damascus, the very ancient capital of Syria in Asia, is said to be the oldest continuously-populated city in the entire world. This city is renowned to the Christian primarily because it was the city in which Saul of Tarsus became a Christian. Please read Acts 22:1-16.

For many years, Damascus was a notable center of wealth, education, and power. The metal-work, silk brocades, steel sword-blades, and wooden mosaics of Damascus are famous throughout the civilized world.

Josephus, the greatest of the uninspired Jewish historians, says that Damascus was founded by Uz, the son of Aram and grandson of Shem, a son of Noah!

Some of the historic things in Damascus have been preserved and are visited by many people every year; viz., the arch of the Temple of Jupiter, the palace and harem of the early Turkish rulers, the street called "Straight," and the old wall.

Jupiter (Zeus) in ancient mythology was the god of thunder, lightning, and rain and the king of all other gods.

J. W. McGarvey says: "The street called Straight is still unmistakably identified in Damascus by its contrast with all the other streets of the city; for while all the others are very crooked, making curves or abrupt angles at intervals of from fifty to one hundred yards, this runs nearly a mile with only five slight angles."

The wall of Damascus is memorable because it frustrated the intention of certain Jews who meant to kill Paul because he had preached Christ in the synagogues just after his conversion:

"But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ. And after many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket" (Acts 9:22-25).

—Newton, MS 39345.

"Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89).

No human author, publisher, or editor ever planned the Bible. No official committee sat down in the beginning to map out the production schedule of the sixty-six books of the Bible. The idea was conceived only in the mind of Almighty God.

Jehovah God inspired forty different authors and editors to produce, over a 1600-year span, the original text. The same God who breathed life into man when he created Adam in his own image breathed his revelation and will into the written word.

From Genesis 1 to Revelation 22, kings and rulers, nations and empires rise and fall across this Book's pages. The Bible grew portion by portion, century by century into a progressive record of God's dealings with mankind, climaxing with the redemptive intervention of God himself for man's salvation.

Although the Holy Spirit allowed the human authors to express their unique personalities and write for the most part within their own background and experiences, the Scriptures declare in hundreds of places, "The Lord said . . . spake . . . commanded." It is God's wonderful Book!



Levi Sides

God's wonderful Book is inexhaustible. Men have drawn from the unsearchable riches of this incomparable book for centuries, yet there are more truths to be learned. It has been studied more microscopically than any other book. Thousands of commentaries have been written on it. Millions of sermons have been preached from its texts, yet it has more to offer. It is the "bread of life" and no matter how many slices we cut from it each day, there is plenty left for tomorrow. The works of men become stale and obsolete but God's Book is ever fresh and up to date. We need to store the Word of God in our hearts and use a fresh supply every day (Psalm 119:11; Matthew 4:1-6).

God's wonderful Book is unified. The Bible deals with a unified central theme: the plan of God to redeem man through Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:18).

The unique circumstances under which the Bible was penned make its unity a wonder. It was written on at least two continents and in three languages. It was completed over a period of sixteen centuries. It was penned by forty men of diversity of vocations: judges, kings, priests, prophets, patriarchs, ministers, herdsmen, scribes, soldiers, physicians, and fishermen. It was written under a variety of conditions: in tents, deserts, cities, palaces, dungeons, in time of danger and in time of joy. Isn't it a wonder that it agrees from beginning to end? There is an answer: God is the controlling mind behind it all (II Peter 1:21; I Corinthians 2:12-13).

Have you read God's wonderful Book today?

—Faulkner University, Montgomery, Alabama.

Hard Preaching

Foster L. Ramsey

Some members of the church are occasionally heard to speak of certain sermons as being "hard preaching." If the "hard preaching" is done in love, such comments should be considered as complimentary. Hard preaching is needed because sin is hard in its actions and in its results. Hard preaching is needed because the sinner's heart is hardened in its rebellion against God. Paul wrote: "Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech" (II Corinthians 3:12).

It is interesting to note the many examples of "hard preaching" recorded in the pages of the New Testament. Your attention is called to the following passages:

"But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." -- John the Baptist.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." -- Jesus Christ.

"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" -- Jesus Christ.

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." -- Peter.

"But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the prince of life, whom God

hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." -- Peter.

"Then Saul (who also is called Paul) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" -- Paul.

"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." -- Paul.

These are examples of "hard" preaching done by inspired men. It is right and essential that their lessons be applied today to the sinful activities of our present generation.

—The Getwell Reminder, 1511 Getwell Road, Memphis, TN 38111.

9TH ANNUAL

GUS NICHOLS WORDS OF TRUTH LECTURESHIP

SEPTEMBER 25 THRU 29, 1988

THEME: "MATURING IN CHRIST"

Sixth Avenue Church Of Christ

1501 6th Avenue

JASPER, ALABAMA 35501

205-384-6446 Or 387-1670

"My Decision To Receive Christ As My Saviour"

We shall quote from a tract circulated by **The Gideons International**: "Confessing to God that I am a sinner, and believing that the Lord Jesus Christ died for my sins on the cross and was raised for my justification, I do now receive and confess Him as my personal Saviour."



W. A. Holley

The foregoing quotation may sound good to many of our readers; but it does not teach the truth of God, as set forth in the Holy Bible.

Where is there a Bible example of any sinner who ever made a similar confession? We have searched the Bible, from cover to cover, but such confession can not be found. We know that all responsible human beings are sinners (Romans 3:23; 6:23). We know that Jesus' name must be confessed before men before one can be scripturally baptized (Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 8:26-39).

We know that Jesus Christ died upon the cross and was raised from the dead, but Jesus' precious blood was shed in his death (John 19:33-34). Before a sinner's sins can be washed away, the precious blood of Christ must be appropriated; unless this is true, universalism would result -- for Christ shed his blood "for every man" (Hebrews 2:9).

How does the sinner go about appropriating, or contacting, the blood of Christ? The answer is clear: Jesus shed his cleansing blood in his death (John 19:33-34), but the penitent believer must be baptized into his death, where his sins are forgiven (Romans 6:3-4). The sinner cannot reach the blood of Christ through prayer alone, or by faith alone, nor by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, nor by just being good, morally.

No man can do enough good deeds to be saved, nor can he quit enough sins to be saved (Jeremiah 10:23). The Ephesian letter states: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). Here we have two elements of salvation: Grace, God's part -- faith, man's part. Listen to Paul: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2). Notice the word **access**. What does this word mean? This word refers to "the access which we have by faith, through our Lord Jesus Christ, into grace" (Vine, p. 21).

When does the sinner by faith enter into Christ? Again, the answer is simple. In the same book, the same writer said: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4). Hence, when the sinner obeys from his heart "that form of doctrine," he is then "made free from sin," and becomes "a servant of righteousness" (Romans 6:16-18). No sinner can ever be saved short of

obedience to Christ Jesus (Hebrews 5:8-9; Matthew 7:21-23).

"I do now receive and confess Him as my personal Saviour" (From quotation under review). We have read many times John 1:11-12: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." In this text, we have the word **power**. What does it mean? (A marginal note in the K.J.V. uses "the right, or privilege"). One cannot "become" what he already "is." For example, one cannot "become married if he is already married!! The believer thus has the right or privilege to proceed with his obedience which includes repentance, confession, and baptism in water for (or, unto) remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Romans 10:9-10; I Peter 3:21). Any sinner who tries to be saved by "faith alone" is trying to be saved by a dead faith (James 2:14-26). A sinner can no more be saved by "faith alone" (a faith that does not work), than a corpse can get up and walk. We sincerely urge our readers to earnestly consider John 6:28-29; Acts 10:34-35; Galatians 5:6; I Thessalonians 1:3; Mark 16:15-16).

The tract which we are reviewing concludes with this quotation: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). We, hereby, go on record as saying, unequivocally, that we believe what is taught in John 5:24 without any reservation, whatsoever. But we do not believe what the

writer of the tract thinks this passage implies. The writer of the tract would have the sinner think that once he is saved, he is always saved, even though he dies in the act of adultery, or dies drunk (Galatians 5:19-21). "The verbs 'heareth' and 'believeth' in John 5:24 involve **linear** (continuous action); and the meaning is, "He that keeps on hearing my word and keeps on believing on him that sent me HATH eternal life so certainly in thought that it may be contemplated as already coming to pass, and it absolutely must ensue in virtue of the 'unalterable law' of the immutability of God's promises" (Woods' Commentary on John).

Eternal life, as far as we are concerned (here and now) is a promise to be received (I John 2:25). "In hope of eternal life . . ." (Titus 1:2). ". . . lay hold on eternal life . . ." (I Timothy 6:12). Eternal life comes after life's battles have been fought successfully. Jesus taught that the faithful shall receive " . . . in the world to come, eternal life" (Mark 10:30). Those who are "in Christ," having been "baptized into" him, who are led by the Spirit, shall not be condemned; but, suppose these same people backslide, walking after the flesh, shall they still be saved? (Romans 8:1-2, 14). Nay, verily!!

Jesus will be your "personal Saviour" if you will but personally believe, repent of your sins, confess Jesus' name before men, and be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (John 3:16; Luke 13:3; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 2:38).

These words are written for honest seekers of truth.

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Christian Friendship

Neal Milam

The scriptures have much to say regarding friendship. The word "friend" is mentioned 48 times in the King James Version of the Bible, and the word "friends," 47 times. Much of what is said pertains to man's relationship with his fellowman. The Bible contains sound advice for us today as we seek to live as we should, and as we (at the same time) share with others the joys and blessings of being a Christian. On this subject let us consider the following:

1. If we expect to have friends we should be friendly. "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly" (Proverbs 18:24). He must be friendly in action, not simply with vain words. True friendship is enduring, and (like love) suffers long. When we help others we help ourselves. Studies have shown that those with strong bonds of family, friends, and church have a much lower mortality rate than those without the comfort and balance of such ties.

2. We should choose friends wisely: We need to realize the tremendous impact which friends can have on our lives. Choosing worthy friends is not easy. Many lives (particularly young people) have been destroyed by the influence of friends and associates. "Do not be envious of evil men, nor desire to be with them; for their heart devises violence, and their lips talk of troublemaking" (Proverbs 24:1-2, New King James Version). "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4,

N.K.J.V.).

3. True friendships survive adversity. We all dislike "fair-weather friends." We enjoy and appreciate friends who stick with us even when things are not well with us, and even when we may have been a disappointment to them. It takes time to make and hold true friends. "Do not forsake your own friend or your father's friend" (Proverbs 27:10).

4. True friends are helpful. This may mean sharing with a friend what he needs to hear and know. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend" (Proverbs 27:6). "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart, and the sweetness of a man's friend does so by hearty counsel" (Proverbs 27:9).

5. A true friend is concerned over the spiritual welfare of others. What could be of more importance than this? What could we possibly do that would be of a greater value to a friend than studying God's word with him?

Special occasions when a congregation emphasizes attendance in Bible School, and other services of the church, offer opportunities for all of us to bring our friends with us. What a tremendous success such drives would be if:

a. Each member will attend a Bible Class.
b. Each sets himself a goal to bring at least one friend with him.

May each of us strive to accomplish this.

—Elder, Memorial Parkway Church, Huntsville, AL 35610.

The Early Church; Pattern For Growth And Unity

Harvey Porter

Every congregation that I know wants to grow and have a spirit of unity and peace. The elements of these things are found in the first paragraph of Acts chapter 6. Let us notice some of them.

First, Luke records, "Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number . . ." Do we recognize that as time

passes we are always changing? Nothing stays as it always was. With or without growth, the church is constantly faced with different challenges. We have to adapt to new situations.

Second, a problem cannot be ignored, it must be solved. "The Hellenists murmured against

the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution." The apostles called together the whole church and they faced the problem with love and openness. They selected seven men to handle the distribution of the food so the apostles could devote their time to spiritual matters.

Third, we can see that they divided up the responsibility and gave authority to the seven so that they could enlist help from the members and get the job done. There was a spirit of unity and harmony among them. "And what they said pleased the whole multitude. . ." When the church has an element in it that can never be pleased with any solution, that church can never grow and have unity. We have to work toward a common goal that will benefit the whole body.

Fourth, the apostles said, "We will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." We wonder how much time they spent in prayer. It must have been a considerable amount of time if they did not have time for this important problem. And one wonders if that was needed. After all, prayer is so intangible; serving food is so good and beneficial. We must conclude that their prayers had a great effect upon the whole body. The same is true of their preaching and teaching, the ministry of the word. Hearts are changed by the word of the Lord. Lives are made better. People love and cooperate. They grew, for Luke recorded, "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied. . ."

Isn't that exciting! It is so simple too. Growth always brings problems. But they must be faced head-on with a desire to solve, not perpetuate. All in the group have to assume responsibility and carry the load. And those who lead must be people devoted to prayer and the word.

—Montgomery Boulevard Church, Albuquerque, NM.

Are You Missing Anything?

Bob Plunket

I found a Bible sometime ago with the owner's name in it. I called him and asked him if he was missing anything. He paused and thought for a minute and said, "No, not that I know of." I am sure he checked to see if his wallet was in his pocket, looked to see if the car was in the driveway and maybe he even checked to see if the children were in their places. He never thought of his Bible.

How long would it take us to miss the refrigerator, our check book, our television, our newspaper? We miss the things we use every day. We miss the things that we depend upon. And was it not strange that his Bible was lost

for two or three weeks in the church building? Has it become a mere fixture around the house? Something we take to and from the church building and even sometimes leave behind. God's word is something like vitamins. You can't always see the vitamins but after a while you know that you are missing something. Let me tell you what you are missing.

1. You are missing the words of God. You are missing his instruction, his counsel, his warnings.

2. You are missing Jesus as the bread of life and the living water, the hidden manna. You are missing some of the greatest messages ever written on this earth: the 23rd Psalm, the prodigal son, Isaiah 53, Genesis 1.

3. You are missing the directions to a heavenly home.

4. You are missing sharing the truth of God with those most precious to you, your family.

Remember, it is not a book for dying. It is a book for living. God said with great hurt, "Can a maid forget her ornaments or a bride her attire; yet my people have forgotten me days without number" (Jeremiah 2:32). Find your Bible, dust it off, read it and live by it or you will miss the greatest offer ever made to man — Heaven!

Fourth St. Church, Tuscumbia, AL 35674.

Marriage 1700 Years Ago

Beautiful the marriage of Christians, two who are one in hope, one in desire, one in the way of life they follow, one in the religion they practice.

They are both servants of the same Master. Nothing divides them, either in flesh or in spirit.

They are two in one flesh, and where there is one flesh there is also one spirit.

They pray together, they worship together; instructing one another, strengthening one another.

Side by side they visit God's church; side by side they face difficulties and persecution, share their consolations.

They have no secrets from one another; they never bring sorrow to each other's hearts.

Unembarrassed they visit the sick and assist the needy. They give alms without anxiety.

Psalms and hymns they sing. Hearing and seeing this, Christ rejoices. To such as these He gives His peace.

Where there are two together, there also He is present; and where He is, there evil is not.

—Tertullian Third Century, A.D.

"Simplicity That Is In Christ"

Continued from page 1

at moderate speed, with 100 per cent attention focused on the meaning of the song, and with everyone singing, and worshiping in song, if at all possible. And, there is no New Testament authority for instrumental music in our worship today.

The preaching should be the simple word of God, adapted to the needs of the soul, or inner man -- not a mere lecture, or flowery speech composed of human wisdom, assertions, and the like. It should be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and presented as a life-and-death proposition, as from a dying man unto dying men and women. It should be so presented, and the content of the message should be such as would make believers, and build up the saints, without any effort to entertain the audience (Acts 14:1-3; Acts 20:20; 26-27; II Corinthians 5:11).

The supper we eat in worship should be "the Lord's supper!" To make it such, the worshipers must "discern" the dying Lord on the cross, shedding his precious blood for our souls, to save us from a devil's hell, and make it possible for us to be Christians and go to heaven some day. Everything about it should be in the utmost sincerity and simplicity

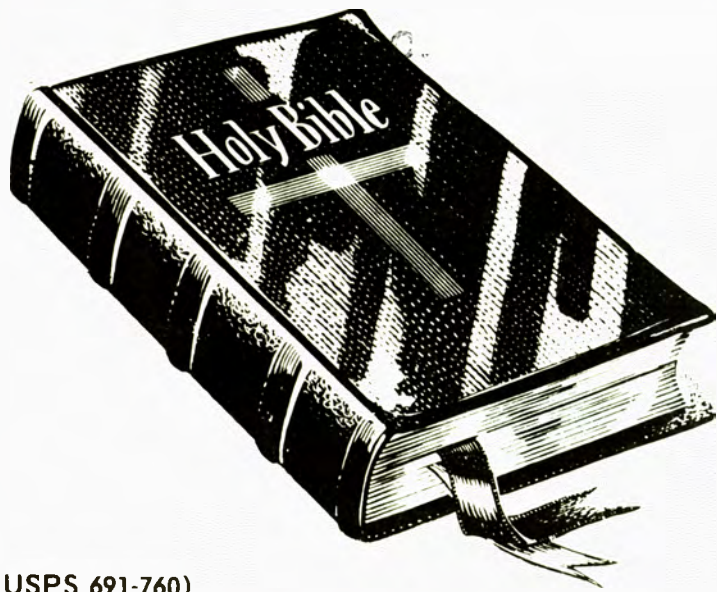
(Matthew 26; Mark 14; Luke 23; I Corinthians 11).

Our giving should not be for show, nor display, but as each "purposeth in his heart" (II Corinthians 9:7), and as he has prospered (I Corinthians 16:2; Acts 11:29-30). It must be with "liberality" --not a stingy sort of gift to merely salve a smarting conscience (Romans 12:8-9, American Standard Version). Surely, all who have just "seen" or "discerned" God's gift -- his "unspeakable gift" (II Corinthians 9:15) displayed in a proper observance of the Lord's supper --surely no one thus "seeing" Jesus die for him, would in his giving present unto the Lord that which is no sacrifice at all (II Samuel 24:24; Romans 12:1-2).

Let us keep our worship pure. --Let each shut the world out, and really worship "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24; I Corinthians 14:15). Let us keep it in the utmost "simplicity." Let us not permit Satan to corrupt our minds "from the simplicity that is in Christ" (II Corinthians 11:3).

—Via Gladly Tidings, Sixth Ave. Church, Jasper, Alabama.





(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

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:25

VOLUME 23

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1988

NUMBER 37

Talk To Yourself

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer" (Psalms 19:14).

Psalms 23 is a song without a peer. The writer talks to himself. Count the times David uses "I," "my," and "me." A strong affirmation of faith can work wonders! In the quietness of one's life the blessings of God can abide.



W. A. Holley

Man IS as he THINKS in his own heart (Proverbs 23:7). Paul, though in prison, suffering as only prisoners can, declared, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). David, though beset by Saul, "encouraged himself" (I Samuel 30:6). It is possible for one to talk himself into a better state of mind. We shall note --

(1) When you are angry talk to yourself. Anger is one of the most destructive forces available to men and women. "Anybody can become angry -- that is easy; but to be angry with the right person, and to the right degree, and at the right time, and for the right purpose, and in the right way -- that is not within everybody's power, and is not easy" (Aristotle). When angry, read Ephesians 4:26-27: "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil."

(2) When your child upsets you, stop and think how BEST to handle the problem. Talk to yourself. Don't make any rash remarks. Always keep control; be calm. Never abuse your child. Child-abuse can cause scars which will never vanish away. Ask yourself, What are you upset, disturbed, aggravated,

about? Is it worth losing control? Time is a great healer of problems.

(3) If the drinking of alcohol has become your problem, it is past time to talk to yourself. Drinking has never made a home better; where drinking is involved, there are more quarrels, more fusses, more fights, and more divorces. Drink debases and deludes its victims; it has no defense. A discovery that whiskey can be made from sawdust completes the ruin of the lush who drinks himself out of house and home: He now can drink the house! We now suggest that Proverbs 23:29-35 be carefully read. If you are addicted to alcohol, it is time to begin talking to yourself. You can do something about your problem if you but try. You are exhorted to avoid drink because of its final fatal consequences.

(4) If you have fallen into the habit of fault-finding, it is time to talk seriously about this terrible sin. Jesus warned against such a problem (Matthew 7:1-4). Of course, we are commanded to "judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24). It is always possible for one to be in "the objective case and in the kickative mood." There are those who seem to oppose anything and everything suggested by others. Of course, there are bad things, we freely admit; but why should we see nothing but the bad? Yes, there are bad apples in the barrel, but not all the apples are bad.

Some -- women and men -- who claim to be Christians, make a career of finding fault with the elders, the deacons, the song leaders, the Bible school teachers, et al; seldom do they find anything good to say about their fellow-Christians. Many of these critics do far more harm to the cause of Christ than they ever realize (Ephesians 4:31-32).

To illustrate: During the Vietnam War, a commander, when asked about a certain city, said, "The only way it could be saved was to destroy it." For shame!! Can it be that some think the only way the church of the Lord can be saved is to destroy it?? Christian, be a builder, not a wrecker! Talk to yourself.

(4) Should you develop a dark, negative attitude, talk to yourself. All improvement, both physical and spiritual, begins in the mind (Romans 12:1-2). "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Ephesians 4:23). Look down and you see mud; look up and see the stars. This writer once went aboard a great plane during a storm; the plane took off and in a few minutes there appeared the brilliance of sunshine, leaving the storm far below. We may be troubled by sickness, pain, hardships, handicaps; but remember: these, too shall pass away! (Cf. John 14:1-6).

(5) Do you find it almost impossible to cooperate with others? Sometimes there are personality conflicts, but so much as it depends on you, "live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18). "... Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:17-18). Don't turn people off. Use a little optimism, a little grace, a strong faith, and a sunny disposition to charm people. Henry Van Dyke said, "There is no personal charm so great as the charm of a cheerful temperament." Tell yourself to turn on the charm!! You can be workers together in good causes (I Corinthians 3:9; II Corinthians 6:1).

(6) Your marriage and entire family can be made better if you will but talk to yourself. Instead of talking about breaking up your home, talk about how to save it. Your family should live as a team, work as a team, attend worship services as a team, and it can survive almost any thing. Probably the most important factor that is causing a breakdown in the home today is lack of good examples. Fathers, mothers, only you can set good examples. The family united is the important factor. Families that fuss and fight, quarrel, and undermine each other, and refuse to be true to moral principles and marriage vows, are certain to fall apart (Ephesians 5:22-32; Hebrews 13:4; Mark 10:2-12).

— P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.



Words Of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

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

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The Six Most Needed Things

Jack Gray

Several years ago our brother Gus Nichols was asked what he thought were the most critical needs of the brotherhood.

1. **CONVERSION OF THE MEMBERS.** The new birth consists of more than baptism. One has to be born of the Spirit and of water. Those of us who have been baptized must have been led to believe in Jesus as the Son of God and the Lord of life. So many Christians seem to take the casual approach to Christianity. Conversion is in reality a matter of surrender of one's life and commitment to Jesus as the Lord of ourselves.

2. **REGULAR ATTENDANCE.** Yes, it takes more than attendance to be a Christian, but there is no way one can be a Christian and develop the Christ-like life without regular worship and Bible study.

3. **SANCTIFICATION.** There must be a clear-cut distinction between Christians and the world. The meshing of the church with the world is one of the great problems facing 20th-century Christianity.

4. **LIBERALITY.** The Lord's people are learning more and more about sacrifice and generosity. For the first time in our modern history, churches are planning big things in the name of the Lord. Million-dollar contributions are being given by single congregations. But it is not the special contributions that will make the church liberal in the long run. It is the commitment of regular, weekly, giving-as-prospered contributions that the church needs to develop liberality.

5. **UNITY.** Many congregations are marred by schism, faction, and disharmony. The church must believe the same thing, hope for the same thing, and work for the same goals. Programs must be so challenging that they require the unity of all to succeed.

6. **INFORMED LEADERSHIP.** Leaders must be first of all committed to what the Bible says. Leaders also need to know the people. They need to know how to lead and where to go. It is not so much "Who's-getting-to-run-the-church" as it is seeking to give pre-eminence to God.

—West Berry Church, Fort Worth, TX 76109.



Flavil H. Nichols

Misuse Of Things Religious

Michael D. Greene

During the time of Samuel's tenure as a judge of Israel, the Israelites and the Philistines were engaged in fierce and mortal combat (I Samuel 4:1-2). The Israelites did not fare well during the battle, having lost 4,000 men. When the defeat was pondered by the elders of Israel, it was decided that the ark of the covenant be brought into the camp so that it "may save us out of the hand of our enemies." The results when the battle was resumed were no better; 30,000 Israelite soldiers were killed. To make matters worse, the ark of the covenant was also captured (II Samuel 4:4-11).

The Israelites were probably confused. Why had not the presence of the ark produced victory? They had failed to realize that it was not the presence of the ark alone that had produced victory previously, but the blessing of God upon their obedience (Exodus 23:20-33). They were using the ark of God as a talisman to ward off their enemies and were not obedient to God. They had misused the ark of the covenant. God had never intended for the ark to be a sign or a guarantee of military victory. I wonder how often we are guilty of the misuse of things religious?

One thing that is surely misused today is the name Christian. The word was used in the scriptures to denote disciples, those who had obeyed the gospel (Acts 11:26; I Peter 4:16). It is a blessed name and one that should be respected -- for it was secured at great cost! Yet, it is bandied about and used so indiscriminately it has lost its meaning for many. Not all that is called "Christian" today, whether schools, churches, or people, are so.

Other words that are misused are "miracle," "gospel music," "pastor" and "church." But perhaps the most abused is the name of God and his Son, Jesus Christ. To many, these are expletives, words used merely to fill out a sentence with no regard to their meaning or intended use. The Psalmist said "holy and reverend" is his name (Psalms 111:9). We should use the name of God and his Son only in the most respectful way possible, lest we use his name in vain (Exodus 20:7).

Then there are the functions of the church that are also misused. The church is not in the business of socialization, nor politics. Yet, in this day and time it is not unusual to see the resources of the church misused to advance every social and political cause that sashays down the pike. The function of the church is to evangelize the world and edify its members. True we are to be the light and salt of the world, but the means of effecting change in this world is the preaching of the gospel, and living the Christian life before others -- not social reform and the political process.

The pulpit is also misused by many. It is not the place to air one's opinions, nor to engage in disputes, questions and strifes of words which produce envy, strife and suspicions (I Timothy 6:3-

5). Rather, it is the place to preach the word to the edification and saving of men's souls (II Timothy 3:13 - 4:5).

Finally, just as the ark was used as a talisman, so many today use all manner of religious symbols and icons in similar fashion. But no religious symbol, no matter the value of the materials from which it is made, can substitute for true obedience to the will of God. It did not work in Samuel's day; it won't work today.

All want the blessings and favor of Almighty God. The Israelites wanted it, as we do today. We should not expect him to bless us while we are obeying his will, for God will not -- and cannot -- do that which is inconsistent with his will.

Let us take care that we do not misuse things religious.

_119 4th Avenue, Columbia, TN 38401.

"We Are All Going To The Same Place Only We Are Traveling Different Roads."

Bill Dedmon

Many people have made the remark when engaged in a discussion about the church and the importance of being in the church. "Everybody is going to the same place but we are not going on the same road." Generally speaking they will explain how you could go to Memphis or Panama City or Atlanta by a number of different roads.

I used to reject the idea but now I must confess that the aforementioned statement is valid. We ARE all going to the same place but we are all traveling a different road. "As it is written, as I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God" (Romans 14:11). Paul said, ". . . we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. . ." (II Corinthians 5:10).

It is true that we are all going to the same place! Judgment! We will all go to the same place but we will not ALL stay in the same place; "before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another . . ." (Matthew 25:32). A person can travel any road he chooses, in fact the broad road is so broad that it will accommodate all philosophies of life and one following the broad road will arrive at the judgment. The narrow road is limited to only those things taught in God's word. We must obey the will of God and in so doing we will hear: "Well done, good and faithful servant. . ."

—Ridgedale Reminder, 1005 Dodds Ave. Chattanooga, TN 37404.

What About "The Temptation Of Christ"?

David Courington

A great amount of controversy has surrounded the movie, "The Last Temptation Of Christ." It has been reported that Jesus is portrayed as having lustful thoughts or dreams, among other things. Had he lusted after women in his heart, by his own teaching (see Matthew 5:28), he would have been guilty of sin. Such a portrayal is indeed blasphemous. However, we need to know that Jesus was tempted in every form, but he never gave in. Let us see what the Bible has to say about Jesus' temptation.

Hebrews 4:15 says, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." It is obvious that Jesus was tempted, but note the phrase, "yet without sin." He never gave in to the temptation to tell a lie to avoid troubles, nor to look at a woman to lust after her, nor do any other sinful thing.

Jesus was, according to this text, tested "in all points" like we are. He had feelings like we do and desires as you and I. He had to often let his desire to do the Father's will override his own appetites. He once told his disciples, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations" (Luke 22:28). So we can see that his temptations were not just a one-time thing, but rather continued during his whole lifetime.

We read of a specific time when Jesus was tempted of the Devil, in Matthew 4:1-11. The temptation here falls neatly into the categories that

I John 2:16 gives, which are: "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." First, Jesus was tempted to turn stones to bread. This was an appeal to a desire of the flesh. Jesus was hungry, for the text says that he had fasted for forty days, and afterward "hungered." Satan tends to tempt man at his weakest point, not his strongest. He tried to take advantage of Jesus' weakened physical condition to get him to give in to him. Jesus refused, saying: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." It would have been easy for Jesus to have given in at this point; but he did not.

Then Satan tried to get Jesus to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple to prove that the angels would really take care of him. The Devil even quoted a scripture here; but Jesus knew that Satan was using it for his own selfish interest. Jesus replied to this temptation to pride by saying, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Finally, Satan took Jesus upon a high mountain and showed him the kingdoms of the world, and told Jesus if he would just fall down and worship him, he would give him all of this. This was a temptation of the lust of the eyes. Jesus was equal to this test also, and replied: "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Jesus never gave in to a single temptation, despite

his weakened condition. In each instance Jesus used a scripture to answer the Devil's test.

Aren't you thankful that Jesus was tempted in every way that we are, yet never gave in, so that he might be our perfect Saviour. You and I should respond by seeking a way to escape our every temptation. I Corinthians 10:13 says, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer (allow) you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

P.O. Box 160, Mulga, AL 35118.

Don't Drop My Name From The Roll"

B. B. James

Have you ever noticed how much importance many attach to a roll book? "No I don't want you to take my name off the roll." This is said in spite of the fact that they never or rarely darken the door of the church building. I have the church directory in front of me even now and if it were not so sad it would be amusing how many people we have "on roll." Some evidently think that so long as their names are in this directory they are in good standing. We should know that the roll book is merely a register of names that we keep so that all of us may know those who claim to be members where they live. God keeps a record in heaven of his own whether their names are written in our roll book or not. The fact that we have one's name in our book, does not, within itself, mean that God has enrolled that one in his, or that that person's name has not been blotted out.

As I look through our book I see that it is weighted down with an awful lot of "deadwood." When Paul was sailing to Rome and ran into a severe storm, one of the first things they did was to lighten the ship by getting rid of the excess weight. I wonder about the "Old Ship of Zion." Do you suppose it would sail better and accomplish more without so many who only want their names on "the roll?"

A person asked a friend of mine if another person was a member of the church where he preached. The preacher replied, "That person is an unfaithful Christian." "That person" learned about it and was upset and came to said preacher very unhappy because of what he had said. The preacher asked the man, "Are you faithful?" The man replied that he was not, but indicated that he didn't want his name taken off "the roll." Those of you who claim membership in the church, of what benefit is the church to you and what do you do for the church? What do you contribute? Can you think of a more public sin than refusing to worship God at the appointed times? ("Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is . . ." Hebrews 10:25). When one refuses to assemble with the saints (even though some of them may be hypocritical) he sins against God. He departs from the faith. He becomes unfruitful. It isn't necessary that one commit other sins; if he forsakes the assembly, he is a sinner.

_Paris, TN.

Why One Should Attend Every Service Of The Church

Billy Watkins

The attitude of every Christian should be that of the writer of Psalm 122:1: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." Worship is a great privilege and honor -- not some difficult chore to be performed. If every Christian will prepare his heart, worship and Bible study will become great avenues of service for the worshiper.

There are several reasons a Christian should be at every service of the church. First, to glorify God, Paul said, "For ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:20). Since we belong to God, we are to glorify him and one means of doing this is by our worship. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me" (Psalm 50:23). When one willfully forsakes an assembly of the church, he forsakes an opportunity to glorify God.

Second, a Christian will attend every service of the church to set the proper example. 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). The example of every Christian is to draw men to the Lord. Willfully forsaking the services of the church does not draw, but repels. Jesus later said, "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6). It is an offense, both to

weak members and non-Christians, to forsake the services.

Third, a Christian will attend every service to help himself grow spiritually. The Bible commands, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18). Participating in worship is a means of growing. Paul said, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). To study from God's word, to sing praises, to pray, to partake of the Lord's Supper, and to give, strengthen a Christian each time he does these acts. There is always room for God's people to grow and to learn. Ignorance of the word of God is a curse to the church. God said "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). A good knowledge of the Word will help any Christian grow, and a lack of it hinders growth.

Finally, a Christian will attend every service of the church because it is a good work, and a Christian desires to abound in good works. Paul said, "That they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works" (Titus 3:8). To "maintain" something means to be consistent in it, and the Christian must be consistent in all good works which includes worship.

Worship is not all there is to Christian living, but it is a very important part.

— Via Bulletin, 270 West Berry Street, Fort Worth, TX 76109.

What Is The Church Of Christ?

G. F. Raines

In the second chapter of Acts of Apostles we read of the establishment of the church of Christ in the great city of Jerusalem upon the first day of Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Upon that day Peter preached remission of sins in the name of Christ in obedience to the great commission that our Lord had given to his apostles before his ascension into heaven (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47).

Those who believed the gospel and obeyed it by repenting of their sins and being baptized in the name of Jesus were added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:37-47). If you hear the same gospel today, believe it as the multitude of Jews did on that day of Pentecost and obey it as they obey it, the Lord will likewise add you to his church—the church against which the gates of hell shall not prevail (Matthew 16:18); because “God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34-35).

The church of Christ is composed of people who have done what the three thousand persons did on the day of Pentecost; and have consequently been added to the church to which they were added -- the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:20-23; Colossians 1:18). As members of the body of Christ, we have organized congregations like the congregations that are called “churches of Christ” (Romans 16:16) in the New Testament. We worship as the first-century Christians worshiped (John 4:24) and we engage in the same work in

which the first-century church engaged (Acts 6:1-6; Ephesians 4:14-16; I Timothy 3:15). The church of Christ of today is, therefore, not a denominational religious organization; it is a reproduction of the church of which we read in the New Testament.

Foy E. Wallace has well said: “The wrong creed, the wrong doctrine, the wrong worship, the wrong organization and the wrong name could not possibly result in the right church. But the right creed, the right doctrine, the right worship, the right organization and the right name, for a like reason, cannot be the wrong church.”

We solemnly urge you to investigate the church of Christ in your community in the light of the teaching of the Bible concerning the church that Jesus built.

The church of Christ refuses to be governed by human creeds and confessions of faith because:

1. They divide believers by enjoining tests of fellowship apart from the gospel of Christ.
2. They are unnecessary. By the holy Scriptures we are “thoroughly furnished unto all good works (II Timothy 3:16-17).
3. They are uninspired products of theological speculation.

Mr. James Alexander Haldane of Edinburgh, Scotland, has well said: “Man-made creeds of any nature, whether they be pronouncements of the Pope at Rome, the Augsburg Confession of the great Martin Luther, the Thirty-nine Articles, or

the Westminster Confession of Faith of our own John Knox, serve no purpose except to bind men to the opinions of other men.”

The gospel of Christ, for the following reasons, is the only rule of faith and practice to which we adhere:

1. Christ has all authority (Matthew 28:18).
2. Christ is the only lawgiver (James 4:12).
3. By the knowledge of Christ our faith is established in the wisdom of God (I Corinthians 2:1-5).
4. Christ is the head of the church (Ephesians 1:20-23; Colossians 1:18).
5. We are complete in Christ (Colossians 2:10).
6. All that we do is to be done in the name of Christ (Colossians 3:17).
7. It is sinful to go beyond the doctrine of Christ (II John 9).

We should study the word of God daily because, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death (Proverbs 14:12). The Bereans “were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so (Acts 17:11).

The church of Christ in your vicinity cordially invites you to attend its services.

_P.O. Box 97, Newton, MS 39345

After Baptism What Am I To Do?

Wendell Winkler

(1) I AM TO WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE. Being “buried with him by baptism into death . . . even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). The man who has been born of God does not continually (commit) living that old life of sin characteristic of him before his conversion (I John 3:9; Romans 6:1, 2). Such obtains on the basis of his genuine repentance (II Corinthians 7:10; Hebrews 6:1).

(2) I AM TO DESIRE THE SINCERE MILK OF THE WORD. “As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (I Peter 1:22-23). This means I will read (I Timothy 4:13), study (II Timothy 2:15) and meditate upon (I Timothy 4:15) God’s eternal Word.

(3) I AM TO BRING GLORY TO THE NAME OF CHRIST. Though I may suffer as a Christian, I am to glorify God in this name (I Peter 4:16). I am to never so live as to bring shame upon this high and holy name. Alexander the Great conquered the world and wept because there was no more to conquer. But, he had a coward, with his name within his ranks. Alexander called this man unto his presence one day and sternly said, “You change your way of living or you change your name!” We wear the name of Christ (Christian). We should live worthily of it. Otherwise, let us not hypocritically thus be identified!

(4) I AM TO CONTINUE STEADFASTLY. Of those who were baptized on Pentecost it is written, “And they continued steadfastly . . .” (Acts 2:42). I am to be “steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (I Corinthians 15:58). I am not to be in and out, on and off, up and down, and hot and cold, spasmodic, irregular, hit and miss in the Lord’s

work. Inconsistent living will not get the job done.

(5) I AM TO SEEK THOSE THINGS THAT ARE ABOVE. “If ye then be risen (referring back to having been risen from our burial with Christ in baptism, Colossians 2:12, with Christ seek those things which are above . . . set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:1-2). The Christian’s interest and affections are not only to run horizontal but vertical! Our Father is in Heaven (Matthew 6:9). Our citizenship is in Heaven (Matthew 6:19-21). Truly, then, we are to seek those things that are

above, setting our affection on things above.

(6) I AM TO TELL OTHERS ABOUT THE SAVIOUR. Immediately upon his conversion Paul shared Christ with others (Acts 9:20). Upon finding Christ, Andrew and Philip told Peter and Nathaniel (John 1:40-51). We have been won to win, saved to save, converted to convert, discipled to disciple. “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).

Fortner University Montgomery, AL 36193.

In Season

John Gipson

“While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease” (Genesis 8:22).

“Autumn to winter, winter into spring, summer into fall—so rolls the changing year,” said D.M. Mulock. We know the order, and we have accepted it. But suppose for a moment that every year it was different. What would happen if winter followed spring or spring followed fall? And everything was turned topsy turvy again the following year? What chaos would prevail! Who would know when to plant, or whether he could even expect to reap?

How do you account for the regularity of the seasons? The answer is found in a promise that God made to man. “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.” God said it and we believe it.

Yes, I have heard it said that the time is coming when you will not be able to tell summer from winter, or spring from fall, but I don’t believe it. For that to be true God would have to break His promise. You can mark it down. We will always

have our seasons -- as long as the earth remains.

But did you notice the phrase, “While the earth remains”? There’s a warning in that. This earth, which looks so permanent, is not going to be here always. “The heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up” (II Peter 3:10). One day it will be the “late, great planet earth.”

But back to our text. God has kept his word been so faithful to his word that even unbelievers have come to accept it as “law.” We all look for the sun to come up in the morning, and the leaves to fall in autumn. We plant in the spring and wait. We trust the seasons and act in faith. What if someone said, “I don’t believe fall will come this year. I believe it will always be summer?” Just mark it down; he will be the loser for his lack of faith. Whether he believes or not, it’s going to be.

God is faithful. You can trust His word about the seasons. . . .OR ANYTHING ELSE!

—Sixth and Izzard, Little Rock, Arkansas.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am no
Words of

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acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1988

NUMBER 38

The Conversion Of Saul

W. A. HOLLEY

Saul (later called Paul) is one of the greatest characters of all time. One should read Acts 9, Acts 22, and Acts 26 in order to see the complete picture of this man's conversion to Jesus Christ.

Here is a man who changed religions—he gave up the Jews religion for the religion of Christ (Galatians 1:13-14; James 1:27, q. v.). Actually, Saul became a friend and member of the church which he had once sought to destroy (Galatians 1:23). Verily, his conversion was dramatic and electrifying, indeed!!

WHAT OF SAUL'S CHARACTER?

Before his conversion to Christ, he was a good moral and religious man (Philippians 3:6). Saul was not an immoral man; rather, he endeavored to always have a good conscience before God and man (Acts 23:1; 24:16; 26:9-11).

One of Saul's problems was that he did not know the religion he was promoting had already gone out of date (Colossians 2:14-17). Today, no person can be saved through obedience to the demands of the Jews' religion (John 14:1-6). While persecuting Christians, he was ignorant of the gospel of Christ (I Timothy 1:13). While persecuting Christians, though zealous of the law of Moses, he was "chief of sinners" (I Timothy 1:13-15; Cf. Philippians 3:6).

Saul, before his conversion to Christ, made a determined effort to completely destroy that church which Jesus Christ established (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2:1-4; 36-38, 41-42, 47; Galatians 1:23; Acts 9:1-2; 26:9-11). One can have a good conscience while promotion a false religion (Proverbs 14:12; John 16:2). In his madness, Saul made "havock" of the church of Christ. What does the word havock mean? It means, according to Vine, "to destroy, ravage, lay waste. . ." All of this action

was done by Saul, against the Lord's church, while he (Saul) was yet a sinner (I Timothy 1:13-15).

WHY THE LORD APPEARED TO SAUL?

The Lord Jesus did not appear to Saul to save him apart from the preached word of God. One does not have to see the Lord to be saved (Cf. I Peter 1:8; I Corinthians 15:8). It was necessary for Saul to see the Christ that he might qualify to be an apostle, thus becoming a "witness" of Jesus' resurrection (Acts 1:21-22; 26:16-18). The apostle Paul wrote: "And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (I Corinthians 15:8). What do these words mean? Well, Saul was "born out of due time" for seeing the Lord in the ordinary way before his ascension. Since we cannot become apostles, it is not necessary for us to see the Lord.

MUST SINNERS SEE A LIGHT?

The light that Saul saw was at "noon" or at "midday." He saw no light in the darkness of night. Saul was still a sinner even though he had seen a light. After seeing the light, he asked, "Who art thou?" (Acts 9:5-6). He did not believe until after he had heard Jesus' reply. Jesus answered, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. . ." Acts 9:5). Faith results from hearing God's word (Romans 10:17).

Seeing a light as did Saul is no part of God's converting process. Saul was not saved until he obeyed the complete will of God (Hebrews 5:8-9; Romans 6:17-18; 6:3-4). Special experiences of grace, feelings, or other acts (imagined, or real) do not belong to God's law of pardon. Any so-called experiences, separate and apart from the word of God, are unscriptural (Romans 1:16; Hebrews 4:12).

WHAT SAUL DID TO BE SAVED

We shall permit the Holy Bible to answer: "Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am

Jesus whom thou persecutest. . ." "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:5-6). Notice the word "must."

Saul was brought into the city of Damascus, where he "was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink" (Acts 9:9). Acts 9:11 tells us that Saul prayed; but he was not saved directly in answer to prayer. How do we know? Because Ananias was sent to tell Saul what to do to be saved. When Ananias came to Saul, what did he tell him to do?

Again, we shall permit the scriptures to answer: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 9:10-19; 22:16).

Is a sinner saved by baptism only? Indeed, he is not!! No gospel preacher ever preached such a doctrine!! A sinner cannot be saved by "baptism only," any more than a sinner can be saved by "faith only" (John 3:16, 36, ASV.), or by "repentance only" (Acts 17:30-31), or by "confession of Jesus' name only" (Matthew 10:32-33). Rather, when the truth of God's word is summed up, a sinner is saved by faith, plus repentance, plus confession of Jesus' name, plus baptism.

Paul argues that he was baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27). Did Paul tell the truth regarding his own salvation? Salvation is in Christ (II Timothy 2:10); but he was baptized into Christ so that he might partake of that salvation. Yes, Paul was saved by faith (Romans 5:1-2); but he was, by faith, baptized into Christ, that he might be saved by faith. One cannot be "justified by faith" out of Christ. We urge our readers to follow Paul's example and become Christians today.

— P. O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Jesus, The Son Of God

G. F. RAINES



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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God's Wisdom In A Mystery

NICKY FAUGHT

Paul wrote a great deal in I Corinthians concerning human wisdom and the foolishness of trusting in human wisdom. He stated his determination to not preach in words of human wisdom lest the faith of his listeners should rest on the wisdom of men (I Corinthians 2:4-5). He then gives a treatise on the wisdom of God that the "mature" of all ages will appreciate. The "mature" are those who humbly receive and trust in the wisdom of God, no matter how "foolish" in may seem to men.

Paul specifically speaks of God's "wisdom in a mystery." In Ephesians 3:6 he elaborates on the definition of this "mystery." There he says that it is that the Jews and Gentiles are fellow members of the body (the church) and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ through the gospel (i.e., the death, burial, and resurrection - the crucifixion and gospel of I Corinthians I and I Corinthians 15:1-4).

Paul says several things about the wisdom of God.

(1) God's wisdom was not of the Jewish age (verse 6). The Jewish age was led by materialistic men of pride. The age itself was governed by a law of works that could not save, and was misused by these leaders.

(2) God's wisdom was hidden in this mystery (verse 7). We defined "mystery" above. The word mystery does not denote the "weird," as it perhaps does today. Vines says that it refers to that which is "outside of the range of unassisted natural understanding, and can only be known by Divine revelation to those illumined by the Holy Spirit." Thus this mystery did not deal with secret or magical arts, etc. God's "mystery" of salvation

Continued on page 3

All penitent believers who have been baptized into Christ are sons of God (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:26-27, A.S.V.); but Jesus, having been miraculously begotten by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (Matthew 1:18-25), was (and is), uniquely, the Son of God.

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: Some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But 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 art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" Matthew 16:13-19).

If Jesus were not the Son of God, he was an imposter, because he said in many instances that he is the Son of God. If Jesus were an imposter, he was not a good man. It is universally admitted by those who deny the truth of the Bible that Jesus is a good man. It is grossly inconsistent to admit that Jesus is a good man and at the same time deny that he is the Son of God.

Jesus made the evidence that he is the Son of God absolutely impregnable forever by his

glorious resurrection from the dead by the working of "the mighty power" of God. Paul says that God "declared (him) to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4).

Other proofs which declared Jesus to be the Son of God are (1) his matchless teaching (Matthew 7:28-29); (2) his miracles (John 3:2; 20:30-31); and (3) his sinless life (Hebrew 7:22-26).

The Ethiopian eunuch, desiring to be baptized into Christ, said to Philip, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:36-39).

Jesus says: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33).

Paul says: ". . . if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10.)

— Newton, MS 39345.

Girls Please Read This. . . (Boys Too!)

(ANONYMOUS)

Once I was an innocent, beautiful, virtuous, religious, and ambitious girl. I went to school and had lofty ideas of doing big things in life. I had hoped some day to have a good husband and a happy home. I loved the church. I believed the Bible. I went to Sunday School. I was much loved and admired by my friends.

Then some, whom I believed to be my friends, made me believe that my happiness depended on my being smart; that only popularity and pleasure were ideal. Too, I was told that "everybody is doing it." After seeing the ads of cigarette companies, and watching my so-called friends indulging, I was influenced

to smoke and I got a great kick from sitting in public places puffing smoke in others' faces."

Having lost my desire to go to church or to be with church folks, I went with the crowds to dance halls, road houses, and cocktail rooms. I became brazen enough to call for a drink at the bar. I learned to gamble, play the horses, and had my late hour dates.

