



(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 26

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

New Year's Resolutions



David Wade

The word "resolution" does not appear in the King James Bible. The word "resolved" appears once in Luke 16:4. "I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses." In this

parable of the Unjust Steward, Jesus uses the word that is most often translated as "know" or "perceive." This usage in Luke 16:4 is somewhat different than our idea of making New Year's resolutions.

The concept of making resolutions, however, is very clearly stated in scripture: "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind" (Philippians 3:12-15). "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). "Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ,

let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits" (Hebrews 6:1-3).
I am altogether for the above resolutions but I have never personally put much emphasis on New Year's resolutions. It is for this reason: If we wait until the beginning of each new year to turn over a new leaf, repent of an old sin, start a good work, be faithful in services, etc., then we will never make much progress in spiritual growth. Most of us can attest to the fact that we usually falter in short time with most of our New Year's resolutions.

It seems to me far better to make the needed change when needed rather than stacking all of our resolutions for the first of the year. To put it simply, most of us would be overwhelmed with the many things we have resolved to do. This leads to discouragement and abandonment of the good we had planned to accomplish. Paul's way is best, "one thing I do." It is far better to do one thing well than to try a thousand things and fail.

An unknown author has left us with these meaningful words:

"I shall pass this way but once.

Therefore, any good that I can do, or any kindness that I can show, let me do it now.

Let me not defer nor neglect it; for I shall never pass this way again."

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Words Of Truth

"I am not
Words of Truth and soberness."

the

—Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 2

"Those Who Despise Small Opportunities Never Get Large Ones"



Edsel Burleson

Daniel C. Steere, in "I Am, I Can" wrote: "Several years ago, I found a quaint old book in a secondhand bookshop. It is bound in leather and was published in 1876. It is called *The Royal Path of Life*, by T. L. Haines and L. W. Yaggy. The language is stilted and old-fashioned. So are many of the ideas in it.

Still, there is a certain charm in the old book. The chapter titled 'opportunity' contains these thoughts which are still good advice:

"Great opportunities are generally the result of the wise improvement of small ones. Wise men make more opportunities than they find. If you think your opportunities are not good enough, you had better improve them . . . As a general rule, those who have no opportunities despise small ones; and those who despise small ones; and those who despise small opportunities never get large ones."

The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) emphasizes the Lord's blessings upon those who take advantage of their opportunities. To the servants who doubled their talents through use, their lord said, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (verses 21 and 23).

There is another side to the story. Those who refuse to take advantage of their opportunities shall finally lose them. The servant who did not use his one talent heard his lord say, "Take therefore the talent from him and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him

that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath" (verses 28 and 29). Alexander G. Bell once wrote: "When one door closes, another opens. But we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened before us."

Cliff Mann recently included in the "Friendly Visitor" of the Auburn church, an interesting story about not letting opportunities pass us by. A young man was courting a farmer's daughter. After a while the farmer realized that the young man was getting pretty serious and even looking toward marriage. One day the farmer told the young man, "I'll give you my daughter for your wife, if you can catch one of these bulls I've got in my pen." The young man agreed and decided to try and catch the bull by the tail. The farm proceeded to run the first bull down a chute with the young man standing on the fence above it. The first bull came charging through. He was big and fierce and had very long horns. The young man decided he would wait for the next bull. The second bull then

came running down the chute, he was not quite as big nor hardly as mean, but still the young man was scared enough to wait on the next one. The third bull then came trotting down the chute and the young man knew this was his last opportunity to win the farmer's daughter, so just as the bull got near him he jumped off the fence to catch hold of his tail, only to hit the ground as he realized that the bull was bobtailed!

An unknown author, in the following lines, challenges us to recognize opportunities when they come our way:

The stairs of opportunities
Are sometimes hard to climb
And that can only be done
By one step at a time.
But he would go to the top
Ne'er sits down and despairs:
Instead of staring up those steps
He just steps up the stairs.

--Via West End News, 420 Seventh Street S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

A Modern Parable

John Rice

A man got married. After the honeymoon, he disappeared. His wife heard nothing from him except that she received a check from him once a month. One evening, he walked in, kissed her, and sat down to be fed. She was incensed!! Bewildered, the man asked, "What's the matter? I married you; I send you a check every month. What more do you want?"


A child enrolled in school. For several days, he was absent. When the truant officer came around, his mother said, "Oh, we feel that Jimmy can be as good a scholar at home as at school, so we let him

play in the backyard and learn from nature."

A man volunteered for the Army, took the oath of allegiance and was inducted. But he failed to report for duty. When the military police came, he said, "I've been shooting guns since I was a kid. I don't have anything to learn from the Army. You just call me when you're ready to fight."

And once upon a time, a family obeyed the gospel and became members of the church . . .

--Via The Pillar, P.O. Box 75, Cave City, Arkansas 72521.



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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David Wade . . . Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

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The Editor's Pen
David Wade

Reader's Response



David Wade

Department of Corrections, Elmore, Alabama. His letter, dated December 17, 1989, is as follows:

Dear Mr. Wade:

Sir, I know you don't know me nor do I think I will ever get a chance to meet you. However, I wish to thank you for making it possible for me to get the Words of Truth. It has helped me very much over the past year to understand the Bible better and to know the way our Heavenly Father would want us to live and the way to worship Him. Sir, I can't send money, but I would like for you to have this wallet. It is not much, but it is the only way I have of showing you and the elders, that I am truly thankful for your paper, Words of

Truth. Maybe you can use it. . .

Our Heavenly Father's blessing be with all of yours always. Thank you so very much for the paper.

With love in Jesus Christ our Lord,

Tommie Cooper

In part of my reply dated December 21, 1989, I wrote, "From the bottom of my heart I want to thank you for the very nice personalized wallet you have made for me. I can tell you spent much time and took great care in making this gift. Thank you, very much."

One side of the wallet is embossed with my name and praying hands. The other side is embossed with Jesus on the cross.

I'm going to keep in touch with Tommie. Also, Hap Johnson, of the Sixth Avenue congregation, has contacted Bill Carr of Enterprise, Alabama to go by and visit with Tommie.

If you would like to send a note of encouragement, you can write him at the following address:

Tommie Cooper

7-74 Box 1107

Elmore, AL 36025-0276

"I was in prison and you came to me" (Matthew 25:36).

Priorities



Ray Hawk

They are excited. A new home. Their loan has gone through. They answered the million and one questions satisfactorily and without balking once. The bank knows their complete financial history. Financing is 10.5 percent. The papers are shoved in front of them. Eagerly, with a nervous smile at one another, they sign. The

house will be their's after 360 payments of only \$856.74 each month.

With a new house, comes new furniture, new curtains, and a thousand other things. More papers are shoved under their noses. Questions are asked and answered without the blink of an eye. Signatures are expertly written without hesitation. Payments for all these new things will run \$432.18 a month for the next 36 months.

No, they waited until they arrived at church before they used these reasons for not purposing to the Lord's work (II Corinthians 9:7).

The old clunker detracts from the new house. One cannot maintain the proper image if one has a new house and an automobile that is three years old. Hi-ho, hi-ho, to the car dealership we go. A deal is struck, financial history is completed, papers are signed. They will pay only \$317.85 a month for

Continued On Page 3

All This And More

Bill Bagents

"But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." Psalm 1:2.

Have you ever considered what it means to delight in the law of the Lord? That phrase is worthy of serious thought. It is central to the character of the righteous. It should characterize every Christian. It is a rich concept. Some thoughts are suggested below. But to delight in the law of the Lord is all this and more.

To delight in the law of the Lord is to spend much serious time with His law. That obvious fact is stated in the verse above. We plan, schedule and sacrifice to "make time" for the things we find delightful. We willingly bear the costs, for the reward is great. We refuse to be denied, for the joy is real.

We plan, schedule and sacrifice to "make time" for the things we find delightful.

To delight in the law of the Lord is to seek to understand that law. The danger of

misunderstanding is clear. We are so easily deceived, particularly when we want to be. But the law of the Lord can be understood. Such understanding demands time and effort and prayer that we willingly give, for new delight awakens with each mystery we unfold.

To delight in the law of the Lord is to use the law as our guide and standard. Understanding and trusting it are not enough. Our lives must conform to its teaching. Our behavior and attitudes must be changed to match its lofty precepts. It is often said "Imitation is the sincerest form of praise." Full willing compliance with God's law is the goal of all who delight in it.

To delight in the law of the Lord is to teach the law to others. How could such a treasure be hidden? That which we hold dear and delightful naturally permeates our thought and speech. We cannot help but tell it. When we invest our time and our minds, when we change our deeds and hearts, when we truly delight in the law of the Lord, we will share the good news of His law daily.

--Via Bulletin 2502, Florence Blvd. Florence, AL 35630.

What Some Of Our Baptist Friends Once Thought Of Us!



Cecil Corkren

a community of believers is those who exalt Christ and His word **FIRST IN THEIR LIVES!** This attracts men and women of honest and good hearts."

Dr. Dehoney, wrote these noticeable remarks about God's people. "While statistical totals suggest a declining church, a closer look at the churches of Christ would hardly reveal that their brand of religion is on the downgrade! This fast growing group is one of the most potent missionary and evangelistic forces in the country. Their congregations are flourishing, and new churches are continually being established."

"A profile of their faith and practice contradicts every **"SOLID CONCLUSION"** by authorities of the main-line denominational establishments about the renewal the church must experience to survive. The churches of Christ are anti-ecumenical in their relationships; conservative in their theology; autonomous and democratic in their congregational practice without any semblance of a denominational superstructure; they have a rigid Biblical theology, with a strong emphasis on Bible Preaching and Bible Teaching! They make rigid moral and ethical demands on their membership on such matters as social drinking, (They are not **"SOCIAL ACTION"** oriented). They have a **"MESSIANIC COMPLEX"** of being the true

Some twenty-five years ago the following analysis of the churches of Christ was made by Dr. Wayne Dehoney, former president of the Southern Baptist convention. He wrote this commendation in his book **SET THE CHURCH AFIRE,** "We have said often that what

people are looking for in

people of God and the true church! All these factors combine to give them a high motivation, and unquenchable zeal, and inescapable compulsion to win the world for Christ and His word, and for the world to accept their convictions and beliefs. **AND THEY ARE GROWING RAPIDLY!"**

"Meantime, a loud, brash minority clamors for the church's supposed need of renewal and restructure rather than for continuing need for God fearing, Christ-centered, and Bible-based faith and practice among all who would please our God in heaven."

To see and hear of some in the churches of Christ suggesting a restructuring of the church and leaving the God-given methods of evangelizing

and teaching the lost has been tried by others and they have failed. We need to heed Jeremiah's admonition in Jeremiah 6:16 "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, we will not walk therein." The **"GOOD WAY"** has worked in the past according to Dr. Wayne Dehoney. When we see the declining attendance records in most every congregation over the country this would suggest that we have in many places left the **"GOOD WAY!"** We have the Baptist to thank for seeing something that some in the church are unable to see.

--1705 Sandra Lee Drive, Jasper, Alabama 35501.

The Influence Of The Bible

BOBBY DOCKERY

One of the great proofs that the Bible is a Book from God is the influence which it has had in the world. Wherever the Bible has gone, it has made men better. Civilization has followed in its wake. Because people have loved the Bible and sought to live its truths, hospitals have been built, orphanages have been opened, and schools have been established. Though the last lines of this Book were penned almost 2,000 years ago, they still have a profound effect on the everyday lives of men and women in the 20th Century. Men of genius from every walk of life have recognized the greatness of the Bible and paid tribute to its influence. . .

One measure, for example, of the profound influence of the Bible on human thinking is the respect which great men of learning have maintained for it. *Sir Isaac Newton* wrote, "I find more sure marks of authority in the Bible than in any profane history whatever." The great

astronomer, *Sir William Herschel*, said: "All human discoveries seem to be made for the purpose of confirming more and more strongly the truths contained in the sacred scriptures."

Great men of literature have also spoken of the greatness of the Bible. *Alfred Tennyson* insisted that "Bible reading is an education in itself." *Charles Dickens* commented that "The New Testament is the very best book that ever was or ever will be known to the world." *John Ruskin* wrote "All that I have taught of art, everything that I have written, whatever greatness there has been in any thought of mine. . . has simply been due to the fact that, when I was a child, my mother daily read with me a part of the Bible. . ."

The great leaders of our nation have also been men who strongly believed in the power of God's word. *George Washington* said, "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible." *Andrew Jackson*: "That Book is the rock on which our republic rests." *Patrick Henry* wrote, "The Bible is worth all other books which have ever been printed. *Douglas McArthur* said, "Never a night goes by, be I ever so tired, but I read the Word of God before I go to bed."

The Psalmist summed up the influence of the Bible by saying that it makes the simple person wise and converts the soul. (Psalm 19:7.) The writer of the Book of Hebrews speaks of the Scriptures as a living, powerful weapon in the battle for truth. (Hebrews 4:12). But you should know that the power and influence of the Bible can be felt only when it is read and studied! **The Bible must be used to have an influence.**

What influence are you allowing the Bible to have in your life. . . ?

- - Via the Pillar, P. O. Box 75, Cave City, Arkansas 72521.

Priorities

Continued From Page 2

the next 60 months.

Christmas is coming up. No problem. Both she and he have Visa and Master Cards. Their limits on both, are \$2,500.00. If they go the limit, the monthly payments will only be 10% of the amount. Isn't plastic wonderful?

During none of these financial transactions did this couple say, "We can't sign this contract for this much money. Why? What if we lost our jobs next month?" Not once did they say, "I never know from one week to the next what I will be making, so I can't tell you whether I will be able to make the same payment each month or not." Not once did they say, "It is none of your business what kind of payment we will make each month on this

house you are selling us." Not once did they say, "I'll send you what I can, if I happen to be in the neighborhood."

Not once did he or she say to one another, "We need this or that, so let's cut our house payment in half for the next two months and our car payment in half next month."

No, they waited until they arrived at church before they used these reasons for not purposing to the Lord's work (II Corinthians 9:7).

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33).

--Via Campbell Street Bulletin, 1490 Campbell Street, Jackson TN 38305.

What Did Jesus Build?



Dalton Key

When the Lord promised, "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18), what did he have in mind to build? We realize the actual, original word used by Christ would better be translated as "the called out" or "the assembly." Quibbles

over the varied implications of "church" as compared with "assembly" are insignificant, however, when weighed against the question of Christ's meaning. The more important matter is not one of semantics, but of understanding. What did Jesus promise to build? What did he build?

It should be obvious to all of us that Christ had no intentions of erecting a building. Though by law the son of Joseph, the carpenter, we have no record of Christ building any physical structure whatsoever. The elaborate and ornate structures of the Romish church, or for that matter, of any religious organization, are not what our Lord promised to build. His blood was shed to purchase the church, his body (Acts 20:28); buildings are bought with dollars and cents, bonds and notes. While a comfortable building may be a useful expedient, it is not, of itself, that which Jesus promised to build or that for which he shed his blood.

Neither did Christ intend to establish a social or political body. He promised to build his church, which he described as the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 16:18, 19). And yet during his appearance before Pilate he explained, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). He refused to be crowned as a temporal king over an earthly kingdom (John 6:15). Religious bodies which have social concerns or political issues as their chief concern can not be that which Christ had in mind when he promised, "I will build my church."

Did the Lord intend to establish a denomination? No. A denomination, by definition, is a named part of a larger whole. The scores of denominational bodies around us, which claim allegiance to Christ, purport to exist as but parts or units of the larger, universal body of Christians. They distinguish themselves by means of their unique teachings and practices and by name. Christ could not have had a denomination in mind when he promised to build his church, for that which he built was to be, not a part of a larger whole, but the whole itself. After the church was established on Pentecost day, as recorded in the second chapter of Acts, the saved were being added to the church (Acts 2:47). If the saved are in the church, and the church is comprised of the saved, the church can not possibly be a part or unit of a larger whole.

What, then, did our Lord promise to build? What did he purchase with his blood? What did he

establish in Acts, chapter two?

The church which Jesus promised to build is simply the body of people saved by the blood of Christ and submitting to him as head. Because all those who obey the gospel and are saved are added to the church, "There is one body" (Ephesians 4:4). Wherever and whenever sincere saints are found, who have received salvation from sin by the grace of God at the time of their gospel obedience, the church may be found. As the body of Christ, under his headship (Ephesians 1:22, 23), the church of

Christ must be subject to his divine will in all matters pertaining to work and worship (Ephesians 5:24; Colossians 3:17). To deny the authority of Christ as head is to lose life as his body.

In the light of these facts, is "one church just as good as another?" Should we not make certain we are members of the church Jesus promised to build? To settle for anything less than his church would be foolhardy at best and eternally dangerous at last.

"This One Thing I Do"



Cecil May, Jr.

Paul the Apostle was a single-minded man. That is one of the reasons he was able to evangelize much of Asia Minor and the European continent.

To the Philippians he expressed his purpose in general terms: "Brethren, I count not myself to have attained, but this one thing I do, . . . I press

toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14). "This one thing I do;" not, "These forty things I dabble in."

To the Corinthians he was more specific: "For though I be free from all men, yet I have made myself slave to all, that I might gain the more . . . I am made all things to all men that I might by all means save some" (I Corinthians 9:19-22).

"This one thing I do." "By all means save some." Paul's life manifests this single desire of his heart. Our Lord's purpose is the same: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (I Timothy 1:15). It ought also to be our guiding star, giving meaning to all we do.

There are many ways to serve, but saving souls

should be the root and guiding principle of all. It is better to save one soul from death than to be Dr. Theologian, Ph.D., Th.D., and be published by the learned Society of Biblical Literature. It is better to bring one person to know Jesus than to be Bro. Epitome Of Soundness and win debates with the greatest proponents of error. The greatest joy in heaven is "over one sinner that repents" (Luke 15:7, 10). That should be our greatest joy, as well.

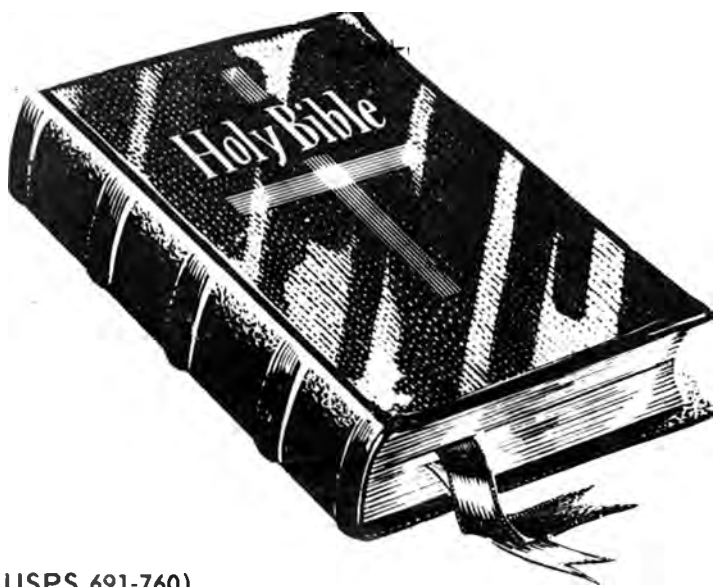
Please note well: The above can be a means to saving souls, and I do not denigrate them when dedicated to that purpose, but let every activity be that, not an end in itself, nor a means for personal glory or self-aggrandizement. Whatever our talents or preferences for work, let us single-heartedly labor that we might "by all means save some."

Give us a watchword for the hour, a thrilling word, a word with power, A battle cry! A flaming breath, that calls, "To conquest! or to death!" A word to raise the church from rest to heed the Master's highest request! The call is given; ye hosts, arise; the watchword is, *Evangelize*.

The martyred saints now all proclaim, "Through all the earth," in Jesus' name. *This* word is ringing through the skys, *Evangelize, Evangelize*. To dying men, a fallen race, make known the gift of gospel grace; The world that now in darkness lies, Oh, Church of Christ, evangelize!

--Magnolia Bible College, P.O. Box 1109, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

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s; but speak forth the

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 26

JANUARY 19, 1990

NUMBER 3

Christ Came Begging For Our Love



Cecil Corkren

Christ came knocking at our door (Revelation 3:20). When a beggar is refused, he does not usually return, but God has returned to man time and again (Matthew 21:33-38). "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your

sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (I Corinthians 8:9). What Christ did in his poverty was a demonstration of his all-consuming appeal for our love. The decisive element in Christian living is the will to give up one's self, giving to others as Christ did by dying on the cross. He emptied himself, and died on the cross begging for our love (Philippians 2:5-8). God, through pity, has sought the love of man. "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles wings, and brought you unto myself" (Exodus 19:4). The mother eagle will carry her young under her protecting wings (Deuteronomy 32:11). This all consuming love of God is seen in John 3:16.

The decisive element in Christian living is the will to give up one's self, giving to others as Christ did by dying on the cross.

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." He came from heaven to visit man (Psalm 8:4; Hebrews 2:6). "We love him, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19). The whole truth is, God is looking for you and for me. He sent Christ on a seeking mission. The Samaritan woman at the well in John 4 is you and me. Someone has said, Thou with weary steps have sought

me, crucified has dearly bought me, have thy pains no profit brought me?"

Many times the word beseech was employed by the inspired apostles to express God's true feelings for man. It means to "ask earnestly; implore, to beg eagerly for or entreat." God would have all men saved, not willing that any should perish. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). God gave the best

he had to offer for man's salvation. Christ came in deep poverty and gave himself to die in our place for our sins; therefore, he is standing at the door of our heart begging for our love. So, the plea goes out "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:28-29).

--1705 Sandra Lee Drive, Jasper, Alabama 35501.

"For Such A Time As This"



Winfred Clark

We come to a new awareness of time each year about this time. We become more conscious when we see the face of the calendar change from one year to another. This is no less true this year. This phrase, "for such a time as this", is surely filled with meaning.

We know something of the biblical setting where this phrase was found. It describes a time in the book of Esther when God's people were in danger of being slaughtered. But Esther was in a place where she might be of assistance. She could make requests that nobody else could make. When she was reluctant to do so her uncle sent her word that she may have come to the kingdom "for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14). What can we learn from this statement?

1. WE SEE HERE A TIME OF URGENCY.

The need for Esther to speak was present at that time, not years later. If she did not speak at that time, it would be too late years later. All the Jews would have been executed. It is therefore urgent that she speak at that time. This is no less true of our responsibility today. If we do not speak when children are young, we will find that they

will grow up and be gone. If we do not speak on certain moral issues the time will come when it will do no good.

2. WE SEE A TIME OF OPPORTUNITY.

Here is Esther with access to the king. She has the knowledge of something that he needs to know. Only she can deliver the message. How tragic if she lets this opportunity pass. How much more with us who now the truth of the gospel! Here lies a world of people out before us who do not know. This represents opportunity. We dare not let it pass. We dare not allow the door to close when we hold the gospel message that can save a lost world

-- Via Hobbs Street Herald, P. O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

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-Acts 26:25

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Rising Above Mediocrity

Bill Denton

The average man is just that -- average. He settles for whatever will do. He is not known for excellence. That is why he is average. He makes no extraordinary effort. He does not stand out as an example that others should follow, although frequently he believes himself to be an example. He has no zeal. He offers no service beyond the call of duty. If he is a Christian, he can be counted on to serve God somewhere in the middle. He would not be classified as a delinquent, yet he surely wouldn't be called a zealot either. He would keep the church going, but he's the first to find a million reasons why you shouldn't be doing more.

I'd like to offer a challenge to you. Make 1990 the year you rise above mediocrity. Don't set your sights on things that barely get by. Rise higher. Set lofty goals. Dare to be called a fanatic (That's the technical term for a "fan," as in "football fan"). Give a little extra effort than the average fellow. Dream bigger dreams.

When called on to serve, go the extra mile. Instead of dragging the church down with negative, defeatist thinking, dare to believe that God can do the "all things" you've heard he can do. Believe in the Lord. Believe in His people. Believe you are important to His work. Believe God can do more with you than you've ever thought about before.

Stop being the "under-dog" and become the "upper-dog". Be an achiever who has the reputation of doing things just a bit better. Determine to be the kind of person you've always wanted to be, but were afraid of becoming. Throw fears out the door. Step out in faith. God really is on your side.

--Via Forest Park Newsletter, 5238 Phillips Drive, Forest Park, GA 30050.



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Jail/Prison Ministries



David Wade

There are several well organized and evangelistic jail/prison ministries throughout the State of Alabama. The January 1990 issue of the "Alabama Jail/Prison Reporter" gives some interesting statistics on ten such ministries. Those reporting are West Huntsville, Mayfair, Meridianville, East Cullman, Homewood, Hartselle, Vaughn Park and College Church in Montgomery, Wetumpka, and East Tallassee. Nine of them report 107 baptisms for 1989 and Bill Carr at East Tallassee reports 46 baptisms since the beginning of their work in October 1987.

John Ellis is editor of the "Alabama Jail/Prison Reporter." John grew up in Jasper in the 40's and 50's and was a member of the old Fifth Avenue

congregation. He serves as an elder in the Wetumpka Church of Christ. In the January 1990 issue, he states, "We know that we have not received reports from perhaps half of the work that is being done in the state." It is good to know that concerned Christians are rising to meet the challenge of this long neglected and needed ministry.

In our recent communications John passed along this information:

1) If you would like to receive information on starting a jail/prison ministry, write him at P.O. Box 92, Wetumpka, AL 36092.

2) If you would like to receive the "Alabama Jail/Prison Reporter," send your written request to Hartselle Church of Christ, P.O. Box 741, Hartselle, AL 35640.

3) If you have a friend, relative, or acquaintance in an Alabama jail or prison and want someone from the church to visit them, please send your request to John.

Remember, these ministries need your help and support. Why not make a tax deductible contribution to this good work?

"I was in prison and you came to see me" (Matthew 25:36).

Does God Hear Your Prayers?



David Courington

To be able to pray and know that God hears our prayers is a blessing beyond description. To have the comfort of knowing that at any time, in any place, the only true God, creator of heaven and earth, will hear our petitions and give consideration to our requests is thrilling. Jesus said to his disciples, "Ask, and it shall be given you, seek, and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Luke 11:9). Paul told the Roman brethren to "continue instant in prayer" (Romans 12:12) and the Thessalonian church to "pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17). In a troubled world with many trials and temptations, it goes without saying that we need to pray.

But can we?

Many people assume that anyone can pray and that God will hear them. This is not the case. When did God promise to hear the prayer of one who is not a Christian and makes no effort to obey the word of God? God will not hear the prayers of those who will not walk in his ways. Read the following scriptures and draw your own conclusions.

"Let mine enemy be as the wicked, and he that

riseth up against me as the unrighteous" (Job 27:7). "For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained when God taketh away his soul?" (Job 27:8). "Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh to him?" (Job 27:9).

"The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry" (Psalm 34:15). "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth" (Psalm 34:16).

"When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you . . . Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer, they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me . . . For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord" (Proverbs 1:27-29).

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18). "But verily God hath heard me, he hath attended to the voice of my prayer" (Psalm 66:19). "Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me" (Psalm 66:20).

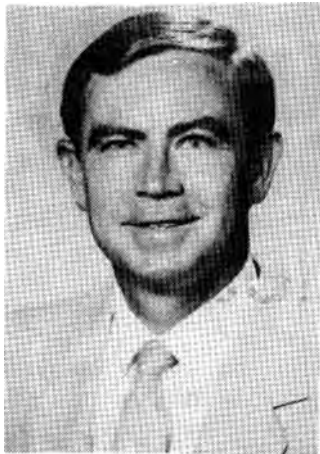
"And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood" (Isaiah 1:15).

"Therefore it is come to pass that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the Lord of hosts." (Zechariah 7:13).

"The Lord is far from the wicked; but he heareth

Continued On Page 3

Footsteps Of Abraham



Weldon Langfield

If one were asked the name of the greatest man who ever lived, perhaps the teachings received in school would influence the response. Some might answer with the name of Marco Polo, Leonardo Da Vinci, Albert Einstein, or even Abraham Lincoln. As we scan the pages of the Bible, however, we find contained therein the records of many outstanding lives. Certainly ranked among the greatest is Abraham. This extraordinary man was born in Ur of the Chaldees around 2000 B.C. At the age of 75, Abram, as he was then called, Sarah his wife and Lot his nephew sojourned to Canaan at God's command (Genesis 12:1-2). Abraham never returned home, but remained a pilgrim all his life.

It has been said that Abraham's "epitaph" is Romans 4:11-12, which says, "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was in uncircumcision: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be in uncircumcision, that righteousness might be reckoned unto them; and the father of circumcision to them who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had in uncircumcision." Abraham's great role today is that of the father of believers . . . those who believe and obey Jesus Christ. Since children are to walk in the steps of their fathers, how is it that we today must walk in the steps of our father Abraham?

First, we walk in the steps of Abraham's great faith. In the book of James, we read, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God." Abraham, when told to leave the Ur of the Chaldees, believed that God's directions for his life were correct. As his life progressed, sometimes things must have seemed very wrong . . . he was, for example, told regarding his lineage, "Look now

toward heaven, and the number of stars, if thou be able to number them . . . So shall thy seed be" (Genesis 14:5). Abraham's faith caused him to give up his family and home of seventy-five years at God's request. Abraham's faith is reminiscent of the trust we are commanded to display in Matthew 10:37, where Jesus commanded, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he hath loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

Secondly, we walk in the steps of full obedience. The Bible commands us to be obedient as was he. In Hebrews 11:8, we read, "By faith Abraham, when he was called obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." There is no evidence of arguments or questions; only willing submission. Just as Abraham's friendship with God prompted full obedience, our friendship to Christ is evidenced by our obedience to his will. Jesus said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things I command you" (John 15:14).

Third, we walk in his steps of regular worship. It has been observed that the progress of Abraham can be traced by the altars which he built. In Genesis 12:8, we read, "He . . . pitched his tent . . . and there he built an altar unto Jehovah, and called upon the name of Jehovah." In chapter 13:18 we again find, Abram . . . built an altar there." Again in Genesis 22:9 we see yet another altar constructed. Likewise "altars" of regular worship are needed today. Every Christian must be resolute in attending all worship services, for the Bible stresses, "Not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh" (Hebrews 10:25). There are, however, other altars we would be wise to erect . . . the altar of family Bible study, the altar of Wednesday night meetings, and the altars of private prayer and Bible study.

Fourth, we walk in his footsteps of hospitality. In Genesis 18 we read of three men (who were in reality angels) appearing to Abraham on the plains of Mamre. Abraham entreated them to allow him to prepare water for their feet and food for their consumption. When they agreed, the fatted calf was slain, and a meal was cheerfully presented. It should be noted that Abraham had huge herds and

many servants. He must have been the epitome of a busy man. Yet the time was available to provide hospitality to these travelers. From this example the writer of Hebrews commands us, "forget not to show love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13:2). Peter further urges, "Using hospitality to one another without murmuring" (I Peter 4:19).

Fifth, we walk in Abraham's steps toward the right goal. The goal of this great patriarch was not to wallow in worldliness, nor to acquire ever-increasing amounts of filthy lucre, nor to multiply herds. Rather he simply desired to follow God. In Hebrews 11:9-10 we read, "By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God." We detect, not begrudging reluctance, but a joyful loyalty to the one who called him out. Sometimes numbered among the saints are those who possess a resentful loyalty to Christ. They don't really enjoy Christianity, but fear unfaithfulness would be less enjoyable. To these people, heaven is not real and the tenets of the Christian life offer nothing more than a burden. Just as Abraham eagerly looked toward the goal of eternal life, the faithful Christian will eagerly await heaven. Paul admonished, "If then ye are raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth" (Colossians 3:1-2). Like Abraham, we are to long for the home of the soul.

Conclusion. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the beggar Lazarus, upon death, was carried to "Abraham's bosom" (Luke 16:22). Abraham lives, and by following in his footsteps, eternal life awaits us as well.

--1000 Highland Road Brentwood, TN 37027.

One Year To Live

If I had but one year to live,
One year to help, one year to give,
One year to love, one year to bless,
One year of better things to stress,
One year to sing, one year to smile,
To brighten each a little while,
One year to sing my Maker's praise.
One year to fill with work my days,
One year to strive for a reward
When I should stand before my Lord.

I think that I would spend each day
In just the very self-same way
That I do now. For from afar
The call may come to cross the bar
At any time, and I must be
Prepared to meet eternity.

So if I have a year to live,
Or just one day in which to give
A pleasant smile, a helping hand,
A mind that tries to understand
A fellow creature when in need,
'tis one with me - I take no heed,
But try to live each day He sends
To serve my gracious Master's ends.
Earnest Worker

Does God Hear Your Prayers?

Continued From Page 2

the prayer of the righteous" (Proverbs 15:29).

"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).

The man who had been healed by Christ in John 9 made a correct statement by saying, "Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth" (John 9:31). His conclusion was right. If a man will not listen to God and strive to do his will, God will not listen to his prayers.

Are you a child of God? Can you be confident that God will hear your prayers? It is folly for one to think that he can completely ignore how God wants him to live, completely disregard God's word, and then in time of sickness, pain, and death, that he can pray to God and that God will hear his prayer.

It is folly for one to think that he can completely ignore how God wants him to live, completely disregard God's word, and then in time of sickness, pain, and death, that he can pray to God and that God will hear his prayer.

--Via The Mailbox Messenger, Maytown Church of Christ, P.O. Box 160, Mulga, AL

Worship Or Performance?



Cecil May, Jr.

I saw parts of two nationally televised "church services" recently, one featuring Jimmy Swaggart and one featuring W. L. Bonner. Both congregations appeared to number in the thousands. Both programs were polished, slick productions.

Swaggart played the piano as well as cousins Jerry Lee Lewis and Mickey Gilley do, and sang with great pathos and haunting beauty. Two other musicians of professional quality performed. The congregation was carried away, raising arms, swaying, captured by the melody and rhythm of the music and by the mesmerizing personality of the charismatic, totally-in-control leader.

Bonner had a large choir and orchestra. They chanted the same words over and over, but with great polish and professional quality, to an almost frantic beat. The congregation not only swayed to the beat, but danced and gyrated in a manner similar to participants on Dance Party or Soul Train, often moving individually into an open area between the pulpit and the congregation to perform solo.

Both speakers showed themselves masters of their art. They played the whole range of emotions, eliciting from their audiences, in turn, laughter, shouts, clapping, and tears.

The songs, and the spoken words were religious in concept. Each speaker taught some significant truths and, neither, while I was listening, taught anything specifically erroneous. The whole, however, was clearly oriented toward entertainment and performance, and its primary appeal was to the flesh; not overtly to the erotic, but overwhelmingly to the sensual.

The underlying question seemed not to be, "What shall we do to please the Lord in worship?" but rather, "What can we do to excite the people?"

I know of no churches of Christ who have come that far, in sense appeal and entertainment, in their corporate worship. I see, however, considerable movement in that direction.

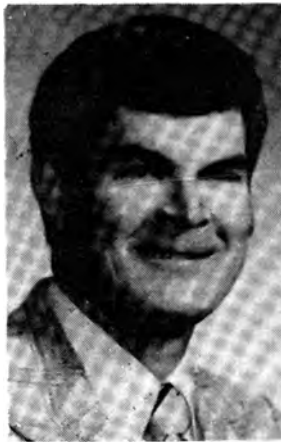
I know of no churches of Christ who have come that far, in sense appeal and entertainment, in their corporate worship. I see, however, considerable movement in that direction.

Often, the steps taken are small ones, and sometimes not in themselves overtly wrong. We talk more about how our singing sounds than about the God we are praising. How long the preacher preaches and how good his sermons make us feel become more important than whether Christ is exalted, sin is condemned and truth is taught. A chorus sings. Delight at the music and approval of a point made by the speaker is expressed by clapping.

The first people to object are usually dismissed as moss-backed traditionalists with an antipathy to any emotion in worship, and sometimes they are

Concerned brethren, not wanting to be identified with the most cantankerous and extreme of the objectors, stay relatively quiet.

Innovators especially do not want to hear, "It may not be wrong in itself, but it can lead to wrong." Within myself I find a great antipathy to making a major issue out of things not clearly shown by scripture to be wrong. It is true,



Ray Hawk

Why am I a member of the church of Christ rather than in some other faith? At one time I was a preacher in a very large denomination. They had a better salary structure as well as a ministerial retirement plan which churches of Christ do not have. Why change? If one denomination is as good as another, why switch?

NOT BECAUSE OF...

I did not change because members of the churches of Christ live better lives than folks in other churches. Jesus had his Judas and we have a few in the twentieth century. Paul spoke of Demas "*hath forsake me, having loved this present world,*" and things haven't changed much in nineteen hundred and twenty five years (II Timothy 4:10). John was burned with his Diotrephes and we haven't been successful in diminishing this sin in our day (III John 9, 10). Christians sin (Acts 8:18-24). Folks still forsake the Lord (Hebrews 10:25-29). Some fall from God's grace (Galatians 5:4). It is a fact that hasn't changed. If I had been looking for a sinlessly perfect people, I did not find them in the churches of Christ. If I had, they would not have wanted me!

I did not change because the churches of Christ have folks who are more friendlier, give more, work more, have no problems, have better reputations, and get along better than any other faith. Church problems have existed since Corinth (I Corinthians 1:10-13). Lukewarmness had its origin with Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-17). Indifference cropped up in Hebrew congregations (Hebrews 4:11). Although we strive for faithfulness in the churches of Christ, we have never reached sinless perfection and never will. Sinless perfection is not our goal. Faithfulness is, and many congregations have attained it. However, I would have become a member of the church of Christ even if the only congregation I had been familiar with would have been like Corinth, or as bad as Laodicea.

BUT DUE TO...

I became a member of the church of Christ because Jesus himself teaches that I must be immersed to be saved (Mark 16:16). At the age of 11 I had been immersed to "show that God, for Christ sake, had already remitted my sins." The church of Christ is the only church that does what Jesus taught in Mark 16:16. Therefore, on May 9, 1957 I was immersed to be saved by Jesus.

I became a member of the church of Christ because my former church taught that it was non-essential to my salvation. It taught that I could be a Christian, live out my life, die and go to heaven without being a member of it. The Lord teaches that his church is essential to my salvation because

however--and here's the rub--that a continuation of small steps in a given direction eventually gets one to the end toward which that direction is leading.

When we get as slick and carnal as Swaggart and Bonner, who will then object? Or who will hear the objector?

-- Via Magnolia Bible College, P. O. Box 1101, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

Differences

he purchased it with his own blood (Acts 20:28). He calls it his body (Ephesians 1:22, 23). To be in his church is to be a member of his body and have him as my head (I Corinthians 12:27; Colossians 1:18, 24). I wanted to be in his church. Therefore, I was immersed into Christ in 1957 (Galatians 3:27).

I became a member of the church of Christ because I can be just a Christian without putting a denominational, man-made name before it (I Peter 4:16). I can call the church by those descriptive names given by God in his word rather than using divisive, man-made ones (Romans 16:16; I Corinthians 1:2). I can preach from the Bible without being restricted by a denominational manual, discipline, minutes, or catechism (I Peter 4:11; II Timothy 3:16, 17; II Peter 1:3). I can serve in my priesthood as a preacher without being elevated into unscriptural positions or be referred to by non-biblical titles.

I became a member of the church of Christ because the membership demands book, chapter, and verse preaching. If it is opinion, tradition, or feelings, it means nothing. If it is a "*thus saith the Lord,*" we are obligated to follow it. The Bible is our only guide. God speaks to us through its instruction. If a practice is not authorized by God's word, we must not practice it.

CONCLUSION

Although my brethren sometimes disappoint me, I will never leave the Lord nor his body, the church. Although I may sometimes disappoint my brethren, I trust they will never leave the Lord nor his church. If the Lord's church is important to him, it must be to us.

-- Via Campbell Street Bulletin, 1490 Campbell Street, Jackson, TN. 38305

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WORDS OF TRUTH
 Radio
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 Daily Over
WPYK A.M. 1010
7:00-7:30 a.m.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am not mad,
Words of Truth a

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 26

FRIDAY, JANUARY 26, 1990

NUMBER 4

Unity Among Local Congregations



BOBBY KEY

I have heard it said by a number of old timers in our area: "It is a shame that we cannot have the unity and fellowship among congregations that we enjoyed a few years ago." Perhaps a number of things contribute to the lack of support from neighboring congregations when

there is a gospel meeting or area wide singing. People are usually busier these days; however, other essential ingredients may be lacking.

There can be no real unity in the absence of genuine love of the brotherhood. "Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king" (I Peter 2:17). Those who love the brotherhood look for something to praise rather than something to criticize. They desire a close tie of fellowship and diligently seek it. Real love will heal the wounds of discord and anoint the bruises of ill-feelings. "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins" (I Peter 4:8).

True dedication to Christ will cause our souls to yearn for harmony among all saints. Christ loves the church. All who love the Lord also love the church. But one cannot love the church and fail to be concerned about its welfare in every way. Show me a Christian who is really consecrated to Christ, and I will show you one who is anxious for the peace and unity of the brotherhood.

Of course, there can be no harmony among congregations where loyalty to the truth is neglected. Doctrines of men hinder fellowship. There can be no peace at the cost of compromise

with error. Let us all emphasize the truth and preach the basic principles of the New Testament and urge all to unite on a "thus saith the Lord." To

Let us all emphasize the truth and preach the basic principles of the New Testament and urge all to unite on a "thus saith the Lord."

have a united brotherhood all must love the truth, preach the truth, and live by the truth. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

No one will promote unity unless he loves peace. The man who loves strife will sow discord. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). "Let us therefore follow after the things that make for

peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Romans 14:19). We are told to seek peace. When we cultivate within our hearts an intense love and desire for peace we will become peacemakers.

When the people of God are found working for the same goal they will be united. A passion for lost souls will make us promoters of unity. If every member of the church could contemplate the world lost in sin and in danger of eternal damnation we could all unite together in order to bring them to Christ. We must not forget our purpose for being. Not only must we be interested in the lost in our own backyard, we must have an interest in the lost in other places. And finally, let us pray for our sister congregations!

-- 324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

"One Nation Under God"

The elders of the Sycamore church of Christ in Cookeville, Tennessee have selected bro. Bill Johnson to be the coordinator of the "One Nation Under God" program. This program is designed to present the gospel to every home in the United States in July, 1991. Our hope is that the methods evolved and the success achieved will enable us to continue with enthusiasm to take the gospel to every other nation when this program is finished.

This is one of the most ambitious undertakings ever attempted by churches of Christ since Pentecost, because the population growth has made more persons available than were in the world in New Testament days.


The planned mailing will be the largest ever done in the United States by anyone except the national government, and will reach over

100,000,000 homes. To achieve this goal, we urgently need to raise over \$17,000,000 or about \$170 million. A conservative estimate of reasons for this effort is that there will be over one million homes seeking further teaching.

In connection with this mailing, we are asking over 120 existing brotherhood television programs, all radio programs, gospel papers, church bulletins and all other publications to work together in this magnificent effort. At the proper time, we hope to have simultaneous gospel meetings, or at least Sunday sermons on the theme of "One Nation Under God."

To those who realize the urgency of helping immediately to get this thrilling task accomplished,

Continued on page 4



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

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

David Wade . . . Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Time For A New Temple?



The above caption heads an article in TIME Magazine, dated October 16, 1989. It tells of traditionalist Jews who hope to rebuild the temple but the Muslim mosque at the temple site and centuries of enmity stand in their way.

According to the article, several small religious organizations in

Jerusalem are already making preparations for a new temple in spite of division among the Jewish ranks and the certainty of provoking Muslim fury. It seems as though temple restoration is also a fixation for some protestants, who deem a new temple the precondition for Christ's Second Coming.

No group is more zealous than the Temple Institute in preparing for a new temple. During six years of research, the institute has reconstructed 38 of the ritual implements needed in the event temple sacrifices are restored. They plan to complete another 65 items as funds permit. A museum of the completed pieces had drawn 10,000 visitors by the time the article was written.

We should never cease to be amazed at such an exercise of religious futility. If the temple could be rebuilt, which it cannot, it would serve no good spiritual purpose for anyone, not even the Jews. Jesus predicted the destruction of the temple (Matthew 24:1-34). Jesus said, "Your house is left to you desolate" (Matthew 23:38). The glory of the Lord had departed the temple never to enter it again. For several years after the beginning of the church and a change of the law (Acts 2:47; Hebrews 7:12), God permitted the temple to remain. Evidently, God was giving ample time for his historical people to abandon the old system of sacrifice and ritual which He had instituted. In July of 70 A.D. time was up. General Titus, with the Roman legion, marched against the city of Jerusalem and demolished it, along with the temple.

The sacrificial system in Judaism was brought to

an abrupt halt and has never been restored. Nor should it be restored.

For all the temple hopes, whether among premillennialists or orthodox Judaism consider the following:

1) The spiritual Jew is not to be found in orthodox Judaism and in their hopes of restoring the temple. "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not of the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God" (Romans 2:28-29).

"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:26-29). In fact, Paul declares that the "household of faith," the "new creation," is now the "Israel of God" (Galatians 6:10, 15-16).

2) God no longer dwells in any temple made with hands (Acts 7:47-48; 17:24). God abides in the church collectively (I Corinthians 3:16-17), and in the Christian individually (I Corinthians 6:19-20) through faith (Ephesians 3:17).

3) Any effort to restore the Old Testament system of animal sacrifices is a direct denial of the all-sufficiency of the perfect sacrifice of Christ (Hebrews 9:1-10:23). The blood of animals can never take away sin (Hebrews 10:11). The Old Testament sacrifices only foreshadowed "the good things to come" (Hebrews 10:1). Jesus poured out his blood as "one sacrifice for sins forever" (Hebrews 10:12).

4) There is not one word in scripture declaring that Jesus will ever set foot on this earth again or reign in the temple at Jerusalem. Paul declares, at his coming, the living who are transformed and the raised dead "shall be caught up together...in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (I Thessalonians 4:17). The faithful are promised that they "shall always be with the Lord."

There shall never be a "time for a new temple."

Lectureship

Revive Us Again is the theme of the sixteenth annual East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions lectureship. The program will be held March 4-7, 1990, at the Kams church building, Knoxville, Tennessee. The goal of the lectureship will be to inspire, convict, edify, and motivate brethren toward a spiritual revival. Among the speakers will be: Hugo McCord, Franklin Camp, Headman Nichols, Curtis Cates, Robert R. Taylor, Jr., C.W. Bradley, and Floyd Dethrow. Sybil Byrd will teach a daily ladies class. A lectureship book will be published and available at \$10.00, and audio tapes will also be available at \$1.00 each.

Edwin S. Jones, Lectureship Director, East Tennessee School of Preaching and Mission, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road Knoxville, TN 37931.

The Door

JERRY JENKINS

In the city of Rome at the Vatican in St. Peter's Cathedral, there is a famous door which is opened only once every 25 years. Doors come in all sizes and shapes. Some are built of stone, wood, glass, metal, bamboo, plastic, etc. There is one door that is the most famous of all.

In every language there is a word for "door." Doors are known to all people. When Jesus employed the word "door," He knew everybody would know what He was speaking about. The word "door" occurs many times in the Bible -- more than 200. Jesus said enter into your closet, shut the door and pray (Matthew 6:6). He told a parable of five virgins who made insufficient preparation and the door was shut. After His death, women were concerned about a large stone and who would remove the stone from the door,

Continued on page 3

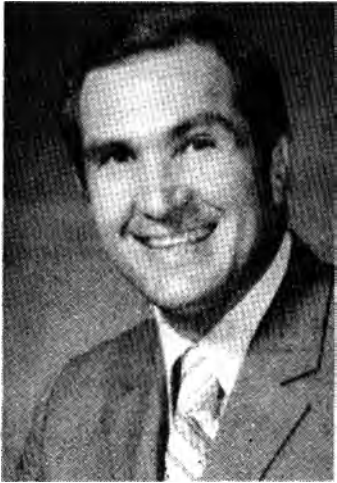
Parental Delinquency

An eighteenth century poet wrote these words: "Why prejudice a garden in favor of flowers and fruit? Why not let the clods of dirt choose for themselves between cockleburs and strawberries?"

A good many parents argue that children should be allowed to choose for themselves in matters of

Continued on page 4

Portrait Of A Generous Man



The ability of a Christian to give liberally to the church is determined by the prosperity of his soul; not by the profit of his business nor by the profusion of his salary. One can be liberal even if his total income is only two mites; but it takes a generous soul to give just as it

HARDEMAN NICHOLS takes a generous soul to give in times of prosperity. Here is his portrait.

1. HIS "WANTS" SUCCUMB TO "NEEDS." Generosity cannot live in a soul that must first supply all "wants" before giving. Desires for things of this world must yield first place to the spirit. Jesus demands, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). This is needful and one can't be saved without it; but he can go to heaven without fulfilling all his "wants" for material things. Putting the importance of the spiritual above houses and lands and luxuries will cause one to offer first-fruits, not cores and

Putting the importance of the spiritual above houses and lands and luxuries will cause one to offer first-fruits, not cores and peelings, to God.

peelings, to God. He knows that he must not get so tied up with debt, obtaining things he wants, that he can't give, covetousness is still idolatry. The generous soul gives first; then his "wants" are considered. This mortifies his greed.