NOW I HAVE HAD MY FLING — I'VE BEEN THE MODERN GIRL, and I have had my personal liberty, but what has it gotten me? My life has been wasted. My virtue is gone. What do I have left? Here I sit, an old, ugly, bleary-eyed blotched-faced, cigarette smoking, half-crazed, drunken sot.

REMEMBER LECTURESHIP
SEPTEMBER 25 - 29, 1988

Unfeigned Love Of The Brethren

R. W. GRAY

Peter leaves no doubt that the new birth is into a new relationship and "into" a new way of viewing one's peers. There will be in the purified life a manifestation that a radical change has occurred in the soul (John 3:3-6). "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth UNTO the unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another with a pure heart fervently, having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth" (I Peter 1:21-23, ASV).

John makes it abundantly clear that absence of manifested love for one's brother bespeaks a soul yet benighted by carnality. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death" (I John 3:14-15 KJV; cf. I Corinthians 3:1-3) The darkness yet in the soul reveals itself in hatred for one who is a member of the household of God (I John 1:6-7).

It is a sobering thought that one may submit to the primary requirements of the faith, seeking through this the purification promised, yet lose his soul at last because he could not dispel the envy and/or hatred for another of God's children. Our soul would be in no greater jeopardy if we murder our neighbor than it is when we seek to harm and/or destroy a brother through envy (I John 3:16-17). This sin is one therefore that must be avoided at all cost.

Love (agapao), whether for God or man, can be known only from the actions it prompts. Our love should have as its primary object the God who first loved us (I John 4:10-11). Love for God must express itself first and foremost in implicit obedience to his commandments (John 14:15, 23). Love for brethren likewise expresses itself in action toward them (I John 3:17, 23). Love that is in word only is a feigned love that will not assure our hearts before God (I John 4:19-20). Because of the importance of this matter, the Holy Spirit has spoken often to the point of it. The so-called "love chapter" seeks to identify love's qualities with such clarity that the reader cannot be left in doubt as to whether it is manifested in his or her life. Paul says love suffers long, and is kind. Love does not envy, brag or boast. It does not manifest itself in a rude or arrogant manner, nor does it seek to have its own way. Love is not easily provoked, is not resentful of others, nor does it think "evil" of its object. It never rejoices in the wrong but always in the right. It bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things. It is a never-failing quality (I Corinthians 13:4-8). And, O how it is needed among the people of God in these trying times. Do we possess it, brethren, by divine definition?

The inimitable Guy N. Woods, in his commentary regarding the fervency of the love we must manifest, observes, "'Fervently,' from ektenos, intensely, describes an emotion that is vivid and forceful, earnest and pointed. . . Children of God are not to love one another indifferently, or loosely, as an unstrung instrument, but with the full tension of heart-strings drawn out fully." (Wood's Commen-

tary on First Peter, p. 50). A derivative of the same word is translated "earnestly" in Luke 22:44 in reference to Jesus' heart-rending plea for his very life in the garden of Gethsemane. How truly "fervent," then, is this unfeigned love to be!

God's love for us, our response to his love, and an unfeigned love for brethren rid the heart of all fear (I John 4:18). If you love me I do not fear that you will harm me. God loves me, and will do what is best for me at all times (Hebrews 13:5; Romans 8:28). Fear of God's wrath upon the disobedient is quelled in the knowledge that he has brought us from death unto life; and our love for one another guarantees his protection (Hebrews 12:28-29; I John 4:18; 3:14; Colossians 1:12-13; 3:6).

A mistaken view of love is that it manifests a mushy sentimentality to the degree it ignores all sin and error in the life of others. Jesus, our example in love, warned, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: . . ." (Revelation 3:19). Love is sometime manifested in the discipline of its object (Proverbs 13:24).

Love for the fallen will move one to "restore such an one in the spirit of meekness (Galatians 6:1). Love for souls and for truth will move one to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 4:1-6). If you love your brother or sister who is in sin and unfaithfulness, you will "snatch them out of the fire; hating even the garments spotted by the flesh" (Jude 22-23).

"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. . . And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment" (I John 3:18-23).

— 563 McGukin Rd., Bremen, Ga. 30110.

Wisdom In A Mystery

Continue from page 2

was so unique that no one could know it, or discover it without God revealing it. Thus it was hidden to men in the Patriarchal and Mosaic Ages. Read Ephesians 3:3-6, 10.

(3) God's wisdom was predestined (verse 7). God planned this mystery before the beginning. He planned to hide it, and then reveal it at the proper time (Galatians 5:4. See Ephesians 3:11; I Peter 1:19-20).

(4) God's wisdom was misunderstood by the Jewish Age rulers (verse 8). Obviously, if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord. They acted in ignorance (Acts 3:17); but they were not innocent.

(5) God's wisdom was prophesied (verse 9). Paul quotes from Isaiah. This quotation is often interpreted as a prediction of heaven. It seems to refer, however, to the same hidden truths concerning this mystery that Paul has referred to already. Thus, Isaiah was predicting these truths that would be revealed in the church.

(6) God's wisdom was revealed through the Holy Spirit (verses 10-11). Read Ephesians 3:3). Since this mystery could not be understood by men on their own, it had to be revealed by God. It had to be an apocalypse (Greek for uncovering).

(7) God's wisdom was revealed specifically to the apostles (verse 12). We must respect the role of the apostles in revealing this mystery to men. The apostles only had the inspiration of the Holy Spirit needed to reveal this mystery (John 16:13) The revelation would be made once, for all time (Jude 3).

(8) God's wisdom was revealed by apostles through verbal inspiration (verse 13). Many feel that the Bible has inspired parts. Some feel that the apostles' thoughts were inspired but that their words were not. Paul plainly

states that the apostles were inspired word for word. Every word is inspired. In Galatians 3:16 Paul even made an argument based on the singular form of the word "seed." We should either take the entire Bible as inspired or that it is not inspired at all. Others feel that the original words have been altered so much by translations and copies that we cannot depend on the Bible. That is a myth! The Bible has been copied and translated many times; but we have hundreds of manuscripts, copies, and segments of the writings of early Christians from which to develop our best translations today. They are not the exact originals, but they are surely very close!

(9) God's wisdom was understandable by those who would humbly accept this inspired message (verse 14-16). Calvinists used this passage to say that a man could not understand the spoken or written word unless the Spirit enters and prepares hearts first to be able to understand it. Thus a man needs (?) the direct intervention of the Spirit even today just to be able to understand what he reads or hears from the word. Further study shows this to be false. The book of Acts gives several conversion examples. In each case people heard the word and then chose whether to believe or not. The word spoken was by direct inspiration; but there was no direct operation of the Holy Spirit apart from the word on the heart of the listener.

Thus we conclude Paul's treatise on the revealed wisdom of God. The mature today will accept this revelation and all the inspired teaching of the apostles as the divine standard in matters of religion. The immature will continue to trust in their own wisdom, even as those in Paul's day.

The Secret Of Contentment

"And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (I Timothy 6:8).

I am told that in a cemetery in England stands a grave marker with this inscription: "She died for want of things." Alongside that stone is another which reads: "He died trying to give them to her."



Levi Sides

In a laughable yet tragic manner, these epitaphs suggest the folly of living and working only for this world's goods. Whenever one is so enamored by earthly possessions that acquiring them becomes his primary goal, he encounters frustration and disappointment. This is true because man is a spiritual being and can never be content with material fortunes. The old Cracker Jack slogan, "The more you eat the more you want" reminds us of an important truth: People can easily develop an insatiable appetite for things, while neglecting to fulfill the real cravings of their hearts with the "bread of heaven." I have yet to meet an unbeliever who has amassed great wealth and doesn't want more. Riches simply do not satisfy, and the more a man gets the more he wants! "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase" (Ecclesiastes 5:10).

The person who knows the Lord and whose affection is centered upon "things above" (Colossians 3:1) can find perfect contentment even with the bare necessities of life. That is why the great apostle Paul could write to Timothy, "... having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (I Timothy 6:8). That is a rough recommendation. How do we translate this advice into action? Try these guidelines:

1. Don't over-estimate material possessions! Many conclude that material abundance is the abundant life. That is a false conclusion. Jesus said: "... A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). Our affluent age is prime proof of this truth. Perhaps no similar amount of space in the world can claim more combined wealth than Beverly Hills, California. Has prosperity provided contentment for its residents?

2. Don't fret over what you DON'T have! One day Ahab pouted into his palace. Flinging himself across his bed, he turned his face to the wall and refused to eat. What was wrong? He wanted to buy a certain vineyard and the owner would not sell. Ahab was a wealthy man! But, all he could think about was this vineyard he did not have. Many are content with their property until they focus envious eyes on a choice possession of another.

3. Don't overlook what you DO have! Contrast what you are with what you might have been but for the grace of God. Stop looking at the things you don't have long enough to focus on the things you do have! Do you have a

regular job, reasonable health, loving family, plenty to eat, sufficient clothing? The majority of earth's citizens can't claim such an impressive inventory!

What are your priorities in life? Have you discovered the secret of true contentment? (School of Biblical Studies, Faulkner University, Montgomery, Alabama).

"We Are All Going To The Same Place Only We Are Traveling Different Roads"

BILL DEDMON

Many people have made the remark when engaged in a discussion about the church and the importance of being in the church. "Everybody is going to the same place but we are not going on the same road." Generally speaking they will explain how you could go to Memphis or Panama City or Atlanta by a number of different roads.

I used to reject the idea but now I must confess that the afore mentioned statement is valid. We are all going to the same place but we are all traveling a different road. "As it is written, as I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." (Romans 14:11) Paul said, "... we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ..." (II Corinthians 5:10).

It is true that we are all going to the same place! Judgment! We will all GO to the same place but we will not all STAY in the same place; "before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another..." (Matthew 25:32). A person can travel any road he chooses, in fact the broad road is so broad that it will accommodate all philosophies of life and one following the broad road will end up at the judgment. The narrow road is limited to only those things taught in God's word. We must obey the will of God and in so doing we will hear: "Well done, good and faithful servant..."

— Ridgedale Church Reminder, 1005 Dodds Avenue., Chattanooga, TN 37404.

NINTH ANNUAL Gus Nichols - Words Of Truth LECTURESHIP

SEPTEMBER 25-29, 1988

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Words Of — +h

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

—Acts 26:25

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All Men Are Amendable To The Authority Of Christ

[Editor's Note: James T. Heron, an elder in the Brookside church, gave me a copy of some material which he and George Shaw had circulated in the Birmingham area. These two brethren acknowledge in the printed copy that much of this material "comes from a workshop held in Dalton, Georgia," stating that "Permission was given us to make this arrangement by: Southeastern Biblical Institute, Atlanta, Georgia, for the purpose of teaching on the subject MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE." Brother Heron granted permission to run this entire booklet in our paper. This issue of Words Of Truth is devoted entirely to this theme, and will be concluded next week. Copies of the 16-page booklet may be obtained from the address at the close. -Flavil H. Nichols, Editor.]

An argument presently being advanced relative to the divorce and remarriage teaching of Jesus in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, is that only Christians (*i.e., those within the kingdom of Christ*) are subject to his teachings. No one, according to this view, is subject to (*nor can be in violation of*) the authority of Christ as expressed in his teachings, until he/she becomes a Christian (*i.e., submits himself to Christ's authority and becomes submissive to his teachings*).

The Context of Matthew 5:32 and 19:9

During the recent discussion concerning Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, the argument was made that Jesus was not talking to unbelievers in either of these contexts, and consequently, his words there have no application to the non-Christian (*i.e., a citizen of the kingdom of Satan*); rather, they apply only to the Christian (*i.e., a citizen of the kingdom of Christ*). To begin with, in the context of Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, Jesus was addressing an audience which contained not a single Christian, as there were no Christians until after the resurrection of Christ and the proclamation of that grand fact

on the day of Pentecost (33 A.D.). Thus, if the argument is valid that this teaching applies only to those to whom it was immediately delivered, then it would be applicable only to those who are not Christians, as non-Christians composed the audience in the context of Matthew 5:32 and 19:9.

Of course, such a line of reasoning is false; Jesus' own language mitigates against such a view. He clearly enjoins his teaching of Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 on all persons (*believers and unbelievers alike*) by the use of the universal term "everyone" (*Matthew 5:32*), and "whosoever" (*Matthew 19:9*). It is not "Every Christian that putteth away his wife . . ." here in Matthew 5:32, but "everyone" (*i.e., all persons - a universal quantifier*).

All Authority in Heaven and on Earth

The fact that Jesus, as God incarnate, possesses universal authority over all men seems a strange doctrine to some, but such is his own claim as evidenced by his words of Matthew 28:18, "All authority has been given unto me in heaven and on earth." And it logically follows that if all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him, then all men on earth (*believers and unbelievers alike*) are amendable (*subject to*) his authority. The implications drawn from this truth, stated in logical form, are as follows:

Major Premise: All men (*Christians and non-Christians alike*) are amendable to the authority of Christ as expressed and delineated in the totality of New Testament teaching.

Minor Premise: John Smith (*a non-Christian*) and Bill Jones (*a Christian*) are men (*members of the class designated as "man."*)

Therefore: John Smith (*a non-Christian*) and Bill Jones (*a Christian*) are amendable and

delineated in the totality of New Testament teaching.

The evident truth drawn from this piece of reasoning is this: what is wrong for Bill Jones (*a Christian*) is also wrong for John Smith (*a non-Christian*); conversely, what is right for Bill Jones (*a Christian*) is also right for John Smith (*a non-Christian*). If an action (*i.e., divorce for any cause and remarriage*) is wrong for Bill Jones (*a Christian*) because of the teachings of Jesus, then the same action is wrong for John Smith (*a non-Christian*) because of the teachings of Jesus, which are just as binding upon John Smith (*a non-Christian*) as upon Bill Jones (*a Christian*). That which is wrong in the eyes of God for Bill Jones is just as wrong in the eyes of God for John Smith.

Conclusion

It cannot be rationally argued nor logically established that God has one set of moral standards for the non-Christian and another set for the Christian. The moral standards inscribed in the New Testament scriptures are the standards of conduct for all men (*Christians and non-Christians alike*); and if divorce for any cause and remarriage to another is wrong for anyone, it is wrong for everyone -- if it is wrong for the Christian, it is just as wrong for the non-Christian.

A Fallacy of False Analogy

The Sermon on the Mount, recorded in Matthew chapters 5-7, is often referred to as the "Magna Charta" of the kingdom of God. It is argued that since Christ is the Lord or King over all those who are subjects of his kingdom, then those who have not submitted themselves to his Lordship are not subject to

Continued On Page 2

All Men Are Amendable To The Authority Of Christ

Continued From Page 1

of that kingdom; those of another kingdom are not subject to the laws of the United Kingdom. This analogy, however, is false in that it assumes that Christ only has authority in the realm of a limited kingdom. A "false analogy" is an analogy which is not equal in all its essential parts, but rather agrees only in some parts. The analogy we are confronted with here is a "false analogy," in that it assumes that Christ is Lord or King only over those who have submitted themselves to him. The king of the United Kingdom has authority over, and only over, the territory and/or subjects within that realm. Such is not the case with Christ. The designation of the extent of his authority spans both heaven and earth: "*All authority has been given unto me in heaven and on earth*" (Matthew 28:18.) His apostles were to go forth declaring his universal Lordship and authority, beseeching all men everywhere to cease their rebellion against the Lordship of God as manifested in Christ, to willingly commanded his apostles (Matthew 28:19-20). It is not the case that one is subject only to the laws of the kingdom to which he has submitted himself; rather, it is the case that if one is a subject of the kingdom of Satan, then he is living in rebellion against the Lordship of Christ (Cf. James 4:4; Ephesians 2:2-3). It is not the case that he is not subject to the teachings of Christ (*which are the verbal expressions of his authority*); rather, he is living in defiance of, or rebellion against the universal authority of Christ when he defies and rebels against his teachings.

Consistency Thou Art a Jewel!

Consistency in application of the whole of

the New Testament teachings readily evidences the line of argumentation we are setting down here. This can be exemplified by a study of the context surrounding the Matthew 5:32 teaching of Jesus concerning divorce for any cause and remarriage to another. Here it will readily be seen that the violation of any of these moral injunctions is just as wrong for the non-Christian as for the Christian; and defiance of, or rebellion against, these teachings constitutes a rejection of the authority of Christ on the part of the unbeliever just as much as for the believer.

The truth of this thesis follows from a consideration of the following analysis of the context of the controversial Matthew 5:32 passage: (1) It is just as wrong for a non-Christian to murder as for a Christian (Matthew 5:21); (2) so also with anger (verse 22); (3) to hold ill feelings against another (verses 23-24); (4) disagreeableness (verses 25-26); (5) to commit adultery or look lustfully upon the opposite sex (verses 27-28); (6) the eyes and hands can lead the unbeliever to sin just as much as the believer (verses 29-39); (7) putting away one's mate except for the cause of fornication, and then entering into another marriage with another, is just as wrong for the unbeliever as for the believer (verses 31-32); (8) failure to keep one's word and deceptive speech is just as wrong for the unbeliever as for the believer (verses 33-37); (9) so also with the eye for eye and tooth for tooth philosophy (verses 38-42); (10) and hating one's enemies (verses 43-48). Who is ready to step forward and argue that these matters are wrong for the believer, yet right for the unbeliever? If the unbeliever stands condemned in the sight of God, it must be because of his sins, i.e., his defiance of, or rebellion against, divine Lordship; and this Lordship stands before and confronts "all men" in the person of Jesus of Nazareth -- the Christ!

A Ludicrous Piece of Reasoning

The violations of the unbeliever against the teachings of Christ (*and consequently his authority*) renders him just as guilty of sin as the believer; and the effects of his sins must reap for him condemnation just as real and consequences just as severe as for the believer, else one becomes penalized for being a believer, and it is to the unbeliever's advantage to be an unbeliever! -- What an absurdity! As long as one remains an unbeliever (*a citizen of Satan's kingdom*) he is free to live in open rebellion against the moral teachings of Jesus (*who is God*) without being accountable for his actions: once, however, he voluntarily submits himself to the Lordship of Christ (*i.e., becomes a citizen of his kingdom*), then the very actions he once could commit freely, he may not now commit. It would seem that there is more freedom in not knowing the truth than in knowing it, and Jesus' words of John 8:31 have no validity at all! What a ludicrous

piece of reasoning!

All Men Are Amenable To The Authority Of Christ

The fact that Jesus, as God incarnate, possesses universal authority over all men seems a strange doctrine to some; but such is his own claim as evidenced by his words of Matthew 28:18: "*All authority has been given unto me in heaven and on earth.*" And it logically follows that if all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him, then all men on earth (*believers and unbelievers alike*) are amenable (*subject to*) his authority. The apostles of Christ were to go forth declaring his universal Lordship and authority, beseeching all men everywhere to cease their rebellion against the Sovereignty of God as now standing before all men in the Lordship of Christ, to willingly become his disciples and submit to all things whatsoever he had commanded (Matthew 28:19-20).

Territorial King and Cultic Deity? or Lord of Heaven and Earth?


Many views presently being advanced relative to the amenability (*and/or non-amenability*) of all men to the authority of Christ evidence a totally inadequate concept of the Lordship of Christ. In advancing the view that unbelievers are not amenable to the teachings of Christ (*the verbal expressions of his authority*), they reduce Christ's Lordship to that equivalent to a territorial king or cultic deity reigning only over those who willingly submit to him as Lord and enter into covenant relationship with him. It is the case that those in covenant with Christ are subject to his teachings; however, it is not the case that those not in covenant relations with him are exempted (*on the grounds of unbelief*) from amenability to him and his teachings. It is, rather, the case that those not submitting to his Lordship are in rebellion against his authority; else how shall they stand before him in universal judgment, if all men are not answerable to him?

Your God Is Too Small

To those holding such a view, we suggest "Your God is too small." Such limitation placed upon the Lordship of Christ is wholly unscriptural and an outright misrepresentation (*if not a rejection*) of the true identity of the Christ of the scriptures.

The New Testament scriptures clearly proclaim him "Lord." From the first apostolic sermon, through the epistles, to the close of the New Testament corpus, Jesus is proclaimed as "Lord." His Lordship is declared by his resurrection from the dead and his ascension and exaltation; but the presence of his authority as Lord may be seen throughout the four gospel records. In essence, from his baptism forward, he began to manifest his authority over the powers of evil (*Satan and unclean spirits*), over disease and death (*as manifested in his healings and*

Continued On Page 3



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All Men Are Amendable To The Authority Of Christ

Continued From Page 2

raisings from the dead), and even over the forces of nature (*as seen in the words of his disciples, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and sea obey him?"*) All submitted to his authority, with the exception of man; and it is not the case that man was in any way exempted because he refused to submit to Christ's Lordship; rather, he was condemned because of his disbelief and disobedience. Now this is the thing some of our brethren have failed to see; it can never be true that disbelief exempts one from amenability to the Lordship of Christ.

"But," someone says, "they are condemned because of their refusal to enter into covenant relationship with Christ, not because they have violated his moral teachings." Here it is argued that one is not subject to the dictates of a ruler he refuses to recognize. This is saying of one who lives within a realm where he does not recognize the authority of the Lord of the realm, if he commits acts which would be considered crimes by those recognizing the authority of the Lord of that realm, these acts may not be charged against him as crimes, only he may be accused of not believing in the authority of the Lord of that realm. In essence he is guilty only of disbelief, not disobedience; and what may be an act of disobedience on the part of the one submitted to the authority of the ruler of that realm is not an act of disobedience at all to the one not recognizing that Lord's authority (*i.e., not believing in him*).

This illustration may be applied to the issue before us, as all men live within the realm over which Christ reigns as Lord, in that all authority in heaven and upon earth has been given unto him (*Matthew 28:18*). There is but "one" excepted from his universal reign as Lord; *i.e.,* he who did subject all things unto him (*I Corinthians 15:25-27*). Whether men recognize the universal Lordship of Christ or not, has little to do with the fact that when they violate his teachings they are "guilty." They cannot be declared "not guilty" on the grounds that they do not believe in his Lordship and have not entered into a covenant relationship with him.

The violations of the unbeliever against the teachings of Christ (*and consequently his authority*) render him just as guilty as the believer, and the effects of his transgressions must reap for him condemnation just as real and consequences just as severe as for the believer.

A Course of Argumentation

This whole line of thought may readily be established by New Testament teaching. It is the case that (1) the New Testament scriptures clearly establish Jesus as Lord, (2) that he is presently reigning as Lord, and (3) that he is reigning as Lord over all.

That Jesus is Lord is established by the fact that in no less than five hundred fifty occurrences in the New Testament he is called "Lord" (*Greek - kurios*): cf. *Matthew 7:21-22*;

12:8; 22:43-45; Luke 2:11; 6:46; John 6:68; 13:13; 20:28; Acts 2:32-36; 10:36; Romans 10:9; 14:9-11; I Corinthians 8:6; 15:27; Ephesians 4:4-6; Philippians 2:9-22; I Timothy 6:14-16; Revelation 17:14; and 19:16.

That Jesus is presently reigning as Lord is clearly established by the New Testament: cf. *Acts 2:32-36; I Corinthians 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:20-23; 4:10; Philippians 2:9-11; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:2-9; 8:8; 12:2; and I Peter 3:22.*

And that he is presently reigning over all is clearly established by the New Testament: *Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-23; Philippians 2:9-11; Colossians 2:9-10; and I Peter 3:22.*

This is the basic line of argumentation we will pursue in the following effort to establish the Lordship of Christ as applicable to all men (believers and unbelievers alike). In connection with this we will also consider the significance of the fact that all men, according to the scriptures, must stand before Christ in universal judgment; if man is amenable to Christ in judgment, he must be amenable to him in life.

All Men Are Amenable To The Authority Of Christ

Either Christ possesses absolute lordship, or he does not. Current articles appearing in some brotherhood papers say he does not. We are told that only those believing in Christ (and consequently in covenant relationship with him) are subject to him and his teachings, thus rendering him "Lord" in a relative or limited sense. Nothing could possibly be further from the truth, in that the New Testament clearly establishes him as in possession of absolute lordship. If it is the case that he is Lord, and is reigning as Lord over all, then it must follow that all men are amenable to his lordship (authority). Perhaps we do not significantly appreciate the implications of the Biblical teaching that Jesus is Lord, because we do not adequately understand what is implied by this christological title.

Historical Significance of "Kurios"

The Greek word confronting us here is **kurios**; it is a term rich in meaning and weighty in significance. "**Kurios** (*from the Classical KUROS*) or authority; as a substantive, *ho kurios, Lord, master;*" (*Abbott-Smith, Lexicon, pp. 261-62*). Among the ancient Greeks, **kurios** had a varied usage: (1) as a term of respect for husbands, masters, teachers, magistrates (*esp. in the vocative case*); (2) as a majesty title for emperors or kings (*especially of the Caesars of Rome*); and (3) as a divine title or ascription of deity. In its usage as a title or name, *kurios* designated one in possession of great power and authority (*i.e., a monarch or deity*). Its great significance in Biblical usage lies in the fact that it is the term used to translate the Hebrew **Yahweh** as well as **adonai** (*lord*) in the Greek Septuagint version of the Old Testament, used by the diaspora (*Hellenistic Judaism*). To the

Jew, especially the Greek-speaking Jew, **kurios** was a designation for his God. Here **kurios** is used for one in possession of absolute power and authority; and this is the title ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels, in the preaching of Acts, in the christology of the epistles, and in the triumphant language of Revelation. The significance of this title cannot be overlooked if one is to fully see the Christ of the Scriptures.

The Christ of the Scriptures

The Lordship (*kuriotes*) of Christ is developed in explicit and implicit language throughout the whole New Testament corpus. In the Gospels, from his birth to his resurrection, his intrinsic Lordship repeatedly keeps breaking through the fabric of his humanity: in *Luke 2:11* the angel declares to the shepherds at his birth, "*Or there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord (christos kurios);*" Mary is referred to by Elisabeth as "*the mother of my Lord (kurios)*" (*Luke 1:43*); John the Baptist is described as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "*Make ye ready the way of the Lord (kurios)*" (*Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4*).

During his Messianic ministry, his Lordship, through his sayings and doings, repeatedly shows itself: in *Matthew 2:21* he says "*not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord (kurie, kurie), shall enter into the kingdom of heaven;*" in *Luke 6:46* he asks those following him, "*Why call ye me, Lord, Lord (kurie, kurie), and do not the things which I say?*" In *John 13:13* he declaratively states, "*Ye call me Teacher (Ho didaskalos) and Lord (Ho kurios); and ye say well; for so I am.*" In *Matthew 12:8* he declared himself "*Lord of the Sabbath (kurios . . . tou sabbatou);*" and in *22:43-45* he gives us insight as to the true identity of the Christ in his question to the Pharisees wherein he corrects their Davidic concept of the Messiah from that of only a human son of David to that of a Lord (**kurios**) over David. The Messianic expectation of the Jews of Jesus' day was that of a human deliverer like David; never did they think that God (*Ho Kurios*) was coming himself.

Implicitly, throughout his Messianic ministry, his lordly identity is evidenced: he has power and authority over the powers of evil; over disease and death, and even over the forces of nature. In *Mark 2:1-12* he reveals his authority to forgive sins; he says, "*But that you may know that the Son of Man hath authority on earth to forgive sins,*" (*verses 10-11*); "*but only God can forgive sins,*" is the reply of the Jews (*verse 7*); exactly, and that is the point to be seen.

Then in his resurrection, his Lordly majesty fully dawns upon his followers. It is, in fact, in his resurrection that his Lordship over all principalities and powers (*even his own*

Continued ON Page 4

All Men Are Amendable To The Authority Of Christ

Continued From Page 3

death) is declared (cf. Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:34; John 30:28; Romans 10:9, The title *kurios* appears in each of these references in connection with Christ's resurrection).

He is "Lord" Absolute

This is precisely what is significant about his words in Matthew 28:18 as seen in light of the Greek term *kurios*. The title Lord implies authority, and Matthew 28:18 ascribes to him "all authority;" hence, his authority is absolute (i.e., the verbal expression of his authority). This was the proclamation of the first apostolic speech in Acts: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord (*kurios*) and Christ (*christos*), this Jesus whom ye crucified" (Acts 2:36). In like manner, to the Gentiles, Peter preached Jesus as "Lord (*kurios*) of all" (Acts 10:36).

What is so beautifully developed in the Gospels and Acts, is the writings of Paul given an undeniable universal application. That Christ is Lord of heaven and earth is the fact that all men must see; he is not simply a cultic deity, as is the Emperor cultus (I Corinthians 8:5-7), nor simply a king over the hearts of his believers; rather, he is the one with whom all men everywhere must reckon. He is the Lord (*kurios*) of both the dead and the living; the one before whose judgment-seat all must stand, the one to whom every knee must bow, and every tongue confess (Romans 14:9-12). He is the one whom God has made .

... to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all (Ephesians 1:20-23).

It is the case that he is Lord over all things to the church (the body of believers), because he is Lord of "all things." Similarly, Paul writes in Philippians 2:9-11.

Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (*kurios*), to the glory of God the Father.

Conclusion

Now what can this language mean? Is it not clear enough to convince us of the fact that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him; and that all men must of necessity be amenable to his authority? Surely it is. Then how say some of our scholars that such is not the case? Could it be that if they acknowledged him for who he is and what he is, their position (that all men are not amenable to his authority) would fall to the dust in absurdity? Could it be that some of our

most respected teachers have gone so far in trying to defend a false position on divorce and remarriage, that they would even deny the absolute Lordship of Christ in order to sustain their position? Look at the implications of what they are saying; especially in light of what the New Testament writers have said.

The Christ of the Scriptures is Lord in the absolute sense of the word; if there is one exception or exclusion from his Lordship (other than within the Godhead), then his Lordship is not absolute; it is relative and/or limited. We will undertake an exposition of several of these and other New Testament passages in continuation of this study.

Jesus: Messiah and Lord Absolute

This is clearly established in the New Testament writings. According to Romans 14:9-12, he is the Lord (*kurios*) of both the dead and the living; the one before whose judgment seat all must stand, the one to whom every knee must bow, and every tongue confess. According to I Corinthians 8:5-6, he is Lord over all that are called lords; and in 15:24-28, he is depicted as reigning as Lord, with all things subjected under his feet (only the Godhead being excepted). In Ephesians 1:20-23, he is the one who reigns at the right hand of God (i.e., the position of majesty from which authority is executed):

... far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

Because he is Lord over "all things" he is "head over all things to the church." Also in Philippians 2:9-11, Paul declares that God:

... highly exalted him and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord (*kurios*), to the glory of God the Father.

In Colossians 2:9-10, Paul again takes up this theme: "... for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and in him ye are made full, who is the head of all principality and power," and in 3:1, "if then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God (i.e., the seat of divine authority). In like manner the writer of Hebrews portrays him as reigning at the right hand of God (cf. Hebrews 1:2-9; 8:1; 12:2); and the apostle Peter, in I Peter 3:22, writes concerning Jesus: "... who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."

From this collection of New Testament teaching, it is clearly evident that Jesus, as the Messiah and Lord absolute, is seated on the throne of God as God, and is reigning

over all men everywhere. He is not a territorial king or cultic deity who reigns only over the hearts of those who believe in him; rather, he is the Holy One with whom all men everywhere must reckon. Because all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him, all expressions of his authority (i.e., his teachings) are applicable to all men (believers and unbelievers alike). But this fact some strongly reject; insisting that Christ is not a Lord in the absolute sense; rather, he is only Lord to those who, in belief, accept him as Lord in their hearts; thus, rendering him Lord only over those in covenant with him.

Concerning Covenants and Amenability

Perhaps we should remember that even though God made covenants with many of the ancients of Old Testament history, he yet reigned as Lord over heaven and earth; and his moral law, which was a very reflection of his absolute moral nature, was the standard by which nation after nation was judged and destroyed. The law of Moses (Old Covenant) was given to "the house of Jacob;" they were to be God's own possession "from among all peoples" (Exodus 19:3-6). Yet God judged and destroyed nations of people not in covenant relationship with him. Now the question is: what law did they transgress? The answer: the universal moral law of God. This was the case with the people in the days of Noah (Genesis 6:5); the people of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:20); the nations of Canaan (Deuteronomy 18:9-14); Nineveh (Jonah 1:1-2); Babylon (Habakkuk 1:12-2:20). Every moral law (or set of laws) given to man in the various moral codes of the various covenants during the patriarchal and Mosaic eras were, in essence, drawn from or a reflection of this universal moral law of God. This law is itself of God. Man has a sense of morality within him which is a part of his very nature. Man may, however, rebel against this nature and live in defiance of what is morally right; but he is nonetheless answerable for his actions. If this be not the case, then the very concept of the justice of God becomes totally unintelligible. (Cf. a development of this theme in M. W. Lusk, III, "The Living Message of Habakkuk," in The Living Messages of the Books of the Old Testament, 1977 Spiritual Sword Lectureship, pages 378-81).

Here we raise a significant point seemingly overlooked by some of our teachers; and that is this: It is argued that Christ's authority since the establishment of the New Covenant is parallel to the Mosaic Covenant where God gave legislation only to his covenant people. As we have seen, those outside the Mosaic Covenant were yet morally accountable before God based upon a universal moral law; but, we think here a false analogy has been advanced.

This article will be continued in next week's issue of Words Of Truth.



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Words Of Truth

"I am not man
Words of Truth

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

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NUMBER 40

Wages Of Sin

W. A. Holley

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

Sin is, and has been, common to all nations, past and present. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "Righteousness exalts a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).

Sin is so popular in our country, our jails and prisons cannot accommodate those law-breakers who should be incarcerated, according to the press. Sin should never be permitted to reign in our bodies (Romans 6:12).

WHAT IS SIN?

In a broad sense, sin is "the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4). To "transgress" means to cut across the commandments of God. But sin can be defined in other ways. (1) "All unrighteousness is sin" (I John 5:17). "Unrighteousness" refers to any injustice or wrongfulness of character in life or act against human beings (Strong). (2) There is the sin of omission (James 4:17). One might not steal, or kill, or commit adultery, but may refuse to yield or submit to the Lord's commandments. (3) " whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). Merely believing a thing is right does not make it right. Saul of Tarsus believed he was doing right when he persecuted Christians, but he was wrong (Acts 23:1; 24:6; 26:9-11; I Timothy 1:13). Romans 14 refers to Jews eating meat, but who doubted they were doing the right thing. The verse we are discussing does not refer to faith in Christ or gospel truth; but faith in rightness of what we do. (4) The sin of commission. The person who knows what God has forbidden, but deliberately participates in what is banned, is not obedience to the law of the Lord.

We shall now offer a few examples of sin: David sinned when he committed adultery with Bathsheba (II Samuel 12:13ff). Nadab and Abihu sinned when they offered fire "which the Lord had not commanded" (Leviticus 10:1-2). Ananias and Sapphira sinned when they lied to God about the amount of money they gave to him (Acts 5:1-11). Judas sold the Master for the price of a slave (Matthew 27:3-10; Acts 1:18-20).

CHARACTERISTICS OF SIN

Sin is deceitful. Sin promises joy and happiness, but brings hardship and disgrace. ". . . Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13). Judas was so deceived by sin that he went out and hanged himself.

Sin, like a baby rattlesnake, grows and grows, day by day. "Let no man say when he is temptd, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man: but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death" (James 1:13-15, ASV). Sin brings guilt, punishment, remorse, and death (Romans 6:23). Thank God, sin, through Jesus Christ, can be forgiven! (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38).

Sin's pleasures are fleeting. "By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward" (Hebrews 11:24-26, ASV).

WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF SIN?

Sin brought physical death into the world (Genesis 3:1:1-8; Romans 5:12-17). Adam and Eve, as a result of sin, were cast out of Eden, and so death came upon all men (Hebrews 9:27). Sin is, therefore, the cause of all suffering, sorrow, pain, tears and death. Old age, grey hair, and a bent frame, so testify (Ecclesiastes 12:1-7). In these verses we have a vivid description of old age.

It is sin that separates man from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). Man is not born a sinner, as Calvinism avers. Psalms 51:5 does not so teach. "We go astray" --we are not born away (Isaiah 53:6; 58:3). ". . . The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). With regard to a certain man, Ezekiel wrote: "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee" (Ezekiel 28:15). Little children are not born totally depraved (Matthew 18:3; 19:14).

Finally, sin leads inevitably to hell and destruction (I Peter 4:16; II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

HOW CAN ONE BE SAVED?

Redemption is in Christ; one is baptized into Christ (Colossians 1:13-14; Romans 6:3-4).

God loves the lost (John 3:16). He offers salvation thru faith (Ephesians 2:8-10).

If you are an erring child of God, you need to be restored (Galatians 6:1; Acts 8:22; James 5:16).

Today, become a Christian; and live faithfully the Christian life (Titus 2:11-12; James 1:27; Revelation 2:10).

_P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

All Men Are Amenable To The Authority Of Christ

[Editor's Note: This is the conclusion of an article begun in last week's issue of **Words Of Truth**. That issue contained most of the material on this subject supplied by brother James T. Heron, an elder in the Brookside church. In the booklet (which he and brother George Shaw circulated in the Birmingham area) acknowledgements are duly made to their sources. For a copy write to the address at the close. -- Flavil H. Nichols, Editor].

It is the case that the specific teachings of the Law were addressed to the house of Jacob; but, the New Testament is addressed to all men everywhere. The application of the Old (*Exodus 19:3-6*): If one was born a Jew, he was born under the law because he was a member of the class designated as the "house of Jacob;" the Jew refusing to accept the authority of God as expressed in the Old Covenant was in rebellion against God and defiant towards his authority.

However, the New Testament is specifically addressed to all men everywhere (*Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16; etc.*); hence, any member of the class designated as "men" is amenable to the Lordship of Christ.

As with the Jew, if he refuses to accept the authority of Christ as expressed in the New Testament, he is in rebellion against him and defiant toward his authority.

There has never been an age wherein men of the earth were exempt from the moral laws of God and from his authority as Lord of heaven and earth. The very idea that some of our teachers and preachers would advance such a view leaves this writer breathless.

Errors of Reasoning

"But," someone says "there are laws Christ gave which are not addressed to the

unbeliever but to the believer, and laws which are addressed to the believer which are not applicable to the unbeliever." This is the argument made by one of our teachers who insists that because Christ taught that his kingdom was not to be upheld by the sword (*John 18:36*) and worldly governments are (*Romans 13*), then it must follow that there are two distinct kingdoms, and Christ has authority only over one of them. Such a conclusion does not follow at all! Rather than prove his point, this fact refutes it, in that Christ (*through his apostle*) authorized the use of the sword for upholding governments; he has here, in essence, addressed himself to both believers and unbelievers alike.

But we think that our teacher has missed a significant point. There are distinctive institutions in our world: (1) the family, (2) civil governments, (3) the church; and all as God has ordained. He does not direct or legislate one institution by the regulations of the other. This does not prove that he has no authority to speak to all these institutions of our world.

Our teacher argues that because the church is not supported by taxation (as are governments), that this proves that Christ has not authority over the world, but only over the church (*his exclusive kingdom*). But how can he have failed to recognize that these are distinctive institutions of our world, and one is not governed by the regulations of the other? He is a father: surely he knows that the qualifications of an elder in the Lord's church are not to be bound upon him as qualifications of a father and head of his family. But this in no way proves that Christ has not authority over the heads of each institution.

He argues that the law of pardon for the believer is distinct from the law of pardon for an unbeliever; and so it is by Christ's own legislation. No one is, for a moment, advancing the view that because Christ has authority over all men, that this eliminates the distinction between a believer (*one in submission to his authority*) and an unbeliever (*one in rebellion to his authority*).

He further argues that the world is not commanded to assemble and exhort, or to observe the Lord's supper which is in the kingdom, or to disfellowship the disorderly, etc. In this line of argumentation a clear error of reasoning is evident. To begin with, the legislation for the affairs of the church are applicable to the church, not to the family, nor to civil government. If every family and government in the world were made up of Christians, that would make the legislation to the church applicable to the family or government in every specific detail. But the crucial point to be seen is that the world is not exempted from these commands because they are unbelievers; rather the world stands condemned because they are not in submission to this instructions. No unbeliever is justified

because he does not observe the Lord's supper; rather, he is condemned because he has rejected it and all that it implies: Christ died for the unbeliever -- a fact which he may deny; but this **DOES NOT** exempt unbelievers from his Lordship; rather it condemns them.

Presenting the Truth in Love - P.O. Box 38, Watson, AL 35181. Phone (205) 674-3475.

"Only Begotten" Topic Of Forum At F.H.C.

The fourth annual Preachers and Church Workers Forum has been set for Saturday, December 3, 1988, at Freed-Hardeman College, Henderson, Tennessee. The topic for discussion will be "The Only Begotten, Translations, and Unity."

Robert R. Taylor, Jr., has been invited as a participant, and J. Noel Merideth, will work with him. Hugo McCord has also been invited as a participant, and Ralph Gilmore of the Freed-Hardeman College faculty will work with him. Each participant will have an equal amount of time in the discussion. There will be opportunities for the audience to question all of them. Earl Edwards, of Freed-Hardeman College, will serve as moderator.

The date for the forum has been changed this year to accommodate the schedules of the participants. In 1989 the regular schedule (the second Saturday in October) will be resumed.

President E. Claude Gardner states, "This topic dealing with the "only begotten" has been a source of discussion and tension in the brotherhood for a number of years. Many lectures and articles have been given on [the Greek] *monogenes* and the way it has been translated. We are having this discussion with the hope that it will bring about better understanding among brethren. It is my hope that this forum will promote unity among brethren rather than further dissension and polarization."



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— Acts 26:25

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Why?

Don Nix

"Why?" is the most timeless and universal of all questions. Why must there be suffering, sorrow, heartache, death, even among God's own children? Many people today suffer, and the Bible is our only strength. Let us look at it now in answering the question "Why do people suffer and especially, why do God's children suffer?"

1. Suffering keeps this world from becoming too attractive. We are but pilgrims and strangers in this world (I Peter 2:11). When life is pleasant, we sometimes forget the home that awaits us in heaven.

2. Suffering brings out our best. The bond that exists for those who stand by an ill loved one is welded firmly. The "bearing of one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2) becomes even more meaningful.

3. Suffering gives an occasion to put to silence the enemies of God. We are all familiar with the sufferings of Job, and the eventual outcome of his tribulation. That experience, in one degree or another, has been re-enacted since the dawn of time. The faith of those

suffering and those who bear with them have caused many to see the Lord's people in a different light.

4. Suffering makes us appreciative. We receive so many good things that we tend to take them for granted. Suffering makes us more aware of God's goodness.

5. Suffering makes us depend on God (Isaiah 54:5). When physicians say that they have done all that they can, you suddenly realize how much you depend on God.

6. Suffering purifies us (I Peter 4:11-12; James 1). We want to be our best, and to be rid of every sin, so that God will hear our prayers.

7. Suffering makes us sympathetic (II

Corinthians 1:3-6). Suffering helps us to be more sympathetic with those who suffer.

8. Suffering makes one humble. By remembering how God has been good to us and what many others have done, we can not help but be humble.

9. Suffering reminds us to pray, and that prayer works when nothing else will. Prayer comes more from the heart and is much more specific.

None of us likes to suffer or see others suffer; but maybe if we understand why we suffer we can bear it with greater strength.

—Via Fayetteville, N.C. Bulletin.

FEAR GOD

Fear God for His POWER;
Trust Him for His WISDOM;
Love Him for His GOODNESS;
Praise Him for His GREATNESS;

Believe Him for His FAITHFULNESS;
Adore Him for His HOLINESS.

LIVE to HIS glory this week!

The Bible And Education

Glann Lee

Some people seem to think that the Bible and education are incompatible; but the research of those who so believe has not been very exhaustive.

Reverence for the Bible kept the knowledge of reading and writing alive during the Dark Ages.

The lyric poetry in the Bible equals that of any other great literature in the world.

Tyndale's translation of the Bible helped to make English a literary language.

The first schools in many countries were built by Christian missionaries.

Eliphalet Nott wrote: "Men cannot be well

educated without the Bible. It ought, therefore, to hold the chief place in every seat of learning throughout Christendom; and I do not know of a higher service that could be rendered to this republic than the bringing about this desirable result."

According to Edward Everett, "All the distinctive features and superiority of our republican institutions are derived from teachings of Scripture."

"I have always believed in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, whereby they have become the expression to men of the Word and Will of God. -- Warren G. Harding."

I Can't Remember the Bible

I know the latest recipes by heart;
I can tell all the movie stars apart;
I know all the new programs on TV;
I know all the ball players from a to z;
I know every big-wig in this town;
I know the bargain prices up and down.
But when it comes to scripture, I'm not reliable; It seems I just can't.
Remember the Bible.

--West Palm Beach, FL.

Excellent Reasons To Promote Harmony Among Church Members

(Author Unknown -- F. H. N.)

1. Remember that we are all subject to failings and infirmities of one kind or another.

2. Bear with, and not magnify, each other's infirmities (Galatians 6:1-2).

3. Pray one for another in our social meetings, and particularly in private (James 5:16).

4. Avoid going from house to house for the purpose of bearing news and interfering with other people's business.

5. Always turn a deaf ear to any slanderous report, and lay no charge against any person until well-founded.

6. If a member commits a personal trespass, tell him of it in private, before it is mentioned to others (Matthew 18:15-18).

7. Watch against a shyness of each other and put the best construction on any action that has the appearance of opposition or resentment.

8. Observe the just rule of Solomon -- that is, leave off contention before it is meddled with (Proverbs 17:14).

9. If a member has offended, consider how Godlike it is to forgive, and how unlike him to seek revenge (Ephesians 4:28).

10. Remember that it is always a giant

artifice of the devil to promote distance and animosities among members of the church; we should therefore watch against everything that furthers this end.

11. Consider how much more good we can do in the world at large, and in the church in particular, when we all are united in love, than we could do when acting alone, and indulging a contrary spirit.

12. Lastly, consider the express injunction of the scripture and the beautiful example of Christ, as to these important things (Ephesians 4:32; I Peter 2:21; John 13:5, 15). --Selected

Criticism: Static? Or Hi-Fidelity?



Roger Jackson

One of the keys to a gospel preacher's longevity, faithfulness, and effectiveness is a healthy attitude about criticism. He must determine when criticism is intended to be destructive, or construction. I often characterize the two as either static or hi-fidelity. The preacher must tune his ears so that he can distinguish the two, else he will find himself being discouraged, or driven from one extreme adjustment to another.

At his best, a preacher will always be criticized; and the man who thinks otherwise is naive. None of us wants to miss the advantages of constructive criticism, so ignoring all criticism is a mistake. How then do we distinguish between the two? There are no unailing tests or rules of thumb; but perhaps experience in being about as much-criticized as any, qualifies me to expound on the matter.

I. We may determine whether criticism is static, or hi-fidelity, by considering the source. It is good to be well-spoken-of by everyone. Unique is the character who can speak God's truth with boldness and not be unjustly criticized. Neither the Lord nor any apostle was able to accomplish that (John 15:18). When the Lord approached the demoniac man in Mark 1:25 he commanded him to hold his peace (be silent). There are some men from whom gospel preachers do not need a recommendation. This is why when it comes to my ears that a false teacher has been criticizing me, or a false brother has done so, I am not disturbed so much. If the gospel truth is getting across to that side of the track I just know someone is going to complain. Weeds will always object to herbicides and the one thing they seldom seek is a public confrontation.

II. A second way we may determine the quality of criticism is by the medium it takes. By this I mean the one to whom the criticism is made. If it is reported to me that someone said something about me to someone else, I know immediately that such is static. The matter should be brought to me, personally, if it is personal and private (Matthew 18:15-17). If it is public, then why not publish it in a medium wherein I have access?

If you write me up, that's all right: just send me a copy. If I have said and/or done that which is in error, be specific. Don't just say, "Roger is too negative." Let me know in what manner such is the case. If I am accused of being a "legalist," specify why. If I am accused of being a false teacher, what false doctrine have I taught and what passage(s) have I violated? Dealing in great generalities in a corner is static.

It would surprise some listeners to learn what specific charges are intended when unjust criticism is disseminated. In fact the disseminator would do himself the most harm if his criticism were specified. Those who criticize the preacher for being "too negative" often actually decry ALL "don't's" in preaching. They aren't actually criticizing "too much" negative preaching," they are denouncing ALL negative preaching. But that is unscriptural (II Timothy 3:16, 17; 4:2). It isn't an argumentative attitude they are decrying, but the spirit of investigation -- period! (I John 4:1; Jude 3).