2. HE TO THE LOST GIVES HEED. A generous heart understands the worth of a soul and the tremendous price of redemption paid by the Lord. And he is so thankful for such an unspeakable gift that he cannot be "at ease in Zion." He holds up the light of truth by supporting those who preach the Word. His offerings plant the seed.

3. FOR THE DESOLATE AND POOR HE

PLEADS. A generous soul is not selfish. He is not like the priest and Levite in the Lord's parable in Luke 10:30-37 who acted upon the satanic principle of "What is mine is mine and I'll keep it." Rather, he, like the good Samaritan, opened his ear and his hand to the cry of the needy, beautifying the heavenly principle of "What is mine is yours when you are in need and I'll share it." If he were not generous he would have no rightful claim to the love of God. "But if any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in

him?" (I John 3:17). One can't possibly love without giving. His love demands his deeds.

4. HE GIVES JUST LIKE IT READS. The generous man proves the sincerity of his love (II Corinthians 8:8) by giving upon the first day of every week as God has prospered him (I Corinthians 16:1, 2). His WEEKLY gifts are not WEAKLY; because he gives "according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." (II Corinthians 8:12).

--Via West End News, Birmingham, Alabama 35211.

Overcoming Satan



CECIL MAY, JR.

not their lives unto the death" (Revelation 12:10-12).

By three things Satan is overcome and cast down.

The blood of the Lamb. Victory over Satan is certain and at the end will be clearly decisive. It will not, however, be won in accord with the premillennial vision of a battle of Armageddon fought with carnal weapons and the shedding of rivers of blood. It is won through Christ's atoning death, the shedding of his own blood.

He "spoiled" Satan and his angels and "triumphed over them openly," "in his cross" (Colossians 2:14-15). He became flesh and blood that "through death" he might destroy the devil (Hebrews 2:14). Satan's power is in the sin with which he enslaves us and in the death which sin brings. In Christ "we have redemption through his

"Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. and they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved

blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:14). With forgiveness of sins comes life and freedom from Satan's clutches.

The word of their testimony. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds" (II Corinthians 10:4). In our vocabulary, "carnal" does not stand opposite to "mighty," but biblically, it does. Isaiah had said to Judah long ago, "The Egyptians are men, and not gods; and their horses flesh, and not spirit (Isaiah 31:3). The weapons of the spirit are the mightiest, and our "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17) is the mightiest of all. "The gospel...is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes" (Romans 1:16).

"The word of God is living and powerful; and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Hebrews 4:12). Jesus defeated Satan with three passages of scripture. Slaves are freed by knowing the truth (John 8:32). The engrafted word is able to save our souls (James 1:21). Satan still cannot stand against the word of God, the gospel.

They loved not their lives unto death. The early Christians' commitment to Christ and utter disregard even for their lives, when it came to practicing their faith and following their Lord, was the third factor in their victory over Satan. They had "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14), but also they "were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and the word of God, and had not worshiped the beast nor his image" (Revelation 20:4).

Seek first the kingdom, (Matthew 6:33). Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth (Colossians 3:2). the priorities of the overcoming Christian are clear. Here, perhaps, is today's missing link. The blood of Christ is still adequate to wash away sin. The word of God is still powerful to pull down evil's strongholds. Do we have the dedication? Can it be said of us, "They loved not their lives unto death"?

Magnolia Bible College, P.O. Box 1101
Kosciusko, Mississippi 39090

The Door

Continued from page 2

allowing them to enter into the tomb and anoint the body of Jesus. Sometimes the word "door" is employed in the figurative sense. Paul, in both his letters to Corinth and also his letter to Colosse, mentions a door that was open.

But the most famous door of all is that mentioned in John 10:9 "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." There are some lessons that we can learn concerning doors. First, doors are for coming and going. In the beautiful analogy of our text, Jesus depicts the strength that we derive from Him. We go and meet the problems of the secular world in which we live, but we can come to Him for help and comfort.

Second, doors are for protection and safety. Every visitor to foreign lands must be impressed with the tremendous doors of the ancient walled cities. Jesus provides us safety and protection. Some buildings have many doors. At Roebuck Parkway, our building has more than 128 doors. Some buildings have only one door. On the way to find a right relationship with God, Jesus is the only door (John 10:1ff).

Finally, we must remember that doors will close. Jesus said that we can open the door and come in and sup with Him at the present time (Revelation 3:20), but the day will come when the door will be shut (Matthew 25:10).

--via Roebuck Parkway Reminder.

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What We Want Is Not Always What We Need!



DALTON KEY

Paul wrote the Galatian brethren, saying, "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10) The apostle was concerned, above all else, with pleasing the Lord. His message was not

determined by the whims or dictates of his hearers, but by what God had spoken. We have no record of Paul ever taking a poll of public opinion, or a survey of brotherhood thinking, in order to decide what position to take or what doctrine to preach. Notwithstanding popular sentiment, he doggedly proclaimed "all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27), and "Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (I Corinthians 2:2).

The church of our day would do well to follow Paul's example. In our frenzied desire to please everyone, and offend no one, we have ultimately pleased almost no one, including and most importantly, the Lord.

Consider our attitudes as a brotherhood with respect to working with young people. More often than not, we ask, "What do they want?" And because they are young, not yet mature and seasoned in the faith, they answer, "Give us more entertainment, more fun and games, more silliness. Make us feel good." Foolishly, we oblige them. Years later, though, when a good number of them have left the Lord and his church for the excitement of the world or sensationalized religion, we will find the kids lost, the parents upset, the church frustrated, and almost no one pleased. Pleasing ourselves in place of the Lord always results in disaster.

Please do not misunderstand. The blame does not rest with our young people. By and large, the youth of the church today are honest, sincere and in love with the Lord. But they do not always want what they need. Our children would much prefer chocolate bars to salads. This preference does not fault them, but it does clearly show us, as parents, our responsibilities in giving them what they need, nutritionally. The same principle holds true in the spiritual realm. The fault and blame is ours - those of us who have ignored needs, over-indulged wants, and nearly starved, spiritually, an entire generation of the Lord's body. Fun is fine, in moderation, but not at the expense of knowing "the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 3:15).

And what about our preaching? Have we, as preachers of the gospel, gone into the business of striving to please men with our preaching? The entertainment-crazed masses, whether in the he world or in the pew, want more jokes and less Jesus, more stories and less substance, more positive thinking and less personal sacrifice. And

many of us have turned our backs to the gospel, to

The entertainment-crazed masses, whether in the world or in the pew, want more jokes and less Jesus, more stories and less substance, more positive thinking and less personal sacrifice.

the doctrine of Christ, choosing rather to please men. Paul warned Timothy that the time would come when his hearers would not "endure sound

doctrine," but with "itching ears" would "heap to themselves teachers" who would tell them what they wanted to hear. But Timothy was charged, in spite of his hearers wants, to "preach the word," to "reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 4:1-4). Timothy was to attend to spiritual needs, not carnal wants. Preachers, we must return once again to the charge of heaven given in II Timothy 4:2 and begin preaching the word.

Remember, what we want is not always what we need.

"One Nation Under God"

Continued from page 1

we offer the following suggestions:

1. Give an immediate contribution to help with current expenses.
2. Plan a regular weekly contribution as great as your wisdom, love and budget will allow.
3. Encourage individuals and Bible classes to participate as much as possible. Some, for example, are encouraging having "Mission Cans" for home use and in classrooms and foyers to encourage all members in evangelism.
4. After the members understand the nature and purpose of the program, have the congregation plan two or three "extra-budgetary contributions" to give the members a chance to express their desire to be a fellow-worker with God in this tremendous effort.
5. Recognize the urgency for you to share with

all other persons and congregations the information and enthusiasm you have as soon as you can.

Even though hundreds of congregations and individuals from about 40 states have made commitments and some have sent in contributions to assist in underwriting current costs, the need is urgent for others to respond immediately.

Several congregations are planning area-wide meetings to see and hear a video presentation of the program. Any individual or congregation who needs a video tape to help present this challenge to any audience, call Horace Burks or Bill Johnson immediately at 1-800-251-6871, or write to Sycamore church of Christ, P. O. Box 3273, Cookeville, TN 38502.

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE. "Today is the accepted time." We need your response NOW.

Parental Delinquency

Continued from page 2

Bible School and church attendance.

The teaching of modern psychology has brought about this attitude. It has been practiced in the public schools. Parents have taken it up. Such parents are shirking their responsibility and neglecting their duty. Children can choose for themselves, but almost invariably they choose the wrong. This self-expression psychology is responsible for much of juvenile delinquency, which can be traced to parental delinquency. On

the American scene the reaping time is here. The best answer to our question is found in the Word of God. The two sons of Eli made themselves vile and the judgment of God fell on the family because Eli "restrained them not" (I Samuel 3:13).

The Scripture warns us that "a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Proverbs 29:15).

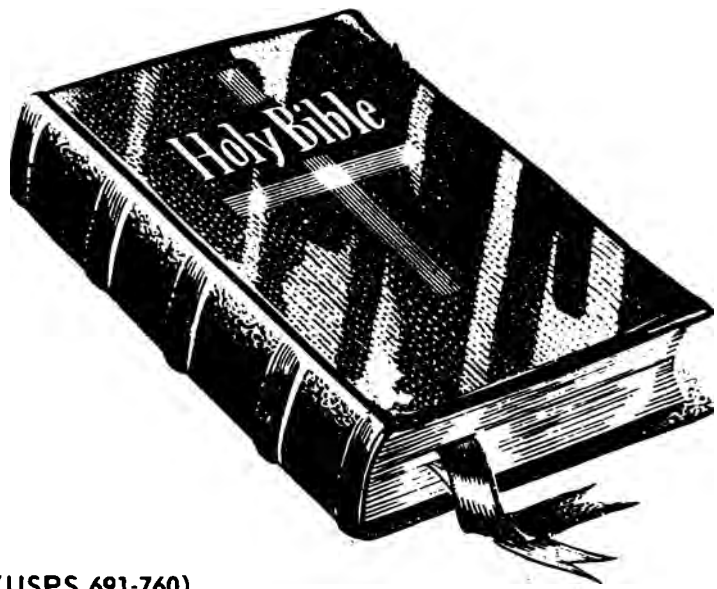
-- from N. Beaton bulletin Corsicana, TX

Verse to Remember

The Spirit of Worship

Let the words of my mouth,
and the meditation of my heart,
be acceptable in thy sight, O
Lord, my strength and my re-
deemer (Ps. 19:14).





(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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Rainbows In The Gutter

Bobby Dockery

"A preacher walking through the slums of a great city noticed two small children standing on the sidewalk staring intently into the gutter. "What did you lose," he asked. "Mister, we ain't lost nuthin'," the little girl answered. "Me and brother have found something." "What have you found, then," the preacher wanted to know. The little girl smiled and said, "A rainbow. See it?" Sure enough the oil from a near-by filling station, floating on the surface of the water was refracting the sun's light in glorious rainbow colors. The children were right. They had found a rainbow in the gutter!

Often in life we find glory in unexpected places. The Bible speaks of some rainbows which can be seen in the gutter . . .

1) **God's Love Is A Rainbow In The Gutter Of Human Rebellion.** God has never quit loving us. When man had rebelled against Him, turned away from Him, responded to Him with nothing but indifference and neglect, God still continued to love (John 3:16; Romans 5:8). The marvel of God's love is celebrated in the words of an old hymn:

*"There's a rainbow of love,
Pointing to heaven above;
Shining through ev'ry cloud,
There's a rainbow of love."*

2) **The Cross Is A Rainbow In The Gutter Of Man's Lost Sinfulness.** Jesus tasted death for every man (Hebrews 2:9). In Him we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:7). He paid a debt He did not owe to cancel a debt we could not pay! (John 19:30). A rainbow unites heaven and earth; its ends are on the earth but its arch is in the sky. The cross of Christ is God's rainbow, spanning heaven and earth and uniting God and man together. By His cross Christ bridged the gap that separated us from God!

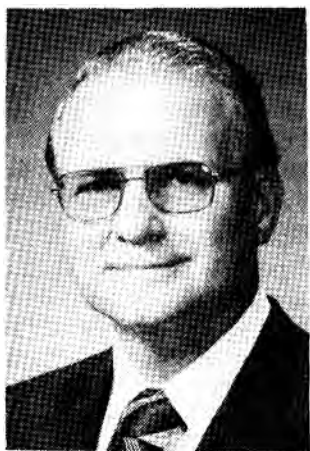
3) **The Church Is A Rainbow In The Gutter Of This Wicked World.** This world is a bleak, inhospitable place to grace. Evil surrounds us . . . We often seem to be living in some modern Pergamum, "where Satan's throne is" (Revelation 2:13). We find ourselves in a grim, ceaseless struggle against principalities and powers, against spiritual

wickedness in high places! But our God has given us a fortress . . . a place of refuge. The church is a place of hope and help and warm fellowship! It is a place where we can find grace to help in time of need. The gates of hell will never prevail against it and all spiritual blessings are in it! (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:3, 20, 22). The church is another of God's rainbows. . .

I am thankful that we serve a God who deals in rainbows. In the long ago He said, "I set my bow in the cloud and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between me and earth . . ." (Genesis 9:13). Now He wants us to open our eyes to see the rainbows -- to learn to walk by faith and not by sight! If your life is in the gutter -- apart from God, lost, burdened by guilt -- there's a rainbow of hope for you! The grace of God has appeared to all men! (Titus 2:11). You need to open your life to it -- surrender to grace in obedient faith and come to God! (Romans 6:3-4, 17).

Do you have faith to see the rainbow of God's love and respond to it?
--Fayetteville, Arkansas.

What Will Become Of The Wicked?



Bobby Key

I have before me a letter from a very angry man. His last two sentences read, "How can you put your faith in a man named Jesus, an out-and-out homosexual, to save you? Right now I wish I believed in hell, so I could tell you where to go." A well known editor wrote, "Hell has gone out of style. Not many

preachers preach about it any more and not many people really believe in it. This writer is included. The idea of an all-knowing God deliberately creating faulty human beings so that he might roast them forever in lakes of fire seems very strange. There isn't any road to hell."

Our liberal editor of the above statements is

speaking for the majority of people today. Preachers are not doing much to help a bad situation. Some go out of their way to get everybody to like them and say, "peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14). The fear of punishment has largely been removed from our preaching. Because of this, people continue to sin (Ecclesiastes 8:11); and there is no fear of God before their eyes. If hell does not exist, the devil certainly is a fool! The Lord was also mistaken, for He talked a great deal about a place called hell and advised everybody to stay out of it. He asked, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell (Gehenna)" (Matthew 23:33).

The following passages tell the fate of the wicked:

(1) "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psalm 9:17).

(2) "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matthew 25:46).

(3) "Begone from me, with the curse resting upon you, into the fire of the ages (aionion - eternal fire)

which has been prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41 - Weymouth's Translation). Notice, friend, the wicked go to a place prepared for the devil and his angels. They did the devil's will, became partakers of his nature, and they must share his destiny!

(4) "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Gehenna)" (Matthew 10:28).

(5) "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).

Every responsible person on earth who walks in his own willful and stubborn way refusing to obey God will suffer eternal punishment -- will be eternally banished from the presence of God; having forfeited eternal life. The state of the wicked will be eternal. God help us to stay out of such a place.

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

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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Good Advice

Ken Tyler

James said, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (James 1:19-20). In this passage James gives three qualities that all of us should possess as Christians. Let us study each one.

1. **"Swift to hear."** Many of us are not very good listeners. We should strive to develop a fast and attentive mind, a disposition ready to listen. We cannot remember names because we do not listen when people introduce themselves to us. Sometimes we form wrong opinions of others and cause trouble because we do not properly listen. We should listen to our children, mates, bosses and our fellowman in general. There are a lot of people who just need someone to talk to. May we be individuals that are "swift to hear."

2. **"Slow to speak."** James is simply saying, "Be a good listener and then think before you speak." Hasty words get so many of us into trouble. Solomon said, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in heaven and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few" (Ecclesiastes 5:2). Do not SAY everything you THINK! Bring your thoughts into subjection to Christ before you speak. We all need to work at being "slow to speak."

3. **"Slow to wrath."** This is the result of being "swift to hear" and "slow to speak." We listen and think carefully before we act. It's easy to make some serious mistakes when we act hastily in the heat of a moment. We must never forget that we are Christians. We must also understand the harm and hurt we can do if we get out of control. Anger is one of the great tools the Devil uses to destroy homes and churches. Remember, James said, ". . . the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." Let us be "slow to wrath."

I pray the thoughts of this article will help us be

Continued on page 3

The Editor's Pen



David Wade

We Are Living In Perilous Times



David Wade

January 22, 1990 marked the seventeenth anniversary of the United States Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. What some would call the "enlightened age" is more correctly called by scripture, "perilous times" (II Timothy 3:1-7). We are living in perilous times when the abortion mills have legally killed over 26 million babies since January 22, 1973. A few comparisons may help you to realize the enormity of this problem. In seventeen years the abortion slaughter has exceeded twenty times the war dead in the two hundred fourteen year history of our nation. In this short time death by abortion has eliminated an 11.3% equivalent of our present population. In America an average of 4,190 babies are dying by abortion each day. Yes, we are living in perilous times. The unborn are dying in perilous times. When two people enter the abortion clinic only one person leaves alive.

We are living in perilous times when a teenage unmarried expectant mother can have an abortion without ever informing her parents or having their consent. And yet a minor must have parental consent to have her ears pierced. She cannot have a tooth pulled or donate blood under age 17 without parental or guardian consent. Yes, we are living in perilous times.

We are living in perilous times when the unborn have no protection, no rights, not even the recognition of personhood. There is no crime or penalty if you destroy the unborn child. Try disturbing the Bald Eagle's nest or crack an egg, or kill the mother and you go to prison. Great construction projects in progress costing billions, have been halted because of the environmental impact on Snail Darters. "The legs of the lame are not equal." Yes, we are living in perilous times.

We are living in perilous times when some political candidates who have no Bible convictions are wetting the proverbial finger and holding it up to see which way the political winds are blowing. Newscasters are telling us that even the President's household is divided on this issue. Many pro-life Republicans are floundering for a softer stance on the abortion issue as they bow in submission to the strident opposition of the pro-choice groups. Yes, we are living in perilous times!

What can I do to help combat the abortion evil? Edmund Burke said over 200 years ago, "The only thing necessary for triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." Here are six things that we can do.

1. **Pray** -- as if this is the only thing that matters,

for in truth, perhaps it is.

2. **Educate** -- yourself, your family and those within your sphere of influence. The **Handbook On Abortion** by Dr. and Mrs. J. C. Willke is an excellent source of information and is available at many Christian book stores.

3. **Work** -- for the service, educational and political groups who support the pro-life cause. For more information how and where you can help, contact National Right to Life, National Office, Suite 402, 419 7th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004-22993.

4. **Contribute** -- time, effort, and money to the pro-life cause. Most organizations are non-profit and your stewardship is greatly needed and appreciated. Please exercise good, sound Christian judgment in these matters.

5. **Vote** -- and support pro-life candidates in local and general elections. We need a pro-life amendment to the Constitution and this can only happen if we continue to elect candidates who will support the right of the unborn.

6. **Write** -- letters to your Senators and Representatives, to your newspapers, radio and television stations, to sponsors of programs, to local government, health department, etc. Keep your letter brief, to the point and courteous. Be sure to sign your name. Let's keep the issue before the public until we get results.

The Coach Is A Christian!

Ray Cox

Gene Stallings became Alabama's head football coach last Thursday. You probably know his credentials of being trained under Bear Bryant and Tom Landry. But, you may not know Gene Stallings is a devout Christian. And, that is why we are interested in Gene Stallings.

This is a Christian universally acclaimed by those who know him. His players at Phoenix say they wish they had more eligibility left so they could play for him in college. Paul Finebaum, not known for his accolades of people with character, describes Gene as a "deeply religious man, devoted to his family." An Arizona reporter says, "They are so devoted that it almost looks phony, but it's not." Gene's four daughters all went to Abilene Christian University. His other child, John Mark, has Down's syndrome.

You may have seen a United Way commercial which runs during NFL games and features Gene and John Mark. Finebaum describes it as an "emotional, gut-wrenching" ad. The coach has led fundraising efforts to build a home for retarded children at Abilene. He is also known for phoning

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How To Live The Christian Life



W.A. Holley

One must begin with a genuine conversion to Christ Jesus and his way. Conversion to Christ involves faith, repentance, confession, and baptism as taught in your Bible (John 3:16; Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 13:3, 5; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38). It is impossible for one to live a

Christian life if one is not a Christian. For example, one cannot live the life of a married person if he/she is not married.

The fruits of a Christian life must be apparent to all (Titus 2:11-12). One's entire body must be devoted to the service of Christ (Romans 12:1-3).

The Coach Is A Christian

Continued From Page 2

encouragement to families with children who have Down's syndrome. Steve Schoenfield, the Arizona reporter, states: "Even if he doesn't even know them, he is simply that compassionate."

Tom Landry says, "I don't know a better person." Others describe him as "kind and gentle," "straight and honest." Al Del Greco, Kicker at Auburn and who has been playing for Stallings as a Phoenix Cardinal, tells of the coach's prayer before the final game of the season, a game vital to Phoenix's play-off chances. Stallings began the prayer with thanks for the safe delivery of Del Greco's child which had just been born. "It was our biggest game of the year and he started out the prayer with that. That has always impressed me." Another Cardinal states that Stallings spent as much time in team meetings discussing the important things in life as much as he did talking about football. The Birmingham Post-Herald quotes this player, Ron Wolfley, "He taught us things not only about football, but about life, about raising a family. He taught me so much. I'm indebted to him for life."

Gene Stallings may or may not win football games for Alabama. But, he is already a winner. It is obvious he tries to exemplify Christ. May God give us more Gene Stallings!

--Attalla Advocate (Jan. 14, 1990), 503 Hughes Avenue, Attalla, AL 35954.

Good Advice

Continued from page 2

better children of God. This is a challenging passage that requires discipline on our part. It is easy to say and do things that we later deeply regret. Being "swift to hear, slow to speak and slow to wrath" will solve many of our problems. Why not resolve to make these qualities rules for your life?

--P.O. Box 376, Arab, AL 35016.

It involves service to the less fortunate (James 1:27). We must love, not in word, but in deed and in truth (I John 3:17-18). There must be no hypocrisy involved. What does this word mean? It is defined: "A feigning to be what one is not or to believe what one does not" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary). All pretentiousness is outlawed by Almighty God.

We shall suggest a few guidelines which can aid you in living the Christian life --

(1) Endeavor to develop a wholesome attitude. Anyone can make a career of finding fault with everything and everybody (Matthew 7:1-5). Of course, others are not perfect, but neither are you! Learn to look on the bright side of life. There is far too much darkness already. One can look up and see the stars or one can look down and see the mud. It will help to possess a warm and friendly disposition. Kind and gentle words win friends and influence people. Keep a cemetery in your backyard in which to bury the faults of your friends.

(2) One needs to understand that there are some "Thou shalt nots" (Exodus 20:1-17). No one is living a Christian life while committing sin (Galatians 5:19-21). The rich young ruler asked Jesus, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" What was Jesus' answer? We read, "Thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, honor thy father and thy mother: and, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 19:16-22). Imagine what healing would take place in our nation if these commands were honored today (Proverbs 14:34).

(3) Remember that there are some "Thou Shalts." Jesus 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). The apostle John wrote, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

You must obey the Lord's commands to believe, repent of your sins, confess Jesus' name before men, and to be baptized in his name for remission of sins (John 3:16; Acts 17:30-31; 8:37; 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4).

Following these primary commands, there are other commands addressed to children of God which must be obeyed. What are some of these? Well, the Lord requires his people to assemble upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 10:25), to engage in worship as prescribed by Him (Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:19), and to follow "in spirit and in truth," as commanded by Him who died for us (John 4:23-24).

Although there are many distractions, all Christians must work for unity, peace, and harmony of the church with Jesus Christ so dearly loves (Ephesians 5:22-24).

Do not sow discord (Proverbs 6:16-19). Honor the elders, deacons, preachers, song leaders, Bible class teachers and one another (Romans 13:6-10). Make certain that you set a Christian example (I Timothy 4:12).

(4) Learn to be loyal and faithful to God at all cost. Some elder, preacher, or other Christian may seem unworthy of your support, but keep on serving the Lord for he never changes (Hebrews 13:8). You can be saved if others are and you can be

saved if others are not. In apostolic times there were many false teachers and profligate church members, but Paul never allowed them to turn him aside from his duties (I Corinthians 5:1-13; II Timothy 4:10-18).

In many places where the church of Christ exists, there are many drifters, wanderers, floaters, who are constantly going from one congregation to another, seeking something they will never find -- perfection. Such members refuse to serve the Lord under the eldership, not wanting any responsibility, they become lost (?) to their duty and responsibility as Christians. Such a practice is always sinful. This scribe has lived in cities where there were many local churches and, with his own eyes, he has seen members of the church who never had a church home, always drifting from one congregation to another. Such a practice robs the church in many ways!!

Jesus Christ wants his followers to be "rooted and grounded" in his will and way. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love" (Ephesians 3:17). Christians must be "grounded and settled," not drifting from pillar to post (Colossians 1:23). Furthermore, we are to be "rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving," wrote Paul (Colossians 2:7).

Any plant must grow down before it can grow up. Isaiah knew well the principle involved when he wrote, "And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward" (Isaiah 37:31).

Why do we have so many crybabies, whiners, complainers, fault finders, unhappy members? Can it be because of the lack of being "rooted and grounded" in the basic principles of God's holy word? Is it not time for us to grow up and begin obeying the word God has given unto us?

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

The Judgement



Winfred Clark

Most people who read their Bibles are well aware of the term, "judgement." The Hebrew writer speaks of the fact that, "it is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgement" (Hebrews 9:27). What then can we learn from the Bible concerning the judgement?

I. There is the SURENESS of the judgement.

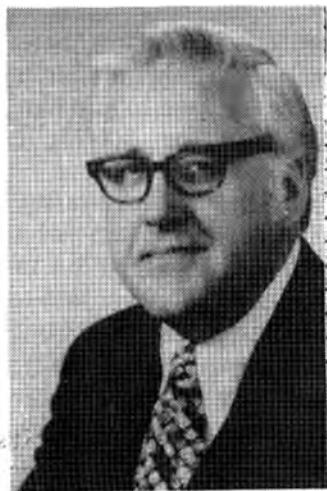
Go back to the verse in Hebrews noted above. None of us doubt the sureness of death. That is dramatized before our eyes from time to time. We have no doubts of it's sureness. Neither should there be any doubt about the fact of the judgement for these are tied together in this verse. Yes, it is sure. It will occur.

We show ourselves foolish indeed when we ignore this fact. It will come and we must be there.

II. There will be a STANDARD by which we will

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Procedure Is Usually Short Of Potential



Edsel Burleson

taught us to take the positive view - this is the view of faith. It involves trust in God and trust in his power to fulfill his promises if we trust and obey. It involves trust in our fellow man - believing that

What do we see when we look at an eight ounce glass containing four ounces of milk? Do we say it is half empty? or half full? Both estimates are factual, but there is a world of difference in the point of view. We can concentrate on our lacks, our fears, our doubts and dry up spirituality. Jesus

We can concentrate on our lacks, our fears, our doubts and dry up spiritually.

with God's help he can do better.

An interesting article appeared in Bulletin Digest which emphasized the difference in what is often done and what could be done.

"A hundred years ago a good cow would give about 600 pounds of milk a year. In 1972 there was a cow whose name was Hattie who gave 44,000 pounds of milk.

"The ordinary wild bird lays six eggs a year. Did you know that experts have produced a hen that lays 365 eggs a year!

"God built into the cow and the hen unbelievable capacity for expansion. If God did that for the cow and the hen, think of what He has built into you. Your capacity to produce a victory for God is marvelous. Why not allow it to come forth as you seek to: live faithfully; encourage your Christian brothers and sisters; do something deliberate in

leading another to Jesus."

Charles Clodfelter once wrote that "Albert Einstein is reported to have said no man has used as much as 10% of his brain. An article from the Personal Motivation Institute, Inc., reports, 'research indicates that by using only half his brain, anyone is capable of:

Memorizing an entire encyclopedia from A to Z.

Learning over forty different languages.

Completing the required courses of dozens of Universities.

Sensing projections of one 1/25,000 of an inch of an apparently smooth surface.

Detecting one part quinine in two million parts of water.

Differentiating between over 10,000 different odors.

The article concludes "recent studies at UCLA have concluded that the potential of the human mind is virtually infinite!"

When we are planning the use of our own potential, do we see the glass half full? Then we can add to the contents of the glass. Let us challenge ourselves to step out in faith in attempting to do more for the Lord! "For 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).

An unknown author said it well in these lines entitled "We Need More Like Him:"

"He couldn't speak before the crowd,

He couldn't teach a class,

But everytime he came to church

He brought the folk 'en masse.'

"He couldn't sing to save his life,

In public, he couldn't pray,

But his jalopy was always crammed

Every single Lord's Day.

"And though he could not sing, nor teach,

Nor lead in public prayer,

He listened well; he had a smile,

And he was always there.

"And all the others he had brought,

Who lived both near and far,

And God's work greatly prospered

Because of his consecrated car."

--420 Seventh Street S.W. Birmingham, AL 35211.

The Man With a Can of Oil

A man was known to carry a little can of oil wherever he went. If he passed through a door that squeaked, he put a drop of oil on the hinges, and if a gate was hard to open, he oiled the latch. So he passed through life lubricating all the creaking places, and making it a little more pleasant for those who followed after him.

There is no telling how many lives we could keep from "rusting and squeaking" and how many gates we could open to happiness, if only we would carry a little oil of brotherly love and human kindness in an effort to prevent lives of Christians from rusting away in sin. -Selected

The Judgement

Continued From Page 3

be judged.

James 2:12 "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." Paul would say, "he will judge the world in righteousness" Acts 17:32. This being the case we would do well to walk in total harmony with the standards God has set in his word. That means one should set aside his feelings or fancies and be governed by the will of the Lord.

God has been good to us in allowing us to know what to expect.

3. There is the FINALITY of the judgement.

One might appeal a conviction of the court of our land. This appeal may be heard and the conviction overcome. Not so at the final judgement. The Lord will have the last word (Matthew 25:31-46). When he says, "come" this will be final, when he says "depart" this will be final. There is no appeal to the word of the Lord (John 12:48).

--P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

Help whenever, however, and whoever I can.

Admit it when I'm wrong, but when I'm right

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make me easier to live with.

Promote Christ whenever an opportunity presents itself.

Present myself in the best way possible so that I may be an example for others.

Yield not to the many temptations that are daily in my path.

Never think an unkind thought of anyone.

Endeavor to work harder for the Lord and the church than ever before.

Weed out all my bad habits to the best of my ability.

Yearn and pray for peace throughout the world.

Earnestly desire a stronger relationship with Christ my Savior.

Attend church regularly and give my whole-hearted support.

Resolve to give my all for Christ and His word for He gave His all for me.

--Selected

Resolutions



(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 26

FEBRUARY 9, 1990

NUMBER 6

The Old Paths



J. C. Choate

In the long ago, God's prophet said, "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein" (Jeremiah 6:16). During those times, as has been true in all times, even up to this day, there were literal paths or roads that were treaded out, used, and worn, that people in general traveled in getting from one point to the other. These were known, accepted, and they were safe. Likewise, on the spiritual side there were paths that God had given his people and he expected them to follow them. They were old and plainly marked. They were good and safe. It was not only wise to follow them but God asked his people to do so. Another prophet of God said, "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isaiah 35:8). But instead of heeding God's wishes, they said, "We will not walk therein." How unwise this was, but again it is not unlike our own times.

Jesus Christ is the way for us today (John 14:6), and he has left us an example that we should follow in his steps (I Peter 2:21). Again, he has set before us the broad and narrow ways, leaving it to each of us to choose the way we will travel (Matthew 7:13, 14). One is broad, with many traveling upon it, and it leads to destruction. The other is narrow, strait, few are upon it, and it leads to eternal life. On which road are you traveling?

Let's further identify the Lord's way for those of our time. It is a way that is clearly revealed in the pages of the New Testament. Any and all who will take the time to read and study God's word will know exactly what he requires. He wants us to

know his will so that we may believe it and obey it. For instance, as we read and study his word we will find that Christ not only died for us that we might be saved (Romans 5:8), but he has given certain conditions or commands that we must comply with if we are to be saved. Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Now that's the path we must take if we are to be saved. It's an old path, but it's the Lord's path, and there can be no other way.

As we continue to read and study the scripture we are told that on obeying the gospel of Christ, and being saved, that the Lord adds us to the church (Acts 2:47). This is his church (Matthew 16:18), the one church that belongs to Christ (Ephesians 4:4), the one he died for (Ephesians 5:25), the one he is saviour of (Ephesians 5:23), and the one that wears his name (Romans 16:16). When we follow the Lord's path, his way, then we will be members of this church and no other.

When we follow the Lord's way we will worship him each first day of the week (Acts 20:7), by assembling with other Christians to study (II Timothy 2:15), to pray (Acts 2:42), to sing (Ephesians 5:19), to partake of the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:23-25), and to give of our means (I Corinthians 11:23-25), and to give of our means (I Corinthians 16:2). Not only that, but the word of God reveals the true path concerning all we should do and say in the name of religion (I Peter 4:11). This makes it possible for us not only to know God's will on these matters but also to do the things that would be acceptable to him (James 1:25).

Sad, but true, but all do not love the truth. There are any number of people who are satisfied to remain ignorant. They don't want to be bothered. They are what they are religiously, and they want to remain where they are. As a result of their indifference and unconcern, they will be lost.


We ought to always keep an open mind and ever desire to know the Lord's will on all things that pertain to life and godliness. We should never be satisfied with anything less than the truth. It is only by knowing God's way that we can obey his will

and travel upon that road that leads to that heavenly city, the New Jerusalem.

We invite you to join us as we return to the old paths that are set forth in God's word. In so doing, you will not be following us and neither will we be following you, but together we will be following the Lord. We will be walking in his ways, doing those things that he wants us to do, being what he would have us to be. Let us ask for the Lord's way, for his will in all things, being satisfied with nothing less. Why follow anyone, why be religious, unless we are going to follow Christ, unless we are going to be right? There is a way that is right and cannot be wrong, but remember also, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). Keep in mind that the right way is the Lord's way, the one and only way to heaven. Only those who travel on that path or way can go to heaven.

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-Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

God Wants No Less Than All Our Heart



David Wade

The heart of men is mentioned 830 times in the King James Bible. By using a concordance and investing about two hours, one can greatly bless himself by reading these passages. One fact really stands out; God desires no less than all your heart. Let us be impressed with

it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion" (Hebrews 3:12-15).

In order to give our hearts totally to God, we must obey the gospel and live a faithful Christian life. "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness" (Romans 6:16-18; cf. vss. 3-6; Acts 2:38). "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful" (Hebrews 10:22-23).

We must love God supremely. Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment" (Matthew 22:37-38).

We must love our fellow man, especially our fellow Christians. "And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' (Matthew 22:39). "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever" (I Peter 1:22-23).

We have touched only the "hem of the garment" on this subject. Surely, we must be impressed with the fact that God wants no less than all our heart.

The Divine Challenge



W. Edwin Kearley

Jesus said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). As followers of Jesus, our mission in life can be no less than to carry the message of salvation to our fellow man.

But the reality is, there is much apathy in regard to personal evangelism. The state

of apathy has several causes. I fear most of it is rooted in the effect Humanism has upon the church to rob us of our faith and zeal. The clamor for pep talks in the pulpit indicates a lack of spirituality. May we kindle in our hearts that great faith of the First Century Christians. Paul could say, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church" (Colossians 1:24). Also he said, "I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus" (Galatians 6:17).

May we be spurred from our indifference by remembering how Israel lost the book of God. The temple was in disrepair. Josiah, the king of Judah, commanded the temple repaired. Recorded are these words, "And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the Lord, Hilkiyah, the priest, found a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses. And Hilkiyah answered, and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord . . . And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes . . . And the king

the great truths found in some of these passages.

First, we should be impressed with the fact that the inclination of our hearts determines what we do with life. "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). "Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

Furthermore, God knows our hearts, whether good or bad. "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, And according to the fruit of his doings" (Jeremiah 17:9-10). "For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (I Samuel 16:7). "For He knows the secrets of the heart" (Psalm 44:21).

God's word is given to direct our hearts in His paths. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6). "With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (Psalm 119:10-11). "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Psalm 19:8).

If one refuses to heed God's revelation, he becomes a guilty of all kinds of sins. "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Psalm 53:1). "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). "This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me, And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:7; cf. Isaiah 29:13). "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while

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The Divine Challenge

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commanded . . . Go, inquire of the Lord for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found: for great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord, to do after all that is written in this book" (II Chronicles 34:14-21).

We have plenty copies of God's word in our possession. However, unless we let the word penetrate our hearts and produce active faith, the effect is the same as if it were lost. Our society becomes engrossed in the pursuit of material goods and pleasure. It is not wrong to have material things and pleasure in keeping with principles of Christ. It is wrong for these to become more important than growing spiritually and saving the lost.

PERSONAL EVANGELISM IS AN URGENT NEED IN THE CHURCH TODAY. Imperative is the need in the church today for Christians who can and will talk to people about their souls and their need of salvation in Christ. We need the burning passion characterized in the person of Jesus and Christians of the First Century. We must divest ourselves of personal vain glory. Selfishness is perhaps the most cardinal sin. It is a great hindrance to the cause of Christ.

Solomon wrote, "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life: and he that is wise winneth souls" (Proverbs 11:30).

Every Christian must recognize the value of a soul. We must imitate Jesus. He said, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). Also, "For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" (John 12:47). Though Jesus spoke to the multitudes, he never lost interest in the individual. He said, "Zacchaeus, make hast and come down: for today I must abide at thy house" (Luke 19:5). Nicodemus came to Jesus by night. Jesus taught him he needed to be born of the water and the Spirit (John 3:1-5).

Let no one say, "I know Jesus did personal evangelism, but I can't do it." The cursing, swearing Peter became a great rock and power in the kingdom of Christ. The urgent need of the hour is for Christians who will say, "Here am I, send me" (Isaiah 6:8).

What is the emphasis of the New Testament? Jesus invited men to, "Come . . . and learn of me" (Matthew 11:28). His charge was, "Go and teach" (Matthew 28:19). Then he said teach again, "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I command you" (Matthew 28:20). The command was to "go." This command was passed on to all who would obey the gospel of Christ. That command cannot be obeyed by proxy.

In the New Testament epistles, the emphasis is placed on individual responsibility. The church can act only as individuals discharge their responsibility. Paul wrote of the Philippian church, "In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life" (Philippians 2:15-16). In addition Paul said, "And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear" (Philippians 1:14). We need more today who are not intimidated by the apathetic, immoral, and atheistic world. Paul's example helped others to overcome.

Jude, in addressing those "that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ" urged, ". . . earnestly contend for the faith which

was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 1, 3). In the parable of the great supper, Jesus said the Master of the house commanded, ". . . go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled" (Luke 14:23). The personal evangelist must have an impelling force from within before there can be a compelling force from his teaching.

All do not have the same office or the same innate ability to perform tasks (Romans 12:3-5). However, the Bible teaches with equal clarity that each individual is responsible for the ability he possesses. Jesus said, "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his servants and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents; to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his ability" (I Corinthians 12:12-18).

(1) May we persuade you to become a personal evangelist? The great commission places personal responsibility upon me. The pronoun "I" can be found in it. The command was given to the apostles. They were commanded to teach those they converted to observe what they were commanded. Therefore personal evangelism is commanded of all Christians (Matthew 28:19-20). What great power for good is involved in the great commission!!

To be like Christ, we must be personal evangelists. Jesus said, "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his teacher, and the servant as his Lord" (Matthew 10:25). Jesus had a passion for souls strong enough to give his life for them.

(2) The primitive church should be our example. The church everywhere must be involved in personal evangelism if it becomes like the original church. When the church in Jerusalem began to be persecuted, we see the individual action of its members. Luke records, "And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem. . . Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:1, 5). Let us notice the work of the scattered church. "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus, and Antioch preaching the word" (Acts 11:19). We must develop and sustain the faith and zeal of the Jerusalem church.

(3) The followers of Christ have been called to "follow his steps" (I Peter 2:21). The Christian's mission is to "show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Peter 2:9). Unless one has a genuine concern for the eternal welfare of his fellow man, he cannot imitate the care of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(4) The convert to Christ feels a gracious impulse of his soul to reach others for Christ. He wants to share his joy with others. Too often the enthusiasm of the new convert is stifled by the dead indifference of those who were already members of the church. May we all return to our first love for Christ and his cause.

(5) Helping another find salvation from sin is the greatest work one can do for another. Feeding the hungry and clothing the naked is the responsibility of Christians. However, the grandest deed one can do for another is to bring him to Jesus Christ. Though a person may become extremely wealthy in material goods and dies without learning of Christ and obeying him, he dies a pauper.

(6) Being a personal evangelist is necessary in

maintaining a vital spiritual life. Helping others in their salvation is bearing fruit. Jesus taught, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch in me that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit . . . 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 15:2, 6). Every Christian should be challenged by those statements. Of the heavenly Father's glorification, Jesus said, "Here is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:8). Fruitlessness is a great cause of apostasy.

(7) We need to be soul winners because of God's desire to have all men saved. Paul stated God would "have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4). Only as Christians become the medium of the truth to the lost can the lost become convicted to obey the gospel of Christ. The lost must be encouraged to study and believe the truth by those who love the truth. Paul wrote, "Now unto him that is able to do EXCEEDING ABUNDANTLY ABOVE ALL THAT WE ASK OR THINK, ACCORDING TO THE POWER THAT WORKETH IN US" (Ephesians 3:20). Also he said, "For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).

(8) Joy in the heart of the soul winner is one of the greatest joys of the human heart. Paul called some of his converts "my joy and crown" (Philippians 4:1). John said he had no greater joy than "to hear of my children walking in truth" (I John 3). To lead one to the truth and observe him to continue in the faith and grow spiritually becomes to the Christian a great joy. Inactive members rarely enjoy their religion.

You can become a soul winner for Jesus! The gospel of Christ is the power to save the soul (Romans 1:16). You must become the messenger of Christ to the lost. Let Christ express his will through you. "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Ephesians 5:14).

--P.O. Box 414, Jackson, GA 30233.

A Pagan America?



Betty Burton Choate

Cultures, ways of thinking, national behavior are formed largely by predominant religious teaching. The old statement, "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet," is a declaration of the tremendous differences in thinking between large sections of our world. In times past, not many Americans personally knew "foreigners." Today, newcomers from other cultures live in practically every small town in the

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A Pagan America?

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States.

What is the result? First, there is curiosity about the new people; and, meeting them, they may seem likeable or aloof. Getting past the strangeness in dress and the heavily accented English, it may seem at first that they are not so "foreign" after all. But in the majority of cases, if the acquaintance is developed to any depth, there will be an unfolding of differences of thinking and values that will seem incomprehensible to the Christian mind. The feeling of being up against a thick wall will often arise in conversations, a feeling of helplessness in the efforts to really penetrate and understand the thinking. And the longer the acquaintance continues and the deeper it becomes, the more of the subtle differences one will discover. These differences are not because of the geographical differences in birth places but because of the religious-cultural differences which have molded our thinking and values as well as theirs.

The following quotes are statements, headlines, doctrines in pagan lands:

"A man may have four wives, if he provides for all of them equally . . ." "Don't trust any Pakistani, not even me . . ." "Eleven-year-old boy sacrificed to Kali . . ." "We will kill. We are fighting a holy war . . ." "Those who would die for Islam must be willing to kill for it . . ."

"Eight million dollars spent for gold and gems for a new crown for an idol . . ." "The bride price was not enough. The husband poured acid on his wife because she would not demand more money from her father . . ." "Children are kidnapped and maimed and then put on the streets to beg for their owners. . ."

"Don't compliment anything because the demons would hear and would mar or destroy whatever is good or beautiful . . ." "Offer food and gifts to Shiva to appease him. . ." "I must have been evil in my past life for the gods to have cursed me with five daughters . . ."

"The entire cosmos, all sounds, words, languages, all things and all creatures come from the sound, 'Om'." "God is the dispassionate observer of the play of life, all of which is only an illusion that seems real but is not . . ."

"The belief in the doctrine of Maya produces the national vices of passivity, laziness, indifference, lack of initiative . . ." "God does not interfere in the works of man or the results of his works . . ."

When we see masses of people following particular lines of behavior, we can know that underlying wide-spread teaching is responsible for it. When a whole nation will follow a fanatical leader into a "holy" war and will commit acts of terrorism, such as the unprovoked killing of people in airports, in the name of religion, it is because strong teachings have molded their minds in that way.

When nations will allow the poor to live in hunger and the orphans to beg on the streets while pouring their millions of wealth into temples to adorn idols with diamonds and to cover domes with gold, it is because strong teachings have molded their minds in that way.

When superstitions and rituals control most of the activities of peoples' lives, it is because strong teachings have molded their minds in that way.

When suspicion and the expectation of being cheated are the windows through which people view the world, it is because strong teachings have molded their minds in that way.

When passivity, laziness, lack of initiative are national attitudes, it is because strong teachings

have molded minds in that way.

Our country is changing far more rapidly than most of us realize. For the first time, massive numbers of people from pagan areas are settling here, and they are bringing their thinking and culture with them. Large temples and mosques are being built and lavishly adorned by them. Their beliefs are beginning to permeate our own culture. Often, in listening to words of songs or reading synopses of books, I am appalled at the pagan concepts that are being subtly implanted in minds. Many dabble with astrology, horoscopes, yoga, chanting, transcendental meditation, ideas of reincarnation, doctrines of karma and destiny, demons.

Our culture has been one predominantly shaped by the teachings of Christ: ". . . let him labor, working with his hands . . ." (Ephesians 4:28). The attitude of giving one's best to whatever he undertakes grows from the admonition "Whatever you do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord" (Colossians 3:23). Being benevolent -- caring for orphans, underprivileged, victims of disasters both nationally and individually -- comes from the Biblical teaching of being one's brother's keeper. Contrast this to paganism where money is given for the priests, the temples and the idols, and where personal hardship in the lives of others is looked on as the just desserts for behavior in a past life. Christians are taught throughout the scriptures to be caring and compassionate. This attitude has so permeated our nation that the third source of national aid (after government and business) is the voluntary donation of time, services, and money. More of this type of work is done by Americans than by the rest of the world combined, according to statistics.



Winfred Clark

contact with them. If those who received this letter would abide by what James had to say, what a blessing they would be. Just think of the difference such would make.

It might do us good to take the little word "go" and see what sort of an effect this might have on our lives.

1. It would bring about RECONCILIATION.

Take a look at Matthew 5:23-24. "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." If this passage became the norm of one's life there would surely be a great deal of reconciliation. A person would be looking for ways to bring such about in the

Will America someday be as pagan as Hindu India or Buddhist Thailand or Islamic Libya?

"Let your yea be yea . . ." (Matthew 5:37) has shaped our culture to the point that a greater degree of trust and honesty is practiced here than anywhere else. We don't live in the expectation of being cheated at the grocery store or the post office, and we can still return broken merchandise and be believed that we didn't break it ourselves. These common things that we take for granted are not true in pagan societies.

In the past, as Christians, we have seen Satan's work of error taught in denominationalism. The divisiveness among believers in Christ and the compromise in His teachings have led to much of the moral breakdown that has already been taking place in our country.

The stage has been set by him now for even more drastic differences. He has brought to us the teachings of thinking and behavior that are totally contradictory to the teachings of Christ. He will work slowly and subtly to influence and remold the "Christian" culture we have had.

If we are unaware, complacent, preoccupied with our buildings and the niceties of the order of services -- with trivialities -- Satan will find no opposition to his progress.

Will America someday be as pagan as Hindu or Buddhist Thailand or Islamic Libya?

A "Go" Religion

James, the half brother of the Lord, has spoken of "pure" religion James 1:27. He has told us what such religion is like. It is seen in purity of life and providing for the assistance of those in distress. Such a religion is a blessing to those involved and to others who have occasion to come in

lives of people.

2. It would bring a great deal of CONSOLATION.

Move over in the book of Matthew to the eleventh chapter and verse four. Here the Lord told the disciples of John, who was very troubled, to go and tell him what they have heard and seen. Jesus would let them know that such was based on what the Bible had to say of him. If they carry a Bible message back to John, such is bound to have its effect in a troubled heart. If they fail to "go" as they are told, John will be left in doubt and despair.

How often can a "go" religion help to bring consolation to hearts that are weary and worn from the cares of the day.

3. It can bring about SALVATION.

This is seen in the commission our Lord gave to those whom he had chosen Acts 1:2-3. Before his ascension, he would tell them to "go" into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature Mark 16:15. As a result of their preaching one might hear, believe and be baptized. That being the case, they would be saved and you have no less than the word of the Lord for such a promise. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Those are the words of Jesus. He is an authority about the matter. He knew what it would take and he would shed his blood to make it happen.

Yes, a "go" religion can make a great difference in the lives of people.

--P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.



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 26

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The Hardened Heart



Winfred Clark

Men have learned to be extremely careful concerning those things that have an effect of the physical heart. This is, as we all know, a matter of life and death. It not only has to do with whether we live, but also how we live. But, the

spiritual welfare of man turns upon his condition of heart. This is surely dramatized in the book of Hebrews. Again and again the writer will make mention of the heart. In one place he will say, "Harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 3:8). Again he will say, "lest any of you should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13). We would do well to learn from his admonitions.

I. THE CAUSE OF THE HARDENED HEART.

How does such come about? Are we responsible? Can such be avoided? Let the writer tell us. He says, "lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13). So we can be misled by sin of Satan. This was true of our parents in the garden of Eden in the long ago. Paul tells us that they were "beguiled" through the subtlety of Satan (II Corinthians 11:3). But how did this occur? It is easy to see that he did so by disputing the inerrancy of the word of God, which can lead to a distrust of the wisdom of God, this would then lead to one's defiance of the warning of God. Isn't this what occurred in Genesis 3? This surely brought about a change of heart on the part of Eve and this led to her fall.

We can easily see how the deception of sin can harden the heart.

II. THE CURSE OF A HARDENED HEART?

This chapter in Hebrews will surely set before us the curse of this kind of heart. It will be seen as an

evil heart of unbelief (Hebrews 3:12). This kind of heart brings the curse of departure from God. It will also bring displeasure from God. Notice, "But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness" (Hebrews 3:17). That surely is a curse. But this kind of heart brings defeat. This is obvious in the fact that "they could not enter in because of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:18). Yes, there is a curse of the hardened heart.

III. THE CURE FOR A HARDENED HEART.

This chapter will not only tell us to the cause and curse, it will also set before us the cure. This will become evident in the phrase, "hear his voice." Three times will this phrase be used in chapter three and four of this book (Hebrews 3:7, 15, 4:7).

To this writer there is no doubt about the cause and curse of such a heart. But there is also a cure. He will tell us the cure is found in respect for the voice of God. It is to be respected as being of the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 3:7). If I will respect that voice as the voice of God such is bound to usher in reverence for that voice. That would mean we would not take his word lightly. We would be careful. But, there would also be the reception of that word. That would mean the word would be received into the heart. That is the word that is quick and powerful (Hebrews 4:12). That word will cure the hardened heart as we respect it, have reverence for the same and receive it into our souls.

--Box 1025, Athens, AL 35611.

Satan, The Real Joker



Cecil Corkren

This frightening example of how man can be led to his destruction, is a warning of how Satan will lead the non-Christian and the unfaithful to be cast into hell with the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). **One definition of a JOKER.** "He tricks another or gets the better of someone." Satan was cast out of heaven (Revelation 12:7-9). So, his mission is to deceive the whole world. "That old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole

Satan's total mission on earth is to trick the whole world into following him. The nine hundred followers of Jim Jones, were led to their death by Satan through Jim Jones who tricked them into taking a deadly poison.

world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." The Old Serpent was the joker that deceived our mother Eve (I Timothy 2:14). He tricked her into eating of the forbidden fruit with his subtlety (Genesis 3:1-7). He wants, and does many times, trick the saints of God with his subtlety (Matthew 24:24).

Satan seeks out the new born babes in Christ, because they are an easy prey for his crafty ways. Paul warned Timothy of the devil's snares. He warned Timothy not to appoint a novice as a bishop, "lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (I Timothy 3:6). All faithful churches of Christ should have a renewal program to rescue fallen saints from Satan's snares. "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which some having coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Timothy 6:10). Paul had warned in verse nine "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and

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David Wade . . . Editor
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Satan, The Real Joker

Continued From Page 1

into many foolish and hurtful lusts." He falls into the fastening net of the devil, the joker of his soul. "He takes many captive at his will" (II Timothy 2:26).

Satan, in many places, is getting the best of us in the church of our Lord. He tricks us into being soft on false doctrines and Christian living. The joker sometimes convinces elderships to ignore the preachers who are faithful to the book who quote chapter and verse for their proof, and turn to the more liberal minded, smooth, charismatic preachers who ignore sound doctrinal teaching and Christian living.

The joker, or deceiver, always comes in a cloak of righteousness. (II Corinthians 11:13-15).

The joker sometimes convinces elderships to ignore the preachers who are faithful to the book which quote chapter and verse for their proof, and turn to the more liberal minded, smooth, charismatic preachers who ignore sound doctrinal teaching and Christian living.

Always keep in mind Satan has a trick up his sleeve. We should not be ignorant of his devices. He can get an advantage over us by tricking us and then, the joke is on us (II Corinthians 2:11).

--1705 Sandra Lee Drive, Jasper, AL 35501.



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Is It Benevolence?



David Wade

It is good that we can own this reputation, for indeed, the Lord wants his people to do good unto all (Galatians 6:10; II Corinthians 9:13; James 1:27).

However, in the process of helping the needy, it is evident to many of us that we are being taken for a ride. There are those professional moochers who make their living going across the length and breadth of our land soaking the church for everything they can get. From reports I have heard, some of these individuals make a very comfortable living in this manner. We need to be aware of the fact that the Lord does not want us to waste his money financing the lazy (II Thessalonians 3:10; I Thessalonians 4:11; I Peter 4:15). Anyone who misrepresents his situation in life in order to get money, or goods from the church is a thief. Any member of the church who parcels out the Lord's resources to thieves is an unfaithful steward (I Corinthians 4:2).

All of us know how difficult it is to sort through the many appeals we receive in order to establish the legitimacy of the needs. However, if we are going to help at all, we must do our best to help the helpless and refuse the moochers. Here are a few suggestions that may help.

1) Keep in touch with area congregations and find out if they have been approached by the same people for help. This will help eliminate duplication; for instance two congregations paying the same electric bill. By the way, some have been known to get churches to pay their utilities, freeing their money for drugs and alcohol. Beware!!

2) If the individual, or family, is unknown to you, ask for identification and a driver's license number. Inform them that it is your procedure to have the local police department run a check in their computer network before any help is given. Most police departments will be more than happy to provide you this service.

3) You would do well to ask for a name and telephone number of someone "back home" who

can verify their needs, or give a character reference. Oftentimes, numbers two and three will discourage the drifters.

4) Never put cash in the hands of the recipient. Whatever you plan to help, see that the money goes where it is supposed to go. The only way you can insure this is to spend it yourself. Otherwise you run the risk of financing tobacco, alcohol and drug habits.

5) Keep records. Oftentimes, moochers become repeaters. You would do well to keep names, addresses, descriptions of individuals, and a record of what help is given.

The Lord expects his people to be benevolent. He also expects us to ask, "Is it benevolence?"

The Rest Of The Story

TOMMY GORE

The Nashville Banner ran a critical article about the incident on Monday afternoon. The radio talk show host voiced his disapproval that afternoon as well. The Tennessean ran a more balanced account Tuesday. They all reported that some friends had walked out of a service for an AIDS victim when David Hunter, minister at the Clarksville Highway Church of Christ, remarked that the young man had adopted "a lifestyle contrary to God's will, which resulted in his being the victim of a terrible disease that led to his death." As Paul Harvey would say, you need to hear "the rest of the story."

The minister had prepared a message of comfort for the Christian family of the victim which centered around the wonderful message of the Prodigal Son. Just two and a half months before his death the AIDS victim had himself confessed that his previous lifestyle had been sinful and was restored to fellowship with the church. Had those who walked out in protest remained, they would have heard a message that did not center upon condemnation, but upon the compassionate forgiveness the Father offers. The family was comforted.

The reaction of the protesters illustrates the spirit of our age. Some are ready to hear about God's grace, but recoil that God would ever judge anything to be wrong. They readily hear that the Prodigal was accepted by his father, but deny that there would be a present day pigpen. But there are some things that are wrong! They are wrong because of the harm they bring to ourselves and to others, wrong because they are contrary to God's will. It was only when the Prodigal recognized the

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Then And Now



BOBBY KEY

The conditions of our country at the beginning of the nineteenth century were primitive. Methods and equipment, long since obsolete, made life hard and progress painstakingly slow. Our forefathers, 200 years ago, were for the most part hard-working, thrifty, sincere, honest, illiterate, but God-fearing. People lived in log houses, usually consisting of only one room, and built by the neighborhood in one day. Furnishings were sparse, water was carried from a well or spring at least a quarter of a mile from the house, and every member of the family, including small children, worked from daylight until dark. Schools were scarce or non-existent.

Religion of that period reflected the times. Even though people were religious, they seldom met for worship more than once a month, especially in rural sections. Nearly every preacher claimed that he was divinely called to preach. This idea was almost universally accepted. Many of the preachers were uneducated; some could scarcely read or write. They would quote, or rather misquote, some passage or proverb and say that it could be found somewhere between the lids of the good book. Hardshell Baptists as they were then called, were in the majority in the South. A little later, the voice of a Methodist circuit rider was heard, and in his wake came the Cumberland Presbyterian pastors and evangelists. Their coming caused a war of words touching man's free agency and God's predestination, and stirred up no little contention and strife among the people.

Pay for preachers was virtually non-existent. Methodist circuit riders, if unmarried, received \$100 each year. If married, he received \$150, and \$50 extra for each baby under ten years of age. Presbyterian preachers and resident ministers had no market value. Each one got what he could, and managed to live on what he got! Primitive Baptist preachers would accept no pay at all. They protected and argued against the principle of paying preachers anything for their services.

Preachers for the most part were greatly respected as men of God. People accepted what they said as the final authority on practically any subject pertaining to religion. Until the preacher

The Rest Of The Story

Continued From Page 2

full consequences of his wild lifestyle that he "came to himself." He never could have experienced the acceptance and restored love from his father if he had not repented.

Compassion should be obvious in the way we treat an AIDS victim or any other victim of sin. We hurt when others are hurting. But telling each other that God approves of a sinful lifestyle is not the loving thing to do.

--Springfield, TN.

pronounced the final and eternal destiny of the deceased at the funeral service, the grieving family had no peace. Funerals were always attended by the entire community, some simply out of curiosity just to hear what the parson would say about the dearly departed. Funerals usually turned into social events, with visiting, swapping stories, conducting business, etc.

Our ancestors took their religion seriously. They believed in heaven and hell. The great camp meetings of those days lasted for at least two weeks, with three to five thousand in attendance. They would consist of a prayer call at six a.m., preaching from ten until noon, preaching again in the afternoon for two hours, and the evening service began about seven o'clock and was never over before midnight, often lasting until daylight. When it came to exhortations, preachers put their full powers in vivid and blood-curdling descriptions of the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, and in soul-moving word pictures of heaven and immortal glory. Their descriptions of hell and the intense agony of the damned were perfectly appalling. Hundreds of people came to the altars, weeping and shouting at the same time. Some in the audience would be praying aloud, some singing, some rejoicing, and some crying. Preachers voices, like foghorns, kept up a continual exhortation about the beauties and glories of heaven, and the awful destiny of the damned in hell.

Such excitement caused the audience to shout, dance, laugh, jerk their bodies, or fall into a trance and lie prostrate on the ground as if dead. This type of activity was always attributed to the work of the Holy Spirit.

Such were the conditions when the Restoration Movement began in America. The reformers denied that the Holy Spirit was responsible for such carrying-on. They questioned the idea that such men had been called to preach at all. They insisted that the Bible be used, correctly read, believed and obeyed. Needless to say, doors were closed to the reformers, and they were accused of committing the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. Some said they had been sent from the devil and were enemies of all mankind.

Gradually a more rational and intelligent approach to religion began to take shape. People paid closer attention to what preachers said, and began to study the Bible for themselves. Audiences demanded less sound and more sense! Less lung power and more brain power. This resulted in the Bible being prized highly as an inspired volume which reveals to all men the will of God. They said that the clergy had no right to stand between them and the Bible. The reformers contended that in the Bible God has spoken, not to preachers, churches, councils or conventions, but to every creature and every nation.

The ministry lost prestige, but the Bible gained power with the masses. Preachers were no longer considered the favorites of God, called and qualified by special revelations from the Holy Ghost to lead the people in matters of religion. It was nothing uncommon to see a plain clodhopper

with Bible open, pointing out the errors in a sermon.

In the last years of this enlightened twentieth century, we can learn from the past. Preachers are better educated, and receive far better pay. Yet, I see men in the pulpit attempting to substitute human reasoning for divine revelation. I see preachers who imply that their word is the final word from God on any subject. They become offended when anyone dares to question their interpretation of any passage. Some seem to indicate that truth must be filtered through them or it is not truth.

It is a healthy sign to see people reading their Bibles, bringing their Bibles to the assembly, looking up the passages referred to by the preacher, and study for themselves. Preachers are not infallible. Every person has the right to study, understand, and obey the Bible for himself, unhampered by what other men think the Bible teaches. The Bible is its own best interpreter. No man has a right to make his understanding of the Bible the rule of another man's faith. We are to be

No man has a right to make his understanding of the Bible the rule of another man's faith. We are to be governed by the Word of God in matters of faith.

governed by the Word of God in matters of faith. In matters of opinion, men are free to exercise their liberty of choice. We dare not bind what God has loosed. We must always refuse to be governed by human law in religion. At the same time, we must not knowingly loose what God has bound. (Matthew 16:19).

- 324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354

I May Be Old Fashioned, But . . .

I still like to hear a man use plenty of Scripture when he's preaching.

I still like to see the young people respect and be polite to their elders.

I still like to hear a congregation lift their voices when they sing.

I still like to see people sit in the front of the building for worship.

I still like to see Christians have a great sense of loyalty to the church.

I still like to see members of the church bring their Bibles to worship.

I still like to see a member making the effort to teach another soul.

I still like to see the church love each other and the lost.

-Dabney Phillips

You May Be Diagnosing Yourself!



Dalton Key

A few years back, a small-town newspaper reporter gave an unusual excuse for his abbreviated, barely-there story. He explained, "First, nothing happened. And second, what did happen, happened to people who don't

happen to want everybody to know what happened."

There are always those within a congregation quick to point an accusing finger at the alleged lifelessness of the church. The charge, "Nothing is happening!" is made. And yet beneath the congregational crust, in the day-to-day lives of sincere, consecrated members, a great deal is happening! Should it surprise us to learn that the church's hardest workers are most often those least

likely to publicize their own good works? Their labors are not done to be seen and applauded of men; in fact, the church's most dedicated servants often don't "happen to want everybody to know what happened."

Those who murmur against the local body for being dead and lifeless are too often failing to see the true picture. They fail to see the godly couple who for years have taken food to an elderly shut-in. They don't know about the good members who regularly visit the nursing home and hospitals. The critics haven't heard about the white-haired couple who spend long evenings, often into the wee hours of the morning, teaching a hungry soul the good news of Jesus Christ. And the list of good, yet unpublished, works could go on, and on, and on.

But these examples of Christian service are not bursting with the sensational flavor many have confused with genuine Christian growth. Must a church wave flags, beat drums, fly banners, and spend enormous amounts of money through complex, ultra-organized, multi-staffed programs

in order to be "alive" and fulfill the will of God? If so, pity the poor widow and scorn her two mites!

The church was designed to grow as by leaven (Matthew 13:33). Many impatient souls would rather inject the body of Christ with steroids.

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

The lesson? (Do what you can, where you are, with what you have. And further, investigate before you castigate. Before you solemnly pronounce the body of Christ dead, look a bit deeper. You may be diagnosing no one but yourself!

Should it surprise us to learn that the church's hardest workers are most often those least likely to publicize their own good works?

The Gospel *ONLY* Makes Christians *ONLY*



Joe E. Galloway

We live in a terribly divided world, religiously. Besides attending separate churches in the same community, our friends and neighbors believe and practice distinctly different doctrines, and they wear different denominational names. Ask a man what he is religiously, and he will give a distinctive

denominational name. Yet if you tell him that you simply follow the Bible and are just a Christian he will probably say, "I'm a Christian, too, and the Bible is what we follow."

The *Bible only* makes Christians *only!* Following it does not make one a hyphenated Christian -- one that is distinguished from other "kinds" of Christians by some denominational name that identifies him with some sectarian body. Following the Bible alone results in unity of faith and practice, too.

In discussing his kingdom, the church, Jesus said, "The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). Seed always produces after its kind (Genesis 1:11), so the produce is always alike. You do not plant beans only and reap a variety of vegetables such as corn, okra, and squash. If these other vegetables are produced it is obvious that other kinds of seed were sown. Likewise, the word of God alone always produces just members of the Lord's church -- Christians! When other religions result it is certain that other seed was planted. Besides the gospel of

Christ, various doctrines of men have also been taught.

Is it important to preach, believe, and follow the Bible alone? Galatians 1:9 tells us that any man who preaches another gospel shall be accursed. I Peter 4:11 clearly states that one must only teach the word of God and serve according to what God has given. II John 9 frankly tells us that the one who does not abide in the doctrine of Christ "hath not God." I Corinthians 4:6 warns us "not to think of men above that which is written." Furthermore, I Corinthians 1:10 requires that we "all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

God has given us his will in the New Testament. He speaks to us in no other manner. All other sources of doctrine and practice are of human origin and without God's sanction. His gospel is the

same to all people, and it makes Christians only, so all who believe and practice it will be alike in religion.

Why not be just a Christian, and be the best one you can possibly be by obeying and faithfully following all the teaching of the New Testament?

--218 Pinecrest Drive, Greeneville, TN 37743.

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beginning
Thursday, March 1, 1990



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Words Of Truth

WORDS

forth the

Acts 26:25

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Broken Homes



Johnny Ramsey

Jesus tells us to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). It would be impossible to obey this injunction and marry a follower of Satan. Someone has said it well: "He that marries a child of the Devil may expect trouble with his father-in-law." The writer of Proverbs tells us emphatically that the house of the wicked

shall be overthrown (Proverbs 12:7; 14:11). The urgent warning of the prophet Isaiah unto King Hezekiah is appropriate to each one of us: "Set thy house in order, for ye shall die, and not live" (II Kings 20:1).

is more detrimental to future stability than a pretentious religion void of solid conviction and loyal devotion. Children can easily see through the veneer of pseudo-spirituality. And conversely, nothing is more faith-building to child than the opportunity view daily the dedication of parents in love with God and His word. Parents need to know the Lord, and the way of His salvation! It is not enough to know the book, chapter and verse; we must know the Lord! Paul said, "I know WHOM I have believed" (II Timothy 1:12). The word of Christ must dwell in us richly (Colossians 3:16). Parents who claim to be Christians should constantly evidence the presence of Jesus in their lives (Galatians 2:20), and manifest the joy of serving the Lord, even as Paul wrote in Philippians 4:4, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice."

To have a home that glorifies God, parents need to be keenly aware of the power of their influence. Far too many of us are similar to the old caretaker

of an apartment building. He was asked how he could possibly remember all the conflicting orders hurled at him each day. His answer is a classic reminder of so many folk who lack backbone to deal with their children; I just throw my mind in neutral, and go where I am pushed." But the Bible tells us "train up a child in the way he should go," and we nurture him "in the admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).

We dare not sin against our children by failing to take a stand for godliness (Joshua 24:15; Matthew 6:33). One of the saddest verses in all the Bible tells us that "Eli restrained not his sons." The tragic results in the lives of those boys are chronicled in I Samuel. The sons of Aaron died a shameful death (Leviticus 10:1-2), as they followed the example of their father who had once been flippant toward God in the "golden calf" (Exodus 32:24). We cannot afford the luxury of sleeping on the job of parental responsibility!

--Via Waymarks

A home is not in order, in God's sight, until both parents and children realize their duty and obey it. There are certain obligations incumbent upon each if we are to make our homes a "a foretaste of glory divine."

A home is not in order, in God's sight, until both parents and children realize their duty and obey it. There are certain obligations incumbent upon each if we are to make our homes a "a foretaste of glory divine." Unless Christianity is real in our homes, we are in the process of raising children in an atmosphere of insincerity and shame. Nothing

God's Promises



Bobby Key

A Christian brother writes, "I am persuaded that God has lost control of the world. Evil is predominant and good is short-lived. There is rebellion all around us, and I have concluded that wrong is stronger than right. I have learned to live with the motto that most things will turn out bad. Everything bad

that can happen has happened to me. Everything I've tried turns sour after awhile; I have fewer breaks and more bad luck than most."

There is no doubt that this brother is in the valley of despair. For too many of the world's problems

there seems to be no human solution, but "the gloomier the outlook, the brighter the uplook"; the darker the night the brighter God's promises shine. We have assurance that God's hand is not shortened that He cannot save (Isaiah 59:1). I am persuaded that for every human need -- for your every need -- there is a divine promise to meet that need. Let us study a few of these together.

HOW MUCH SHOULD WE WORRY ABOUT OUR DAILY NEEDS? "But my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). "How much more shall your father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him" (Matthew 7:11). "But they that seek the Lord shall not want (lack) any good thing" (Psalm 34:10).

WHERE CAN I TURN FOR WISDOM IN SOLVING MY PROBLEMS? "If any of you lack

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David Wade . . . Editor

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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Continued Vigilance

Dean Fugett

Speaking of political freedom, a former statesman said, "The price of liberty is continued vigilance." Can the price of our spiritual liberty be any less? We know that it cost to make us free from sin. "If the son therefore shall make you free, ye shall, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). "Redeemed by the blood of the lamb" is a theme we well know. We glory in that precious bought freedom. Paul said concerning that liberty, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1). We are exhorted by Peter to "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8).

We are very jealous of our freedom. We resent any threatened encroachments. All kinds of safeguards are in place to protect our personal freedoms. We have heard repeatedly about the "Constitutional" protection of our personal freedoms. Court cases are abundant that have reaffirmed the personal rights and freedoms we hold dear. But, how strange that we would give ourselves so easily into the snares of some who would deprive us of our spiritual freedom in Christ. This freedom we have from the Law of Moses, this freedom in Christ, is not freedom from all and any law, but freedom from the KIND of law contained in the Old Testament. The freedom is freedom from the bondage power of sin through the justifying power of Christ. The law we are now under is one which frees us from that which was before. Any statements of freedom command our attention. This is why some today can gain a following so quickly. They promise liberty. Those who speak of freedom and oppose encroachments claim a ready audience and receive accolades. But we must remember that the greatest tyrant claims that his subjects have

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

The Drug War



David Wade

A recent Associated Press poll finds that illegal drug use is down among teenagers and young adults. "The reduced demand is attributable largely due to the important changes occurring in the attitudes, beliefs, and social norms among our young people," said Lloyd Johnston, a University of Michigan social scientist who helped conduct

the survey. Johnston said the decline has come about because anti-drug education has made illegal drug use unfashionable.

Survey findings indicate that illegal drug use among high school seniors has dropped from its peak of 65.6 percent in 1981 to 50.9 percent in 1989.

Among college students, the survey found that 36.7 percent used an illicit drug at least once during the previous year, compared to 56.2 percent in 1980.

In 1979, nearly 39 percent of the high school seniors polled said they had used an illegal drug during the previous 30 days. By 1989, that figure had dropped by nearly half, to 19.7 percent. College students registered a similar decline from 38.4 percent in 1979 to 18.2 percent in 1989.

These figures, though far from being good, are encouraging. It is a good indicator that the President's War on Drugs and drug education in our schools are having some effect.

As Christians we should hope, pray, and work for the continued decline in use of illegal drugs. The Christian's responsibility begins at home. As parents, we must set the right example, educate our children, and demand that our home be "drug free," and that no family member will ever buy,

sell, or use any illicit drugs. We must demand that no family member ever abuse legal, or prescription drugs.

There are some really off the wall "solutions" being bantered these days. Some are advocating that the federal government buy up all the illegal drugs coming out of South America. Some project this would cost one billion dollars the first year. This outrageous idea will not work. Such an effort would only drive up the cost and would encourage the Medellin cartel to produce more cocaine. Other countries would want a cut of the market, and soon, our nation could not afford to buy up all the illicit drugs that could be produced. Personally, I deplore the idea that a portion of our tax dollars might be spent to supply the "wages of unrighteousness" (II Peter 2:15).

Some are urging that such drugs as cocaine and marijuana should be legalized and controlled. Are we prepared to legalize every illicit drug that invades our country? What about crack, ice, etc.? We are already cursed with legalization in most places of the most abused drug in the world -- alcohol (Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35; Ephesians 5:18; I Corinthians 6:9-10).

On the eve of the U.S. -- Latin America drug summit, the Medellin cocaine cartel has declared it would surrender its three largest cocaine producing laboratories if the Colombian government would end its war on drugs and stop extraditing traffickers to the United States to stand trial. Obviously, this gesture to give up "three little sacrificial lambs" is nothing more than a tactic to keep the drugs flowing unhampered across the American border.

The bottom line is, we have a drug problem because Americans want to buy and consume illicit drugs. As one Latin American leader said, "It is impossible to win the war on drugs while Americans consume 70 percent of the world's cocaine."

Paul's statement is currently applicable, "let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints" (Ephesians 5:3).

Failure Need Not Be Fatal

Douglas Parsons

The history books are filled with the biographies of failures who made good. From them we can learn the valuable lesson: that failure need not be fatal.

The first President of the United States -- the father of our country -- lost two-thirds of the battles he fought during the Revolutionary War. But George Washington won the war, founded a nation and succeeded brilliantly in spite of those failures.

Who failed more than Babe Ruth? In a baseball career that spanned 21 years, the immortal slugger

hit 714 home runs but he struck out 1,330 times! Until he retired in 1935, this famous failure was baseball's biggest attraction.

A lot of people who have made the history books started out poorly but finished well. Just because one fails at some point in life does not necessarily mean he or she is a failure.

After Edison had experimented 10,000 times with his storage battery and still couldn't get it to work, a friend tried to comfort him. "Why, I have not failed," Edison replied. "I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work." Nearly deaf, with only

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Christianity Will Eliminate Short-Weight Scales

Elwood Holt

"But he that looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing" (James 1:25). Take a brief glimpse into the perfect law of liberty.

Two elderly women were talking one time, and one remarked, "Oh, but that was a grand sermon the preacher gave us Sunday." She was the proprietress in a small grocery store. "What was the text?" inquired her friend. "I don't remember," said the old lady after considerable thought. "What was the sermon about?" "I do not remember a lot about it," she replied. "Well, in what way was it good and helpful?" "It was grand because it made me come to my store and dispose of all the short-weight scales and measures I had, and put in honest ones. Hereafter, I am going to be honest with God and man. That's why the sermon was wonderful to me."

When the Bible talks about a "hearer that forgetteth" as James mentions in our text, it does not mean that one is expected to remember every word that the preacher says from the pulpit or every word that he reads from the book. It means that one is guilty of sin when he fails to retain enough of God's message to make corrections in his heart if such corrections need to be made. While it is true that the average person does not listen closely

enough to the spoken word, many who cannot tell you just what the preacher talked about through the sermon, get enough of it to accomplish wonders in their lives. We need to be close hearers of the word of God. We need to be attentive when we read and study his word. But, when a chapter is prayerfully read, or a sermon is closely heard, enough will be retained to cause us to have compunction of conscience when we do wrong. And, it will cause us to go out and make things right with our neighbors and fellowmen if we have been wronging them. It will make the fellow who has been using the wrong weights throw them away. It will make the one who short changes his customers quit it and make restitution if at all possible. It will cause the one who is overly fond of scandal peddling to stop that, too. The best preventive against character assassination is a good dose of the word of God.

The best counteractive against malice, greed, avarice, covetousness, envy, jealousies, and strife, is a portion of the word of truth taken into the heart. I do not feel that I ever preached a sermon in vain. I believe with all my heart that every lesson that I ever delivered, though it may have been forgotten for many, many years, is still doing good in someone's heart. God's word has that characteristic. Nothing can kill it. It has been crushed down a million times, but has always risen up to

haunt its would-be assassin. God's word is the cure for our spiritual heart trouble. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). But, the heart is purified by "obedience to the truth" (I Peter 1:22). Obedience is absolutely essential to a pure heart. The good moral man must not die short of obedience, for in obedience he accepts Christ as the author of his salvation (Hebrews 5:8, 9). Christ is not the author of eternal salvation to those who will not obey him.

When you hear the word of God, try to retain all of it that you can. You can develop greater ability the harder you try to do this. And, if your mind slips occasionally as to what the preacher's text was, or just where the particular chapter you have in mind is located, you will be able to apply the holy principles that will abide with you as heaven-sent benedictions anyway.

"Take heed what ye hear," said Jesus He also said, "Take heed how ye hear." It matters what we hear. Error heard and obeyed will enslave the heart; truth heard and obeyed will liberate the soul from the bondage of iniquity.

The word that caused the little store keeper to throw away her dishonest weights can help you make whatever correction there is to be made in your life.

We recommend that word to you, our friend. May the Lord help us to study and meditate with open minds, be willing always to make such corrections in our own lives as are requisite to our soul's eternal well-being. **GOD'S WORD, THE TRUTH, SHALL MAKE YOU FREE.**

--Via Country Shopper, Grand Bay, Alabama 36541.

God's Promises

Continued From Page 1

wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

IS THERE A REMEDY FOR MY SIN AND GUILT? ". . . Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). "He is able to also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him" (Hebrews 7:25). "He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9). One who puts his faith in Christ and does His will has the blessed promise that his sins are forgiven. "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 8:12). "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).

IS IT POSSIBLE FOR A CHRISTIAN TO BE FAITHFUL AND VICTORIOUS?

"Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ" (II Corinthians 2:14). "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen" (Jude 24, 25).

IS THERE VICTORY OVER DEATH, OUR LAST ENEMY? "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? . . . but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 15:54-57).

IS THERE ANY PLACE TO TURN WHEN I AM BURDENED WITH PROBLEMS?

"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you . . . but the God of all grace, who hath called

us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (I Peter 5:7, 10).

DOES GOD HAVE PLANS FOR OUR FUTURE? "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3). Our God has promised, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Revelation 21:7). It is comforting to know that one day God shall wipe away all tears, and there will be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying. There shall be no more pain (Revelation 21:4).

IS GOD ABLE TO KEEP THESE PRECIOUS PROMISES? "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us," (Ephesians 4:20). God is honest; He cannot lie. He has always kept His word, and we may rest in full assurance that He will do even more than He promised.

God is accessible and approachable to all who will come to Him. For the Christian, the door is always open in heaven. To overcome pessimism and gloom, read God's promises -- they will increase your faith.

Christ is a merciful and faithful high priest. He has suffered, been tempted, and he is able to succor them that are tempted. We must have strength from above. God cares. There is a door opened in heaven, (Revelation 3:8; 4:1). This signifies opportunity and access to God. Through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father (Ephesians 2:18). God opens the door and no man can close it.

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.



UPDATE

God has truly blessed the efforts of the "One Nation Under God" campaign thus far. A mailing to almost 14,000 congregations has recently been made. Already responses from over 300 concerned churches have been received. In fact, over 40 states have already made a positive response and enthusiastically offered to help. We hope that within a few more weeks we will have brethren in every state working to make the dream of putting the gospel into every home in America a reality. Constantly we need to be reminded of the

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Continued Vigilance

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the greatest freedom and liberty.

Peter warned of those who promise liberty but are themselves the slaves of corruption (II Peter 2:19). Paul warns of some who attempted to "spy out" their liberty (Galatians 2:4).

Be vigilant, lest you lose your liberty to those who promise liberty.

--Via The Pillar, P.O. Box 75, Cave City, AR 72521.

The Riches Of Christianity



Edsel Burleson

It is said that Patrick Henry, the great patriot, incorporated these words in his will: "I have now disposed of all my property to my family. There is one thing I wish I could give, and that is the Christian religion. If they had that (and I had not given them one shilling), they would be rich."

The Christian religion is the most astonishing system ever known. Babcock wrote "Christianity is not a voice in the wilderness, but a life in the world. It is not an idea in the air, but feet on the ground, going God's Way. It is not an exotic to be kept under glass, but a hardy plant to bear twelve months of fruits in all kinds of weather. Fidelity to duty is its root and branch. Nothing we can say to the Lord, no calling Him by great or dear names, can take the place of plain doing of His will. He may cry out about the beauty of eating bread with Him in His Kingdom, but it is wasted breath and a ruthless hope, unless we plow and plant in His Kingdom here and now. To remember him at His table and to forget Him at ours, is to have invested in bad securities. There is no substitute for plain, every-day goodness."

Someone has given the following wonders of Christianity.

1. It is perfect; nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it.
2. One person can go into the wilderness and set it up and operate, and a hundred persons in one community can find employment in it.
3. It will work in a room 16x16 feet, or in a township six miles square.
4. It will work among Christians, and it will go among the heathen and turn them from darkness into light.
5. It will work in the day, and do equally as good work in the night.
6. It is broad enough and deep enough to employ men of the greatest talents, and yet it will triumph in the hands of yoemen and herdsmen.
7. It will receive and use, and disburse all the money that can be put into it, and yet it will run with very little money.
8. It can be operated by the rich, but it will be difficult for the rich alone to carry it; if by one class alone, much better by the poor alone; a few poor men can run it to great success.
9. It is the strongest brace and the surest support to the youth that the author can give; it is a blessing to the strong man, and a comfort to the aged at the sunset of life.
10. It is the most sympathetic to the poor and downtrodden, and yet far more denunciatory to the wicked than any human government ever known.
11. It is the only system which proposes to unite the people of the earth, the people of every nation and clime and language, and make them one family.
12. Christianity is the best system that God could give to men in this life, and it is the only system that will lead us safely into the world to come. But its perfection must be regarded at all times by all peoples. It must be received just as the author gave

it.

Christianity is a new way of life. This is what Jesus was saying when he described disciples as "salt of the earth" and "light of the world" (Matthew 5:14-16).

This is what Paul was saying in II Corinthians 5:17 -- "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold,

all things are become new."

This is what Paul was saying in Romans 8:9 -- "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

Christianity is not something that occupies a small corner of our lives, but is something that permeates every aspect of our lives.

--420, 7th Street, S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

Failure Need Not Be Fatal

Continued From Page 2

three months of formal schooling, Thomas A. Edison patented more than 1,000 inventions. During his 60 years of reaching toward the unknown, Edison failed more than he succeeded. But who would call Edison a failure?

Is it a sin to fail? The answer is both yes and no.

It is a sin when failure is due to moral or spiritual laxness or to laziness. But it isn't a sin to fail when one has done his best or her best, within the will of God, and the results don't come out.

One must not be so afraid of life that one refuses to try. We don't have to succeed, but we do have to give life a run for its money.

A faithful old preacher felt he had failed miserable when he reported to his congregation that only one new member -- just a boy at that -- had been saved and added to the church during the

year. But that boy went on to become a missionary in Africa and the gospel was brought to tribes that previously had never heard the name of Jesus.

Take heart! If life has put you on the canvas and pummeled the breath out of you, it's still too early to quit. If you feel you must quit, then do it the day after tomorrow. You may have lost the battle today but you could win the war tomorrow.

As Grantland Rice, America's first great sports writer put it, when Jesus comes to judge us, He will not be so concerned about whether we won or lost, "But how we played the game!" The world will measure you by your success, but God will measure you by your faithfulness (I Corinthians 4:2).

--Via Forest Park Newsletter, P.O. Box 623, Forest Park, GA 30051.

One Nation Under God Update

Continued From Page 3

magnitude of our task. When our mailing goes out in July 1991, it will be the largest non-governmental mailing in the history of the United States. That's correct. This mailing, with the exception of tax returns, will be America's largest. The very fact that this effort is far larger than the ability of any congregation or individual should prove to all of us that God will have to bless it to make us successful.

With God's Blessings ... The Largest Non-Governmental Mailing in History!

The Lord recently raised up a man to coordinate this great undertaking. Bill Johnson, a long time gospel preacher and teacher at White's Ferry Road School of Preaching, is moving to Cookeville to devote his life to carrying the gospel into all the world. We are thrilled that Bill has seen the need to give himself to this mission. Please pray for Bill and all those who are laboring selflessly in making this work go forward.

Other Developments

1. Two U.S. Congressmen have called and expressed interest in this undertaking and asked to be kept informed on its progress.
2. Several congregations have indicated they plan to co-ordinate evangelistic efforts in 1991 around this campaign and take advantage of all the publicity surrounding it.

3. A special word of appreciation needs to be given to those men who have volunteered to take states or portions of states to encourage this work.

What You Can Do

1. Make sure your congregation has let us know that they are going to help in this work. Some have not told us for sure and we do know who to communicate with.

2. Help us financially now. The cost of this work is being carried by only a few congregations and individuals at this time while the word is being spread. We must have soul-loving Christians who will share what the Lord has given them to make this task possible.

3. Encourage the 17 cents cans to be put in every home in the brotherhood. Every 17 cents means another home will hear the gospel.

4. Be planning for the special contribution dates of April 15, August 26 and November 12, 1990. Set your goals now and please let us know your goal as soon as possible. Think bigger than you ever have before. The cause is worth it.

For more information, write:

One Nation Under God
Sycamore Church of Christ
P.O. Box 3273

Cookeville, Tennessee 38502

Or Call:

1-800-251-6871, ask for Horace Burks or Bill Johnson.

In Christian Service,
The Elders
Sycamore Church of Christ



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 26

MARCH 2, 1990

NUMBER 9

Preparation

Clifford Dixon

Rehoboam, son of Solomon, was not a very good king. He triggered the division of the nation by promising heavier taxation and burdens on the people. His reign was one of turmoil; and the scriptures point out that he did evil in the sight of the Lord. We read, "And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord" (II Chronicles 12:14). This is the case of people doing evil in our day -- they prepare not their hearts to seek the Lord. We have to prepare ourselves for the word of God to enter our hearts and be fruitful, in much the same way that the soil must be prepared for the planting of a crop.

God will not force himself upon anyone, because he respects the image of himself in man. We must prepare ourselves to serve the Lord. Israel had to prepare themselves for three days before God gave them the law upon Sinai (Exodus 19:10-11). The world was prepared for thousands of years for the coming of Christ. From his fall, man had the promises and prophecies of the coming of the Saviour. When Christ was ready to establish his kingdom (which is the church), preparation of the hearts of men was first necessary. John preached that the kingdom was at hand, and so did Christ (Matthew 3:1-2; 4:17). Christ showed that a teaching process was necessary for people to enter the kingdom (Luke 8:1-18). Christ also showed that one must be born again to enter the kingdom (John 3:3-5). He showed that his kingdom is a place of work and development of talents (Matthew 20:1-16; 25:1-30).

Preparation of our hearts is necessary for us to become servants of Christ. "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (James 4:8-10). We must realize the sinfulness of our lives, and must determine that we will turn an about face, and serve the Lord. This does not mean that one is saved at that moment; but he must then go to God's word and find the will of God which he must obey.

Men are drawn to God by being taught the truth (John 6:44-45). We must know the truth to be made free (John 8:32). That truth includes three fundamental facts: Jesus died for us, was buried, and arose again the third day (I Corinthians 15:1-4). That truth contains three fundamental commands; Faith, repentance, and baptism (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38). We are then added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:47).

This is not the end of the spiritual journey, but only the beginning. Every act of service in the Lord's vineyard requires preparation. We must prepare our hearts to partake of the Lord's supper. The early church partook thereof on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Jesus told the Christians to partake of it in remembrance of him (I Corinthians 11:23-26). Paul further says, "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (I Corinthians 11:27). "Unworthily" is an adverb, and refers to the manner in which we partake of the supper. Verse 29 points out that this is done by "not discerning the Lord's body." So, when one does not prepare his heart to remember the death of Christ, he eats and drinks damnation to himself in partaking of the supper.

Every act of service in the Lord's vineyard requires preparation.

In our singing we must teach and admonish one another, and make melody in our hearts to the Lord (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19). There is not an item of worship in which we can render an acceptable service without preparation.

Preparation is necessary to teach the word of God. Ezra set his heart to seek the law of the Lord, to do it, and to teach God's statutes in Israel (Ezra 7:10). Unless a teacher clearly understands his les-

son, he cannot properly teach it. Such is but a blind leader leading people blindly into the ditch with himself (Matthew 15:14).

Let us not make wrecks out of our spiritual lives by not preparing our hearts to seek the Lord.

--Route 3, Box 62, Brewton, Alabama 36426.

Religious Sinners




Bobby Key

"Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:22, 23). Yes, religious people will be turned away at the judgment.

The most prominent and influential religious sect of Jesus' day did not have God's approval. The

It is a difficult truth to accept, but one may be religious and still be a sinner. Solomon saw the wicked buried. These wicked people had "come and gone from the place of the holy" (Ecclesiastes 8:10). Today they would be called "regular churchgoers." In spite of this fact, they were still wicked! Jesus saw people in the judgment calling,

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Asking And Receiving



David Wade

Aesop tells the story of an old man, bent double with age and toil, gathering wood in the forest. While trudging out of the woods with the load on his back, he grew tired and hopeless. He threw down the bundle of wood and cried out, "I cannot bear this life any longer. Oh, I wish Death would only come and take me!"

As he spoke, Death appeared to him and said, "What wouldst thou, Mortal? I heard thee call me." "Please sir," replied the woodcutter, "would you kindly help me to lift this faggot of sticks on to my shoulder?" The moral to the story is, "We would often be sorry if our wishes were gratified."

The Prodigal of Luke 15 learned this lesson the hard way. Apparently, no amount of love his father

could show him would keep him from asking for his inheritance to squander in a far country. He had to experience the pig pen of life before he came to himself. It is regrettable that some lessons are learned in the "school of hard knocks" but for some, that is the only way they learn. Furthermore, James says, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you spend it on your pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! 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 4:3-4).

It is far better to be in harmony with the will of God. Then, we have the assurance that our prayers shall be answered. "And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (I John 3:22). "Now this is the confidence we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him" (I John 5:14-15).

I Am Not Ashamed



W. A. Holley

Jesus said, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the Holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

Paul suffered many things for the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ, but he was not ashamed of it (II Timothy 1:12). Onesiphorus was not ashamed of the chain worn by Paul (vs. 16). No one should be ashamed to wear the name, **Christian** (I Peter 4:16).

There are some things of which we should never be ashamed. Please note the following.

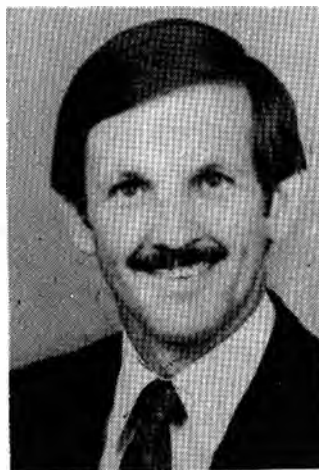
1) Never, never, be ashamed of the gospel of Christ. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). Thus, the gospel of Christ is the only power God uses to save believers.

God does not use dreams, visions, or experiences of so-called grace, or prayer to save the lost. There are many false gospels being preached today (Galatians 1:6-10). many would do well advised to see if what they believe to be gospel truth is really and truly taught in the Holy Bible (Acts 17:11; Isaiah 8:20).

2) We must never be ashamed of the word of God. Throughout the centuries the Bible has had many enemies. For example, ten thousand Bibles were burned at Graez in Steiermark on August 8,

Continued On Page 3

Isn't It Easy To Conform?



Demar Elam

Conforming to the world is one of the easiest things we do in life. Isn't it easy to conform? However, Paul instructed those at Rome with these words "and be not conformed to this world" (Romans 12:2). Divine inspiration demands non-conformity with the world. So, did Paul mean that we aren't to do anything that people

in this world are doing? Certainly not! There are many acts of acceptable conduct that people in the the world engage in. But, Paul has in mind our being conformed to those acts of conduct that are evil and wrong.

The great apostle of love wrote, "The whole world lieth in wickedness" (I John 5:19). Our world is surrounded and permeated with wickedness. Being conformed to the world carries the idea of going along with its wickedness.

Webster defines the word CONFORM thusly: 1) to be similar or identical 2) to be obedient or compliant; especially to adapt oneself to prevailing standards or customs.

A synonym of conform is agree. Conformity is the order of the day but isn't that because conform-

ing to the standards and customs around us is the easiest thing for all of us to do?

Satan is the prince of this world (John 14:30; 16:11) and we read in Galatians 1:4 that Christ died to deliver us from this present EVIL WORD. If we drift with the tide of today's world, we'll find ourselves conforming to such sins as immoral sexual acts, filthy language, lying, stealing, murder, greed, hatred, idolatry, drunkenness, and pride.

We are living in perilous times! "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, an dye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord almighty" (II Corinthians 6:17, 18). We must not form the pattern or mold of today's society. Though there are many good and wonderful things happening in our times we are forced to admit that sin is rampant in our present world.

Paul told the Corinthians, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Corinthians 7:1). Let us break away from conformity with the world. **Faith, Courage, Conviction and Holiness** should be very much a part of our lives today.

If you live righteously, you will definitely be considered a non-conformist and will attract, like a lightening rod, the scorn of a world that DEMANDS conformity. But just as the lightening rod protects those around it, so you will guard fel-

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I Am Not Ashamed

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1600 by order of Ferdinand II. Again, 60,000 Bibles were burned in one year, 1637, in Bohemia. These are but samples of numerous efforts to destroy the word of God. Even today there are those who have devoted each waking moment to its destruction; and, if they cannot destroy it, they seek to discredit it. Thousands of preachers are standing in the pulpit preaching from a Bible which they do not believe. Dr. Spong, a bishop of the Episcopal Church has said, "Is one of the reasons that our clergy do not teach the Bible rigorously to their congregations the fact that clergy ourselves have come to dismiss much of the Holy Scripture as no longer valid?" (Birmingham News, February 3, 1989). This same man wants to "retire this noble book to the shelves of our libraries and museums." Dear readers, never be ashamed of God's Holy Word!!

3) Do not be ashamed of the Lord's church or kingdom. The Lord's church has never been popular, but many are determined through gimmicks and gadgetry to make it so. These people will bend or wrest the scriptures to attain their goals (II Peter 3:15-16). Others are willing and ready to ignore our sweep under the rug certain passages which stand in their way. One Birmingham area Church of Christ through its leadership has said, "Women have been scapegoated throughout history in religion. The church is an instrument of man and sometimes does wicked things that do not reflect God (Birmingham News, March 24, 1989). To show just how far they are willing to go, they say, "As far as we can tell, that will mark the first time that any woman has stood up in a Church of Christ and given a sermon." The passage they wish to wrest is I Timothy 2:12. It is false to contend that "The church is an instrument of man. . . ." Man did not establish the church (Matthew 16:18-19); it was established by the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus, not man, possesses all authority necessary to lead the church in His way. The church as Jesus Christ established it needs no improvement!

4) We should never be ashamed of scriptural worship. This worship has been divinely authorized, and it must not be changed (Revelation 22:18-19; Galatians 1:6-10). The first day of the week is the Lord's day (I Corinthians 16:1-2; Revelation 1:10). The items of worship are: participating in Bible study, in fellowship, the Lord's supper, prayers, singing, and giving of our means (Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:19, I Corinthians 16:1-2). Human participation may be subject to improvement, but the divine side of worship cannot be improved (John 4:23-24). For example, the addition of a piano or organ cannot improve the Lord's prescribed worship, for the use of such like instruments would be an addition (Revelation 22:18-19).

5) We should never be ashamed of being a Christian. "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (I Peter 4:15-16). How shameful for one to live a life devoted to sex addiction, to crime in all of its ramifications, drug addiction, locked away in some institution!! But how wonderful to see people, young and old, living lives devoted to truth and righteousness!

Christianity, wrongly practiced, casts long, dark shadows which blind men to the truth of God Almighty. Christians are required to be examples

of believers, in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity (I Timothy 4:12). Elders, deacons, preachers, brothers and sisters, do great harm to the cause of Christ when they set sinful examples before others. Never be ashamed to set the finest example before others. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teach-

ing us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12).

Dear reader, do not be ashamed of the Lord's will Obey it today.

--P.O. Box 724, Parrish, AL 35580.

Religious Sinners

Continued From Page 1

Pharisees had made a pledge to set apart all sacred tithes, to refrain from eating anything which had been tithed, and to observe all laws and conditions concerning purity in food and family relationships. To them religion was a burden consisting of thousands of petty rules and regulations. Their whole idea of religion consisted of outward appearances.

These religious sinners were rebuked by John the Baptist and by our Lord. They would say and do not -- they preached much, but practiced little. Their works were done to be seen of men. They loved the preeminence, and shut up the kingdom against men, not going in themselves and not allowing others to enter. They often made long prayers, standing on street corners. They frequently talked widows and poor people into letting them manage their property for them, thus, devouring widow's houses. They would cross land and sea to make one proselyte; yet, their efforts only made the convert worse. Jesus said, "Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel" (Matthew 23).

It is interesting to note that the Pharisees came into existence about 160BC, but never became a really large group of people. Judah's population was well over one-half million, but the sect of the Pharisees numbered as little as two thousand, and as many as six thousand. One can only wonder how such a minority could have so great an impact.