It isn't "legalism" some are challenging at all, but the concept that the Bible is objective, and that conformity in matters of faith can and must be maintained (I Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 1:27). They are not against 'slandering' the denominations nearly so much as they are against the slightest mention of one of them from the pulpit. Some are courting human churches, and fellowship them. They consider ANY mention of them to be contentious. They aren't against "negativism" - they are against debating -- PERIOD!

Some aren't against "casting people out of the synagogue;" they are against New Testament church discipline, period (II Thessalonians 3:6; Romans 16:16-17). (In many cases the practice of these scriptures would put them on the list sooner or later).

I could go on, but space will not allow an exhaustive elucidation. It is past time that great gospel preachers, who stand four-square for the truth, cease allowing moral cowards (who are trouble wherever they go), to whisper unjust criticism in a corner, and discourage them. It is static!

III. A third test by which we may determine the quality of criticism is its content. I Corinthians 2:11 says that we cannot know the heart of another person (unless that person reveals it to us). It is true that we may get a good idea of the content of one's heart by the words that proceed out of his mouth. Jesus said that this is true: ". . . for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34). Judging the motives of a person is a precarious, if not presumptuous, matter. The fact of the matter is that there are some subjects that a preacher cannot discuss at all without being accused by some of having ulterior motives or a bad attitude. Since the auditors does not believe the message at all, and yet cannot speak against it from the perspective of the Scriptures, he has no alternative but to attack the speaker by impugning his motives. Have you ever preached on a topic that was controversial, giving scores of scriptures to substantiate your position, only to be told by some dissenter that that was just your opinion? This is the attitude under consideration. It is an aggravating response that we know to be invalid, but what more can you do than you have already done? If those scriptures you have already given

have been rejected, why would we believe one more would make any difference to an unreasonable person?

What is your response when a person responds to your sermon by saying you preached right at him? I never want to be abusive, but I want to respond that he is correct. I would hasten to add, however, that the sermon was preached "right at" everyone else also. I suppose most brethren of this opinion would prefer that sermons deal with great generalities on widely-applicable specifics that certainly have no one present at heart. I do not preach that way. The faithful gospel preacher preaches the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), being gentle toward all men with a view to instruct (II Timothy 2:24). He preaches the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27) and knows his own heart. Then when a guilty brother complains, "You had the wrong attitude," a simple, "No, I didn't," settles the matter, and the preacher can pillow his head in confidence, allowing somebody else to fret about it.

Brother preacher, do yourself a favor: Preach God's word from a pure heart, and tune your ears to eliminate the static. Otherwise you will not last five years anywhere. A preacher friend once told me that he moved, and moved, and moved again because some brother or sister would get "miffed" about his preaching, and he would leave. Finally, he decided something was not as it should be so he just announced that if anybody got upset about his preaching, and it was the truth, preached with the right attitude, THEY COULD MOVE. He had been "run off" enough. Complainers will mold you and remake you to the extreme of telling you how to comb your hair (one tried it with me)! If you allow this, it is your own fault -- and you deserve the whipping that comes with it!

-- 940 Old Wood Rd., Oxford, AL 36203.

DENOMINATIONALISM

1. Many Churches (one is as good as another)
2. Many Heads Rome, Salt Lake City, Boston, etc.)
3. Many Bodies (300 in the United States)
4. Human Creeds (Manual Catechism, discipline)
5. Earthly Headquarters (Vatican, Springfield, Mo., etc.)
6. Sprinkling or pouring subsituted; baptism non-essential anyway!

MEN SAY:

One religion is just as good as another. It matters not what one believes so long as he is sincere.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

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VOLUME 23

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1988

NUMBER 41

Preaching And Preachers

Jackie M. Stearsman

Encouraging, training, and promoting the preaching of God's Word is the central objective of the Florida School of Preaching. Every student in attendance has this emphasized more than any other single topic. Faculty, staff, and administration uphold and endorse every expedient means available to us in the teaching of God's word. Read very carefully II Timothy 4:1-5 and ponder preaching and preachers.

Preach

There is a very solemn charge issued to Timothy: "I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: PREACH. . ."

Preaching is no optional matter for the Devil. When evil has wrecked humanity, that which has made the greatest contribution to that cause will be the proclamation of that which is destructive in design and effect.

There is no shortage of preaching in the world today. Preaching may be heard at any hour of the day or night. Teaching may be had over the radio, TV, from house to house, publicly, in printed matter, on video and cassette tapes, etc. But surely no one would say that preaching is all that is needed. Were preaching all that is wanted the Florida School of Preaching would not need to be. Let us consider another factor demanded by the Lord -- the content of preaching.

Substance

Paul was commissioned by the Lord to charge Timothy to "preach the word." It is possible to preach self under the pretense of preaching the word. It is possible to preach fables. It is possible to preach false doctrine. It is possible to "pervert" the gospel and preach another gospel (Galatians 1:6-9). It is possible to preach to please men (Galatians 6:10ff).

Any informed individual must admit that most preaching does not have the truth (the word) as its most significant item. Any informed individual must know that that which distinguishes God's people is always the truth (John 17:17; I Timothy 3:15).

It is because of what (the truth, the word) is to

be preached, that all those interested in the Florida School of Preaching labor. It is because of truth that we exist and toil.

Tenacious Persistence

That this is demanded of us, consider the orders of heaven: "Be urgent in season, out of season . . . be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill thy ministry (II Timothy 4:2-5).

Preach the word when it is being received; preach the word when it is being rejected. Preach the word in grave sobriety. Preach the word although it may cause problems -- to you and to those to whom it is preached. Do the work of an evangelist -- preach the word. Fulfill thy ministry - - preach the word!

Hindrances

Hear the Lord: "For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables" (II Timothy 4:3).

Fact -- some will not endure sound doctrine. Fact -- some want teachers which uphold them in their own lusts. Fact -- that which we attune ourselves to hear reveals much about us. Fact -- to turn away from the truth is to be at the same time turned to fables. Fact -- those entering the wide gate and remaining in the broad way are in the majority (Matthew 7:13-14).

Preachers, it is a compliment not to be asked to preach in some assemblies.

Leaders in the Lord's church need to know in no uncertain terms that the selection of preachers (teachers) for any occasion is a manifestation of the direction the "ears" are turned.

Hearing preaching will have its effect. Every effort should be made to insure that "the word" (truth) and the truth only, will be preached.

Components

In preaching the word, the Lord designed that certain things be included. Among those items are the following: "Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (II Timothy 4:2).

In much preaching today, as always, there is the absence of rebuke. Minds have been desensitized

to correcting. In the minds of far too many, the only one who needs correcting is the one doing the correcting! Those who preach the word must not neglect to "reprove" and "rebuke."

As we began this article we noted the place of the Florida School of Preaching in encouraging preaching. This is not merely our custom; it is a Divine mandate -- exhortation in preaching the word is neglected. Indifferent brethren will not encourage the preaching of the word. Those practicing and promoting error will not encourage preaching the word. Those who have turned away their ears from the truth will not encourage the preaching of the word.

"Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering." Consider the author of these words -- the Apostle Paul. Read the New Testament and note how long he suffered. Read again and record how many he reprovved. Consider again the many he rebuked. Do not neglect to see the encouragement and exhortation he provided. Beyond this make sure that these things are identified with his preaching the word. Finally, hear him: "The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:9).

Conclusions

Today (as always) there is a shortage of preachers of "the word." There has always been an abundance of false teachers, while the supply of teachers of truth are in the minority.

There has always been the selecting and rejecting of preachers. There is ever the need to consider why we have been selected or why we have been rejected (Matthew 10:11-42). If preachers are rejected for preaching the truth, they should shake the dust from their feet and not frustrate their mission by casting their pearls before swine, for it is not proper to give that which is holy to the dogs -- so says he who sends forth preachers of the word (Matthew 5:6).

If you are looking for a preacher, what do you expect of him? If you are preaching, what do you expect of yourself and what should others expect

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Fall Into The Hands Of The Living God



W. Edwin Kearley
It is evident that a greater percentage in the church today have little fear of God. The clamor for compromise is everywhere. Some want "grace" to mean the salvation of everyone, without conditions. Others would lower the standards of morality on such things as divorce and remarriage, social drinking, etc. Still others want a preacher who says the right things, but then negates what he says by apologizing for what he says.

The writer of Hebrews stated, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31). In this context the writer urged the church to "provoke one another to love and good works." They were not to forsake the assembly of the saints. He warned, if after they learned the truth, then "sin willfully," there will not be another sacrifice for their sins. The death of Jesus on the cross is the only sacrifice God will give.

The New Testament does not teach that one can earn or merit salvation; yet it does lay down conditions of salvation. Down through the centuries men have sought to lower the conditions

of salvation. In this they take upon themselves the role of God. However, God is still on his throne. His word expresses his will for man. By his word we shall be judged (John 12:48).

The "faith only" theory is an effort to water-down God's will. This dogma originated from the idea that the body of man is evil, and can do no good. They acknowledge man can believe. They then conclude that if one believes in Jesus Christ for a fleeting moment in his entire life, he is saved and cannot be lost.

One problem with the above is that it is not true. Paul taught that man is responsible for what his body does. He said, "For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Corinthians 5:10). The Bible teaches man's faith must be strong enough to obey God's will. The writer of Hebrews stated concerning Christ and his will: "and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9).

Today far too many in the church have compromised with the world. An example is one who wants to dance, yet wants to worship God. This caused preachers of the last century to declare that a dancing foot and a praying knee do not grow on the same limb.

The church today is drawn by the pressures of today's society to be a part of the world, and to do what the world does, and yet be pleasing (?) to God. There is a tendency to yield to the humanistic philosophy and declare evil does not exist. This is the cry of the atheists. The cry of many in the

church is the cry of unbelief.

There is a need today to impress upon the church that God is on his throne; he rules the universe; his word is law; he will judge the world in righteousness.

God is love, merciful, and forgiving. The Bible tells us his love is manifested in the gift of his Son. Sins are forgiven through his shed blood on the cross. The benefits of his blood are not without condition. The word of God teaches a plan whereby one may receive the effects of the cleansing blood of Christ (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4, 16-18; 10:8-17). Worship is directed by the word (Acts 2:42; 20:7; I Corinthians 16:2; 11:23-29). Daily living is regulated by the word of God. Paul said, "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partakers of other men's sins: keep thyself pure" (I Timothy 5:22).

One day we will all stand before the throne of God to be judged. Jesus said the Father gave him all authority to execute judgment because he is the Son of man. Then he said, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29).

Ignoring the law of Christ and the reality of the judgement are the actions of fools. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." May we throw off the allurements of the world that will destroy us spiritually. May we become wholly dedicated to love God and do his will.

_419 Polk St., Montgomery, AL 36107.

Preaching And Preachers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

of you?

Let us never forget that the mandate from heaven is for preachers to preach the word."

--The Harvesters, 1807 Florida Ave., Lakeland, FL 33803.

[Editor's note: What is here said of the Florida School of Preaching is applicable to others also].

Come And See

Winfred Clark

have about the Lord.

III. THIS INVITATION HELPS US TO OVERCOME DISTANCE.

As they "come," the distance between them and the Lord is overcome. That which separated is no longer there. They are no longer separated from him who takes away the sins of the world.

Paul spoke of those who were at one time "far off" but now "are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13).

Yes, this is a grand and glorious invitation which helps one to overcome that which would otherwise separate him from the Christ to whom he must come.

_W. Hobbs Street Church, P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

Our Ruin

Dave Miller

Approximately 8 years after Daniel was deported from his homeland, a second wave of Jewish exiles were transported to Babylon during the reign of Jehoiachin in 597 B.C. Among this latter group of captives was the fiery prophet Ezekiel. In 592 B.C., on the banks of the Cheber River, Ezekiel was called by God to speak inspired words to the Israelite captives. Ezekiel's divine message was typical of the Hebrew prophets: "Repent!" On one occasion, the prophet poses a particularly intriguing aim of this penitence: "so iniquity shall not be your ruin" (Ezekiel 18:30).

We sorely need to recognize the significance of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

—Acts 26:25



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FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Editor
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This is a statement made by the Lord to two of the disciples of John (John 1:35-39), who had just pointed them to the Christ, saying: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." This aroused their attention and caused them to follow him. As Jesus turns to see them following, he says: "What seek ye?" And they said, "Where dwellest thou?" His answer was: "COME AND SEE."

That has to be a grand invitation! It has to be something worth our time and attention! So let us take a look.

I. THIS INVITATION HELPS US TO OVERCOME DELAY.

You will note that he does not say, "Come sometime," nor does he say, "Come someday." The implication is: "Come now." The emphasis should be on the word NOW! That is where Paul places the emphasis in II Corinthians 6:2. He says: "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." Twice he utters this in rapid fashion. So it is easy to see the invitation of our Lord as helping one to overcome delay.

II. THIS INVITATION HELPS US TO OVERCOME DARKNESS.

It is obvious that these men were in the dark as to where Jesus dwelt. They would humbly ask, but would never know until they have responded to his invitation to see. After they respond, they will surely see. They would no longer be in the dark. Wasn't this what Paul was to do? Was he not given the responsibility of "opening the eyes and turning men from darkness to light" (Acts 26:18)?

Yes, as they respond to that invitation they would overcome any darkness or doubt they might

The Coming Generation

John Gipson

Why is it that preachers continually emphasize the importance of Bible study? Have they just run out of other things to say, or is it really that important?

Perhaps one thing to remember is that apostasy lurks just one generation away. It has been true in the past, and it is true today. You well remember that the days of Joshua were glorious. This man served as the faithful minister of Moses, the servant of God; he was the bold and believing spy, the successor of Moses, the captain of the hosts of Israel, and the conqueror of Canaan. His influence was so great that "the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua" (Judges 2:7). But then, at the age of one hundred and ten, Joshua dies. "And there arose another generation which knew not the Lord" (Judges 2:11).

One generation served the Lord -- the next does not. How swiftly things can change! What brought it all about? The answer is quite simple: Someone allowed a crop of children to grow up without proper instruction. And eventually they had to reap destruction. One step followed another until the punishment of God was meted out. Note the order of progression as it related to ancient Israel:

(1) **Spiritual illiteracy.** They "knew not the Lord" (Judges 2:10).

(2) **Forsaking God.** "And they forsook the

Our Ruin

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

this insight in our own day. There was a fellow in the church of Christ at Corinth who was exhibiting unfaithful behavior. The membership took the backslapping, tolerant approach to the situation. They took the "broadminded" approach. That's where you figure you should "bear with" impenitent persons. You feel you should give them time -- perhaps more teaching -- more encouragement. Then you get to thinking that such is the "loving, spiritual" course of action. The members at Corinth were being "big" about the situation, no doubt thinking their tolerance was the "mature" thing to do. This attitude was evident from the fact that Paul described them as "puffed up" (I Corinthians 5:2). In other words, they were PROUD of their decision to continue to associate with the brother.

Paul set them straight about their warped perspective. He said instead of being PROUD, they should have been filled with grief! The word for "mourned" is the word used for the sorrow that occurs when a loved one DIES. Paul was saying they should have been mourning for this brother because in God's sight, he was DEAD! Rather than seeking to woo the fornicator out of his lost condition by tolerating it or overlooking it, they should have already formally and publicly handed him over to Satan (I Corinthians 5:5)!! They should have already "purged" him from the church (I Corinthians 5:7). They should have passed "judgment" upon him and "expelled" him (I Corinthians 5:12-13)!!

How odd -- how strange such instructions sound in contrast to the general mood prevailing among churches of Christ today! Groups accept the impenitent with open arms without batting an eye, or at most after only a mild bout with conscience. If only Ezekiel's words could penetrate our proud hearts -- so that sin will not be OUR ruin.

_1801 Brown Trail, Bedford, TX 76021.

Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt" (Judges 2:12).

(3) **Serving false gods.** They followed "the gods of the people that were round about them" (Judges 2:12). They gave in to pagan ideas, pagan practices and customs. Immorality abounded, and "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6).

(4) **Punishment from God.** "And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered

them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about" (Judges 2:14).

There is no hope if spiritual illiteracy prevails. Heathen altars will abound. Tidal waves of iniquity will arise and destruction will follow.

We must not fail the youth of today. We must diligently teach them the truth lest it be said once again, "There arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord."

_Sixth & Izzard, Little Rock, Arkansas.

These Are Perilous Times

W. N. "Bill" Jackson

Paul warned Timothy that "... in the last days, perilous times shall come" (II Timothy 3:1). Paul goes on to give some items characteristic of such a sinful day as our own. Spiritual and moral values are tumbling down, and every sort of authority is mocked and ridiculed, even God's authority! We are indeed living in times of peril!

A. These are perilous times for congregations. There has always been an abundance of problems; but so many different sectarian notions are prevailing today, all congregations need to live in day-to-day alertness to the dangers around them, and exert day-by-day care to insure the purity of the body.

B. These are perilous times for elders. A part of the anti-authoritative philosophy of our day, when brought into the area of religion, is to attack the established order of God -- the local elder-ship. It is a time of peril for elders who, in watching over the flock, and then in taking a stand for God in rebuking the sinful and withdrawing from the disorderly; their godly stand will be less and less appreciated as time goes on. Pressure of many sorts can be brought to bear on an eldership, and it takes strong men of faith to withstand.

C. These are perilous times for preachers. Living accommodations and financial help have never been better, but the work is being appreciated less and less. When one stands up to PREACH THE WORD, he must do so without fear or favor.

Again, there are pressures upon the preacher designed to make him either dilute the message, or shun the unpleasant altogether. He must withstand, having loyalty to Christ first.

D. Finally, these are perilous times for every member of the church. The world cries out "Conform!" -- and pressures are applied to insure it. Every godly stand will be met with ridicule and mockery. The Christian is constantly "shamed" at being a part of the minority. The weak collapse, and either build a set of values without real conviction, or quit the Cause entirely. Now is the time to be strong.

Indeed, these are perilous times! But we are called to be soldiers (II Timothy 2:3); and the soldier's real worth is tested, not in times of peace, but in warfare.

_Austin, TX.

The Bible Is Indestructible

G. F. Raines

Although the Bible has been frequently assailed by powerful and consolidated ranks of disciplined foes for many hundreds of years, "all the powers and malice of worlds seen and unseen shall never prevail against it" (Alexander Campbell).

Jesus says: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

Peter says: "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever" (I Peter 1:24-25).

"They burned Truth in the market place

And thought their work complete;

But next day, with a smiling face,

They met it on the street.

They threw it in a dungeon damp

And thought it was no more;

But lo, it walked with lighted lamp

Among them as before

They scorned and ostracized it,

And ordered it to depart;

But still it dwelt in all the land

And challenged every heart."

--Flynn

_Newton, MS 39345.

Restoration Roots

Dabney Phillips

History is a fascinating study to the maturing Christian. Both divine and secular history provide valuable information. This writer has made two trips to Cane Ridge, KY., and two to Bethany, W. Va. I have been asked to direct a Restoration Tour October 24-27. Visits will be made to where Barton W. Stone, Walter Scott, and the Campbells worked with such diligence and success. Faulkner University is sponsoring the tour.

tour.

Readers interested in the tour please call Dabney Phillips at 205-277-0548, or write to my home address below. We will leave early Monday morning and return Thursday evening.

The reservation fee is \$25.00 and should be made out to Faulkner University. The entire trip should not exceed \$200.00.

_3953 Elm Ave. Montgomery, AL 36109.

What Does The Bible Say?

Hilton Royster

All the great religious bodies professing to believe the New Testament to be the word of God hold that to be a member of their respective church one must submit to baptism, or to what they call baptism; and, in administering the rite, they refer to Matthew 28:18-19 as their source of authority for performing the rite.

Some hold that baptism may be performed by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion; while others insist that immersion only is baptism.

In giving the command to "baptize," Jesus certainly used a word which had a clear, definite meaning, and used that word with its commonly-accepted meaning. From the lexicons of the language used in recording what Jesus said, we may easily learn the meaning of this word, and also from the practice of the inspired men performing the act commanded by the master.

The command of Christ was recorded in the Greek language, that being the language in which the New Testament was written. The word "baptize" is from the Greek word "baptizo." The

question is not what does the word "baptize" mean as now used, but what does the word "baptizo," as used by inspired men, mean? What was the meaning of the word when Christ gave the Commission?

Baptizo: "To dip in or under water." -- Lidell and Scott.

Sophocles, a native Greek, in his lexicon defines baptizo: "To dip, to immerse, to sink."

Thayer, who is without doubt, the greatest New Testament Greek lexicographer in all the world, defines baptizo: "To dip repeatedly, to immerse, submerge."

We could quote a great many Greek lexicons; but why should we, since there is not a recognized standard Greek lexicon in the world which defines the word otherwise than the above-mentioned examples.

If one could be an eye-witness of a baptism administered by inspired men, the question as to what act they performed would be settled; but

since this is not possible for us in this day, let us determine from the inspired records just what act was performed.

"And they were baptized of him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins" (Matthew 3:6).

And Jesus "was baptized of John in Jordan" (Mark 1:9). After his baptism it is said: "And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending on him" (Mark 1:9-10).

"And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there" (John 3:23).

"Much water" is not required for sprinkling or pouring; neither do those who have water sprinkled or poured on them "come up out of the water," as Jesus did immediately after his baptism; neither does anyone sprinkle or pour anyone "in" or "into" a river. All these conditions and circumstances are met, however, in immersion.

_7th & College Streets, Mayfield, KY 42066.

Communist Rules For Revolution

(Editor's Note: To the best of our knowledge, this article was first printed in the Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise in 1919. It was reprinted again in 1946 in The New World News, after the Florida Attorney General secured it from a known member of the communist party, who acknowledged that it was then still a part of the communist program).

In May of 1919, at Dusseldorf, Germany, the Allied Forces obtained a copy of some of the "Communist Rules for Revolution." Nearly 50 years later, the Reds were still following them.

A. Corrupt the young; get them away from religion. Get them interested in sex. Make them superficial; destroy their ruggedness.

B. Get control of all means of publicity, thereby:

1. Get people's minds off their government by focusing their attention on athletics, sexy books and plays, and other trivialities.

2. Divide the people into hostile groups by constantly harping on controversial matters of no importance.

3. Destroy the people's faith in their natural leaders by holding the latter up to contempt, ridicule and disrespect.

4. Always preach true democracy, but seize power as fast and as ruthlessly as possible.

5. By encouraging government extravagance, destroy its credit, produce fear of inflation with rising prices and general discontent.

6. Incite unnecessary strikes in vital industries, encourage civil disorders and foster a lenient and

soft attitude on the part of government toward such disorders.

7. By specious argument, cause the breakdown of the old moral virtues -- honesty, sobriety, self-restraint, faith in the pledged word, ruggedness.

C. Cause the registration of all firearms on some pretext, with a view to confiscating them and leaving the population helpless.

[That is quite a list, isn't it? Now, stop to think how many of these rules are being carried out in this nation today?

_The Texas Freemason - December, 1969.

_via Hobbs St. Herald, P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

Perverted Grace

Joe E. Galloway

God's grace is being misused by some as a spiritual "catchall" to give hope for the disobedient and unfaithful. Without any Bible basis for such, we have heard a few members through the years express their opinion that God may decide to accept many of the "heathen" who have never heard the gospel. These usually admit that God has not promised this; but they still argue that he may do this through "grace." More recently we are hearing some teach that God may overlook doctrinal error on the part of sincere Christians who are ignorant or gullible. The suggestion is that God may accept such Christians who are believing, practicing, and teaching error ignorantly, **because they are under the covenant of grace.**

That we are saved by God's grace (favor) we gratefully affirm. The Bible teaches that God's grace has appeared to all men (Titus 2:11); that it resulted in Christ's death for us (Hebrews 2:9); and that salvation is by grace, through faith (Ephesians 2:8). However, some seem to overlook this important fact: God's grace provided God's revelation of his will for us in the New Testament! To be saved by his grace we must learn, believe, and obey this revealed will (Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 5:9). There is no indication that God's

grace will save (cause God to accept) anyone -- sinner or saint -- who does not comply with the stipulations of his will.

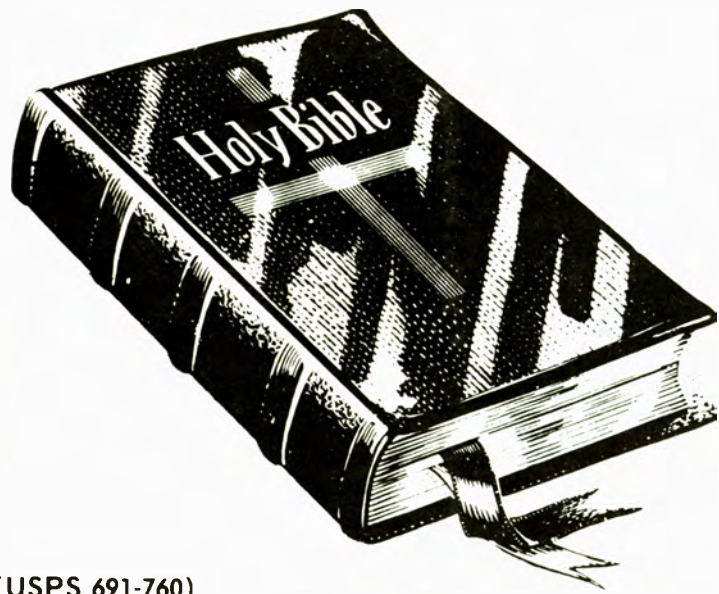
After telling us in Titus 2:11 that "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men," verse 12 continues the thought by saying, "teaching us . . ." In other words, God's grace tells us what we must do to be saved by God. So, the New Testament is called "the word of his grace" (Acts 14:3 and 20:32). Some have tried to make strict adherence to God's word antagonistic to God's grace. They label those of us who teach the need to faithfully obey and live by the Bible "legalists," and say that such "legalism" is the exact opposite of grace. Yet the Bible clearly shows that strict acceptance and obedience to God's word is essential to being in God's favor!

A thought often overlooked when God's grace is being considered, is the fact that it is "impossible for God to lie" (Hebrews 6:18). So, God cannot go against (or act contrary to) his word! Any concept of grace which suggests that God may decide to set aside, or overlook, that which he has said, is a FALSE concept. God has clearly told us that when Christ comes again he will take "vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the

gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thessalonians 1:8-10); so we can KNOW that his grace cannot extend to save the ignorant heathen. Likewise, Christians are told that all that they do in word or deed must be done by Christ's authority (Colossians 3:17), so all must be authorized by the New Testament. When we teach or practice that which is without such authority (for example, instrumental music in worship), we have neither the fellowship of Christ nor of the Father (II John 9-10.) God's grace does not constitute an exception to this.

Remember that God's grace is extended to all, and that it is conditioned on each person's learning, believing, obeying, and living by God's word. This should keep us from giving hope for the disobedient and unfaithful. It is not a matter of sincerity and ignorance. Sincere and ignorant people crucified Christ; but God's grace did not save them until they repented and were baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:36-38; 3:17-19).

_P.O. Box 790, Greenville, TN 37744-0790.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am
Words...

forth the

Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 42

Are There Christians In Denominational Churches?

Rex A. Turner, Sr.

There has been of late a surge of discussions and/or debates on the question of whether or not there are Christians in the denominational churches. Let this be said at the outset: (1) a Christian is a follower of Christ; (2) specifically, he is one who has believed on Christ; (3) he is one who has repented of his sins; (4) he is one who has made a public proclamation of his faith in Christ before men; (5) and he is one who has been baptized into Christ for the remission of his sins.

Conceivably, there could be situations wherein a person might obey the gospel under circumstances where he has had no fellowship contact with a loyal church of the Lord. To illustrate, the late John T. Lewis related just such a case. He had been speaking by means of radio from Birmingham, Alabama, and he had been "thundering away on the first principles" ["thundering away" was a favored expression of his], and as a result he received a telephone call from an elderly gentleman who related in substance that he was convinced of the truth being taught, that he would be present, come Sunday, to confess his faith in Christ and to be baptized for the remission of sins. Brother Lewis was disappointed when the old gentleman did not show the following Sunday. Some two weeks later, the old gentleman called to explain that his daughter refused to bring him to the Ensley church, that his daughter said her pastor [a Methodist] would baptize him for the remission of sins, that the Methodist preacher did baptize him, and that he had a clear understanding with the preacher that he was being baptized for the remission of sins. Brother Lewis chuckled that that was one Methodist who baptized by immersion for the remission of sins.

As a boy of ten years and above, this writer recalls numerous ones who presented themselves, primarily from the Baptist Church, for membership at the Antioch and Pleasant Hill Churches of Christ on the basis that they had been baptized for

the remission of sins. The comments of the various preachers ring clear even today: "John Doe comes forward with a desire to hold membership and be in fellowship with the Antioch church. Now, though he is or has been a member of the Baptist Church, he states that he was baptized for the remission of sins. I have just pointed out to him that Baptist preachers do not baptize for the remission of sins, that they teach that one is saved by faith only, coupled with an experience of grace, and that one should be baptized to show to the world that he has been saved. John Doe insists, however, that he has read his Bible, that he knew baptism is necessary for salvation when he was baptized by the Baptist preacher, and that he has never believed anything else."

The preacher continued: "Now, only God and John Doe can really know if he were truly baptized into Christ. We are glad to have this man in our fellowship. He can with us partake of the Lord's supper each Lord's day; and further, he will not be a party to the teaching of false doctrines and to a system of perverted worship. Further, if John Doe ever entertains any doubts about his baptism, we urge him to be rebaptized at once." The result was that almost all who came in on their Baptist "baptism" were later rebaptized.

The case was that in those days [that is, days which were in the aftermath of J. R. Graves, the great Baptist defender whose articles against the Methodists appeared in the columns of the Tennessee Baptist under the title, "The Great Iron Wheel" and were later published in book form] the Baptists were very vocal against the Methodists for their having repudiated and denounced the "doctrines of election and sovereign grace" and for their practice of sprinkling instead of immersion.

The situation was that the Baptists' preachers were very critical of the Methodists, and the rank and file of those who heard, while having little understanding of the "doctrine of election and sovereign grace," could see a contrast between the

act of sprinkling and the act of submerging for Bible baptism. Thus, there were those who very naturally arrived at the concept that baptism by immersion is necessary for salvation. There were some "country Baptist preachers," here and there baptized converts "into Christ for the remission of sins"; but Baptist preachers today are quite a sophisticated class. They teach with emphasis the doctrine of salvation by faith alone coupled with an experience of grace.

There can be but little doubt that the vast majority of members of the Baptist Church believe Baptist doctrine; but suppose for the sake of supposing that there are vast numbers of the Baptist Church, and other like denominational churches, who have been baptized for the remission of sins! What then? Shall they be left where they are? Shall they be left in a system of Calvinism which perverts the principles of Christianity? Shall they be left in a system which has established its own creed -- a church that wears the name of "John the Baptist" rather than the name of Christ? Shall they be left in a system where the Lord's supper is observed only monthly instead of each Lord's day? Shall they be left in a system which teaches the doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy? Such questions could certainly be expanded.

Does not every Christian have the obligation to preach a full gospel and to call all people out of a sinful life, whether regarding morals or doctrine? If this were being done by all, would there be any need for the present ongoing debate? Why should anyone spend time sitting on God's judgment throne? Surely every Christian will rejoice in all the mercy which God, through the gift of his Son on the one hand and the requiring of the demands of justice on the other hand, extends to man, or to all men. There is always present the principle of the "greater the opportunity the greater the responsibility," but the Christian must speak that and only

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Are There Christians In Denominational Churches?

that which is in keeping with God's word. Why not be content to be an humble spokesman for God? Is the church moving into a course of asceticism?

Further, if the Baptist Church and other churches that immerse are to be given a clean bill of spiritual health, let someone explain why the Methodists should be left out? There is no system of Christian doctrine that has prevailed more against true Christianity than Calvinism, and the Methodists are the farthest removed from Calvinism of any of the denominations closely related to the Baptists through the doctrine of Calvinism. In short, in the basic principles, the Methodists are much closer to the truth than are the Baptists, or other closely related denominations. True enough, the Methodists do not immerse, but the Baptists declare that baptism is only for the purpose of one's saying to the world that he has already been saved.

The chart which follows will, in brief, reflect the Baptists' and the Methodists' positions relative to Calvinism.

Calvinism declined by the Acrostic Tulip	Missionary Baptist	Methodist
T=total depravity	agrees	denies
U=unconditional election	denies	denies
L=limited atonement	denies	denies
I=irresistible grace, or direct operation of the Holy Spirit which cannot be resisted	agrees, except emphasizes that Spirit's operation can be resisted	agrees except the Spirit's operation can be resisted
P=the perseverance of the saints, or once saved always saved	agrees	denies

As the above chart reflects, the Methodists are in principle closer to the truth than are the Baptists and other like denominations. True, the Baptists immerse, but the Methodists will immerse if one requests to be immersed. Baptists strongly proclaim that baptism is not a condition of salvation; and so, what advantage is the Baptists' immersion over the Methodists' sprinkling?

Now, back to the supposition -- that is, suppose for the sake of supposing that there are many among the denominational churches that practice the rite of immersion who were baptized into Christ -- what then? Are they to be left where they

are? Can they be saved eternally without their meeting on each first day of the week, unless providentially hindered, to worship, including the partaking of the Lord's supper? Can they be saved while contributing of their funds to support an institution that is dedicated to the promulgation of a basic system of Calvinism? Does every gospel preacher, in fact every Christian, have the obligation to "expound . . . the way of God more accurately" to those who are in error?

There is no place for a caustic and bitter attitude in the proclamation of truth, and a gospel preacher should be careful lest he become a judge in the place of God rather than a proclaimer for God; but the case is that the truth of God must be

proclaimed. Instead of a much to do about unity in diversity, gospel preachers should get back to the needed task of preaching truth to the point of contrasting truth with error. There is absolutely nothing which can suffice for the proclamation of the first principles of the gospel coupled with an emphasis on godly living -- subjects such as: "A Proper Division of the Bible"; "The One Church"; "What Must One Do To Be Saved"; "The Lord's Supper"; "Acceptable Prayers"; "The Foolishness and Weakness of God"; "Scriptural Names for God's People" -- to mention a few. Paul wrote Timothy: "Preach the Word."

--*Sound Doctrine*, April-December 1984.

Are We Barren Fig Trees?

Clifford Dixon

In Luke 13:6-9 we read: "He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down." The Lord was giving this parable to the Jews because they thought they were more righteous than others and needed no repentance. He shows them as being an unfruitful fig tree that was about to be destroyed. But the lesson doesn't end there. We need to ask the question, "Am I an unfruitful tree?"

1. This tree had been planted in a favored spot -- the vineyard. We likewise have so many blessings going our way. We are favored with material blessings galore, and have the blessing of the fact that Christ has died for us, established his church to house the saved, gave us the Bible to guide us and opportunities to obey and serve the Lord. Any man now who is without God is especially without excuse because of all the blessings he has and opportunities he has of serving God.

2. The Lord expects man to bear fruit for him. The Jewish nation was not bearing fruit because they rejected Christ. If we reject Christ and the word of Christ, we also will be barren. Jesus said, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:4-5). No matter how many good works one attempts outside of Jesus Christ, he will have no credit with God. One must get into Christ first; and to get into Christ he must be willing to listen to the words of Christ. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:1-4). When one does this, what is his new relationship? Look at verse 22 of Romans 6 --

"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." To bear fruit for the Lord we are going to have to get "into" the Lord. Have you done this, neighbor?

3. Life is vain that does not bear fruit for the Lord. The Lord told the vine-dresser that he had come three years seeking fruit, and found none. Then he said, "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" Man is the only creature of God's creation who is made in his image. That means that man has an eternal spirit within him, and also that God wants to have communion with him. God thus tells man in the scriptures how He wants man to live; and when man will not listen to God's instructions, his is a thwarted life that is unfruitful and vain.

Look at all the years and all the things that God did to give man salvation through the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Then look at all the people who turn their backs on Jesus and will not be cleansed in his blood. Solomon of old summed it up when he said: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). The translators added the words "duty of" in this verse, and without them the verse would read that to fear God, and keep his commandments is "the whole of man."


John speaks of the fact that Jesus would not only give the baptism of the Holy spirit but also fire; then he explained that the "wheat" (representing the fruitful Christians) would be gathered into the garner, but the chaff (representing those who did not serve Christ) would be burned up (Matthew 3:12).

4. The vine-dressers represent the messengers of Christ who teach the word of God and encourage people to obey it. They are digging around the tree and fertilizing it to get it to be fruitful. This would represent the preaching of the word, which is to be done with reproving, rebuking, and exhorting with all longsuffering and doctrine (II Timothy 4:2-3).

Plain preaching of the word disturbs people who love the practice of sin, or who do not know they are walking in wrong paths. On Pentecost day the preaching of Peter caused the people to be pricked in their hearts, and to cry out to him and the rest of the apostles saying, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37).

Don't get excited if strong gospel preaching dis-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

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What Does The Bible Say?

Hilton Royster

All rational beings act from motive. Motive, then, is the power which produces voluntary action. If the gospel produces all the proper motives to move one to become a Christian, there can be no other power to move a free moral agent to become a Christian. The gospel presents to us the most powerful of motives, such as salvation, heaven, the love of God, and fear of punishment.

Can man know these motives? Do they appeal to him without God's sending the Holy Spirit into his heart to enable him to know the motives and to be influenced by them? It is conceded that Satan seduced Eve and led her into sin by placing motives before her. Eve, acting on these motives, departed from the Lord and became a sinner; but, according to the direct-operation advocates, God is unable to reach the heart of the sinner by motives presented in the gospel without some additional power. Thus the strange theory is held, that God cannot accomplish as much by motive as the Devil did!

Eve was as far from Satan as the sinner is from righteousness, even according to the theory of the most radical advocate of hereditary total depravity. According to the direct-operation theory, Satan, by motive, led Adam and Eve to voluntary sin; but God cannot, by motive, lead sinners to do right. Who can believe that Satan is so much more powerful than God?

Has the sinner the ability to become a Christian? Without hesitation I affirm that he, when properly instructed, has the ability to forsake sin and obey the gospel; and that he has the ability to understand the gospel when it is presented to him. Otherwise he would not be responsible. Where there is no ABILITY there is no RESPONSIBILITY.

"Inclination" is a leaning or preference of the feelings, mind, or will. What inclined Adam and Eve to sin? What inclines a rational person to perform any act? What inclines people to become Christians? Is it possible that the stirring appeals of the gospel cannot stir up in a sinner's heart any desire for the blessings offered?

Can a sinner become a Christian? Keep in mind the fact that the sinner's sinfulness does not exceed the holiness of Adam and Eve; that the sinner is no further from God than Adam and Eve were from Satan; yet Adam and Eve were able, when the way was opened to them, to voluntarily go into sin. So also the sinner is able, when the way is opened

to him, to voluntarily obey the gospel. If sinners do not have the ability, it is not their fault, and they cannot be blamed. It must follow then that, if the sinner cannot become a Christian when the gospel is presented to him, God only is to be blamed for his remaining in sin.

If some direct work of the Spirit on the sinner's heart gives him the ability to act, then he is helpless till God sends him the Spirit; neither would he, in any way, be responsible till the Holy Spirit gave him the ability. If the sinner has the ability, but has no inclination till the direct work of the Spirit creates in him the inclination, then he is not responsible for not being inclined.

We do not recall a clear-cut statement by the direct-operation advocates as to whether they think

the Holy Spirit, by direct-operation on the sinner's heart, creates in him some new faculty enabling him to act; or whether he woos the sinner into favorable feelings toward the matter about that. The fact is, the theory frees the sinner from responsibility till God sees fit to send the Holy Spirit into him.

If the theory is true, then God damns a man for not doing that which he cannot do. But the scriptures nowhere intimate that the Spirit of God does, or must, accompany the word to make it either intelligible or credible, or to enable one to accept it.

God gave the gospel to meet man's needs as he is.

--7th & College Street, Mayfield, KY 42706.

Legalize Drugs?



Joe E. Galloway

The past two Sundays in the three lessons on "What the Bible Says About Strong Drink" we noticed that alcohol is an addictive drug. While answering arguments which proponents of social drinking make, we pointed out that the use of alcohol (and hard drugs, such as cocaine) stand or fall together. One might as well argue for the moderate, recreational use of cocaine as to argue for "social" drinking!

Evidently the world is seeing this similarity, too! Since they favor the use of alcohol, socially, it should come as no great surprise that they will argue for legalizing drugs, also. On May 18, 1988, the **Today Show** featured a discussion of the advisability (?) of legalizing drugs. Evidently the NBC network wanted to really get this idea over rapidly to the viewing public for they also featured this on their evening news. In both instances the reporting was biased, in favor of the legalization of drugs such as cocaine!

Their "reasoning" went something like this: We have demonstrated that the sale and use of drugs cannot be stopped. By making it illegal we have provided a profitable area for organized crime,

resulting in gang murders and other crimes. If we legalize drugs we will take the big profit out of drugs, so organized crime will drop out of it and things will be better. Then their big "fact" to cap this all off was: We learned that prohibition did not work with alcohol! We need to learn that it works no better with drugs!

This is the old idea of doing evil that good may come. The only problem is: all this is but a pipe-dream, an illusion! Good NEVER comes from evil! Legalizing drugs will only contribute to more drug users, and to more evil!

What about the repeal of prohibition? Did it make things better regarding alcohol? If we will open our eyes to the situation in our country today regarding the blight of alcohol we will answer this with a resounding "No!" Read carefully the following article on the real effects of the repeal of prohibition in 1933:

Was Prohibition All That Bad?

John Davis

David Lusk recently published some very interesting information seldom revealed relative to those infamous prohibition days. Most of us have been led to believe that the 18th Amendment to the Constitution in 1919 was all bad, and that we would never again try such a disastrous bit of legislation. About all some can remember is Al Capone and bath-tub gin, etc.

What did the 18th Amendment really do? It closed 177,790 saloons and 1,756 breweries. During the next ten years, look at what happened:

1. Crime decreased 54 per cent.
2. The death rate due to liquor decreased 42 per cent.
3. Ninety-seven of the ninety-eight "Keely Alcohol Clinics" closed.
4. Insanity decreased 66 per cent.
5. All sixty "Neely Cure Clinics" closed down from lack of outpatients afflicted with alcoholism.

Then in 1933, prohibition was repealed. Here is what happened:

1. Drunkenness increased 350 per cent.
2. The major St. Louis hospitals alone recorded 400 per cent increase in alcoholic patients.

And, isn't it strange how, here 44 years later, alcohol is the "drink of the man of distinction," and prohibition is remembered as the "scourge of the American's liberty." You've got to hand it to him -- the devil has done a good selling job in 44 years.

Continued On Page 4

Are We Barren Fig Trees?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

turbs people, because it takes this to convert them. These messengers are also making intercession for men who need to bear fruit for the Lord. "I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; . . . 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 2:1, 3, 4). Through their intercessions, time is often extended for the sinner to have opportunity to obey the Lord.

5. There is a limit to God's tolerance, as can be seen from Luke 13:8-9, where the plea for the fig tree is, that it be extended for another year: "And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down." There will come a time when

life can no longer be extended to the sinner, and he will have to go out to meet his Maker as an unfruitful tree. There will be a day when the Lord Jesus Christ will return; then it will be sad for all the unfruitful trees.

While the usual application of this parable is to unfaithful members of the church, we have seen in it such a good lesson to the sinner that we could not fail to give it. After all, he lives on earth, breathes the air God gives, and enjoys the blessings God gives here. His life touches others here; but how sad that he has no fruit for God because he has not rendered his life to the Lord.

Sinner friend, there is still time for you to do this, if you will act today!

--P.O. Box 507, Jay, FL 32565.

A Successful Meeting Predicted



Winfred Clark

When you stop to read some passages of the Bible, they have a way of causing you to stop and take a second look. Acts 10:33 is surely one of those passages: "Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou has well done that thou art come."

Now we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." You must know that these are the words of Cornelius to Peter, after Peter has entered his home to preach the gospel.

Is it not safe to say that you could predict the outcome of such a meeting? Would you not think it would be successful? Does it not have all the ingredients to make it a total success? Would you not like to see such ingredients in every meeng in

which you have a part? I think most preachers would surely want to see such a meeting, and be a part of the same!

What are those ingredients found within these verses that will enable us to predict (in all likelihood) a successful meeting?

I. ONE THING WOULD SURELY BE THE ATTENDANCE.

You will note that Cornelius said, "We are all here present." Yes, I know this has to do with why they were present. But remember that he has called together his kinsmen and near friends (Acts 10:24). These are among those who are present.

One thing needs to be noted at this point, and it is that these folks were there because they HAVE BEEN INVITED. They would not have known of the meeting with Peter, unless Cornelius had told them. This was an opportunity that would have been known only to Cornelius and his family, and to Peter. The efforts of Cornelius increased the attendance at that meeting!

Would you not say Cornelius used his influence to try and increase the attendance? He went to those who are most likely to listen to what he has to say. He went to those who would most likely be interested in the same things he was interested in. Yes, he used his influence to encourage the attendance -- and so should we!

II. ANOTHER THING WOULD BE THE ATTITUDE:

Notice that they are present "to hear all things commanded thee of God." This shows an attitude of reverence and respect. They know they are not just listening to a preacher, but they are listening to a message from God. They are not interested in hearing jokes, or human experiences; but that which is commanded of God.

III. ANOTHER THING WOULD BE APPROACH OF THE PREACHER.

You will note that Peter opens his mouth and begins to talk about God. They wanted to hear what God had commanded; and that is exactly where Peter begins. He points out that God is no respecter of persons; that God sent the word; that God anointed Jesus, and that God was with him; that God raised him from the dead; and God chose the apostles; and that God ordained Christ to judge men. You would have to say his lesson was God-centered and Christ-centered. What would you expect the result of such a meeting to be? You would say, "A success." And that it was!

BUT ANY MEETING CAN BE A SUCCESS THAT HAS WITHIN IF THE SAME KIND OF INGREDIENTS!

--Hobbs St. Church, P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

Legalize Drugs?

Continued From Page 3

[This was evidently written in 1977, JEG]

By the way, how do you feel about marijuana? Lots of folks argue that such should be legalized. [And NOW they are saying ALL drugs, including cocaine -- JEG] Politicians are buying votes in large quantities by such propaganda.

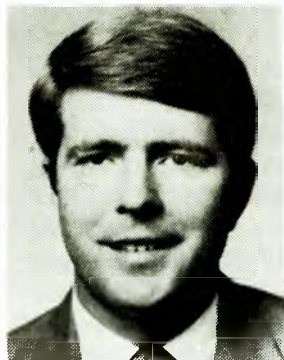
Look back at the twenties and see if the arguments are not parallel.

Was prohibition all that bad? Was the repeal all that good?

(Bulletin, January 15, 1981)

--P.O. Box 790, Greenville, TN 37744-0790.

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Ken Tyler

It is easy to become so involved in our daily activities that Bible study is stifled out. It takes a person who really loves the Bible to study it regularly. Without a genuine love for God's word, Bible study is a hit-and-miss affair -- mostly miss.

There are many verses in Psalm 119 that point out how much God's word means to the child of God. In this article I want to draw your attention to a few of them.

First, the Psalmist said (in 119:72): "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver." He said again (in verse 127): "Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold." Does God's word mean this much to you? So many have sold their souls for gold and silver. Please don't let this happen to you!

Second, the Psalmist said (in 119:129): "Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them." Is this how you feel about God's

word? Do you consider God's word to be "wonderful"? Notice carefully that the Psalmist "kept" God's word because of what it meant to him.

Third, the Psalmist said (in 119:131): "I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments." What a marvelous statement! He did not run away from the commandments of God, but longed for them. Do God's commandments mean this much to you?

Fourth, several times in this great passage the Psalmist mentions his love of God's word. Listen, "... I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved" (v. 47); "O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day" (v. 97); "I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love" (v. 113); "My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly" (v. 167). Are these statements characteristic of your feelings about God's word?

John 12:48 makes it plain that we will be judged by the word at the last day. I pray that all of us will love it, study it and then obey it. The Bible is too valuable to lie around in our houses collecting dust. Be a good Bible student. You won't regret it!