Kevin Ballard observed three reasons for the Pharisees remaining so few in number. (1) The group was small because of their rigid entrance requirements. In order for a person to apply, he had to be recommended by a member of the Pharisaic order. After that recommendation, and an extensive background check, the applicant was questioned by three members of the sect, and only after being approved by all these methods would a person be allowed to take the oath to become a Pharisee. (2) The group was so small because of their internal control system. Once a person was a Pharisee, he was never allowed to give tithes or prepare food unless someone else of the Pharisaic order was present to assist and observe. This was done in order that discipline could be maintained. When a person became a Pharisee, his entire household became Pharisees and were bound by the rules of the sect. The head of the household was responsible for the conduct of all the family, including servants and slaves. (3) They remained small because of their strict system of discipline among their members. If one member of the order was considered suspect of not following the rules of the order, he was brought before a council. If charges were proven, the member was expelled.

Being religious is not enough. External religion has always been easier than internal religion. It is far easier to abstain from certain foods, and to

wash the hands in a certain way than it is to forgive the unlovely and the unlovable, and to help the needy at the cost of one's own time, money, comfort and ease. It is easier to attend the church service than it is to maintain the right spirit while there. External observances are often misleading. We see what man does, but we cannot know why he does it. We examine the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart.

This is the reason we continue to harp on attitude. Attitude determines action -- it is just that simple. To change a man, you must first change his heart, his thinking. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2).

It is possible to attend church every time the door opens, and never really worship. We can honor the Lord with our lips, and our heart be far from Him. We can go through the motions -- meet the letter of the law -- yet fail to worship in spirit. Thoughts are as important as deeds; the motive is as important as the act. To be what we ought to be we must have the right spirit and the right action. It is little wonder that the Lord places so great emphasis on the heart! "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8).

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love:
Where there is injury, pardon:
Where there is doubt, faith:
Where there is despair, hope:
Where there is darkness, light:
Where there is sadness, joy.

Oh, divine Master, grant that I may not so much
Seek to be consoled as to console:
To be understood as to understand:
To be loved as to love:
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned:
It is in dying that we are born
To eternal life.

St. Francis of Assisi
--324 17th SW Miami, OK 74354.

It is possible to attend church every time the door opens, and never really worship. We can honor the Lord with our lips, and our heart be far from Him. We can go through the motions -- meet the letter of the law -- yet fail to worship in spirit.

"Let Me Die The Death Of The Righteous!"



Joe E. Galloway

What better wish could be expressed than: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" (Numbers 23:10)? To "die the death of the righteous" is to die faithful to the Lord! Those who so depart this life will with certainty be rewarded in heaven with God eternally! Who expressed this wish, a wish that should be the number one priority of every person? Surprisingly, the person who said this was Balaam! You will remember that Balaam had been approached by Balak, king of Moab, who had offered Balaam great material rewards if he would curse Israel, God's people (Numbers 22:7). Properly, Balaam had inquired of God what he should do. God had said, "Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed" (v. 12). But, Balak then offered Balaam "very great honor" along with the riches. Balaam was enticed! He asked Balak to wait until he could ask "what the Lord will say unto me more" (v. 19). God does not force individuals to do right; so he allowed Balaam to go with Balak, although God emphasized that Balaam would be permitted to prophesy only the word God permitted regarding Israel. "God's anger was kindled because he went" (v. 22). The well-known instance of the ass talking to Balaam showed God's displeasure, further, and gave Balaam another chance to reconsider and repent. But, Balaam "loved the hire of wrong-doing" (II Peter 2:15, ASV); so he went anyway!

Someone may ask, "Did not Balaam end up blessing Israel as God wished? What harm was done?" Yes, Balaam's three groups of prophecies blessed Israel so well that Balak became very angry and refused to reward him (Numbers

23 and 24). Balaam was able only to speak the words God put in his mouth, but evidently this was because the Lord turned his intended curses into blessings (see Deuteronomy 23:5; Joshua 24:10). And, this is not the end of the story! Apparently Balaam coveted the silver and gold of Balak so much that he gave him some advice on how to bring Israel down: The daughters of Moab were to seduce the young men to commit fornication. This was done, resulting in a plague which killed 24,000 Israelites (Numbers 25 -- 23,000 fell in one day, I Corinthians 10:8). Revelation 2:14 informs us that Balaam "taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." Little wonder that Jude 11 pronounces a "woe" on those who "ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward"!

Did Balaam finally come to repentance and "die the death of the righteous"? The sad answer is, "No." Numbers 31 records God's instructions to Moses to avenge Israel of the Midianites. Along with the names of the great men of Midian that were slain by God's edict, "Balaam also, the son of Beor, they slew with the sword" (verse 8). Verse 16 again emphasizes that it was his counsel that caused so many of Israel to perish.

There is an extremely important lesson to us from

all this: We cannot expect to DIE the death of the righteous unless we are willing, now, to LIVE the life of the righteous! Seldom do those who put off obeying the Lord change when death approaches. The very attitude that rejects God and his will at present, is a rebellious attitude that will make it difficult to change later. Added time does not soften one's heart if he is knowingly living away from God in sin; it hardens it instead (Hebrews 3:13)! TODAY is the best time in your life to obey the Lord! You cannot go back and obey the Lord yesterday. Tomorrow may not come (Proverbs 27:1), and even if it does, you will be more hardened in sin. Why not obey the Lord and live the life of the righteous, now? "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2).

--218 Pinecrest Drive, Greeneville, TN 37743.

We cannot expect to DIE the death of the righteous unless we are willing, now, to LIVE the life of the righteous!

Boldness

Rusty Johnson

Boldness is "a positive, courageous action in the midst of threatened negative results." There are many people in the Bible who demonstrated boldness in the face of danger. In the third and fourth chapters of Acts we can read Luke's account of Peter's boldness.

During an hour of prayer, Peter was going into the temple to pray. Before entering the temple, Peter saw a lame man begging for alms. Peter, using the gifts that God had given him, healed the man. As one would suspect, this caused quite a stir among the people in the temple, so Peter seized the opportunity to preach the gospel to them. The Jewish authorities, being disturbed that Peter was preaching to the people, placed him in custody.

The next morning Peter was brought before the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin is like a court with 72 judges. The court threatened Peter with bodily harm if he taught or preached of Jesus again. Peter

responded by saying, "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." That's the type of boldness we need to have.

How can you determine if you are bold? Answer the following questions and you should have a good idea if you are bold.

1. The most important goal for me at school is to make and keep friends.
2. I'm often embarrassed to admit to certain people that I'm a Christian.
3. I act differently at school from the way I do at church.
4. As long as life goes smoothly for me, I try not to get involved.

A yes answer to any of these questions may indicate a lack of boldness. God needs bold soldiers to carry out his work. Are you bold enough for the task?

--Via Hobbs Street Herald, P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

Isn't It Easy To Conform?

Continued From Page 2

low Christians by your example of receiving the fiery darts of the wicked without submitting to them.

--P.O. Box 642, Madison, Alabama 35758.

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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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Why Would Anyone Want To Be A Christian?



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

When your soul leaves your body there will be a lot of questions asked concerning you. Such questions as, "Was he rich? Was she pretty? Was he a great athlete? Was she really as intelligent as everyone thought? Did he know the President on a first name basis? Did she have as many beautiful clothes as most people thought?" will be asked. But the most important question that will be asked at that time will be, "Was he/she a faithful Christian?" By putting an emphasis on the word "FAITHFUL", what would be the answer concerning you if you were to die today?

There are those who would even ask such a question as, "Why would anyone want to be a Christian? What good is that? What's in it for me?" How would you answer such a question?

Here are some answers or reasons one might use for being a faithful Christian:

(1) In a selfish way it is good to be a Christian because it pays to be a Christian! Psalm 1:1-3 extols the virtue of being a follower of God (in this dispensation, a Christian), accounting him as "bringing forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things (physical necessities) shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

However, it might appear that the highest of the selfish reasons for being a Christian is found in Paul's tender words to young Timothy, "... there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give unto me at that day; AND NOT TO ME ONLY, BUT UNTO

ALL THEM ALSO THAT LOVE HIS APPEARING" (II Timothy 4:8). Yes, selfishly, it pays to be a Christian, for the RIGHT REASON!

(2) Ethically, we know it's right to be a Christian! In Acts 4:19, 20 Peter said, "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." Is it right to heed men more than God? Would that be ethical? Jesus asserts that when one has done "all those things which are commanded" you have to conclude, "we are unprofitable servants" for we have just done what it was our duty to do (Luke 17:10). One should desire to be a Christian because ethically, it's right!

(3) Socially, it's right to be a Christian! This is true because it grants to us the very best fellowship in this world and in the next world. By being a Christian who seeks to follow God's will, one finds that Jesus is always a constant companion, "... and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). How is Jesus "with you always"? Only inasmuch as we follow his instructions (the Bible), as he followed the will of his Father. If we cease to walk with him by neglecting his will, by being unfaithful to his cause, then we cease to have fellowship with him! (Amos 3:3; I John 1:6-9). Socially, we have fellowship with the spiritual Israel, Abraham's seed (Galatians 3:26-29).

(4) Prospectively, there is no life that promises AND DELIVERS such a great wealth of promises as the life a Christian lives! Paul said that godliness is profitable "unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (I Timothy 4:8). An auto commercial on TV asks, "Who could ask for anything more?" John said, "this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life" (I John 2:25). Who can ask for anything more than the promise of eternal life? "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on

immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory . . . thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 15:54, 57).

Yes, "why would anyone want to be a Christian?" The answer seems so clear and plain; because selfishly, it pays to be a Christian; ethically, it is the right thing to do; socially, we gain the very best fellowship available; and prospectively, it presents promises that are great and sure! A more important soul-searching question might be, "Why would anyone NOT want to be a Christian?"

Now once again, if it was your funeral and the question was asked, "Was he/she a FAITHFUL Christian," what would be the right answer?

--1400 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501.

Real Power


Joe T. Spivy, Jr.

"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).

The world has many images of power. It is manifested in the ability to "hire and fire," to affect public policy, or to demand personal attention. The physical signs of one's power can be seen in the title they possess, their gold card, or even what controller they use with their Nintendo games. Power is expressed in terms of military might, economics, and education. For a few, power is simply another utility bill they pay on the eighth of the month.

While power is understood and expressed in a variety of ways, there is one which stands unrivaled. There is no source or form of power

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Words Of Truth

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-Acts 26:25


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David Wade . . . Editor
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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Fear To Whom Fear



David Wade

"Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour 'to whom honour' (Romans 13:7). What does Paul mean by the statement, 'fear to whom fear'?"

Jesus put the terror of fear in proper perspective when he said, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him" (Luke 12:4-5). This greater fear is to be shown unto God.

Conversely, we are to fear God with reverence, awe, and respect. "Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). "Fear God. Honour the king" (I Peter 2:17).

There are many attendant blessings that accompany godly fear. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Psalm 111:10). "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). "Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief" (Proverbs 28:14).

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15). "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Timothy 1:7). "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (I John 4:18). "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Corinthians 7:1).

We are to render "fear to whom fear." If our thoughts and deeds are evil, we will feel fear or terror for both God and man. As one anonymous writer put it, "He who fears God need fear nothing else, and he who fears not God needs to fear everything else."

Persevere



Johnny Ramsey

We should never overlook the power of endurance in the life of a Christian. Day by day, as we grow in the grace of godliness (II Peter 3:18), we come nearer to the ideal heaven set for faithful soldiers of the Savior. A brilliant hymn challenges our attention:

Valiant endeavor and loving obedience,
Freely and joyously now would we bring,
Yielding henceforth to our glorious King
Freely surrendered and wholly Thine own.

Ardent members of the church of the Lord continue steadfastly (Acts 2:42). We stand up for the name of Christ, the gospel, and the plan of salvation. We worship sincerely (John 4:24), give generously (Acts 20:35), live spiritually (Romans 13:14), attend regularly (Psalm 122:1) and pray fervently (James 5:16). The only one who conquers is the one who perseveres in every good thing. Even when adversity comes our way, we remember this powerful truth:

Trouble and perplexity drive me to prayer,
and prayer drives away perplexity and trouble.

We will certainly fail in our pursuit of heaven if we allow difficult moments to crush our spirits and dampen our hopes. Many people cannot enjoy the rainbow, because they are still dwelling upon the storm. It is sad indeed when we linger over past problems and miss present joys and future success. Paul made it very clear in the magnificent section of II Corinthians chapter four that outward things perish while the inward man is renewed daily. External matters do not compare with internal

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Persevere

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peace, joy and contentment! Never forget these words:

Worry is a mental tornado but peace within produces harmony without.

We we ABIDE in the Lord, CONTINUE in His word and REMAIN in the confines of God's grace (I John 2:24) it will be very difficult for Satan to gain an advantage over us (II Corinthians 2:11). But when we become slothful and careless, we dig our own spiritual grave. Our faith must work by love if heaven would be our home and if we would

Real Power

Continued From Page 1

which is even comparable. We speak of the gospel, the "power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). The gospel may be shunned by many and considered powerless by a world that will believe in only what it can see with its eyes. yet, none can match its attributes.

What other message is eternal? While world powers rise and fall, human philosophies move in and out of favor (i.e., communism in eastern Europe), the gospel stands eternally. This great message of God "shall never pass away" (Luke 21:33).

Man struggles to fend off the old enemy, Death. The gospel, with its awesome power, has overcome the horror and terror of death. No longer must one be eternally separated from the presence of God. Through Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, and man's response to that act (Romans 3:3-5), death's power is ultimately negated (I Corinthians 15:54-57).

One's spiritual citizenship, and hence his eternal destination, can be altered by the gospel. Its power can liberate from the bondage of sin and deliver one into the kingdom of God. Through the gospel, a way is made for adoption into the family of God (Romans 8:15, 16; John 1:12, 13).

Lives which have been ruined by the power of Satan, those who have lost their way, can find direction and redemption through the message of the gospel. Lives can be changed radically from a course of self-interest and domination by Satan to one of walking with God. Your life can be changed to the point that it can be said, "Christ (now) lives in me" (Galatians 2:20).

The gospel! The greatest power on earth! The power to become and overcome! Yet it is power that is wasted until it is used! As Paul said, it is "the preaching of the cross" which is the "power of God" (I Corinthians 1:18).

--Route 7, Box 204 Fairmont, W. Va. 26554.

The gospel! The greatest power on earth! The power to become and overcome! Yet it is power that is wasted until it is used!

be productive in spiritual values in the here and now. A beautiful sentiment in spiritual song declares:

Lord, I would keep soul and body for Thee,
No room for self or for sin shall there be;
Fit for thy dwelling, for Thee set apart--
Savior divine, dwell in my heart.

We must diligently add the virtues of godliness to our daily walk if perseverance becomes a reality in our journey toward the land of fadeless day. It is the end of our faith (I Peter 1:9) that culminates in joy and glory. We must always be found pressing on if we would dwell in God's house forever (Psalm 27:4). If we become weary in well-doing, we will certainly fall short of our cherished destination. We are exhorted to recall the tragedy that befell Lot's wife (Luke 17:32) and never look

back, but ever look onward and upward lest we turn back to perdition (Hebrews 10:38-39). The challenge to do better is found all over the Bible, It is surely the word of the devil that causes us to be content with less than our best.

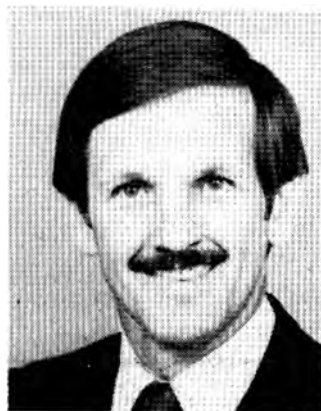
To keep on keeping on, even when trouble and sorrow attend our way, is a mark of true greatness, supreme loyalty, and undaunted faith; and, these are the things that make us strong. May we fervently and sincerely sing:

Savior, lead me then at least
When the storm of life is past,
To the land of endless day
Where all tears are wiped away.

And, as the old brother prayed, "Lord, that will be enough." Amen!

--Via Waymarks, Bedford, Texas.

It Is Within Our Power!



Demar Elam

The feeling of being in control of a situation can be an enormously satisfying experience. To have something to accomplish that you know is within your power is confidence-building. All Christians should be filled

with a sense of confidence as they live the Christian life from day to day. Why? Because it is within our power to lift up Christ before the world.

Christians are failing on many battlefronts today because they are not lifting up Christ to the world. In speaking of his death, Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). There is, however, another sense by which Christ can be lifted up; and this lifting up is completely within our power. Christ needs to be exalted and lifted up in our present times. Jesus declared that he would draw all men unto him and that his death would be the means of accomplishing this objective. Because Christ was lifted up upon the cross of Calvary and died for our sins, we have the privilege of lifting him up before the world today as the source of redemption from sin.

We also can be lifted up. How? "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (James 4:10). Each person struggles with the problem of humility in this wealthy, self-centered, and pride-filled world. Our growth numerically and spiritually has been hindered by our failure to lift up the Christ. Many of the ills that plague our great brotherhood would vanish overnight if we would begin lifting up Christ.

The world is looking for Christ. Many many not be aware of their search, their yearning, their longing, but it is there within each man. What man will not tell you that he desires more out of life than he has? Even faithful Christians have

yearnings: we are restless souls from here to eternity. We shall not fully rest until we rest with him!

We must not fail to see our opportunities and to use them fully. Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness (Numbers 21:9) to save those who looked upon it, so also we must lift up Christ that whosoever believes on him shall not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:14-16). No, we must never "lift up" Christ to crucify him afresh, but rather "lift" him up as the crucified. Christ is light, life, and liberty to those entrapped by the snare of Satan; and we as Christians must not fail to lift him up.

It is within our power! We have control of the situation and need to act confidently in daily Christian living. Let each of us lift him up in our speech, in our morals, in our attitudes and in our actions. Let us live in such a way that all will know what Christ has meant to our lives. We can lift him up so that others will not doubt our love.

Let us all lift up the Christ! It is truly within our power.

--P.O. Box 642, Madison, Alabama 35758.

The world is looking for Christ. Many may not be aware of their search, their yearning, their longing, but it is there within each man.

Time

I Have Only Just A Minute,
Only Sixty Seconds In It,

Forced Upon Me, Can't Refuse It,
Didn't Seek It, Didn't Choose It,

But It's Up To Me To Use It,
I Must Suffer If I Lose It,

Give Account If I Abuse It,
I Have Just A Tiny Minute--

But Eternity Is In It!

Good Doctrine: Forsake Not God's Law

Proverbs 4:2



Cecil May, Jr.

Christians are saved by God's grace through faith in the blood of Christ (Romans 3:24-25). We cannot boast that we have justified ourselves, through law or any other way. If we can save ourselves, faith is unnecessary

(Romans 4:14), and Christ's death is vain (Galatians 2:21). If we think we save ourselves, we go down to our houses unjustified (Luke 18:9-14).

Always there have been some who misuse the doctrine of grace as an excuse for sin (Romans 6:1-2). Similarly, some may erroneously deduce from the inability of law to justify sinners that Christians, justified by faith, are not subject to God's law. True Bible doctrine is not an encouragement to anyone, anytime, to forsake God's law.

We must not forsake God's law, because without law we would know neither sin nor grace. Law shows sin to be sin (Romans 3:20). Sin is defined by law (I John 3:4). If there is no law, there is no sin; if there is no sin, there is no need for grace.

We must not forsake God's law, because it is four our good. God does not capriciously forbid things good for us. He loves us. He gave his law to show us the way that is best for us. He commands us to love because love is better than hate. Forgiveness is better than vindictiveness and malice. Honesty is better than lying and cheating. Committed love for one mate is better than promiscuity. Honest work is better than stealing. When one forsakes God's law, he hurts himself.

We must not forsake God's law, because to do so is to reject God's favor and grace (Proverbs 28:9). Law cannot justify sinners, because obeying one commandment cannot earn forgiveness for breaking another (James 4:17; Luke 17:10). Law justifies only the righteous (Galatians 3:10-12), and in that very sense, "There is none righteous" (Romans 3:10). However, the only kind of faith that can appropriate grace is obedient faith (James 2:24). A faithful Christian may stumble, and God by grace can lift him up and not impute his sin to him (Romans 4:6-8). As long as he walks in the light, the blood of Christ keeps cleansing him (I John 1:7). But one who sins and refuses to repent (Acts 8:22), commits sin unto death (I John 1:7; 5:16). One who willfully sins rejects Christ's sacrifice for sin (Hebrews 10:26). God's law is never broken with impunity. Whenever one sins,

his sin must be covered by the blood of Christ, or he must pay its penalty himself.

It is a great disservice to encourage anyone to forsake God's law. Good doctrine never does that. God says, "For I give you good doctrine; forsake eye not my law (Proverbs 4:2).

--Magnolia Bible College, P.O. Box 1101, Kosciusko, Mississippi 39090.

God's law is never broken with impunity. Whenever one sins, his sin must be covered by the blood of Christ, or he must pay its penalty himself.

"Examine Yourselves"



Ken Tyler

Paul told the brethren at Corinth, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. . ." (II Corinthians 13:5). Self-examination is one of the hardest tasks of life. It is not easy to look at ourselves honestly and objectively. One quality we all need is to be able to see ourselves just like God sees us. I want to ask some questions in this article that will help us take a good look at our lives.

1. How long has it been since you prayed? The Christian loves to pray. He cannot live without prayer. It is like food and drink to his physical body. Prayer is something very special to the child of God. How is your prayer life? Examine yourself! Paul said, "Continue in prayer . . ." (Colossians 4:2).

2. How long has it been since you studied the Bible? The Bible is the standard of our lives. Paul said, ". . . the faith . . ." is the basis of our self-examination. "The faith" is the gospel of Christ. In

Acts 6:7 we read that ". . . a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." They had simply obeyed the gospel. Knowledge of the word of God is the greatest need of the world. Do you study? Examine yourself! May we never forget that the Bible will also be the basis of the judgment (James 2:12; John 12:48).

3. Do you attend all the services of the church? When the church meets, is something else more important to you than worship? When you seek God's kingdom first, you do not forsake or neglect worship (Matthew 6:33). The Christian loves to worship. Do you? Examine yourself!

4. What kind of life are you living? Do you drink, or use other drugs? What kind of movies do you watch? What about the magazines you look at or the books you read? Are you living in fornication? John said, "Love not the world . . ." (I John 2:15). Paul stated, "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:22). Are you different from the world? The Christian is. Examine yourself!

I hope the thoughts of this article will help all of us go to heaven. The Christian's desire is to examine himself and please God. I pray this is your desire today.

--P.O. Box 376, Arab, Alabama 35016.

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VOLUME 26

MARCH 16, 1990

NUMBER 11

Lord Teach Us To Pray



Wendell Winkler

1. **WHEN FACED WITH IMPORTANT DECISIONS.** Before selecting the twelve apostles, the Lord prayed all night (Luke 6:12-16).

2. **BEFORE GREAT EVENTS.** Pentecost grew out of a season of prayer (Acts 1:14; Acts 2:1ff).

3. **WHEN SUFFERING PHYSICAL AFFLICTIONS.** James 5:13 encourages, "is any among you afflicted? Let him pray." Did Paul pray concerning his thorn in the flesh? (II Corinthians 12:7-9). Upon being "sick unto death," Hezekiah "prayed unto the Lord." See I Kings 20:1-11.

4. **WHEN ANXIOUS OR DISTRESSED.** David

said, "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: He heard my voice out of his temple and my cry came before him even unto his ears" (Psalm 18:6). See also Psalm 118:5; 120:1. We are to cast our care upon the Lord, confidently knowing he cares for us (I Peter 5:7). Instead of being anxious, we are to take everything to God in prayer with such resulting in the peace of God coming as a garrison to guard our hearts against the intrusion of all future anxious alarms and fears (Philippians 4:6, 7).

5. **WHEN PROBLEMS ARISE.** When the problem arose in the early church concerning the neglect of the Grecian widows, the matter was immediately taken to God in prayer (Acts 6:1-4).

6. **BEFORE ENTERING TRIALS.** Oh! the strengthening hours Jesus spent in Gethsemane in prayer to his father just before the ordeals of his trials and subsequent crucifixion (Matthew 26:35-46).

7. **WHEN SUFFERING PERSECUTION.** Upon being lacerated with the whip and being cast into

prison "at midnight Paul and Silas prayed" (Acts 16:23-25).

8. **BEFORE SEPARATIONS.** Upon leaving the Ephesian elders, to see their faces no more, Paul "kneeled down, and prayed with them all" (Acts 20:36-38).

9. **AFTER GREAT EVENTS IN OUR LIVES.** Immediately upon having fed the five thousand Jesus "went up into a mountain apart to pray" (Matthew 14:21-23).

10. **IN THE MIDST OF THE BUSY ACTIVITIES OF LIFE.** As Jesus' fame was spread abroad and great multitudes were coming to hear him and to be healed by him, "he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed" (Luke 5:15, 16).

11. **WHEN WE SIN.** Psalm 51 is David's penitential prayer upon his having sinned with Bathsheba.

12. **WHEN DYING.** Did not Stephen thus pray? (Acts 7:59, 60). Yes, and our Lord prayed when he was dying (Luke 23:24).

--Faulkner University, Montgomery, Alabama.

"Have It Your Way"

Norman Bales

Jim Hart is the track coach at Sharpstown High School in Houston, Texas. Recently, some athletes came by the office requesting permission to determine for themselves the extent of their practice. Coach Hart responded by saying, "I thought this was the coach's office, not the Burger King." The boys didn't seem to understand, so the coach explained, "Well, you want to have it your way."

A few days later, Jim was teaching his Bible class and he observed that this is the lifestyle of many Christians. When you think about it, "Have it your way" is the life principle chosen by most people in the world.

There are several reasons why the child of God

"I thought this was the coach's office, not the Burger King." The boys didn't seem to understand, so the coach explained, "Well, you want to have it your way."


can't live according to the philosophy expressed in the Burger King slogan.

1. **CHRISTIANS BELONG TO GOD.** We are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1). When we let God control our actions we have to forget about having things our way.

2. **IF I HAVE IT MY WAY ALL THE TIME, THEN MY WAY WILL INEVITABLY CONFLICT WITH SOMEONE ELSE'S WAY.** Our Savior left us an example of serving others. In the upper room, he demonstrated the practice of thinking of the needs of others when he washed the disciples' feet (John 13). He then told them to act the same way. We can't do that if we insist on having it our way.

3. **IT IS NOT IN OUR OWN BEST INTEREST TO ALWAYS HAVE THINGS OUR WAY.** Paul learned this when he asked for removal of his thorn in the flesh (II Corinthians 12:7-10). If our children were allowed to determine their own diet,

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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David Wade . . . Editor
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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Springtime, A Reminder



David Wade

Spring will officially arrive March 20. The fruit trees are blooming, the carpet of grass is turning green, as the weather is now warming. Springtime is perhaps the favorite season of most people. The short days are lengthening, and we have more daylight and congenial

weather. It is a good time to get out and enjoy the beautiful nature. shall completely destroy the earth at Christ's coming. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Peter 3:10).

Why does God permit this present wicked world to continue? We should be aware that God has not always borne with sinful humanity. Remember "Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger and in his wrath" (Deuteronomy 29:23; cf. Genesis 19:24-25). The answer to the question is found in Peter's declaration in II Peter 3:9. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." The promise of God that Peter refers to is that "the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

In view of these eminent events, Peter concludes, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation (living) and godliness" (II Peter 3:11).

As you contemplate the beauties of nature, think also of God's promise, God's patience, God's call, and God's judgment. Obey his will today!

The Book Of Life

Rusty Johnson

In the Chapel of St. George, in Westminster Abbey, is a memorial of World War II. It consists of four bound volumes that contain the names of the 60,000 civilians who were killed in the city of London by enemy action. One volume lies open upon a pedestal and a light shines down upon the names that appear on the open page. Each day a page in the book is turned. When the last page of one volume is reached, it is replaced by the next volume. In this book you will find the names of men, women, and children, some rich, some famous, but the majority are ordinary people. Some of the people in the book had healthy, sound bodies, while others were sick and crippled. However, in this book no distinctions between people are made. They stand together for all to see.

Another book exists that contains a list of people's names with a very diverse background. It is a very important book, that we all should dedicate our lives to getting our names in. This is a book kept by God, that contains the names of those who have been saved. It is the Book of Life (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 20:12-15).

Judgement Day is very real and will one day be here. When it does get here, no names will be added to the Book of Life. Don't let it sneak up on you. Get your name added to the Book of Life today.

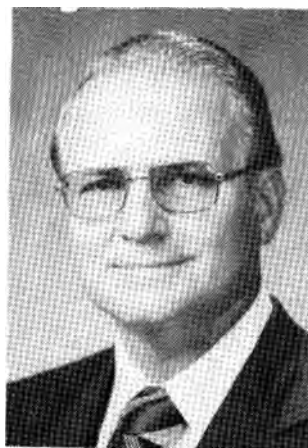
--Via Hobbs Street Bulletin, P.O. Box 506, Athens, Alabama 35611.

Judgement Day is very real and will one day be here. When it does get here, no names will be added to the Book of Life.

Springtime tends to remind us afresh of the great promise God made to Noah, "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter shall not cease" (Genesis 8:22). Because God gave this promise, the farmer is able to plow in hope and thresh in hope (I Corinthians 9:10).

We must remember that God has awesome power. He created the earth from nothing, and he shall destroy it. He destroyed the living in the days of Noah, "all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land" (Genesis 7:22). God

attempt to set a date for the Lord's return. At the same time every believer should be deeply interested in his return. The thought of his return should quicken the heart of every Christian. Many are being deceived in regard to things which will take place when he comes. Theories that are very harmful have been woven around the return of Christ, and many sincere people have been led astray regarding these things.



Bobby Key

As the Jews in the Old Testament looked for the coming of the Messiah, so the Christian now looks for the return of Christ. There is no truth more clearly taught in God's Word, no fact more firmly established, no warning more emphatic than the second coming of Christ. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" (II

Peter 3:10). "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 24:44).

No man knows when the Lord will return, and it is foolish for any man to pretend that he does know. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven, but my Father only . . . Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Matthew 24:36, 42). We must not propose to be wiser than the angels and

He Will Return

There was a purpose in his first coming, and there is a purpose in his second coming. Christ came the first time to save man. "For the Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). To accomplish this task it was necessary that Christ offer himself a sacrifice for our sins. It was also necessary that he set up his kingdom, which is the church. While on earth all that Christ did was to carry out the will of the Father. "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 8:38). In the very shadow of the cross Christ prayed to the Father: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4).

Christ will not come the second time to offer

He Will Return

Continued From Page 2

himself a sacrifice for man's sins, but to judge the world. "But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:26-28). Every person who ever lived will appear before him in judgment. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). After the reign of mercy comes the reign of justice; after the gospel that grants pardon and peace, the law that inflicts punishment and sorrow. There is no doubt about it, Christ will come the second time to judge the world.

Our Lord is coming the second time to raise the dead. "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). Christ did not teach two resurrections, one for the good and one for the wicked a thousand years later. All will be raised on the same day and at the same hour. This will take place on the last day. Jesus said, "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day . . . And I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:39, 40).

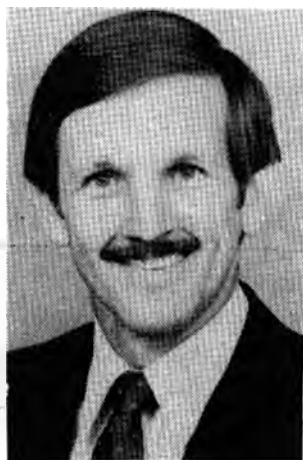
When Christ returns it will be the last day. It is called "the day of the Lord" (II Peter 3:10). On this day Christ will not set up his kingdom, rather he will return the kingdom to his Father. "But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and

power. For he must reign, til he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Corinthians 15:23-26). This passage forever disputes the theory of a future kingdom and one thousand years reign on earth. At His coming, "the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Peter 3:10).

Christ's return will not be a secret appearance. "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen" (Revelation 1:7). "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the great God . . . Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (II Peter 3:11-14).

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

"Speak A Good Word For Jesus"



Demar Elam

"Speak A Good Word For Jesus" is the title of a book written by Joe D. Gray. The title of his book has made a profound impression in my mind. Just think! What if every Christian would "speak a good word for Jesus," at every opportunity.

I fear that our concept of souls winning may be too narrow. Some think that in

order to be a soul winner one must be able to lead an individual from Genesis to Revelation. Granted, every Christian should study to the extent that he or she could properly instruct the sinner in the way of truth and righteousness (II Timothy 2:15). However, soul winning often begins simply with a word fitly spoken in behalf of Jesus Christ.

Just pause and think what could be done in every place where the Lord's church exists if every member went about daily speaking a good word for Jesus! Our great God desires that all men be saved. This great desire of God is echoed in I Timothy 2:3-4, "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

Think how much our lives and the lives of those with whom we come in contact will be enriched when we learn to speak a good word for Jesus. Daily we are afforded the privilege of speaking out in behalf of Christ and daily we either use or lose those opportunities. If we aren't using our opportunities to the fullest extent, we need to take the time to change our thought processes to be on continual look out for an opportunity to simply speak a good word for Jesus.

Jesus came into the world and lived a sinless life (I Peter 2:22) setting an example for us to follow (I Peter 2:21). Jesus' very mission on earth was ". . . to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Christ entrusted us with the ongoing of the redemptive work he began (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). Yes, the redemptive work was initiated by the suffering and death of Jesus on the cross of Calvary (I Peter 2:24). However, we are responsible to proclaim the message that redemption has been provided and that it is available to all men (John 3:15-17).

All the organized programs in the church will not replace the impact of every Christian in the body of Christ learning to speak a good word for Jesus.

Our buildings would already be running over if every saint had been daily practicing what we have spoken of in this article. Improvement should be the goal of every Christian. Let each member of the Lord's church learn to capitalize on every opportunity that comes our way to "speak a good

word for Jesus." The results will be simply phenomenal! Our love for Christ will increase; the love among brethren will increase; the love for others will increase, and the building will fill up as the average man on the street becomes impressed with the name we wear.

--P.O. Box 642, Madison, Alabama 35758.

All the organized programs in the church will not replace the impact of every Christian in the body of Christ learning to speak a good word for Jesus.

Tangue-Tongled



Dalton Key

Standing to speak before an audience has turned the strongest of men into mush. We've all seen brawny, personable, articulate men transformed into red-faced, blubbing two-year-olds; and by what? by merely standing before others and attempting to say

something. And this is only natural. We expect such from those with little or no speaking experience, and yet, even those of us who have

"Have It Your Way"

Continued From Page 1

they never would eat anything but candy and ice cream. Parents know that such a diet is not in the best interest of their children so they require the inclusion of meat and vegetables. You can be sure that when our Heavenly Father denies us our way, it is always in our best interest.

"Have it your way" is all right when it comes to ordering hamburgers, but you'll end up disappointed if you try to live that way.

--Via East Hill News, 509 E. Madison, Pulaski, TN 38478.

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Tangue-Tongled

Continued From Page 3

been addressing the public for years find difficulty at times saying just what we mean to say. When placed before an audience, the tongue and the brain often go off in two different directions.

Gleaned both from personal experience and from the testimony of others, comes this collection of church service "bloopers": "Let me assure you that we have gathered here for no other purpose than to think on worldly things" . . . "It would simply be impossible for one to attend every service and get anything out of the sermons" . . . "We have two who are sick of this church" . . . "I am sorry that we don't have any sick to announce, however, we are happy to announce that Sister Blank has the flu" . . . "We pray that if there has been any spark of revival lit during this meeting that the Lord will water that spark" . . . "We are so thankful

that brother Blank had the audacity to respond to last night's invitation". . . "The elders would like to announce that we have just bought the lot across the street from the church building. It will be used for a sparking lot" . . . "As you know we like to have the truth properly confounded here, so we invite you back tomorrow night to hear brother Blank dispense with the gospel once again" . . . "I have an announcement here about a debate over at -- well, I don't remember where - with - well, I don't remember who is debating or what the subject is - but you will need to go" . . . And one man, in closing the service, said, "I do hope that we will never see you again."

This reminds us of the timid usher, who, in asking a lady to move to another seat, said nervously, "Mardon me padom, but you're occupewing the

wrong pie. If you'll fladly gollar me, I'll sew you to your sheet!"

The next time you hear a blunder from the pulpit, please be patient. Many of us, from time to time, appear to be taking Matthew 10:19 out of context and applying it to ourselves. I say "appear to be taking," for we know the trouble with that approach: those early disciples were inspired; if we "take no thought how or what (we) speak," we're on our own. But yet, even when thought is given, and much thought at that, the tongue and the brain too often stray, the one from the other, singing, "When we asunder part, it gives us inward pain."

Yes, be patient. Your time will come. Now, if you will excuse me, I need to sork on my wermon.

--Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.

Why I Am A Christian! And Why Others Should Be Also!

Paul Sain

A Christian is one who obeys the precious gospel of Christ, lives godly, and worships faithfully and scripturally . . . looking to the time of being with the Father and all the redeemed of all ages.

But Why do I want to be a Christian?

I Want to Reciprocate God's Love. God's love was demonstrated to us while we were sinners (Romans 5:8); God so loved us that he gave his only begotten Son (John 3:16). We love him because he first love us (I John 4:19). To love God I must be a Christian, a follower of the path that leads heavenward (I John 5:3; Matthew 7:13-14).

I Want To Serve Christ Who Died For Me. The Son of God was in the beginning and came to earth in the flesh (John 1:1, 14) to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). He purchased the church with his own blood (Acts 20:28).

I Want To Share The Greatest Honor Possible. We often count it an honor to be related to great people. To be a Christian is better than being fleshly related to any great person -- or even related fleshly to our Lord. Notice the thoughts of Luke 8:19-21; 11:27-28.

I Want To Live The Best Life Here On Earth. It is natural to want to be remembered for significant accomplishments. A righteous life is the greatest memorial one can possibly erect. If we notice all the ones itemized in the "Hall of Faith" chapter of Hebrews 11 we will notice ones having chosen to follow God and his way. The way of God is the best life!

I Want To Go To Heaven When I Die! The Hebrews writer tells us that "it is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment" (9:27). When we have passed from this life, and stand before God in judgment, what will be of value or count then? Nothing but whether we had been a Christian! Unless we had obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ and then faithfully followed him unto the end of our time upon this earth, there would be NO HOPE for us (Acts 4:12; John 14:1-4; II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Will YOU be a Christian? Believe in Jesus Christ (John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6); Repent of your sins

(Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30); Confess him before men (Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10); and be baptized for the remission of your sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

May we assist you in your obedience?

--Via East Hill News 509, E. Madison, Pulaski, TN 38478.

A Little Known Philippian



Winfred Clark

else would you think of that might be very important? What about a man by the name of Epaphroditus? Yes, he came from Philippi. What do we know of him? Listen to what Paul had to say, "Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labor, and fellow soldier, but your messenger, and he ministered to my wants . . . he was sick night unto death . . . because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me" (Philippians 2:25-30).

What kind of a man was he? Who is this little known man for Philippi?

1. HIS LIFE WAS IN BALANCE.

As you look at Paul's description of him you will see that he is a brother, and this comes from the fellowship of the gospel. He is a laborer and this has to do with the furtherance of the gospel. He is

If someone asked you about the folks at Philippi, who would you name? Who would be the first people to come to mind? I am sure Lydia and the jailor would be among those you would remember. They are very prominent in Acts sixteen. Yes, there was the little maiden, but who

a soldier and this means he is set for the defence of the faith of the gospel. In every good way his life has been influenced by the gospel. Such has produced a marvelous blend in this man's life. He is the kind of person all of us should strive to be.

2. HE CARRIED A BURDEN.

Paul is anxious to tell those at Philippi of his "longing for them." He was concerned because Epaphroditus knew word had reached Philippi that he was sick. He did not want them to have additional burdens because of him. He thus assumes an emotional burden concerning them. He also had a burden of concern with reference to Paul. He would do for Paul what Paul could not do for himself. This would be done even though he is extremely sick. Yes, he carried a burden because he was that kind of a man.

3. HE WAS SURELY A BLESSING.

You would have to say that such a man as he was a blessing. He surely was to Paul, for he is placed in some very choice company. His efforts as a child of God would not go unnoticed. He would be a blessing to all of those at Philippi who knew him. He is also a blessing to us.

Remember, this is not one of the first people who would think of when thinking of those at Philippi. But, we come to see just how important this man really is. Isn't this true of churches and places you know today? Do we not find a multitude of people of whom we know little? But, oh how valuable they are to the Lord's cause. They are the balanced, burdened and blessed ones!

--P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.



Words Of Truth

"I am
Words

orth the
ts 26:25

(USPS 691-760)

VOLUME 26

MARCH 23, 1990

NUMBER 12

Zeal To Act And Patience To Wait



Cecil May, Jr.
they have always been.

You have seen him. He is usually young, bubbling with enthusiasm, convinced that he has all the answers, vibrant with the confidence that the is going to turn the world around. It would have already been done, but until he came along, no one had the faith and zeal to do it! Usually, he finds a congregation which wants his kind of confidence and enthusiasm, and things go well for a few months. But the inevitable leveling off occurs, discouragement sets in, and the preacher moves on for "greener pastures." Often he goes through 3 or 4 churches in 6 or 8 years, and then quits to sell insurance. He needs a bit of realism and patience.

Other preachers have preached so often with no response they no longer expect any. A few people move in, a few more move out, some of the children growing up are baptized, and some of the older members die. The preacher visits the hospital, fraternizes with his favorite members, works his garden or in his shop or plays his golf, preaches his old outlines until he runs out, and moves somewhere else to repeat the process. He needs a reminder of what the word of God can accomplish, if he will apply it where it is needed with faith and zeal.

I remember thinking, when I was fresh and

young, that if a problem arose and was recognized, when I had preached the truth on it, it was taken off; I could move on to another. I soon found it did not work that way.

It will not solve the problem to get discouraged and quit. It is not the thing to do to whip up those who agree to a fever pitch and drive out the rest. IT does not help to move to another congregation; it will have problems, too, that will not be cured in a single treatment.

I remember, also, looking back over a decade of work and being able to see that sound and faithful preaching, continued patiently, persistently, and zealously, does do good. With time, results are evident.

God's word is living and active (Hebrews 4:12). The gospel is powerful (Romans 1:16). As a fire burns and a hammer breaks what is pounded with it, God's word will affect the hearts to which it is applied (Jeremiah 23:29). We must sow the seed

and wait with patience for the harvest (James 5:7). We must be instant in season and out of season (II Timothy 4:2), that is, we must continue to speak the truth even when it does not seem to be accepted.

Don't expect so much so soon that you grow discouraged. Don't become so apathetic that you expect nothing and so do nothing.

--Magnolia Bible College, Kosciusko, Mississippi 39090.

Don't expect so much so soon that you grow discouraged. Don't become so apathetic that you expect nothing and so do nothing.

Not Impressed



Joe Splvy, Jr.

the amount of one thousand dollars.

When Washington saw the amount of the check he said, "Sir, I have failed to impress you with the bigness of the cause I represent." When next they


Mack Lyon wrote many years ago of a visit by Booker T. Washington to Andrew Carnegie. Carnegie, a well-known philanthropist, was asked by Washington to invest in Negro education. When the interview ended, a check was given by Carnegie in

met, Washington again requested aid. At the conclusion of that meeting a check was given by Carnegie in the amount of five hundred thousand dollars - quite a difference.

While there are many good causes in our day which deserve our support, none can rival the cause of Christ. Sometimes you must wonder if we have been impressed with the bigness of that cause. Like Mr. Carnegie, we give lip service and then only a paltry portion of our effort, time, and/or money.

Until we are impressed with what it means to be a Christian, the beauty of Christ's body, the church, the need for fellowship among brethren, and the

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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


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David Wade . . . Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Are Gospel Meetings Dead?



David Wade

We are approaching the time of year when congregations of the Lord's church hold their traditional spring gospel meetings. While many congregations would not dare forsake this time-honored tradition, there are some who have ceased having gospel meetings accounting them as worthless, out of date, and out of touch with today's needs.

Specialized seminars, lectureships, workshops, involvement and outreach programs certainly have their place in the work of the church. However, I am not convinced that any, or all of these, have made the gospel meeting or revival obsolete. The First Century church did not consider gospel meetings worthless. The early church continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine on a daily basis (Acts 2:42, 46). The word of God was preached (Acts 8:5; 13:5). The whole counsel of God was shared (Acts 20:27). Their services were known to be both edifying and evangelistic (I Corinthians 14:23-26). Souls were saved and members were strengthened through the preaching of the Word (Acts 2:41, 47; 18:23). They were urgent in their

work whether it was considered to be in season or out of season (II Timothy 4:2).

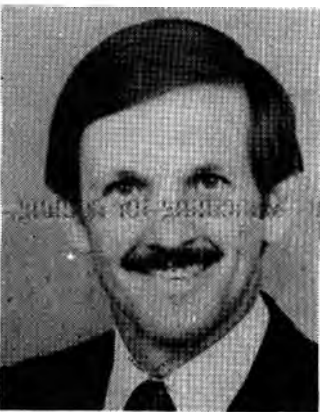
When the word was preached, their numbers grew and as individuals grew in faith, the word of God also grew in its influence in society. "And the word of God increased; and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly" (Acts 6:7). "But the word of God grew and multiplied" (Acts 12:24). "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed" (Acts 19:20).

Gospel meetings are not dead, rather, meetings where no gospel is preached are dead. Also, meetings held in dead churches where members do not support the gospel, nor attend, nor invite the lost, are dead. The gospel is never dead! It is alive and powerful! (Hebrews 4:12).

If you think gospel meetings are dead, look again. Look around and you will find some congregations who have very effective gospel meetings. They plan the work and work the plan. They pray, work, invite, attend, and support the effort. They plant, they water, and God gives the increase (I Corinthians 3:6); and how can God give the increase, if we don't plant and water?

Those who charge that gospel meetings are dead only indict themselves. "Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee? Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation" (Psalm 85:6-7).

The Greater Thing



Demar Elam

Great it is to believe the dream --

When we stand in youth by the starry stream;

But a greater thing is to fight life through--

And say at the end, "The dream was true."

-Edwin Markham

Many scoff and mock and laugh at those who dream the

seemingly impossible dream. Increased ridicule and interference follow for those who dare dream and then set about working to put substance and reality to those dreams.

The Bible is filled with dreamers, dreaming the seemingly impossible dream. Men like Joshua and Caleb, Gideon, David, the twelve apostles, and others too numerous to list were known for their dreams.

Edwin Markham was so right when he wrote that it was GREAT to believe the dream when one stands in YOUTH by the starry stream, but that a GREATER thing was to fight life through and turn that dream into a reality.

God can and will do great things through those whose hearts are perfect toward him (II Chronicles 16:9). Much of our failures are directly linked to our not relying on God and seeing the task through. Relying on God is the key to success (II Chronicles 16:8)! Impatience has destroyed untold members of dreams, good works, and congregations.

Worthy endeavors are achieved after long periods of struggle, fiery trials, and dependence upon the

Jesus And The Twelve Disciples



CECIL CORKREN

These four (Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John) left their fishing boats in answer to his call.

Soon, many other disciples joined Jesus and traveled with him from place to place as he went about his work of proclaiming the kingdom of God. Eventually, he decided the time had come to select twelve of these disciples and train them; James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew, James, the

son of Alphaeus, and Jude (Thaddaeus), Simon and Judas Iscariot. These men would serve at first as Jesus' closest helpers. Later, he would send them forth as his apostles to "preach the gospel to every creature."

son of Alphaeus, and Jude (Thaddaeus), Simon and Judas Iscariot. These men would serve at first as Jesus' closest helpers. Later, he would send them forth as his apostles to "preach the gospel to every creature."

What kind of men were these twelve that Jesus had chosen? We have no reason for thinking that they possessed any outstanding natural talents; nor did they at the onset, demonstrate any remarkable spiritual qualities. Jesus had to rebuke them at times for their lack of faith; all of them deserted him after his arrest; Peter denied even knowing him; Judas betrayed him. Clearly, they had the frailties of ordinary men and women.

Yet, when the time came to begin the work for which Jesus had chosen them, eleven of the twelve displayed the dedication and courage that made

You Can't Live Tomorrow Until Tomorrow

Elwood Holt

It was wise advice when one man said, those who desire to go hopefully and cheerfully through their work in this life should "take short views; not plan too far ahead: take the present blessing, and be thankful for it." Friends, this sums up in a very

Jesus And The Twelve Disciples

Continued From Page 2

them Christianity's greatest heroes. Thus did God replace human weakness with strength in the men chosen to preach the Christian message.

From this, we can see the weaknesses of the disciples which he later chose as apostles. Though they were weak, the Lord used them in his ministry later. The Lord can and wants to use you with all your weaknesses. It is not what we are, but what the Lord can do with us in his service. Why not like these men who left all to follow the Christ?

The Lord can and wants to use you with all your weaknesses. It is not what we are, but what the Lord can do with us in his service.

--1705 Sandra Lee Drive, Jasper, Alabama 35501

Not Impressed

Continued From Page 1

great power found in the gospel, we will continue to give only tokens to our Lord.

Until we are impressed with what it means to be a Christian, the beauty of Christ's body, the church, the need for fellowship among brethren, and the great power found in the gospel, we will continue to give only tokens to our Lord.

What have you given to the Lord? What real sacrifice have you made? What commitments kept? Surely it is the case that our offering to God or our whole life, in the totality of all its elements, reveals how impressed we are with the bigness of the cause of Christ.