--Church of Christ, Arab, AL 35016.

He Lives Today

He had no servants, yet they called Him Master.
He had no medicines, yet they called Him Healer.
He had no degrees, yet they called Him Teacher.
He had no armies, yet kings feared Him.
He had no toys, yet children loved Him.

He had no home, yet disciples followed Him.
He committed no crimes, yet he was crucified.
He won no victories, yet he overcame the world.
He was buried in a tomb, yet He lives today.
--Selected



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Words Of Truth

"I am not m
Words of Truth and soberness."

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—Acts 26:25

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The Will Of God

Romans 12:2
Bobby Liddell

As God's creation, we must be *aware* of God's will for us; but we must go beyond being aware of God's will to the point of *understanding* what God's will is. Having been made *aware* of, and having gained an understanding of, God's will, then we are to be *submissive* in obedience to the will of God.

Learning the will of God should produce a **CHANGE** in our lives. **AFTER HE HAS LEARNED GOD'S WILL**, no one can ever be the same as he was before. A change is demanded. The will of God demands a *change of masters*: "And be not conformed to this world: . . . (Romans 12:2). No longer are we to follow the will of self (Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:12). No longer are we to be formed by the world of sin (I John 2:15-17). We should not let the world mold us to fit it; but we should be in accordance with God's form (Romans 6:16-18). No longer are we to be fashioned by the wickedness of society (James 4:4). We should learn from the people of Israel: they disobeyed God by the desire to be like the world round about them, and suffered the wrath of God!

The will of God demands a *change of manner*: ". . . but be ye transformed. . ." (Romans 12:2). Not only should our masters change, but our manner of life must also be changed to the point that we are pleasing to God. The will of God brings a new concern (Matthew 26:39; John 6:38). No longer are we concerned about worldly things; but spiritual things have become priority (Matthew 6:33; Colossians 3:1, 2). The will of God "begets" a "new creature" (James 1:18; II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15). Obedience to God transforms our life. The will of God builds a new character (II Peter 1:4-11; I John 3:8-10).

The will of God effects a change of *masters and manner* because it demands a *change of mind*; ". . . by the renewing of your mind . . ." (Romans 12:2). Only when we change our mind to serve God, and to no longer serve sin, will we make a change of masters and manner. This *change of mind* is intellectual. God's will appeals to our intellect (John 6:44-45). God's will appeals

to the other aspects of our being; but it also appeals to our intellect because of its truthfulness, accuracy, and evidence presented. This change of mind is inward (Romans 12:1-2; 8:16). No longer are we to be governed by the outward man of the flesh (II Corinthians 4:16; 5:10); but the flesh is to be governed by the inward man of the spirit. This change of mind is influential (Proverbs 23:7; Matthew 12:34). Our every aspect of life in word and deed is influenced by the thinking of the mind. For our actions and words to be those of a new creature, we must have a renewed mind.

Learning the will of God presents a **CHALLENGE** in our lives: ". . . that ye may prove . . ." (Romans 12:2). The word "prove" means to examine with the expectation of thus approving. The will of God challenges us to *enquire*. Before we can "prove" or "approve," we must enquire into God's will. We should enquire by daily searching (Acts 17:11; Psalm 119:97). As we need our daily physical bread, so we need the bread of life daily. We should enquire by diligent seeking. Our enquiry should not be haphazard, spasmodic, nor half-hearted (Psalm 1:1-2; John 5:39). We should enquire by dedicated studying (II Timothy 2:15, A.S.V. "give diligence"). Our study must be dedicated; therefore, it must be regular, in depth, and with the goal of understanding God's will better that we may be more pleasing to him.

The will of God challenges us to *examine* the evidence. We are not asked to believe and live by that which is not supported by evidence, but to examine the evidence which has been presented (John 20:30-31). We are challenged to make a thorough examination (Acts 17:11); a thoughtful examination (Psalm 1:2); and a truthful examination (II Corinthians 4:2).

The will of God challenges us to *endorse* that about which we have made enquiry and which we have examined. This endorsement is made by acceptance of God's word (Acts 2:41); by approval of God's will (Psalm 119:11-16, 172); and by application of God's way (Psalm 119:105; I John 1:6-10). It is not enough to accept and approve; each must then make application of God's way to his life.

Learning the will of God presents a **CHARGE**

we must obey. This charge from God is *profitable* to man: ". . . what is that good, . . ." (Romans 12:2). Man "profits" because of riches that are real (Ephesians 1:3, 7; 3:8; Hebrews 11:26); because of a relationship that is right (II Corinthians 6:14-18; I John 1:3; I Peter 2:17; Romans 5:1-2; 6:16-18); and because of the reward that is reserved (I Peter 1:3-5; Matthew 25:46; II Timothy 4:7-8). This charge from God is *pleasing* to God: ". . . acceptable. . ." (Romans 12:2). Its purpose pleases God; that is, the salvation of men's souls (Luke 19:10; Matthew 20:28). Its promise pleases God; that is, the abundant life of the saved both now and hereafter (John 10:10). Its preaching pleases God (I Corinthians 1:21). This charge from God is *perfect* (" . . . perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2). God's will is full (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:3); finished (Jude 3; Revelation 22:18-19); and final (John 12:48).

The will of God demands a change in our lives, challenging us and charging us in the way of God. No one can ever be the same after he has learned the will of God.

--6474 Grenewell Street, Pensacola, FL 32506.

Presidential Debate Moderator To Speak

Edwin Newman, retired NBC newsman, will speak at the annual Benefit Dinner on December 2 at Freed-Hardeman College, Henderson, Tennessee.

Newman has moderated two presidential debates, written three books, two about the English language. He is widely known for his documentaries.

"The Advisory Board Benefit Dinner has two major purposes: one, to raise operational funds for Freed-Hardeman College; two, to bring international celebrities to the community. We hope to see you there," said Dr. James Canter, California, Mo., president of the Advisory Board.



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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Using God As An Emergency Device

Arnold Sexton

We all recognize that one of the greatest privileges that a Christian has is prayer. There are many benefits that come through prayer. But the purpose of this article is not to discuss these.

Think of how wonderful it is to be a child of God and the prayer privilege that goes with it. God has promised to hear our petitions and give us the things we need (not necessarily what we want). When we are distressed, discouraged, or physically threatened by sickness or danger, we know that God is faithful. We know he is concerned and will hear the requests we make according to his will (1 John 5:14).

There are some people who only see this side of prayer. They never pray when everything is falling into place. If they are not in some kind of emotional distress or physical danger, prayer never crosses their minds. Their view of God is one who is needed only in emergencies. Their philosophy is: "God, when things are going well, I won't bother you if you won't make any demands upon me." But, you let trouble come and they begin to call on God. Their view is somewhat like that of Mary in the following story:

Mary had had an exceptionally happy day. When it came time for bed, she said good-night to Mother and Daddy and jumped into bed.

"Aren't you going to say your prayers?" asked Mother. "Oh, we only say prayers when we want something; but today I had everything I wanted."

Mary had been taught that prayer was an emergency device. A Christian should pray in difficult times; but if that is the only time he prays, God will not hear him. Please read Proverbs 1:24-33.

--Little Rock, AR.



The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Congregational Singing In History



neither **instrumental music** nor **singing** in the public worship of the church is authorized in the New Testament!

Of course, this is but an effort to justify the use of mechanical instruments of music in the worship. But it involves a repudiation of the oft-made arguments by which many have sought to prove (?) that instrumental music in the worship is **scriptural**. It is inconsistent to insist (1) that neither mechanical instruments of music, nor singing, is authorized in corporate worship, yet (2) at the same time to argue that it is "scriptural" to play mechanical instruments of music. A thing which is not authorized in the scriptures cannot be "scriptural!"

The following history does not prove congregational singing is scriptural, nor is it intended to prove such. But it does show that religious people in all the history of the church have so regarded it. We shall see in subsequent studies that we must have Bible authority for all that we do in religion, and that the New Testament does clearly authorize "singing" in congregational worship. But mechanical instrumental music in connection with that singing is NOT authorized.

The **Cyclopedia Of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature**, by McClintock and Strong, under "**PSALMODY, Ancient**," speaking of "public worship," says: "It is worship of a much higher and more catholic" [universal, FHN] "character for the whole congregation to unite in the utterance of religious feeling . . . Every kind of composition is legitimate that a congregation can use, and through which it can express the emotions of its spiritual life." (Vol. VIII, p. 735).

After referring to Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26' and Acts 16:25, the same volume says: "In his epistles to the Ephesians (5:19) and to the Colossians (3:16), the apostle Paul recognizes and enjoins the use of sacred songs. So does the apostle James (5:13). . . . In the passages just cited of Ephesians and Colossians, the apostle enjoins the use of hymns in the social worship of Christians (emphasis mine, FHN), classing them with Psalms and spiritual songs" (Vol. VIII, p. 736).

"Enjoin" means "1. To direct or impose by authoritative order or with urgent admonition." This shows that the author understood Ephesians 5

and Colossians 3 to **REQUIRE** singing in the public worship -- by apostolic command!

Of the "form" of the "early hymns of the church," we read: "Among the Jewish Christians, the chanting of the psalms was familiar, and it would be easy for them to compose hymns that could be sung to their accustomed tunes; but with the Gentile converts it would be somewhat different. . . . Such singing would no doubt be new to the Gentile converts, but it would be speedily learned; and . . . they would hail with delight this accession to their source of enjoyment, which served at the same time as a vehicle of the devotional feeling that had been kindled within them. . . . The early Christians used the Jewish psalms in their worship, which would almost certainly be sung to their traditional Temple music." (Vol. VIII, p. 737).

Regarding when **uninspired** hymns were introduced, we read: "Eusebius intimates that private individuals wrote hymns to Christ as God, which were generally sung . . . In his letter to Trajan, Pliny says, 'The Christians are accustomed to sing alternately between themselves, and to praise Christ as a god' . . . alluding probably to the **Gloria in Excelsis**, the morning hymn of the early Church" (Vol. VIII, p. 737). Thus we see that the "early church" did sing.

In the same volume, under **PSALMODY, Christian**, we read: ". . . The most ancient and general practice of the Church was for the **WHOLE ASSEMBLY** to unite with one heart and voice in celebrating the praises of God. After a time, alternate psalmody was introduced, when the congregation, dividing themselves into two parts, repeated the psalms by courses, verse for verse, one in response to another, and not, as formerly, **ALL TOGETHER**. The mode of singing all together was called "symphony," while the alternate mode was termed "antiphony, and in the West, **responsoria**, the singing by responsals. This latter manner of conducting the psalmody originated in the Eastern Church, and is attributed to bishop Ignatius of Antioch, who flourished in the early part of the 2d century . . . but in a short time **antiphonal** singing became the general practice of the whole church." (Vol. VIII, p. 738). It is clear that the "ancient" practice of the church was for "the whole assembly" to sing.

Did the early Christians use mechanical instruments of music in their worship? They did not! Read further from McClintock and Strong: "The Greek word [PSALLO] is applied among the Greeks of modern times exclusively to sacred music, which in the Eastern Church" [similar to the Greek Orthodox, FHN] "**has never been any other than vocal, instrumental music being unknown in that Church, as it was in the primitive Church**" [Emphasis mine, FHN]. "Sir John Hawkins, following the Romish writers in his

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Congregational Singing In History

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

erudite work on the **History of Music**, makes Pope Vitalian, in A.D. 660, the first who introduced organs into churches. But students of ecclesiastical archaeology are generally agreed that instrumental music was not used in churches till a much later date; for Thomas Aquinas, A.D. 1250, has these remarkable words: 'Our Church does not use musical instruments, as harps and psalteries, to praise God withal, that she may not seem to Judaize.' From this passage we are surely warranted in concluding that there was no ecclesiastical use of organs in the time of Aquinas. It is alleged that Marinus Sanutus, who lived about A.D. 1290, was the first that brought the use of wind-organs into churches, and thence he received the name of **Torcellus**. In the East, the organ was in use in the emperor's courts, probably from the time of Julian, but never has either the organ or any other instrument been employed in public worship in Eastern churches; nor is mention of instrumental music found in all their liturgies, ancient or modern." (Vol. VIII, p. 739).

After discussing the Reformation, and the Welsh and English uses of Psalms and hymns in the 16th and 17th centuries, McClintock and Strong's **Cyclopedia** says: "A curious controversy on psalmody arose among the dissenters in the end of the 17th century. Whether singing in public worship had been partially discontinued during the times of persecution to avoid informers, or whether the miserable manner in which it was performed gave persons a distaste for it, it appears that, in 1691, Mr. Benjamin Keach published a tract entitled **The Breach Repaired in God's Worship; or, Psalms, Hymns, etc., proved to be a Holy Ordinance of Jesus Christ**. To us it may seem strange that such a point should be disputed; but Mr. Keach was obliged to labor earnestly, and with a great deal of prudence and caution, to obtain the consent of his people to sing a hymn at the conclusion of the Lord's Supper. After six years more, they agreed to sing on the thanksgiving-days; but it required still fourteen years more before he could persuade them to sing every Lord's day, and then it was only after the last prayer that those who chose might withdraw without joining in it! Nor did even this satisfy these scrupulous consciences; for, after all, a separation took place, and the inharmonious seceders formed a new church . . . where it was twenty years longer before singing the praises of God could be endured. It is difficult at this period to believe it; but Mr. Ivimey quotes Mr. Crosby as saying that Mr. Keach's was the first church in which psalm-singing was introduced. This remark, however, must probably be confined to the Baptist churches. The Presbyterians, it seems, were not quite so unmusical; for the Directory of the Westminster divines distinctly stated that 'it is the duty of Christians to praise God publicly by singing of psalms together in the congregation.'" (Vol. VIII, p. 742).

"In Scotland, the early Reformers, while they banished instrumental music from churches, paid great attention to singing. In John Knox's Psalter, arranged for use in churches, the metrical psalms are set to music in harmony of four parts."

The same **Cyclopedia** says: "The singing of spiritual songs constituted from the beginning an interesting and important part of religious worship in the primitive church" (Vol. VI, p. 756, article "MUSIC, Christian").

After references to Matthew 26:30 and Acts 16:25 along with other N.T. passages, we read again: "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 (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:14, 19; James 5:13)." (Vol. VI, p. 757).

"The celebrated letter from Pliny to Trajan, just at the close of the apostolic age (103, 104)" says that the Christians "were accustomed to meet before day to offer praise to Christ." "Tertullian, only a century later, evidently understood the passage to be descriptive of this mode" [singing, FHN] "of worshiping God and Christ, for he says that Pliny intended to express nothing else than assemblies before the dawn of the morning for singing praises to Christ and to God." (Vol. VI, p. 757). "Eusebius . . . says that Pliny could find nothing against them save that, arising at the dawn of the morning, they sang hymns to Christ as God." (Vol. VI, p. 757).

Read one more quotation from McClintock & Strong under "SINGING:" "From the apostolic age

singing was always a part of divine service, in which the whole body of the Church joined together. . . We find that in after-pages the people enjoyed their ancient privilege of singing all together." (Vol. IX, p. 776).

I have quoted rather extensively from this classical reference work for two reasons: (1) Most homes do not have access to this 10-volume set; and (2) This shows that from the first century A.D. until now, singing in the public assembly of the church has been generally regarded as part of the worship.

Only one reference did I find to any controversy over singing in public worship, and then McClintock & Strong referred to it as a "curious controversy." That controversy arose "in the end of the 17th century" --sixteen hundred years too late to be Biblical! And then it arose among the "dissenters," who in the article are identified as the Baptists! But apparently all opposition ceased after a third of a century --until the recent "Unity Meetings" with the Conservative Christian Churches!

(Next: We must have Bible authority).

The Best People In The World

Weldon Langfield

A new Christian once complained to this writer about the profanity at his workplace, commenting that he wished he could work with Christians all the time. It would be nice, he said wistfully, to always be associated with "the best people in the world." It is true, or at least should be true, that brethren in Christ represent the cream of the crop of the human race. Yet they can sometimes be cruel. Intolerance of mistakes and human frailties, backbiting and gossip, have too often characterized some members of the Lord's church. Mature, experienced brethren know that in some cases, reputed "pillars of the church" have a very negative side. Let us remember, all the sins committed in the churches to which the New Testament epistles were written are committed in the Lord's church today.

In facing any difficulty, it helps to know someone else has had the same experience. Of Christ, the Bible says, "Wherefore, it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:17). Christ was constantly associated with the people of God in his day, i.e., "the best people in the world." Let us consider some of his experiences.

The best people in the world rejected Christ because of his teaching. In John 6 Jesus revealed some difficult-to-follow truths. The reaction of the crowds following him is recorded in John 6:66: "Upon this many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." The great apostle Paul had similar experiences. On one occasion, he pleaded, "Am I become your enemy, by telling you the truth?" (Galatians 4:17).

Some hear the word of God, and see the need to change their lives. Others, upon hearing, resent the message, while quietly storing up that resentment. When the opportunity arrives, they spew out their venom. That is what happened at the crucifixion. Lies, slander, meanness, and cruelty were used to

attempt to destroy Christ. Among those engineering that travesty were God's chosen people, "the best people in the world."

The best people in the world put selfishness above the life of their Savior. In Matthew 16:21, the Bible says, "From that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples, that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up." Yet only a short time later, they were apparently debating over who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. In the shadow of his statement concerning his death, Christ took a child in his arms and taught *them* the meaning of humility (Matthew 18:1-6).

The best people deserted Christ when he needed them most. When we are lonely, facing pain, and in the throes of tragedy, friends can be of great value. The Son of God found himself in exactly such a state at his crucifixion. He prayed so fervently, his sweat was like drops of blood (Luke 22:44). Bitter tears dampened the dirt beneath him. Friendship would have been welcomed at this time. Instead, his closest friends chose to sleep (Matthew 26:40ff). Upon his arrest, when human loyalty would have proven a source of great comfort, we read, "Then all the disciples left him and fled" (Matthew 26:56). As if this weren't enough, Peter underscored his unwillingness to stand by Christ by denying him three times (Matthew 26:69-75). These followers were handpicked and personally tutored by the Son of God himself. They were the best people in the world.

What did Christ do for the best people in the world? He loved them. Jesus said, "As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you" (John 15:9). "He taught them" (Mark 10:1). He forgave them. In Luke 23:34, the Bible says, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." He died for them. In I Thessalonians 5:10, we are told that he

Continued On Page 4

Faith Healing?

Jerry Moffitt

Because neo-pentecostalism is on the move, we publish this article on "healing" and gifts of the Spirit. We want to print excerpts from an article which appeared in one of our leading magazines in America. The title of the article is "In Search Of A Miracle" by William A. Nolen, M.D. In this article he traces out how he, with a willingness to believe, investigated Kathryn Kuhlman, a noted faith healer.

Background

Dr. Nolen begins, "Anyone who works with sick people, as I do, knows that there are many unpredictable, ill-defined factors that affect the healing process. The 'will to live,' for example . . . A couple of years ago I began to wonder how great a role faith plays in the healing process. Is faith in someone, or something, enough by itself to effect a cure? . . . I decided to take a closer look at the healing that was reportedly being done outside of the traditional Western school of medicine . . . But because of my Roman Catholic background, I was already convinced that faith played some role in healing and so I was certain I could approach the subject with an open mind. Since Kathryn Kuhlman is certainly the best-known and probably the most highly regarded of the Christian faith healers, I decided that my investigation should begin with her.

"Kathryn Kuhlman is an ordained minister. She has been 'healing' since 1946; in an average year she holds 125 'healing' services and treats approximately one and a half million patients. Her services are held in the largest auditoriums in the biggest cities in the United States. At each service hundreds of sick people claim to have been cured.

"Through a friend who knew I was writing a book about para-normal healing, I arranged to be an usher and was assigned to the wheel-chair division. After the service, I was able to interview Kathryn Kuhlman. So began my investigation of faith healing."

A Sample Cure

Dr. Nolen described how the "healings" took place. He continues, "Occasionally Miss Kuhlman would turn to the audience and say, 'Someone with

a brace - a brace on your leg - you don't need that brace any more. Take it off. Come and claim your cure.'

"The first time she called for a brace, no one came forth. You could sense that the audience felt this was almost embarrassing for Miss Kuhlman. Finally, a very pretty young girl came up on the stage. She was waving her leg brace and standing, with her pelvis tilted badly, on one good leg and one short, withered leg. Kathryn Kuhlman questioned her. 'How long have you worn this brace?' 'Thirteen years. Since I had polio at seven.'

"And now you're cured. You don't need it any more. You've taken it off.'

"'Yes,' she said. 'I believe in the Lord. I've prayed, and He's curing me.'

"Everyone applauded. The girl cried. This scene, to my mind, was utterly revolting. The girl's leg was just as withered as it had been ten minutes earlier. Now she stood in front of 10,000 people, giving praise to the Lord -- and indirectly to Kathryn Kuhlman for a cure that hadn't occurred and wasn't going to occur. I could imagine how she would feel when the hysteria of the moment had left her and she again had to put on the brace she had worn for 13 years -- and would wear for the rest of her life. This was the case that first made me skeptical of Kathryn Kuhlman and her organization."

Investigation

"During the service, as those who had 'claimed a cure' came down off the stage, two legal secretaries I had enlisted to help me write down the names and addresses, phone numbers and diagnoses of everyone who was willing to

cooperate in a follow-up study. We got 82 names -- almost everyone who was approached . . . A few weeks after the service, letters were sent to the names on the list, inviting them to come to Minneapolis on Sunday, July 14, and tell us about their experiences. Twenty-three people showed up, and I made arrangements to interview them individually over the next few months."

Conclusion

"In talking to these people, I tried to be as honest, understanding and objective as possible, but I couldn't dispense with my medical knowledge and my common sense. I listened carefully to everything they told me and followed up every lead that might have led to a confirmation of a miracle. I was led to an inescapable conclusion: of the patients who had returned to Minneapolis to reaffirm the cures claimed at the miracle service, not one had, in fact, been miraculously cured of anything.

"And what about the cancer patients who had claimed cures? None of them had returned to Minneapolis. Since I was anxious to find out what had happened to them, I contacted everyone on my list. Mrs. Sullivan died of cancer four months after she had been 'cured' at Kathryn Kuhlman's miracle service. (Etc. J. C. M.)"

Res Ipsa Loquitur

"I'm inclined to rest my case on the axiom, often used by the defense lawyer in malpractice cases when a sponge has been found in the patient's abdomen after an operation: Res ipsa loquitur ('The thing speaks for itself')."

--Via "The Southwesterner," 8900 Manchaca Rd., Austin, TX 78745.

What You Think Of Yourself

Jon Atkinson

"If you think you are beaten, you are.
If you think you dare not, you don't.
If you like to win but think you can't,
It's almost a cinch you won't.
If you think you'll lose, you're lost,
For out in the world we find
Success begins with a fellow's will;
It's all in the state of mind.
If you think you are outclassed, you are.
You've got to think high to rise.
You've got to be sure of yourself

Before you can ever win a prize.

Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster man.
But sooner or later, the man who wins
Is the man who thinks he can."

The apostle Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13). Believe in yourself and in God within you, and you can do more than you ever thought possible!

--Mt. Carmel Church, Rt. 5 Box 254, Athens, AL 35611.

The Best People In The World

Continued From Page 3

"died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him."

The lesson is clear. Sometimes "the best people in the world" hurt us, let us down and terribly disappoint us. Yet we, too, must persevere in our service to them if we are to emulate the master. Peter wrote, "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow in his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not" (I Peter 2:21-23)!

2913 Brockway, Bakersfield, CA 93306.

My Eternity?

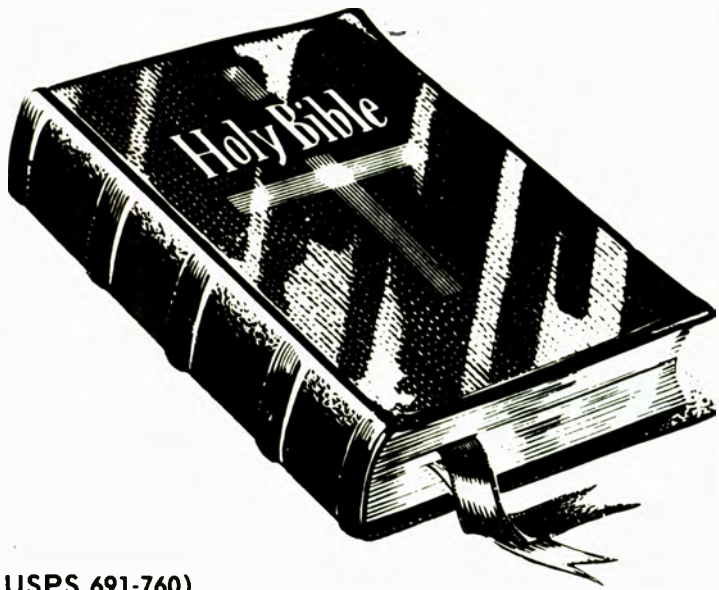
Dorothy E. Bowman

My eternity is in your hands, Oh Lord:
Help me to live each day by thy word.
Help me to work, and sing, and pray,
And to live as you lead the way.

My now is yours, Oh Lord:
For all that I can do
To teach and comfort and bring others to
you.

My tomorrow I leave in your hands,
Praying I will live by your plans.
With faith, and hope, and love, I raise
My voice to you in grateful praise.

Thank you Lord, for my now; for you see
In your hands I leave my eternity.
_Rt. 1 Box 44 Nunnally, TN 37037.



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 Inspired Word Of God

W. A. Holley

"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).

On Pentecost, after Jesus' resurrection, Peter taught that the Holy Spirit gave us the scriptures. "And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, . . . Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake . . ." (Acts 1:15-16).

Millions of people have loved the Bible dearly, and have made it their daily companion. Thousands have suffered imprisonment and martyrdom because of their devotion to its sacred teachings.

The Holy Bible is yet present with us; you read it for comfort when sad, for guidance when perplexed, for instruction when you have lost your way (Isaiah 34:16; I Timothy 4:11; II Timothy 2:15). The Bible is available to you; it can be read and understood; it can be believed and obeyed (Ephesians 3:3-4; 5:17; I Peter 1:22-25; 3:15).

Why should we consider the Bible to be inspired? Well, when we read, it reads like it is. Sinful human beings recognize it as a special message from God. Men desperately need a revelation from God, and the Bible is that revelation!

No uninspired man nor group of such men could have written the Bible. Most people realize that men would not have written the Bible which in such strong terms condemns them. Most books are written by but one author; but the Bible was written by about 40 men, with different backgrounds, at different times, of different cultures, over a period of some 1600 years; but when the 66 books of the Bible are brought together, there is harmony, there is unity; but no contradiction among them. We suggest that I Corinthians 2:9-16 be read.

There is a special preservation which attends the Bible. Jesus taught, "My word shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). Throughout the centuries, the Bible has had many enemies. For example, ten thousand Bibles were buried at Graez by order of

Ferdinand. The Jesuits boasted of burning 60,000 Bibles in a single year. Wycliff was condemned for heresy because he dared translate the Bible into the language of the common people. Ancient and modern infidels have tried hard to destroy the Bible; but they can never succeed. Voltaire, a famous French infidel, said: "In less than a hundred years the Bible will be discarded and Christianity swept from the earth." What happened? Voltaire's printing press was afterward used to print Bibles, and his house was used to store Bibles. These are but examples of countless efforts to destroy the Bible!! Indeed, the Bible marches on!!

The Bible lives on. Carlyle said, "No lie can live forever; but the precious Bible is still with us, and across its pages falls now shadow of decline or decay." The Bible is so popular it has been translated into thousands of languages and dialects.

The Bible claims to be inspired of God. Time after time, we read, "The Lord God called unto . . . and said . . ." "And God said to . . ." "Now the Lord said unto . . ." "And God said unto . . ." "And God spake unto . . ."

"Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass that the Lord said unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister saying . . ." (Joshua 1:1-2). David said, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue" (II Samuel 23:2). And so read similar expressions throughout the Poetical Books of the Bible: VIZ, Job, Psalms, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

The books of prophecy carry the same message. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken . . ." (Isaiah 1:2). "Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying . . ." (Jeremiah 1:4). "The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest . . ." (Ezekiel 1:3). These, and many other references, show that God spake to the people of the Old Testament.

In the New Testament, we read, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:1-2).

In the gospel records (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) we have Jesus Christ teaching the people, seeking to turn them from darkness to light. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Verse 24 (same chapter) says, "He that loveth me not keepeth not my words: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me." In the light of this verse, read Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:18-20).

The book of Acts is designed to teach honest souls how to be saved (Acts 2:36-38, 41-47).

The Epistles, addressed to individuals and to New Testament churches, teach honest souls how to worship and how to live (John 4:23-24; Acts 2:41-42; Titus 2:11-12; Romans 12:1-2).

The book of Revelation is a marvelous account of some of the struggles and trials of the early church. Read it slowly, read it daily, ever seeking to understand its wonderful message. Never add to its word -- never subtract from God's words (Revelation 22:18-19).

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

The High Price Of Success

Jackie M. Stearsman

Serving God requires perseverance and toil. The drop-out rate of preachers has reached an alarming proportion, if the words of Harold Hazelip are characteristic of our brotherhood: "Preachers are leaving the pulpit by the dozens. In Nashville there are more ex-preachers than current preaches. Fewer and fewer young people are preparing to preach." (Harold Hazelip, President, David Lipscomb College, at the Christian College President's Conference, Washington, D.C., as quoted in *International Gospel Hour News*, April-May, 1988, p. 2). The Schools of Preaching have no greater task than that of finding men who will commit their lives to preaching 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 26:25

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By Grace Through Faith



George W. DeHoff

There are two words which cover the whole plan of salvation -- "grace" and "faith." "Grace" includes everything that God does for us. We are lost, we are in sin. We cannot save ourselves; but God through his grace has made provision for us to be

saved. By "faith" we accept this gift. Everything which we do in religion is an act of faith. "Faith" includes every command which we obey. A. G. Freed used to draw a line down the middle of the blackboard, write "Grace" on one side and "Faith" on the other. "Grace" covered God's part and "Faith" covers man's part in obtaining salvation. This is the teaching of Ephesians 2:8-9.

"Grace" simply means it is a gift. We did not earn it; we are not worthy of it; but God provides it any way. "Faith" means we accept God's gift. For every gift to be effective there must be a giver and a receiver. If one will not accept the gift, it actually becomes no gift at all. A friend of mine bought a "gift" for a young lady. She refused to accept it and threw it back onto the street. It became no gift at all. God has provided salvation for us. With outstretched arms (Romans 10:21) Jesus extends the precious invitation; but only those who will come, only those who will accept, enjoy the gift.

God's grace provides many things for us -- food, air to breathe, clothing, shelter. These blessings come to all mankind. God's grace which brings salvation operates only through the method of teaching. "The grace of God which brings

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

What We Do In Worship Must Be Authorized



Everything thing we do in divine worship must be divinely authorized. Whatever is not authorized -- either explicitly, or implicitly -- in the holy scriptures, is sinful. Of course, we must "rightly divide the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15. After

fulfilling it, Christ, by his death on the cross, abrogated the Old Testament, and put his will into effect. "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second, by the which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:9-10). "For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth" (Hebrews 9:15-17). Jesus died before any of us were born; therefore we are under the New Testament, not the Old. So what we do in worship must be authorized in the New Testament.

If worship is not LIMITED or RESTRICTED to those ingredients which ARE authorized (either explicitly or implicitly) in the New Testament, then where is the stopping point? There would be no basis on which anyone could object to counting the beads of a rosary as worship --nor to the handling of rattlesnakes as worship --nor to the washing of feet as worship --nor to the burning of incense as worship --ad infinitum! ANY PERSON or ANY GROUP may, as worship, engage in any act he or they may choose!

This position clearly is untenable because it is unbiblical, as we shall see!

1. Must Worship "In Spirit and In Truth"

Jesus said, "God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him IN SPIRIT and IN TRUTH" (John 4:24). To worship "in spirit" means that we must be sincere in our worship, putting our heart, our spirit, into the worship; it means that what we do in worship is not ritualistic, not a mere formality.

To worship "in truth" means that each ingredient or item of our worship is authorized in the "truth." Jesus identified what the "truth" is: to the Father he said: "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Therefore every part, or item, or ingredient of our worship must be authorized in the word of God. This is the only kind of worship God wants, for "the Father seeketh such to worship him" (John 4:23).

2. From Heaven? Or, Of Men?

Of John's baptism, our Lord inquired: "Whence was it? from heaven or from men?" (Matthew 21:25). There is no middle ground! Whatever is not authorized from heaven, is "of men," having

only human authority back of it -- and has no place in the worship of God.

Each item in our religion is either "from heaven," or it is "from men" (Matthew 21:25). In order to be "from heaven," it must be authorized, either explicitly, or implicitly, in the scriptures. All else is "from men;" and our Savior expressly condemned worship which involves the "doctrines and commandments of MEN" as "VAIN" worship (Matthew 15:9).

3. New Covenant Consecrated With Blood

When he received the Old Covenant from God, Moses first "came and told the people all the words of Jehovah, and all the ordinances" (Exodus 24:3). Then he "wrote all the words of Jehovah" (verse 4) in a book. Taking the "blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop [Moses] sprinkled both the book itself and all the people . . ." (Hebrews 9:19). Thus all the will of God was consecrated: it was dedicated with the blood of animal sacrifices. But ANY THING --and EVERY thing! --NOT INCLUDED in that book did not have a drop of blood on it, and was sinful!

An illustration of this principle is found in Nadab and Abihu's "strange fire" (Leviticus 10:1-10). Not being included in God's law, God had NOT AUTHORIZED it; thus it had no blood on it! God condemned it as "common" and "unclean" (verse 10). It was NOT IN "the statutes which Jehovah hath spoken unto them by Moses" (verse 11). Therefore "there came forth fire from before Jehovah, and devoured [Nadab and Abihu], and they died before Jehovah" (verse 2).

Similarly, the New Testament is dedicated with "precious blood . . . even the blood of Christ" (I Peter 1:19). Jesus called it "the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 2:20), and spoke of "my blood of the covenant" (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24). Thus every command and precept written in the New Covenant has been dedicated with the blood of Christ our blessed Savior! But whatever -- and this applies to both (1) congregational singing and (2) mechanical instruments of music in worship! -- ANY thing WHATSOEVER which is NOT INCLUDED in the New Testament, does not have one drop (!) of Christ's blood on it -- and is therefore unholy and sinful!

If congregational singing is NOT authorized in the New Testament, then it (like mechanical instruments in worship) does not have a drop of the blood of Christ on it, and is therefore sinful!

4. Not Go Beyond The Word

It always has been sinful to go beyond the word of the Lord. Balaam well expressed this truth (although he did not live up to it): "I cannot go beyond the word of Jehovah my God, to do less or more" (Numbers 22:18). If singing is not authorized in the assembly of the church, then to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

What We Do In Worship Must Be Authorized

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

sing in a church assembly is going beyond the word of the Lord, and such singing is a sin.

5. Sinful If Not Authorized

"Sin is lawlessness" (I John 3:4, ASV). Thayer's **Greek-English Lexicon** (p. 48), says that the Greek word for "lawlessness" [ANOMIA] means "1. prop. the condition of one without law, --

either because ignorant of it, or because violating it. 2. Contempt and violation of law; iniquity; lawlessness." (Emphasis his, FHN). It must follow, therefore, that it is a sin to do anything for which there is no law, or which God has not authorized. If singing in the assembly is

not authorized, to participate in such congregational singing is a "sin" --for "sin is lawlessness" (I John 3:4).

(To be continued).

The High Price Of Success

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Heaven's Mandate

When we give up, we fail. When we refuse to pay the price essential for success, we fail. When we become entangled in the world (II Timothy 2:4), we will fail. When we refuse to contend lawfully (verse 5), we fail. When we refuse to cultivate patience (verses 6-7), we fail. When we refuse to endure all things for the elects' sake (verses 9-10), we fail. If we deny him (verses 11-12), he will deny us. If we become faithless, he abides faithful. Read this text thoughtfully:

'Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life; that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier. And if also a man contend in the games, he is not crowned, except he have contended lawfully. The husbandman that laboreth must be the first to partake of the fruits. Consider what I say; for the Lord shall give thee understanding in all things. Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the

seed of David, according to my gospel: wherein I suffer hardship unto bonds, as a malefactor; but the word of God is not bound. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. Faithful is the saying: "For if we died with him, we shall also live with him: if we shall deny him, he also will deny us: if we are faithless, he abideth faithful; for he cannot deny himself" (II Timothy 2:4-13).

Conclusion

Are you successful in serving God? Are you persisting in that which will guarantee success by his evaluation (II Corinthians 10:12, 18)? Are you willing to pay the high price of success? Consider the exhortation of Paul: "The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:9).

--Florida School of Preaching, 1807 S. Florida Avenue, Lakeland, FL 33803.

The Common Salvation



Joe E. Galloway
"salvation" (Jude 3).

The book of Jude was written to encourage God's people to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). Jude said "I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common

(Ecclesiastes 7:20). "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Sin results in death (separation from God), so all need to be saved from the penalty of sin (Romans 6:23; Isaiah 59:1-2).

There Is A Common Atonement For Our Sins

One person did not make it possible for some to be saved while it required another person's death to atone for others. Hebrews 2:9 says: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that he by the grace of God should taste of death for every man." Romans 5:11 says that through Christ "we have now received the atonement."

There Is A Common Law Of Pardon - A Common Plan Of Salvation

God did not reveal one way for some to be saved, while requiring something different of others. After Jesus died on the cross to make forgiveness possible, saying, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." In reading the book of Acts, it becomes quite obvious that all who were saved did the same thing. They believed and were

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

unsearchable riches of Christ.

The Fear Of Failure Defeats Some

Some, like the one-talent man in Jesus' parable (Matthew 25:14-30), fear failure to the point that their defeat is assured before the task has begun. How well does the following picture you, or those you may know?

"Failure does not mean I'm a failure;

It does mean I have not yet succeeded.

Failure does not mean I have accomplished nothing;

It does mean I have learned something.

Failure does not mean I have been a fool;

It does mean I had enough faith to experiment.

Failure does not mean I've been disgraced;

It does mean I dared to try.

Failure does not mean I don't have it.

It does mean I have to do something in a different way.

Failure does not mean I am inferior;

It does mean I am not perfect.

Failure does not mean I've wasted my life;

It does mean I have an excuse to start over.

Failure does not mean I should give up;

It does mean I must try harder.

Failure does not mean I'll never make it;

It does mean I need more patience.

Failure does not mean God has abandoned me;

It does mean he must have a better idea.

Amen" -- (Truth For Today, August, 1987, p. 51).

Success Requires Persistence

"Harold Sherman, quite a while ago, wrote a book entitled, **How To Turn Failure Into Success**. In it he gives a "code of persistence." If you give up too easily, write this down and read it daily:

1. I will never give up so long as I know I am right.

2. I will believe that all things will work out for me if I hang on until the end.

3. I will be courageous and undismayed in the face of odds.

4. I will not permit anyone to intimidate me, or deter me from my goals.

5. I will fight to overcome all physical handicaps and setbacks.

6. I will try again and again, and yet again, to accomplish what I desire.

7. I will take new faith and resolution from the knowledge that all successful men and women have had to fight defeat and adversity.

8. I will never surrender to discouragement or despair, no matter what seeming obstacles may confront me." **Truth For Today**, August, 1987, p. 51).

We use the word "common" in at least two different ways: (1) to describe something that is just mediocre, not so good; and (2) to show that something is alike for all people. Obviously this second usage is the idea expressed when "the common salvation" is mentioned here in the Bible. The salvation of Jesus Christ as it is revealed in the New Testament is alike for all people: for the rich and poor, the old and the young, women and men, the educated and the uneducated, and for people of every race and nationality.

There Is A Common Need

For This Salvation

Regardless of who we are, what we do, where we live, and other such differing factors in our lives, we all sin! "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not"

By Grace Through Faith

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

salvation hath appeared to all men teaching us..." (Titus 2:11-12). There is not one truth we know about the grace of God which brings salvation except what we learn from the written word of God.

Grace came by Christ - John 1:17

God's grace operated in the Old Testament. "Noah found favor (grace) in the eyes of God" (Genesis 6:8). "And Jehovah passed by before him [Moses] and proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious. Slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness and truth" (Exodus 34:6). David enjoyed the grace of God: "For thou wilt bless the righteous, O Jehovah; thou wilt compass him with a favor as with a shield" (Psalms 5:12). Solomon enjoyed God's favor. "A good man shall obtain favor of Jehovah, but a man of wicked device will he condemn" (Proverbs 12:12).

There was "grace" and "truth" in the Old Testament; but Christ brought both in the superlative sense (John 1:17). The New Testament is superior to the Old. In Christ we have complete forgiveness of sins. "But God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God" (Romans 5:8-9). God did for man what man could not do for himself -- he paid for our sins. Man is lost. God, by his grace, showed the way to be saved.

Salvation Conditional - Romans 3:23

Our salvation is conditioned on our accepting

The Common Salvation

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

baptized. None today can be saved in a different manner. Jesus is "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9).

A Common Work

Is Given To All The Saved.

This work is to teach the gospel to others, to help build up those already saved, to help those in need, to worship God, and to live an upright life. This is summed up like this: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (I Timothy 4:6).

There Is A Common Destiny For The Saved

This common destiny to all faithful Christians is heaven. It is the Christian's hope (I Peter 1:3-4). It will be all that the spiritual man could desire.

"The cares of the road will seem nothing,

When we get to the end of the way."

Even though salvation is "common," it is not ours unless we have obeyed the gospel and faithfully live the Christian life. In this way we make the choice!

_P.O. Box 790, Greenville, TN 37744-0790.

the gift of God --the "free" gift of God, the "unmerited" gift of God, as most of our brethren like to say. If this salvation is not conditional, then the whole world would be saved, since Christ died for all (John 3:16). The idea that salvation "by grace" frees one from obeying the Lord is so imbedded in the hearts of many that it is difficult to convince them that salvation may be of "grace" and still be conditional. Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). No one enters the kingdom without doing the will of the Father.

Conditional salvation is taught throughout the Bible. "If the wicked turn from his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, and not die" (Ezekiel 18:21). "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord Jehovah; wherefore turn yourselves and live" (Ezekiel 18:32). This has always been God's plan.

To the lawyer, Christ said, "Keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:16-17). Christ himself learned obedience by the things which he suffered (Hebrews 5:8-9). Even the heathen jailer knew that he must do something to be saved: "What must I do?" he asked (Acts 16:25-34). This jailer knew more than some preachers --he knew something must be done!

Jesus gave the parable of the two builders: one built his house on the rock, and one on the sand (Matthew 7:24-27). The difference was in whether or not they obeyed the Lord.

Paul explained that we are not saved by the works of the Old Testament law. "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace" (Romans 11:6). "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Romans 4:4-5). No man is saved because he deserves it, but because he accepts God's mercy.

The Jews claimed salvation on the grounds that they did the works of the Old Testament law. Paul plainly says we cannot be saved by that law. Some Gentiles, especially the Greeks, claimed that adherence to moral laws and philosophies were sufficient. Both were depending on works apart from the grace of God. We are saved only if we accept that grace. The Old Testament law will not do it. The inventions of man will not save. Only the grace of God will save.

To whom is this grace offered? To any who will obey. Naaman was healed of his leprosy. Only the grace of God healed him, but he had to dip seven times in the Jordan river. (This is an example resented by all false teachers. It is one so plain that little children can understand it).

The blind man of John 9 had to go wash in the pool of Siloam. Only the power of Christ healed him; but had he not washed, he would not have had his eyes opened.

Hebrews 11 contains a long list of people who were justified, blessed, and saved by God's power and his grace. In every case it took faith plus action to get the desired result. Abel offered a sacrifice; Noah built an ark; Abraham moved from his home. It takes faith plus action, faith plus obedience. The faith that saves is the faith that obeys. Man must exercise faith, and faith must exercise the man!

In the famous Moody-Harding Debate (commonly called the Nashville Debate), brother James A. Harding wrote on the blackboard that it takes faith plus obedience to save, that no man ever received any kind of blessing on account of his own faith until after that faith had expressed itself in action. That was true in the Old Testament and the New. It was true of physical blessings and of spiritual blessings. Faith plus obedience is the answer. Harding's opponent, throughout the long debate, was never able to write one example --one chapter and verse -- where any one was blessed without obedience. We must accept God's gift. His grace teaches us what to do.

Grace and Baptism

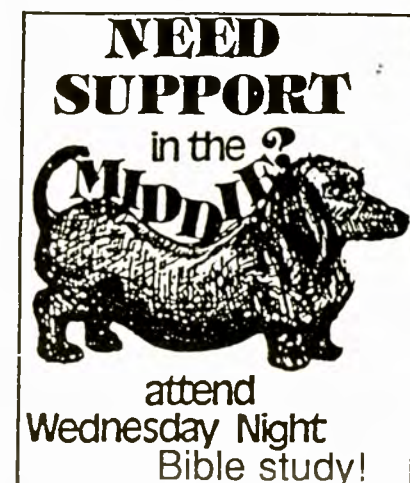
"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us through the washing of regeneration" (I Titus 3:5). I Peter 3:21 says we are saved by baptism.

Grace received in vain - II Corinthians 6:1

"We entreat also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain" (II Corinthians 6:1). God's grace received "in vain" would not accomplish its purpose. To receive God's grace "in vain" simply meant they refused to do what God said. Paul received God's grace. "But by the grace of God I am what I am" (a Christian) and "his grace which was bestowed upon me was not found in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I but the grace of God which was with me" (I Corinthians 15:10. See also Galatians 3:20). God's grace bestowed on Paul was not in vain because he labored; he did what God said. Grace teaches us what to do (Titus 2:11). God is not willing that any should perish (II Peter 3). He tells us what to do. The next step is up to us.

Peter told the people on Pentecost day, "save yourselves" (Acts 2). When they obeyed, they were saved "by grace, through faith."

_P.O. Box 1093, Murfreesboro, TN 37130.





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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

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Where Has Gospel Preaching Gone?



W. A. Holley

The gospel of Christ is God's inspired revelation to all of earth's citizens. It is the word of God which is to be preached to every creature (II Timothy 3:15-17; 4:1-5). The gospel of Christ is God's power to save sinners (Romans 1:16-17). The word of God is the seed of the kingdom (Mark 4:14; Luke 8:11).

Where no gospel seed is sown, there can be no gospel harvest!!

All Christians should take warning, especially preachers. Why? Because departures began early in the apostolic age, and (in many quarters) are still going on (Acts 20:28-31; I Timothy 4:1-2). Jude 3 urges us to "contend earnestly for the faith." There must be no additions, substitutions, or subtractions (Revelation 22:18-19).

Do we have any evidence of departures now? Indeed, we do! What is the evidence? Many desire to make the gospel more attractive to the general public. Did Jesus or the apostles ever follow such a course? The gospel of Christ needs no improvement (II Timothy 3:15-17; II Peter 1:3).

There are those who are far more interested in NUMBERS, than in real Bible conversions. Such an attitude leads to compromise of truth. Some, even now, are advocating open membership of denominational members, whether they have been scripturally baptized or not. In many instances, there are churches of Christ using denominational literature in Bible classes. Thus they are feeding their members on false doctrines (Cf. Mark 7:6-13; II John 9-11).

Others are no longer convinced that the use of the piano or organ is unscriptural (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16) in worship (John 4:23-24; Acts 2:41-42). In a few more years it may become common practice.

Great effort are being made to modify the Lord's teaching of divorce and remarriage (Matthew 19:3-9). As result many church members are

living together in adulterous relationships (Colossians 3:1-17).

Social drinking is becoming more and more acceptable. Some preachers and elders have fallen into this trap (Proverbs 23:29-35; Isaiah 5:11-12; 28:7-8).

Some churches of Christ have borrowed from denominational churches all sorts of unscriptural programs, or notions, or ideas. For example, we have run the word MINISTER into the ground. One congregation boasts of having 27 ministries: the ministry for the aged, the hungry, the poor, the singles, transportation -- the list goes on and on.

We have developed a whole new vocabulary, a vocabulary unknown to the Bible. In the Bible there is a "pattern of sound words" (Titus 2:7; Cf. I Timothy 1:10; II Timothy 1:7, 13; 4:3; Titus 1:9, 13; 2:1, 2, 8). "If any man teacheth a different doctrine, and consenteth not to sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ . . ." (I Timothy 6:3, ASV). The following verses (4-5) reveal the evil fruits of failure when we abandon God's pattern of sound words.

The language of Ashdod (Nehemiah 13:23-24) is common among many churches of Christ (Cf. I Peter 4:11). For example, "church of Christ doctrine," "church of Christ preachers," "our pastor," "Pulpit minister," "minister of music," "minister of education," "minister of involvement," "minister of youth," "minister of singles," ET AL. Since the word MINISTER means SERVANT, all Christians are "ministers" in the Bible sense, why single out special or certain class to the exclusion of all others?

Christian friends: How long has it been since your preacher discussed the following Bible subjects?

- What must I do to be saved?
- The conversion of Saul?
- The identity of the New Testament church.
- The proper division of the word.
- Instrumental music in Christian worship.
- The sin of denominationalism.
- The sin of adultery and fornication.

- The danger of apostasy.
- The inspiration of the Bible.
- Baptism for the remission of sins.

The sin of cooperation with denominationalism.

Many years ago this writer sat in Brother Gus Nichols' class on Friday night, and heard him urge all preachers present to fill their sermons with scripture quotations. Now, many preachers read their text from the Bible and spend the remainder of the time preaching (?) -- but never quoting a single passage more. How can one "preach the gospel" if one does not preach the word (II Timothy 4:1-5)? It is the preached word that possesses power to change the lives of sinful men (Romans 1:16; Hebrews 4:12).

Verily, many preachers and congregations have left the word of God to serve tables (Acts 6:2). Roman Catholicism, Pentecostalism, and all forms of error must be condemned. Have we become side-tracked somewhere along the way? Jesus and the apostles never failed to condemn error (Matthew 23:1-39; Acts 13:4-12). Sin is sin wherever it may be found, whether it is of a moral, or a spiritual, nature (Galatians 5:19-21; I John 1:6-10).

The world is dying for want of gospel preaching. There is a great "famine" throughout the earth: The word of God, the food for man's soul, is being systematically withheld from him (Amos 8:11-12)! Preachers may solve man's social, moral, economic, and emotional problems: but, if he remains still in sin, what lasting good has been accomplished? Man's sin-problem must be resolved first (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47).

These words are written for those who truly wish to see gospel preaching continue its wonderful transforming power in the hearts of men (Romans 12:1-2).

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



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—Acts 26:25

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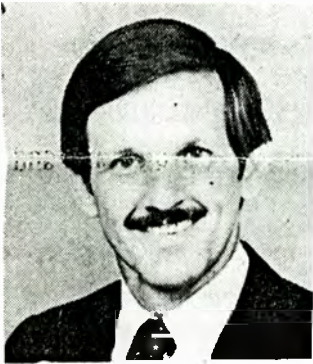
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Courage



Demar Elam

Courage is needed, if the church is to meet the challenges facing her in the latter years of the twentieth century. Peter informs Christians that they are to add to their faith virtue (II Peter 1:5). According to Barnes' Notes, the common

meaning of the Greek word for virtue is: "manliness, courage, vigor, energy; and the sense is, that he wished them to evince whatever firmness of courage might be necessary in maintaining the principles of their religion, and in enduring the trials to which their faith might be subjected."

Don't you want to be tougher spiritually? Would you not like to be courageous for Christ? Paul, the aged servant of God, instructed the young evangelist Timothy to "preach the word" (II Timothy 4:2), ". . . to endure afflictions" (II Timothy 4:5), to ". . . endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (II Timothy 2:3), and to "flee also youthful lusts" (II Timothy 2:22). Timothy is being called upon to live courageously, to stand up and be a hero!

How is courage developed? Mary Tyler Moore is quoted as saying, "Pain nourishes courage. You can't be brave if you've only had wonderful things happen to you." Courage is exemplified in the face of opposition, danger, and stress. Our courage is bolstered when we remember what Paul wrote to the Philippians. He said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). This passage calls for courageousness. Attitudes must often be changed,

Continued On Page 4



George W. DeHoff

Bible teaches regarding being saved by grace.

Reality of God's Grace

Peter refers to our Father as "the God of all grace" (I Peter 5:10). To the Corinthians Paul said, God is able "to make all grace abound toward you."

"Grace" means "favor," kindness, affection, pleasure, good will, love. We learned as children in Vacation Bible School that grace means "unmerited favor" though the word "unmerited" is rather gratuitous. Not one of us deserves the favor, grace, love, and kindness of God. If we got what we deserved, we would all be lost. When Adam and Eve sinned and were cast out of the Garden of Eden, God, by his grace, made it possible for them to be saved. He instituted a system of religion -- "re-" meaning to do again, and "-ligio" meaning to tie or bind; hence religion means to bind us back to God, to restore what was lost.

John 1:17 tells us "The law was given by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Certainly there was "grace" and "truth" in the Old Testament. All that God did for his children was a matter of "grace" and every word he spoke was the "truth." "Grace" and "truth" existed from the beginning. They existed before Christ; but they did not exist in the quality and quantity that Christ brought. "Grace" and "truth" became available to man in Christ as they had never been available before. When our Lord spoke concerning John the Baptist he said that a greater man had never been born of woman, but that the least in the kingdom is greater. He certainly did not mean that those in the kingdom do greater works, or that they are more faithful, than John; but that we enjoy greater blessings and privileges in Christ. In the same way, "grace" and "truth" existed before Christ -- even from the beginning; -- but not to the extent that they exist in Christ.

Why Teach on Grace?

We need teaching on the grace of God now as never before. Many people, including preachers, have been so influenced by denominational seminaries and denominational commentaries that they teach error on the grace of God. One has written a book in which he says, "We are not now under any kind of law. We are under grace." Another said, "The church is not under any law at all." Still another said, "Christians are not ruled by codes, rules, 'church laws' . . . there ain't no such thing as 'church laws, rules and regulations.'" Another wrote a book, "Free in Christ," in which he teaches that we do not have to obey any laws at all. Another says, "There are no steps into Christ." Solomon must have been walking among these people when he wrote Song of Solomon 6:11 and stated that he has walked in the valley of "nuts."

I grew up among the common people. Most had

not been to high school and only a few had attended college; but they knew that God loves us, and they knew what to do to be saved. They had read: "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). They knew the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament, between the law of Moses and the law of Christ. They read that we are saved by God, by Christ, by the Holy Spirit, by the word of God, by faith, by repentance, by confession, by baptism (I Peter 3:21). When they read that we are saved by about twenty different things, they believed all of it. They believed that God's grace has appeared, teaching us what to do (Titus 2:11-12). They believed that all these things work in harmony, that they are all necessary. But, Presto! Along comes young preachers, telling us that we do not even know what the grace of God means! One lady (the wife of an elder) told a preacher who questioned her "umbrella-of-grace" theory, that he needed to learn some lessons on the grace of God from Baptist preachers! (Someone needed to remind her that gospel preachers were reaching the truth on the grace of God sixteen hundred years = 3 - before any Baptist church was started!)

When I was growing up I hear Leonard H. Fielder, Joe H. Blue, John L. Fry, W. Curtis Porter, G. C. Brewer, N. B. Hardeman, H. Leo Boles, J. D. Tant, C. R. Nichol, Foy E. Wallace, Jr., Joe S. Warlick, B. C. Goodpasure, Gus Nichols and others preach. They had not graduated from denominational seminaries and did not have a wide acquaintance with all that the sectarian scholars had to say; but they knew the Bible! They quoted so much scripture that many thought they had the whole Bible memorized. They knew the grace of God, and they knew what men had to do to be saved. When I was five years old I was hearing some of these men say, "If it is in the Bible, it is the truth. If it is not in the Bible, it is false." I believed them then; I believe them now!

In every age and in every generation no one has pleased God without being under God's law. This was true during the patriarchal dispensation, during the Mosaic dispensation and during the Christian dispensation. Different people in different ages were told different things to do; but all had to do what God said for them to do.

Grace and gospel

God's grace works through his gospel, through his word. Everything which the Bible says God's GRACE does for people on earth, it also says the GOSPEL does the same thing. We are saved by grace (Ephesians 2:5); but we are saved by the gospel (I Corinthians 15:2). We stand in the grace of God; but we stand in the gospel (I Corinthians 15:1-2). In Galatians 1 Paul used the word "grace" and "gospel" interchangeably and synonymously. "I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the GRACE of Christ unto another GOSPEL." Everything which grace does for us, the gospel does for us. That simply means that God's grace operates through his gospel through his teaching, through his word. There is no truth which we know about the grace of God (or about anything else) unless we can read it in the written word of God. "These things are written that you might believe" (John 20:30-31). God's grace has given us the gospel plan of salvation; he has told us the steps to take to get into Christ.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

God's Abounding Grace

Continued From Page 3

steps to take to get into Christ.

Are We Under Any Law?

No one would contend that we are under the law of Moses, or any law which man has made; but we are under the law of Christ. It is amazing that anyone who even claims to preach the gospel would claim that we are not under the law which Christ died to establish!

When Paul stated that he became all things to all men "as without law," he promptly stated "(being not without law to God but under the law of Christ)" (I Corinthians 9:21).

Again he said, "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). Would some of these "no-law" brethren today kindly explain this verse for me? I read it, and get the idea that we are under

the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

And did not Paul say, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ?" (Galatians 6:2). Would some of these "no-law" brethren explain that to me?

And the whole book of Hebrews teaches that we are not under the law of Moses but the law of Christ. Try Hebrews 7:12, "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." A change of what, Paul? Did you not know that some of our preachers have now learned that we are not under any law at all?

And try James 1:25: "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty . . ."

Yes, we are under the New Testament law, the law of Christ, the perfect law of liberty. To teach

otherwise is to deny the word of God. Our Lord said, "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17).

Our pioneer preachers who preached hear, believe, repent, confess, and be baptized were preaching the "grace" of God. They knew the grace of God and did not need any denominational seminary to tell them what it is. "The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared . . . teaching us . . ." (Titus 2:11-12).

--P.O. Box 1093, Murfreesboro, TN 37130.

Restoration Reflections

Jackie M. Stearsman

Some years ago, while I was a student of his, brother G. K. Wallace impressed upon me the danger of seeking to establish truth by appealing to the belief and conviction of some brethren. His advice was based upon the fact that he had brethren who held to, and taught, all manner of falsehood. This truth needs to be instilled in the hearts of all; for there are some today who have never learned that the Bible is our only basis of deciding what is right and wrong.

TWO MISTAKES

Some have no respect for the concept of restoration; and as they write and speak, their feelings will be clearly evident in their bias toward anyone seeking to call men back to absolute truth and righteousness based solely on the teaching of the Bible.

Another error in respect to restoration leaders, is to endow them with an unsought and underserving reverence to the point of citing their writings as authoritative as the Bible.

PLAYING GOD

Some, rather than dealing Biblically with a specific principle or teaching, will dodge the issue by citing prominent individuals in the religious world who held (or did not hold) to a particular point. They attempt to place the individual upholding the Biblical truth in the position of God, by saying -- "If that is true, then you are saying that religious leader "X," "Y," or "Z" is lost."

Mortal man is not qualified to be the ultimate judge of either the heart or the total conduct of his fellowman. There is no need for men to be overly concerned with ultimate and absolute justice, for God has appointed One who is infinitely qualified to be the ultimate judge of all (John 5:22).

This is not to deny that we are to judge, by the infallible truth presented (the Bible), specific actions of our fellowman (II John 9-11, I John 4:1, Romans 16:17-18, Ephesians 5:11).

One is not playing God who decides specific issues as to their truth or error. It is not playing God to uphold the truth and to oppose the error. It is not playing God to mark those who depart from the truth, and to label them with holding and propagating error. It is not playing God to consider a particular teaching Biblically in order to establish whether a given statement from a restoration --or any other-- personality is right or wrong.

personality is right or wrong.

MISREPRESENTATION

It is not treating the Bible, or the personality in the Bible, properly when we cite one phase of his life while ignoring a later period wherein change occurred evidencing the rejection of former error. For example, it is not fair to represent Saul of Tarsus only as a persecutor of Christians, when it is known that he became the great Apostle to the Gentiles. It is not fair to represent Apollos as knowing only the baptism of John, and disregard the fact of his becoming a great preacher of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

Some misrepresent great restoration leaders by citing their mistakes (mistakes as they were working their way out of denominational error), and encouraging brethren today to fellowship known false teachers and to refuse to oppose false teaching. Some would leave the impression that the only way restoration can occur is to fellowship error. The church is "the pillar and ground of the truth," not of falsehood (I Timothy 3:14-15). Falsehood is not an inherent element in restoring New Testament Christianity.

TRUTH AND RESTORATION

Any philosophy of restoration which is not committed to Biblical truth, is wrong. Biblical truth is objective, inspired, perfect, all-sufficient, and authoritative. It can be known (John 8:32) Man can demonstrate, by properly handling the truth, that the position which he is upholding is Biblically sanctioned.

Restoration can be a reality only when we are willing to demand of one another that our doctrine and teaching be authorized by the Bible. We must not act without authority (Matthew 21:23-27; II John 9-11; Hebrews 7:14).

By being committed to truth, we know that our teaching cannot be in contradiction to the Bible.

By being committed to truth we know that every precisely-stated doctrine, principle, or teaching cannot be in contradiction to the Bible.

By being committed to truth we know that every precisely-stated doctrine, principle, or teaching, is either true or false. It is true if it can be sustained by the word of truth (the Bible); it is false, if it cannot be.

CONCLUSION

Those writing articles regarding restoration need

to know the importance and significance of truth. When we read articles written on the subject of restoration, we must consider very carefully the goal and objective of the total article. Is its mission to lead us into the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? Is the foundation, upon which the said arguments are based, sound? Is it a matter of integrity to encourage us to compromise truth, and to endorse error?

The concept of restoration is a glorious and Biblical principle to call men back to truth and commitment to doing what is right. If any restoration leader (in the past or the present) is asking anything other than obedience to the truth, he is wrong and has need of restoration himself (Galatians 2:11-14; James 5:19-20).

If restoration is to be realized, brethren must discontinue sitting on the fence, with their ears to the ground and their hands in the air to see which way the winds of popularity are blowing, and with their feet running to and fro while their arms embrace both truth and error. "Let us not love in word, and with the tongue; but in deed and truth" (I John 3:18).

--Florida School of Preaching, 1807 S. Florida Ave., Lakeland, FL 33803.

Where Will Heaven Be?

George W. DeHoff

Several years ago brethren advertised that I would lecture on "The Kingdom of Heaven" in an Indiana city. The auditorium was filled to overflowing -- it seems the "Jehovah's Witnesses" had been through the area advertising the Kingdom, so we had a great many of their people present. I proceeded to preach on "The Establishment of The Church," beginning with Daniel 2 and coming all the way down to Pentecost Day. Then, I started in Revelation, and went back to Pentecost with one of the old

Continued On Page 4

Acts 17 And The Word Of God



Winfred Clark

It is interesting to read history. It helps one to see how people reacted to many situations we face even in our own lives. That is what we have in the book of Acts. We have inspired history that helps us to see how preaching fared in various places and under various circumstances. We see it preached by the best preachers the world has

known. These were men like Paul, Peter and others. They had the purest of motives, and preached with untiring zeal. It will be interesting to see how the word fared when they preached.

As we select a chapter from Acts, we will be able to see how it fared. Take the seventeenth chapter: What will we be able to see?

I. IT IS REJECTED AT THESSALONICA.

How was the word presented to those of that city? Who did the preaching? We find Paul doing the

preaching. He goes into the synagogue and reasons with them out of the scripture (Acts 17:2). You have no doubt about the scripturalness of his lessons. You find him "opening and alleging that Christ must suffer and rise from the dead" (Acts 17:3). So you know what the subject was. We can be thankful that many in that city would give heed to the preaching done by Paul (Acts 17:4). But, the Jews who did not believe would do all in their power to see that the word spoken was rejected. Was it because the preacher was not what he ought to be? Surely not. Was it because the subject matter was not relevant? Absolutely not. What then is the problem? It was in the unbelief of the Jews.

What could be done to overcome such rejection? Should the preacher change the message? Should he accommodate himself to their unbelief? No! Not then, nor should it be done today.

II. IT IS RESPECTED AT BEREIA.

It is said of these that they "were more noble than those in Thessalonica." But in what way? "In that they received the word with all readiness of minds" (Acts 17:11). But who is the preacher in this case? None other than Paul. What does he

preach at this place? The same thing he preached wherever he went. The scripture was the standard by which preaching was measured in Berea, as it was in Thessalonica.

III. IT IS RIDICULED IN ATHENS.

Paul used the occasion of his wait for Silas and Timothy as an opportunity to preach in Athens. Some who heard him referred to him as a "babbling." Others said, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods." To them his preaching was altogether new. Later, when given the opportunity, Paul spoke of God in no uncertain terms. He ultimately reached the point of the resurrection of Christ. It is at that point that some "mocked" what he had to say (Acts 17:32). But that just does not change the matter at all! There were, in spite of this, some who believed (Acts 17:34). That makes it all worthwhile.

--P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

Courage

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

if the Christian life is to be lived courageously. Courage demands a mind-set that says, "...Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

One of the crying needs of our time, on the part of Christians, is courage! Courage is needed to avoid conformity with the masses of humanity today (Romans 12:2). Twentieth century Christians need courage like Noah, Joseph, Abraham, Daniel, Rahab, Gideon, Samson, David, Peter, Paul and James. Remember, the difference in their lives was courage!

An article on "Courage" in a 1976 "Gospel Advocate" had an excellent definition, as well as an illustration, of courage. Courage was defined as, "fighting with the handle after the sword has been broken." The illustration was about Napoleon's battle at Marengo. "After the battle of Marengo had been lost, Napoleon came to his dummer boy and said, 'Beat a retreat!' The boy replied, 'Sir, I can beat a charge. My master taught me to beat a charge, but not a retreat. I do not know how to beat a retreat. I can beat a charge that will wake up the dead. I beat the charge at Lodi and the Pyramids. Shall I beat a charge?' Napoleon was so impressed that he said, 'Beat a charge!' The boy beat a charge, which rallied a defeated army to renew the battle with such courage and determination that Marengo is numbered among the outstanding victories of the 'Little Corsican.'

Brethren, which of us will be courageous, and 'beat a charge' for the Lord's army in the closing years of the twentieth century? We shall not surrender to Satan, if we know only how to die for the Lord.

Madison Church of Christ, P.O. Box 642, Madison, Alabama 35758.

Where Will Heaven Be?

Continued From Page 3

sermons showing that the Lord's church -- his kingdom on earth -- was established on Pentecost Day of Acts chapter 2, and that this kingdom will last until the end of the world when Christ comes again.

Out in the vestibule as the people were leaving, a gentleman said, "Brother, you do believe that heaven is going to be right here on earth, do you not?" Since I didn't care to argue with him at that time, I said, "If that is what the Bible says, then that is what I believe." He pushed further by saying, "I want a direct answer. Do you believe that heaven is going to be here on earth when Christ comes again?" I again replied, "If that is what II Peter chapter 3 teaches, then that is what I believe." He promptly hit the floor with his walking stick and said, "I see you are one of those people who believe that the earth is going to be burned up." Of course I had said nothing about the matter, but when II Peter 3 is read to

Premillennialists, they do not like what they see in that place.

The "New Heaven and New Earth" is a figurative expression describing the final abode of the righteous -- in heaven -- where the Father dwells and where Christ now reigns. Christ went there "to prepare a place" for his faithful followers (John 14:2). Man is a creature of the heavens about him and the earth on which he lives; and the phrase "New Heaven and Earth" are all identical in meaning. They refer to that blessed home of the soul which our Lord has now gone to prepare for his children. The Bible says nothing about purifying the earth "by fire." It does say, "The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Peter 3:10).

Brethren should beware lest we be led into false ideas by the great flood of Premillennial literature which floods our land today.

--P.O. Box 1093, Murfreesboro, TN 37130.

RULES . . . for Daily Life

BEGIN THE DAY WITH GOD:

Kneel down to him in prayer;
Lift up thy heart to his abode,
And seek his love to share.

OPEN THE BOOK OF GOD:

And read a portion there;
That it may hallow all thy thoughts,
And sweeten all thy care.

GO THROUGH THE DAY WITH GOD:

Whate'er thy work may be;
Where'er thou art — at home, abroad,
He still is near to thee.

CONVERSE IN MIND WITH GOD,

Thy spirit heavenward raise;
Acknowledge every good bestowed,
And offer grateful praise.

CONCLUDE THE DAY WITH GOD,

Thy sins to him confess;
Trust in the Lord's atoning blood
And plead his righteousness.

LIE DOWN AT NIGHT WITH GOD,

Who gives his servants sleep;
And when thou tread'st the vale of death
He will thee guard and keep.



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VOLUME 23

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1988

NUMBER 46

Fit For The Master's Use



W. A. Holley

"But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use,

and prepared unto every good work" (II Timothy 2:20-21).

The context of the verses under study shows that false teachers are in view. Paul warns Timothy of "profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness." As examples of false teachers, Hymenaeus and Philetus are brought to the fore. Their teaching had destroyed the faith of some. These teachers had erred from the truth of God.

Paul does not want Timothy to become too discouraged. Despite false teachers and their devastating influence, "the foundation of God standeth sure."

The Lord's church and his word and work will go marching onward. To illustrate his point, Paul uses "a great house" which contains "vessels of gold and silver" and some vessels of 'wood and stone; some to honor, and some to dishonor."

The Lord's house is his church. We quote: "... that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3:15).

The church of the Lord is worthy of protection from misguided souls, whether in the church or out. There have been false teachers in the church from apostolic times. For example, "... Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme" (I Timothy 1:19-20). Others of like

persuasion are Demas and Alexander the coppersmith (II Timothy 4:10, 14). Another is Simon who tried to purchase the Holy Spirit with money (Acts 8:13-24). Diotrefes represents another 'bad egg' (III John 9-11). Read the story and you will see that those who err from the truth can be restored (Galatians 6:1), if they meet the Lord's conditions of restoration.

In Acts 20:28-31, Paul, speaking to the elders of the church of Ephesus, said, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall greivous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Read these words again, and ponder their meaning.

Sometimes we are disappointed in elders, deacons, preachers, and other members of the church, because of their failures; but within the church there are many vessels of gold and silver.

Our text says, "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." What does the word PURGE mean? It means "to cleanse thoroughly." False teachers need to cleanse themselves from what? The answer is, cleanse themselves from all false doctrines, from all corrupt affections, and from all sinful actions. To "purge" (John 15:2) is to prune, cut off; in I Corinthians 5:7, the old leaven of sin is to be discarded. In II Timothy 2:21, the thought is that Christians must purge themselves from those who utter profane babblings.

Those who want to be "fit for the Master's use," must be completely sold on the Lord's cause. There is no middle ground (Matthew 6:24). One is the servant of him whom he serves (Romans 6:16). Jesus died for his Cause; so must we be willing to

die if we expect to enter heaven (John 6:38; Revelation 2:10). The apostles were so dedicated to Jesus' Cause, they "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (Acts 5:41-42).

God expects his people to believe and obey the truth (Hebrews 11:6; 5:8-9). Those who "believe for a while, and then fall away," cannot get the job done (Luke 8:13). Faithfulness in demeanor, in Bible study, in prayer, in worship, must be constant pursuits of ours (Titus 2:11-12). Here is the way John expressed these ideas: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:15-17).

Just here I Corinthians 6:9-11 should be read. Any church member should know that faith without works is dead (James 2:14-26). One may be an eloquent and mighty teacher of God's word; but if one's life is dark and shady, how can one stand before God and men??

Brother H. Leo Boles sometimes would say, "How can I hear what you say, when what you are is forever ringing in my ears"? Paul demanded much of Timothy, a young preacher. He wrote, "Let no man despise" (think down upon or against you) "thy youth; but be thou an example of them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity" (I Timothy 4:12, ASV).

In conclusion, let us purge our lives of sin, of excuses, of worldly pleasures, of evil consciences, of all shades and forms of negligence, that we may serve him acceptably with reverence and godly fear (Hebrews 12:28-29; Romans 12:1-2).

These words are written for those who honestly seek for truth.

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

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

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Flavil H. Nichols

A Suggestion To Elders



Flavil H. Nichols

Your responsibilities are enormous! Like each Christian in all the world, you (individually) must "take heed unto yourselves" (Acts 20:28). But in addition to this personal and individual demand of each elder, God has committed to the care of elders the souls of all the members in a congregation (Hebrews 13:7, 17; I

Peter 5:1-4)! Each elder himself is part of the congregation in which he was selected, and as such he is subject to the eldership, submissive to the decisions of the elders as a body.

Since you have such awesome responsibilities, I have a suggestion which will help you discharge the obligations which rest upon your (collective) shoulders: For every family in your congregation, **SUBSCRIBE TO WORDS OF TRUTH!** This will be like adding the writers of this journal to your teaching staff --without adding them individually to your pay-roll. You will not have to pay their traveling expenses; nor will you be responsible for their room and board while they teach among you; nor will you be expected to give them an honorarium for each lesson they present.

As good stewards, can you think of a more economical way to re-enforce the teaching program for the souls committed to your oversight?

We want always to speak and write "Words Of Truth" and soberness (Acts 26:25). We strive to publish only those articles which "speak the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15). We strive to deal with basic fundamentals, such as the inspiration of the Bible, rightly dividing the word, all men are amenable to the authority of Christ, we must have divine authority in religion, singing in worship is authorized, and other such themes. Some articles deal with social and moral issues, such as dancing, drinking, and divorce and remarriage. Theological religious doctrines are also discussed, with articles on scriptural worship, and godly living, with no ban on any Bible topic as we strive to "preach the word" (II Timothy 4:2) by the printed page.

Words Of Truth remains a weekly paper. (I know of only one other surviving weekly subscription journal among us; and it, **Gospel Minutes**, is only half our size). Our cost is only 22 cents per week! Many families will gladly increase their contribution by this amount to pay for their subscription, if you but ask them!

Last fall our printer revised the mailing list, removing all those names which (1) were not paid for individually, or (2) were not confirmed by some congregation as subscriptions for which that church will pay each month. This drastically reduced our circulation!

For more than two decades, names were kept on the list, with updated addresses after each move -- and (unless otherwise instructed) the church where they formerly worshiped was billed for their subscriptions --although some made numerous moves, with some having moved across the state, and some across the nation. This practice has been changed.

Now, each year the subscribing church will be asked to revise its own list. It probably will remove those who leave its area. For example, Sixth Avenue church in Jasper now pays for less than half the subscriptions it formerly did. --Not that the paper did those people no good! But they no longer are in our area, and other elderships are now shepherds of their souls (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1-4).

To subscribe to **Words Of Truth** for your membership, send us a list of the names, with the correct mailing address (including zip code) of all families in your congregation. (You may also include prospects, those who have become negligent, and any who are shut-ins --or not shut-ins-- whom your eldership wants to reach for Christ). Upon receipt of these names, they will be added to our subscription list. After they receive the paper each week **FOR A MONTH**, your treasurer will receive a bill for the subscriptions you authorize.

All BUSINESS correspondence regarding this paper should be addressed to:

Words Of Truth
P.O. Box 430
Haleyville, AL 35565

Do NOT send it to me, nor to the Sixth Avenue church -- that only delays it; for we must forward it to the printer at Haleyville, where the circulation list and financial records are maintained.

Individual subscriptions cost the same: 22 cents a week, which is \$11.44 per year. The bundles rate is also 22 cents each per week. But direct mail has several advantages: (1) Absentees will receive it, and they often need the instruction more than regular attenders do. (2) It will arrive at a time when the family has not immediately been absorbed in a Bible School lesson or a sermon. (3) No one will 'forget' to pick up a copy at the door of the church building, as happens with bundles. (4)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Uncertain Sound



R. W. Gray

"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to battle?" (I Corinthians 14:8). The apostle is here regulating the use of "tongues" in the early church. In the process he sets out an important principle.

Teaching of God's truth should be as distinctive and clear as the teacher is capable of imparting. Nothing should be left to doubt or speculation when the truth is considered.

For some time now we have been plagued with a vague idea with reference to the "grace of ignorance." If the phrase sounds ambiguous it is because it is! It has been postulated by a growing number that the baptized believer, while teaching, worshiping, or performing immoral acts in "ignorance," is covered by the "grace" of God. The idea has all but reached the old Calvinistic error of "once in grace, always in grace" in its implications.

It usually begins innocently enough. It is pointed out that we are babes at birth (Mark 10:15), and are in need of growing toward maturity. The Bible clearly teaches this principle, as does sanctified common sense. The urgency in the Bible is, however, that we move rapidly from this baby state into the full-grown state. The scriptures nowhere say or imply that one may remain indefinitely in "ignorance," or that a child of God at any stage of development is "innocent" of sins of immorality on the basis of ignorance.

It has been seemingly easy for those who emphasize the virtue (?) of ignorance to conclude that folk who have been exposed for a lifetime to God's revelation regarding scriptural worship, may remain "covered by grace" because they have not yet "been convicted" that unauthorized innovations are sinful. Such a premise lends itself to a multitude of false conclusions. If it continues to be taught our young people (as it now is in some

Continued On Page 3

The Witness Of Rust

Dean Fuggett

Before you continue with the reading of this short article, we encourage you to turn to and read James 5:1-5. James well describes the INDIVIDUAL who is placing his trust, his security, in his possessions. We certainly do not discount the wisdom of planning ahead. We find Jesus teaching us to do so in the parable of the unjust or unfaithful steward, and the story of the necessity of sitting down and counting the cost before beginning to build a tower. But, nowhere does Jesus teach us that our laying up should ignore the needs of the present -- such as the needs of others that we have the opportunity to meet, especially the spiritual needs of hearing of the Savior of the world. The word is necessary to produce the faith that leads to obedience and salvation (Romans 1:16-17).

The "witness of rust" actually points to the money "stored up" and not being used, while the actions of James 5:4 and 5 were taking place. We are also reminded of a foolish farmer in Luke 12. But, there is another lesson here -- a lesson not only for the individual, but for the churches of the Lord with large bank-accounts.

We are continually hearing "horror" stories from our missionaries concerning their work of reaching the lost. They speak of congregations with large bank accounts refusing to hear their reports and

their plea for help. They tell us of churches with bank accounts of tens-of-thousands of dollars who refuse to share any, storing up and hoarding material possessions to be spent on the material.

No one faults a congregation with a building program planned where a program is needed. We find no fault with a building fund where planned repairs are justly needed. But we hear of churches who have auditoriums less than half full, built at the expense of hundreds of thousands. We read of some churches building places of entertainment for their members at the cost of millions or hundreds of thousands. Surely we are building houses of "cedar" while our Lord and his people in many places have even "NO TENT." We feast ourselves in our fellowship halls and kitchens while millions die without the bread of life -- bread that could be offered if we would be more spiritually-minded. Remember, to be carnal-minded is death (Romans 8:6).

We fault no elders or congregations for fiscal responsibility; but how about our spending thousands on buildings and pennies for missions? If I were an elder, I would feel quite uncomfortable at the prospect of standing in the judgment alongside multitudes of lost souls who never heard, while I was an overseer of a congregation that had a bank full of money and didn't use it to offer the lost the gospel. We feel as though those words of Luke 12 would fit: "Whose shall these things be?"

How terrible for the Lord to return to find us unwrapping our napkins of hidden talents (money in the bank) that had been given to do his work! Surely he would have greater pleasure in our putting that money into the usury of SOULS rather than into the usury of more money that will perish with the destruction of this world.

THINK, ELDERS! What will your answer be, your defense against the witness of the rust on the money in those church bank accounts? Are you willing and ready to accept the spiritual and eternal

consequences of meeting the Lord who gave his all while you carefully guarded the money that was given for his work? It may well be time for the members of the Lord's church to call for an accounting of the SPIRITUAL use of the money lying rusting, drawing canker, in those bank accounts.

We plead with elders and churches to become more committed to the word and the work laid before us by the Lord. Not to lay up the possessions, but to PREACH THE WORD.

--P.O. Box 75, Cave City, AR 72521.

Some Thoughts On Gratitude

Charles E. McDonald

"Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (I Thessalonians 5:16-18). "... Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:20). These scriptures point us to the need of learning and practicing the virtue of gratitude. Men ought to be diligent about it.

I read of a preacher who had the habit in his opening prayer each Sunday of thanking God for the weather. On a particular dreary, cold, icy, windy Sunday morning, the few people who had ventured out wondered how he could possibly refer to the nasty weather outside with any note of gratitude. The preacher was, however, equal to the occasion. "Dear God," he prayed, "we thank Thee that Thou doest send us so few days such as today."

How about us? Do we "give thanks always for all things" to the Father through Jesus? As we learn to see the "silver lining" in all things, to be "good-finders," we will grow in the virtue of Gratitude, and will make it a point to "give thanks, in everything."

--417 Coosa Pine Dr., Childersburg, AL 35044.

A Suggestion To Elders

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

It will not be laid aside and forgotten in the rush of getting home from church services. (5) Each week another issue will be in the mail-box, 'knocking' for the family's attention.

Your membership will be taught on a wide variety of subjects by our balanced staff of writers. Even if these men preached in your general vicinity, many (perhaps "most"!) members in the average congregation would not drive even to a nearby church to hear them in a revival! But they can read the articles of these writers without leaving home!

Words Of Truth carries no display advertising. Our columns are used exclusively for Bible teaching. Hence, the amount of Bible teaching done during a year in our paper compares favorably with the amount done in **The Gospel Advocate** in a similar period, although the **Advocate** is thicker.

In view of your grave responsibility to shepherd the flock which belongs to God, I suggest that you give this matter urgent consideration at your next meeting. May God give you wisdom from above (James 3:17) as you further the spiritual growth of the souls committed to your care.

quarters), the next generation will embrace everyone and everything that smacks of anything "religious."

This error in embryo logically grows to embrace all false teachers who "know no better." It implies that God has two standards -- one for saints, and another for sinners. The sinner i.e., the unbaptized, impenitent, unbeliever, is damned for his sins of immorality. But the one "in Christ" may practice the same gross immorality with impunity, so long as he does so in ignorance. Do I hear John Calvin say "Amen!" from the grave?

The next logical step is to embrace anyone or anything that is performed in sincerity by a person of sincere intent. And if it be the case that man is acceptable before God just so long as he is sincere in his moral and religious functions, it is also the

Uncertain Sound

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

case that we do such "innocent ones" (?) an injustice when we proclaim to them the grace of God that teaches us to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (Titus 2:11-14)! Why not leave him "safe" in ignorance?

The place to end such folly is in the embryo state. May it not proceed any further. Those who embrace it are sometime asked, "How long may we remain in ignorance with God's approval?" Their answer is, "Only God knows." Brethren, if only God knows about a thing, it is best that we leave it alone. It is out of our ball-park. It is folly to teach folk that they may be all right in ignorance, when we have no "idea" as to how long they are thus acceptable to God. Stay with the Word, and leave doubtful speculation to those who have little or no respect for God's truth.

-Bremen, GA.



Joe E. Galloway

After a certain scribe responded discreetly, Jesus said, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God" (Mark 12:34). All responsible people are either in the kingdom of God or outside it. Of those outside the kingdom, many are far from it. It would take much teaching, as well as a big change of attitude and emphasis on the part of these individuals themselves, before they would be able to enter it. Yet there are some, like this scribe, who are "not far" from the kingdom. Perhaps with just a little encouragement from us they would enter the kingdom and be saved.

How One Enters The Kingdom

To be in the kingdom is to be in the Lord's church (Matthew 16:18-19). So, it is the same as being in the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23), which is equivalent to being in Christ. All these expressions suggest the common idea of being accepted of God, of being saved.

Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Those who did this in Acts 2 were added by the Lord to his church (Acts 2:47). This baptism puts one "into Christ" (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27), or "into one body" - the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13). Since the kingdom is the church, the body of Christ, or the saved state, we would conclude that faith and baptism put one into the kingdom.

This conclusion agrees perfectly with Jesus' teaching to Nicodemus on how one enters the kingdom. He said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Then to explain this new birth further, he said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). In a physical birth there is the begetting by the male, but the actual birth itself involves the coming forth from the female. This illustrates the new birth, the spiritual birth. The Spirit does the begetting by means of his seed, the word of God. James 1:18 states, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth . . ." When one is buried in baptism he comes forth from the water to "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). So, being "born of water and of the Spirit" is to believe and be baptized. As we have already seen, this puts one into the kingdom of God (John 3:5).

Those Near The Kingdom

Who are those people who are neither "far" from the kingdom, nor yet "in" the kingdom, but are near the kingdom of God? Knowing who they are should help us to further teach and encourage them to enter and be saved.

1. Those who have honest hearts are not far from the kingdom. Regarding the good ground in his parable of the soils, Jesus said, "But that in the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15). Those with honest hearts will desire God's truth like a starving man desires food and water. Jesus promised, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Matthew

5:6). We know that Cornelius was not far from the kingdom, for he obeyed the gospel the very day he learned the truth. Consider his honest, longing attitude toward God's truth as he was about to be taught. He said, "We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God" (Acts 10:33). Those with such an attitude today are our best prospects for conversion!

2. Usually those who are basically good people are more easily taught. Prior to his conversion, Cornelius was described as "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway" (Acts 10:2). Of course one may trust in his own goodness, and so deny his need of God's salvation. Paul wrote of those who went "about to establish their own righteousness and have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." (Romans 10:3).

3. A truly humble man is "not far" from the kingdom. He realizes his unworthiness and is willing to submit to God. In contrast, one who is self-satisfied and who is as good as he wants to be will be difficult to interest in the kingdom. Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). Those "poor in spirit" are those who do not think too highly of themselves. In Isaiah 57:15 God said, "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." This shows the humble man to be the type

who can be "revived."

"Near" Is Not Enough!

Someone has said that "horseshoes" is the only game where being near ever counts. We understand that if a football player NEARLY made a touchdown, or a baseball player NEARLY made it to homeplate, HE DID NOT SCORE! What about the car that NEARLY made it across the railroad crossing in time?

Likewise, having been NEAR the kingdom will not count on Judgment Day! Jesus said, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:22, 23). These were near the kingdom in many ways, but they had not entered it. Jesus had already said in verse 21, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Until one obeys the Lord's will to enter the kingdom, being "near" does not count.

Those "near" the kingdom seldom remain that way long. If they fail to enter, they will gradually lose interest and it will be more and more difficult to gain them. Let us be the proper example and encouragement, now, to those who are "not far" from the kingdom!

--218 Pincrest Dr., Greeneville, TN 37743.

Junk In/Junk Out

Joe Connell

Times are unusual. Our heroes, the ones most likely having the greater influence on our children, share few or none of our values. These people are the entertainment stars and athletes. They are so highly regarded that we give them astronomical sums of money to see them or hear their voices. The Associated Press reported the top ten entertainers made a high of \$60 million and a low of \$43 million in 1988.

Why? Why will we as parents allow these people such a place in the lives of our children? It is well recognized that the music of the past two decades has made a strong contribution to the low life that is presently bringing so much heartache to so many. My thinking is that the first generation of parents did not know what was happening to their children and the second generation has been desensitized by the experience they had in youth. One thing is for certain: the problems of the fifties are not the problems of the eighties! School problems have gone from tardiness, and not having the homework done, to using drugs and violence toward both teachers and students. Children doing sex and having children is commonplace. We are living in a more progressively evil age where this type of behavior is rapidly growing. Only a few years ago no one would have dared come out with a movie of the nature of **The Last Temptation Of Jesus**; but here it is in the theaters across the country. Who would have thought a few years ago that children would be given free birth control aid by the public school systems across our country? Who would have thought that abortion as a means

of terminating a pregnancy would be advertized on billboards? That time has come too.

It is these values that modern music espouses. It is even worse than I have mentioned. Every form of vile behavior is being heard and seen by our children and many of their parents. This has to produce unwarranted behavioral problems. ". . . For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). You had better be careful what you see and hear, for if you put junk into your mind, then you are going to have a "junkyard" life! What a contrast between what we think on -- today -- and what the apostle Paul told the Philippians to think about: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

It is never too late in this lifetime to start building spiritual values in your life. It will take much work in your home life, and an active participation in the services of the church. Be sure that your children are involved in the Bible classes, and the extra activities of our young people. Be certain that you and they are actively involved in worship. If you get your priorities right, Christ will be the center of your life. There is no other place for him.

--307 N. Gloster St., Tupelo, MS 38801.

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Words Of Truth

"I am not man, ...
Words of Truth and soberness."

the

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

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NUMBER 47

The Christian's Duty Toward The Church



W. A. Holley

The word DUTY is an important word. Solomon wrote of "the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). Jesus said, "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). In Romans 1:14, Paul writes of being a "debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise."

A "debtor" is a person who owes a debt. Are we willing and ready to pay our debts? As a child of God, you owe a debt which must be paid, if you wish to be saved eternally. What debt do we owe?

OUR DUTY IN GENERAL

1) We should be boosters of the church . . . not knockers; builders, not wreckers; fault fixers, not faultfinders (Ephesians 4:1-6).

2) All Christians should speak with the same voice, promoting no division, no discord; but always urging peace and harmony among all members of the church (I Peter 3:1-12). A busybody or a tattler can do untold harm (Exodus 23:1-2; II Thessalonians 3:11; I Peter 4:15).

3) Christian conduct is very important. "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). "But the path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18). All Christians should endeavor to make the church the most beautiful institution possible (Romans 2:24; Titus 2:5; Philippians 1:27).

OUR DUTY IN PARTICULAR

Christian, do your best to respect and obey the elders (Hebrews 13:7, 17; Acts 20:17, 28). Help

the deacons accomplish their God-given duties. Do your best to support the preachers, and all teachers as they seek to spread the word (Mark 16:15-16; Romans 1:16). Do not develop a rebellious attitude, but ever be willing to cooperate in all good works (I Corinthians 3:9; II Corinthians 6:1-8).

DUTY DEMANDS

1) The proper use of our time, talent, and money. How much time do you give to the support of the church? Thirty minutes on Sunday? An hour per week? An hour per month? Or perhaps, no time at all? How do you use your talents? For the Lord? or, against him? What about the use of your money? (Ephesians 5:16; Matthew 25:14-30; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 10:24-25).

We are obligated to help teach and defend the truth of God (Jude 3; I Timothy 3:14-15; Philippians 1:17). If members of the Lord's church refuse to support the work of the Lord, who will support it? If we wish for the church to cease to exist, just sit back and do nothing. "If every member of the church were just like me, what kind of a church would this church be?" (Answer honestly!)

What are you worth to the church? Are you a "profitable," or an "unprofitable," member? (Matthew 25:14-30).

INDIVIDUAL DUTY

Listen to this statement: About all the world knows of the church is what it sees in YOU! What does the world see in you? Does it see an honest, dependable, courteous person, who tries to be helpful to others? Or, does it see a person who stands aloof, refusing to become involved in the church and its activities? Usually, such members make very good critics; but, somehow they cannot seem to see themselves. Some church members have walked so as to become enemies of the cross of Christ: "Brethren, be ye imitators together of me, and mark them that so walk, even as ye have us for an example." For many walk, of whom I told you often, . . . now tell you even weeping,

that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is perdition, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things" (Philippians 3:17-19, ASV). Those church members who drink, commit adultery, and who otherwise set bad examples, bring shame and reproach upon that church for which Jesus Christ died (Ephesians 5:22-32).

Each individual member of the church should be a good example of what Christianity truly is: Paul instructed Timothy to be an example of the believers in several areas: We shall note I Timothy

1) Be an example in word, or speech. Would Jesus use such speech?

2) Be an example in conversation, or conduct. Would Jesus live as you live?

3) Be an example in charity, or love. Jesus loved his enemies; could you?

4) Be an example in spirit, or attitude (or disposition) (Philippians 2:1-5). All selfish ambition and vain conceit must be restrained. To have "the mind of Christ" is to have that inner disposition toward one another which characterized Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:1-5).

5) Be an example in faith. Is your faith weak? or, strong? (Hebrews 11:1, 3, 6).

6) Ever strive to be an example in purity -- of mind, heart, and soul (Matthew 5:8; I Timothy 5:22).

Christian Friend, will you truly commit yourself to the will and way of the Lord?

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

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The Two Talent Man

David Courington

The parable of the talents is found in Matthew 25:14-30. Many lessons have been taught from this pointed parable. Usually the one talent man is emphasized. He was given less than the other stewards, and he failed to use the little that he had. The five talent man was given the most, and he used it to make the most. However it is the two talent man that we will consider here.

First note that he pleased his lord just as much as the five talent man. The Lord told him the same thing that he did the five talent man: "Well done, good and faithful servant: thou has been faithful with a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (verse 23). This should be comforting to those of us who do not have the ability, means, or money that others do. One can please God just as much as if he had more, by using what he has. One does not have to be the biggest, or best, to please God. Our society puts great emphasis on being "Number One," yet God was in this case just as pleased with "Number Two" -- because he used what he had to the best of his ability.

Also, the two talent man could have done just what the one talent man did. There were some who had more than he did. There probably was no way that he could have gained as much as the five talent man, no matter how hard he tried. He could have said, "I cannot, because there are others who can do so much better." It may be that one elder can never, no matter how hard he tries, do as much

as another elder. This does not mean that he should not be an elder, nor that he must be ashamed. The same can be said of teachers, song leaders, parents, Bible students, personal workers, etc. One must do what he can rather than bemoan what he cannot do. Paul warned against measuring oneself against others and commending oneself because he does more than someone else (II Corinthians 10:12). God does not judge us according to what others do, but rather according to what we do with what he has given us. Runners often talk about running their "personal best" time in a race. Christians would do well to strive for their "personal best," and not become discouraged and quit because they do not do as well as others.

On the other side of the coin, the two talent man did not look at the one talent man and say, "I already have twice as much as he does, so I will do nothing." One must exercise caution lest he become self-satisfied with little, and not try to do more and/or better. The church at Laodicea made God sick because they said, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17). The child of God has not learned enough, worked enough, or become good enough. Likewise the church must never become self-satisfied. Not until the whole world is converted to Christ, will our work be done.

Two talent folks must be diligent that they not lose their reward.

--P.O. Box 160, Mulga, AL 35118.

Do It Yourself

Bob Plunket

In 1865 in Yorkshire, England, Sabine Baring Gould, who was a minister in a 'Christian school,' needed a song for a religious festival that the school could march to. He looked everywhere to find a suitable hymn. There was none available. He sat up all night to compose a hymn for the occasion. As day began to break he had written the great hymn, "Onward Christian Soldiers." It is a moving hymn. The first verse says:

Onward Christian soldiers marching as to war
With the cross of Jesus going on before.
Christ the royal Master leads against the foe.
Forward into battle see his banner go.

The children marched proudly in their festival -- and thousands of Christians have "marched" since then to this great hymn. We need this man's great spirit today. Many complain that there are no songs to sing, and no good books to read, and no poems to inspire. Then write one! Many would have said, "Well, we don't have a song for our festival this year, so we won't march." Our Father was the master of all creation, and we are made in his image. Why should not we be creative? Interdependence can be a good thing, but we need some individuality as well. Many many people today are becoming mentally paralyzed. We let

others think for us, and write for us, and sing for us. Not all the great songs, nor all the great books, nor all the great sermons have yet been written!

Sabine found (along with many others) that necessity is the 'mother' of discovery and invention. How many have said, "I am not pleased with my country?" Then make it better. Still others say, "I am not pleased with my community." Then make it better. How many great songs, and great books, and great poems have been buried in a cemetery because he or she never tried. I admire our sister Beulah Hand who made the world a little richer by writing some beautiful hymns herself. We must not lose confidence in our individual abilities. So you don't know Sabine Gould who lived over a hundred years ago, but you have sung his song and that is what counts. Jesus admired and praised creativity. He said, "Well done, good and faithful servant" to the men who had used their talents. To the man who had buried his talent, he said, "You wicked and lazy servant . . . you should have invested my money . . . Take the talent from him and give it to him who has ten talents" (Matthew 25). If what you see and what you hear is not suitable, then do it yourself!