How impressed are you?

--Route 7, Box 204, Fairmont, WV 26554.

wonderful manner the correct attitude toward life. We would learn a great lesson if we would only learn that to successfully live, is to live one day at a time. Oh, how many of us try to live tomorrow before we get to it! Many are living in the future altogether. They never think of present duties. But the present -- today -- is our golden day of opportunities. Tomorrow may never come. We know the time will come when there will be no tomorrow. We shouldn't plan too far ahead. It is alright to think about tomorrow, the next day, or even next year, but we are not to depend too heavily on tomorrow. We need to say that we are not to "bank" on tomorrow. If we lean heavily upon it we will forget what our present duties are. Solomon said, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow" (Proverbs 27:1).

Jesus said, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:34). It is good that we do not know what tomorrow has in store for us. It will be a day of sadness and tragedy for millions. It will be a day of success for many. What will it be for us? We do not know. God, in his great wisdom and love for us, has withheld from us what is to be in the future. I know some things I want to do if I live. I have some plans, but I realize that I do not have to carry them out. It may not be the Father's will for me to do even what I want to do. My life may be cut short; yours may, too, but while we tarry we are to take advantage of the time we now have -- today. Forgetfulness prays on the mind of many of us. We should train our minds to remember the important things we are to do from day to day.

Friend, "Take the present blessing." Have you ever sat down and counted your many blessings? Do you think you have none? Friend, you are sadly mistaken if that is your feeling in the matter. David thought once that he was friendless . . . that he stood alone. He even said, "no man cared for my soul" (Psalm 142:4). But, David was wrong. And we are wrong, too, when we think nobody cares. We may be neglectful at times, but we care for our friends and loved ones. We may not go to the sick room as frequently as we should, but surely we care. When we are despondent, we need to tabulate our many blessings. Begin, count them one by one, and in the words of the song, you will see "what the Lord has done." I sometimes think my lot in life is a hard one until I look about me and see the lot of others. I read a little motto on the wall once, "I complained because I had no shoes, until I met the man who had no feet." So we could be much worse off.

Oh, we worry about what we are to eat, wear, and where we will live -- worry, worry, worry. That seems to be the word that most aptly describes the present day attitude of the majority. In view of it the Lord still says, "In nothing be anxious, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6). "In nothing be anxious" simply means, "Don't worry about things you can't help." Most of our troubles never happen anyway. We are prone to make mountains out of mole hills.

We need to gather up all our worries, troubles, distresses, tribulations, heartbreaks, and take them to Jesus. "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" we are told in I Peter 5:7. Do we believe this? Jesus is the great burden bearer for the whole world.

Let us pray to God for forgiveness of our ungrateful attitudes. We need to cry out, "God be merciful to us" for we have erred. Then we need to use the present time. It is seed time. The harvest will come, by and by. Every day and every hour of the day, is a talent of time. God expects us to use it, to improve it, and will call us to account for it in

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The Greater Thing

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God of heaven! In our world today we have adapted the "fast-food syndrome" to most everything in life. If our dreams are not fulfilled in short order, then forget it! If we aren't served in less than five minutes, we feel it should be free. Worthwhile endeavors do not always come off the assembly-line like a Big Mac. First the PRAYERS, then the SWEAT, then the TEARS, and finally the YEARS before starry-eyed youth's dreams are true. The price of patience, struggle, and endurance is not cheap. Perhaps our "something for nothing, right-now" attitudes destroy many great things God might have done through us.

In our world today we have adopted the "fast-food syndrome" to most everything in life. If our dreams are not fulfilled in short order, then forget it! If we aren't served in less than five minutes, we feel it should be free.

Let us realize the importance of starry-eyed dreaming, and the elements involved in making such dreams come true. There is so much God can do with us and through us if we will allow him. Perhaps we have been guilty of dreaming some seemingly impossible dreams. These worthy goals will not be achieved if we have the "fast-food syndrome" or fail to fight the battles, or withstand the fiery trials, or fail to rely on God.

It is at this stage of our lives that the words of John Ruskin will be helpful: "Work first, and then rest." Jesus said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4). Now is the time for each Christian to WORK! Remember, it is great to dream but even greater to see the dream is true at the end. "Ye have need of patience . . ." (Hebrews 10:36).

--P.O. Box 642, Madison, Alabama 35758.

The Lowly Sparrow



In his book Beyond Survival: A P.O.W.'s Story, Capt. Gerald L. Coffee, U. S. Navy (Ret.) relates the joy a plain little sparrow brought to the lives of himself and his fellow prisoners. He was in one of a succession of

JOE E. GALLOWAY Vietnamese prisons, having undergone a great deal of torture and deprivation. Then one day when his building was being cleaned a sparrow's nest was torn down, tumbling a recently hatched sparrow into the cell. Soon the entire cell block of 16-18 men were busy feeding the fledgling bits of bread and rice, trying to assist its crippled body so it could learn to fly, and in keeping it warm. It was missed terribly when it died. In our normal lives it is difficult to understand how such a lowly, baby sparrow could have meant so much to several grown man.

Yet, in Matthew 10:29 Jesus showed that the heavenly Father knows when even one sparrow falls on the ground. The lesson to his disciples was, "Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows" (10:31). How reassuring it should

"Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows"

be to each one of us that God is aware and cares about our needs!

The greater context of Matthew 10 shows that Christ's followers would often be hated and persecuted for his name's sake, some even unto death. In many instances being faithful to the Lord in preaching or practicing his will would even cause close members of ones family to turn against

You Can't Live Tomorrow Until Tomorrow

Continued From Page 3

the last days. We cling to this world as if it will never have an end, and neglect preparation for the next as if it will never begin.

We cling to this world as if it will never have an end, and neglect preparation for the next as if it will never begin.

--Via Country Shopper, Grand Bay, Alabama 36541.

him. Still, the assurance is that God understands and cares! As Romans 8:31-32 expresses it: "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

There is an additional lesson to be learned from God's concern for even one sparrow: since God cares for even the lowly sparrow, he certainly wants each human being, created in his own image, to be saved. This desire of God for human salvation is plainly stated in I Timothy 2:4 and II Peter 3:9.

God wanted lost humanity to be saved so much that: (1) He made plans for our salvation through Christ and the church before the world began (Ephesians 1:4; 3:10-11). (2) He was willing to give his only begotten Son to make salvation

possible (John 3:16; I John 4:9). (3) He revealed in the New Testament clearly and exactly what we must do to be saved (II Timothy 3:15-17). (4) He gave command that this saving gospel be preached to every person under heaven (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:18-20).

God cares for us more than the sparrow. He has done his part to make salvation possible for each of us. Yet we must (1) make the final choice by obeying his will. "He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9). (2) We must do our best to see that all of lost humanity also hears the message of salvation. "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).

-- 218 Pinecrest Drive, Greeneville, TN 37743

The Incredible Power Of Our Thoughts

JON ATKINSON

Psychologist William James said, "The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind." The way we think is one of the greatest factors in determining the quality of our lives. Solomon stated this truth centuries ago: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). In the parable of the talents two of the servants doubled their allotment, but the man given only one talent buried it in the ground and made no gain. When his master questioned him, he replied, "I was afraid." How often fear paralyzes us and keeps us from attempting to live boldly. We are our own worst enemy. That little voice inside our head whispers to us, "It can't be done." We set our own limitations. Our thinking colors our whole outlook on life. The message of the following poem written by an unknown author is certainly true:

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 the prize.
Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or the faster man.
But soon or late, the man who wins
is the man who thinks he can.

The apostle Paul said, "I can do all things in him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). Believe in yourself and in the God within you, and you can do more than you ever thought possible.

-- Via The Voice of the Northeast, 5501 E. 30th St., Indianapolis, Indiana 46218.

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Words Of Truth

Radio Broadcast
on WARF A.M. 1240
8:00-8:30 a.m.



Words Of Truth

"I am
Words of Truth and soberness."

forth the
—Acts 26:25

(USPS 691-760)

VOLUME 26

MARCH 30, 1990

NUMBER 13

Neglected Opportunities



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

Each time he prayed he would say, "and Lord, forgive us our neglected opportunities." After the new preacher had heard the sentiment a number of times he inquired of another person about the phrase. Some years before, when the man was rather young and

newly married, his wife had suggested that they attend church, after all, both were brought up that way. "No, not yet," he had said, and had not gone or encouraged her. They both had neglected church for many years. Ultimately, he decided to go to church, but try as he did, time and again, he could never rekindle her interest. He had been faithful for many years but his wife, who had wanted them to go to church years before, had never again attended church. His heart was broken, and he felt somewhat guilty because he had not listened to her earlier in life, and now she was dead and had not been faithful to God.

Webster says that neglect means, "to disregard; esp. a) to omit to notice; slight, b) to be remiss in attention to; fail to do, care for, etc." Was it not a character flaw in the nation of Israel that caused them to "disregard, to omit to notice, to slight, to be remiss in attention to, to fail to do, or to fail to care for" Jehovah who had blessed them so well? God had delivered them from Egyptian slavery after they had cried unto him (Exodus 1-13). He delivered them from Pharaoh's army at the Red Sea (Exodus 14). He gave them the promised land (Joshua 1-24). After each great blessing from God, Israel seemed compelled to neglect God.

Years later John would write, "He came unto his

own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11). The reason they did not receive him is that they neglected the greatest opportunity ever given to the world.

In Matthew 25, Jesus points us to three examples of those who neglected their opportunities. The five foolish virgins wasted their opportunity to make adequate preparation for the coming of the bridegroom. The one talent man squandered his possibilities when he hid his talent and did not use it. Those on the left hand had ample opportunities to have "done it unto the least of these my brethren," and did not avail themselves of their opportunities.

Paul admonishes, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men . . ." (Galatians 6:10). Later, he would remind Titus that those who believe in God are to "be careful to maintain good works" (Titus 3:8). If we follow Christ we will work the works of Him that sent Christ "while it is day" for "the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).

But, alas, do we take advantage of the opportunities, or must we parrot the request, "forgive us our neglected opportunities"? Do you MAKE TIME to read and study your Bible? We all have 168 hours per week, and we all have an opportunity each week to "Study to shew thyself approved unto God" (II Timothy 2:15). Have you taken advantage of that glorious opportunity this week? Did you last week? If not, have you asked forgiveness for wasting an opportunity?

Do you assemble with the saints, not just some of the times they meet, but for all the worship assemblies? We are reminded not to forsake "the assembling of ourselves together . . . but exhorting one another" (Hebrews 10:25). Every week has only one first day, the Lord's day, for worshipping the Lord. Do you neglect it for something else which is much less important?

Heaven may well be missed by many, not

because they were totally evil or the filth and offscouring of the earth, but simply because they neglected so many opportunities. What about you? Never let it be said that we could have been in heaven, but that we neglected our opportunities, failing in the sight of God in our responsibilities. We must prepare for heaven. Neglect will pave the way to hell, as we have heard, "the road to hell is paved with good intentions."

Heaven may well be missed by many, not because they were totally evil or the filth and offscouring of the earth, but simply because they neglected so many opportunities.

--1400 6th Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501.

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Ouch!



Joe Spivy, Jr.

It appeared to be a terrific opportunity, the chance to appear on a morning Talk Show and tell the public about an upcoming gospel meeting. With the theme, "Jesus is the Answer," we knew that there should be some community interest. Excited about the prospects

of reaching so many with an invitation to hear the gospel, I never expected one of the questions that was asked.

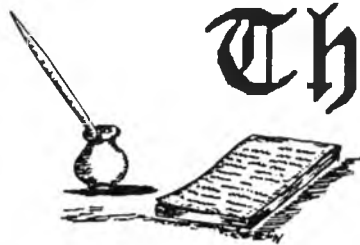
Discussing the campaign before going on the air, the host of the program was doing his best to make me feel comfortable. Then, in a half-inquiring and half-apologetic tone he asked, "I've known many churches of Christ in the various places I've worked; it may be that I just didn't see it, but none of them ever struck me as being evangelistic. Is that true or did I just misread the situation?"

That hurt! Boy, did that hurt! Ouch! It hurt, not because there was any accusation intended or any attempt to embarrass the church (the question was not alluded to while on the air), but because it came too close to a painful truth. As a people, members of the Lord's body simply do not talk to others about their faith. Those times when religion is discussed, it almost always falls into one of two extremes: either we attack an erroneous doctrine, or we act like you can just about believe anything you want.

Thirty years ago it was said that churches of Christ were the fastest growing religion in the United States. For a decade it would seem that housekeeping has become the order of the day.

Continued On Page 3

The Editor's Pen



David Wade

Biblical Principles Governing Our Recreation



David Wade

Our young people are constantly bombarded every day with strong temptations to conform to the world they live in. The following Bible principles are offered to help them make wise choices about their daily activities. Let me

urge you to carefully study these points and passages with your child in your devotional studies.

Inward

1. Does it violate my conscience? (Acts 24:16; Romans 14:23; 10:17; I Corinthians 8:12; I Timothy 4:2).
2. Does it put me under evil influences? (I Thessalonians 5:21-22; I Corinthians 15:33; Exodus 23:2; II Peter 3:17).
3. Does it conflict with my duty to God? (Ecclesiastes 12:1, 13; Matthew 6:33; Hebrews 10:25).

4. Does it defeat my efforts at self-control? (Galatians 5:22-24; I Corinthians 6:12; 9:27; Colossians 3:5).

5. Is it a work of the flesh? (Galatians 5:19-21); I John 2:15-17; Romans 13:14; Matthew 26:41).

6. Does it arouse the indecent in me? (Matthew 15:19-20; James 1:21; Philippians 4:8; Proverbs 23:7).

Outward

7. Can I glorify God in my body? (I Corinthians 6:19-20; 7:23; 10:31; 3:16-17).

8. Will it be a stumbling block to others? (Leviticus 19:14; Romans 14:13; I Corinthians 8:9; Revelation 2:14).

9. Does it bring reproach on Christ and the church? (Matthew 5:11-12; I Peter 4:14-16; Proverbs 14:34; I Timothy 5:14).

10. Does it weaken my influence as a Christian? (Matthew 5:13-16; Philippians 2:14-15; Romans 14:16; I Corinthians 14:25).

11. Is it in accordance with my parents' wishes? (Proverbs 23:22; Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20; I Timothy 3:4).

12. Is it legal and ethical? (Romans 13:1-7; I Peter 2:13-14; Titus 3:1).

Christian Education Celebration Slated For April 16

The second annual CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CELEBRATION joint benefit dinner for Alabama Christian Academy, Alabama Christian School of Religion and Faulkner University, will be held Monday, April 16 at 7:00 p.m. at the Montgomery Civic Center.

The decision to hold a second joint fundraiser is a reflection of the enthusiastic spirit of unity among local brethren. So many hailed last year's dinner as a welcome opportunity to join in fellowship and support for all three Christian institutions. The first CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CELEBRATION (CEC), held in May of 1989, was well-attended, grossing over \$50,000. Net proceeds were divided equally among the three schools.

The CEC steering committee hopes to double profits this year with increased ticket sales and with the solicitation of printed program ads. A crackerjack sales force has been established, with ticket sales coordinators at each local

congregation.

The presidents of the three schools expressed excitement at the prospect of strengthening the bonds of unity forged with last year's effort. "We look forward to this upcoming occasion for friends of Faulkner University to once again join together in such a grand testimony of support and fellowship," said Faulkner University President Billy D. Hilyer.

The presidents of the three schools expressed excitement at the prospect of strengthening the bonds of unity forged with last year's effort.

Continued On Page 3

Ouch!

Continued From Page 2

Something has changed; and that something is US.

Many reasons for the changes could be given. Some are quite valid. Whatever the reasons, there is a need for each Christian to be challenged anew, -- to consider what may be keeping us from telling the "old, old Story" to those who need it most. Below are some suggested areas where we might examine our own lives and see if these may provide the means for a renewal of evangelistic fervor in our daily lives.

1. **Have we lost our sense of urgency?** No one of us wants to see our friends, neighbors, and loved ones lost. We see the need to go after the lost sheep, the lost coin (Luke 15); but just not right now? The time to go is "today" (II Corinthians 6:2).

2. **Have we lost our sense of power?** The charismatics have laid false claim to the power of God and his Holy Spirit. They have been taken without hardly even a struggle. Let's take back

what belongs to God's people! The spirit of power, love, and a sound-mind is ours by rights (II Timothy 1:7).

3. **Have we lost our sense of direction?** Doctrine is important. Only truth can save. But in the pursuit of the truth let us not lose sight of Jesus Christ. He is the only source of grace and truth (John 1:17).

4. **Have we lost our sense of identity?** We are the called out, a purchased people, a royal priesthood (I Peter 2:9). There IS only one way to heaven (John 14:6). Let us graciously point others in that way which we have found by the grace of God.

5. **Have we lost our sense of responsibility?** Although each stands before God (Romans 14:12), we have the responsibility to share the gospel with them. Paul stated that he had declared the "whole counsel of God" so that he would be "pure of the blood of all" (Acts 20:26, 27). The Christian

MUST tell others of God's will or they are not guiltless before Him.

6. **Have we lost sight of what God has done for us?** We cannot be called as eye witnesses to the life of Christ on earth, and what he did in the flesh. However, that does not mean that we cannot or should not tell others of the difference he has made in our lives. This we can, should, and must do as His children.

These questions are not meant as a wholesale indictment, neither is their purpose to be a harbinger of despair. Rather, they seek to call us to return to our God, look to our Savior, and tell others of the One who died so that we might live.

--Route 7, Box 204, Fairmont, WV 26554.

Jonathan, A True Friend



Bobby Key

A true friend is a blessing. Most of us have one or two close friends on whom we can depend. One who doesn't have friends may be to blame. "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly" (Proverbs 18:24). Friends do not just happen; they do not

come to us by accident. They are made by a sincere and genuine effort on our part.

It is difficult to have close friends when the following characteristics prevail: (1) When one insists on always having his own way, (2) When one is persistent in criticism of everything and everybody, (3) When one is not dependable, (4) When one is pessimistic about everything, and (5) When one is overly talkative, a blowhard, exaggerates every incident, and fails to keep confidences.

When David was a young man he was honored by the people, but despised by King Saul. Even though David married Saul's daughter, he just didn't hit it off with his father-in-law. He was actually afraid to be around his in-laws, and with good reason. His father-in-law attempted to kill him every time he came on the place. Now, such does not make for a good relationship!

Because of this family situation, David experienced the privation and loneliness of a hunted man. Soldiers were always at his heels, and several times he barely escaped with his life. His days were spent fleeing from one wooded section to another. He was denied the companionship of family and friends.

In one of the darkest hours of David's life, a true friend risked his own life in coming to comfort him. "And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God" (I Samuel 23:16). Now this is real friendship. The Bible says, "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (I Samuel 18:1).

After Jonathan died, David said, "How art the mighty fallen in the midst of battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hath thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women" (II Samuel 1:25, 26).

When David was alone and afraid, Jonathan came to him. When there was no other to help, Jonathan was there. "Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad" (Proverbs 12:25). When David's heart was so heavy that he could hardly bear the load, his friend came and spoke the words which strengthened his hand in God. If one does not strengthen your hand in God, he is not a real friend. If one does not encourage you to do right, he is not a real friend. Some so-called friends weaken our faith in God; they cripple our faith; they discourage us from doing the right. "Evil companionships corrupt good morals" (I Corinthians 15:33).

What kind of friend am I? When is the last time I have strengthened one's hand in God? Do I encourage a weak brother to hold to God's unchanging hand? A word fitly spoken, a handshake, a hug, or a smile can help a discouraged friend.

There are some in every congregation whose hearts are pining away in secret anguish for the lack of a friend. "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of fearful heart, Be strong, fear not . . . God will

come . . . and save you" (Isaiah 35:3, 4).

Make up your mind to go to some discouraged and disheartened person and admonish him to be strong and fear not. You can strengthen his hand in God.

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

There are some in every congregation whose hearts are pining away in secret anguish for the lack of a friend.

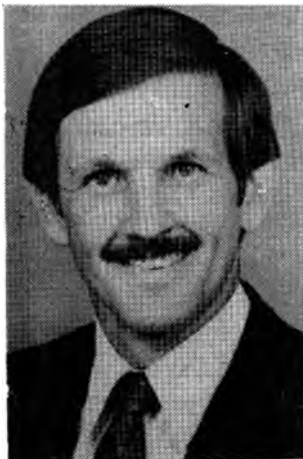
Christian Education Celebration Slated For April 16

Continued From Page 2

Rex Turner, Jr. of the School of Religion stated, "So many, like myself, spend a majority of their time, energy and gifts on only one of these institutions. This Christian Education Celebration gives every individual the opportunity to be united in a common cause." The president of Alabama Christian Academy, Jerry Atkinson, termed the fundraiser a grass roots effort which everyone could feel good about participating in.

Tickets for the 1990 CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CELEBRATION are on sale at a price of \$50.00 per person, \$400 for a table of eight. Ad sales run \$1000 for a full page, \$500 for one-half page, \$250 for one-quarter page and \$100 for a business card sized ad. Those interested in supporting the three Montgomery Christian schools through this event may call 1-800-828-8110 or (205) 272-5820.

Behold How Pleasant To Dwell Together In Unity



Demar Elam

The Psalmist in the long ago said, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1). It has well been said that "unity is that PRICELESS ingredient." Brethren, we must not allow any man or woman to destroy

the unity of the Lord's people.

Paul instructed the saints at Ephesus, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." ENDEAVORING demands a positive effort on the part of each Christian. Division in the religious world at large, or division in the local congregation, is condemned. It is contrary to the spirit and will of God. Division is destructive to the church, and to the souls of men. Unity needs to be the prayer and effort of every individual who wears the name of Christ. ENDEAVORING demands action, not just talk. Are you working in behalf of unity? Christians must put forth strenuous efforts to promote and maintain peace, harmony, and true unity among the members of the family of God.

Division within the church is a sin. God hates it (Proverbs 6:19)! To "sow discord" is to trouble the peace of a family (or church) by lies, misrepresentations -- to strive to poison men's minds about the truth of God, or about the brethren. There is a need for peace today if we are to win the lost for Christ. PEACE is a requisite of unity. "So the church throughout all Judea, Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord and comfort of the Holy Spirit was multiplied" (Acts 9:31). The result of the peace that prevailed was that the church was "edified and multiplied." In Acts 4:32 we read, "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul." In order to have such today we must, "... follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another" (Romans 14:19).

One who "soweth discord among brethren" creates the soil that produces division, whence springs infidelity and unbelief in the world. Division is carnal (I Corinthians 3:1-4). Division is a work of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-20). Please envision yourself standing before God in Judgment, having been a sower of discord among the family of God, having caused a division within the church that Jesus shed his blood and died to

unite. Surely, the thoughts of such should be horrifying to any one wanting to follow after righteousness and be eternally saved.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). Every Christian should spend his time promoting unity. Are you a peace "maker"? or, a divisive element within the church? Let each true child of

God endeavor to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Be careful never to allow yourself to become a part of any element that sows discord. God HATES one who "soweth discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:19). Yes, it is even an ABOMINATION to him!

--P.O. Box 642, Madison, Alabama 35758.

We Never Seem To Be Satisfied



Edsel Burleson

Does your neighbor's grass always appear greener? It is very likely that a stroll across his lawn would reveal some very thin spots, some uneven areas, and perhaps gravel scattered here and there.

One of our greatest problems is being satisfied. Jim Shannon recently wrote in Bulletin Digest: "Have you

ever noticed how difficult it is to be contented with material things? For instance, people who had to depend upon fireplaces for heat during the winter were eager to get electric heating when it became available. Now people with the electric heating consider it a luxury to be able to have a wood-burning fireplace in their homes. Also, many people in rural areas have moved near the city for convenience, while city dwellers are desirous of a 'place in the country'." Paul said, "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry both to abound and to suffer need" (Philippians 4:11, 12).

Likely, if we would go a distance into our neighbor's yard and look back at our own, we would find our grass greener. A little boy was raised in mountainous country. He and his parents lived in a home built on the west side of a high mountain. Across the valley was another home built on the side of another mountain. Very early in life, the little boy began to notice that early in the morning the house across the valley appeared to have golden windows. The more he noticed it the more he begged his mother to let him go see the house with the windows of gold. Finally, when his mother felt that he was old enough to cross the valley alone, she gave him permission to go and see the house which had attracted his attention so long. Full of excitement, he rushed down the mountain, across the valley, and up to the house where the windows of gold had seemed to be. While he was making the trip, the sun was moving across the heavens. By the time he had reached his

destination it was in the western sky. To his dismay there were no windows of gold; just ordinary windows like those of his own home. However, as he looked back across the valley, his own house now seemed to have windows of gold. What he had been seeing was the reflection of the sun.

The golden hue of opportunity is everywhere, but many times we just haven't seen it. An unknown author teaches the principle clearly in these lines entitled "Opportunity."

I ask no one to lift my load,
No one my burdens bear,
I ask that all along life's road
I may my talents share.
If I my brothers keeper be,
My course in life is plain:
To note his need unceasingly.
And spare him every pain.
The talents which have graced my life
Were given from above;
That in this world of sin and strife
They'd shine like light and love.
What right have I to hide their power
While lives are sorely stressed;
My chance to serve is every hour --
Lord, help me give my best.

A soldier in the Civil War had lost his place in his company and rather timidly said to General Sherman as he came up behind the line, "Where shall I step in?" "Step in?" said the general, "step in? Step in anywhere. There is fighting all along the line." God has always expected the best from his people. In the great warfare against Satan and sin we must not miss a single opportunity to give God our best. Step in anywhere and work for God. There is fighting all along the line.

--420 7th Street SW, Birmingham, Alabama 35211.

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To
Words Of Truth!**



Words Of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

(USPS 691-760)

VOLUME 26

APRIL 6, 1990

NUMBER 14

Simon Magus



Bobby Key

The eighth chapter of Acts records the gospel being carried to Samaria. "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them." Before His ascension the Lord said, "But 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 Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Under ordinary conditions, a Jew was not likely to go to Samaria. "For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans" (John 4:9). The gospel, however, breaks down racial barriers. The Samaritans "believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ" and "they were baptized both men and women" (Acts 8:12). It is at this point that Simon Magus enters the narrative.

Simon lived in the same city and used sorcery to deceive the people. Because of his tricks, he had received quite a reputation. The sorcerer stood ready to render any kind of services which might be desired. He would seek to accomplish such ends as causing a neighbor's house to catch fire, bringing a hail storm, depriving an enemy's cows of milk, or causing his child to become sick or die. He was also credited with domestic brawls or causing sudden death. The ancients were accustomed to attribute all disasters to a malignant demon, sorcerer, or witch. A person with a peculiar look was often accused of being sorcerer, especially old women of unusual ugliness (Prof. Whitehouse, in Hastings Bible Dictionary). Sorcery was a profitable business (Acts 16:16).

Not only was Simon a sorcerer, but "he believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done."

There is nothing in this passage to suggest that Simon's believing was different from that of others who became Christians, or that his baptism came from impure motives. Yet, many believe that Simon was a hypocrite and insincere. One wrote, "The verb believe describes him with reference to his supposed or apparent state, not his actual condition. He was wholly insincere." There is every evidence to sustain the proposition that Simon was genuinely converted to Christ.

After his conversion, he "saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given." It was at this point that he offered money to the apostles, "saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:19). Simon was tempted, and fell into sin.

Peter does not deal with Simon as if he had been wrong all the time. "But Peter said unto him, Thy silver perish with thee." Why? Because Simon had pretended to believe and accept the gospel when, in fact, he had not? No! Rather, "because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money." This evil thought is the beginning of his trouble.

Peter next speaks to Simon as an erring child of God rather than an alien sinner. "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."

The door opened for Simon to pass is the same that must be entered by all Christians who have been overtaken by sin and wish to return to the Lord. Peter's rebuke shows Simon was wrong only in that he thought to obtain the gift of God with money. Simon was not told to repent of his sins, plural, but to repent of the specific sin in evidence, "This thy wickedness."

It is possible for one to become a Christian, and later fall away. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (I Corinthians 10:12).

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

The door opened for Simon to pass is the same that must be entered by all Christians who have been overtaken by sin and wish to return to the Lord.

New Testaments Mailed To Russia

(Fort Worth, TX) The World Bible Translation Center recently mailed 17,000 of its newly-translated Easy-to-Read Russian New Testaments to Soviet citizens.


These names were taken up at the Moscow International Book Fair after the Center had distributed 10,000 New Testaments and still had thousands of eager Soviets standing in line.

"It was so exciting to see the New Testaments being packaged and mailed, realizing they would soon be in the hands of the people," said Dale

Randolph, World Bible Translation Center President. "The New Testaments were mailed from Moscow by certified mail and should reach the homes in just a few days."

The Translation Center has also reached an agreement with Sovaminco, a Russian publisher, to publish 100,000 New Testaments inside the Soviet Union. These New Testaments will be distributed in Soviet bookstores where they will be sold for a

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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David Wade . . . Editor
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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Rumors



David Wade

Please read carefully the four letters on Page 3. The two letters on the left side of the page are still making their rounds in our area. The incredible part of this story is that uninformed, well meaning, members of the Lord's church have been involved in the spread of these lies.

also urged to sign the bottom part, clip and mail to the F.C.C. in order to register your protest.

Perhaps whoever penned this petition meant well. However, the petition is loaded with falsehood, is not a current matter, and has cost the public well over five million dollars in useless protest and wasted energy and effort.

Several copies of the petition surfaced around Jasper, Alabama the last few weeks. We called the F.C.C. in Washington, D.C. and they sent us the following fact sheet on this matter. The entire reply is published so that our subscribers may have access to this information and help put an end to this matter."

Recently, I received communication from the Public Affairs Division of the Procter and Gamble Company. Calls and letters have increased sharply from our area concerning the vicious rumor letter aimed at them. Here again, this letter is nothing more than a pack of lies. There is ample evidence to support this fact.

Procter and Gamble has filed suit against several people already for spreading this letter and they indicate that additional lawsuits are possible. Christians should not have anything to do with the spread of these lies. If you know of anyone who has received or passed along either of these letters, contact them and urge them to not spread these rumors. If you have passed along either of these two letters to others, you have an obligation to contact them and inform them of the facts. How can God be pleased with us if we do anything less than this? (Ephesians 4:25).

Matthew 19:1-12



Cecil May, Jr.

(Editor's Note: This is the first of a three-part series dealing with Matthew 19 and 1 Corinthians 7).

The basic passage concerning marriage in the current discussion is Matthew 19:9, "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." The main question being asked is, "Does this refer to all men, aliens as well as Christians, or is it applicable only to Christians, to those in the new covenant?"

The context of Matthew 19 itself points toward a universal application, as the following considerations shows:

1. The "whosoever . . ." language of the passage suggests universality, just as it does in "whosoever believeth . . ." (John 3:16), and in "whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:15).

2. Jesus roots the teaching of Matthew 19:9 in the will of God "from the beginning" (19:8). It is not, therefore, as a new covenant principle only, but as an original principle that he asserts this word.

3. The context shows that Jesus states his Matthew 19:9 principle, not as original legislation, but as interpretation and application of God's first marriage word in Genesis 2:24, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh" (quoted in 19:5). Again, this points away

Continued On Page 4

The text of the Federal Communications Fact Sheet was published in Words of Truth 10/6/89 along with the following editorial statement.

"(Petition RM-2493) For several years a petition has been making its rounds under the above heading. The petition claims that, "Madelyn Murray O'Hare, an athiest whose efforts successfully eliminated the use of Bible reading and prayer from all public schools 15 years ago, has been granted a hearing in Washington, D.C. on the subject (F.C.C. The Petition RM-2493) which would ultimately pave the way to stop the reading of the gospel on the airwaves of America. She took her petition with 27,000 signatures to back her."

The petition urges concerned Christians to photocopy this letter and "send it to ten people (friends, relatives, church members, etc.) who will share our concern." The individual receiving it is

The Pearl Of Great Price

Harvey Porter

The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought the field.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it" (Matthew 13:44, 45).

There were no banks or safety deposit boxes in Jesus' time. People often buried their jewels and money in a box or pouch in their field. Only they knew the location, making it hard for a thief to find. What if they died and the heirs did not know where it was buried? What if they sold the land? These things often happened. A man plowing the field and turned up the treasure could buy that land and the treasure was his to enjoy. So, he might sell all that he possessed to have the greater treasure.

The same was true for the pearl merchant. He traded pearls all the time, but he came upon one so beautiful, so exquisite, that he had to have it. He sold all his other pearls to possess this one, rare, priceless pearl.

Do you know what Jesus is talking about? He is talking about the church. That is His kingdom! It is in existence right now! He is not talking about heaven. He is telling us that to be in this kingdom is number one priority --give up everything for it. Recognize its value. Become obsessed with making the kingdom your own.

I guess that the Lord knew that we humans have a hard time with values. He knew that we would give all our time and money and effort on worthless things and neglect our wife, husband, children and the church. We are busy in school and

Continued On Page 4

PLEASE READ

PETITION #2493

Madelyn Murray O'Hare, an atheist whose efforts successfully eliminated the use of Bible reading and prayer from all public schools 15 years ago, has been granted a Federal hearing in Washington, D.C. on the subject (F.C.C. The Petition R.M. 2493) which would ultimately pave the way to stop the reading of the Gospel on the airways of America. She took her petition, with 27,000 signatures to back her.

If her attempt is successful (as her last one was), then all Sunday Worship services being broadcast, either by radio or television, will be stopped. Many elderly people and shut-ins, as well as those recuperating from hospitalization or illness, depend on radio and television to fulfill their worship needs every week.

Madelyn is also campaigning to remove Christmas programs, Christmas songs and carols from public schools.

You can help this time. We need one million (1,000,000) signed letters. This should defeat Mrs. O'Hare by showing that there are still many Christians alive, well and CONCERNED in our country. This petition is #2493. Sign, cut out, and mail the form below. Please do not sign as "Mr. or Mrs.", but sign individually. Let each adult sign one separately and send it in. BE SURE TO PUT PETITION #2493 ON THE LOWER LEFT-HAND CORNER OF THE ENVELOPE -- THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT!

Please have this letter and petition photocopied and send it to ten people (friends, relatives, church members, etc.) who will share our concern.

SEND TO:

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
1919 "M" Street
Washington, D.C. 20054

RE: PETITION #2493

DATE _____

Gentlemen:

I am an American and proud of my heritage. I am also very much aware of the part religious faith has played in the freedom we, as Americans, now enjoy. Therefore I protest any human effort to remove from radio or television any programs designed to show faith in God or in a Supreme Being, or to remove Christmas songs and carols from the Public School Systems.

Sincerely, _____ (Signature)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

SUBJECT: SUPPORT OF CHURCH OF SATAN
COMPANY INVOLVED: PROCTOR & GAMBLE COMPANY
PERSON INTERVIEWED: PRESIDENT OF PROCTOR & GAMBLE COMP.
SOURCE OF INFORMATION: PHIL DONAHUE T.V. SHOW

THE President of Proctor & Gamble Co. recently appeared on the Phil Donahue T.V. Show. Subject of which he spoke was his company's support of the Church of Satan.

He stated that a large portion of Proctor & Gamble's profit goes to the Church of Satan, known as the Devil's Church. When asked by Mr. Donahue if he felt that stating this on television would hurt his business the president replied: "THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH CHRISTIANS IN THE U.S. TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE."

The president of Proctor & Gamble was contacted by the president of the Church of Satan notified that if he was going to support the Church of Satan, then Proctor & Gamble would have to place the emblem/symbol of the church organization on labels of each Proctor & Gamble product. It is noted that since that time, the symbol of the Church of Satan has been placed on all their labels. Recently on the Merv Griffin Show, a group of cultists were featured, among them the owner of Proctor & Gamble Corp. He said that as long as the gays and other cults have come out of the closet, he was doing the same. He said that he told Satan that if he (Satan) would help him prosper then he would give his heart & soul to him when he dies. He gave Satan all credit for his riches.

Proctor & Gamble Corp. manufactures the following products,

among others:

CAKE MIX: DUNCAN HINES PRODUCTS.

CLEANING AIDS AND DETERGENTS: BIZ, BOLD, BOUNCE, CASCADE, CHEER,

COMET, DASH, DAWN, DOWNEY, ERA, GAIN, JOY, MR. CLEAN, OXYDOL,

SPIC & SPAN, TIDE, TOP JOB.

COFFEE: FOLGER'S, HIGH POINT.

COOKING OILS & SHORTNING: CRISCO, FLUFFO, PURITAN

DEODORANTS: SECRET, SURE.

DIAPERS: PAMPERS, LUVS.

HAIR CARE: LILT.

SOAPS: CAMAY, COAST, IVORY, SAFEGAURD, ZEST.

MOUTHWASH: SCOPE.

PEANUT BUTTER: JIFF.

LOTION: WONDRA.

SHAMPOOS: HEAD & SHOULDERS, PERT, PRELL.

TOOTHPASTE: CREST, GLEEM.

If in doubt, watch for this Satanic Symbol to be found on the front or back of all their products. The actual size is shown with an enlarged drawing. It is a tiny ram's horn with three sets of stars placed in such a way that if the stars or dots are joined they form the number "666", known as the devil's number.

Christians should always remember that if they buy any products with this symbol they will be taking part in the support of the Church of Satan, or Devil's Worship. We urge that you use what you have on hand, but make sure that you don't buy any more.

Please feel free to make a copy of the letter and pass them out to anyone who should be informed, so that as little business as possible will go to Proctor & Gamble. We can easily prove to their President that there are more than enough Christians or other believers in God to put a large dent into his profit.



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20554

IN REPLY REFER TO:

*** FACT SHEET - RM-2493 ***

Thank you for your inquiry concerning the broadcast of religious programs. This information presents basic facts on a subject that in recent years has aroused widespread interest and has resulted in a great number of letters and telephone calls to the Commission.

In December, 1974, a petition from Jeremy D. Lansman and Lorenzo W. Milan asked the FCC to inquire, among other subjects, into the operating practices of noncommercial educational broadcasting stations, including those licensed to religious educational organizations. The petitioners also asked that no licenses be granted for any new noncommercial educational stations until the requested inquiry had been completed. The "Lansman-Milan petition" (which was routinely assigned the number RM-2493) was DENIED by the FCC on August 1, 1975 -- over 12 years ago! The Commission explained then that it is required by the 1st Amendment "to observe a stance of neutrality toward religion, acting neither to promote nor to inhibit religion." It also explained that it must treat religious and secular organizations alike in determining their eligibility for broadcasting channels.

Early in 1975, the FCC began to receive mail which indicated that in many parts of the country there were rumors claiming the petitioners of RM-2493 had called for an end to religious broadcasting and that the Commission was going to prohibit religious programs on radio and television. Such rumors are false. Additional mail and telephone calls came in from people who thought that Mrs. Madelyn Murray O'Hare, a well-known atheist, was a sponsor of RM-2493, or had separately proposed that the FCC consider limiting or banning religious programming, and that she had been granted a federal hearing to discuss this matter. Those rumors are also false.

No federal law or regulation gives the FCC the authority to prohibit radio and television stations from presenting religious programs. The Communications Act (the law that established the FCC and defines its authority) prohibits the Commission from censoring broadcast material and from interfering with freedom of speech in broadcasting. The Commission cannot direct any broadcaster to present, or refrain from presenting, announcements or programs on religion, and it cannot act as a judge of the wisdom or accuracy of such material. Broadcasters -- not the FCC or any other government agency -- are responsible for selecting the programming that is aired by their stations.

We hope the preceding paragraphs will help to correct any and all misinformation about FCC policies on religious broadcasting. Over the past 12 years this agency has received over 21 million pieces of mail on this subject. Every effort has been made to advise the public of the action taken on RM-2493. The laws and the Commission's policies on broadcast of religious programming have been publicized in newspapers and magazines (including TV Guide and Time), in religious publications, and in meetings of religious groups. Because these false rumors still persist, any assistance you can provide by telling your friends and neighbors what the facts are will be greatly appreciated.

FORUM

THE FREEMAN COURIER
Freeman, S.D.
February 1, 1989

7/88

EDITORIAL

A run on the rumor mill

It should be an embarrassment to those calling themselves Christian.

The spreading of rumors and untruths, scripture notes, is a sin.

And yet, a good number of people calling themselves Christians across this country -- and that includes this community -- have helped perpetuate and spread a vicious rumor contained in a letter alleging a link between the Proctor & Gamble Company and the Church of Satan.

As reported in this issue of the *Courier*, there is absolutely no basis for the rumor which began eight years ago. The company has renounced the rumor as totally false, as have television companies reported to have carried programs about the alleged link. And over the past seven years, national religious leaders have called for an end to the rumor.

"It is unfortunate that such false accusations are made in the first place, but even more concerning that accusations are made by people who call themselves Christians," wrote national religious figure Jerry Falwell in a letter to Proctor & Gamble in 1982.

Yet the rumor has persisted. Distribution of such garbage is easy. Photocopies are easy to make and pass from person to person, community to community.

But we are most troubled by the ease with which people have accepted it. There are reasons why people should be skeptical of the contents of the letter.

For example, the letter is unsigned and has no date. It offers no specific information about when the television shows alleged to prove Proctor & Gamble is supporting the Church of Satan were aired. It offers no documentation of its charges of the link between the Proctor & Gamble trademark and Satanism.

There is also the implausible suggestion that a company as large as Proctor & Gamble would make such an unpopular public statement. Public support of the Church of Satan by a major corporation in this country would be classified as one of the biggest public relations blunders in recent history.

Furthermore, the rumor-letter refers to the "owner of Proctor (sic) & Gamble Corp." Proctor and Gamble is a large company owned by stockholders, not an individual.

Logic and common sense, it seems, have been discarded at the expense of people and ideals.

Who's getting hurt?

Obviously, Proctor & Gamble which is losing at least some sales from people who believe the rumor and are following the call to boycott Proctor & Gamble products. It has also resulted in the diversion of the company's financial and human resources for a campaign to combat the rumors.

But it has also hurt the credibility of the church to be party to such misguided efforts. It looks irresponsible and silly...because in the final analysis, that's exactly what it is.

And finally, it has hurt legitimate issues which deserve public attention. Rather than circulating letters and boycotting a company on a non-existent issue, people could have been working for issues of social and economic justice, a ministry to the homeless or starving, support of mission efforts and church-related relief efforts around the globe...the list goes on.

This is a vile and vicious rumor. Sadly, as Jerry Falwell points out, it is being perpetuated by Christians -- people who are called in the scriptures to be responsible and loving.

There is little which can be done to reverse the damage inflicted by the irresponsible spreading of this rumor. But there is something which can be done in the future.

This unfortunate run on the rumor mill is a prime example of the destructive and counter-productive nature of falsehoods, lies and half-truths. Rumors -- spread by word of mouth or passed in written form, local or global -- are cruel. They serve no purpose whatsoever.

Rumors are a poison. We have a choice to either spread them or bury them.

This one should have been buried long ago.

dw

Ideas For Evangelism That Anyone Can Use

Bill Denton

You've heard it before. The preacher got fired up Sunday morning and delivered a stirring sermon on how the church ought to reach out to the lost. It's not that he said anything wrong, after all everyone knows that the church ought to evangelize. The problem is there wasn't enough of the "how to" in the sermon to help you do much more than normal. Well, here's a list of ideas for evangelism that anyone can use. You might note that most of them don't call for you to do much

teaching. Evangelism is a team effort, don't forget that. Do your part and then depend on those who are good teachers and evangelists to help you reach those friends and neighbors. Be positive. When we all work together the church can grow!

1. Invite people to attend Bible class and the assembly on Sunday morning. Here is a tried and true method. Surveys have shown that the most people not in church in America are open to an invitation to attend church services. Be positive about the church. Tell people the ways you are

benefiting and growing. If they have children, talk about our Bible classes. People must believe that we have something worthwhile before they will attend, but if they see that you have found something that works, they will likely be open to your invitation. By the way, if they don't come the first time, keep inviting.

2. Invite your friends to attend your next zone fellowship. Most of our zones schedule dinners out, picnics or other times when people can get to know one another. Research into church growth says that most people belong to a church because of the influence of friends or family. Plus, once becoming a member, the more friends a person has within the church, the greater the probability they will remain faithful. So, bring people to events where they can meet members of the church and form friendships with them. It just might be the first step to saving the lost.

3. Talk about what you are learning. Whether it is in Bible class or a sermon, if you learn something that proves helpful to you, then share it with others. Find a good point out of a lesson and focus on it. Chances are that if you find something in the Bible that helps you, it will help others as well. The key here is for you to talk about it. Once you have the other person's attention, you can then invite them to come study for themselves.

4. When you bring a visitor to the assembly, remember to introduce them to the ministers and elders. It eliminates the awkwardness that many people experience in a new situation and it says that you consider your guests to be important. Making sure that your guest meets church leaders helps establish contact so that future visits are much easier on everyone.

5. As much as possible, keep discussions on spiritual things focused on the gospel. Romans 1:16 says that the gospel is God's power to save. A person may have many questions, but Paul said in I Corinthians 15:1-4 that the gospel comes first. You should always keep the person's mind on Jesus Christ. You will do a good job if you help develop faith in Christ.

6. Believe that doing things such as we have suggested here is important. Evangelism happens and the church grows when members realize how important they are to the process. The job can't be done by a few. Develop the attitude that says, "I can make a difference in someone's eternity."

--Via Living the Word - P.O. Box 623, Forest Park, GA 30051.

New Testaments Mailed To Russia

Continued From Page 1

nominal price that the average Russian worker can afford.

"Distributing our New Testaments through bookstores represents an outstanding opportunity to get God's Word into the hands of the man on the street in the Soviet Union," said Randolph. "We

also will be doing mass distributions of free New Testaments during 1990 and beyond."

Randolph also said negotiations are underway with two additional Soviet publishers. Both publishers are also interested in publishing 100,000 copies initially.

Matthew 19:1-12

from an application to those in the New Covenant only, toward an application to all men.

4. Those who deny the universality of Matthew 19:9 are left with no satisfactory answer to the question: "What, then, is God's law of marriage for those in the world?" The fact that God has a law of marriage for the world is demonstrated by the fact that he charges those in the world with adultery, which is, by definition, a breach of marriage law. Although some answers have been suggested to this question, none are satisfactory. Many of the "implications" which are charged against the view that Matthew 19:9 is covenant legislation grow out of this fact. If, indeed, God has no marriage law

for the alien, there are serious implications! Most of those who advocate the limitation of Matthew 19:9 to Christians would not personally accept all of these implications, and that should be emphasized in pointing them out, but it is certainly legitimate to show the implications to prove the untenability of the view.

I turn from Matthew 19:9, therefore, with a strong impression of universality, and with some difficult, unanswered questions, if some other consideration were to limit its application to Christians only. (To be continued).

--Magnolia Bible College, P.O. Box 1101
Kosciusko, MS 39090.

The Pearl Of Great Price

Continued From Page 2

don't have time for the church.

We are busy with our job, our house, our car, our boat, our hobby, our politics, our friends, our holidays, our wants and do not have time to worship and serve the Lord. Many retire and have time and money, but spend it totally traveling and doing "the things we have always wanted to do," and do not give any more time or money to the Lord and His kingdom.

We all have seen people quit the church over a multitude of things. We have heard all those old worn-out excuses; but the real reason is what Jesus was talking about here over nineteen hundred years ago -- they place no real value on His kingdom. They do not "go and sell all they have and buy that field!" They have never given very much money to the church. They have worshipped only now and then. Worship and service are low on their list of things to do and place to go.

Why don't more people really face what Jesus has

said? Why do we play at our religion? When we are really converted to Christ, He and His church mean more to us than even our family, our job, our life! Worship and service are not a drudgery -- they are a joy. "And then in his joy went and sold all he had . . ."

The man with the treasure buried in the field found it by accident, but knew that he had to have it. The man who found the pearl was looking for rare pearls and recognized immediately what he had found. Both gave up everything else to possess the prize.

The lesson is simple. Jesus made it that way. We all understand what He was teaching. The difficult part is doing what He demands. Let us have the great desire to "seek first the Kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33).

--Via The Pillar, P.O. Box 75, Cave City, AR 72521.

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VOLUME 26

APRIL 13, 1990

NUMBER 15

Preaching



Bobby Key

Things were different in 1949 when I started preaching. We did not have the buildings or the equipment. We did not have the high salaries then. Fifty dollars per week was the going wage, and often there was no pay at all on the fifth Sunday (all contributions on the fifth Sunday usually went to orphan homes).

Contributions averaged about \$2.00 per family. Television was unknown in West Texas.

There were numerous opportunities to preach the word. People were willing to listen. We never had a meeting without responses, visible responses. Usually there were eight to ten baptisms and three or four restorations. Almost all the members attended every service and many brought their neighbors.

Preachers were given a position of undisputed leadership in the community. They were usually respected and admired. Most mothers wished their sons to grow up and become preachers.

Gospel preachers of this age find themselves being analyzed, envied, and criticized as never before. It takes much greater effort to be a successful preacher in this enlightened age. More work, knowledge, and training are required. More is expected of the preacher today, and the things expected usually have little to do with Bible knowledge. It is more difficult to find a pulpit today. When a vacancy occurs, there are often fifty to one hundred applications.