--110 E. Fourth St., Tusculumbia, AL 35674.



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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Faith

Hilton Royster

Among the "things that become sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1), the subject of FAITH demands attention. In the study of this important subject we should find the answer to three questions, namely: (1) What is FAITH? "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:6 A.V.). "Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen" (A.S.V.). "Now faith is confidence of things hoped for, and the conviction of things not seen" (Living Oracles). The latter is clear: faith is confidence as to the future, including blessings in this life, and also the hope of heaven as an everlasting home. It is also conviction regarding these, coupled with a conviction regarding the truthfulness of testimony concerning the past -- including the creation of the world, and of man. A beautiful expression of faith is in Romans 4:20-21. It is stated regarding Abraham: "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able to perform." (2) How is faith obtained? We request that you read and consider the first ten verses of Hebrews 11, and observe how Abraham and Noah received their faith. God told them what to do, and what he would do, and they believed him. Then turn to Romans 10:17, and read the answer to our question in plain words: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." People too often say, "I BELIEVE," when they should say, "It is my OPINION," in religious matters. If God has not spoken in the Bible concerning a subject, it is not a subject of FAITH.

(3) How do we profit by faith? It is doubtful that anyone except an atheist, an infidel, or a heathen would deny that people who are saved are saved by faith. That, however, is a far different thing to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Friday Of Gloom, Sunday Of Glory



Winfred Clark

may be the Friday of gloom, but there is the Sunday of glory!

Go back to that setting as found in Matthew 27 and see what we can learn.

1. WE HAVE THE FRIDAY WHEN TRUST SEEMS FUTILE.

From the human standpoint the trust that Jesus has in God seems to be a futile thing. They indeed said, "He trusted in God; let him deliver him now" (Matthew 27:43). It does seem that all is lost as he hangs on a cross with his hands fastened by the nails. It surely dealt a blow to those disciples who followed him along the way. But the fact that God did not meet their timetable, does not mean his trust was not well placed. They said, "Let him deliver him NOW." But there was the Sunday that was to come! That day would reveal the value of that trust. That day would show God is not limited by our way of thinking.

2. WE HAVE THE FRIDAY WHEN EVIL SEEMS OF BE IN CONTROL.

If one measured things by the way it looked that day, he would think evil was on the throne, and

Faith

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

being saved by faith ONLY. The latter is a popular doctrine; yet the Bible plainly states exactly the opposite: "So then, we see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:24). Study again the great faith chapter (Hebrews 11) and see if you can determine how the men of old profited by faith. It is clearly set forth that they did so by exercising their faith by obedience. "By faith Abraham . . . obeyed," "By faith Abel offered . . ." "By faith Noah . . . prepared an ark . . ."; and other statements prove that the faith that saves is the faith that obeys. We do not have the same commands in this (the Christian) age; but the principle of faith and obedience is the same. Now Jesus says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). One who stops short of baptism now does not have the faith that saves from past sins; and one who refuses to obey commands of God addressed to Christians, does not have the faith that saves eternally. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

--7th & College, Mayfield, KY 42066.

good was forever crushed. He would think righteousness would never rise again. And it does seem sometimes that righteousness has no chance. It seems that evil will forever be the popular cause. But, that is the wrong estimate. There is a Sunday coming when righteousness will reign again. When the lifetime of right living will pay dividends far beyond man's expectation!

3. WE HAVE THE FRIDAY WHEN GOOD PEOPLE FEEL LONELY.

There were precious few in and around Jerusalem who dared stand very tall alongside the Son of God on that dark Friday. Most of the people near the

cross were enemies, not friends. Even some of the disciples fled in fear, and good people stood alone. Can you imagine the feelings of Mary as she stood by, when she recalled all who had been helped by that one now being killed? But that day would pass -- and Sunday would come when the hopes of many would be revived, and the good news of his resurrection would be told by these. They would later be challenged to tell the whole world about it (Mark 16:15-16).

Yes, they faced the Friday of gloom, but they could surely wait for the Sunday of glory.

--P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

Does Jesus Trust Us?



Ancil Jenkins

Jesus refused to "entrust" himself to them. This was because of the superficial nature of their faith. It was based entirely on the spectacular. This was the same faith that caused the multitude to follow him because of the loaves and fishes. This was an incomplete, inadequate faith. To have entrusted himself to them would have been like building a house on the sand.

How real is the power of Jesus in your life? Do you ever say, "I wish I were able to do more for the Lord?" Have you often thought, "My spiritual life is just not what I want it to be." Are you confused by your lack of opportunities to use your abilities. Do you wonder why the Lord has not used you in a mighty way?

The promise of Jesus is that he will be with us, even to the end of the age (Matthew 28:18-20). He promises to come in and make his permanent abode in us (Revelation 3:20). Jesus said that both he and the Father would dwell in those who love them (John 14:23). Paul prayed that Christ might have a permanent dwelling in the heart of the Ephesians (Ephesians 3:17).

Do you have such a relationship? What actions come from your knowledge of this indwelling? Our lives are to be enriched and empowered by Christ in us. If they are not, it is because we either do not have this knowledge, or he does not dwell in us.

If we are Christians, how could we have missed his being in us? It may be that he does not trust us, just as he didn't trust some in his day. He has not committed himself to you because you have not

committed yourself to him. If we give all we have to him, he will give all of himself to us. This trust will never come until we are willing to give him every part of our lives. I seem to remember a fable of a king who wanted to reward some of his subjects. He asked them to give him all the money they had. They gave him copper, brass, and a few silver coins. When he later called them in to his presence, he returned the money to them, but the coins were now all made of gold. This brought a mixed blessing to the people. They were happy they now had gold coins, but disappointed they had hoarded back a few they had not given the king. God is able to take all we give him and reward us richly.

" . . . many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name. But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men" (John 2:23-24).

There is an interesting play on words in this passage. The people "believed" in Jesus because of his miracles. However,

committed yourself to him. If we give all we have to him, he will give all of himself to us.

This trust will never come until we are willing to give him every part of our lives. I seem to remember a fable of a king who wanted to reward some of his subjects. He asked them to give him all the money they had. They gave him copper, brass, and a few silver coins. When he later called them in to his presence, he returned the money to them, but the coins were now all made of gold. This brought a mixed blessing to the people. They were happy they now had gold coins, but disappointed they had hoarded back a few they had not given the king. God is able to take all we give him and reward us richly.

All he gives, I will take,
All he takes, I will give.
I may have full right to him
When he has full right of me.

(Adapted from an anonymous verse)

--8445 Sunset Dr., Miami, FL 33143.

Does He Really Expect So Much?

Dean Fugett

After all, what did he do? He just died for us, that's all. So just go ahead and do as you please. Go ahead and hold malice in your heart! Go ahead and keep that chip on your shoulder! Go ahead and divide his church. Go ahead and be deceitful! Go ahead and forsake the assembling! Go ahead . . . GO AHEAD!

But remember, That was Jehovah's ONLY BEGOTTEN SON who died there on that cross. He cannot be expected to look so lightly on our infractions as we look upon them. He will not deal so lightly with our failure to follow that SON who died there for us.

How hard it is to get people to see that the Bible is not just so many suggestions that we may or may not follow, as suits our fancy. That is actually God's Word for us to follow, every precept, every principle!

--P.O. Box 75, Cave City, AR 72521.

"Let The Redeemed . . . Say So"

W. A. Holley

"Oh, give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good; for his lovingkindness endureth forever. Let the redeemed of Jehovah say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the adversary, and gathered out of the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south" (Psalms 107:1-3, ASV).

Under the law of Moses the "redeemed" were those faithful Jews who followed the Lord's commandments of that day. Under the New Testament the redeemed are those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb. When is one so washed? When one believes (John 3:16), repents of his sins (Luke 13:3, 5), confesses the name of Jesus Christ (Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 8:37), and is baptized into Christ for remission of sins (Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47).

In apostolic times those who heard and obeyed Christ were so filled with joy they could not help but rejoice and be glad. They were compelled to share their new faith, their Saviour, with others. The eunuch "went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:26-39). The Lord's people are commanded to "rejoice" (Philippians 3:1; 4:4).

But there are some things which should never characterize the churches of Christ. We shall note--

(1) Among members of churches of Christ there should be no **RECIDIVISM**. What does this word mean? "A tendency to relapse into a previous condition or mode of behaviour" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 8th edition). How does this definition apply to members of the church? Well, many who come from the world into the church, remain for a time, and then return to the world from whence they came. Perhaps these were not properly taught. Could it be that we are willing to receive members at any cost? At any rate, we are losing far too many members (II Peter 2:20-22).

(2) Do some of our members have too much fraternization with those who are not sympathetic with New Testament Christianity? The Bible warns against evil companionships (I Corinthians 15:33). Have we sent out unqualified teachers who are unable to uphold the truth of God? (Titus 1:9-16; 2:15). All should understand that "right doctrine" and "right practice" stand or fall together. We realize that sinners must be taught; but is it not dangerous "to associate on close terms with members of a hostile group," if we possess not the strength or courage to stand for the truth? McGarvey, commenting on I Corinthians 15:33-34, among other remarks, says: "To show the full enormity of the teaching of the rationalist, Paul declares that it is a shame to the Corinthians to have such Christless Christians in the church -- men who have so little knowledge of even the power of God as to deny his ability to bring to pass so simple a matter as the resurrection."

(3) The church of Christ needs no fifth columnists to infiltrate its membership, working undetected, in their efforts to undermine the power and influence of Christ's gospel. This is exactly what happens, in many instances, if members of denominations are brought into our fellowship. Denominational baptisms, and instrumental music, and women preachers can do much to create the spirit of compromise (Romans 16:16-18; II Timothy 2:22-26; II John 9-11). If denominational church members can be converted to the truth -- well and good! But compromise the truth? No! Never!!

(4) The church of the Lord needs no traitors such as was Judas (Luke 6:16). The word **TRAITOR** occurs in II Timothy 3:4, in a list of evil characters, foretold as abounding in the last days. Benedict Arnold lives in infamy because he dared betray his country. Truth should be bought but never sold (Proverbs 23:23). Let members of the Lord's church stand tall, having backbones as big as saw logs, never yielding an inch to false doctrines (Galatians 1:6-10). The Lord needs some one to "make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me . . ." (Ezekiel 22:30).

"LET THE REDEEMED . . . SAY SO"

(1) If you know the difference between truth and error, "SAY SO!" (Ezekiel 22:26; 44:23; I Timothy 6:3-5). Here we have the bitter fruits of error outlined.

(2) If you have obeyed the truth of God, "SAY SO!" Truth must be obeyed (I Peter 1:22-25). Why should a Christian be ashamed of it? (Romans 1:16). Why not stand up and be counted?? (Revelation 22:16).

(3) If you know how to distinguish the church of the Lord from human denominationalism, then, "SAY SO!" Matthew 16:18-19 and Acts 2:36-38, 47 teach that the church of Christ was in existence hundreds of years before the curse of denomina-

tionism ever arose. Any standard encyclopedia will disclose the origins and peculiarities of all major denominations of the world. Why not "say so?"

(4) If you know that singing, as taught in the New Testament, is God's authorized music for worship in the church, stand up with courage and conviction, and "SAY SO!" We urge our readers to read again I Corinthians 14:15; Romans 15:9; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12; and James 5:13. Christian church organs can corrupt the Lord's worship, just as ordinary food corrupted the worship when added to the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:20-29). Dear readers, do have courage to stand for the Old Jerusalem gospel? Why not "SAY SO?"

(5) Do you know that denominational baptisms are invalid? Why? Because they teach that one should be baptized because he is already saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27). Any defective baptism must be corrected as taught in Acts 19:1-5. We need no one who feels compelled to apologize for the truth of God. The word of God will stand when the world is on fire (Matthew 24:35).

If you truly believe, stand up and "SAY NO!"
--P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Paying The Price

Tom Kelton

Everyone who writes knows that constant discipline is necessary to continue to produce works worth reading. This discipline is not easy. There is a temptation to let up and not pay the price.

When you are tempted to do this consider these examples of discipline.

Gibbons toiled twenty years in writing "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire."

George Bernard Shaw wrote five pages a day for nine years, even though he made a total of only thirty dollars in those nine years -- about a penny a day.

Martin Luther led the Protestant Reformation and made an important contribution to German literature with his translation of the Bible. He wrote more than four hundred works, from pamphlets to large books. In addition, he wrote 125 hymns, the best known, "A Mighty Fortress," is still very popular.

William Tyndale first translated the Bible into English. He was harassed; he was excommunicated; he was driven from pillar to post; he was betrayed; yet he sneaked copies of his translation into England in crates and cases, in boxes and barrels, and bales, in rolls of cloth and sacks of flour and bundles of merchandise. On October 6, 1536, Tyndale paid the final price for his translating the Bible. He was first strangled and then burned at the stake.

In 1660, John Bunyan was imprisoned for preaching without permission. He remained in prison for over twelve years. During his imprisonment Bunyan wrote "Pilgrim's Progress." This well known allegory has been translated into more than a hundred languages and dialects, and has been read by more people than any other book except the Bible.

William Carey could read the Bible in six languages when he was in his teens. When he went to India as a missionary he established the Serompore

Printing Press and published the Bible or portions of it in thirty-six languages or dialects. His press made the Bible available to more than three hundred million people.

Charles Spurgeon, during his lifetime, wrote one hundred thirty-five volumes and edited another twenty-eight. He died at the age of fifty-seven.

These men were dedicated to writing. They gave their lives to communicating with others.

We must do the same thing. We must study and write. We must do as Winston Churchill said, "Lock yourself in your study and write whether you are in the mood to write or not."

Discipline yourself as these men, who have left their stamp on the world, have done.

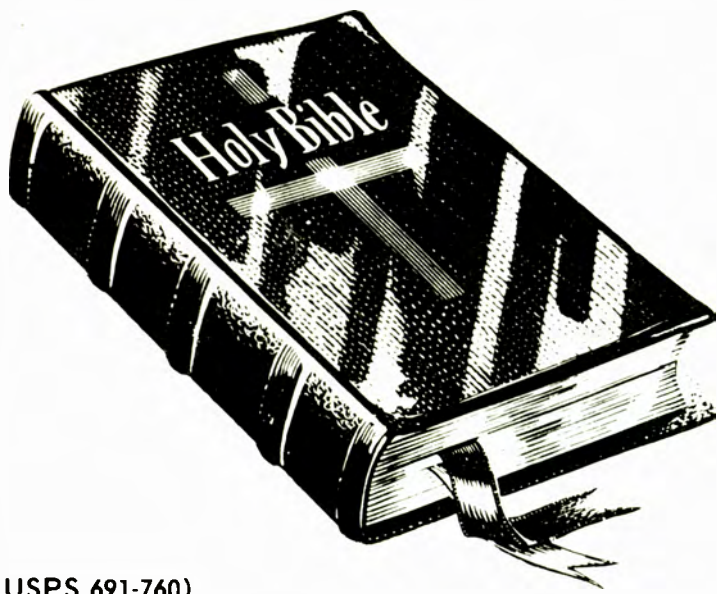
Be willing to pay the price!

--Box 152, Pharr, TX 78577.

I Go To Services On Wednesday Night Because . . .

1. I want to go and am wanted.
2. I need to go and am needed.
3. I believe Jesus would go if he were here in the flesh.
4. I had rather be there with my brethren than anywhere else.
5. I want to encourage my brethren all I can.
6. I want to be there to encourage the visitors.
7. I haven't found any excuse the Lord will accept at the judgment.
8. I want to have more than just a Sunday religion.
9. I want to set a good example before my neighbors.
10. I have a strong desire to go to heaven after death.
11. The New Testament Christians taught "daily in temple" (Acts 5:42).
12. It prepares me in knowledge and in spirit to serve God and my fellowman during the week.

--SELECTED



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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VOLUME 23

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NUMBER 48

What Is The "One Baptism"

When one studies the New Testament, one soon learns that there are six baptisms mentioned therein;

- 1) Those baptized unto Moses (I Corinthians 10:1-3).
- 2) Baptism of John (Matthew 3:1-11).
- 3) Baptism of fire (Matthew 3:1-11).
- 4) Baptism of suffering (Matthew 20:20; Mark 10:38).
- 5) Baptism of the

W. A. Holley

Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5; 2:1-4).

6) Baptism of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

However, when we come to Ephesians 4:4-6 we read of but "ONE BAPTISM." This classification of the various baptisms will aid the reader to understand more correctly how and what the Bible teaches regarding this subject. Fix the above classification of baptisms firmly in your mind.

WHAT THE "ONE BAPTISM" IS NOT

1) It is not Holy Spirit baptism.

In the entire Bible there are only two instances of Holy Spirit baptism: The first, on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection (Acts 1:5; 2:1-4); and the second, at the home of Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:44-48; 11:4, 13-18; 15:6-11). In these verses we have the fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32. When the scriptures says, "... I will pour out my Spirit upon ALL FLESH," the prophet has reference to Jewish flesh and Gentile flesh, not to every individual of all flesh. Jesus is the administrator of Holy Spirit baptism, not men (Matthew 3:10-11; John 1:33).

2) It is not baptism of fire.

John, in Matthew 3:11, is speaking to a mixed multitude, some of whom would be baptized with the Holy Spirit, and some would be baptized with the baptism of fire, hell fire, eternal punishment. Read the entire passage and notice what is said about the wheat and the chaff. Those who pray for the baptism of fire are praying to be baptized with

the fires of hell!! The context shows that casting the unfruitful trees into the fire represents the punishment of the wicked (Matthew 3:10-12).

3) It is not John's baptism.

John's baptism pointed to Jesus. John's baptism was out of date after Jesus died on the cross (Acts 19:1-5). The baptism of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) looks back to the cross. "Then Paul said, "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus" (Acts 19:4). Thus, Apollos, in Ephesus, had administered a baptism that was invalid, a baptism which was not administered in the name of Christ, and which needed to be corrected; so Paul promptly baptized them "in the name of the Lord Jesus." Denominational baptism (because one "feels" that he is already saved) is without divine authority.

4) It is not denominational baptism.

Denominational churches have no authority to baptize anyone. The idea: Get saved first, and then -- because one is already saved -- be baptized, is false doctrine. In the New Testament, no one was ever baptized because he was already saved. Please read Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:20-21; Romans 6:3-4).

5) It is not sprinkling or pouring, nor infant baptism.

As taught in the New Testament, baptism is an immersion (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12). Hence, baptism is a burial in water from which one is raised to walk in newness of life. As far as infants are concerned, they are not lost, they cannot believe, they have no sins of which to repent, they are not subject to the command to be baptized (Matthew 18:3; 19:14; Ezekiel 18:20; 28:15). The doctrine of hereditary total depravity is God-dishonoring, and is not found in the Holy Bible!

WHAT IS THE "ONE BAPTISM?"

1) There were two baptisms at Pentecost, in A.D. 33 (Acts 1:5; 2:1-4, 36-38).

2) There were two baptisms at Caesarea in A.D. 41 (Acts 10:47-48; 11:15-16).

3) But when we come to Ephesus, in A.D. 64, there is but one baptism (Ephesians 4:4-6).

Again; I ask: what is the "one baptism?" Is it Holy Spirit baptism? or water baptism? We shall note --

Holy Spirit baptism was a promise (Acts 1:5). But water baptism is a command (Acts 10:47-48; Mark 16:16).

Holy Spirit baptism was administered only by Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:10-11; John 1:33). Water baptism is administered by men (Matthew 28:18-20).

Holy Spirit baptism was not administered in the name of the Father, and the Holy Ghost. (Where is such a reference?) But water baptism must be administered "in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:18-20).

Holy Spirit baptism was never "for the remission of sins" (Acts 11:15). But water baptism is "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38; I Peter 3:21).

Hence, Holy Spirit baptism ended before A.D. 64, according to Ephesians 4:4-6. Thus, the only logical conclusion rational minds can reach, based upon the facts, is that (by A.D. 64). Holy Spirit baptism had ceased. Since that time many have CLAIMED to have been baptized in the Holy Spirit; but they cannot demonstrate such miraculous gifts as characterized those who were baptized in the Holy Spirit in the first century (I Corinthians 2:4-5; II Corinthians 12:12; I Thessalonians 1:5).

Thus, in contrast to Holy Spirit baptism which ceased, water baptism will continue unto the end of the world (Matthew 28:18-20).

These words are written for honest seekers of truth.

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

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—Acts 26:25

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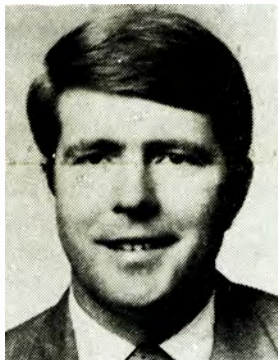
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Assurance



Ken Tyler

Paul said in II Corinthians 5:1, "For we KNOW that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Please notice the word "know." Paul said we know if we die we are going to heaven. This is the kind of assurance God intends for every Christian to

have.

Paul, while suffering in prison, put it this way in Philippians 1:21, 23, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain . . . For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." Paul in these statements recognizes the difference between living on earth and being in heaven. We should never forget that we are going to a far better place.

There is a very meaningful statement in Psalms 116:15. Listen carefully, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Do you mean that something as horrible as death can be "precious?" Yes, that is what the verse says. The Lord views death as "precious" when his saints die. Why? Because we have loved him and he has a special place prepared for us.

We all need the assurance of heaven to sustain us through the difficulties of life. David said in Psalms 27:13, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." The assurance of heaven is what kept David going. Life is tough, but if we have the assurance, that God is with us, we are going to heaven, and it will make the difference.

Today, if you are not headed for heaven, you should take a sober look at your life. Can't you see that your life needs the assurance of heaven?

--P.O. Box 376, Arab, AL 35016.



David Courington

Every Christian should attend every service that he possibly can. If you do not do so, why not? Here are some questions for those who do not attend faithfully.

(1) Is attending every other service, every third service, etc., being "faithful"? If so, just how far does one have to go to become UNfaithful? Would one be considered "faithful" who lies once in a while? drinks -- only on special occasions? steals only when it is hard to do? steps out on his/her spouse once in a while? Why do many apply a different standard to the subject of absenteeism than others? Is it any less a sin to be unfaithful in ATTENDANCE than to be unfaithful in OTHER areas? Paul said that it is required of stewards that "a man be found faithful" (I Corinthians 4:2). If being "faithful" in attendance is just attending when it is convenient, what is being unfaithful? Psalm 31:23 says that the Lord preserves "the faithful," not the unfaithful.

Almost every congregation has a group of people who are sporadic in their church attendance. They may come to three services and miss two, come all of the time on Sunday morning and miss on Sunday and Wednesday nights and other services, or just come when the notion hits and they have nothing else to do.

(2) Is it right to put other things before the Lord and his church, so far as attendance at church services is concerned, and not right in other areas? Jesus plainly taught that we should seek "first the kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33). The fact is, when one neglects church attendance, he neglects Christ. Worshiping God, studying God's word, praying to God, singing praises to God, is what church services are all about. One may feel that it is a small thing to habitually be absent from church services. However, it is a matter of vital importance.

Do you really hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matthew 5:6) when you let any little thing keep you from coming to church services? We often sing, "More About Jesus Would I Know . . ." Evidently some need to not only repent of not attending church services, but of singing a lie, as well! Does one who has a "Don't - care" attitude about Bible study want to know more about Jesus?

When you attend sporadically, are you doing what you really know you should be doing? Seldom has this writer ever had anyone argue that regular attendance is unimportant. Many say, "Well, I know I should, but . . ." and then follow with a lame excuse. If one knows he should, but just will not, is he not guilty of sin? Note James 4:17: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

Are you going to be comfortable as you face God in judgment, knowing that you have persistently disobeyed God? God will "Render to every man according to his deeds" (Romans 2:6). If you have not obeyed God, begin now to do so!

--P.O. Box 160, Mulga, AL 35118.

The Songs We Sing

Charles E. McDonald

When you lift your voice in worship with song, what do you understand the words to be conveying? Singing in worship is not optional, for the Lord instructs: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;" (Ephesians 5:19). Through the inspired pen of the apostle Paul (Colossians 3:16) he further says: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." In I Corinthians 14:15 it is stated, "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."

So singing in worship is not just a "filler," but is intended to have substance and to be a part of the instruction and exhortation so important to the spiritual health and well-being of each Christian.

Sometimes a song will take on re-newed meaning when you know something of how and why it came to be written. I came upon the following little essay from the pen of Bob Hampton concerning that great hymn "Just As I Am." I share it with you here in hopes it will make the song mean even more to you in the future.

Back in 1822 Caesar Malan was visiting in the home of a friend in Brighton, England. One day he said to the daughter of his host, "I wish you were a

Christian, Charlotte." This statement did not receive a very favorable response and so he dropped the subject. However, the next day she admitted to being disturbed by what he said, and told him she would like to be a Christian, but didn't know how. He explained to her, but noted that she thought her life must be cleaned up first, before obeying. So, finally, he said, "Charlotte, Charlotte, you must give yourself to the Saviour just as you are! JUST AS YOU ARE." Not long after, her response was forthcoming -- and she wrote her famous hymn,

"Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidd'st me come to Thee.
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!"

Bob Hampton continued: "Each must come to grips with the fact that I cannot save myself (Acts 4:12). Saying we will not come to Jesus until we are good enough is like saying, "I'll go to school when I know enough." Jesus wants me to come just as I am! JUST AS I AM! It is his power that can make me what I ought to be; it is his blood that can cleanse my heart and make me free. With joy we give thanks "unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

--417 Coosa Pines Dr., Childersburg, AL 35044.

"Charismatic Gifts" And Fellowship

Cecil May, Jr.

Members of the Lord's church who think they have received miraculous gifts, usually seek the company of others who imagine they possess such gifts, even when the "others" have not been scripturally baptized. For most, participation in the supposed miraculous gifts becomes the sole criterion of sonship and brotherhood.

Once Pat Boone was "baptized with the Holy Spirit," he was soon thereafter appearing on Oral Robert's broadcast, embracing him as a brother. A journal published by brethren who have adopted charismatic views said recently,

An encouraging fruit of the renewal that **Paraclete Journal** chronicles is the coming together of brothers and sisters from all three branches of the Restoration Movement . . . In fact, the spirit of acceptance and oneness has been so evident that the "us" list has grown to include saints from Calvary Chapels, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and some with essentially no denominational fellowship heritage. The common thread which seems to draw us together is the Holy Spirit. (Tom Smith, **Paraclete Journal**; Winter, 1987, p. 2.)

These named groups do not practice baptism for remission of sins, and some do not practice immersion at all.

Even in the first century, however, Christians who truly received valid miraculous gifts through the laying on of an apostle's hands, were warned that these gifts were not designed to constitute proof of salvation and acceptance. A Biblical discussion "concerning spiritual gifts" (I Corinthians 12:1), includes the words: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (I Corinthians 14:37). The Corinthian church, some of whom possessed genuine spiritual gifts (I Corinthians 12:8-11), were thus reminded that any apparent gift was to be checked on the basis of the possessor's agreement with the revealed --written-- word of the apostle, the gospel they had already received. Even the appearance of an angel, if he brought a different gospel, was to be rejected and cursed (Galatians 1:8).

When "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" is changed to "He that speaks in tongues and works miracles is my brother," then "another gospel, which is not another," is being presented. Jesus said, "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out demons? and in thy name done many wonderful works? Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:22-23). Some, therefore, who thought they had worked great miracles in the name of Christ were in reality never saved.

When Jesus sent his disciples on the limited commission, they came back to Jesus reporting and rejoicing, "Lord, even the demons are subject unto us through thy name." Jesus responded by acknowledging the power he had given them, but adding, "Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:17-20).

Certainly, genuine miracles such as were done by Jesus and the apostles, like restoring a withered arm, walking on water and raising the dead, would be proof that God was confirming the word of the

person through whom such miracles were worked. Today's supposed miracles and miraculous gifts, however, are not of that nature.

Members of two different Pentecostal groups have claimed in my presence to have worked great miracles and to have spoken in tongues. One held that Jesus Christ is the only Person in the Godhead and maintained that if the words, "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," instead of "in the name of Jesus Christ," are said at a baptism, that baptism is invalid. The other held a Trinitarian viewpoint and baptized "into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Each testified to the same kind of alleged miracles and gifts. Each denied the validity of the other's gifts. This points up the problem. There is no objective means of validating the gifts claimed today, because they are subjective.

A person seeking to determine whether he or she

is saved, or who his brothers and sisters in the Lord are, must look beyond subjective experience to the promises and word of God. It is not, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you speak in tongues and have the gifts of the Spirit." It is not, "He that believes he can work miracles and perform acts of healing shall be saved." It is not, "If you see a vision of a nine-hundred foot image of Jesus, you can know I am with you." It is rather, "You 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).

The question at judgment will not be, "Have you spoken in tongues and worked wonderful works in Jesus' name?" It will be, "Have you done the will of the Father?" (Matthew 7:21-23).

--President, Magnolia Bible College, Kosciusko, Mississippi.

You And Preaching!

There isn't a word that a preacher can say,
No matter how lovely or true,
Nor is there a prayer that his eager lips pray
That can preach such a sermon as you.

You vowed to serve Christ
and many know that you did;
They're watching the things that you do;
There isn't one action of yours that is hid,
Men are watching and studying you.

You say you're no preacher? Yes, but you preach
A powerful sermon each day.
The acts of your life are the things that you teach
It isn't the things that you say.

So Christians, remember you bear his name.
Your lives are for others to view.
You are living examples; men praise you, or blame,
And measure all Christians by you.

--Author Unknown

Sin's Masks

W. A. Holley

"For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me" (Romans 7:11). Here Paul shows how deadly sin is. Notice, "For sin . . . deceived me . . . and slew me."

Sin is very deceitful; sin is extremely deceptive . . . sin kills by fraud. It promises what it cannot give, and it gives what it does not promise (Hebrews 3:12-13). The word DECEITFUL means "to give a false impression, whether by appearance, statement or influence." Hence, sin always wears a mask, always pretending to be what it is not.

We shall note a few examples of sin's masks:

(1) Sin wears the mask of a "servant;" but in reality, it becomes the master. Sin says to its victims: "Follow me; I'll make life more enjoyable, more beautiful, more satisfying; but such is never so! Sin "grows" (James 1:13-15). All bad habits soon become masters. For example, the habits of smoking, drinking, cursing, stealing, lying, adultery, et al., start off in a small way, but soon grow into acts which are almost impossible to end. Narcotic addicts usually end up leading lives of wretched degradation, ready to commit almost any sin to satisfy their desires.

(2) Sin wears the mask of "beauty," but in reality, it is hideously ugly. Newspaper and TV ads portray smoking and drinking as acts with no consequences; but look at what happens in the hospitals and on the highways, if you desire truth.

Satan masked sin when he approached Eve: "And

when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat" (Genesis 3:6, cf. I Timothy 2:11-14). Hence, the thing that looked so beautiful, and tasted so good, and that appeared to show so much wisdom, brought physical and spiritual death to the human race (Romans 5:12-14). Sin is ugly, indeed!

(3) Sin wears the mask of "advantage," but it is the most destructive force on earth. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). Sin drove Adam and Eve from Paradise (Genesis 3:1-ff). Paradise can be regained in Heaven if sinners will but obey God and remain faithful unto death (Hebrews 5:8-9; I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 22:1-14; 2:10).

Sin gives no advantage to any one. Today, many sins are called by nicer names, such as delinquency, impropriety, indecorum, indiscretion, irregularity, another life-style, "shacking up," et al. Sins do not become virtues by being widely practiced. Right is still right, if nobody is right; and wrong is still wrong, if everybody is wrong (Romans 3:3-4).

God said, "Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden . . ." But "of the tree of knowledge of good

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Sin's Masks

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:16-17). Satan changed the whole meaning of what God had said by adding just one word, "Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). Thus, the seed of rebellion was sown. Many today think that adding to God's word is of little consequence (Revelation 22:18-19; Galatians 6:7-9).

(4) Sin wears a mask even if one does immoral acts with a good conscience. Such acts are absolutely sinful, regardless of how sincere one may be. For example Paul was "chief of sinners," even though he possessed a good conscience, while he "PERSECUTED the church of God, and wasted it" (Galatians 1:13-14). Hear Paul. "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief (I Timothy 1:13-15).

Paul even though he persecuted Christians, always had a good conscience (Acts 23:1; 24:16; 26:9-11). One's conscience, like a good watch, must be properly SET. Saul's conscience was set

by the law of Moses. Moses' law had been abrogated when Jesus died on the cross (Colossians 2:14-17). Saul's conscience needed to be changed. It was changed when he learned the truth concerning Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:1-11). When Saul learned the truth, he believed on Jesus, repented of his sins, confessed Jesus' name, and was baptized, that his sins might be washed away (Hebrews 11:6; Luke 13:3; Romans 10:9-10; 6:3-4).

Ignorance does not and cannot change error into truth (Leviticus 5:17; Proverbs 14:12). Furthermore, neither money, nor politics, nor popularity can change a lie into truth (II Thessalonians 2:10-12). "Buy the truth, -- and sell it not" (Proverbs 23:23).

(5) The Sin of denominationalism wears a mask, too. Denominationalism cloaks itself in pretense and disguise. Denominationalism hides itself under an assumed identity. It claims to be the church of the Bible; but it is not.

Denominational churches are all built upon men. They are built upon division; division is contrary

to the spirit of the New Testament church (John 17:20-23). Jesus prayed for the unity of his people. Denominationalism promotes and teaches division of the rankest sort. If one follows denominational doctrine and practice, true unity of the Spirit can never be realized (Ephesians 4:1-6).

Denominationalism possesses different creeds, different doctrines, different names, different kinds of government, different kinds of worship, and different plans of salvation.

The man does not live who can justify the existence of denominationalism from the teaching of God's holy word. Where does the Bible teach -- Join the church of your choice? The church is non-essential? salvation by faith alone? human creeds? that there is nothing in a name? baptism is a non-essential command? sprinkling or pouring are acceptable modes of Bible baptism?

These words are written for honest seekers of truth.

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

The Solemn Style In Prayer

Mary Nell Hardeman Powers

[Editor's Note: Brother E. L. Whitaker has preached at the Knight Arnold church in Memphis for about 30 years. Their bulletin for November 8, 1988, contained this by sister Powers. Brother Frank D. Young suggested that it be given wider circulation through **Words Of Truth**.

I am among the numerous preachers who are indebted to sister Powers for classes in English grammar which she taught at Freed-Hardeman College. For a few years my father and I were houseguests of brother and sister Powers during the annual F.H.C. Lectureships.

Brother Whitaker prefaced her article with an introduction, and a paragraph from Adam Clarke's Commentary, Volume I, page 1, which I also quote. -- Flavil H. Nichols.]

(This article is not being published in the spirit of condemnation, but as food for thought. I realize there are those who have gone to the extreme on both sides, and this is wrong. Last week I was studying and read Adam Clarke's definition of God. Do we really understand who God is? After Clarke's comments is an article written by Mary Nell Powers, daughter of the esteemed N. B. Hardeman. I believe it should receive your thoughtful consideration. -- E. L. Whitaker.)

God is: 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, and 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 be fully apprehended only by itself. In a word, a Being who, from his infinite wisdom, cannot err or be deceived; and who, from

his infinite goodness, can do nothing but what is eternally just, right and kind. --Adam Clarke.

The Solemn Style In Prayer

To one who has heard the solemn "thou", "thy", "thine," and "thee" and the stately "art" and "be" and "wast" and "saith" all his life, it comes as a shock to hear these quaint and lovely sounds replaced by the everyday, everybody "you" and "your" and "is" and "was" with reference to things divine. This is especially true in prayer -- when we directly address the Supreme Being. Almost all of the infinity of words we use daily are addressed to our fellows -- those on the mortal plane. It seems only reasonable that there should be some distinction in the form of address to the Creator of all -- the Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent One. Even in our human relations, we defer in our speech to those of superior rank. We do not hesitate to use "sir" and "your honor" and "ma'am" in speaking to those who deserve respect, if only by the position they occupy.

It is easy, it is useful, to use the common ordinary style in our endless exchange with our fellows. And we rightly enjoy being folksy and chummy with our families and colleagues. But does it seem appropriate to address the God of the universe in the same language as we use over the back fence to our neighbor? Does the living God deserve a special style of address, especially when our God-given languages contain special forms of solemnity?

Throughout his relations with men, God has demanded that he be set apart, that his supreme status be respected. The sheep or bullock offered to him, must be without blemish. He made his servant Moses "put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." God is supreme and worthy of glory and honor, and of the very best that we have to give. So it behooves us to offer the most solemn and impressive worship of which we are capable.

Nobody can offer a direct scriptural objection to

the practice of wearing casual clothing to church. Nobody can find specific scriptural condemnation for men serving at the Lord's table clad in sport shirts without coat or tie; nor for women in extreme styles of hair arrangement. Yet, when we remove the dignity, the solemnity, the spirit of veneration from our worship, we have diminished its influence and minimized the emotions and respect it should inspire.

All need to reconsider the use of modern speech in addressing God. Use terms that are reverent and solemn. "How Great You Are" will never be able to touch the soul as deeply as "How Great Thou Art!"

--Via Knight Arnold News, 4400 Knight Arnold Rd., Memphis, TN 38118.

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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

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1988

NUMBER 49

"Ye Have Heard It Said . . ."



W. A. Holley

until he died upon the cross (Galatians 4:4; Colossians 2:14-17). Jesus fulfilled the law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms concerning himself (Luke 24:44-48).

Whatever the law of Moses taught was true; but many of the rules and regulations promoted by the Pharisees or Sadducees were not necessarily true. In fact, these leaders were guilty of inventing and teaching traditions of men when it suited their purpose (Matthew 23:1-12). False teachers are unconcerned about lost souls caused by their ungodly teaching and conduct (Matthew 23:29-39).

Many warnings are contained in the scriptures regarding deception. Jesus warned of "false prophets who come in sheep's clothing" (Matthew 7:15). John the apostle wrote, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1).

What have you heard? The word of God? or the word of men?? We shall note ---

(1) Have you heard that "It does not matter what you believe, just so you are honest?" Honesty does not, and cannot, change falsehood into truth. The old prophet lied to the man of God, and it cost the man of God his life (I Kings 13:1-32). A person can "believe a lie, and be damned" (II Thessalonians 2:10-12). Jesus said, "Take heed that no man deceive you" (Matthew 24:4-5).

Strychnine never turns into aspirin just because one honestly THINKS he is taking aspirin.

(2) Have you heard it said that "You can prove anything by the Bible?" Such a false accusation is often made against God's holy word. Would a letter written by you to a dear friend be subject to MANY TRUE interpretations? Certainly not! You would consider such a charge an insult to your integrity.

God's word is "truth" (John 17:17). The word TRUTH is never used in the plural in the Holy Bible! One must know the truth of God in order to be saved from sin (John 8:30-32). There are many conflicting doctrines, but the Bible does not teach them (Mark 7:6-13). Some teachers "wrest . . . the scriptures to their own destruction" (II Peter 3:16). Believe and obey the truth today (I Peter 1:22-25).

(3) You have heard it said that "All depends upon your own interpretation of the Bible." Is the foregoing statement true? It is not! Do we depend upon our own interpretation of mathematics? of grammar? of spelling? Certainly not! No student can ever follow his own interpretation in these areas.

II Peter 1:20-21 is a passage which is often misunderstood. It says, ". . . No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." What does this verse mean? The meaning is, that the prophets spake not their own interpretations, but they spake as the Holy Spirit guided them.

(4) You have heard it said that "One is saved by faith only." This is a very popular doctrine. Is it true? No! No! We are saved "by faith," but not by "faith only." The Roman brethren were saved by faith when they were baptized into Christ (Romans 5:1-2; 6:3-4). James 2:24-26 expressly denies that one can be saved by "faith only." Read these passages and you will see. If one can be saved by merely believing, then the devils will be saved (James 2:19). Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Did Jesus make a mistake here? Was he wrong?

(5) You have heard it said that "Baptism is a non-

essential command." Why are commands given? Are there any non-essential commands? Are traffic laws non-essential? Just get caught exceeding the speed limit and you soon will see. Why are commands given, if they are not to be obeyed? We respectfully suggest that the following passages be read: Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; I Peter 3:20-21). Will you listen to the Lord God? or to men?? Bible baptism is not sprinkling or pouring; Bible baptism is immersion.

(6) You have heard it said that "One need not be a member of the Lord's church to be saved." If such a statement is true, why did Jesus establish his church (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2:47). Why did Jesus add the saved to the church? If one can go into heaven apart from the church, why is Jesus the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23)? Why did Jesus purchase the church with his own blood (Acts 20:28)? Why does the Bible teach that Jesus is the Saviour of the body, which is the church? (Ephesians 5:23). When Jesus talked about the church, he was not talking about modern-day denominationalism; for, according to all historical accounts, they did not then exist. Verily, denominationalism is inherently evil, being founded upon division -- and not upon "the unity of the Spirit," as taught in the Bible (Ephesians 4:1-6). If a human church is as good as the Bible church, why did Jesus build his church??

(7) You have heard it said that "There are many roads to heaven; we can, therefore, select the road we choose to travel." Indeed, there are many roads leading to Birmingham, Alabama. But there is but one road to heaven (John 14:6). Jesus is that way. That way is strait and narrow (Matthew 7:13-14).

It is sinful to promise what the Lord has not promised. We suggest, therefore, that you believe, repent of your sins, confess Jesus' name, and be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins; then live faithfully the Christian life (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38; Galatians 3:26-27).

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

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-Acts 26:25

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Flavil H. Nichols . . . Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

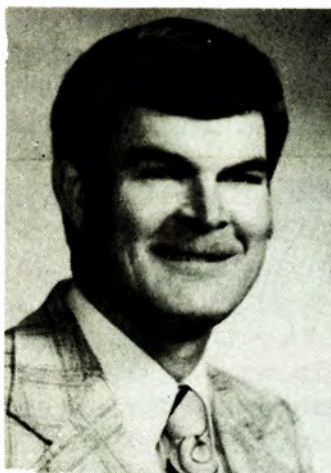
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Don't Go To Bible Class



Ray Hawk

Don't go to Bible class! Stay away from extra studies of the Bible (II Timothy 2:15). Don't get in a class where you can share your studies with others. Don't listen to those old cliches like, "Children brought up in Sunday school are seldom brought up in court." You don't want to prepare yourself or your children to go to heaven. Let them grope in the darkness for themselves. If they leave what little faith you have instilled within them, you can always blame it on the church.

Classes have been provided for you to help you grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ (II Peter 3:18). But, who needs it? Right? Spiritual giants that attend only on Sunday morning for worship don't need Bible classes. Right? The spiritual giants are the ones who give more, attend more, convert more, and work more than those who attend Bible classes. Right? Staying away from Sunday morning and Wednesday night classes have helped convert your children, your mate, your neighbors and made you appreciate spiritual things more and more. Right? Because you have stayed away from classes, you are more consecrated, dedicated, and mature in Christ Jesus than all those put together who attend Bible classes. Right?

Whom are you fooling? Only yourself (Ephesians 5:14)!

--1490 Campbell St., Jackson, TN 38305.



Flavil H. Nichols

What We Do In Worship Must Be Authorized No. II



That singing in congregational worship in the Christian age is scriptural has been conceded almost universally. Historical practice approves singing in corporate worship. To my knowledge, sectarian debaters have never - not once! -- affirmed that it is a sin to sing in congregational worship. The scripturalness of a cappella singing has generally been acknowledged and recognized by even those who themselves use mechanical accompaniments. Let me illustrate this fact.

In 1947 W. Curtis Porter debated Glenn V. Tingley in Birmingham, three nights at our church building (Central), and three nights at his Birmingham Gospel Tabernacle. Our brethren were in charge of the 'preliminaries' at our building, and the "rafters rang" with songs by the large audiences --with Tingley's followers joining in the singing. At his Tabernacle, his brethren were in charge, and at the start they began playing two pianos. Because we can not conscientiously sing with mechanical accompaniment, approximately half the audience sat silent. All were immediately aware of the contrast between their singing and ours! Coming quickly to the microphone, Mr. Tingley interrupted the song, and asked the pianists to leave their instruments, so everybody could sing -- and sing they did! This demonstrates that OUR practice is not called in question. It is admittedly right to sing without instrumental accompaniment. All the doubt and debate has been over "their" practice -- not ours.

Before we examine Biblical authority for such singing, let us continue to emphasize that what we do in worship must be authorized in the New Testament, either explicitly or implicitly. If we may sing in worship without Biblical authority, there is no basis on which we may reasonably object to washing feet in worship, nor to handling rattlesnakes in worship!

But the fact is that we must have divine authority for what we do in worship. Five arguments have been advanced previously: 1) We must worship in spirit and "in truth" (John 4:23-24). 2) What is not "from heaven" is "from men" (Matthew 21:25). 3) What is not authorized in the New Testament has not been consecrated by the blood of Christ

(Matthew 26:28). 4) We must not go beyond the word of God (Numbers 22:18). 5) What is not authorized is sinful "lawlessness" (I John 3:4). Let us continue.

6. Must Worship "By Faith"

"Without faith it is impossible to please" God (Hebrews 11:6). But "faith cometh by hearing . . . the word" (Romans 10:17). Both Abel and Cain offered sacrifices (Genesis 4); but there was a significant difference in their worship. Abel worshiped by faith: "By faith Abel offered . . ." (Hebrews 11:7). Since faith comes by the word, we now that Abel offered what the word of God said offer. Cain acted without divine authority when he offered that which God had not authorized. His worship was not "by faith," and God vetoed it as being unauthorized, hence unacceptable. Today, whatever God has not authorized in the New Covenant, cannot now be rendered "by faith," and is therefore a sin.

There is no authority for instrumental music in the worship of the New Testament church. Consequently we cannot use such music "by faith." Therefore instrumental music in worship is sinful.

If there is no New Testament authority for singing in congregational worship, we cannot sing "by faith." Therefore it would be sinful to sing.

7. Must Speak According To Word

"To the law and to the testimony! if they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them" (Isaiah 8:20), or " . . . it is because there is no light in them" (King James Version). While this was spoken of the Old Covenant, surely this principle applies no less to the New Covenant.

Whatever is not authorized in the New Testament is no part of God's word for us today. One who claims to "speak . . . according to this word" must teach now what it teaches --else "there is no light in him," or "no morning" of joy for him!

If the word does not authorize singing when we assemble for worship, "there is no light in" one who thus sings in congregational worship.

8. God Gave A "Pattern"

By the apostle Paul the Holy Spirit admonished a young preacher to "hold the pattern of sound words" (II Timothy 1:13). If any item is not included in this "pattern of sound words," it necessarily follows that such item no part of "the pattern of sound words"; therefore said item must

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

What We Do In Worship Must Be Authorized

No. II

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

be 'rotten' or unsound words, hence, sinful. This is true, whether the item contemplated be singing, or playing mechanical instruments of music in worship.

9. Continue Steadfastly In Apostles' Doctrine

Those baptized on Pentecost day (Acts 2:36-41) "continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching" (Acts 2:42) or "doctrine" (King James Version). The apostles "spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4). But Jesus promised that the Spirit would "not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he also speak" (John 16:13). Thus the word which the apostles spoke was not theirs, but the Father's. If we are to reproduce New Testament Christianity, we must follow their example of continuing steadfastly in "the apostles' doctrine." The preaching or teaching of the apostles was inspired by the Holy Spirit (their LIVING was not). We are not at liberty to add to the public worship any item -- neither playing mechanical instruments of music, nor singing -- which is not included in "the apostles' doctrine."

10. Must Speak "Sound Doctrine"

The Holy Spirit instructed a young preacher to "Speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). What the apostles taught was revealed by the Holy Spirit (John 14:25; 16:13). They spoke "as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). Therefore what they taught is unquestionably "sound doctrine." If singing in the assembly is not included in "sound doctrine," it must be "unsound" or "rotten" doctrine, and as such it therefore is sinful.

11. Revealed Things Pertain To Life And Godliness

The apostle Peter wrote that "his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3). If congregational singing is not authorized in the New Testament, it does not "pertain to life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3). This applies with equal force to mechanical instruments of music in worship.

12. Must Not Add To Word

All the warnings not to add to God's word have a bearing on this issue. At the giving of the law, Moses said: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2). Again he cautioned: "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it" (Deuteronomy 12:32). Toward the middle of the Bible we read this warning: "Every word of God is pure: . . . Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Proverbs 30:5-6). And the New Testament practically closes with this warning: "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 his book: and if any man shall take away from the

words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18-19).

In view of these solemn warnings, we dare not add any item to the worship of the assembled saints which is not either explicitly, or implicitly, authorized in the revealed word of God. If congregational singing is not authorized, it is an addition -- and hence is sinful. The same thing is true of mechanical instruments of music.

13. Accursed If Preach Another Gospel

The apostle Paul wrote of some who "would pervert the gospel of Christ," adding that "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 the which ye have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:6-9).

If playing mechanical instruments of music in the public worship is not included in the gospel which Paul and the other inspired men of the first century preached, one who teaches the use of such mechanical instruments of music in worship is accursed for preaching "another gospel."

Likewise, if SINGING (a cappella) is not included in the gospel preached by Paul and other inspired men of the first century, one who teaches we should sing in worship is equally guilty of preaching "another gospel" and is similarly accursed.

A Tribute To Ariel Missildine, Jr.

Ronnie A. Missildine

Ariel Missildine, Jr. passed into eternity September 26, 1988. He had lived a dedicated life as a Christian, husband, father, worker in the kingdom, and gospel preacher.

He was a man of integrity, supreme honesty, sincere love, and faith. He loved God first; his family, second; and his brethren third. These were above everything else. He had learned these priorities from his father and mother, Ariel David and Iome Missildine. He lived these traits nobly, and taught them to his children, and to all before whom he preached and taught the gospel.

Ariel was reared a farm boy, poor in this world's goods, but rich in the things which really count. He married Merle Register on June 1, 1940, and she loved and supported him as a faithful wife for 48 wonderful years. Together they farmed, did a tour in the U.S. Navy during WW II, then worked in the grocery and welding business; and during the early 60's he began preaching the gospel -- part-time at first, then full-time. Dad preached at Macedonia in Montgomery County, Alabama, for five years, before moving to Ashboro, N.C. where he labored for 13 years. He then returned to his beloved Alabama to preach in Linden for eight and one-half years.

In November of 1987, it was discovered that

14. Commandments Of Men

Make Worship "Vain"

Our Savior warned: "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9). We must have divine authority for what we do in worship, else we worship in vain. Whatsoever lacks New Testament authority must rest on no higher authority than the "doctrines and commandments of men." If there is no Biblical authority for singing -- or for playing mechanical instruments of music -- in worship, such unauthorized actions make the worship "vain."

15. Must Do All

"In The Name Of The Lord"

The New Testament demands that "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17). The phrase, IN THE NAME OF, means by the command or authority of one. Thayer says (p. 448) that "in the name of Christ" in this text means "relying or resting on the name of Christ, rooted (so to speak) in his name, i.e. mindful of Christ." But if Christ did not authorize or command congregations to sing in worship, no one can thus sing relying on or resting on his authority. Such singing would therefore be sinful. The same is true of the use of instrumental music in congregational worship.

(To be continued).

he had cancer in advanced stages. After major surgery and several rounds of radiation treatments, he tried to preach again, that work he loved so much; but he was able to for only a few Sundays. When it became apparent that he could not continue, he resigned at Linden and moved to Pensacola, Florida, to be near doctors and children. He and Merle identified with the Warrington congregation, where he attended services as long as he was able. In fact, often his pain was so acute that he was forced to lie down on the pew. But he loved the Lord and the brethren, and he wanted to be in worship as long as he could, which he did. He was a tremendous encouragement to so many in his family by his side, and asked one of his sons to pray that he could go on and be with the Lord. Just an hour and a half later he did.

His family, the church, and the community will greatly miss Ariel Missildine, Jr. But heaven will gain one of the great men of love on the earth, for many, many said of him, "He was a man of great love."

His Son,

Ronnie A. Missildine, Minister
--Warrington Church, P.O. Box 4171, Pensacola, FL 32507-0171.

"Teach Us To Number Our Days"

W. A. Holley

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalms 90:12). The true meaning of life can be understood only in the light of God's divine revelation (Jude 3; II Peter 1:3; II Timothy 3:15-17).

Psalms 39:4 states: "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am." As man lives, he soon becomes aware of his fraility and brevity of life (Hebrews 9:27). He knows that he soon will be cut off (Job 14:1-2; Ecclesiastes 12:1-2). Man's life is like grass: it blooms, but soon withers away (I Peter 1:24-25).

How long have you been upon the earth? 20 years? 30 years? 40 years? 50 years? 60 years? 70 years? 80 years? How many years do you have left? Use them wisely.

1) Adam and Eve in the beautiful garden. They never thought that hearing a lie, believing a lie, and obeying a lie would remove them from Paradise (Genesis 3). Now, in order for one to again eat of the "Tree of Life," and thus live forever, one must hear the truth of God, believe the truth, and obey the truth (Romans 10:16-17; Hebrews 5:8-9; I Peter 1:22-25). The "Tree of Life" is now in heaven: (CF. Genesis 2:9; Revelation 2:7; 22:1-14). Only those who enter heaven, through obedience to the gospel, can have access to the fruit of the "Tree of Life."

2) The antediluvians whose hearts were evil continually, lost their way and perished in the waters of the flood (Genesis 6 and 7). "Number their days" they did not. Noah and his family "numbered their days," and were saved (II Peter 2:5; I Peter 3:20-21).

3) Others who failed to "number their days" are Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and 250 princes who rallied to their ungodly cause (Numbers 16:1-35). These were "sinners against their own souls" (Verse 38).

Nadab and Abihu were destroyed because they "... offered strange fire before Jehovah, which he had not commanded them" (Leviticus 10:1-2; 16:12, ASV).

Ananias and Sapphira failed in their responsibility when they lied to God with regard to their contribution (Acts 5:1-11).

Judas, who could have had a bright future, failed to properly "number his days," and ended up a suicide, thus dying in disgrace (Matthew 27:3-10; Acts 1:17-20).

SOME SUCCESSFULLY "NUMBERED THEIR DAYS"

1) Abel offered "by faith" a sacrifice according to God's word (Genesis 4:1-13; Hebrews 11:4; Romans 10:17). After this manner, he made his life count for God Almighty.

2) Although David committed some egregious and flagrant sins (II Samuel 11:2-27), he recognized he had sinned, and repented of them (Psalms 51:10-13). Apparently, Solomon would not repent of his sins; hence his name is not recorded in God's **Honor Roll of Faith** (Hebrews 11). Sins unrepented of can never be forgiven

(Luke 13:3).

3) Paul knew what the real meaning of life was. He gave up all Hebrew advantages and associations in order to become a Christian (Philippians 3:4 ff; Galatians 1:11-17; Acts 26:19). Furthermore, he never looked back! His faith and obedience brought him safely over the tide (II Timothy 4:6-8).

HOW TO MAKE YOUR DAYS COUNT

1) Memorize Romans 8:28 and use it often. What does it say? We quote, "And we know that to them that love God, all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose" (ASV). What does "all things," refer to? It refers to whatever is according to God's purpose. Read the verse again. Paul does not refer to the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21). "All things" has reference to those things in keeping with God's holy and divine will. Hence, Paul's statement is somewhat limited. In some instances failures can become benefits. For example, Paul's hardships were translated into blessings for others (Philippians 1:12-19).

2) Keep on fighting for truth and righteousness. Never permit discouragement to keep you down. When others failed, "David ENCOURAGED himself in the Lord his God" (I Samuel 30:6). Paul put the situation like this: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (II Corinthians 4:8-9). We may fall on our faces: but let us get up, and

get going again!!

3) Never measure success by the world's standards. In our society, everything seems to be measured by material wealth. Jesus teaches that life is more than the abundance of man's wealth (Luke 12:13-21). The love of money is what gets countless millions into all kinds of sins (I Timothy 6:6-11, 17-19). Your soul is worth more than the entire world (Matthew 16:26). Wealth laid up in heaven is the only wealth which can endure (Matthew 6:19-21).

4) Learn to live today. Yesterday is forever gone, and in a very real sense, tomorrow never comes. Goodspeed put it in these words: "But you must make his kingdom, and uprightness before him, your greatest care, and you will have all these other things besides. So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will have worries of its own. Let each day be content with its own ills" (Matthew 6:33-34).

5) Above all, learn to depend upon God. Become a Christian; worship and serve him, no matter what. Read the Holy Bible each day; and pray often. Memorize great sections of the Bible, e.g., Matthew 16:18-19; 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; Psalms 1; Psalms 23; John 14:1-6, 25; 16:7-13; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-42, 47.

In the lonely hours in the hospital, or when you are approaching the hour of death, you will desperately need them.

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

Preachers Helping Wives

Cecil May, Jr.

Some men come to marriage with a macho spirit that rebels against wearing an apron or doing the dishes. Some wives feel strongly about "their kitchen" and who can do what in it. No outsider can tell any couple how to divide up chores in their home, and I wouldn't try. I do know, however, that, if a preacher expects his wife to go with him on visits, type his articles and letters, and assist his ministry in other ways, he needs to be willing to help in some way with household chores. If a wife contributes to the family income, and thus helps with "the husband's responsibility," the husband should be willing to help with "the wife's responsibilities." It is only fair, and even preachers ought to be fair in their relationship with their wives. Besides that, it pays off. Whatever a man wants from his wife, he is more likely to get it, if he gives his wife what she wants. Every wife wants consideration, fairness, and some kind of help.

Having said that, let us look at another side. Preachers usually do not have clocks to punch or supervisors to check on whether they are at their desks or properly about their work. Wives who work outside the home frequently do. The preacher can take the kids to school; the wife has

to be at work on time. The preacher can pick up the kids, or be at home when they get home; the wife doesn't get off in time. The preacher can do the laundry, fix the supper, vacuum; the wife is too tired from her work. The preacher must remember that he has an important work to do. The wife's work is not more important just because it must be done at a particular time. A preacher who is paid for full-time work should put in a full forty hours, and, in addition, as much extra time in attending services, doing visitation, and participating in church activities as he expects other members to do over their full-time jobs. He should help his wife, but not at the expense of his work.

There is a need in this, as in all things, for balance.

--President, Magnolia Bible College, P.O. Box 1109, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

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—Acts 26:25

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VOLUME 23

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NUMBER 50

Are Non-Christians Subject To Christ's Law On Marriage In Matthew 19:1-9?



Kenneth L. Jones

And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery (Matthew 19:9).

There are those who contend that this is a "covenant passage," that is, that it applies only to Christians; and that, therefore, no matter how many times one is married and divorced before his conversion, when he is baptized he may continue with his present marriage partner without sinning. This is an unwarranted assumption which may cause hundreds of precious souls to be eternally lost. All men everywhere are amenable (subject) to this law.

How can one assume that these words apply only to Christians, when in fact they were spoken in reply to a question posed by the Pharisees who were not Jesus' disciples. His disciples were present, and later asked about this teaching; but the primary participants were Christ and the Pharisees.

How can one assume that these words apply only to Christians when Christ said "whosoever." He did not say: "a disciple," "one in covenant relationship," or "a Christian." He said, "whosoever" which means "whatever person: no matter who" (Webster's Dictionary).

If Christ's law on marriage does not apply to non-Christians, how could non-Christians be guilty of adultery? Paul says that they were (I Corinthians 6:9-11). The fact that the Corinthians were adulterers before they were baptized (washed) proves that they were amenable to Christ's law on marriage before they were Christians (I Corinthians 6:11).

If this law does not apply to non-Christians, what

about other laws, such as those against murder, lying, stealing, etc.? Will not alien sinners be judged and condemned for all these things, including adultery (Colossians 3:6; Ephesians 5:3-6)? The Bible says that adulterers will have their part in the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8).

Jesus said that even those who reject him will be judged by his word (John 12:48). Is not Matthew 19:9 part of his word? He also said that those "goats" on the left hand, which will include all alien sinners, will hear the sentence, ". . . depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." The reason he gave was:

... for I was hungry and ye fed me not, I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink, I was naked and ye clothed me not, I was sick and in prison and ye visited me not" (Matthew 25:42-43).

Why will they be lost for not obeying these commands, if they are not amenable to them? These are Christian duties, and if aliens will be condemned on the basis of their failure to fulfill these, how can they escape if they fail in respect to Christ's law concerning marriage and divorce?

Acts 2:38 requires repentance before one may be scripturally baptized. If one does not repent, he only gets wet -- he is not baptized into Christ for the remission of sins. If one must repent for stealing, lying, etc., why must he not also repent of adultery? Repentance would require the dissolution of unscriptural marriages.

Those who contend that Christ's law in Matthew 19:9 applies only to the Christian, base their argument on the expression, "But to the rest say I, not the Lord . . ." (I Corinthians 7:12). They contend that verses 10 and 11 are addressed to Christians married to Christians, and verses 12-15 to Christians married to non-Christians; and that if Christ's law did not apply in that case, neither would it apply in the case of non-Christians married to each other. Verse 20, "Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called," is interpreted to mean that one is to remain in the marriage arrangement he is in when called.

This argument is based on assumptions. First, it is

ASSUMED that the words of I Corinthians 7:10-11 apply only to Christians married to Christians. There is nothing in the context to suggest such a limitation. Second, it is ASSUMED that Paul allowed the Christian deserted by an unbelieving spouse to remarry without committing adultery. Remarriage is not mentioned in I Corinthians 7:15, and neither is divorce. The third ASSUMPTION is that verse 20 includes unscriptural marriages. None of these assumptions can be sustained.

The expression, "to the rest say I," may refer to the remainder of the questions which the Corinthians had asked (I Corinthians 7:1). Paul had answered the question of whether or no a single person should marry. In verses 10-11 he deals with whether those married should separate. He cites the general statement of the Lord emphasizing that they were not to separate. The wife was not to depart from the husband and the husband was not to depart from the wife; and if any did depart, they were to remain unmarried or else be reconciled to their mates.

In verses 12-15, Paul deals with the rest of the questions relating to specific situations about which they had asked. He applies the general law stated in verses 10-11 to these cases: (1) Christian men married to non-Christian women, (2) Christian women married to non-Christian men, and (3) the departure of a non-Christian husband or wife from a Christian companion. Paul's answer to the third question is that if the non-Christian is content to dwell with the Christian, the Christian is not to depart. "Yet if the unbeliever departeth, let him depart: the brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases." The expression "not under bondage" means "not enslaved." The brother or sister is not required to renounce allegiance to Christ in order to keep the unbelieving companion. The subject of remarriage is not under consideration.

The idea that I Corinthians 7:20, "Let every man abide in the calling wherein he was called," includes sinful and unscriptural conditions and

Continued On Page 2

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Flavil H. Nichols . . . Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

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Tatoos For Children



Ray Hawk

The Sullivan County [Tennessee] Sheriff sent a letter to all churches, community leaders, school officials, and news media on July 19, 1988. Part of that letter declared,

"A form of tatoos called 'Blue Star' is being sold to school children. It is a small sheet of white paper containing blue stars the size of a pencil eraser. Each star is soaked with LSD. Each star can be removed and placed in the mouth. **The LSD can also be absorbed through the skin simply by handling the paper!!**

THESE ARE ALL LACED WITH DRUGS . . . Please advise your community and children about these drugs. If you or your child see any of the above, **DO NOT HANDLE!! THESE DRUGS ARE KNOWN TO REACT VERY QUICKLY AND SOME ARE LACED WITH STRYCHNINE!!**

Symptoms are: Hallucinations, severe vomiting, uncontrolled laughter, mood changes and change in body temperature. Get to the hospital as soon as possible and call the police. To help stop drugs, we must be informed and know the symptoms and signs. Please help me spread the word and protect our children. Signed: Sheriff Mike Gardner"

Note: I called the number given on the article to see if this were true, or a hoax. The Sullivan County Sheriff's office answered. The deputy told me they had sent the letter out. I asked our Madison County sheriff, Warren Roberts, if we had this problem here. There are no reports at this time, although in the past it has happened. Parents, you need to educate yourself on drugs. Marijuana is prevalent. Do you know the smell? When it gets into your child's clothing, it smells like strong cigarette smoke.

--1490 Campbell St., Jackson, TN 38305.



Flavil H. Nichols

What We Do In Worship Must Be Authorized No. III



Flavil Nichols

Man is not free to offer up as worship to God just anything his heart desires. We must have divine authority for the ingredients or 'items' of our worship in order for said worship to be acceptable to God. The only way we can have divine authority is for those items to be designated or specified in God's written word.

We have shown this to be true by the following arguments: (1) Our worship must be in spirit and "in truth" (John 4:23-24). But God's word is truth (John 17:17). (2) Whatever is not "from heaven" is "from men" (Matthew 21:25). (3) Only what is written in the New Testament has been dedicated with the blood of Christ (Matthew 26:28). (4) It is sinful to do less or more than the word of God (Numbers 22:18). (5) What is not authorized in the Bible is sinful "lawlessness" (I John 3:4). (6) Without faith, which comes by the word, it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6 with Romans 10:17). (7) We must speak according to God's word (Isaiah 8:20). (8) We must hold fast the form or pattern of sound words (II Timothy 1:13). (9) All Christians should continue steadfastly in "the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42). (10) "Sound doctrine" is found in the New Testament (Titus 2:1). (11) The scriptures contain "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3). (12) Man does not have the liberty to add to God's word (Deuteronomy 4:2). (13) One who preaches "another gospel" will be accursed (Galatians 1:6-9). (14) Worship is made "vain" by the doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 15:9). (15) Whatever we do must be done "in the name of" (or, by the authority of) Christ (Colossians 3:17).

If we are not restricted or confined to doing in worship that, and only that, which is authorized in the scriptures, then there is absolutely no standard by which worship is to be measured or regulated. There would be no way to forbid the handling of rattlesnakes as worship, nor the washing of feet as worship.

It is amazing that we are called upon to prove that congregational singing is authorized in the scriptures. The general acceptance of a cappella singing since the age of the apostles bespeaks a well-nigh universal consensus that singing is

"scriptural" -- that is, it is taught, or authorized, in the scriptures.

However, some in the Conservative Christian Church, being unable to produce New Testament authority for playing mechanical instruments of music in worship, reasoned (?) that their practice is no worse than ours -- for (they now aver) neither is there any New Testament authority for SINGING in worship! Hear Don DeWalt: "There is no command, apostolic example or necessary inference in the New Testament for congregational singing with or without an instrument." (Letter to Guy N. Woods, *The Gospel Advocate*, May 16, 1985, p. 293).

Does he think that if he can prove that in our worship we --churches of Christ-- do ONE thing (sing) which is not (?) authorized, he (and his brethren, the Congregational Christian Churches) thereby are justified in doing a SECOND unauthorized thing in worship? The old adage remains true, that two wrongs do not make a right!

His statement reminds me of the following, written in 1932 by the late John T. Lewis, of Birmingham, Alabama: "I was astounded . . . to hear a gospel preacher declare from the pulpit, before an intelligent audience, that there was no authority in the New Testament for congregational singing." (*The Voice of the Pioneers On Instrumental Music and Societies*, p. 180). Similarly, "I was astounded" by Don DeWalt's assertion.

Never again can he consistently deny the charge of ADDING mechanical accompaniment to the worship authorized in the New Testament! For here are his own words: "There is no command, apostolic example or necessary inference in the New Testament for congregational singing with ... an instrument."

Never again can he (or those who stand with him)

Are Non-Christians Subject To Christ's Law On Marriage In Matthew 19:1-9?

Continued From Page 1

practices, is absurd! One could not continue in an adulterous relationship any more than he could continue to be a bigamist, homosexual, or polygamist, or continue to lie, steal, drink, etc.

All men are amenable to all of Christ's law, including Matthew 19:9.

--P.O. Box 118, Parrish, AL 35580.

A Question And An Observation

W. Terry Varner

Question: "We read in the Scriptures about the 'third heaven.' Explain, please."

Paul says he was "caught up to the third heaven" (II Corinthians 12:2) which he equated as "into paradise" (II Corinthians 12:4). "Heaven" is used in three different senses in the Bible. The context determines the use: (1) Where the birds fly (Luke 9:58). (2) Abode of the sun, moon, and stars (Psalm 19:1-6). (3) The abode of God (Deuteronomy 4:39).

The word "Paradise" means a place of great blessing. It is used variously in the Bible, the context determines the sense: (1) The garden of Eden (Genesis 2:28). (2) The abode of the righteous dead in hades (Luke 23:43; Cf. 16:19-31). (3) The final abode of the soul (II Corinthians 12:4).

An Observation

LET US MAKE WORSHIP SERVICES MORE REVERENT. The longer I preach the more I am bothered by the apparent irreverence in our worship services. Some are constantly exiting and entering without any apparent consideration that they are to be worshipping God. Exiting to the bathroom, to drink water, following communion, and during the invitation song are mind-boggling to me. It is doubtful these can be done **REVERENTLY**. When brethren sleep, talk, refuse to sing, and young people hug and kiss, talk, laugh, exchange notes -- it is apparent a serious problem exists for them during worship that should not. **This is not reverent worship but irreverent worship.** Such actions are offensive to those trying to worship reverently. More importantly, they are offensive to God to whom worship is to be directed.

These problems can be corrected. (1) **Realize worship begins in the presence of God.** What more solemn pronouncement could God make to mortal man than: **"The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him"** (Habakkuk 2:20). Worship is before the presence of the majestic and living God. None can truly worship without a concept of God, whose presence he is in (John 4:24).

(2) **A sense of profound reverence.** The attitude of reverence brings into sharp focus the line between profound respect for God, versus a jaunty, frivolous attitude. It describes the conduct and attitude of those who fear God. God is **"greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him"** (Psalm 89:7; John 4:24).

(3) **Parents have a responsibility for their children's behavior.** If parents had their children to sit with them as a family, instead of with their friends, it would help to correct the problem. If young people want to sit together in the back few pews, I suggest that the parents move to the back with them. Someone has said, "If a child is young enough to misbehave in worship, he is young enough to sit with his parents, be he eight or eighteen."

(4) **We must never forget that we are not the audience, but God is.** Perhaps, our failure to understand what we term the "audience" in our worship services technically is not the "audience" -- that is, not WE, but GOD! On the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered the Holy of Holies to make the offering. On his robe was **"a golden bell and a pomegranate, . . . upon the hem of the robe round about"** (Exodus 28:34). The

assembly was to be reverent and if the tinkling of the golden bell ceased, they knew he had died (Exodus 28:35). The point of reverence of both the

high priest and the assembly is a rich lesson. --200 Edgewood Dr., Marietta, Ohio 45750.

Talk To Your Self (No. II)



W. A. Holley

vah, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; let me know how frail I am" (Psalms 39:1-4, ASV). In the light of Romans 15:4 and I Corinthians 10:11 respected Reader, ponder the meaning of the foregoing quotation!

In a former article, we have cited Psalms 19:14, which discloses a conversation the Psalmist had with himself: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Jehovah, my rock, and my redeemer" (ASV).

All improvement begins with one's self, whether social, physical, or spiritual. "There is no use trying to help people who do not help themselves. You cannot push anyone up a ladder unless he is willing to climb himself" (Andrew Carnegie). Talk to yourself. Only those who wish to do better, ever show any improvement!

(1) When preaching, or teaching, talk to yourself. Why do you seek to preach or teach the gospel of Christ to others? is it because you wish to show off your education? does teaching give you a sense of power? a feeling of importance? furnish satisfaction for an ego-trip?? are you sincerely trying to win sinners to Christ? (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; Romans 6:3-4). It has been said that some preachers (and teachers), when they get in the pulpit should never get out; while others who get out should never get back in. What is your true motive? Talk to yourself.

(2) When praying, talk to yourself. Beautiful words and eloquent phrases are not necessary. Jesus taught his disciples how to pray (Matthew 6:9-13). Notice how plain and simple this model prayer is. Vain repetitions and much speaking (long prayers) are out of order (Matthew 6:7; cf. I Kings 18:26-36). One brother prayed for 45 minutes and then, standing before the assembly, apologized for leaving out a few thoughts! Another's prayer ran on, like the Mississippi, finally expressing a thought that especially pleased a brother, who said, "Amen." The prayer-leader said, "Thank you, brother. That's the word I've been trying to think of for the last hour!" Prayer is not an exhibition.

(3) When observing the Lord's Supper, talk to yourself. There is a special day for it (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 10:25; Revelation 1:10). Paul teaches us that we must discern the real meaning of eating the bread and drinking the fruit

"I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred. My heart was hot within me; while I was musing, the fire burned; then spake I with my tongue: Jeho-

of the vine (I Corinthians 11:23-31, ASV). A Christian eats the bread and drinks of the cup "unworthily" when he/she does not see or understand what they represent. If one's mind is not on what is being done, all is vanity. Two sisters are seated in the same pew as the communion trays are being passed. As the trays approach, one sister opens her purse taking out a compact to fix her face, absent-mindedly reaching for the bread; the other after eating opens her purse, removes a napkin to wipe tears from her eyes. Which of the two describes you? Is eating the Lord's supper a mechanical ritual?

(4) Talk to yourself when making confession of sins. All the gory details need not be stated. Why confess your sins? To expose or to humiliate another? Certainly not! One sinful brother said, "I'll tell what I did, if she (calling her name) will tell what she did." James 5:16, says, "Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working" (ASV). There is no Auricular Confession here, as is claimed by the Catholic Church. If this passage teaches that one is to confess to the priest, then the priest must also confess to the confessee! Christians are not required to confess their sins to the elders or to the preacher, but to ONE ANOTHER.

(5) Songleaders should talk to themselves. A little soul searching is always in order. Why should the songleader select the most difficult song in the book? We have gathered to gather to worship, have we not? Why select a song which the leader knows the congregation cannot sing? Talk to yourself! Why should the songleader choose the longest song, with the most verses, and insist on singing every one of them? Is it because he has an ego-problem and wants to show what he can do? The worship service is no place or time for one to exhibit one's skills. (Read Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; I Corinthians 14:15).

(6) Talk to yourself when you assemble with the saints to worship God. (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Revelation 1:10). Let us be honest: your heart is involved. Why have you assembled? To show off a new coat? or car? or a wedding ring?? Did you assemble to meet a girl - (or boy) friend? Or, are you present because God has commanded you to be present, and because your conscience will not permit you to stay away? We need a little soul-searching here.

It is possible for one to assemble for the wrong purpose. For example, the Corinthians had corrupted the Lord's supper: they could not eat it according to the demands of the Lord. We read, "When therefore ye assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to eat the Lord's supper: for in your eating, each one taketh before other his own supper; and one is hungry, and another is drunken" (I Corinthians 11:20-21 ASV). The Lord's supper must not be turned into a common meal! (cf. Jude 12; II Peter 2:15).

(7) Talk to yourself when you feel compelled to criticize others. Criticism can be good, or bad.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

When God's Silence Is Not Respected

William Woodson

A capsule phrase of much interest and significance in the history and heritage of churches of Christ is: "Where the scriptures speak, we speak; where the scriptures are silent, we are silent." This is a summary of such verses as: "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17), and: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11).

The meaning of "speaking where the Bible speaks" is, that we are to do Bible things in the ways given in the Bible, to call Bible things by Bible names. Thus we speak of the church in the ways it is designated in scripture, use Bible terms for the Lord's supper, the elders, the preachers, the members, etc. It means that the actions in teaching, worshiping, and serving are those guided by the truth of the gospel.

Being "silent where the Bible is silent" means

that where and when an activity in religious life is not authorized of God, this activity is omitted from the faith and practice of the church. The contrast between doing what God has authorized and the doing of that which he has not authorized is evident.

Tragically, the religious world has not often been willing to abide by such principles. The result is focused by the question: What happens when God's silence is not respected? From even a casual look at the religious scene, such developments as the following are observed:

Infant membership instead of baptism for a believer who has repented of sins;

Human creeds instead of following the Bible alone;

Incense and instrumental music in worship instead of purity as given in the New Testament;

Man-made names in religious life instead of those

in Scripture;

Baptism administered "because of" rather than "in order to" salvation as given in the word of God.

All these, and other beliefs and practices, are allegedly justified by such claims as: "God did not say not to," "there is nothing in the Bible against it."

Precious indeed is this principle of following what is revealed in scripture, and leaving off that which is not authorized in scripture, for the people of God.

--Dean, Graduate School, David Lipscomb University, 3901 Granny White Pike, Nashville, TN 37203.

Why The Church Of Christ Does Not Observe Christmas As Christ's Birthday

Ken Tyler

Many people think that we are strange and weird because we do not observe this "holy day" each year. The fact of the matter is that the Bible does not tell anyone to observe December 25 (or any other day) as Christ's birthday. When we read the history of Christmas, we find some important facts. Please listen to this quote from **The World Book Encyclopedia**, volume III, page 416, "The exact date of Christ's birth is not known. The early Christians did not celebrate His birth because they considered the celebration of anyone's birth to be a pagan custom. The first mention of the observance of Christ's birthday appears about A.D. 200." This quote within itself should settle the matter: Christmas is not Biblical. The first century Christians did not set aside a holy day for Christ's birth. The observance of Christ's birthday did not originate from God, but man started it in about 200 AD.

The fifth grade Social Studies book that our son, Todd, is studying this year has something interesting to say about the Pilgrims and the matter of Christmas. When they settled at Plymouth and December 25 came around, they did not observe Christmas as Christ's birthday because they said it was not mentioned in the Bible. If you will study your Bible you will see that the Pilgrims were right.

This matter is serious because it involves Biblical authority. If we can do one thing in religion (Christmas) that the Bible does not mention, why can't we do other things that the Bible does not mention? This is the very problem in the religious world today. People have made up their own religion. This is the reason we see so many things being done by churches that are not in the Bible.

Listen: we must not add religious practices that are not found in the word of God. The Bible from beginning to end tells us that we must not add to or take away from God's word (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18-19). Is not observing Christmas as Christ's birthday adding to God's word?

--P.O. Box 376, Arab, AL 35016.

What We Do In Worship Must Be Authorized No. III

consistently argue that the Greek word PSALLO authorizes mechanical accompaniment to the singing in public worship! For he said: "There is no command, apostolic example or necessary inference in the New Testament for congregational singing with . . . an instrument." He thus repudiates all those arguments made by his own brethren who thought, and tried to prove, that the New Testament authorizes mechanical instruments! Brother DeWalt now tells them and us that they were wrong! He announces that instrumental music in congregational worship is NOT scripturally authorized! --Thank you, brother DeWalt, for admitting this truth!

Assume for a moment that there is absolutely NO DIVINE AUTHORITY --either explicit or implicit-- "in the New Testament for congregational singing with or without an instrument." If this were true (which it is not!), it still would NOT make scriptural the use of mechanical instruments of music in the worship! Assuming (momentarily) that SINGING is NOT authorized in the New Testament scriptures, this does not prove that MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC ARE authorized!

This newly-espoused doctrine merely compounds

HIS unscriptural practice! It makes him guilty of TWO infractions of divine revelation: He is guilty of adding (according to his own statement) VOCAL MUSIC -- CONGREGATIONAL SINGING -- PLUS he also does (in fact!) go beyond what is written by adding MECHANICAL MUSIC -- PLAYING -- to what is authorized.

The Holy Spirit warns: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works" (II John 9-11). All along churches of Christ have insisted that playing mechanical instruments of music in congregational worship is no part of "the teaching of Christ" and his apostles --that there is no New Testament authority for PLAYING in public worship --and DeWalt now admits this, saying: "There is no command, apostolic example or necessary inference in the New Testament for congregational singing with . . . an instrument."

All it would take to refute this entire series is for someone to give us the book, chapter, and verse where the New Testament authorizes (either explicitly or implicitly) the playing of mechanical instruments of music in the worship of the church. Just cite ONE passage of scripture where such music is authorized -- by either a command, an approved apostolic example, or by a necessary inference. Until this is done (--and it is impossible!--) these arguments stand like the rock of Gibraltar!

Next we shall see that the New Testament does authorize "singing . . . without an instrument" in congregational worship.

(To be continued).

Talk To Your Self

(No. II)

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Some make a career of finding fault with the elders, the preacher, the Bible school teacher, the song leader, ET AL. We suggest that Matthew 7:1-5 be read and memorized. Few have earned the right to criticize others (John 8:1-11).

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



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

Speak forth the

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1988

NUMBER 51

Lessons From Acts Four

Clifford Dixon

1. SOULS ARE SAVED

In spite of the fact that Peter and John were put into prison because of the gospel they preached, Acts 4:4 states: "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand." This was the result of the gospel sermon Peter preached on Solomon's porch of the temple. He showed people that they needed to repent and be converted so their sins could be blotted out (Acts 3:19).

Everyone who hears the gospel with an open heart and believes it, will repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). They were thus being saved from their sins, and made new creatures in the Lord. There is no respect of persons with God (Acts 10:34-35), so all must do the same things to be saved.

The Lord's church grows as a direct result of the teaching of the gospel. We should, like the disciples of the first century, use every opportunity to spread the gospel because souls are passing into eternity every day unprepared to meet God. The Lord describes the world as "sheep having no shepherd," and commands his disciples to pray that laborers would come into the vineyard (Matthew 9:36, 38). Let us all get excited about our own souls and the souls of others; then in spite of what happens souls will be saved.

2. SANHEDRIN TRIES THE APOSTLES

(Acts 4:7-20)

First they ask the question, "By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?" (Acts 4:7). This gave Peter the opportunity to point out that it was by the name of Jesus Christ that the impotent man had been made whole (Acts 4:9-10). He also pointed out that the stone which the builders had rejected has been made the head of the corner, and that there is salvation in none other name. Peter concludes, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"

(Acts 4:12). To do things in the name of Christ is to do them by his authority and as he directs. We are told that "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord" (Colossians 3:17).

It is important to do things as Jesus told us to do them; and it is also important to wear the name of Christ. As individual disciples they were called "Christians," and as congregations they were known as "churches of Christ" or "churches of God." The Jewish persecutors blasphemed the "worthy name" by which the disciples were called (James 2:7). This did not stop the disciples, but they continued to follow the teaching of Christ and to wear his name.

If John 9 states that if any man does not abide in the doctrine of Christ, he has not God.

The council of the Sanhedrin knew Peter and John had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13)! When people have been with Jesus it shows in their words, and their actions.

The Sanhedrin admitted that a notable miracle had been done in the healing of the crippled man. This is a mark of the miracles of the apostles. They were genuine, and confirmed the word they preached.

The Sanhedrin commanded "them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus" (Acts 4:18). This gave Peter and John the opportunity of saying, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19-20). When people are convinced of the gospel, the same convictions will be theirs as were those of Peter and John. They could not be stopped from preaching the gospel, and they were ready to die for the gospel they preached. We need to study the scriptures and be convinced that beyond a shadow of doubt the gospel is the power of God to the salvation of the human race, and give ourselves to the task of spreading it.

3. SUPPLICATIONS TO GOD (Acts 4:23-30)

The apostles went back to their company and offered a wonderful prayer to God. They did not ask for relief from the persecutions, but "that with all boldness they may speak thy word" (Acts 4:29). And they were granted this request, as is shown in verse 31.

We need to couple together our efforts to carry the gospel, with prayers and supplications to God. No effort can be successful without prayer. As great as was Christ, he still spent much time in prayer. As powerful as were the apostles with the baptism of the Holy Spirit which was peculiarly theirs, still they needed continual seasons of prayer. No wonder we are told to "Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus" (I Thessalonians 5:17-18).

4. SPEAKING THE WORD

Verse 31 declares that they spoke the word with boldness. Verse 33 states, "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all." "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so" (Psalms 107:2). We need both the characteristics of boldness and power in preaching the gospel. We cannot be timid and expect to convince people of the truth.

People need to obey the truth to purify their souls, and the only ones to tell them this are New Testament Christians (I Peter 1:22). We need to "sanctify the Lord God in (our) hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh" us a reason of the hope that is in us (I Peter 3:15).

5. SOULS UNITED

In verse 32 we read: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all

Continued On Page 3

Words Of Truth



(USPS 691-760)

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

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Flavil H. Nichols . . . Editor
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Faulkner Reunion To Be Held January 27-28

Singer Ray Walker will headline the schedule for the 1989 Faulkner University Homecoming to be held January 27-28, 1989 at the Montgomery, Alabama campus.

In conjunction with the state's "Alabama Reunion" celebration of the history and people of Alabama, this year's Homecoming is entitled "The Faulkner Reunion," a celebration of the heritage-and-future of Faulkner University.

During the weekend the classes of '49, '59, '69 and '79 will be honored and there will be a special reunion concert of the singing group Harvest Gold (1979). Ray Walker will perform several times, including a Sunday afternoon fellowship singing in the E. L. Cullom Rotunda.

Friday night and Saturday afternoon at the Fine Arts Center, "Show Boat," Kern and Hammerstein's landmark musical will be presented. Directed by Phillip Sprayberry, this saga of life on the Mississippi has been a classic on Broadway for over 50 years.

The weekend will climax with the Homecoming basketball game featuring the Eagles vs. the Auburn University at Montgomery Senators.

Coached by Jim Sanderson, the Eagles are off to one of their best starts in years. The coronation of the Homecoming Queen and the presentation of the court will take place at halftime.

Several special devotionals, dinners and reunions have also been planned by alumni.

All Faulkner University friends and alumni are invited to attend the festivities.

For more information call (205) 272-5820.

**A Gift Suggestion:
Subscribe To Words Of Truth
For A Friend!**



The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Congregational Singing Is Authorized In The New Testament



Flavil H. Nichols

We have abundantly proved by the scriptures that only what is authorized in the New Testament may rightly be used in the worship of the church. "Whosoever goeth onward, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God" (II John 9-11).

It is not enough to say, 'I like it.'

One who at home 'likes' butter and jelly on his bread, must not put butter and jelly on the bread of the Lord's supper! Such an addition in worship would be sinful. Likewise one may at home 'like' mechanical instrumental music with singing; but such an addition to singing in worship would be sinful.

The New Testament authorizes the bread in communion, but not butter and jelly on it. Similarly, the New Testament authorizes singing in worship, but not mechanical instrumental accompaniment with it.

An Astonishing New Dodge

We have been astounded by the recent quibble that there is no divine authority in the New Testament for congregational SINGING --either with, or without, an instrument! If this were true, it would prove that churches of Christ are guilty of adding one item (SINGING) to the worship, while the conservative Christian Church is guilty of TWO additions to the worship: (1) they add SINGING, and (2) they add PLAYING also.

Those who make this argument seem willing to admit that they have ADDED two unauthorized elements (or 'items') to the worship (singing, and playing), seeking to indict my brethren and me for adding --they say-- one item (SINGING) which they now say is not authorized. This I deny.

Singing Authorized In Three Ways

In the New Testament, congregational singing is authorized by command, by approved example, and by necessary inference.

We here present proof that singing is commanded.

Greek PSALLO Authorizes SINGING.

In the New Testament, the Greek word PSALLO appears and is translated as follows:

Romans 15:9 "I will . . . sing."

I Corinthians 14:15 (twice) "I will sing."

Ephesians 5:19 "making melody."

James 5:13 "let him sing psalms."

Thayer's Definition of PSALLO

Hear Thayer on the meaning of PSALLO: ". . . IN THE N.T., to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song" [Emphasis his, FHN]. (Greek-English Lexicon, p. 675).

Thayer translates I Corinthians 14:15 thus: "I will sing God's praises indeed with my whole soul stirred and borne away by the Holy Spirit, but I will also follow reason as my guide, so that what I sing may be UNDERSTOOD alike by myself and BY THE LISTENERS" [Emphasis mine, FHN]. (Ibid).

This imminent scholar comprehended that the singing would be done in an assembly where others could hear and understand what is being sung. It would be utterly impossible for the apostle Paul to have been understood by listeners if he sang when he was alone. A single worshiper could not possibly do what this verse says. It necessarily demands two or more worshipers. If it authorizes singing where two are together, it also authorizes singing where there are two hundred, or two thousand, assembled.

The New Testament authorizes SINGING in the assembly of worshipers. But the participial form of PSALLO in Ephesians 5:19 (PSALLONTES) is imperative, which has the effect of a command. Therefore SINGING in the assembly for worship is commanded.

PSALLO Does Not Identify the Instrument

The object (or instrument) on which one may PSALLO never did, nor does it now, inhere in the word itself! The object must be specified or identified! The Holy Spirit named the instrument in Ephesians 5:19. In Greek it reads: ". . . adontes kai psallontes en ta cardia to Kurio." The English reads: ". . . singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19). So the object or instrument on which we are to PSALLO is the human "HEART" --not 'a mechanical HARP!'

With this Albert Barnes agrees, saying at Ephesians 5:19 of PSALLO: "THE IDEA HERE IS, THAT OF SINGING IN THE HEART, OR PRAISING GOD FROM THE HEART. The psalms and hymns and songs WERE TO BE SUNG so that the HEART should be engaged, and not so as to be mere music, or a mere external performance" (Emphasis mine. FHN).

Ephesians 5:19 Authorizes Congregational Singing

"Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

In The Garden Of Gethsemane



Winfred Clark

is the spot on this earth where our Lord prayed fervently. It is there that his sweat became as great drops of blood. Yes, Gethsemane stands out!

Take a moment to see what factors emerge from the scene at that place. You will find the record of it in Matthew 26:36-56. The central figure around which all else revolves is the Lord.

1. YOU WILL SEE HIS FOREKNOWLEDGE.

Jesus knew exactly what to expect. All one has to do is go back to passages such as John 13:1. He knew his hour was come. He knew the time was upon him. He had even named the night (Matthew 26:31). Yes, he knew he was about to die. This is bound to have caused a burden.

2. YOU WILL SEE HIS FRIENDS.

He has carried with him eleven men. Eight are left at the gate, while three others go farther into the garden. But, while he prays, they sleep. That seems so out of place! Surely they could watch for a little while! But they do not.

3. YOU WILL SEE HIS FEELINGS.

He offered up "prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears" (Hebrews 5:7). Yes, he had feelings too. He could grow tired, and hungry, just like we do. He can thus be in touch with our feelings (Hebrews 4:15-16).

4. YOU WILL SEE HIS FEAR.

The Hebrews writer makes mention of this

There are some spots on this earth that bring to mind some sad events. Ford Theatre in Washington, Omaha Beach in France, Pork Chop Hill in Korea, and on and on one could go. Surely the Garden of Gethsemane stands out in the midst of those who are children of God. This

(Hebrews of this (Hebrews 5:7). No, he was not afraid of God; but he did have respect for what God had said. He would not carelessly handle the word of God. He would not approach his responsibility to that word in a flippant manner; and neither should we.

5. YOU WILL SEE HIS FAITHFULNESS.

It is, "Thy will be done" (Matthew 26:39, 42). He does not ask to be excused because he was a Son. He does not think relationship means release from

responsibility. No; he will be faithful. But what will it cost? You know the answer to that, and so do I. It would cost him his life. He would have to go from Gethsemane to Golgotha, and then to the grave. That was an awful journey; but faithfulness would require it.

Yes, the garden of Gethsemane was a painful place, but visiting there by faith can be most profitable.

--P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL.

Congregational Singing Is Authorized In The New Testament

Continued From Page 2

and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." This text necessitates an assembly of two or more.

That this passage refers to worship in the assembly, has been generally understood. Hear Conybeare and Howson: "When you meet, let your enjoyment consist . . . in . . . fulness of the Spirit; let your songs be . . . psalms and hymns; and their accompaniment . . . the melody of the heart; while you sing them to the praise . . . of the Lord Jesus Christ" (*Life & Epistles of St. Paul*, pp. 714, 715).

Albert Barnes said: ". . . This has the force of a command, and it is a matter of obligation on Christians. From the beginning, praise was an important part of **public worship**, and it is designed to be to the end of the world . . . Nothing is more clear than that it was practiced by the Saviour himself and the apostles (see Matthew 26:30), and the singing of those psalms has constituted a delightful part of **public worship** in all ages" [emphasis mine, FHN]. He identifies "hymns" as "compositions which were used in the **early churches**" [Emphasis mine, FHN]. (*Barnes' Notes: Ephesians*, p. 105). "Singing, as here meant, is a direct and solemn act of worship, and should be considered such as readily as prayer" (*Barnes' Notes: Ephesians*, pp. 105, 106).

Just a few verses after this instruction about singing, the apostle Paul wrote about how Christ loves the church, and is head of it (Ephesians 5:25-27). Not one single statement in the context indicates that the instructions in verse 19 apply exclusively to private or individual worship.

Colossians 3:16 Authorizes Congregational Singing

That each member of a congregation should sing with "grace" in his heart is not questioned. But this verse says that in such singing, each of us is also teaching and admonishing "one another." Two (or more) must be singing to fulfill the demands of this text also.

Hear brother Guy N. Woods:

The participial terms (teaching, admonishing) done by singing, are coordinate in usage, and reciprocal in significance --all performed at the same time. The "teaching" and "admonishing" are specifically commanded (the participles and

imperatives) and are to be done while assembled, **and by singing!** [Emphasis his, FHN]. In the nature of the case two or more people must be present. Fewer than two people cannot carry out either Ephesians 5:19 or Colossians 3:16; if two, then two thousand, and this is corporate (congregational) action. (*The Gospel Advocate*, May 16, 1985, p. 292).

Because of the King James reading ("speaking to yourselves"), some may imagine that Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 may be obeyed by one's singing while he is alone. However, the American Standard reads: "Speaking one to another" --which demands that there be a minimum of two worshipers together when this verse is obeyed. Thus this involves an assembly of worshipers. It is impossible to obey this command when one is isolated.

To the objection that in congregational singing, we all sing simultaneously the same song to the Lord, not to one another, brother Guy N. Woods ironically responded:

We are to "forgive" one another [**heautois**] (Ephesians 4:32), but of course only one at the time! We are to be "at peace" with one another [**heautois**] (1 Thessalonians 5:13), but not both sides at the same time! We must take time about being peaceful! (Ibid, p. 292).

That Ephesians 5:19 refers to the worship assembly has generally been understood. With reference to this text, Lenski says: "Paul had just spoken about **public worship** but the riches of it and the wisdom of the Word of Christ permeate the entire life" (emphasis mine, FHN).

Adam Clarke contrasts the kind of singing here required with "what is commonly used in most Christian congregations." This shows that he associated this text with congregational worship.

Conclusion

In the New Testament we have seen that singing is commanded. The singing that is commanded is to be done to one another, thus necessitating an assembly. Therefore we have proved that congregational singing is commanded in the New Testament.

Next we shall show that congregational singing is authorized by approved example.

Lessons From Acts Four

Continued From Page 1

things common." When souls are united they are willing to share this world's goods to help the needy among them.

Barnabas was a great example of this. He had some property on Cyprus which he sold and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet for distribution to the needy (Acts 4:36-37). There is great power in unity. There is weakness in division.

Let us all work for unity.

--P.O. Box 507, Jay, FL 32565.

Religious Freedom Under Attack

Joe Connell

The newspaper has run news items about the drive by Mississippi's Mabus administration to tax some churches. Not all religious bodies in Mississippi are having their books audited to determine if they have paid sales taxes on out-of-state purchases. The Salvation Army is one that is exempt from this. Also church-operated homes, hospitals, newspapers, and all non-profit organizations are exempt even from paying state sales tax. Churches, although they are non-profit, are required to pay.

Mississippi apparently is the only state that has such a law on the books. Evidently this law was allowed to lie dormant through the years until 1988.

One of two things needs to be done. The state needs to decide to tax all institutions without exception, or else drop its double standard. If taxing NEWSPAPERS is interfering with freedom

of the press, why isn't taxing CHURCHES interfering with freedom of religion?

There is no question but that religious freedom is under attack. Gradually the high esteem that Americans have had for religious institutions is being eroded.

THE EROSION OF RELIGION

It was the Christians' influence that led to Sunday being declared a special day. Christians led the fight to stop the cruel games and the killing of babies. God intends for government to be used for the good of mankind, and this has been the basic concept of government in the western society for the past hundreds of years. Now, all this is changing. Tennessee recently ruled against churches who contributed against a liquor-by-the-drink referendum. In any number of cases churches have been convicted for disciplining erring members. Many communities are only allowing

worship in zoned areas. You cannot legally worship in your own house.