Today's preacher must be eager to grow. He must be energetic, willing to sacrifice himself for the gospel of Christ. Preachers must preach for the sheer love of preaching. They must be dedicated to Christ and in love with people.

Gospel preachers of this age find themselves being analyzed, envied, and criticized as never before. It takes much greater effort to be a successful preacher in this enlightened age.

Preachers must maintain a positive, enthusiastic attitude. In every congregation there are those who are experts in the art of discouragement, carrying with them their own clouds of doom and gloom. There are people in every church who will break your heart, break your spirit, and just break you if they are allowed to do so. A preacher's happiness and success depends to a large degree upon his refusal to let such individuals control his life.

Preaching the gospel of Christ and laboring to build up His kingdom in a given community is a lifetime proposition. A long ministry brings growth to the church and glory to God. The average preacher spends less than five years with a congregation. Keep in mind that God requires faithfulness, not success. Noah had seven converts in 950 years, yet he is reckoned "a preacher of righteousness" (II Peter 2:5), and included in God's hall of fame. We plant and water, but God alone gives the increase. God is pleased when His word is faithfully preached, and we have done our best.

In order for a preacher to remain for a number of years in a congregation he must maintain credibility with those in the church and also with people in the community. Credibility is lost when a preacher is found to be dishonest, immoral, lazy, or overly mercenary. No preacher can afford to show partiality (I Timothy 5:21). He must practice what he preaches (Romans 2:21).

Preachers are likely to move often if they attempt

to preach without study, preach just to make a living, fail to consider the needs of the congregation, take advantage of the audience, keep talking when they are finished, or substitute their opinions for the gospel. Few churches will tolerate a hobby-rider for long. It is easy to become overly concerned with one subject or one issue to the neglect of the whole counsel of God.

It would be well for every preacher to study Paul's letters to Timothy. Timothy was admonished to "preach the word" (II Timothy 4:1-4), "be an example" (I Timothy 4:12), "give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (I Timothy 4:13). The preacher is told "meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them" (I Timothy 4:15). He is to take heed unto himself and unto the doctrine (I Timothy 4:16). He is to rebuke those who sin (I Timothy 5:20). He is to "lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partakers of other men's sins" (I Timothy 5:22). God's preacher will avoid foolish and unlearned questions, knowing that they do gender strife (II Timothy 2:23). He is told to guard his health and to keep himself pure (I Timothy 5:22, 23).

It is a great honor and an exalted privilege to be able to preach God's word. The world needs more preachers and better prepared preachers.

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

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-Acts 26:25

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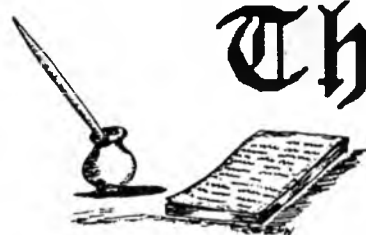
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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Why The Resurrection?



David Wade

Doubters and scoffers have disputed the fact of the resurrection of the dead in every age (Acts 17:32; I Corinthians 15:12). The New Testament clearly attests to the resurrection of Christ from the grave (Matthew 28:1-6; Mark 16:1-6; Luke 24:1-7, John 20:1-9). In

addition, Jesus predicts that 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). The fact that Jesus raised the widow's son (Luke 7), Jairus' daughter (Luke 8, and Lazarus (John 11) underscores the power of God to raise all the dead as Jesus has promised. While much preaching and writing concerns itself with the reality of the resurrection, we seem to fall short in sharing the "why" of the resurrection. Why was Christ raised from the dead? Why are our bodies to be raised from the dead? Let me share with you five reasons for the resurrection.

1) The resurrection of Christ establishes Jesus as the son of God with power (Romans 1:4). Someone may say, "According to John 20:30-31, didn't Jesus' signs and miracles prove him to be the son of God?" Yes, but these signs, separate from his own resurrection, did not; for indeed, others performed similar signs. It is by his own resurrection from the grave that God declares Jesus to be the "son of God with power" (Romans 1:4).

His death, burial and resurrection are essential elements of the gospel fulfilling the scriptures (I Corinthians 15:1-4). By his resurrection, Jesus is distinguished from all pagan deities and self-proclaimed Messiahs. Without his resurrection, there would be no "good news." Lost humanity would still be awaiting a savior from heaven. The resurrection of Christ is unique. He has been raised to never to die again (Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 7:25). By his resurrection, he is declared to be the "son of God with power."

2) The resurrection of Christ is a sign verifying the promise that there is life beyond the grave. Without the resurrection of Christ, the promise of life beyond the grave would seem somewhat empty and hollow. It was the purpose of signs to

confirm the word (Mark 16:20). Before raising Lazarus, Jesus declared, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet he shall live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25-26). Jesus promised "abundant living" (John 10:10), and "everlasting life" (John 3:16). He said, "I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore" (Revelation 1:18). John declares, "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" (I John 3:2). God's word, which promises life beyond the grave, is ultimately confirmed by the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

3) By the resurrection of Christ, God is able to reclaim his holy temple. In ancient times, God's glory resided in the temple at Jerusalem (Ezekiel 1). By the time of Christ, God's glory had long since departed from the temple (Ezekiel 11), and faithless Israel's house was left desolate (Matthew 23:38). In the context of the New Testament age, Paul declared that God "dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 17:24). Speaking of his body, Jesus said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19-21). Likewise, Paul declares that "your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost" (I Corinthians 6:19), and that the church is "the temple of God" (I Corinthians 3:16).

The human body is the only physical substance that awaits transformation and reclamation. By the resurrection, God will transform and reclaim his temple, both the good and the bad (I Corinthians 15:50-58). Jesus refers to this great event as "the resurrection of life" and "the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:29). The fact that "God raised up Christ" is the assurance that we will also be "raised in glory" (I Corinthians 15:15, 43).

4) The resurrection of Christ gives power to the gospel. Jesus is "declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16).

If Christ were not raised, the New Testament would be a false witness, we would yet be in our sins, and would be most miserable (I Corinthians 15:12-19). Because Christ has risen from the grave, the gospel is empowered to transform our lives into God's new creation (II Corinthians 5:17).

5) The resurrection of Christ fills our hearts with

I Corinthians 7

(Editor's Note: This is the second of a three-part series dealing with Matthew 19 and I Corinthians 7.)

I Corinthians 7 is believed by some to limit Matthew 19:9 to Christians only and thus to leave aliens free to remarry or remain married to second or subsequent mates, even if their former mates were not put away "for



Cecil May, Jr.

fornication."

The argument goes something like this:

"I Corinthians 7 deals with several different classes of people: 'To the unmarried and widows' (verse 8); 'to the married' (verse 10); 'to the rest' (verse 12). The verses following verse 12 make it clear that 'the rest,' or 'the remaining ones,' are those in mixed marriages, where one mate is a believer and the other is not.

"That, by implication, requires that 'the married' in verse 10 be Christians married to each other.

"In speaking to 'the married' (Christians) of verse 10, he says, 'to the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, . . . ' Then, 'to the rest,' he says, 'speak I, not the Lord.' This distinction between what 'the Lord' says, and what 'I' say is the key to the argument.

"What 'the Lord says' must be a reference to what he, Christ, had said in his personal ministry. But that is Matthew 19:9, which Paul must, therefore, be paraphrasing in I Corinthians 7:10. But since I Corinthians 7:10 has been shown to refer only to

I Corinthians 7

Continued From Page 2

Christians married to each other, (those in mixed marriages being, 'the rest'), then Matthew 19:9 refers only to Christians.

"One cannot have a universal law (I Corinthians 7:10, Matthew 19:9) and have some 'remaining ones' to whom the 'universal' does not apply. That would be logically contradictory. Therefore the marriage law of Matthew 19:9 is not universal, but limited to Christians."

This is not a direct quotation from any one writer, but is, I believe, a fair and accurate summary of the basic argument. It has already been noted that this argument presents us with unanswered difficulties in Matthew 19. I believe it can also be shown that I Corinthians 7 itself suggests an entirely different meaning to the, "I command, yet not I, but the Lord," and the "speak I, not the Lord," statements of verses 10 and 12 respectively.

It is not at all clear that, "I command, yet not I but the Lord," has to refer to what the Lord said personally during his personal ministry.

In the first place, the words of I Corinthians 7:10-11, which are said to be this command of the Lord, are not the same as Matthew 19:9. It is not just a different wording of the same idea. It is a different emphasis altogether. Matthew 19:9 is emphasizing under what conditions remarriage with another may take place. I Corinthians 7:10-11 is emphasizing that husband and wife should not separate: "Let not the wife depart . . . let not the husband put away his wife." The question in Matthew 19 is, "Who can put away his wife and remarry?" The answer is, "Only one who has put away his wife for fornication" (verses 3, 9). But the question in I Corinthians 7 is, "Isn't it good for a man not to touch a woman," or "Is it all right to stay married if one is married" (verse 1). The answer, "to the married," is that it is not only "all right," it is a "command." IF you depart, remain unmarried or be reconciled, but the main point is, "Don't depart; don't put away." It is worthy of note that the word "put away" here is not the word for divorce, not the word used in Matthew 19:9.

Why The Resurrection?

Continued From Page 2

hope. Paul said, "of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question" (Acts 23:6). Because of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, Paul urges Christians to "sorrow not even as others which have no hope" (I Thessalonians 4:13). Peter declares, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (I Peter 1:3-4).

Divorce and remarriage is not the question under discussion. Do not separate. Stay together. This is the command of the passage.

Secondly, note that a meaning for, "I command, yet not I but the Lord," is found in the context of this very letter. In I Corinthians 14:37 the same apostle says, "If any man claim to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto thee are the commandments of the Lord." So when Paul writes a command by his own inspired pen, his apostolic authority makes it "a command of the Lord." When Paul says, here in I Corinthians 7:10, "I command, yet not I but the Lord," he is simply giving emphasis to the fact that he is COMMANDING by apostolic authority.

That this is the correct interpretation of this phrase is further suggested by what the context reveals as the meaning in verse 12 of, "speak I, not the Lord."

Paul says, "I say," or "I speak" (in contrast to "the Lord says") a number of times in I Corinthians 7. See, for example, verses 6, 8, 25, 35, as well as verse 12. Some have suggested through the centuries that Paul, in those passages, was disavowing inspiration. There are a number of reasons why that is not a satisfactory explanation, and it has usually been as a counter to that suggestion that others have said that "I say" equals Paul's own inspired words, and "The Lord commands" equals Jesus' words during his personal ministry.

I suggest a third alternative, toward which the context strongly points.

Look at the times Paul says, "I say," or its equivalent, in this chapter. Every time, unless verse 12 is the exception, the "I say" points to a "permission," or "a judgment," or advice, in contrast to a "command."

Verse 6 says, "I speak this by permission, and not of commandment." There is a difference of opinion as to which part of what he is saying in this section the "this" refers, but it is obvious from the verse itself that it fits the category I am suggesting.

Verse 8 says, "I say therefore to the unmarried and the widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I," that is, unmarried. But note, "it is good," not, "it is commanded;" and he goes on to show it is not, in fact, a command, for he says, "But if they cannot contain let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn."

Verse 25 says, "Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful." He does not just mean, "The Lord hasn't spoken on this in his personal ministry." He means more than that. He is declaring that he has no "commandment of the Lord" to give as an inspired apostle to bind upon the virgins. He further makes that clear by saying, "And if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned" (verse 25). The contrast is not between what is inspired

and what is not. Nor is it between what Jesus said in the flesh and what Paul says now. It is rather between what is command, and therefore bound, and what is judgment and therefore not bound. It is Paul's inspired judgment that "for the present distress" (verse 26) it is more convenient, less trouble to be unmarried. But he expressly says he is not commanding it, even for that distress. Under other circumstances, he declares, "Forbidding to marry" is a "doctrine of demons" (I Timothy 4:1-3).

There are three reasons, then, in summary, why Matthew 19:9 is not the word spoken in I Corinthians 7:10-11 to "the married" (Christians).

(1) I Corinthians 7:10-11 is not the same command as Matthew 19:9.

(2) "I command, yet not I but the Lord," is shown by I Corinthians 14:37 to more likely mean a command given by Paul as an inspired apostle than a quotation from Jesus' personal ministry.

(3) "Speak I, not the Lord," is seen by similar usage throughout the same chapter to be advice or judgment in contrast to a command, rather than Paul's words in contrast to Jesus' words in the flesh.

Since the primary argument limiting Matthew 19:9 to Christians is based on the premise that Paul is referring to it in I Corinthians 7:10-11, if this reasoning from the context of I Corinthians 7 stands, then Matthew 19:9 stands as a universal principle. We have already seen that Matthew 19 itself points in that same direction. (To be continued).

--P.O. Box 1101, Magnolia Bible College, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

The Ear That Blesses



Jerrie Barber

"When the ear heard me, then it blessed me" (Job 29:11).

I have heard that one of the greatest fears of the American citizen is the fear of speaking to a group of people. That may be true. Surveys support it.

However, it is my unscholarly observation that there are thousands more excellent speakers than there are outstanding listeners. Both talking and listening are essential for a complete communication cycle. Both are scriptural when done in a good manner, at the right time, and for

Continued On Page 4

Who Intercedes And Mediates For Us?

T. Pierce Brown

The question is sometimes asked, "Since I Timothy 2:5 says that there is one mediator between God and man -- Christ Jesus who intercedes on our behalf (Romans 8:24), how is it that Romans 8:26 indicates that the Holy Spirit also intercedes for us?" The basic question is, "If there is one, and only one mediator, how can there

be two?" Possibly a related problem would be, "If we can discover that there is more than one mediator, maybe some man, such as a preacher, priest, or pope might also be one."

One key to the problem is the failure to distinguish between things that differ. "Intercession" is from the Greek word "enteuxis" and means "a petition with respect to." The verb "entugchano," translated "deal with" once and "make intercession" four times means "make petition or intercession either for or against a person" (See Acts 25:24, where the Jews made intercession against Paul). The Spirit makes intercession (Romans 8:26), Christ makes intercession (Romans 8:24, Hebrews 7:25), and we are to make intercession for each other (I Timothy 2:1; 4:5). God in no way, at no time, limited the number of persons who are allowed to intercede for another.

One key to the problem is the failure to distinguish between things that differ.

However, the word "mediator" is from the Greek word "mesites," and literally means "a go-between" -- one who mediates between two parties to produce a reconciliation of differences. Christ is a mediator in a way that no one else is or can be. The peculiar nature of man's relationship with God demanded a special mediator. Man was estranged from God by sin, and there needed to be a price paid, an offer made and accepted before man could be reconciled to God. Although Moses could be a mediator of the law (Galatians 3:19), he could not accomplish what Christ needed to and did accomplish as a mediator.

In a dispute between labor and management, a federal mediator may be able to offer certain things to management on behalf of labor, and to offer certain other things to labor on behalf of management. He may or may not intercede, but if he does, it is a different function than that of mediation.

As a Mediator of the New Testament (Hebrews 9:15), Christ entered once (for all) into the Holy place to make possible this reconciliation of man to God (Hebrews 9:24-28), but one can intercede to God on behalf of man without doing that.

Although this is a slightly different aspect of the same subject, it is my considered judgment that the intercession of the Holy Spirit spoken of in Romans 8:26 is done through the prayers of the individual who does not know what to pray for as he ought, so he makes inarticulate groans in the spirit, and the Spirit by which he lives knows and "interprets" these groanings to God who searches the hearts. One would need to have an unusual concept of the Holy Spirit to conclude that the Holy Spirit Himself had to express his mind by inarticulate groanings.

But this intercession of the Spirit, however it may be done, is not the same as the mediatorial office or function of Jesus as spoken of in I Timothy 2:5.

I realize that a far more scholarly and definitive article could be written about this profound subject, answering far more questions, and dealing with it in more depth, but perhaps this is at least enough to help make us more aware of the differences between intercession and mediation, and that the particular kind of meditation Christ does for us is unique.

--Box 144X, Rt. 2, Wartrace, TN 37183.

Reading For His Own Benefit

Hardeman Nichols

The drawn expressions of shock were still upon the faces of the neighbors and friends who were gathering to offer sympathy to his widow. Like most of us, these knew of the possibility of death, but it was not expected here yet. His wife met the three of us as we entered the room.

Her husband had died suddenly at the evening service soon after worship began. One minute he was singing praise and the next he was slumping forward as his soul left the body. He had prepared, but he wasn't ready. That is, he had made preparation for changing worlds some day by obeying the gospel and growing for many years into a mature soul, but he wasn't expecting that this would be the day of death. We offered our condolences as his wife recounted the already precious memories of the hours spent with him that day.

I was glancing around the room, noticing the usual touches of comfortable housekeeping. Beside what apparently was his favorite chair were books and commentaries, arranged at hand on a table as if they had been left in the midst of use to go to the evening services of the meeting. On that table was a well-worn Bible with a sheet of paper marking a place in it. She saw my eyes lingering on this place of study and she explained that while she had ironed during the afternoon, he had sat there and studied. One of them asked, "Oh, was he preparing to teach a class?" "No," she replied, "he was just reading the Bible for his own benefit."

Now there is the key to conversion and growth. The rich benefits of the Bible are available to those who read it with proper motives. It is commendable to study, to read the Bible for the purpose of sharing its truths with others; but this is good only if we are constantly reading the Scriptures for our own benefit.

In the hurried paces of each day -- stop running. Read God's Word and pray.

--Via The Pillar, P.O. Box 75, Cave City, AR 72521.

The Ear That Blesses

Continued From Page 3

the right purpose.

Listening Suggestions

1. People need someone to listen. It is amazing and encouraging in the last few years, since I have been working on listening as well as talking, how more than one person has said, "The answer to the problem is clear now that I have talked about it. No one had let me explain the whole thing before. Thank you for listening."

2. People will check to see if I am a compassionate listener. Many have told me what horrible problems a friend was having and asked for my suggestions for that friend. When I have been kind in dealing with that "friend," they have later told me that the "friend" was themselves, and then they were ready to really talk.

3. People will determine if I am sensitive. Sensitivity hears more than just words that are spoken. "My mother is a widow now" also says, "My father has died." My ignoring or responding to that will communicate whether I have the time, concern, or inclination to "weep with them that weep" (Romans 12:15).

4. Listening is hard work. My experience has been that it takes preparation, dedication, and concentration to be effective in listening.

5. Listening is a rewarding service. When I really listen to a person with a hurt, with a tough decision, with a complicated problem, or with a joy to celebrate, I am putting into practice what I preach about one soul being worth more than all the world. In fact, this person is worth an hour of my focused attention! Also, I have found the same blessing returned to me: Listen, and you will be listened to: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will blessings be put into your life. For with the same measure that you value other people, that value will be measured back to you.

Let's work on having a blessed ear as Job described, "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me."

His thoughts were slow,

His words were few, and never formed to glisten

But he was a joy to all his friends --

You should have heard him listen.

--West Nashville Heights, 5807 Charlotte Avenue, Nashville, TN 37209.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am not mad,
Words of Truth"

VOLUME 26

APRIL 20, 1990

NUMBER 16

Urgent Message!



Please Read To Your Congregation

We, too, live in a time when communication is explosive. Technology has made the world a neighborhood. It will take the gospel to make it a brotherhood. Today's technology gives us incredible opportunities to tell the world the life-changing good news that "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believes on Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

The elders of the Sycamore church of Christ in Cookeville, Tennessee, have decided to take advantage of these opportunities to launch a nationwide evangelistic campaign called "One Nation Under God" in the summer of 1991.

In a coordinated effort with churches of Christ and individual Christians throughout the United States, plans are being made for a full page introductory ad in a national publication, possibly *Reader's Digest*, a direct mail piece to go into every home in America, which will be the largest religious mailing in the history of the world, a coordinated effort by our existing TV programs to center their message on this theme, and simultaneous gospel meetings and evangelistic campaigns across the country.

A Cookeville firm will provide office space, a toll-free watts line, fax equipment and other support. A full time coordinator has been selected to synchronize the various parts of the program.

"Even a 1% response will mean 1,000,000 interested people"

Estimated costs for media, mailing, and other expenses are .17 per household or \$17 million.

Plans for the "One Nation Under God" campaign include the following elements:

June, 1991 -- Possibly full-page ads in national publications, such as *Reader's Digest*, will tell their millions of readers of a special mailing they will receive in July.

July, 1991 -- Each household in the United States of America will receive, by mail, the message of the gospel of Christ. In brochure form, this will be brief, well thought out and well written. It will also include a response card allowing each recipient to request a correspondence course or other Bible study aids. This can be accomplished if congregations throughout the U.S. sponsor the mailing to a particular county. The 3,138 counties or county-equivalents in the U.S. range from 400 families to over 2,000,000 families. With almost 14,000 congregations, no one group faces an overwhelming task.

During the same week, all brotherhood publications, radio programs and television broadcasts will be encouraged to center on this same theme -- "One Nation Under God." Coordinating the network of existing brotherhood television stations, our goal is to broadcast dynamic gospel messages on our theme to as many targeted areas as possible.

Local congregations will be encouraged to write letters, make phone calls and promote this event in local newspapers and on local radio and television.

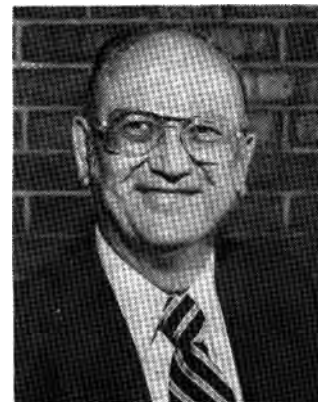
Almost 14,000 congregations of churches of Christ in the U.S. will be asked during the following week to hold simultaneous gospel

meetings in our own neighborhoods.

This effort will only succeed if we work together to reach our nation and our world with God's good news. Many individuals, as well as congregations, will wish to contribute to this work. It will take our time, our prayers, our creativity and seventeen cents per household. Aren't our neighbors worth seventeen cents?

For more information on how you can help, please contact the Sycamore Church of Christ, P.O. Box 3273, Cookeville, Tennessee, 38502 615-526-5427, or call toll free 1-800-251-6871 and ask for Shirlee Young.

Wise Little Things




T. Pierce Brown

(Editor's note: Brother T. Pierce Brown is volunteering his services and travelling extensively in behalf of the ONE NATION UNDER GOD campaign).

Many times when we consider the vastness of the universe, or some great task, the accomplishment of which boggles the mind, we may feel a sense of our own littleness, and cry out as David did in Psalm 8:4, "What is man, that thou art

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

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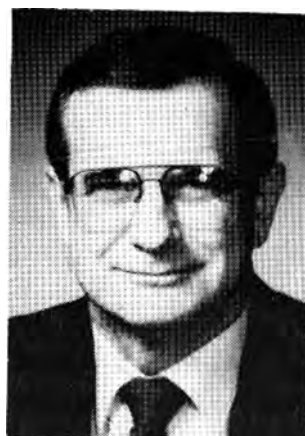
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Individual rates are \$11.44 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, AL 35565.



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

"God Gave The Increase"



David Wade

delivered an excellent series of biblical lessons in the meeting.

In view of the meeting, many prayers ascended, many visits were made, and many invitations were extended. Several said we had more than the usual number of members, visitors, and prospects to attend. However, at the close of the meeting, not one soul had responded to the invitation for rededication, prayers, restoration, or to obey the gospel.

In spite of this fact, it seems that all who attended the meeting were uplifted, had grown spiritually, and that the revival was a success in many other ways.

Within two days after the close of the revival, the

The recent editorial, "Are Gospel Meetings Dead?", WOT 3-23-90 was published two days before the beginning of our spring revival at the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ. Brother Gary Bradley of the Mayfair congregation in Huntsville, Alabama,

waters of our baptistry began to stir. Within the next 48 hours, we witnessed the baptism of seven of our young people. At this date of writing, 4-4-90, it appears there will be others, responding, including prospects we have been working with, who were not reared in the church.

Perhaps it is good to be reminded of Paul's statement, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (I Corinthians 3:6). Jesus explains the mystery of spiritual growth thusly: "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle; because the harvest is come" (Mark 4:26-29).

Also, we need to remember the admonition of James 5:7-8, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

Brother and sisters, we need to be planting and watering! We must demonstrate faithfulness and patient endurance. God will give the increase!

More Than A Movement



Dalton Key

The past several months have witnessed an uneasy shift in our terminology. Much is being written in various brotherhood papers, and much is being said in countless lectures and sermons, concerning "our movement" and "our fellowship." But little is

being said about the church.

Not so long ago, preachers of the gospel proudly proclaimed the beauty and singularity of the Lord's church, as called out from the world and set apart from all denominational bodies. But times are changing. It appears that now, at least in the minds of many, loyalty to the Lord and his church is being blindly bartered for allegiance to a human movement or a nebulous, vaguely-bounded fellowship.

It appears that now, at least in the minds of many, loyalty to the Lord and his church is being blindly bartered for allegiance to a human movement or a nebulous, vaguely-bounded fellowship.

Continued On Page 3

"A Crown Of Righteousness"



Don Williams

Army is several thousand medals shy of the number needed to give to those soldiers who fought recently in Panama.

Frank Johnson, a spokesman for the Defense Personnel Support System, estimated that 13,000 infantrymen of the 25,000 soldiers who fought in Panama are eligible to receive the badges. The three-inch badges, which cost 90¢ each, and are emblazoned with a wreath and a rifle, are awarded

You may have seen the story. It didn't make the front page headlines, but on the top of page three in *The Tuscaloosa News*, January 30, the paper read, "Army Runs Out Of Medals For Panama Service." The lengthy article went on to say that the

to infantry officers and enlisted soldiers who "satisfactorily perform the infantry operations in active ground combat." Major L. D. Walker at Fort Ord, California, said that these medals are highly sought after by infantrymen, who haven't had many combat situations in recent years to qualify.

It seems the shortage resulted when the Army ceased trying to stockpile these medals in huge quantities. Because there had not been any call for these badges in recent years, the Army was low on their supply of them. With over 10,000 medals being given out already, the Army has now called for an emergency order from Lordship Industries in Hauppauge, New York.

It is good to know that our soldiers who recently risked their lives in Panama should receive adequate recognition. But how much greater it would be to receive the CROWN OF LIFE that Christ will reward to his soldiers on the day of judgment! Concerning that spiritual crown, Paul wrote, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown

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Wise Little Things

Continued From Page 1

mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?"

It is good for us to realize how small and helpless we are, that we may depend on God and give glory to him. But sometimes we may concentrate on our limitations instead of the infinite power of God and bury our talent in the sand. Remember the excuse and the result. "I was afraid and went and hid thy talent in the earth" (Matthew 25:25). The response of his master was, "Thou wicked and slothful servant --. Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:26, 30).

Proverbs 30:24-28 says, "There are four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: the ants are a people not strong, yet they provide their food in the summer; the conies are but a feeble folk, yet they make their houses in the rocks; the locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands; the lizard taketh hold with her hands, yet she is in kings' palaces."

Let us examine some lessons from that passage, that we may be at least a little wiser than we sometimes are. First, the ants prepare their food in the summer. This suggests that there is an appropriate time for every task, and if it is not done at that time, it may never be done at all. Solomon put it this way in Ecclesiastes 3:1, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven." This is especially fitting as we think of the present gigantic and thrilling task of getting the gospel message into every home in the nation. We have thought about it many times. Now we are making specific plans not merely to think and talk, but do.

We may be small and insignificant compared to many religious and irreligious groups, but the lessons from the ant are for us right now.

We could dwell at length on the industriousness and ingenuity with which they find and prepare their food. The courage, confidence and perseverance with which they operate is amazing. I have seen them face a body of water across which they apparently could not swim. So they would push a straw out in the water and climb on. I have seen them pull or push an object many times their size. If they are not able to push it forward, they pull it backward. If they are unable to get it over an obstacle, they go around.

They may follow a leader if they have one. If not, they cooperate as if they did have one, for they are moved with a common purpose. Some of them may have been lazy, cantankerous, proud, self-willed, selfish, uncooperative, but in all my hours of observing them I never found one.

Indeed they are exceeding wise. The wonderful thing about it is, they apparently exercised this wisdom, not by trying to acquire more brain power, but simply by using what they had in the way God intended for it to be used. The man with the one talent did not have to get five before he could function adequately and gloriously. He just needed to use what he had for his master. Surely

the lesson is plain. Every individual and congregation should recognize that now is the time to use every resource we have with ingenuity and confidence to accomplish the task of helping to get the gospel into every home. Each can send financial aid, pray, and make plans for follow up on responses.

Every individual and congregation should recognize that now is the time to use every resource we have with ingenuity and confidence to accomplish the task of helping to get the gospel into every home.

The conie, or rock badger, somewhat like a rabbit was weak and small. Yet he built his house in the rock. We must start like the wise man, building our house on the rock. Keep in mind that Jesus says that happens by "Hearing these sayings of mine *and doing them.*" We have heard these sayings all our lives, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," and "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men," but may have not really made a sacrificial, faithful, cooperative effort to do this.

Also, it is my judgment that many are trying to find shelter in the blueprint instead of in the house on the Rock. It is possible to get very involved in studying and analyzing the blueprint of the house that we never actually get into the house. The key to it is simple. Instead of sounding as if we must choose the plan OR the Planner, the church OR

Christ, we need to be keenly aware that if we choose Christ, it automatically follows that we are added to his church. If we really have any respect for the Planner, we MUST follow his plan! How are you individually or congregationally going to cooperate in this present glorious opportunity to get the gospel to every home in the nation? It may be the only actual opportunity you will have this century.

The point I am making here is that Christianity is not MERELY a doctrine to be believed and taught, but a life to be lived. Jesus said about some on one occasion, "They say and do not." Beware lest he say it about some others on another and more final occasion!

The locusts without any king, going together in bands can wipe out the opposition in any nation under heaven, no matter how scientific, technically advanced or actively engaged that opposition may be. One can crush a dozen of them under one foot at one step, yet they cannot be stopped once they go on a mission. The reason is simple. They all use their God-given ability in a cooperative fashion at the same time. They do it without a king. Think of what we can do WITH a King, if we but follow him together! One can burn a hole in a piece of steel if he can properly get the sun's rays concentrated on that one place.

What a lesson for us! Without any national headquarters, central organization or denominational machinery, we can simply work together on a common cause with our own individual talents and opportunities, but concentrating our efforts on the same thing at the same time and overcome all opposition from the world. Thousands of us are already trying it in scattered local efforts. Let us now concentrate those efforts in this big task!

--Box 144X, Rt. 2, Wartrace, TN 37183
Phone: (615) 454-9042

More Than A Movement

Continued From Page 2

Please do not misunderstand. As Christians living in this land of freedom, we owe much to the honest and truth-seeking leaders of what has been commonly coined, "The American Restoration Movement." Men such as Alexander Campbell, Barton Stone, James O'Kelly - along with others of like faith and fortitude - performed a tremendous service to the world by leading men back to the Bible. But we must not forget that our roots run deeper than the American Restoration. If we are the church which Jesus built, we must trace our roots back to Pentecost as recorded in Acts, chapter two.

Only an ingrate would neglect to give thanks for those godly men who gave of their very lives in restoring New Testament Christianity. But God's only son gave his life in death to purchase more

than a mere movement of men. His blood purchased the church (Acts 20:28).

We are not members of a denomination founded by Alexander Campbell. Campbell never intended such. He sought to point men back, beyond himself, to the risen Savior. His desire was not for disciples to worship at the shrine of his, or any other man's, movement. He urged men to unite in the one, non-denominational, New Testament church.

I am thankful for "our movement." I appreciate the blessings and warmth of "our fellowship." But my allegiance, my loyalty, yea my very life, belongs to my Lord and his church. Furthermore, I intend to continue calling the Lord's church, the church of Christ, what it is -- the church.

"Not Under Bondage"



Cecil May, Jr.

(Editor's note: This is the third of a three-part series dealing with Matthew 19 and I Corinthians 7.)

In I Corinthians 7:15 Paul says, "But if the unbelieving (mate in a mixed marriage) depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage

in such cases."

Another point under current discussion, suggesting a limitation or amending of Matthew 19:9 by I Corinthians 7, is whether this verse adds 'desertion by an unbelieving mate' to 'fornication on the part of a mate' as a reason for allowing remarriage following a divorce. The discussion of this point, which follows, will also answer a question that was no doubt raised by the previous discussion of I Corinthians 7: If "say I, not the Lord" means Paul is giving inspired advice or

"A Crown Of Righteousness"

Continued From Page 2

of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto ALL them also that love his appearing" (II Timothy 4:8).

At best, these infantry men's badges will grow old and tattered as years go by. Some of them will be lost -- others will be put into mothballs as keepsakes to show to future generations. But our reward is made of incorruptible material (I Corinthians 9:25). Peter tells us, "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I Peter 5:4).

These badges given to the soldiers were for participating in the invasion of Panama. It was not given to them for heroic deeds of valor, but for their participation in this warfare. The crown of life, given by Christ, is only for those Christian soldiers who have faithfully served in his army; it is for those who have forsaken the world, suffered persecution, and remained loyal to Christ, come what may. To these precious children of God he says, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

Isn't it ironic? Before the cross, having been beaten and scourged, our Lord had a crown of thorns pressed upon his head (Matthew 27:29, 30). When he was beaten on the head, blood may have come out of his scalp. Yet to us, his faithful children, he offers a crown of life -- Heaven with all its glories -- a crown that shall never fade away. Maybe that is why we call his grace AMAZING!

--Route 2, Box 713, Guin, AL 35563.

judgment, as contrasted with command, how does that apply to the verses that follow verse 12; what implications does this have for their application?

Here is a paraphrase of an argument sometimes made in favor of the amendment of Matthew 19:9 by I Corinthians 7:15:

"One does not learn all the truth about a Bible subject by camping on one passage that relates to the subject. It takes all that the Bible says about a matter to establish the truth on that matter. Some passages that seem to be universal are later found to be limited by other passages. For example, "whosoever believeth" in John 3:16 does not teach salvation by faith only, even though repentance and baptism are not mentioned in that passage.

"It is possible, therefore, that I Corinthians 7:15, a later revelation of God, can give an additional reason for divorce and remarriage to Matthew 19:9, even though the Matthew passage sounds universal and limits the exception to one."

Let's note two things in response to this: (1) The language of Matthew 19:9 strongly mitigates against it. (2) To say it is possible that some passage may do so is not the same as to say that I Corinthians 7:15 does do so. I believe we shall find, as a matter of fact, that it does not.

(1) What Matthew 19:9 says is, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery." While it is possible to learn something from other passages that would be an addition to what is said here, it is not possible to learn from any other passage, given the nature of the Bible, anything contradictory to what is said here.

Note the force of "except." In Luke 13:3 Jesus said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." That establishes the necessity of repentance. We can learn from other passages the necessity of other things, for example, faith and baptism. But we cannot expect to find any passage which would allow anyone in the scope of Luke 13:3 to escape perishing if they did not repent. If we thought we found such a passage, we would have to reevaluate our interpretation of it.

Similarly, if Matthew 19:9 is universal for whoever marries and puts away, as we have reasoned previously, then we shall not expect to find any passage anywhere to say someone can marry, put away, and remarry, and not commit adultery in doing so, unless they have put away because of fornication. To find such would contradict the plain sense of the passage.

(2) I Corinthians 7:15 is not, in fact, saying that one may divorce and remarry and not be committing adultery when desertion of an unbelieving mate is the cause of the separation, in the absence of fornication.

We have seen that I Corinthians 7:10 and following verses are not discussing divorce and remarriage. The question in these verses is, "Is it good for a man to touch a woman?" or "Isn't it good to be unmarried?" In response, Paul is commanding the married, "Do not separate." That is what he has bound upon them as a "command" of "the Lord."

Now, in verse 12, he says, "To the rest speak I,

not the Lord." Given our previous observations regarding this expression, we would expect to find following it, a "permission," a relaxing, in some circumstance, of what was bound or asserted in another circumstance. That is the consistent use of the "I say," "I speak," type passage throughout the chapter.

And indeed, that is what we find. Having bound upon "the married" (Christians) that they stay together, he says to "the rest," those in mixed marriages: "You stay with your mate, too, but (Here is the 'permission.') if your unbelieving mate refuses to stay, you are not bound to stay together, as I, or the Lord, have bound on the married." "Let him depart."

That this is the correct interpretation of "not under bondage" is further suggested by the word used by Paul which is translated "bound" in I Corinthians 7:15. There is a word translated "bound" in I Corinthians 7:15. There is a word translated "bound" which is often used to describe the marriage bond. "The woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth" (Romans 7:2); "Art thou bound to a wife?" (I Corinthians 7:27); "The wife is bound by law as long as her husband liveth" (I Corinthians 7:39). The word translated "bound" in I Corinthians 7:15 is not the word for "bound" in those passages; nor is the word for "bound" in 7:15 ever used anywhere else in the Bible for the marriage bond. He is not saying, "Not under bondage" in the marriage bond; but "not under bondage" to stay together, the bondage he was just placed on "the married."

Conclusion

I Corinthians 7 is not, therefore, limiting Matthew 19:9 to Christians, nor is it adding "another exception" to it. Consequently, Matthew 19:9, as a prior word of the Lord, would still be binding upon all: Upon the unmarried and the widows, regarding whom they shall marry; upon the married, if they did divorce and remarry; and upon the rest, if they are deserted. I Corinthians 7 is responding to the Corinthians' questions regarding the assertion, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman" (I Corinthians 7:1). He responds as to the way in which the assertion relates to various groups. But he does not mention Matthew 19:9; he does not refer to the conditions under which divorce and remarriage may occur. Matthew 19:9 still stands independently as applicable to all.

--Magnolia Bible College, P.O. Box 1101, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

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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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Are You A Procrastinator?



Edsel Burleson

Procrastination is my sin

It causes me endless sorrow,
But I've made up my mind to quit,
And I will begin tomorrow.

-Anonymous
Weldon R. Langfield, in the March 21, 1978 issue of Firm Foundation, wrote: "An intriguing organization is

the Procrastinator's Club of America, Inc. Founded in 1956, the club has protested against the War of 1812, attempted to get the founders of the Liberty Bell to repair the crack, and has sent delegates to Spain in an effort to raise money for three ships with which to discover America. While the association has not prevailed in any of these exploits, it has managed, with tongue in cheek, to underscore the tendency that perhaps all of us have to put off until tomorrow what can and should be done today."

It is said that requisite for membership in the club includes coming late to all the meetings. A recent release from the group indicates that once again their announced predictions by the members had all come true. The reason is because the forecasts had all come in late, well after the happenings. The club has almost 500,000 members, but, being procrastinators, most of them haven't yet joined!

Someone has written these clever lines about procrastinators:

"Mr. Meant To has a comrade
And his name is Didn't Do.
Have you ever chanced to meet them,
Have they ever called on you?
These two fellas live together
In the house of Never Win.

And I'm told that it is haunted
By The Ghost of Might-Have-Been!"

Jesus told us about some procrastinators who said they they would be willing to follow him later. One said, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father" (Matthew 8:21). Another said, "Lord, I will follow thee: but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house" (Luke 9:61). Luke also wrote about such in Acts 24:25, "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

A preacher visited an elderly man who had recently suffered a paralytic stroke, and was now bedfast. They talked about the church, its blessings and its problems. The old man's eyes misted over, and he said, "Preacher, I'd give anything I've got just to be able to come to church. But I know that I'm never going to be able to get out of this bed." Smiling and somewhat embarrassed, he went on, "There was a time when I could have come to church services regularly - but I preferred to stay in bed."

In the classic novel, JANE EYRE, by Charlotte Bronte, the heroine comes to an estate to be the governess of a little girl. Upon arrival, and for a considerable time after that, she does not meet her employer who is away on business. But she does notice that everything is kept neat and clean, particularly the master's private sitting room. "Do you expect your master soon?" she inquired of the housekeeper. "This room looks as if it were ready for his arrival at any moment." The housekeeper with a shake of the head replied, "No, I have no idea when the master will return. He might come at any time; and when he does, I want everything in readiness for him!"

Whatever we have to do, if it is possible, get it done today. When we learn to face up to our challenges and deal with our difficulties as soon as

they develop, we will be more successful and happy with our lives. Vivian A. Bruner said it well in these lines entitled, "Procrastination:"


Whatever we have to do, if it is possible, get it done today. When we learn to face up to our challenges and deal with our difficulties as soon as they develop, we will be more successful and happy with our lives.

Procrastination is the road
To Never - Never land,
Where birds are always in the bush,
But never in the hand.

Where trees drop saddened branches down
With fruit of Might-Have-Been,
And brooks wash youthful dreams away
Into the river When.

It is no fun to travel on
Procrastination way,
For promised work is never done.
And gain is always Say.

I think I'd much prefer to walk
The Do-It-Now highway,
Where tasks grow never large or hard
For him who works Today.
--420 Seventh Street, SW, Birmingham, AL
35211.



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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David Wade . . . Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Modest Apparel



David Wade

As the weather warms, many will indulge in the annual ritual of parading in public places in scanty apparel that leaves little or nothing to the imagination. Most Christians would agree that they should "adorn themselves in modest apparel" (I Timothy

wrong for David to look on her with lust. This fact is established in the ensuing tragedy.

Perhaps the examples could be multiplied, but surely we get the point. We need to understand that there is a direct relationship between the spirit as God would want it adorned and the clothing that covers our body. It is only through the physical body that our spirit expresses itself. Being chaste involves more than not being a fornicator, it involves dressing in such a way that we do not evoke lustful thought in others (Matthew 5:27-30). Some may lust no matter what you wear, but this argument will not vindicate you when you forsake modesty.

Those who are "not bothered" by anything anyone else may wear have lost their sense of shame. Those who argue that "anything goes" should not be surprised or complain at the grave consequences of immodesty which is both a cause and effect of immorality.

Is State Lottery Gambling?



Cecil Corkren

What is lottery? "A scheme for distributing prizes by lot or chance." A poll taken in 1986 on channel 32 in Louisville, Kentucky, revealed that 79% of those called were for state lottery. Since many in Alabama want state lottery, we need to know more about this evil which has

been made lawful in many states. Many think this would ease our tax burden, but when we take a close look at states with lotteries, taxes are even higher. The politicians and self-interest groups want to foster this insidious evil upon the state of Alabama.

What is gambling? "To play games of chance for money or other valuable stakes." So lottery is gambling. Gambling and lottery are birds of a feather. Gambling devices can be found almost everywhere there is evil of any kind. Hardly any type of sinful allurements flourishes without adding gambling to its attractions. There is a big thrill in taking a chance at a gambling device. A high fever is created at the thought of winning a

Someday



Johnny Ramsey

There are those people who plan to obey the Lord **someday**. Others purpose to return to the church and be **faithful someday**. Others, totally unprepared say they are going to heaven **someday**. If all of us would just get right with God **now** it would make a lot of difference for time

and eternity.

I have preached in enough places and observed enough brethren to know for sure that procrastination is one of Satan's greatest tools. As long as young men delay their spiritual development and active participation in the gospel system the Devil wins. The **potential** elders, deacons, preachers, Bible teachers and ardent members of the church will never be realized as long as we wait for "someday I'll do better" to arrive! Johnson Oatman wrote these piercing words:

The heaping up of riches
To many seems life's goal,
But in the eager rush for wealth
Forgotten is the soul.

While many postpone spiritual values and growth to gain earthly prestige their talents are unused in heavenly pursuits and righteous endeavor. Many a young man, who could have become a great elder, squanders time and energy in business, recreation and politics and winds up robbing God of what he should have done in the

2:9).

The big question is, "What constitutes modest apparel?" Some would argue from the context of I Timothy 2:9 that "modest" has reference to "not expensive or gaudy," as opposed to "gold, pearls, or costly clothing." While the passage refers to excess, it is not limited to excess only. The command is that "women adorn themselves." The qualifiers are "with shamefacedness and sobriety" or, as another version renders, "with decency and propriety." Costly array may also be the scantiest of clothing. Therefore, Paul is not merely discussing the "cost of clothing."

One may ask, "Why does the New Testament say so very little about appropriate dress for the Christian?" You might as well ask, "Why does the New Testament say so little about creation, origin of the species, the spread of mankind, the flood, etc." The answer is apparent. God's mind has already been revealed in great detail on these matters (Romans 15:4). This same record, the Old Testament, gives examples by which we may know the mind of God on the subject of modesty.

After the sin of Adam and Eve, nakedness took on a different meaning and clothing became a necessity (Genesis 3:7-11). God was not pleased with the fig leaves Adam and Eve sewed together for coverings, therefore, he made for them, "coats of skins and did clothe them" (Genesis 3:21). This took place before the birth of Cain (Genesis 4:1).

The first case of drunkenness and the second offense of nakedness is recorded in Genesis 9:20-25. Shem and Japheth were careful to turn away their faces so as not to see their drunken and naked father as they entered to cover him. It is easy to get sidetracked on the curse of Canaan and miss the matter of modesty.

One of the darkest days in Old Testament history is recorded in II Samuel 11:1-5. King David's sin with Bathsheba cost the life of Uriah, and ultimately the death of four of David's sons (cf. II Samuel 12:6). Obviously, it was wrong for Bathsheba to expose herself to David, and it was

Feeling Left Out?

Rodney M. Miller

When it is announced at the assembly that someone is sick, do you: Send them a card? Offer help? Organize help if necessary? Visit them at the hospital? Get irritated with the announcements

Someday

Continued From Page 2

kingdom of Christ. We shall, under the banner of the parable of the talents, give answer to our Maker for what we should have done in His glorious service (Matthew 25).

Someone has properly spoken these challenging words:

Idleness is the burial of a living person.

As long as we sit idle, pondering what we will accomplish **someday**, we are useless in the Savior's service. Too many of us waste years in a lifetime by **thinking** shallow thoughts while **doing** very little that is genuinely worthwhile. Cecil Alexander challenges us in a spiritual song:

Jesus calls us over the tumult

Of our life's wild, restless sea;

Day by day His sweet voice soundeth

Saying, **Christian Follow Me.**

The Bible clearly emphasizes **today** but the Devil shouts **someday!** Too many folk listen to the enemy of their souls. It is an everlasting tragedy to realize that the urgency of Christianity is overwhelmed by the laziness of humanity. The acceptable time is **now** as II Corinthians 6:2 informs us. Therefore, we should:

1. Exhort one another (Hebrews 3:13).
2. Obey God's commands (Psalms 119:60).
3. Hear, and harden not our hearts (Hebrews 3:15).
4. Get busy in the Lord's work (Romans 13:11-14).
5. Preach the Word (II Timothy 4:1-5).

When the final day peals forth (Hebrews 9:27; Romans 2:16) those who spent their entire sojourn upon earth promising that "someday I will do better," will, all of a sudden, run out of opportunity. Only an eternity of regret will follow. Did not an evil man in torment hear these solemn words . . . "Son, remember, that in your lifetime. . . " **Someday** is a big word in the Devil's dictionary and a stumbling block on the road to Hell.

When we pitch our tent toward Sodom we need to snatch up the pegs and point them in a wiser direction **immediately**. An unknown writer was very accurate in these words:

The grass may be greener on the other side, but it is just as hard to mow.

Instead of postponing a zealous effort in the direction of heaven, let us be wise enough to make our move toward glory **now** -- before it becomes harder to get rid of the debris that separates us from God!

--Via Waymarks, Brown Trail Church of Christ, Bedford, Texas.

about people you don't even know?

When a work day is planned, do you: Arrange your plans so you can be there? Look for ways you can contribute to the upkeep and improvement of the buildings (not only on work days)? Always manage to be "too busy" because it is your day off?

When new souls are added to the Lord, do you: Introduce yourself and welcome them? Visit and encourage them? Ignore them and hurry away?

When you think there isn't enough social activity do you: Invite groups of Christians into your home? Plan and carry out recreational activities for either adults or children? Offer to supply transportation or help for activities which others plan? Complain no one is doing anything?

When no one seems friendly, do you: Make it your place to greet visitors? Invite people to your home who are weak? Look for another church?

When Bible classes are provided for you: Do you

Something Better Than A Miracle

Randy Vaughn

Would not more people obey God if preachers could only work miracles just like Peter and Paul did? This is the common thinking of many: "If we could raise the dead, if we could heal the sick, if we could walk on water, if we could speak with tongues -- then multitudes would flock to us, eager to learn of God, and the church would grow by leaps and bounds." But God has taken away man's ability to do miracles (I Corinthians 13:8-10). Today we have the word of God in written form only in the Bible.

All of us have probably thought at one time or another, "Why should Christians be without spectacular attention-grabbing miracles? Why are we left with just an old holy Book? Does God really expect the Bible to be able to convict the

attend faithfully and encourage others to do so? Prepare your lesson? Contribute to the class discussion with comments or by asking questions? Sit with your mouth shut waiting for the class to be more interesting than it was the last time?

When someone is absent from the assembly, do you: Call to find out why? Exhort and encourage them? Offer transportation when needed? Even notice that they are missing?

When there is a gospel meeting, do you: Help advertise the meeting? Invite others to come? Exhort members to attend? Invite the guest preacher into your home for a meal or Bible study? Support the effort with your attendance? Ignore the whole thing?

NOW, FROM WHAT ACTIVITY DO YOU FEEL YOU HAVE BEEN EXCLUDED?

--Via Jackson Heights Bulletin, 1031 Hermitage, Dr. Florence, AL 35630.

sinner, strengthen the church, destroy false doctrine, and enable the Christian to live a godly life?" Let us re-evaluate the purpose God had for using miracles.

Miracles were used in Bible days to prove God's message (Hebrews 2:3, 4). God used those signs to get people to heed his messengers. We see this same principle every day: **One thing is used to point out and vouch for something else.** For example, a road sign, a birth certificate, a signal flare, and a parade all point to something more important than themselves.

Which is more important to a sick man -- the hospital sign, or the hospital? Which is more

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Is State Lottery Gambling?

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million dollars.

The word gambling is not mentioned in the Bible; therefore, many reason that it is not wrong to play the lottery game. God said, "Thou shall not covet" (Exodus 20:17). In Colossians 3:5 covetousness is said to be idolatry. Many try to justify gambling by saying that life itself is a gamble. We know that almost everything involves chance, but we do not covet what belongs to our neighbor. **Are religious people gamblers?** Some of them are compulsive gamblers. Some churches have gambling such as lotteries and bingo which, in reality, is a violation of the law. Because churches have these lotteries, many think God approves of this wickedness.

Ask yourself these questions: 1. Would I want my children to grow up as gamblers? 2. Would I want those now on welfare to be a greater burden to the tax payers by gambling their incomes away on the lottery? 3. The lottery, is it wrong or is it

right? 4. As a Christian, can I say I am not of the world? "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (I John 2:15). Now let's put the question back to you. Is the lottery of the world or of Christ?

The line is clearly drawn and unmistakably clear that when we gamble we are hoping to obtain something without working for it. So, **why not speak out against the insidious evil that some want to foster upon the good state of Alabama.**

--1705 Sandra Lee Dr., Jasper, AL 35501.

Gambling devices can be found almost everywhere there is evil of any kind. Hardly any type of sinful allurement flourishes without adding gambling to its attractions.

Something Better Than A Miracle

Continued From Page 3

valuable to a new parent -- the birth certificate, or the baby? Which is more important to a rescuer -- the signal flare, or a stranded victim? Which is more significant -- the Veteran's Day parade, or the men who served? Which is greater -- the miracles, or the Bible which the miracles confirmed? We must understand that miracles are inferior to the Bible. While many today emphasize the spectacular working of miracles, they ignore the hidden pearl of God's truth.

Early Christians did not have the written Bible. Yet God had to communicate to them in some way. The spiritual gifts were designed to accomplish this. They were never intended for, nor were they ever given to, the masses of humanity. However, they were a thorough and a convenient way to TEMPORARILY dispense spiritual knowledge to humanity through those who were miraculously endowed. In I Corinthians 12:31, Paul said that he would show the Corinthians a more excellent way. God would one day set aside those spiritual gifts for a more perfect means of revelation. These gifts were only temporary. The Holy Spirit foretold the superior method God would use -- and now does use -- to teach man his will. Notice the parallels Paul uses to show the Corinthians that system of teaching which was coming:

"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be KNOWLEDGE, it shall vanish away. For we KNOW in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When 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. For now we SEE through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I KNOW in part; but then shall I KNOW even as also I am KNOWN" (I Corinthians 13:8-10).

Many quibbles and attempts have been made to explain the phrase in verse 10, "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." Some insist the word "PERFECT" in this text refers to Jesus. They say Jesus was the only perfect person to ever live. Hence, miracles would continue until he comes again. Others say it refers to the time when we all reach heaven, saying that when we reach heaven there will be no need for miracles. Thus, miracles will be around as long as this old earth is standing. But these ideas are not what this passage is saying. They are not at all in the ball park! There is no way this passage could be referring to Jesus, heaven, nor some utopian state of love which the church has not yet reached.

Paul was talking about how Christians received spiritual knowledge. In his days it was directly through men who were endowed with spiritual gifts. The purpose of I Corinthians 13 is to explain that another means of obtaining spiritual knowledge was coming.

Even a brief reading of this passage shows that the purpose of the spiritual gifts was to give spiritual knowledge. Five times in this passage the

word "know" or "knowledge" is used -- (verses 8, 9, 12). Other related words are: "understood," "thought," and "see." Three particular gifts mentioned in verse 8: prophecies, tongues and knowledge. Even was a method God used to give early Christians spiritual understanding. (1) "Prophecy" was the gift to preach inspired sermons or speak divine messages without having to learn or study them. (2) The ability to speak with "tongues" was the gift to preach divine sermons or messages in other languages. (The only difference between "tongues" and "prophecy" was that prophecy was in a language common to the speaker and the hearers). (3) "Knowledge" was the gift which endowed a Christian with divine and spiritual insights not available to the average person.

Because of the quibbles about what "PERFECT" means, some refrain from using this text. But there can be no doubt as to the meaning of the word "PERFECT." This passage uses a figure of speech called ANTITHESIS. That simply means that Paul was using a series of ANTONYMS or opposites to hammer down a point. Notice the contrasts:

1. When **that which is perfect** comes,
2. **That which is in part** shall be done away.

1. **When I was a child**, I spake, understood, and thought as a child,
2. **When I became a man**, I put away childish things.

1. Now we see **through a mirror darkly**,
2. But then **face to face**.

1. Now I **know in part**,
2. But then I shall **know even as I am known**.

The amazingly simple thing about opposite words or phrases is that if you know one, you automatically know the other. For example: What is the opposite of white? What is the opposite of day? What is the opposite of pretty? It doesn't take a genius to answer these questions, because these words have opposites. Similarly, the word "PERFECT" has an opposite -- the word "PART" (verse 9).

Now, just for the sake of argument, let us say that we do not know what "PERFECT" means in this text. We can easily find out by comparing its opposite word, "PART." Paul tells us what the word "PART" means in verse 9. "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part." What is the "PART"? It is partial knowledge and partial prophecy, that is, the partial or incomplete means of revelation in Paul's day. Now, what is the opposite of partial, or incomplete, revelation? It would not make sense to say the opposite of partial knowledge is a "PERFECT JESUS" or a "PERFECT HEAVEN." Whatever "PERFECT" means, it is the opposite of "PART." If "that which is in part" is partial revelation, then "that which is perfect" could mean only perfect (complete) revelation! Paul's point is obvious: When the

COMPLETE method of revelation would come, then the PARTIAL method of revelation (which was the spiritual gifts and miracles) would cease!

James 1:25, II Timothy 3:16, 17 and II Peter 1:3, 19 are good verses to show that the written word, the scriptures, the writings of the apostles and prophets, are the completed means of revelation. God intended all along to replace the temporary spiritual gifts with the "MORE EXCELLENT WAY" through which truth-seekers would obtain spiritual knowledge. When understood, I Corinthians 13 makes a beautiful diagram showing the difference between the written Bible versus the spiritual gifts. The miracles were for the infant church; the Bible for the mature church. The spiritual gifts were foggy and unclear; the Bible has face-to-face clarity. In the miraculous apostolic days, early Christians knew "in part." Today we know "as we are known."

To know the mind of God today, all one has to do is study his Bible. To know how to be saved, how to worship, how to fellowship, how to stop false teaching, etc., all one has to do is study his Bible. The greatest responsibility of a Christian to himself is to study his Bible. The greatest work of a Christian upon others is to teach the Bible. The greatest accomplishment you will ever accomplish in your life, is to know and obey your Bible. God wants us to understand that the Bible, that grand old Book, is superior to any MIRACULOUS, spectacular events in by-gone days. We have something greater than miracles. So please do not think the church needs to go back to the days of her childhood when miracles were used.

God wants us to understand that the Bible, that grand old Book, is superior to any MIRACULOUS, spectacular events in by-gone days.

The next time someone tells you that miracles are still being performed today, just ask them: "If that is true, then why do we need the Bible?" Remember the words of Abraham to the rich man: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

--P.O. Box 452, Homerville, GA 31634.

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Of

Truth

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—Acts 26:25

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So, You Don't Want A Divorce!



Joe T. Splvy, Sr.

often the same scene is played in similar circumstances; in a home of a friend, the home of parents, the office of ministers or marriage and family counsellors.

Malachi 2:16 declares, "the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away." It should not be considered as unusual that God hates putting away and that man has so decreed by civil laws that divorces are a dime a dozen (reference is to the frequency of "putting away" and not to the expense). After all, we read from Isaiah that God's thoughts and ways are higher than the thoughts and ways of man (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Most all states, if not ALL, grant "no fault divorces." Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, (1983) defines divorce as "a legal dissolution of a marriage; to end marriage with a spouse by divorce; to dissolve the marriage contract between; to terminate an existing relationship or union." Thus, according to "no fault divorces," one can dissolve, end or terminate a relationship or a union (called marriage in the Bible, Matthew 22:2, 4; John 2:1, 2; I Corinthians 7:38; Hebrews 13:4) without stating a fault or cause for such.

If one would listen to men it would seem that divorce is honorable in all and that no shame, disgrace or sin is attached to the dissolution of the

marriage. However, God had other ideas. Jesus said in Matthew 19:5 that two become one in the sight of God. Marriage is "till death do us part" and that doesn't mean until one kills the other, but rather until one dies because of age, disease, accidents, etc.

Often when counseling with couples in trouble it seems that they will usually say something like, "we have been having trouble. We have differences that we don't seem able to reconcile. But, we still don't want a divorce." I cannot read where two who were made one are to become two again **JUST BECAUSE THEY ARE HAVING PROBLEMS**. I suppose every marriage on earth would fail if every couple sought a divorce whenever they faced problems! Every marriage has some problems because of the joining of two distinctly different people, but it is much better to work out the problems than to split the couple who in turn would seek out other imperfect mates. No, we do not have to divorce, even in the face of problems.

Every marriage has some problems because of the joining of two distinctly different people, but it is much better to work out the problems than to split the couple who in turn would seek out other imperfect mates.

When one says "I don't want a divorce" the simplest thing to say is, "Don't get one then." It sounds so simple, but you and I know that it is not that simple. If it were, they would not have come to you and me seeking help. However, here are some suggestions from Paul Rogers that can help

in such situations. Read them carefully and use them to the greatest advantage for the furtherance of marriage!

If you do not want a divorce, put your mate first. I shudder when I hear a woman say, "Oh, I put my children ahead of everything!" You should put your husband first, knowing that the greatest gift you can ever bestow upon your son or daughter is the security which comes from knowing that mother and daddy love each other. Growing up in a home with that kind of security is better than living at Windsor Castle any day!

If you do not want a divorce, then learn to express your love to your mate. Love is never out of style or out of date. There is no taboo on tenderness in any culture. A man or woman needs to be loved at fifty no less than on the wedding night.


If you do not want a divorce, then learn to build, not blast, the self-esteem of your partner. Practically all of us, from time to time, wonder about our worth. In those moments, nothing is as demeaning as the discovery that the one person who ought to know and love us best is the very person who puts us down.

If you do not want a divorce, then learn to live within your means. It is a fine thing to do with, but it is even better to be able to do without successfully. Refuse to live beyond your income or to become a compulsive buyer. Piling up debts has a way of breaking down a marriage.

If you do not want a divorce, then do not marry a mate with the idea of reforming him or her. It has been my studied conclusion that very few people are ever changed by the simple action of walking down a marriage aisle.

If you do not want a divorce, then seek and find common goals and directions. We are living in a day when each does "his own thing," the wife

Continued On Page 3



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The Editor's Pen
David Wade

Reflections



David Wade

It has been a genuine pleasure editing the WORDS OF TRUTH over the past twelve months. For one thing, I never have to sit and ponder, "What do I need to be doing?" The deadline for submitting the copy rolls around every seven days!

It is appropriate that I express appreciation to all to whom I am indebted. I thank my 6th Avenue family for underwriting the paper. Thanks to my elders for their confidence in me. I appreciate Joe Spivy, our new Associate Editor. Joe and I have worked closely together here at

Sixth Avenue since August of 1989. He has been a big help to our total program of work. Thanks to our subscribers and readers. We now enter over 4,000 homes weekly representing 70 subscribing congregations. In addition, there are approximately 250 individual subscriptions. To all of you, we say "Thanks!"

D. M. Patton has commented, "The printed page never flinches, never shows cowardice; it is never tempted to compromise, it never tires, never grows dishearted; it travels cheaply, and requires no hired hall; it works while we sleep; it never loses its temper; and it works long after we are dead. The printed page is a visitor which gets inside the home and stays there; it always catches a man in the right mood, for it speaks to him only when he is reading it; it always sticks to what it has said, and never answers back; and it is bait left permanently in the pool."

Announcement From The Elders Of The Sixth Avenue Church Of Christ

Brother David Wade has been serving as Acting Editor of Words of Truth since May 1989. Brother Wade has done a great job in serving in this capacity. As of May 1, 1990 he is now serving as Editor.

Also, brother Joe T. Spivy, Sr. will be serving as Associate Editor. We know that they will do a good job with the Words of Truth, and that this paper will continue to teach the Word of God in its simplicity and truth.

"I Sleep Real Well At Night, Knowing I've Made A Difference!"



Don Williams

Let me begin this article with a disclaimer. Some might view this article about abortion as politically-motivated. It is not -- I am dealing with it based upon moral conscience, not party allegiance. The Pro-Choice versus Pro-Life issue is much more serious than a

18 seconds a baby is killed. Since January of 1973, when the Roe versus Wade case was tried, and the Supreme Court made abortion legal, over 20 million babies have been killed.

Since January of 1973, when the Roe versus Wade case was tried, and the Supreme Court made abortion legal, over 20 million babies have been killed.

In China, families are allowed one child each. Technology now allows the parents to know the sex of the child before it is born. If they desire a male, and the child is a female, they can have a "gender-based" abortion. Many feminist groups are alarmed -- on one hand, they cry for "Pro-Choice" -- let the women decide what to do with her body, they say. On the other hand, in China male children are preferred to female children. If this continues, there will be fewer females . . . and thus you can see the dilemma.

The subject of abortion hinges on the subject of

Announcing the 1990 Words Of Truth

Lectureship

August 26-29, 1990

Theme

"Back To Basics"

to be held at the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, Jasper, AL
Speakers and Topics to be announced.

vote of some candidate -- it is the difference between life and death, goodness and sin.

The title of this article was a statement made by Diane Derzis, Administrator of Summit Medical Center in Birmingham. Each year, the staff of this clinic performs about 3,000 abortions. Her comment was based upon the idea that she is happy she can give women a choice between keeping or aborting (murdering) the fetus (baby) within her. Interestingly enough, on the door of the medical center, there is this sign posted: "No Children Allowed." An understatement, to say the least.

The facts of abortion are these: 4,900 innocent babies die every 24 hours -- that means that every

The Clothes Are Coming Off Again

Gerald Cowan

It never seems to fail. When the summer heat starts coming on, clothes start coming off. For some reason Christians seem to be no exception. They often have the shortest shorts, the scantiest swimsuits, highest hemlines and lowest necklines and the flimsiest excuses of anybody in town. Christians should be modestly dressed (I Timothy 2:9). That principle applies to men and boys as well as to women and girls. It used to be that people were expected to be **decently covered**, but it is apparently no longer necessary to be either decent or covered.

There is really no logical reason for going around in public undressed or half-dressed. But there are quite a number of psychological reasons for it. **First**, there is the **need to be noticed** and admired -- perhaps even to be "desired" by the opposite sex. Strange though, how often these bare beauties get offended when some creep gets "turned on" and makes an ungentlemanly remark or "proposition" to them. **Second**, there is **vanity**. Those who are physically attractive, or think they are, will try to "show off their assets" to the best advantage. Some supposedly grown-up women evidently feel that

they must compete with their own daughters for a "fair share" of the attention and admiration of the male population. This is a sure sign of **psychological inferiority**. It is an effort to compensate for a lack of character.

Jesus once met a man who "had devils (demons) a long time, and WORE NO CLOTHES . . ." But when Christ cast the evil spirits out of him, the man was found "at the feet of Jesus, CLOTHED, AND IN HIS RIGHT MIND" (Luke 8:27, 35). Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit of "the knowledge of good and evil," and they became aware of their nakedness (Genesis 3:11). They covered themselves with leaves to hide the fact of their nakedness (shame) from each other. It would be nice if some such awareness of the shame of nakedness, suggestive behavior, and immodest exposure could be passed around today.

This doesn't mean that I am opposed to comfort and fashion. I just happen to believe that comfort and fashion must yield to common sense, good taste, respect for one's own character and concern for the impact of one's actions on others who observe them.

When a person goes around wearing shorts or other abbreviated clothing as some wear, they cannot really claim to be a Christian. A Christian

will not wear such clothing that reveals the body. There is something wrong with the dedication of a people who enjoy exposing their body to the lustful eye of everybody of the opposite sex. The person has to be lewd and have some evil desires himself or else more clothes would be used to hide their nakedness.

There is something wrong with the dedication of a people who enjoy exposing their body to the lustful eye of everybody of the opposite sex.

"Christian" men or women, boys or girls, who go around with most of the body exposed are in direct violation of I Timothy 2:9 and general Christian morals. The desire to be seen and desired by the opposite sex is based on vanity and lustfulness. It is a shame that any of the children of God dress in such indecent ways. Those who do so need to repent and pray to God for forgiveness. They need to set their "affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:2-3).

--Via Walnut Street Church of Christ, Dickson, TN.

So, You Don't Want A Divorce!

Continued From Page 1

going one direction, the husband another, with rarely the twain meeting. Look for projects which can be pursued together.

If you do not want a divorce, then **learn to compromise with each other**. Never forget the sweetest words ever to fall from human lips are "I'm sorry, please forgive me."

If you do not want a divorce, then **reject interference from in-laws and relatives**. You have left your parents and must "cleave to your mate."

If you do not want a divorce, then **learn to communicate to your mate that which is in your heart**. The surest road I know leading to divorce court is the one which passes through the hall of silence.

If you do not want a divorce, then **determine today that your marriage is a gift from God, set apart by God, designed to last as long as you or your spouse live**. The greatest thing that can happen to a person's marriage is to get right with the Lord! I know that is what a preacher is expected to say -- but it is true, everlastingly true! When a husband lives his life for God and begins to live according to the Bible, it does make a difference. When a wife begins to love God with all her heart, soul and strength, it does make a difference. The children will be able to sense it, the neighbors will notice it, and the church will rejoice over it.

--1400 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501.

"I Sleep Real Well At Night, Knowing I've Made A Difference!"

Continued From Page 2

life and the soul. When does life begin -- after nine months when the child comes into the world and breathes, or at the onset of conception within the female? For the answer, look at the following verses from God:

(Psalm 139:13) "For you created my inward being; you knit me together in my mother's womb." (New Testament Version)

(Jeremiah 1:5) "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."

(Luke 1:41) "And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:"

(Exodus 25:22) "And the children struggled together within her."

(Deuteronomy 27:25) "Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say Amen."

God teaches that life begins at conception within the mother's womb. One final thought. An immature bald eagle can be killed, and laws protecting it will cause the guilty to pay fines that can exceed \$40,000. Yet, the same government allows, condones, and in some instances pays for the murdering of babies living within the mother's womb. When shall we get our priorities correct and give to children the same rights and protection of life as do animals?

--Rt. 2, Box 713, Guin, AL 35563.

Hear

Words Of Truth

Radio Broadcast
on WARF A.M. 1240
8:00-8:30 a.m.

What Do We Mean "Christian Living"?

Bernice Vinsant

As a housewife, mother and grandmother, I daily ask myself this question. I know what the Bible says on the subject. I know where it is found throughout the New Testament. I have most of them marked; but what impact does this have on the life I live in my home, my community, my social life and especially my church or religious life?

Do I seek to know the will of Christ in every decision I make for myself and my family? Will I put Christ and His church first in everything I do? Will everything I do be done to His glory? (Ephesians 5:17; Matthew 6:33; I Corinthians 10:31).

Forty seven years ago I married a non-Christian. I had been reared by a Christian mother and an unbelieving father. My family was uneducated. My mother could read and did read the Bible to us quite often. There was never a time a Bible wasn't accessible to us in our modest country home. We were poor dirt farmers in Pike County, Alabama. We walked many miles to worship one Sunday a month when there was a preacher. My mother fed many preachers on Sunday so we could have close Christian fellowship in our home. She felt it would help our father also. It did! He obeyed the gospel in 1934.

In May 1942 I did as most of the country girls, I married a service man. Christ was put on the back burner at that time. In the second year of marriage God blessed us with our first daughter, the third year another daughter. Having two beautiful, healthy babies to hold and love, I had to reflect back on my life and ask myself the age old question -- What had happened to my mother's teaching? Why had I put God and Christ out of my life? Why did I feel so alone? It was then I decided to go back to my first love, make myself right with God and the church and begin again to live for Christ. Seven years later a son was born to us, a beautiful blond, blue-eyed boy. So God showed His love to us again.

Why had I put God and Christ out of my life? Why did I feel so alone?

My husband was military and away most of the time, but the children and I could worship on Sundays. When he was home he always went with us. When the girls were 14 and 15, brother Pervie Nichols baptized them into Christ in Albany, Georgia. Then, Christian living became a reality in our lives. All our spare time was filled with good works in the church and community in which we lived. In 1970 my husband and our son were baptized into Christ by brother James Cullins in Homestead, Florida. This was another glorious day in our lives! Time passed swiftly and the children were out of school and college and away from us. My husband and I had so much time to devote to the church and work even harder to bring people to Christ. There were so many to be taught, fed,

visited in hospitals, nursing homes and shut ins. We were always busy in the Lord's work.

In 1984 my son was killed instantly in an automobile accident. My world was in shambles, but I knew I had God in my life. I understood the passage so well "that God is no respecter of persons", and that He would never put more on us than we could bear or leave or forsake us in our trials (Acts 10:34; I Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 13:5). My Christian living had made me so much stronger and able to bear the loss.

In 1987 my mother passed from this life leaving nine children, all members of the Lord's church. Her passing left a void in my life, but her Christian living made the passing a beautiful memory. She had gone to be with God.

The Lord's Panacea For Stress



Cecil Corkren

many directions.

We should not try to avoid stress because we can't. In fact, we NEED stress in our lives! We cannot always be able to predict the conflicts in our lives; however, we can adjust and manage stress on a daily basis by going to the right source for our answers.

Circumstances of day to day living bring about times of stress. Our reaction in attempting to adjust to situations constitutes stress. Experiencing positive stress is healthy. It makes us a more alive, creative, productive, and dynamic person. Stress helps us get things accomplished; otherwise we might be failures. Stress helps us meet the deadline; therefore, we need positive stress.

Experiencing positive stress is healthy. It makes us a more alive, creative, productive, and dynamic person.

Stress becomes damaging when it turns into distress. This can grind away at you, drain your energy over the days and months, even years, causing wear and tear on your life. What we need is balance: the right proportion of positive stress needed to manage our lives well.

What do we do about stress as a Christian? When

In October 1987 I was told I had cancer. I had surgery and thirty-three radiation treatments. Through it all, Christ never left me and God never forsook me a minute. Christian living became even more a necessity. I realized then that through Christian living, sharing with others the words of God and letting my light shine around me that my neighbors and others could truly see and know me, a child of God.

Therefore, I'm putting Him first in all I do and living every day as if it was my last on this earth. Christian living is a joy and never a burden. Through Christian living we can live with God and Christ forever.

--104 Graham Road, Wetumpka, AL 36092.

our bodies send certain messages, we are living under too much stress. We can stop and listen to these messages and ask what is my body trying to tell me. Are we burning the candle at both ends? When we experience sleepless nights, backaches, depression, restlessness, nervousness and digestive problems -- these can be just a few of the symptoms of stress. When we learn to identify these signals it will help us turn to the GREAT PHYSICIAN even if we don't have the price of a doctor.

We need to think positive. Paul was a positive thinker. He would say, "I can do all things through Christ." It was Paul who gave us the panacea for positive thinking in Philippians 4:8. We are told by Peter to "Cast all of our care upon him." Christ wants to share your burdens. When we read Matthew 11:28-29, Hebrews 2:18, and I Peter 5:7 we know no one cares like our Lord.

So, we need to turn to the greatest source of strength for troubled hearts. We must turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. He has the remedy or the panacea for whatever troubles you!

--1705 Sandra Lee Drive, Jasper, AL 35501.

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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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VOLUME 26

MAY 11, 1990

NUMBER 19

II John 9-11 (Part I)



Cecil May, Jr.

"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."

Some interpret this passage in such a way as to allow complete acceptance of anyone who says, "Jesus is Lord," regardless of what they believe and teach about salvation or morality, and to allow full joint participation with them, regardless of what they practice in worship. Others see it as a mandate to refuse to have anything to do with anyone who has anything to do with anyone who differs with them about anything at all. As is so often the case, the truth is to be found between the two extremes.

Two questions need consideration: (1) Who is the person who "brings not this doctrine?" and (2) How are we to treat that person?

Doctrine Of Christ

To answer the first question, we must inquire, "What is 'the doctrine of Christ?'" Is it the doctrine concerning who Christ is, and that only, or is it the doctrine Christ taught, thus including various subjects?

In grammar, if the expression means "the doctrine about Christ," it would be called an "objective genitive" phrase (like "doctrine of baptisms," Hebrews 6:2) if it means "the doctrine Christ taught," it would be a "subjective genitive" (like "doctrine of the Pharisees," Matthew 16:12). Form and spelling are the same in either case; so whether it is objective or subjective has to be determined

by the wording of the phrase itself, or by its context.

Those who believe it means the "doctrine about Christ" point to the fact that the particular doctrine being discussed in this epistle is a denial of Christ's humanity. II John 7 says, "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."

Other considerations, however, point strongly to the conclusion that the "doctrine of Christ" refers to what Christ taught, and is not confined just to what is taught about him. For one thing, that is the way this kind of phrase is usually used in the New Testament when it is "the doctrine of . . . (a person or persons)." Examples include "the doctrine of Baalam" and "the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes" (Revelation 2:14-15); and "adorn the doctrine of God" (Titus 2:10, though a different word for "doctrine" is used here).

Even more significantly, however, the rest of the New Testament clearly shows the apostles did not consider error concerning the person of Christ to be the only significant error. Those who taught, "You must be circumcised and obey the law of Moses," were preaching "another gospel" and declared "anathema" (Galatians 1:6-9). Those who taught "the resurrection is past already" were said to "overthrow the faith" of those who believed their teaching (II Timothy 2:18). Taking I, II, and III John as a whole, there was a great deal more error in the Gnostic heresy John was opposing than just the denial that Jesus came in the flesh. There is nothing to indicate he would limit his concern to those who "transgress" (literally, "go beyond") only in regard to that particular matter. If John had wished to limit what he was saying only to those who denied Jesus came in the flesh, he could easily have done so. The expression "doctrine of Christ" is broader than that.

Differences Of Opinion

On the other hand, then, does this passage mean we must refuse to receive or encourage anyone who differs with us about any scriptural subject,

whatever it may be?

That this does not follow is evident, both scripturally and practically. Christ clearly taught that all food is clean (Matthew 15:11; Acts 10:15); yet Paul commanded us to "receive" one another in spite of differences of opinion in regard to this (Romans 14:1).

Everyone has some areas and subjects which he or she recognizes to be areas of permissible disagreement. Otherwise, none of us could have anything to do with anyone else.

Everyone has some areas and subjects which he or she recognizes to be areas of permissible disagreement. Otherwise, none of us could have anything to do with anyone else.

Two men on a panel, because they were discussing an issue they felt, I think rightly, was an issue which affected fellowship were in agreement that "the doctrine of Christ" included everything Christ taught. They sounded in that discussion as if, therefore, no one could disagree about anything Biblical and remain in fellowship. Yet, I knew that the two of them disagreed strongly on what constitutes the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but considered themselves to be very much in fellowship with each other and in basic agreement on everything essential.

Everyone recognizes, at least in practice even if not in theory, that some diversity is allowable within Christian unity, and virtually everyone recognizes there are some things on which we

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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How Much Did Malcolm Forbes Leave?

Jim Howard

The answer to that question is easy. He left it all. He left his magazine. He left his Fiji island, his French chateau, and his Colorado ranch. He left his vast art collection, his Faberge jeweled eggs, his yacht, The Highlander, his hot air balloons and his motorcycles. As someone has said, "There are no U-Hauls behind hearses."

"There are no U-Hauls behind hearses."

Please don't misunderstand. I'm not trying to be unkind to Mr. Forbes. He will go down in history as a powerful proponent of our American free enterprise system as well as a generous philanthropist. But the truth is whether we have a hundred dollars or a million dollars, at the time when we meet that destined appointment called death, we will leave it all. And for most of us that appointment comes sooner rather than later. What most of us need to realize, however, is that from a financial standpoint, we may be able to be a far greater blessing to good causes dead than alive. Why leave all our wealth to children to whom that wealth may be a curse rather than a blessing? Through life insurance and careful financial planning (another name for good stewardship) we may have a positive and lasting impact on the ministries of the local church, Christian education, benevolent needs, care of orphans and the elderly, and world evangelism. After all, unless the Lord comes back first, we shall all leave our wealth to someone.

Memphis, Tennessee



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

An Open Letter

Dear High School Seniors,



David Wade

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're 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 exalt 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

The Home Under Siege

Bobby Dockery

In the story Jesus told of the wise and foolish builders, he described how powerful forces undermined and swept away a house built without foundations on sand. "That house fell," Jesus said, "and great was its fall!" (Matthew 7:27).

That might be taken almost as a parable of what is happening to homes all across America. Family breakdown has become our number one social problem. Family specialist Harold Voth of the Menninger Foundation insists: "I honestly believe that civilization as we now know it is imperiled by the forces that are eroding the family." Historian Will Durant says simply, "The family has gone to pieces and marriage has gone too."

What are some of the powerful forces that are wrecking our homes?

Family breakdown has become our number one social problem.

1) HUMANISM. This is a philosophy of life which seeks to dethrone God and put man in his place. The Humanist Manifesto II begins by saying, "No (god) will save us, we must save ourselves" and goes on to promote divorce, abortion, euthanasia, and license to indulge in a variety of sexual life-styles including homosexuality. Many of the signers of this document are the authors of the textbooks used in

Continued On Page 3

II John 9-11 (Part I)

Continued From Page 1

must agree in order for our unity to be Christian. The difficulty is in coming to agreement on what things belong in which category. It would be helpful if everyone would recognize that more than our opinion is needed to determine what is placed where.

The Bible informs us as to what affects salvation. Only that which affects salvation should affect fellowship, and whatever affects salvation should ultimately affect fellowship.

The preaching in Acts, the list of "principles of the gospel of Christ" in Hebrews 6:1-2, the seven "ones" of Ephesians 4:4-6, the "works of the flesh" and the "fruit of the Spirit" in Galatians 5:19-24, the things for which withdrawal of fellowship is commanded, as in I Corinthians 5: these form a basis for deciding where agreement (or proper understanding, or sound faith, whatever one may wish to term it) is essential.

There is no one exhaustive list in scripture. There

is no alternative to examining each issue separately as it may arise and considering its implications for faith and salvation.

If a brother is involved in sin, whether due to misunderstanding of scripture or some other cause, we are obligated to first teach, then exhort, rebuke and warn, and then, ultimately, if he persists willfully in sin, to withdraw fellowship. Even while attempting to teach and warn, we should, of course, avoid any participation in or encouragement of that which is wrong.

As important as it is to avoid fellowship with sin, and this passage shows it to be very important, it is equally important not to sever fellowship over mere opinion. To do so is to rend the body of Christ. (To be continued).

--Magnolia Bible College, P.O. Box 1101, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

The Home Under Siege

Continued From Page 2

our schools!

2) FEMINISM. The woman's movement is largely a revolt against marriage and the home. One feminist publication, for instance, states that "Marriage has been a legally sanctioned method of control over women" and that since "the end of the institution of marriage is a necessary condition to the liberation of woman. . . it is important to encourage women to leave their husbands."

3) GOVERNMENT. Many politicians are self-declared allies of Humanism and Feminism and willingly spend tax dollars to aid their attacks on the home. In 1980-81, the National Organization for Women received \$595,961 from the Department of Education, National Public Radio gave \$14,695 in tax funds to the National Lesbian and Gay Men's Radio Project and CETA gave \$640,000 to Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Services. In recent years Planned Parenthood, the major procurer of abortions in America, received as much as \$70 MILLION a year in tax dollars!

4) TELEVISION. One of the most sinister, subtle influences undermining our homes has been the impact of TV on attitudes. Homosexuality, unmarrieds living together, adultery, and abortion are portrayed as being normal, sane, and even glamorous. TV is a thief of time, taking an average of more than 20 hours from every American each week! On TV immorality is glorified; the husband and father as a leader within the home is discredited; religion is presented as unenlightened and hypocritical!

5) WORLDLINESS, NEGLECT AND IMMORALITY. Homes are also being torn apart by drinking, drugs, delinquency, perversion, sexual abuse, selfishness, and disrespect for authority!

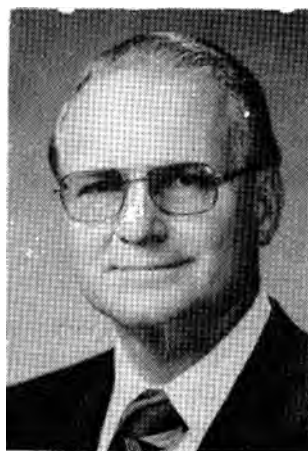
The hope for disintegrating families is to let God have his way with the home! Research has

revealed that happy families are those with a sense of values and spiritual purpose. They allow God's word to inspire and direct them. IN GOD THEY TRUST! Regular worship, prayer at meals and bedtime, Bible reading - all these bind families together.

Homes built on the rock of God's word will survive the storms of life.

--Via The Pillar, P.O. Box 75, Cave City, Arkansas 72521.

Jesus Built The Church



Bobby Key

"Every religious organization was founded by some group of individuals. The church of the New Testament was built by Jesus. Following Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God," Jesus said, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build

"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" (Psalm 127:1). "But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13).

Continued On Page 4

Words Of Truth Lectureship

WORDS OF TRUTH LECTURESHIP

Sixth Avenue Church of Christ

1501 Sixth Avenue

Jasper, Alabama 35501

Telephone (205) 384-6446 or 387-1670

Theme: *Back To Basics*

Date: August 26-29, 1990

SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, AUGUST 26, 1990

6:30-6:55 p.m.....Congregational Singing
7:00-8:00 p.m.....What Manner Of Persons Ought Ye To Be
Harold Hazelip

MONDAY, AUGUST 27, 1990

9:30-10:15 a.m.....Church Leadership And Organization
Bobby Duncan
9:30-10:15 a.m.....Women's Role In The Work of the Church
(LADIES CLASS) Sue Crabtree

10:30-11:15 a.m.....Current Problems Confronting
The Church
Don McWhorter

11:15 a.m.-2:00 p.m.....BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00-2:45 p.m.....Christian Education:
At Home, At Church, And At School
Milton Sewell

3:00-3:45.....Reaching Out To The People
Jerry Jenkins

3:45-6:30 p.m.....BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30-6:55 p.m.....Congregational Singing
7:00-8:00 p.m.....Abounding In The Work Of The Lord
James Moffett

TUESDAY, AUGUST 28, 1990

9:30-10:15 a.m.....Church Leadership And
Organization
Bobby Duncan

9:30-10:15 a.m.....Women's Role In The Work Of The Church
(LADIES CLASS) Sue Crabtree

10:30-11:15 a.m.....Current Problems Confronting
The Church
Don McWhorter

11:15 a.m.-2:00 p.m.....BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00--2:45 p.m.....Christian Ethics
Don Flatt

3:00-3:45 p.m....Mission Opportunities At Home And Abroad
Mac Lynn

3:45-6:30 p.m.....BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30-6:55 p.m.....Congregational Singing
7:00-8:00 p.m....How Shall The Young Secure Their Hearts?
(YOUTH NIGHT) Jeff Jenkins

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29, 1990

9:30-10:15 a.m.....Church Leadership And Organization
Bobby Duncan

9:30-10:15 a.m....Women's Role In The Work Of The Church
(LADIES CLASS) Sue Crabtree

10:30-11:15 a.m....Current Problems Confronting The Church
Don McWhorter

11:15 a.m.-2:00 p.m.....BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00-2:45 p.m.....The Need For Christian Counseling
Bill Flatt

3:00-3:45 p.m.....Speak Thou The Things That Become
Sound Doctrine
Wendell Winkler

3:45-6:30 p.m.....BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30-6:55 p.m.....Congregational Singing
7:00-8:00 p.m....The Same Commit Thou To Faithful Men
Cecil May, Jr.

Jesus Built The Church

Continued From Page 3

my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:16, 18).

Since Jesus is the founder of the church this means that the church was not founded by Adam, Abraham, or Moses. Abraham was a great example of faith, and the father of those who believe, yet Abraham built no church. I have before me a book which states that the church was founded by Adam. The author reasons that Adam was the first man to be saved, and therefore God added him to the church. This is somewhat absurd!

We honor Moses because of the great role he played in God's dealings with men. He was privileged to be in the presence of God when the law was written on tablets of stone. He was the mediator of the Old Covenant. The law which God gave through Moses to ancient Israel was a "schoolmaster" or "tutor" to bring people to Christ (Galatians 3:19-24). We are not under this tutor today. Neither do we look to Moses as the founder of the church.

John the Baptist was not the founder of the New Testament church. John was already dead when Jesus made the promise to build His church (Matthew 14:1-12). John's work was to prepare the way for the Lord (Matthew 3:3). It is true that John was a great man. Jesus said, "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he" (Matthew 11:11). Those who are in the kingdom are greater than John because he lived and died before the kingdom was established. The church and the kingdom are the same. According to Colossians 1:13, God was already translating people into the kingdom. The saved were added to the church (Acts 2:47). And the saved were "translated into the kingdom of his dear son." What a privilege to be a part of the church Jesus built.

There are many churches established as a result of the teaching of various religious leaders. We admire Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Campbell, and others for their zeal and for their courage in opposing religious error. These men are not founders of the New Testament church. The church did not belong to them, neither does the church belong to you. Christ died for the church. He gave His blood for it. It belongs to Him.

We plead with people of good will to abandon all human creeds, whether written or unwritten, and accept only the authority of Christ in religion. Those who accept Christ and His words, accept His mercy and grace, and obey His gospel are saved. The saved are added to His church. People can simply be Christians and followers of Christ. As the pioneers before us, we urge everyone to embrace no book but the bible, to have no creed but Christ, to wear no name but the divine, to have no plea but the gospel, to have no aim but to be saved. In Christ, let there be unity. In opinion, let there be liberty. In all things, let there be charity.

We plead with people of good will to abandon all human creeds, whether written or unwritten, and accept only the authority of Christ in religion.

Field Laboratory In Missions Is Unique

Dowell Flatt

One of the many methods which can be used in an effective way to evangelize, edify, and educate is to do field lab experience under veteran preachers and missionaries. Under the oversight of the Estes Church of Christ and supervised by Everett Huffard, this has become an excellent work. This program lasts for twelve weeks and one receives college credit for it.

During the summer of 1989, five Freed-Hardeman College students did effective field labs in four different countries. They all returned home very tired, yet very happy.

Randy Atkins (a junior Bible major from West Memphis, AR) worked as a youth minister in Gainesville, GA. He organized the youth activities, planned a youth retreat, directed the mothers' day out program every Wednesday, and taught in a Bible camp. Randy observed, "Youth ministry is not a hobby. It is not just an adventure. It has to be a way of life."

Randy Barber (a sophomore Bible major from Little Rock, AR) worked with Campaigns Northeast/Southeast. Under the oversight of the Sylvan Hills Church of Christ in Little Rock, Owen Olbricht has directed this excellent program for over twenty-five years.

Randy worked in Albany and Staten Island, NY; Lancaster, PA; and Lithia Springs, GA. His key works involved door knocking, home Bible studies, preaching, and teaching classes. His most memorable experience was "watching a lady I had talked with being baptized." His efforts helped bring twelve souls to Christ.

Wil Perkins (a junior Bible major from Newell, WV) spent ten of his twelve weeks in Singapore. The other two weeks were spent in Malaysia. Wil worked with a former F-HC missionary-in-residence Gordon Hogan.

It was a personal joy to work with Wil for two weeks in Singapore and Malaysia. By his second week, he was making major adjustments to become an effective worker in an Eastern culture. His key activities included working with youth groups, door knocking, preaching, and teaching. He said, "My most memorable experience was when we went to Malaysia and were told that if we were caught talking to a Muslim about Christ that we could be put in jail."

Brad Blake (a senior Bible major from Lebanon, TN) spent the summer in Nigeria. He spent his time in follow-up work of the World Bible School,

Our Aim

Every Christian should be devoted to the restoration of New Testament Christianity. We have no desire to be another denomination, but rather to urge people to return to the simple gospel of Jesus Christ. We desire that ultimately the church for which Christ died may supercede all the movements of men, and that His people may be one in every sense of the word.

-- 324, 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

teaching classes in a secondary school, open-air preaching, conducting chapel at a government-operated college, and home Bible studies. His work helped to bring about seventy-five new souls to Christ.

Linda Record (a senior social work major from Benton, KY) worked for twelve weeks in Nigeria. Though it can be hard for a Christian lady to raise money for mission work, it can be done. Linda's home congregation helped pay her way. Several young children brought dimes and quarters "to help Miss Linda go to Nigeria."

As Chairman of the F-HC Bible department, one is often asked by sincere people, "Since a woman cannot preach, what can she do on the mission field?" The basic reply is, "She can do far more than is being done!"

A few of the things which Linda did included teaching a children's class, teaching two teenage girls' classes, working as a helper in home Bible studies with Brad Blake, working in the follow-up program of World Bible School, and working in the Nigerian Christian Hospital by participating in mobile clinics. A woman can do some of these jobs far better than a man.

All of the F-HC students said that they would engage in their evangelistic activities again. Though they highly recommended this type of endeavor to others, it will be a real challenge. These students warned of the hard work and loneliness. The hardest thing was "being homesick." One gave the wise comment, "It is lonely. The glamor wears off very quickly."

Though one may find flaws with any method, he should be slow to criticize until he does it better some other way.

Though one may find flaws with any method, he should be slow to criticize until he does it better some other way. Wil Perkins likes to cite the statement of Rick Pinczuk, missionary to Slavic countries, "The one who says it cannot be done should never interrupt the one who is doing it!"

--Division Head, Bible Department, Freed-Hardeman College, Henderson, TN 38340.



Words Of Truth

"I am not
Words of T

the
6:25

(USPS 691-760)

VOLUME 26

MAY 18, 1990

NUMBER 20

II John 9-11 (Part II)



Cecil May, Jr.

We must also inquire, what does it mean to "receive him not, . . . neither bid him God speed"?

Basically, it means to do nothing which would support or encourage his false teaching.

I John contains an extensive refutation of the doctrines of

Gnosticism. The apostle encourages those who are not Gnostics, but are true to the gospel received from the apostles, assuring them they are the ones who "know God." II John urges an "elect lady" not to receive the propogaters of error, and III John commends "the well beloved Gaius" for receiving John and other faithful brethren, in spite of opposition from "Diotrephes, . . . who receiveth us not" (III John).

This context, and the other things said, make it clear that the subject is the support of preachers. One who supports faithful preachers of the gospel becomes a "fellowhelper" in that preaching of truth (III John 8), and, by the same principle, one who supports a teacher who has "gone beyond" truth to some other doctrine becomes a "partaker" in the false teaching he thus supports (II John 11). Adding "neither bid God speed" forbids encouraging the teaching of error, even in ways that may fall short of financial support.

The passage does not, obviously, forbid all association, only that which encourages or supports teaching which transgresses the doctrine of Christ. Association designed to convert the false teacher, for example, would certainly be acceptable.

Two incidents involving Mormon "elders" will illustrate the point. Certainly, most readers would agree these men, supported to spread Mormonism,

are among those identified in this passage as those who "bring not this doctrine" and who, therefore, are treated in this admonition.

The passage does not, obviously, forbid all association, only that which encourages or supports teaching which transgresses the doctrine of Christ. Association designed to convert the false teacher, for example, would certainly be acceptable.

A devout Christian mother has a son who is converted to Mormonism in his early twenties and who plans to spend two years overseas as a Mormon missionary "elder." Normally, the families of these young men support them in that work. This young man's mother not only tells him she will not support him, but she adds "As my son you have my love and are welcome to live at my house and sit at my table, but if you were assigned to this area as a Mormon missionary, I could not allow you to live in my house and eat at my table as support while you did that work." I believe she correctly understands II John 9-11.

Two Mormon elders knock on the door of a devout and knowledgeable Christian couple, just as the couple is sitting down to lunch. The "elders" ask if the couple would study with them. The couple says, "Sure," and invites them to share the soup and sandwich ingredients they had spread for lunch. Beginning over that lunch, and continuing for several other sessions, during which refreshments were sometimes served and

sometimes not, the study continues. Obviously, the purpose of the Mormons is to convert the couple, but the purpose of the couple is to convert the Mormons. In one such instance I knew of, the couple came close to fulfilling their purpose, with at least one of the young men. Interestingly, just as he began to show interest and indicate a mind open to what scripture said, he was suddenly "transferred," and the other "elder" and a new partner decided the study with that couple was "fruitless" and they would not continue it.

A Christian mother can share her house and table with her Mormon son in normal family relationships. A Christian mother would rightly refuse to provide support as a teacher of Mormonism, even for her son. Christians may rightly share a meal with Mormons while trying to teach them, but would be obviously wrong to take them in to live with them in order that they might do their teaching, or to encourage them and compliment what they were teaching.

These, note please, are but examples of how the principles under consideration might be applied. They are not intended to be exhaustive.


Misuses

Undoubtedly, this passage is most frequently misused in that it is ignored all together.

Another frequent misuse involves mislabelling men as false teachers. It is quite common in some quarters to invent such charges, or to hear them and exaggerate them, and then to pass them on both verbally and in print.

Still another misuse is to attempt to extend the application of the passage secondarily. That is, not only refusing fellowship with those who "bring not this doctrine," but refusing fellowship with those who have fellowship with those who "bring not this doctrine;" and then, refusing fellowship with those who have fellowship with those who have fellowship with those who "bring not this doctrine."

Besides the fact that it is not what the passage
Continued On Page 3



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Are You Including The Lord In Your Vacation Plans?



David Wade

It is nice to get a vacation and "leave everything behind" for a few days and "get away from it all." However, in our vacation plans, let us be mindful that we should never leave the Lord behind or try to get away from him. After all, the Lord never leaves us

the saints (Hebrews 10:25-26). Each congregation would do well to purchase for the church library a directory of the congregations of the churches of Christ, **Where the Saints Meet**, published by **Firm Foundation**. Each family could then copy out of it the locations of the church on their travel itinerary.

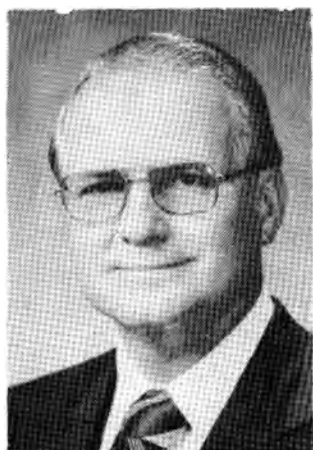
Most congregations really love to meet and get to know visiting Christians from other parts of the country. Furthermore, we are an encouragement to them, if for no other reason, as our presence helps take up some of the slack for their members who are away on vacation. Perhaps their members are doing the same. We will also benefit greatly in that we will get to meet our brothers and sisters who are also a part of the Lord's spiritual family. Furthermore, our visit will afford us the opportunity to learn something from them about their methods of accomplishing the Lord's work. If scriptural and practical, we may wish to suggest to the leadership back home what others are doing.

Third, it is appropriate for us to leave our regular contribution with the saints back home. After all, the local church budget depends upon us for its support. The Lord does not excuse us from giving on "the first day of the week" (I Corinthians 16:2) simply because we are on vacation.

Most of us have "vacation with pay." We would feel slighted if our employee refused to give us our "well deserved" vacation pay. If we make a loan, our creditor does not excuse us of the monthly payment while we are on vacation. By what stretch of the imagination do we assume God excuses us from our regular contribution so that we may lump it into our vacation?

These few suggestions are offered to help us see the need to include the Lord in our vacation plans. May we never forget that the Lord has made arrangements for our eternal "vacation."

John 3:16



Bobby Key

"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."

The death of our Lord displayed two things: 1) How much God loved man; He gave His only begotten Son

in behalf of a sinful world, and 2) How much God hates and detests sin; sin is so bad, that only the death of God's Son could serve as a sacrifice for it!

The Bible teaches that alien sinners must be baptized in water to have their sins blotted out (Mark 16:16). Some object to this plain teaching by asking, "What about John 3:16?" A preacher recently said, "Baptism has nothing whatsoever to do with our salvation because John 3:16 says: "Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The same reasoning would prove that repentance is not essential to salvation. Repentance is implied in John 3:16; so is baptism, because the Bible teaches in other verses that both repentance and baptism are included in what John 3:16 calls believing in Him (Acts 2:38; 17:30).