The free exercise of religion hinges upon keeping the government out of churches' business. When the government starts auditing the financial records of churches to see if taxes have been paid, it also has the opportunity to look at every phase of the church's religious activities. The state of Mississippi is actually taxing teaching material that churches are using. This is bought with money people have freely given to promote their religion, and it does not stop there. It also taxes food and clothing that is given in benevolent work, such as was contributed to the recent tornado victims in Lee County.

Mississippi Christians should write to your State Representative about this matter.

--307 N. Gloster St., Tupelo, MS 38801.

Do You Have Heart Trouble?



W. A. Holley

"Thy heart is not right in the sight of God," said Peter (Acts 8:12-24).

In the United States, thousands of our citizens die from physical heart attacks each year. Many are alarmed because of this problem. Doctors, heart examinations, treatments, even open-heart surgery, represent efforts to correct

various heart problems. We applaud all such noble efforts. We need to understand that doctors, medicines, surgery, and hospitalization represent God's gifts to sick and suffering humanity (Luke 5:30-32).

But there is another type of heart trouble mentioned in the Holy Bible. As the Bible uses the term HEART, what does it mean? "The word HEART is used in Scripture as the seat of life or strength; hence it means mind, soul, spirit, or one's entire emotional nature and understanding . . ." (Cruden's Complete Concordance).

In the light of the foregoing definition of the Bible "heart," do you suffer from heart trouble? The Bible answer is YES, if . . .

(1) A sinful life indicates a severe case of heart problems. We shall quote: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man . . ." (Matthew 15:19-20). What is here needed is a heart that has been cleansed and purified through obedience to God (I Peter 1:22-25).

(2) One's heart is not right with God, if one's tongue is out of control. David the Psalmist said, "Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity: who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words: they

that shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not . . ." (Psalms 64:2-5).

Jesus taught, "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).

(3) If you love the sinful attractions and allurements of the world, you have a serious heart problem. An inordinate desire for the "cares and riches and pleasures" indicates one's priorities are misplaced (Luke 8:11-15). Those who put their trust in things of the world, have forgotten God (I John 2:15-17; Hebrews 11:24-26). Demas made this fatal mistake (II Timothy 4:10).

(4) Real heart problems characterize one who is a busybody. Who are busybodies? Those who lead a lounging, gadding, gossiping, meddling life. Many can attend to everybody's business, except their own. Scriptures to read are: II Thessalonians 3:11; I Timothy 5:13; I Peter 4:15.

(5) A sure sign of heart trouble is found in one who possesses a low "flash point" --a temper, violent, and ready to explode. Such a person (man or woman) is headed for trouble because he always has his fighting clothes on, and his stinger out. Others hardly know how to deal with such a person because they cannot predict what his reaction will be! We suggest that Ephesians 4:31-32 be memorized, and its principles be applied daily.

(6) An overwhelming desire for 'a place in the sun' reveals a severe case of heart trouble. Diotrophes was such a person (III John 9-11). He seems to have been looking for power, honor, prestige, position. Jesus taught that the way to be great is to become the servant of all (Matthew 20:25-28). Greatness is not for sale in any department store -- it must be earned. Some folk, if they cannot be in the lead, refuse to do any thing!! (Philippians 2:8; I Peter 5:5).

(7) Those who love money and other material things are suffering from heart trouble. It is the

LOVE OF MONEY -- not money itself -- that is the root of all kinds of evil (I Timothy 6:5-12, A.S.V.). Those who TRUST in their riches cannot go to heaven (Mark 10:23-27). Judas loved money so much that he was willing to sell Jesus for 30 pieces of silver -- the price of a slave -- \$15.00 in our money! (Matthew 27:3-9).

(8) Others suffer from heart trouble because they have an inordinate desire to be popular, wishing to please everyone, at almost any cost. Many possess no convictions, but seem to compromise almost any principle, if such will gain them favor. Peer pressure is far too important to many boys and girls (older people, too)! Here is where many girls lose their virtue, and where many boys and girls begin drinking, cursing, using narcotics, and smoking tobacco and marijuana, and the like (Proverbs 1:10-19). Joseph did not allow Potiphar's wife to seduce him (Genesis 39:7-16). Suggested reading is Ephesians 5:11; Galatians 1:6-10; Romans 15:3).

(9) Heart trouble afflicts those who have no love, compassion, and concern for the lost, and for the less fortunate. Jesus showed his compassion for the sick, the hungry, and for the lost. Can we -- recipients of his grace -- afford to do less? These works he did for the people to show that he also had power to save the souls of men (Mark 2:1-12). Do we love God so little, we fill our hearts and minds with filth, trash, and robbish, instead of with the word of God? X-rated movies and pornographic viewing cannot build a strong and abiding faith. Faith comes by hearing God's word (Romans 10:17).

Read the Bible daily, spend much time in prayer, attend each service of the Lord's church, use your talents to the fullest extent, and stay busy doing the right things, and your heart can be right with God.

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



(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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Shock And Dismay: 1988 FHC Forum

Hugo McCord

Some 20th century restoration preachers apparently have forgotten the 19th century restoration history: Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone, Jacob Creath, "Raccoon" John Smith, and others made their determination clear to go back of and beyond the 17th century King James version to get as close to the original 1st century Greek manuscripts as possible.

What Campbell wrote would bar him from some pulpits today: the King James Version, he wrote, "has failed to be as lucid and communicative as in its prime . . . Taken as a whole it has outlived its day at least one century." (CHRISTIAN BAPTIST, April 6, 1829).

What would he say today if he were told that some preachers hold that the King James Version should not be criticized? So much did he see the need for a new translation he himself had one published in 1826: the LIVING ORACLES. He wrote, "The weak-minded only are afraid of new translations." After he had studied one hundred versions he wrote:

"I have never seen any English version, Romanist or Protestant, orthodox or heterodox, however imperfect, from which a man of sense and industry might not learn the way to heaven."

However, in his debates with Walker, McCalla, and Rice, basically he used the King James Version, but not because of its accuracy or clarity: "we voluntarily use that which was introduced by King James, merely because it is in fashion."

The TEXTUS RECEPTUS, "the received text," erroneously has **bapto**, "dip," in Revelation 19:13, which the King James Version has followed. But Origen, Jerome, and the Syriac have "sprinkled" in Revelation 19:13. Accordingly, N. L. Rice (CAMPBELL-RICE DEBATE, 1843) argued that unless we can believe that they were ignorant of the meaning of the word **bapto**, we are obliged to believe in their day it was used in the sense of "sprinkling."

However, Campbell believed that "the received

text" and the King James Version were in error in having **bapto** and "dipped" in Revelation 19:13, because the antecedent of Revelation 19:13 (Isaiah 63:3) has **nazah**, "sprinkle." The reading **bapto** and "dipped" as in "the received text" and the King James Version make the inerrant (?) Bible contradictory. Campbell knew that this could not be so.

Campbell therefore speculated that Origen, Jerome, and the Syriac only once, and that in reference to the same verse, out of 120 occurrences, translated **bapto** as "sprinkle," and that through 1800 years a hundred versions never so translated **baptidzo**, there is "almost a moral certainty that there was a different reading." Rice replied that Campbell would change the word of God to sustain his position, for no ancient Greek manuscript had **hrantidzo**, "sprinkle," in Revelation 19:13.

But the very next year (1844) the 4th century Sinaiticus manuscript was discovered, and it has **hrantidzo** in Revelation 19:13. Campbell was almost a prophet! On the basis of this discovery, the American Standard Version (1901) has "sprinkled" in Revelation 19:13, thus agreeing with Isaiah 63:3.

Who among us today could have handled this difficulty? Is there any King James Version advocate who could have answered Rice? Using only the King James Version, Rice made a strong case that baptism is sprinkling, and caused Campbell to look defeated.

The 19th century restoration preachers received with much satisfaction Campbell's LIVING ORACLES, which uses "immerse" instead of "baptize." LIVING ORACLES went into six editions and sold 40,000 copies. Denominational preachers named those who used it as "the Campbellite preachers." Ben Franklin in 1869 wrote, "We are today rather be without any other books in our library than this one volume." W. McGarvey wrote, "No book published during

the early history of the Reformation did more to spread the knowledge of primitive Christianity than" the LIVING ORACLES.

The restoration movement of the 19th century became based on the LIVING ORACLES, wrote David Lipscomb in the GOSPEL ADVOCATE in 1890, not on the King James Version, which "Alexander Campbell rejected . . . He did more to bring about the [Revised Version of 1881-1885] than any other man of earth."

Jacob Creath, Jr., "the Iron Duke" of the 19th century restoration, received his first copy of the LIVING ORACLES, said one writer, "with tears of gratitude." Among other excellencies, it had removed the "if" (King James Version at Hebrews 6:6) which had been injected, Creath wrote, "to correct the Holy Spirit, to save one of the Calvinistic dogmas -- the 'perseverance of the saints.'" Creath became so attached to the LIVING ORACLES he requested that a copy of it be placed under his head when he was buried, and in January, 1886, this was done.

Barton W. Stone, on reading the LIVING ORACLES in I Corinthians 16:2, "on the first day of every week," wrote,

"Whenever the church shall be restored to her former glory, she will again receive the Lord's Supper on every first day of the week."

In 1828, while "Raccoon" John Smith was still a Baptist, he became enamored by the two-years' old LIVING ORACLES, and for using it was put on trial in his Baptist Church. When the moderator asserted that the King James Version was "the only word of God," Smith asked, "Do you mean that?" He replied, "Yes, I said so, and still say it." Smith asked, "How old is the King James Version?", but the moderator did not know. When Smith said it was about 220 years old, the church clerk agreed.

Continued On Page 3

Words Of Truth



(USPS 691-760)

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-Acts 26:25

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"My Servant The Branch"



W. A. Holley

"Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: and he shall grow up out of his place; and he shall build the temple of Jehovah; even he shall build the temple of Jehovah; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule

upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zechariah 6:12-13, A.S.V.).

The prophets used the word **Branch** to refer to the great Messiah -- the Lord Jesus Christ. Looking down through the centuries, the prophet, Zechariah, wrote of "the man whose name is the Branch."

Earlier, the prophet had said, "Behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch" (Zechariah 3:8). The prophet Isaiah wrote, "In that day shall the branch of Jehovah be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel" (Isaiah 4:2, A.S.V.).

Later, the prophet Isaiah writes, "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, that standeth for an ensign [emblem, sign, rank] of the peoples, unto him shall the nations [gentiles] seek; and his resting place shall be glorious" (Isaiah 11:1, 10, A.S.V.).

Again, Jeremiah, looking down through the centuries, said, "In those days, and at that time, will I cause a Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land" (Jeremiah 33:15; Cf. 23:5-6, A.S.V.).

That Jesus is the son of David is easily established by the scriptures. We read, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1). II Samuel 7:13-16 with John 7:42 shows that the fulfillment of these passages is the Messiah -- Jesus Christ. Listen to a divine commentary: "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:30-32; Cf. Daniel 2:44). It was Jesus who said that "the gates of hell" (A.S.V.: "hades") shall not prevail against his church or kingdom (Matthew 16:18-19). The promise of "the sure mercies of David" have been fulfilled in Christ (Isaiah 55:5

with Acts 13:34-35). Amos 9:11-12 teaches that the fallen "tabernacle of David" was to be rebuilt, but this prophecy was fulfilled in the establishment of the church or spiritual kingdom of God (Acts 15:16-17). If this conclusion is not true, then Gentiles have no right to seek after God!!

What was "my servant the Branch" to accomplish? We shall note --

(1) "He shall grow up out of his place." He shall originate, as to his humanity, from his home land; he will not be a foreigner. He would grow up "as a root out of dry ground" (Isaiah 53:2). Yet, "He shall be exalted and extolled, be very high" (Isaiah 52:13).

(2) "And he shall build the temple of the Lord." Solomon had built one temple; but it had been destroyed (II Kings 25:8-17). Zerubbabel rebuilt that temple (Ezra 6:3-4). Later Herod's temple was built; it is this temple which the Romans destroyed in A.D. 70.

But, Jesus "the Branch" would build a **spiritual** temple, the church or kingdom of God (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-42, 47; Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 1:9). Peter put it after this manner: "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (I Peter 2:5). Ephesians 2:21-22 mentions the church as a "holy temple in the Lord . . . a habitation of God in the Spirit."

(3) "And he shall bear the glory." No other person was ever accorded the glory bestowed upon Jesus Christ. He now has all authority (Matthew 28:18-20). He now is the head of his church (Ephesians 1:22-23). He now has preeminence in all things (Colossians 1:18).

The text says, "He shall sit and rule upon his throne." The throne promised him was the **throne of his father, David** (II Samuel 7:11-14; Isaiah 9:6-7). This throne was also **the Lord's** throne (Psalms 2:6-7; 110:1). Jesus was raised up to sit on **David's** throne (Acts 2:29-35).

(4) "And he shall be a priest upon his throne." Jesus is now our High Priest (Hebrews 3:1). Jesus is our priest after the order of Melchizedek, not after the order of Aaron (Psalms 110:4; Hebrews 5:9; 7:1-3). We approach God through Jesus, not through the Pope, nor through Mary. Jesus now is seated on the throne of David, at God's right hand, where he will remain until all enemies are put under his feet (Hebrews 1:13). This will be accomplished when the last enemy -- death -- is abolished (I Corinthians 15:20-28). When will these wonderful works be accomplished? At the final judgment (Revelation 20:11-15).

The 1,000-year-reign advocates are wrong. Jesus is coming, not to set up an earthly, literal kingdom, but to deliver up the kingdom to the Father (I Corinthians 15:24-28). Jesus' kingdom began on the first Pentecost after his resurrection, and has been in existence ever since (Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 47).

(5) "And the counsel of peace shall be between

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

"It Is Easier For A Camel . . ."



W. A. Holley

"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:24).

Another reference which sheds more light on our subject is: "And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answered again, and

saith unto them, Children. how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:24, A.S.V.).

Many commentators seem to have trouble with the expression -- "camel" and "needle" -- but it seems better to consider them as literal -- a real "camel" and a real "needle." The expression used by Jesus seems to have been a proverbial one.

Why were the disciples amazed and astonished at Jesus' lesson concerning those who put their trust in wealth? It was because men and women tend to **trust** in their wealth rather than in God Almighty. Money therefore becomes their God (Matthew 6:24). Money has no character of its own -- it derives its character from its owner. Money spent for holy and righteous causes is good; but money spent for sinful purposes becomes evil. Many Jews thought that wealth was a sign of divine favor. The apostles, since they thought Jesus would establish an earthly kingdom, may have thought that they would receive great honors and wealth

Continued On Page 3

Shock And Dismay: 1988 FHC Forum

Continued From Page 1

Then Smith said,

"Is it not a pity that the apostles left the world and the church without any word of God for fifteen hundred years? Do you not pity the Dutch who do not have the King James Version, and could not read one word of it if they had it?"

After Smith left the Baptist Church, he explained in a sermon why he used the LIVING ORACLES' "immerse" instead of the King James Version's "baptize":

"Baptism' is a foreign word, and as not many of you have the gift of tongues, or of interpretation, I am resolved to speak to you in Greek no more."

On another occasion, as he read from the LIVING ORACLES' "Holy Spirit," instead of the King James Version's "Holy Ghost," an angry brother objected, "His version has no Ghost at all!" Smith asked, "Is God a ghost? Can you be born of a ghost?"

When the American Bible Society refused to translate **baptidzo** in any language, someone wrote that it was an insult to the Holy Spirit to require "his truth to be concealed from men to accommodate sectarian views." Since the 19th century restoration preachers translated **baptidzo** as "immerse," quoting the LIVING ORACLES, it came as a shock in the 1988 Freed-Hardeman College Forum to hear 20th century restoration preachers, "our brethren," one letter says, "criticizing the translation of 'baptism' as 'immerse,' and defending the translation of the King James Version 'only begotten' when speaking of Issac."

It appears these 20th century restoration preachers have in mind a restoration only back to 1611, and not to the first century. Their zero milepost is not the inspired autographs, but the

"My Servant The Branch"

Continued From Page 2

them both." The Messiah holds a two-fold office: Priest and King. "Peace" as used here is not political, but peace of the inner man, peace of mind and spirit, peace resulting from the forgiveness of sins (Isaiah 9:6-7; Micah 5:5; John 16:33).

Jesus is our "peace." He died upon the cruel cross to make peace between the sinner and God, and between Jew and Gentile (Ephesians 2:14-22).

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uninspired work of forty-seven Episcopalians. They actually defend a version (the only one of five hundred?) that puts Jesus in "hell" (King James Version, Acts 2:27, 31), and inserts "Easter" (King James Version, Acts 12:4). Wherever the King James Version is wrong (in these citations as well as Genesis 1:28; 22:1; Judges 4:11, etc.), they rally to its defense. A paraphrase is in order: "My King James Version, my King James Version, may it ever be right, but right or wrong, my Kings James Version!"

"It Is Easier For A Camel . . ."

Continued From Page 2

when that time came. The "Rich Young Ruler" refused to give up his possessions; but Paul surrendered all for Jesus' sake (Matthew 22:37-38; Philippians 3:6-9).

What makes it so difficult for rich men to be saved? We shall note --

(1) Many wealthy men have obtained their money dishonestly. Some lie, steal, cheat, defraud, murder, or even sell their bodies that they might gain wealth. On the contrary, we should provide all things honest in the sight of others (Romans 12:17; II Corinthians 8:21).

"He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house" (Proverbs 15:27). Greed has caused employers to defraud and mistreat those who work for them (James 5:1-4; Cf. Proverbs 1:18-19).

(2) Material wealth is one of our great problems in our society. We have fallen in love with possessions: houses, cars, clothes, jewelry, etc., and with academic achievements. Many are more concerned with the pursuit of these items than with the pursuit of God and his righteousness.

The Lord demands perfect and exclusive loyalty. But Israel, like an unruly beast fattened in a stall, refused to submit to God's demands: "But Jeshurum waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxed fat, thou art grown thick; thou art grown sleek; then he forsook the God who made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation" (Deuteronomy 32:15). Stop and think! "For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?" (Matthew 16:26, A.S.V.). Now read Proverbs 30:7-9.

(3) Material wealth causes some to become high-minded. Many rich people look down upon the poor. Arrogance and exalted ego can harden the hearts of the wealthy. Paul wrote, "Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not high-minded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate" [Margin: "ready to sympathize"]; "laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed" (I Timothy 6:17-19; Cf. Matthew 6:10-21).

Personally I love the King James Version: it saved me, my mother, and thousands of others, and is still doing so. I'd like to see it purified so that it can do even more good.

The 19th century history mentioned above (taken in large measure from R. L. Roberts' restoration writings of 1973) is recounted to try to rescue some King James Version advocates who are not completely set in concrete. May the Father help us all!

--3400 Pleasant Drive Midwest City, OK 73110.

(4) It is a great sin to trust in riches. Money can, and often does, become an idol. "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Ephesians 5:5; Cf. Colossians 3:5). A "covetous" person is one who unlawfully lusts after the possessions of others.

Riches are deceitful, promising what they cannot give (Matthew 13:22). One man said, "If I cannot take my wealth with me, I just will not go." How foolish! Howard Hughes, when he died left 2.2 billion dollars. The Bible teaches: "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 6:7-8). A truer statement has never been uttered!!

It is not money, but the love of money that is a sin (I Timothy 6:10). Money -- bribes -- can be used to do great harm. "And thou shalt take no gift (bribe): for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the wise" (Exodus 23:8).

(5) It is a sin to fail to use money properly. Hear these words: "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. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:8-10). We know this passage applies to those Jews who lived under the Old Testament, but there is a principle involved here. The principle of obedience is the same always. They were required to give according to the Old Testament law; we are required to give according to the New Testament law.

We must give as we have been prospered (I Corinthians 16:1-2). We must give as we purpose in our heart (II Corinthians 9:6-7). We must give according to our ability (Acts 11:29-30; II Corinthians 8:12-14). This contribution is to be freely made upon the first day of the week.

These words are written for those special people who love truth and righteousness.

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

A Sad And Tragic Condition

Yarbrough Leigh

Tragedy is somewhat commonplace in the world. If it happens to us, or to someone occupying a vital place in our life, it tends to blot from our view whatever else of good there might be, leaving us to magnify our suffering. But, there is a kind of tragedy that is exceedingly commonplace, and, as a rule, it dwells in our midst almost, if not altogether, unnoticed. And this is true in spite of the fact that this tragedy is so devastating and, often, is so irremediable as to make any and all other tragedies to be insignificantly by comparison.

Of what kind of tragedy do I write? Listen to an inspired account of it as written by the prophet Isaiah some 2,700+ years ago:

"Also, I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed" (Isaiah 6:8-10).

There it is: it is the tragedy of developing a mindset -- an attitude and disposition of mind and heart which makes it impossible to acknowledge any truth against which we hold deep prejudice, or which would cost us dearly in terms of our past commitments, beliefs, and actions; or which would cut painfully across what we want to believe to be the truth.

This prophecy was dramatically fulfilled in the Jewish people in the days of Christ's earthly ministry. In Matthew 13:14-15, following the parable of **The Sower**, when his disciples asked why he spoke to the people in parables, he quoted this prophecy as having been fulfilled in that generation, thus making it necessary to "help" and to "illustrate" the truth by simple parables so that, if possible, they might see the truth of the gospel (parallel accounts in Mark 4:12 and Luke 8:10). Again, as Jesus taught his Jewish brethren and saw their unbelief, in spite of his many miracles done before them, he cited Isaiah's description of their tragic condition (John 12:40). While imprisoned in Rome, the apostle Paul talked with some of the Jewish leaders there, reminding them of this same prophecy, and urging them not to fall into that tragic disposition and be irrevocably lost through unbelief (Acts 28:27-28). Again, Paul used that prophecy to explain the unbelief of the Jews of his day (Romans 11:8).

What a great tragedy is herein described! It is one that seems not to inflict any physical evil, but instead, dulls the mind and heart so as to destroy the love of truth. It crushes truth, and in its place substitutes the imaginations of the hearts of men; as Isaiah prophesied in another place: "forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men" (Isaiah 29:13). In fact, our Lord Christ applied this last prophesy to

the Jews of his day (see Matthew 15:7-9) -- "Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men."

The wise writer of Proverbs wrote, "Buy the truth, and sell it not" (Proverbs 23:23). What a precious commodity is truth! There is no substitute for it, no matter in what field of activity it is considered. And it is this unique characteristic of truth that makes the impossibility of discerning it to be such a tragedy! How deadly is the disease which masks the truth and hides it from our eyes and ears and minds and hearts so that we can neither see nor hear nor understand it!

It is the truth of God's word (John 17:17) which "sanctifies" men, and which "sets men free" (John 8:31-32). It is that word, and that word alone, of which our Lord spoke, saying: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). Therefore, how tragic it is when I have so dulled my hearing and perception so as to be incapable of seeing or hearing or perceiving and understanding the truth because of the hardness and blindness of my own heart (see Ephesians 4:17-19)!

Gentle Reader, is your heart prepared to receive the word of God as it is, indeed, the word of God and not of men (I Thessalonians 2:13)? This cannot be until you have acknowledged in your conscience the absolute authority of that word, above and beyond the power and authority of any other word known to man! Ezra "had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments" (Ezra 7:10). Ezra had repented of **all rebellion against God and of all resistance to his will**. He had prepared his heart to **seek**, that is, to search and find out and to understand and to apply **the will of God**: not that he might debate it, or talk about it learnedly, or argumentatively; but that he might **do it, and teach in Israel statutes and judgments!**

Hear me, dear Reader: you and I are not prepared in heart to see, or to hear, or to understand God's will until we are ready and anxious to **seek the will of the Lord, that we might do it, and show it to others, both by precept and example**. This is true, because otherwise (whether I admit it or not) **I really do not want to know the truth!** In his conversation with Nicodemus, our Lord, having said to him that those who refuse belief in him are "condemned already," went on to say, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, **because their deeds were evil** (emphasis mine, YL). For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:19-21).

What a tragic illness this is that will, unless cured, forever bar me from saving faith in the Lord

of grace and mercy and truth! And, the tragedy of this illness is compounded by the fact that it is **self induced!** Let me ponder this truth prayerfully, and search my heart to know my own response to God's word! His mercy and grace are mine if I humbly receive his word in obedient faith, subjecting my will to his every command. But, if I rebel and harden my heart to the truth, my condemnation is sure and certain, by my own hand!

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—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1988

NUMBER 53

Words Of Truth - Index 1988

ANONYMOUS

- Girls, Please Read This . . . (Boys Too!) 9-16
- Excellent Reasons To Promote Harmony Among Church Members (9-30)
- Communist Rules For Revolution (10-7)

ANNOUNCEMENT

- Workshops At Freed-Hardeman College (1-15)
- Faulkner University Appoints New President (3-25)
- Magnolia Bible College Benefit Dinner (3-25)
- Faulkner University New Board Chairman (3-25)
- Bibles Cost More (5-27)
- Ninth Annual Gus Nichols Words Of Truth Lectureship (8-26)
- Ninth Annual Gus Nichols Words Of Truth Lectureship (9-16)
- Fourth Annual Preachers And Church Workers Forum (9-30)
- Presidential Debate Moderator To Speak (10-21)
- Faulkner Reunion To Be Held January 27-28 (12-16)

ATKINSON, Jon

- What You Think Of Yourself (10-21)

BOWMAN, Dorothy E.

- My Eternity? (10-21)

BRIGHT, Tom L.

- When Loyalty Becomes Idolatry (4-22)

BURLESON, Edsel

- May We Never Take Our Religion Lightly (1-22)
- The Cost Of Becoming A Christian (2-5)
- Murmuring Displeases The Lord (2-26)
- "I'd Rather Do It My Way" (6-3)
- You Have The Reputation Of Jesus In Your Hands! (6-10)
- Are You In Numbers Or Acts? (6-17)
- Making, Watching, Or Wondering? (6-24)
- "I Just Can't Stand It Any Longer" (7-1)
- Joshua Explains Salvation By Grace (7-1)

CLAIBORNE, Winford

- Freed-Hardeman College Bible Lectureship (1-1)

CLARK, Wilbur

- A Successful . . . Predicted (10-14)

- Acts 17 And The Word Of God (11-2)
- Friday Of Gloom, Sunday Of Glory (11-18)
- Come And See (10-2)
- In The Garden Of Gethsemane (12-16)

CONNELL, Joe

- Junk In/Junk Out (11-11)
- Religious Freedom Under Attack (12-16)

COOK, Charles

- How The Holy Spirit Converts The Alien Sinners (2-26)
- Shirley MacLaine And Neo-Hinduism (3-4)
- Watch Those Erroneous Statements! (5-20)
- An Especially Bad Habit (7-15)

COURINGTON, David

- What About "The Temptation Of Christ"? (9-9)
- The Two Talent Man (11-18)
- Some Questions For The Sporadic Attender (11-25)

CUNNINGHAM, Barry

- Causes And Consequences Of Fornication (2-12)

CRUMP, Peggy T.

- "Do Not Thou This Folly" (1-22)
- The Words I Speak (5-13)

DEDMON, Bill

- "We Are All Going To The Same Place Only We Are Traveling Different Roads" (9-9, 16)

DEHOFF, George W.

- Are We Under Any Law? (5-13)
- By Grace Through Faith (10-28)
- God's Abounding Grace (11-2)
- Where Will Heaven Be? (11-2)

DIXON, Clifford

- We Can Live It (6-3)
- Are We Barren Fig Trees? (10-14)
- Lessons From Acts Four (12-16)

DORAN, Adron

- "The Disciples Of Christ" (2-12)
- History Repeating Itself (7-8)

DUNCAN, Bobbie

- Brother Nic . . . The Indwelling Of The Holy Spirit (1-1)

ELAM, Demar

- Courage (11-2)
- EPPERSON, Judy
- Drifting (1-15)

FAUGHT, Nicky

- God's Wisdom In A Mystery (9-16)

FUGGETT, Dean

- The Witness Of Rust (11-11)
- Does He Really Expect So Much? (11-18)

GALLOWAY, Joe E.

- Winning The Unbelieving Companion (1-8)
- "The Power Of God" (5-27)
- When Men Disappoint Us (7-8)
- God's Kingdom First (8-12)
- Perverted Grace (10-7)
- Legalize Drugs? (10-14)
- The Common Salvation (10-28)
- Not Far From The Kingdom (11-11)

GARDNER, E. Claude

- 52nd Annual FHC Bible Lectureship (1-29)

GIPSON, John

- In Season (8-26)
- In Season (9-9)
- The Coming Generation (10-2)

GOLDTRAP, George

- Madison Elder Homer Roark Crosses Jordan (1-1)

GRAY, Jack

- The Six Most Needed Things (9-9)

GRAY, R. W.

- Saved By Blood (5-6)
- "Not Specifically Prohibited" (7-15)
- Unfeigned Love Of The Brethren (9-16)
- Uncertain Sound (11-11)

GREENE, Michael D.

- Misuse Of Things Religious (9-9)

HAIRE, Denise

- Who Is To Blame? (7-15)

HAMPTON, Gary C.

- Ephesians No. 2 (4-1)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



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Continued From Page 1

Galatians (4-8)

Ephesians No. 3 (4-15)

Ephesians No. 5 (4-22)

Ephesians No. 6 (4-29)

Ephesians No. 6 (5-6)

Ephesians No. 7 (5-13)

Ephesians No. 8 (5-20)

Ephesians Chapter 6 (5-27)

Galatians: Chapter 3 (6-24)

Galatians: Chapter 4 (7-1)

Galatians: Chapter 5 (7-8)

Galatians: Chapter 6 (7-22)

HAWK, Ray

Time (2-5)

Computers In The Church No. 1 (2-19)

Computers In The Church No. 2 (2-26)

Computers In The Church No. 3 (3-4)

My Son (7-29)

Don't Go To Bible Class (12-2)

Tatoos For Children (12-9)

HEARN, Roy J.

Decline In Church Growth No. 1 (2-19)

Decline In Church Growth No. 2 (3-4)

The Nature Of The Church No. 3 (2-11)

HERON, James T.

All Men Are Amenable To The Authority Of Christ (9-23, 30)

HESTER, David

Shall We Publicly Stand Against False Teachers? (6-3)

HESTER, Guy F.

Some Outstanding Characteristics Of A Lost Man (1-22)

Where Is The Passage? (2-12)

HOLLEY, W. A.

A Baptist Woman Preacher (1-15)

Obedience: Is It Important? (1-22)

The Commandments Of The Lord (1-29)

"We Ought To Obey God Rather Than Men" (2-5)

An Old Man Sinned (2-12)

Conditions Of Scriptural Prayer (2-19)

"Strange Things" (2-26)

Restoring The Erring No. 1 (3-4)

Restoring The Erring No. 2 (3-11)

Restoring The Erring No. 3 (3-18)

Dr. Graham's Plan Of Salvation (3-18)

Purposes Of Marriage (3-25)

A Preacher's Work (4-1)

A Contented Life (4-8)

Josiah, The Mistaken King (4-8)

Reproaches Removed (4-15)

The Gospel Of Christ (5-27)

"Kids Say Rape OK In Some Cases" (6-3)

A Roman Catholic Ceremony (6-10)

A Church That Continues (6-17)

The Blood Of Christ (6-17)

What Is Baptism? (6-24)

"Uncertain Sounds" (6-24)

"Tell Us Plainly" (7-1)

How To Make The Church Strong (7-22)

He That Despiset The Word (7-29)

The Sin Of Negligence (8-5)

Religious Sinners (8-5)

Can One Afford Not To Be In Christ (8-12)

The Conversion Of Saul (9-16)

Fruits Of Repentance (8-19)

"My Decision To Receive Christ As My Saviour" (9-2)

Talk To Yourself (9-9)

Wages Of Sin (9-30)

The Inspired Word Of God (10-28)

Where Has Gospel Preaching Gone? (11-2)

Fit For The Master's Use (11-11)

The Christian's Duty Toward The Church (11-18)

"Let The Redeemed . . . Say So" (11-18)

What Is The "One Baptism?" (11-25)

Sin's Masks (11-25)

"Ye Have Heard It Said . . ." (12-2)

"Teach Us To Number Our Days" (12-2)

Talk To Your Self No. II (12-9)

Do You Have Heart Trouble? (12-16)

"It Is Easier For A Camel . . ." (12-23)

"My Servant The Branch" (12-23)

The Holy Bible (12-30)

HUFF, Charles

"Now Where Have I Heard That Before?" (2-5)

JACKSON, Roger

Moving The Fence (7-22)

Worship God (7-29)

Criticism: Static? Or Hi-Fidelity? (9-30)

JACKSON, W. N. "Bill"

These Are Perilous Times (10-2)

JAMES, B. B.

"Don't Drop My Name From The Roll" (9-9)

JENKINS, Ancil

Faithfulness (7-15)

Related To The Devil (8-12)

Does Jesus Trust Us? (11-18)

JENKINS, Dale

Do You Evaluate? (3-25)

"His Hour!" (7-15)

When Spiritual Leaders Stumble No. 1 (8-5)

When Spiritual Leaders Stumble No. 2 (8-12)

JONES, Kenneth L.

Are Non Christians Subject To Christ's Law On Marriage In Matthew 19:1-6? (12-9)

KEARLEY, W. Edwin

The Incorruptible Crown (1-29)

Judging (2-12)

Spiritual Clothing And Spiritual Living (2-19)

"Let Us Put The Armor Of Light" (Romans 13:12) (2-26)

The Church No. 1 (3-11)

Does God's Grace Extend Universal Salvation? (3-11)

The Church No. 2 (3-18)

The Church No. 3 (3-25)

God's Great Love No. 4 (4-8)

Fall Into The Hands Of The Living God (10-2)

KELTON, Tom

Prayers Of The New Testament (4-1)

The Prayer Life Of Jesus (4-8)

Prayer No. 3 (4-15)

Prayer No. 4 (4-22)

Prayer No. 5 (4-29)

For Whom Should We Pray? (5-6)

Paying The Price (11-18)

LANGFIELD, Weldon

The Whole Counsel Of God (1-29)

Misplaced Pity (3-11)

The Truth About Instrumental Music (5-20)

The Joy Of Service (6-10)

The Wrongness Of Abortion (7-8)

The Dreadful Sin Of Envy (7-15)

The Best People In The World (10-21)

LEE, Glann

The Bible And Education (9-30)

LEIGH, Yarbrough

A Sad And Tragic Condition (12-16) And (12-23)

LIDDEL, Bobby L.

The Will Of God (10-21)

MANASCO, Jerri

Zacchaeus No. 1 (4-22)

Zacchaeus No. 3 (4-29)

MAY, Cecil Jr.

"Charismatic Gifts" And Fellowship (11-25)

Preachers Helping Wives (12-2)

McCLISH, Dub

Review Of Moffitt-Billingsley Debate (6-17)

McCLUSKEY, Trent

Missionary (1-15)

The Sin Of Omission

Concerning Hell (2-12)

McCORD, Hugo

Shock And Dismay: 1988 FHC Forum (12-23)

McDONALD, Charles E.

Some Thoughts On Gratitude (11-11)

The Songs We Sing (11-25)

MEADOWS, James

In Times Like These When False Teachers Are Being Encouraged By Christians (4-29)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Words Of Truth - Index 1988

Continued From Page 2

- MEDLIN, Randall J.
Talebearing (1-15)
- MILAM, Neal
Christian Fellowship (9-2)
- MILLER, Dave
Our Ruin (10-2)
1988 Words Of Truth Index (12-30)
- MISSILDINE, Ronnie A.
A Tribute To Ariel Missildine, Jr. (12-2)
- MOFFITT, Jerry
Faith Healing? (10-21)
- NICHOLS, Flavil H.
1987 Words Of Truth Index (1-1)
God Is Omniscient (1-1)
Words Of Truth (2-5)
Sixth Avenue Has New Minister (4-29)
Some Lessons From Israel No. 1 (5-6)
Lessons From Israel No. 2 (5-22)
An Open Letter To A Brother Overtaken In A Fault (7-15)
The Thief On The Cross No. 1 (7-22)
The Thief On The Cross No. 2 (7-29)
The Thief On The Cross No. 3 (8-5)
The Thief On The Cross No. 4 (8-12)
Saved By Grace Through Faith (8-26)
Congregational Singing In History (10-21)
What We Do In Worship Must Be Authorized (10-28)
A Suggestion To Elders (11-11)
What We Do In Worship Must Be Authorized No. 2 (12-2)
What We Do In Worship Must Be Authorized No. 3 (12-9)
Congregational Singing Is Authorized In The Testament (12-16)
- NICHOLS, Gus
Empty Benches (1-29)
Religious Indifference (5-6)
The Sin Of Making Laws For God (8-26)
"Simplicity That Is In Christ" (9-2)
- NIX, Don
Why? (9-30)
- PHILLIPS, Dabney
Restoration Wives No. 1 (1-8)
Restoration Wives No. 2 (1-15)
The Christian Race: Hebrews 12:1-2 (1-22)
Can We Find The Lord's Church? (6-10)
Restoration Roots (10-2)
- PLUNKETT, Bob
Are You Missing Anything? (9-2)
Do It Yourself (11-18)
- PORTER, Harvey
The Early Church; Pattern For Growth And Unity (9-2)
- POWERS, Mary Nell Hardeman
The Solemn Style In Prayer (11-25)
- PRICHARD, Bob
Is It True That The Churches Of Christ Don't Have Music? (6-10)
Does The Bible Really Condemn Abortion? (6-10)
What Can The Christian Do About Abortion? (6-17)
- RAINES, G. F.
Preservation Of The Bible (5-13)
A Man's Gift (5-20)
The Ecumenical Movement (5-27)
Genuine Loyalty To Christ (5-27)
Peace And Submission (6-10)
Daniel's Prophecy Of The Messiah (6-17)
Thoughts Concerning Sympathy (6-24)
Lovers Of Pleasure (7-8)
Steps Away From And Back To God (7-22)
The Basis Of Happiness (8-5)
Choosing A Religion (8-26)
The City Of Damascus (9-2)
What Is The Church Of Christ? (9-9)
Jesus, The Son Of God (9-16)
The Bible Is Indestructible (10-7)
- RAMSEY, Johnny
A Classic Sermon (4-29)
Hard Preaching (9-2)
- RANDOLPH, Kenneth L.
The First "Gospel" Sermon (12-30)
- ROSENZWEIG, Stephen
From Judaism to Christianity (5-13)
- ROYSTER, Hilton
What Does The Bible Say (10-7)
What Does The Bible Say? (10-14)
Faith (11-18)
- SEXTON, Arnold
Using God As An Emergency Device (10-21)
- SIDES, Levi
Roll, Jordan, Roll! (5-20)
Jesus the Master (5-27)
All Authority (6-3)
"If Any Man Be In Christ" (6-17)
The Great Physician (6-24)
The Attraction Of The Ages (7-1)
The Art Of Laughter (7-1)
Parents - God's Special Tutors (7-8)
The Five Looks (7-8)
A Sad Time: When God Laughs (7-15)
The Missing Body (7-22)
The Older People (8-5)
God's Wonderful Book (9-2)
The Secret Of Contentment (9-16)
- SIMS, Douglas
"Asleep In Zion!" (1-29)
The Right To Pray (3-4)
- STEARSMAN, Jackie M.
Preaching And Preachers (10-7)
The High Price Of Success (10-28)
Restoration Reflections (11-2)
- TURNER, Rex A., Sr.
Are There Christians In Denominational Churches? (10-14)
- TYLER, Ken
A Servant Of The Lord (6-3)
Bible Study (10-14)
Assurance (11-25)
- VARNER, W. Terry
A Question And An Observation (12-9)
Why The Church Of Christ Does Not Observe Christmas As Christ's Birthday (12-9)
- WADDEY, John
Could You Spare Five Minutes? (1-8)
A Question Of Chronology (1-15)
Paul's Ministry (1-22)
Preaching For A Modern Generation (1-29)
The Proper Working Of Every Member (2-19)
Peter's Mother-In-Law (2-26)
Fruitful For Christ (3-4)
Burden Bearing (3-11)
Should We Marry? (3-18)
Gospel Meetings (4-1)
Put The Bible Back Into The Bible School (4-8)
Ananias And Sapphira, Partners In Deceit (4-15)
The Kingdom Of Darkness* (4-22)
The Missionary Society: What It Was; Why It Is Wrong (5-13)
A Tale Of Two Prophets (6-3)
The Whole Law Fulfilled In One Word (6-10)
- WADE, David
An Open Letter (5-13)
- WATKINS, Billy
Why One Should Attend Every Service Of The Church (9-9)
- WEEKLEY, John P.
The Number One Problem In The Lord's Church (3-18)
Questions About Preaching (3-25)
- WILLIAMS, Don
Is It Really A New Year? (1-22)
The Wounds Of Jesus (1-29)
- WINKLER, Mike
Heed The Word Of Christ (2-19)
- WINKLER, Wendell
"True Happiness Found" (8-26)
After Baptism, What Am I To Do? (9-9)
- WOODSON, William
When God's Silence Is Not Respected (12-9)

The First "Gospel" Sermon

Kenneth L. Randolph

It is often surprising to many when it is said that the sermon on the day of Pentecost (recorded in Acts 2) is the first "gospel" sermon. Many think of the sermon on the mount, or other teachings in the Gospel according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, and wonder why Acts 2 contains the first "gospel" sermon. This is the first "gospel" sermon in the New Testament for the three following reasons:

(1) The Preachers Had To Be Prepared To Speak.

The apostles were instructed to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit to be sent upon them before they began to preach the gospel. Notice Luke 24:49: "And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

The First "Gospel" Sermon

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

high." The apostles were not to become witnesses of Christ's resurrection until they had received the Holy Spirit. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). On the day of Pentecost they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the power that he bestowed, and therefore they were thus qualified to begin preaching the gospel.

(2) The Message Had To Be Complete.

Prior to the day of Pentecost the gospel message was incomplete. It had to include the death, burial, resurrection, ascension and coronation of Christ. Even that message had to be attended by miracles in the first century in order to confirm its truthfulness. Today we have the record of its confirmation in the New Testament, and have no need of the miracles.

The gospel had been in the external PURPOSE of God (Ephesians 3:10-11; II Timothy 1:9-10). It had existed in PROMISE beginning with Adam (Genesis 3:15), to Abraham and the other

patriarchs (Genesis 22:18; 49:10), and extending throughout the Mosaic age. The gospel was preached in PROPHECY throughout the Old Testament even as early as Samuel (Acts 3:24). The gospel was preached in PREPARATION during the days of John the Baptist and the earthly ministry of Christ. But it had to wait until the day of Pentecost of Acts 2 for it to be preached in its PERFECTION. Christ had been crucified, buried, resurrected, and had ascended on high. He had sent forth the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles to endow them with power to work wonders and signs, thus confirming the words that they spoke (Mark 16:15-20). The message was complete by Acts 2.

(3) The Hearers Had To Be Able To Make A Full Response.

Before the day of Pentecost, hearers could not have made a full and complete response to Christ. Their FAITH had to be in a savior exalted as the Lord, and that faith had to be assured by the confirmation of the message by the attendant miracles. Their REPENTANCE had to be made sure by the conviction that he who had died was

the Son of God -- and that he had died for their sins and had been raised for their justification (Romans 3:24-26; 4:24-25). Their CONFESSION that Jesus was the Son of God had to come from a heart that believed that God had raised him from the dead (Romans 10:9). Their BAPTISM had to be into his death, and in the likeness of his burial and resurrection (Romans 6:1-4). It had to proceed from a faith in the operation of God who raised Christ from the dead (Colossians 2:14).

On the day of Pentecost of Acts 2 the preachers were prepared, the message was complete, and the hearers could make the full and complete response to the gospel.

On that day 3,000 heard, believed, and obeyed (Acts 2:41). That old Jerusalem gospel had the ring of perfection in its tone. It brought life and immortality to light then; and it will do the same today.

--P.O. Box 321, Talladega, AL 35160 - 0321.

The Holy Bible

W.A. Holley

Countless millions of people do not reverence the Holy Bible. Millions despise the Book, saying, "It is now outdated; science and philosophy have surpassed its usefulness."

H. G. Wells, lamented, saying, "It (the Bible) has lost its hold but nothing has arisen to take its place." We ask, Why? Why have not the scientists and scholars written a book capable of replacing the Bible?

It is argued in some circles that the Bible is an unnecessary and useless book. Listen: Dr. James Bisset Pratt said, "Men can get on without the Bible, they can live good and religious lives without it, or without any sacred book. The man who does not know the Bible, or whose acquaintance with it has begun in an unimpressionable age, will probably never know that he is missing anything." What person approaching death and eternity can believe the foregoing quotation? One quotation reads, "There were no atheists in the foxholes of Bataan."

Hear the words of a man who tried to live apart from the holy influence of the Bible. "Strike out a few sages, and the crowd of human beings is nothing but a horrible assemblage of unfortunate criminals, and the globe contains nothing but corpses. I tremble to have to complain once more of the Being of Beings, in casting an attentive eye over the terrible picture . . . I wish I had never been born. The box of Pandora is the most beautiful fable of antiquity. Hope was at the bottom," said Voltaire, the French infidel, 1694-1778. What a dark and sad picture!

Rober G. Ingersoll was an agnostic. He had a brother whom he loved dearly. In the course of events his brother died, and Robert was called upon to conduct his funeral service. Among other things he said, ". . . Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We

strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word; but in the night of death, hope sees a star and listening love can hear the rustle of a wing. He who sleeps here, when dying, mistaking the approach of death for the return of health, whispered with his latest breath, 'I am better now.' Let us believe, in spite of doubts and dogmas and tears and fears that these dear words are true of all the countless dead." How dark, how dismal, how dreadful, must be the view of those who die shrouded in garments of gloom and despair!!

The Wonder Of Its Formation

Verily, the Bible is a vast library containing 66 books -- 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. These books were written by about 40 men from different backgrounds, over a period of some 1600 years. These men trace the history of man from his beginning to his departure from this earth, and then to his entrance into eternity. It was written by former slaves, a doctor, a tax collector, fishermen, prophets, and a converted Jew, and such like. But, when they had completed their work there was perfect unity and harmony (II Timothy 3:15-17). While written by men, it was not the product of men (I Corinthians 2:9-16). "Plenary" inspiration means the Holy Bible is full, complete, and absolute. "Verbal" inspiration of the Bible means that God, through the Holy Spirit, chose the very words of the original autographs. Hence, never add to nor subtract from God's word (Revelation 22:18-19).

The Accuracy Of Its Statements

There are no discrepancies in the Holy Bible. We make this statement without any reservation, whatsoever! Yes, there are "apparent" contradictions; but these can be harmonized without any difficulty at all! Assuredly, it is accurate historically, geographically, scientifically, psychologically, and verbally. 10

The Bible contains the sum of God's truth (Psalms 119:160, A.S.V.). The truth is available; it can be read and understood; and it can be obeyed (John 8:30-32; 17:17; Romans 2:8; Galatians 3:1; 5:7). An honest person can trust the word of God (Matthew 24:35; John 12:48).

Fulfillment Of Its Prophecies

No other sacred (?) book can point to the fulfillment of its prophecies. In the Holy Bible there are more than 300 prophecies relating to Jesus Christ: his coming into the world, his work, his teaching, his life, death, burial, and resurrection. Many of these prophecies were fulfilled in a 24 hour period. How remarkable!

The expression, "that the scriptures might be fulfilled . . ." is found many times in the sacred narrative. In the following references see the prediction and fulfillment of the establishment of the church or the kingdom of God upon earth (Isaiah 2:1-5; Micah 4:1-4, 8; Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 36-38, 47; Colossians 1:13-14). The notion that the prophets knew nothing about the church is unscriptural.

The Urgency Of Its Message

The demands of the Holy Bible must be obeyed today -- now, not tomorrow (Hebrews 3:13; Cf. James 4:13). The apostle Paul, quoting Isaiah 49:9, says, "At an acceptable time I hearkened unto thee, and in a day of salvation did I succor thee: behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2).

The Bible's message is addressed to live people, not to the dead. Luke 16:19-31 teaches that there is no second chance. The doctrine of purgatory is false to the core! Jesus urges all sinners to come unto him (Matthew 11:28-30; Revelation 22:17).

Would you like to know what to do to be saved? Read Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; and Romans 6:3-4.

Believe and obey these passages as they are recorded in your own Bible and you will become a Christian.

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