Baptism alone does not save any more than faith alone saves. Baptism must be preceded by the kind of faith that causes one to repent of his sins and to confess his faith in Jesus. Every time baptism and salvation are mentioned in the Bible in the same verse, baptism precedes salvation. The expression, "that whosoever believeth in him," does not refer to just one act any more than, "he

behind, or takes a vacation from us, or neglects us (Matthew 6:33; Hebrews 13:5). Satan certainly never takes a vacation. He is always looking for the opportunity to tempt us to do wrong (I Peter 5:8).

Please permit me to make a few suggestions as to how we can include the Lord in our vacation plans.

First, since it is the Lord's will that Christians dress modestly (I Timothy 2:9), it behooves us to do so, whether at home or on vacation. This writer knows of "faithful" Christians who dress "modestly" at home, but quickly adorn themselves in strings and straps when at the beach in another state. The reasoning seems to be that, "No one knows us here, so our influence is not hurt. Therefore, it is alright." Where has God said, "It is not sin so long as no one you "know" knows about your behavior??" Quite the contrary, we are responsible for what we wear, where we go, what we do, or whatever, whether people know us personally, or not (Matthew 5:16; I Corinthians 10:30-31).

Second, when we are away from home, we ought to put forth the necessary effort to assemble with the saints. Just because we are away and cannot assemble with the "folks back home" does not excuse us of our responsibility to assemble with

Amazing Grace

John Gipson

Susan Herzog was 18 when she was killed on New Year's Day 1982. Kevin Tunell was 17, so his case went to juvenile court, where he was convicted of manslaughter and drunken driving.

Louis and Patricia Herzog filed a \$1.5 million suit against Tunell, but settled for \$936 to be paid \$1 at a time to remind Tunell what he had done to their daughter.

Tunell, now 26, keeps missing his payments. The Herzogs keep taking him to court.

About a week ago he was sentenced in Fairfax County Circuit Court in Fairfax, Virginia, to 30 days in jail for contempt because he has not lived up to his agreement to make the weekly payments.

Testifying, Tunell said he is haunted by Susan Herzog's death and tormented by the payments

"Let Us Be Therewith Content"



Edsel Burleson

An old man who had recently suffered a stroke said, "Oh, I'm feeling fair-to-middlin' these days. No pain, I'm eating and sleeping right well, and able to drive to town, fetch the groceries and go to church."

And as an after-thought he added,

"Of course, my mind is gone, but I don't miss it much."

Paul knew the secret of contentment. Whether times were hard or easy, he made adjustments. Even when circumstances became very difficult he said, ". . . for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." He then added, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need" (Philippians 4:11, 12).

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines contentment as "Having the desires limited to that which one has; satisfied." In reality, contentment comes from inside one's own heart and is not greatly affected by outward circumstances. Two people can have almost identical troubles and difficulties, and yet one is contented and the other isn't. Two may be afflicted with similar bodily ailments, one is happy and pleasant and the other is sad and gloomy. Two may suffer financial

setbacks; one is thankful for what he has left and takes courage while the other complains that all is wrong and gives up. The difference is on the inside.

Several years ago Calvin Henry wrote an article which should prompt each of us to look with more contentment on our circumstances. He said, "The other night I was feeling rather dejected about a certain 'failure' in my life, when consolingly I thought to myself, 'I still wouldn't trade places with any of my neighbors.' Then I asked myself a painfully difficult question: 'with whom would I trade places?' I thought about it a good long while.

"I could think of many people having certain advantages of position or personality which I might envy. One man's money - another's power - one's success - another's charisma. But each person I thought of also had certain things in his life that I wouldn't want to trade for - family problems, or burdens of responsibility, or the hopelessness of a life without faith. Would I really want to trade places with any of these people? And I need to remember that they all are certain to have other problems of which I am totally unaware. To trade places would be to take a 'surprise package.'

"Finally (after ruling out anybody living nowadays) I decided that the apostle Paul - to me the almost ideal Christian - is the one with whom I would trade places. But wait a minute! Am I prepared to be an apostle Paul? To face the same loneliness? And heartaches? And persecutions? Somehow I don't feel cut out to be Paul. God made me to be me. And somehow even with all my frailties, he has prepared me to fill a special role in his great scheme of things."

John 3:16

Continued From Page 2

gave his only begotten son," refers to just one act. "That he gave" is a summation of all heaven has done in the scheme of man's redemption. This clause embraces every act of God and all the ordeal of Calvary. Everything that Jesus endured is summed up in that He "gave his only begotten son."

It is not possible to separate the believer from gospel obedience.

"The son of God gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our father: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." (Galatians 1:4, 5). Every spiritual blessing in heavenly places is found in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). Eternal life is in the Son (I John 5:11).

"Whosoever believeth in him," is a summation of all that man is required by heaven to do, not only in becoming a Christian, but in living the Christian

life. When sinners refuse to do the will of God, it is a clear sign of unbelief. If we fail to enter heaven, it will be for the same reason Israel failed to enter the promised land. "So we see they could not enter in because of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:19).

The people on Pentecost Day, 1) heard the gospel, 2) believed the gospel, 3) repented of their sins, 4) were baptized for the remission of their sins, 5) were added to the Lord's church, and 6) continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine, in fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers (Acts 2:36-42). After they had obeyed these truths, it is said, "All that believed were together, and had all things common" (Acts 2:44).

Believers shall be saved; believers that are obedient to God. This is the kind of belief referred to in John 3:16. Believers in Acts the second chapter were saved and became members of the Lord's church when they obeyed the gospel. It is not possible to separate the believer from gospel obedience.

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

An honest examination of self will enable one to take courage in his strengths and to improve or learn to accept his weaknesses. Many weaknesses can be strengthened, but some cannot. It is most important that one learn to live with those weaknesses that cannot be removed. Paul had a thorn in the flesh. He besought the Lord three times to have it removed, but the Lord answered, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness." Paul learned to live with his problem, even gloried in his weakness that the power of Christ might rest upon him. (II

Continued On Page 4

II John 9-11 (Part II)

Continued From Page 1

says, one thing that shows clearly that this is a "misuse" of the passage is the absolute impossibility of applying it consistently in actual practice, as any survey of the associations of those who try it will clearly demonstrate.

Notice what can happen when some of the misuses are added together. Someone does something or says something that is a little less than the most desirable, but that is not really in the realm of what would overthrow faith or lead to sin. Someone who has a grudge against him exaggerates it to something more serious and publishes it, thus labelling him, in the quarters where the publication took place, "a known false teacher." Then, a second brother appears on a program with him, or associates with him in some similar ways. A third brother is then condemned and refused support for having association with that second brother, even though he clearly teaches and practices the truth on the matter the first brother is criticized for. Variations on that theme are played out time and time again in our brotherhood.

Conclusion

Note that, when we receive and encourage a false teacher, we become a "partaker in his evil deeds" (II John 11). Many would not consider that teaching could constitute "evil deeds," but scripture so labels it here. Many need to have their consciousness raised to (1) recognize what a serious thing it is to lead people astray from the gospel, (2) cause strife and discord by pushing harmful speculations, or (3) teach that which encourages and condones sin.

On the other hand, others need to recognize (1) that allegations of false teaching should only be made on the basis of knowledge, not of hearsay, (2) that the teaching under consideration should be serious enough to cause souls to be lost in order to be made a matter of fellowship, and (3) that association should be withdrawn from the guilty but not from innocent bystanders.

--P.O. Box 1101, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

Do You Charge To Forgive?

Bill Denton

A sign in a convenience store read, "Check Cashing Policy: To err is human. To forgive, \$10." It's a funny way to recognize the fact that we make mistakes, but it's also evidence of the way many people think about forgiveness.

To forgive is to accept within yourself the consequences of the sins of others. It means to accept the pain, the problems and the burden that comes when someone sins against you. Forgiveness is neither easy nor a frequent gift.

This is what God did for us. "... knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Peter 1:18-19), NKJ). What did God give for your forgiveness? It wasn't money or anything of wealth or value in worldly terms. He gave His Son. Jesus took upon himself the burden of our sins. "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (II Corinthians 5:21, NKJ). The prophet put it this way in Isaiah 53:4-5, "Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised

for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed."

We forget sometimes that God's forgiveness comes at a high price. Yes, that price was His Son. But there is more to the price. In that gift, God took the burden of sin that didn't belong to Him. My sins should bring the consequences home to me. However, God intercepted the consequences, bore the burden, accepted the pain and the suffering on my behalf. That's the good news found in Jesus Christ.

The problem is that we fail to understand how forgiveness works among ourselves. If you sin against me, practically speaking, how do I forgive.

It works much the same way as when God forgives. If I forgive you, I will accept within myself the pain caused by your sin. I must not require you to pay for it.

If I do, it is not forgiveness. When I forgive you, I actually pay for your sin. Then I put it away. I cancel it out and consider it done with.

This old world needs more forgiveness. IT always will. Why? Because it's not easy to pay for what others do. I find it easier to practice forgiveness when I remember how God managed to forgive me.

--Via Living The Word, P.O. Box 623, Forest Park, GA 30051.

Love At Philippi



Winfred Clark

We do not know all about the people at Philippi, but there are some things that we do know. We know what kind of love Paul wanted these folks to have. We know that because he told us. Take time to listen to his prayer where he says, "And this I pray,

that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgement; That you may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ" (Philippians 1:9-10). So we know the kind of love Paul desired for the church at Philippi.

1. He Desired A Progressive Love.

Notice what he will say, "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more" (Philippians 1:9). There can be no doubt about his desire that they might have a greater love. That it might abound or overflow it's banks.

Do we not sing a song, "More Love to Thee?" That song expresses a desire on our part to love more and more.

This is one of those things that a person can not

overdo. Didn't Paul say, "against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:23)? So there is ever room for growth in this area. This is true whether it be in the relationship to God, to man, to the truth, to the church, in the home, at work or in play. One will always have room to love more and more. This surely the thing Paul desired for those at Philippi.

2. A Love That Is Perceptive

Note that his prayer is that they may "approve things that are excellent;" (Philippians 1:10). The fact that he wants them to love does not mean that they will give their endorsement to everything that comes along asking for acceptance.

This is often needed when those so close to us may espouse that which is not in harmony with the will of the Lord. Our love cannot be blind to that which is not right even though it may be embraced by one we dearly love.

3. A Love That Is Productive.

Notice what he will say, "that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruit of righteousness" (Philippians 1:10-11). Love is not merely something passive but is very active. It will produce some things in the life of one so motivated.

There will be sincerity. There is no sham but the character will be able to stand the test.

There will also be a life of service as one is filled with the fruit of righteousness.

--P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

"Let Us Be Therewith Content"

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An honest examination of self will enable one to take courage in his strengths and to improve or learn to accept his weaknesses.

Corinthians 12:7-10).

All would do well to contrast what they are with what they might have been but for the grace of God. Let us stop looking at the things we do not have long enough to focus on the things we do have! Do we have a regular job, reasonable health, loving family, plenty to eat, sufficient clothing? The majority of the people of the earth cannot claim such an impressive inventory.

Adjusting to the things we cannot change is far more desirable than complaining about them. Moses said, "And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord" (Numbers 11:1).

--420 7th Street, S.W. Birmingham, AL 35211.

which are due each Friday, in the amount of \$1, because Susan died on a Friday. They began in 1982, and will end in 2000, -- one year for every year Susan lived.

From the witness stand, Tunell offered the Herzogs two boxes of checks covering payments until 2001, one year more than required. They refused.

As I read the story I reflected on two things. First, we partake of the Lord's Supper every Sunday so that we will not forget the sacrifice Christ made for us. This follows the pattern set by the early Christians. Eusebius, a church historian born A.D.

270, wrote, "Christians assembled on the first day of the week, called by them, the Lord's Day, for the purpose of religious worship, to read the Scriptures, preach, and to celebrate the Lord's Supper." How can one forget when he is reminded every week? Secondly, I thought of the amazing grace of God. We have sinned. We stand condemned. But God has established a new covenant with us. His promise is, "I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more" (Hebrews 8:12). "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound. . .!"

--Via Keynoter, Little Rock, AR

Amazing Grace

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Words Of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

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The Water's Warm



T. Pierce Brown

"The water's warm. The clothing is ready. Everything is prepared for you to obey the gospel." Years ago sometimes I said something like that during the invitation in a gospel meeting. I began to reconsider when, on making such a statement, I discovered the

water was bitterly cold, and they had not prepared any clothing, for they expected no baptisms, and rarely had one.

A few years later, I began to reconsider it from two other standpoints. First, when we say, "everything is prepared" and we almost always think of physical things, what does this reveal (or at least suggest) about our thinking? Is it not very similar to what we often hear when an announcement is made about our favorite habit of meeting and eating? In New Testament times the emphasis was on praying and fasting. In our day, it seems to be on preaching and eating. So, after we have had our experiences (whatever they are) in the "main auditorium," we say, "Now let us go have fellowship in the basement (or room 101 or the fellowship hall)." One might think we misunderstood or disagreed with Paul in Romans 14:17, "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

Those who have seen me in the "chow line" (usually close to the front, for I try to be a leader) know that I am not averse to eating and drinking -- even in the "fellowship hall." But I am concerned that a large part of our thinking, talking and acting reveal our materialistic tendencies. And I am

convinced that "thy speech maketh thee known" (bewrayeth thee -- KJV) (Matthew 26:73) when we need to go into a "fellowship hall" to have "fellowship," although we might have had it around the Lord's Table, or in the singing of spiritual songs.

But consider again, "everything is prepared." Has the heart been prepared? Have we even made a special effort to make sure the person knows what it means when he says, "I believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God"? I am persuaded that there are those who are baptized who think that "Jesus Christ" was his name, as mine is "Pierce Brown." When Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," did he mean, "He that believeth almost anything and is baptized for almost any purpose, shall be saved?" I had a person with whom I was studying to tell me, apparently in all seriousness, that he thought that meant, "He that believeth that Jesus already saved him from his past sins and is then baptized will be saved eternally." As far as I know, he had never heard of "the new hermeunitic" although he was using it.

Instead of emphasizing the glorious privilege of sacrificing anything, or everything, if need be, for the Cause of Christ, we continue to suggest, either accidentally or by design, that whatever Christ wants can be done easily, without any sacrifice.


Of course we can not make sure that everything is prepared, for we are not God. We have no authority to screen all those who wish to be

baptized in order to make sure they meet our particular standards. But at least we do need to develop a consciousness that there should be a greater concern for preparing the heart than there is for preparing the baptismal garments.

In the second place, when we emphasize that "the water is warm and the clothing is ready," is it possible that we are leaving the impression that if the water is not warm, or we have to walk a mile in freezing weather to a lake that is frozen, perhaps we should wait until spring to obey the gospel? I am convinced that we have, by our constant emphasis on physical and material things, made it appear that Christianity does not really demand much of a person. I remember Charles H. Roberson saying in class, "It does not take much of a man to be Christian." I had my hand about halfway up to get permission to speak in refutation of that when he finished the sentence. "But it takes all there is of him." Jesus said, "If a man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). Some of us may have been so scared of the idea of "total commitment" that the Crossroads and Boston elements attracted many persons who failed to be challenged by a type of Christianity that demanded nothing special, while they demanded total commitment, even to a humanly imposed system that operated under the guise of total commitment to Christ.

We even emphasize when we want to get money for a project, how little it would take for it to be completely funded if each one of us would give up practically nothing. Instead of emphasizing the glorious privilege of sacrificing anything, or everything, if need be, for the Cause of Christ, we continue to suggest, either accidentally or by design, that whatever Christ wants can be done easily, without any sacrifice. Of course that is true

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Words Of Truth

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

The Memorial Supper



David Wade

As we approach Memorial Day it is appropriate that we reflect upon the meaning of it and also consider the greatest memorial of all time.

Our annual Memorial Day had its origin during the days of the Civil War to honor the war dead. This patriotic holiday has

been extended to honor all members of America's armed forces who have given their lives for their country, whether in peace-time or war. It is most fitting that we remember these who have given their lives to ensure our American freedom.

Likewise, we have been given the Lord's memorial supper as a perpetual reminder of the wonderful spiritual blessings secured for us through the suffering and death of Jesus. When Jesus instituted the supper, he said, "this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19; I Corinthians 11:24-25). The Lord's Supper is a 2000 year old memorial to the sacrifice of the perfect lamb of God for the sins of the world. Unlike many other memorials which have long since been forgotten, Jesus authored his memorial to be observed on

"the first day of the week" (Acts 20:7) and is to be observed until the end of time (I Corinthians 11:26).

Very appropriately, the Lord's supper looks three directions. It looks to the past and memorializes his suffering at Calvary (I Corinthians 11:24-25). The supper looks to the present as it presents us the opportunity to commune with Christ. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? (I Corinthians 10:16). The word "communion" conveys the idea of fellowship or joint participation. As he instituted the supper, Jesus said, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom (Matthew 26:29).

The Lord's supper also looks to the future. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew (proclaim) the Lord's death till he come" (I Corinthians 11:26). The supper is a proclamation of the fact that Jesus is coming again (I Thessalonians 4:13-17; Revelation 22:20).

We should count it an exalted privilege to be faithful to our calling and partake of the Lord's memorial supper in a worthy manner (I Corinthians 11:27). Truly, the Lord's supper is the greatest memorial of all time!

"I Will -- But"



Winfred Clark

I am sure you would say "I Will -- But" is an odd title. One might well wonder what we might have in mind. Well, take the time to look at a passage in your Bible. "And another also said, I will follow thee, Lord, but first suffer me to bid

farewell to them that are at my house" (Luke 9:61). Have you ever stopped to really look at what that man was saying.

1. He is saying "I ought to follow."

You do not find that this man is saying, "I do not need to follow." He does not think the Lord had no right to ask him to follow. All of that is granted. He does not discount the idea that he must follow. He admits that he should follow and the Lord has the perfect right to ask him to do so. So he admits that he ought to follow.

2. He is saying, "I can follow him with profit."

There is no doubt in his mind that the Lord has something to offer that he does not have. He also admits that the Lord has something to offer that he really needs. He would not propose to follow at all unless he thinks he would benefit by doing so.

3. He is saying, "Let me follow on my terms."

That is the fallacy in his reasoning. Yes, he says "I ought to follow," "I would profit by following." But, here is a man, like a lot of other men: he wants to do it on his terms. Isn't this what that rich young man of Mark 10:17-22 wanted to do? When he was told to go sell all that he had and come and follow the Lord, he could not let go. Yes, he wanted

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Four Truths About Rules



Cecil May, Jr.

Christians are not subject to man-made rules. Paul warned against such "commandments . . . of men," as, "Touch not, taste not, handle not" (Colossians 3:21-22). Such rules, he said, have an appearance of wisdom in man-made religion but are of no value in restraining fleshly indulgence (Colossians 3:23). Jesus rebuked those who were "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9). He never violated a commandment of God, but he almost seemed to go out of his way to demonstrate his refusal to be bound by the "traditions of the elders" (Matthew 15:2; 12:1-9).

Those who bind man-made rules on the church claim authority that belongs only to God. Those

who submit to them as essential to salvation, at least in some instances, doubt the sufficiency of the gospel to save, and fall from grace. "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by law; ye are fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4).

Some may object that the law of Moses was not "commandments of men." While this is true, the imposition of the law on Gentiles as a condition of salvation was a commandment of men, and that imposition is the point in Galatians.

Rules are not the essence of Christianity. Christ is the essence of Christianity. The gospel is good news. One who tells us something we have not known about and which we ought to do, does us a favor, but there are already too many things we know we ought to do that we are not doing, for hearing about one more to be good news.

God loves us and gave his Son for us. Christ paid the penalty for sin, which we had no ability to pay. This is the essence of Christianity and makes the

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Numbers, Numbers, Numbers!!



Jerri Manasco

It is increasingly apparent that the success of any endeavor in the Lord's church today is measured in NUMBERS. Meeting baptismal quotas seems to be popular with some evangelistic outreaches. Some preachers are not included on the list of "effective" men because they fail to baptize "x" number of people in a given period, or they can't seem to get the "responses" the church wants in order to maintain their image, etc. Being able to report attendance in the hundreds is becoming the rage of the brotherhood.

I am certainly NOT opposed to having as many people as possible gathered to worship God. It surely is not wrong for as many people as possible to come together to hear God's word. There must have been quite an assembly when Ezra read the law to those in Jerusalem (Nehemiah 8:1-8). Moses, no doubt, spoke to a great assembly (Deuteronomy 1:1ff). There is no telling how

many the Twelve preached to on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). The number baptized on that eventful and crucial day was great (Acts 2:41), and the numbers increased daily (Acts 2:47; 4:4). Thus, numbers aren't wrong, but **number consciousness** is an epidemic that is becoming widespread.

David ran into difficulty because of an obsession with numbers. Satan moved David to conduct a census in Israel (I Chronicles 21:1). Joab saw the dangers inherent in this, and attempted to warn David about it. "Now the Lord thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see it; but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?" (II Samuel 24:3). The devastation that followed this deed was a terrible judgment (verses 10-15ff). Surely there was nothing wrong with NUMBERS, but David's obsession with numbers was the source of regret to him. Joab's advice was rejected because David's word prevailed over his warning. Influential men sometimes prevail over the sane advice and teaching of others.

Am I suggesting that we should cease inviting all we can to the public worship? Am I suggesting that we no longer take a count of Sunday and mid-week attendance? NO! Counting heads as a means of assisting in measuring spiritual attitudes or effectiveness of the local work, etc., could not be wrong, but when such counting becomes boasting material, it IS wrong!

Counting heads as a means of assisting in measuring spiritual attitudes or effectiveness of the local work, etc., could not be wrong, but when such counting becomes boasting material, it IS wrong!

"I Will -- But"

Continued From Page 2

life, but not if it means giving up his material wealth. That, to his mind, was too much to ask.

Now, stop and ask yourself if that is the last person who would say, "I will -- but." You wouldn't think so. One would be baptized; he knows he ought to be baptized -- but. In his mind it means renouncing his mother, father, or some member of the family. That seems to be too much of a price to pay. That means a person would like to follow the Lord, but not on his terms. He is saying, "Let me be your follower, but without doing what I must do in order to become your follower."

You and I know the Lord would not accept this man's demands. It is follow the Lord without "but's or if's." That is what we know we ought to do, and that is what the Lord wants us to do for our good.

--P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

Gospel meetings are still viable and valid parts of the local work of the church. In these services the Great Commission can be fulfilled (Mark 16:15). Private teaching in as many homes as possible is certainly scriptural (Acts 5:42). An attendance of 100 or 1,000 is equally right and good. Where, then, are the dangers? Risking the possibility of being a brotherhood monitor or watchdog of orthodoxy, I suggest that the dangers are subtle because of the misplaced emphasis that is rising in so many quarters.

The general scenario is something like this: "We had a great meeting! Sunday evening we had over 400 in attendance and each evening we averaged 300. What a meeting!" However, when the attendance is "below" our expectations, have you noticed the tendency to speak in somewhat hushed tones, as though somehow the lack of

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Four Truths About Rules

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gospel gospel.

Rules are not the basis of our salvation. To be saved on the basis of keeping rules, it is necessary never to break a rule. When we break a rule of God, we become sinners. A sinner must be forgiven in order to be saved, and only God can forgive. We can neither formulate rules that would earn our forgiveness, nor earn forgiveness by keeping other rules God has given. Even if we kept all other rules, or kept the rule we broke at all other times, we would but keep ourselves from further sin, for "to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). It would earn no credit to atone for previous sins.

There are conditions, given by God, which we must meet in order to be forgiven, but meeting conditions is not the same as keeping all the rules. When we meet the Lord's conditions because we trust the One who gave them, we are saved by grace through faith. If we think we are saved because we have kept all the rules, we trust ourselves and our own efforts, and we are condemned by our failure to fully comply, for "there is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10).

God has rules, and they must be kept. "The royal law" contains rules: "do not commit adultery, do not kill" (James 2:8-11). They are not arbitrary rules. They are given for our benefit by one who both knows and wants what is best for us, but they are rules. Persistently willful transgressors are condemned, not justified.

He who breaks God's rules is broken by them. They are not transgressed with impunity.

--Magnolia Bible College, P.O. Box 1101, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

The Water's Warm

Continued From Page 1

with most of our little projects, for our vision is so limited and our faith so small that we scarcely think in terms of our ability to do what Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

Apparently most of us who even give it lip service do not think it is possible to accomplish, especially without some man-made scheme such as a missionary society, or some other unauthorized method.

The truth is that God never gave any command without giving both the ability and resources to carry out that command. Our problem is not in the lack of resources and ability, but in the lack of vision, faith and the willingness to do what we can, where we are, with what we have for the glory of God and the good of man. If we had been in Caleb's place, we might have said, "Let me have the molehill, for this mountain looks too big for me to handle."

Is it possible that this thing we might call "the warm water syndrome" is partially responsible for the widespread soft-soaping pep-rallies that take the place of gospel preaching in many places, and the habit of receiving into fellowship almost any sort of unrepentant character who wants to "come into the church?" Have we become so interested in the number of warm bodies that we can count that we have neglected to properly concern ourselves with the quality of the spirit that dwells in those bodies?

--Rt. 2, Box 144X, Wartrace, TN 37183.

"Lord, Increase Our Faith"

Dean Fugett

It goes almost without challenge that there is a real famine of faith among those who claim to be the Lord's people today. The increase in absenteeism from worship services, Bible classes, lectureships, gospel meetings, and other public displays of faith in expression; the increase in the level of immorality among "Christians;" the dividing of congregations; the rising divorce rate among members of the Lord's church; the decrease in the number of preachers and elders; and the overall clamor of many for a religion of emotionalism, sensationalism, entertainment and personal comfort all clearly demonstrate that to a great extent we are a people who want to walk by sight, not by faith. (cf. II Corinthians 5:7).

Gross unbelief runs rampant in pulpit and pew, among old and young alike. Only unbelief will allow the above conditions to exist. At the risk of being labeled pessimistic, if the brakes are not applied soon, we can anticipate matters to get much worse before they get better. Brother Coffman makes an excellent observation in his commentary on Luke: "God's antidote for unbelief is the reading of his word." We may add to that the observation that total recovery is dependent on the understanding and application of that which is read from God's word.

Gross unbelief runs rampant in pulpit and pew, among old and young alike.

It is still true that "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). That is true whether heard by the ear from a speaker or heard by the mind in the study of that

word. "Faith is the evidence of things hoped for, the assurance of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). If it is not contained in the word of God, it cannot be of "faith."

It is also true that the unlearned and unstable still wrest the scriptures to their own destruction. And, we might add, to the destruction of those who will be deceived by their manipulation of the word of God. We must ever be on guard that our faith is established in the word and not in the men who deliver that word. It is possible to believe a lie and be damned as easily as it is to believe the truth and

be saved. It all depends on how concerned we are to "search the scriptures daily to see" if what we are being told is true.

It is only by faith that we can hope to meet and be victorious over the issues of the first paragraph of this article. It was only "by faith" that the honor roll of the faithful in Hebrews 11 could exist. It is only by the continued study of God's word with the experience of the application of it to our lives that we can "increase our faith." Let's all do it!

--P.O. Box 75, Cave City, AR 72521.

How To Prevent A Divorce-- Before You Marry

Dick Marcear

Divorce has never been God's plan. He permitted it in the days of Moses because of the cruel way men treated women (Matthew 19:8 "because your hearts were hard"). But what about some guidelines for today so that before you get into a bad situation you will have done all you know to prevent divorce.

Seven suggestions:

1. If you desire a Christian home and family, then do not even consider marrying someone who is not a Christian.
2. If your parents violently object to your choice, then I would doubt if you should get married until you have had time to convince them of his/her character. Like it or not, you marry a person's family.
3. Do not marry someone who drinks, even if it is "just for fun." Remember drinking/drunkenness is one of the chief causes for divorce.

4. Watch how your potential mate's parents treat each other. If you don't like it, remember that they have been his/her model and probably the way you will be treated. If you don't like it, then don't marry them.

5. Can he/she manage their finances? A young man who cannot manage his money when single will not suddenly change when he gets married. Many divorces are caused by "money troubles."

6. Are they truthful? Can you depend on them doing what they say? Marriage is built on trust. If you do not have complete confidence in the person, don't marry them.

7. Can he/she hold a job? A good test of a person's ability to get along with others is in his/her job record. A failure here indicates a character flaw that should signal danger to you.

--Via The Booneville Informer, P.O. Box 28, Booneville, MS 38829.

Numbers, Numbers, Numbers!!

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QUANTITY totally bleached out the QUALITY?

Analyze the general situation! The common procedure is to send invitations to the meeting to every sister congregation within 30 to 50 miles of "our" location. We advertise that Brother _____ is going to do the preaching. Perhaps scores of people come from the sister churches, at least on that first Sunday night. Then, we count "our attendance" as being the "best ever." But now for some crucial questions: Were "OUR OWN" members present? HOW MANY FROM THE COMMUNITY, WHO DO NOT EVEN KNOW BROTHER _____, AND WHO ARE NOT CHRISTIANS, SHOWED UP? Did those from sister churches come to hear Brother _____, or to hear Christ? There is simply more to this than the fact that "x" number of people were counted!!

There is another phase of this issue that needs to be addressed, and that is the drawing card mentality that is taking hold among us. More and more we are hearing that "we need something that

will draw a crowd." Why is the mention that a certain choral group, special speaker, balloon rides, potluck prizes, etc., more of a drawing card than the mere mention that the gospel is going to be preached?

Well-meaning brethren often reason that we live in different times than did our fathers, therefore, we need something to compete with and appeal to people, especially to the youth. Such reasoning is not reason at all! Why deceive an already luxurious generation into thinking that being a Christian is a luxurious past time? The First Century, when the gospel began to be preached, was a pleasure-mad age (I Corinthians 15:32). Even the prophets of the Old Testament contended with a pleasure-crazed society (Isaiah 22:13; Amos 6:4). Solomon dealt with this very issue (Ecclesiastes 2:1ff; 8:15). What did the apostles and the prophets offer their generation? They gave them the word of God without gimmick! Amos' warning to Israel at ease certainly did not appeal to

the ivory couch set! The loaves "drew a crowd" (John 6:22-25), but Jesus drove them away with his hard sayings (verse 60ff)!

How can anyone maintain a straight face and actually justify the mentality that we "need something" to draw a crowd? Can any brethren actually see Paul advertising a "special day" in Corinth or Rome, pulling for crowds by announcing a chariot race between the elders and the preacher? Can you imagine the announcement that there will be chariot rides for all the kiddies? Is there anything wrong with chariot rides for all the kiddies? NO! But WHY DOES THIS HAVE TO BE THE KEYNOTE THAT DRAWS THE ATTENTION OF PEOPLE AS THOUGH THIS IS THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE LORD'S DAY OR OF A YOUTH MEETING OR ANYTHING ELSE THAT PERTAINS TO THE SAVING OF SOULS? How is the cross of Jesus enhanced by door prizes?

--Rt. 7, Box 428, Boaz, AL 35957.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am not ma
Words of Trut

—Acts 26:25

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Do We Really Care?



Edsel Burleson

Herb Smith once wrote about a man who worked on a railroad in Indiana, who, one morning, discovered that a bridge on the line had fallen down. Remembering that a train was almost due he started along the road to meet it. As the train approached, he raised

his hands and pointed toward the bridge; but the train sped on. Seeing that there was no time to lose, he threw himself across the rails. The engineer, seeing it, thought he was a mad-man, and instantly shut off steam, put on the brakes, and stopped the train. The man arose, told his story, and thus saved the train from disaster.

John Bizzell told a similar story of some men who, risking their lives, rushed to free a man from a heavy beam that was crushing him, as the doctor feverishly worked to keep him alive. But he died. And as they pulled the doctor away, she looked back at the dead man with hurting heart and said, "I'm a bad loser!"

These stories should cause every Christian to take a good look at his or her concern for those who are dying spiritually. Paul frequently expressed his concern for the lost in such statements as: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Romans 9:1-3). "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Romans 10:1).

Real concern does not allow a Christian to be content as long as there are those in physical or spiritual desperation who can be helped by them.

"People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care."

Rudy Wray tells about a certain person who came into his office one day excited and enthusiastic because of a home Bible study with a friend that was to take place that afternoon. The study was to be about Matthew 16:13-20.

"People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care."

Later that afternoon, they met again, but now the mood had changed entirely. Enthusiasm was now replaced by tears of sorrow. The friend had cancelled the study. It was truly a sorrowful moment, yet as he tried to console the person, he

said it occurred to him that a great victory had been won. Here was a child of God so deeply concerned about the lost soul of another as to weep tears of sorrow. The Psalmist said it this way: "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalm 126:6).

More concern for others would characterize each of us if we would realize these truths expressed by an unknown author:

"Christ has no hands but my hands
To do His work today;
He has no feet but my feet
To lead men in His way
He has no help but my help
To bring men to His side;
He has no tongue but my tongue
To tell men how he died!"

--420 Seventh Street, S.W. Birmingham, AL 35211.

Compassion



Glenn A. Posey

Compassion literally means, "suffering with another; hence having pity or sympathy for another." Character, conversion, conviction, consecration and compulsion all are attributes of the Christian. So, also, is compassion.

Without compassion, a person is cold, unfeeling, unkind and uncaring. Christianity is a warm, feeling (empathy) religion.

God is a compassionate God. "But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, gracious,

longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth" (Psalms 86:15; 111:4; 112:4; 145:8, also, Exodus 34:6-7).

Did he have time? He took time. He felt for that poor man.

Jesus is a compassionate Lord. "So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes; and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him" (Matthew 20:34). Jesus was moved by those blind folks. He knew how it would be not to be able to see. Because of His compassion he

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

"No Man Cared For My Soul"



David Wade

David lamented, "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for for my soul" (Psalm 142:4). When pursued by his enemies, earthly ties seemed to fail him. He felt he was a stranger among people who

didn't care if he lived or died. For sure, some desired that David were dead. However, he seemed momentarily to forget the friends who cared very much for him and helped him escape the wrath of King Saul.

The very depressed feelings of David are typical of many people today who are lost and without hope. Some feel that no one cares for their soul. Perhaps it is as the song suggests, "You never mentioned him to me."

Some feel so distraught they convince themselves that God could never love a sinner like them. And yet we are assured, "Casting all your cares upon him; for he careth for you" (I Peter 5:7). Jesus used the simple illustration of the birds sacrificed by the poor to underscore God's care. "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Luke 12:6-7). No one should ever think for a moment that our God does not care, or cannot love the sinner. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16).

God's concern for the sinner is expressed in many ways. God has given the inspired word, his message of love and salvation, to the world. He gives to all, "life, and breath, and all things" (Acts 17:25). "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth the rain on the just and unjust" (Matthew 5:45).

In addition, God sends you and me, faithful Christians, to share the good news with the sinner (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). Solomon declares "He that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30). Paul said, "I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more" (I Corinthians 9:19). James emphasizes the great blessing of soul-winning. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20).

When we have the opportunity to help the lost and refuse to help them, God will not hold us guiltless. Ezekiel's experience demonstrates this fact. "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not him from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul" (Ezekiel 3:17-21).

Can we say with Paul, "I am pure from the blood of all men, For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:26-27)? Surely, there is someone we know who needs our help today. Let's get busy and show them that we care for their soul.

Compassion

Continued From Page 1

healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, gave hearing to the deaf, fed the hungry, and even raised the dead. Would to God all of us would have His kind of compassion.

The Good Samaritan had compassion. "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him" (Luke 10:33). He just practiced the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12). Did he have time? He took time. He felt for that poor man.

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" (I Peter 3:8). Do we believe and practice this beautiful verse? When members of the church suffer, do we suffer with them? Do we help bear their burdens?

John said it best. "But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?" (I John 3:17).

--9th St., 7th Ave. S.E., Cullman, AL.

Forgiveness



Bobby Key

The late Knute Rockne, who was the great football coach at Notre Dame from 1918 until his death in 1931, said: "A football player cannot have sufficient energy unless his emotions are under spiritual control." In fact, he went so far as to say that he would not have a man on his team

who did not have a genuinely friendly feeling for every fellow player. "I have to get the most energy out of a man," he said, and have discovered that it cannot be done if he hates another man. Hate blocks his energy, and he isn't up to par until he eliminates it and develops a friendly feeling."

Forgiving means all emotional impact has been removed from the things which have happened. And once you have completely forgiven a person, you can think or talk about the things they did to you with no more emotional impact than you would have in discussing the price of a sack of potatoes at the market.

Continued On Page 4



Harold Hazelip



Bobby Duncan



Sue Crabtree



Don McWhorter



Milton Sewell



Jerry Jenkins



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Mac Lynn



Jeff Jenkins



Dennis Jones



Wendell Winkler



Cecil May, Jr.

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THEME: "BACK TO BASICS"**

SUNDAY, AUGUST 26, 1990

6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00 - 8:00 p.m. What Manner Of Persons Ought Ye To Be Harold Hazelip

MONDAY, AUGUST 27, 1990

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Church Leadership And Organization Bobby Duncan
9:30 - 10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Women's Role In The Work Of The Church Sue Crabtree
10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Current Problems Confronting The Church Don McWhorter
11:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00 - 2:45 p.m. Christian Education: At Home, At Church And At School Milton Sewell
3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Reaching Out To The People Jerry Jenkins
3:45 - 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00 - 8:00 p.m. Abounding In The Work Of The Lord James Moffett

TUESDAY, AUGUST 28, 1990

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Church Leadership And Organization Bobby Duncan
9:30 - 10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Women's Role In The Work Of The Church Sue Crabtree
10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Current Problems Confronting The Church Don McWhorter
11:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00 - 2:45 p.m. Christian Ethics Don Flatt
3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Mission Opportunities At Home And Abroad Mac Lynn
3:45 - 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00 - 8:00 p.m. (Youth Night) How Shall The Young Secure Their Hearts? Jeff Jenkins

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29, 1990

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Church Leadership And Organization Bobby Duncan
9:30 - 10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Women's Role In The Work Of The Church Sue Crabtree
10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Current Problems Confronting The Church Don McWhorter
11:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00 - 2:45 p.m. EXPO '90 - A World Evangelism Showcase Dennis Jones
3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Speak Thou The Things That Become Sound Doctrine Wendell Winkler
3:45 - 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:30 - 8:00 p.m. The Same Commit Thou To Faithful Men Cecil May

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AIDs, Death And Sin



Don Williams

The news was grim. Ryan White, the eighteen-year-old young man with AIDS, has died. He had acquired the disease through a routine blood transfusion over five years ago. Isolated by friends, he and his family had moved to a city where he was

accepted and where he could attend school. Finally, the toll of his disease had caused serious illness, and eventual death. Flags flew at half-staff in Indiana. Friends, Michael Jackson and Donald Trump, came to visit and pay their respects to the family.

By mere coincidence, I finished reading today a condensed version of another story about an AIDS patient. His name was Ben Oyler, and he died at the tender age of nine. He was a hemophiliac and some time, perhaps in his infant years, bad blood had been passed on to him. The book, *Go Toward The Light*, dealt with his last year of life, and how

he and his family lived it. My eyes misted over as I read of the last hours of his life, of the love his parents gave him, and of their "final farewell" to each other. You see, I have a son named Ben and I have a son approaching the same age as this boy was when he died.

When someone dies of this disease through no fault of their own, we are especially touched. But all of us have knowledge of someone who is dying spiritually.

And then I thought -- as terrible as AIDS is -- how much more terrible sin is. AIDS destroys the body -- SIN destroys the soul. James 1:15 points out, "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Romans 6:23 states that "The wages of sin is death." I know of Christians with fatal diseases within their bodies. One day that disease - - cancer, or whatever it is, will destroy their body.

But if they are faithful to the Lord, then their soul will not be destroyed by sin. Long ago, they were baptized into Christ. He was made to be sin for us, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21). Concerning him, Peter wrote, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (I Peter 2:24). Christians can die, faithful to Christ and his Church knowing that a crown of life awaits them (Revelation 2:10).

AIDS patients die daily. Many of them die as the result of sinful, sexually, immoral living "The way of the transgressor is hard" (Proverbs 13:15). A recent statistic showed that in the next several years all of us will have knowledge of a friend who died because of AIDS. When someone dies of this disease through no fault of their own, we are especially touched. But all of us have knowledge of someone who is dying spiritually. We need to rise up and help them with their spiritual problems before it is too late (James 5:19, 20).

--Rt. 2, Box 713, Guin, AL 35563.

The Brazen Serpent



T. Pierce Brown

In John 3:14-15 we read, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Thus, Jesus points to the serpent as a type of himself. From this, we

can get some important lessons.

Of what does the type consist? The Israelites were a sinful people. We are a sinful people. The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23) and we have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). The cure was not found in men searching for an antidote, killing the snakes, compromising and making an offering to the serpents, examining their wounds and applying a mustard plaster, but in lifting up the serpent that they might look upon it and live. The antitype is Christ being lifted up and our trust being put in him. If there is any one verse in the Bible which shows that believing in the Son includes obeying his commands, John 3:36 does. "He that believeth on (pisteuon) the Son hath everlasting life and he that believeth not (apeithon -- which means "does not obey") shall not see life." To state it another way, "Saving faith is always an obedient faith."

It does not really matter whether the command to them was "Look and live," or "Crawl out and touch the pole and live," the principle is that when the Christ was offered for our salvation from the poison of sin, there was a God-given method of

appropriating the cure. No one was offered life on any other basis.

If a man had been too weak and sick to look on the serpent, would it have been fair for God to let him die just because he could not do what he was unable to do? Most of the denominational preachers I have known and many of those whom we have called our brethren reason that way today. There are two great truths we need to know about that sort of situation. We have no right to decide what would or would not be fair for God to do. Whatever God does will be fair and right. Second, we need to know that if a man bitten by the serpent died, he died because he was bitten by the serpent. He did not die because Moses was not nearby, or did not get the brazen serpent up in time, or because he was too weak to look, or even because he did not choose to look. Those may be contributing factors, but the prime cause was that he was bitten by the serpent.

You are guilty of contributory negligence if you see a drowning man, can throw him a rope, and do not. You are guilty of failing to obey the Lord if you know a man in sin, have the opportunity to teach him the gospel, and do not.

The point is that the prime cause of man's condemnation is sin. If a man falls into the water and drowns, the thing that causes him to drown is not that he falls into the water, or that he cannot swim, or that you fail to throw him a rope, or that he refuses to take hold of the rope. The thing that causes a man to drown is that he gets water in his lungs and does not get it out. You can prove this logically to yourself if you realize that many men fall into the water and do not drown. Many cannot swim, but do not drown. Many men do not have you to throw a rope to them and do not drown. Many may refuse to take a rope, but do not drown. But all who get water in their lungs and do not get it out will drown.

You are guilty of contributory negligence if you see a drowning man, can throw him a rope, and do not. You are guilty of failing to obey the Lord if you know a man in sin, have the opportunity to teach him the gospel, and do not. But you are not the CAUSE of his being lost. Sin, and only sin, is the cause of a person being lost. Of course, if we wanted to use a more complete logical analysis and talk of "instrumental cause," "contributing cause," "formal cause," "final cause," "material cause," "transeunt cause," "immanent cause," or some other philosophical division of causality, we might do that. But the primary point I am now making is that whatever other related events may or may not take place, the primary cause of a man's being lost is the man's own sin.

So, the religious or irreligious world who finds a sinner, on his deathbed or any other place, who died without looking in trusting obedience to Christ, has no right to blame God for his being lost. He is lost because he sinned. We may be lost if we fail to care about his condition and deliberately fail to help him find salvation. This is one reason why any specific evangelistic outreach that helps you to evaluate how much you really care about the lost can be very valuable. If you do not care enough to help, you will not be lost because you did not help with that particular program, but because you did not really care about lost souls at all, and thus show that you do not really respect and love Jesus.

We are not responsible for the sins of lost mankind. We are only responsible for ours. And whereas many are lost because of the sins that society finds contemptible, we may be lost because we simply do not love our Lord enough to help him in the task he died to accomplish. And God is not responsible if we sin, then neglect salvation until it is too late to receive it, or never get a chance to receive it.

The Bible teaches that God's justice demands punishment for sin, but nothing in the Bible suggests that God's grace demands that he offer more than one chance for a man to do the right thing. God may offer two or a thousand chances, but if a man rejects the first or the first nine hundred, for a man to presume that God is not merciful because the man did not take the last one offered is unduly presumptuous, as man is wont to be. Don't sin by presumption as well as by indifference!

--Rt. 2, Box 144X, Wartrace, TN 37183 Phone: (615)454-9042.

Forgiveness

Continued From Page 2

The reason to forgive another person is not primarily a favor to the individual that you forgive as much as to yourself. Forgiveness is the greatest act of self-interest in which you can possibly engage. When you forgive you quit committing suicide. A burden is lifted from your life. Happiness, together with a sense of release, comes with a measure that few have ever known.

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32). Forgiving means all emotional impact has been removed from the things which have happened. And once you have completely forgiven a person, you can think or talk about the things they did to you with no more emotional impact than you would have in discussing the price of a sack of potatoes at the market. Dear reader, if you would be healthy in mind and in body, forgive.

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

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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 26

JUNE 8, 1990

NUMBER 23

Mission Books Anyone?



J. C. Choate

the loser.

Mission books don't generally sell. Most book stores operated by our brethren will not stock them because they don't sell well. I should know because J. C. CHOATE PUBLICATIONS have brought out more mission books than anyone in the brotherhood. But if they won't sell, why do we publish them? Because they need to be published, and hopefully in time more and more brethren will grow up and develop an interest in them. We print them along with books that do sell, and putting the two together, we manage to make it. In addition to those the authors and their friends use, we also send them to the libraries of our Christian colleges and schools, we give lots of them to those we feel will profit by them, and eventually we hope to use them in a Missions Correspondence School.

But at a time when books, paperbacks, etc., are so widely read, why is it that members of the church do not read mission books? Perhaps most are afraid to be exposed to them because it will make them feel guilty for having so much and yet having done so little to take the gospel to others. Maybe they feel that the authors are blowing their own horns. Others evidently feel that anything put out by our brethren is shallow, second rate, and not worthy of their attention. Whatever the reason, it is sad that our own brethren would deprive themselves of such wonderful reading materials.

Have you read a mission book recently? Have you ever read one? I am talking about a book written by a Christian, by a missionary, a book based on the true life experiences of work in a foreign field. If you have, you are one of the very few who have done so. If you have not, you are

It is also sad that our own colleges, schools, bookstores, and papers will not use and promote mission books written by our brethren. If they use anything, it is usually written by denominational people. Is it any wonder then that we are not doing more mission work, that we don't have more individual Christians who are involved in sending contributions, that we don't have more deciding to go to the mission field, and that we don't have more preparing to go?

Is it any wonder then that we are not doing more mission work, that we don't have more individual Christians who are involved in sending contributions, that we don't have more deciding to go to the mission field, and that we don't have more preparing to go?

When we are ignorant of the world and its needs, of the opportunities to proclaim God's will, of what the church is doing, and of the needs to do more, then how can we ever hope to improve the present situation? Mission books have been written and printed by our brethren to inform, inspire, and encourage us to do more to spread the caues of Christ. We need to read them and encourage more brethren to write their story. This will not only be a great help to the church today as they doucment their experience, concerning the people and places involved, the methods used, the response they had, but it will also be of help to future generations of brethren to know the history of the work done.

Let me therefore encourage you as a Christian to buy and read every mission book brought out by our brethren. Encourage others to read them, especially young people. Give them to your preacher, elders, and your Christian friends. Congregations need to build a missions library and encourage their members to read them. They should especially encourage their missionaries to read every mission book that is available. And finally, our Christian Colleges and Schools should use these books as text books in their mission classes.

For a listing of mission books available, covering a number of countries in Asia, Africa, and South America, please write to J. C. CHOATE PUBLICATIONS, Rt. 2, Box 156, Winona, MS 38967, or phone (601) 283-1192. Special prices are available to congregations who wish to build a Missions Library.

Beyond Treatment!



Dean Fugett

As a superintendent in a public school system, we have access to varied materials relative to drug and substance abuse. Most of our schools are deeply involved in a variety of programs to deal with this deadly threat to our national health. At the same time, as a preacher of the gospel, much of what we read, learn, see, and experience, we transfer to the church and individual Christians. There are many parallels to

Continued On Page 3



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

-Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Contact, Cultivate, Convert



David Wade

went out of their way to bypass the Samaritans (John 4:9). Jesus went there because he saw a great harvest of souls (John 4:35).

In verses 7-9 Jesus made the initial contact with the woman. He extended the spirit of kindness toward her as he requested a drink of water. The woman was amazed that Jesus made such a request. She immediately engaged him in conversation about the long-standing hostilities between Jews and Samaritans. However, Jesus did not dwell on the hostility, but on the harvest.

In verses 10-20 Jesus cultivated the prospect. He was preparing the heart soil for conversion (cf. Luke 8:15). She had difficulty comprehending the "living water" in the likeness of Nicodemus who did not understand being "born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:5).

The above title outlines the method Jesus used in reaching the woman at the well as recorded in John 4. Jesus was returning from Judea to Galilee and took the most direct route through Samaria. Most Jews of his day

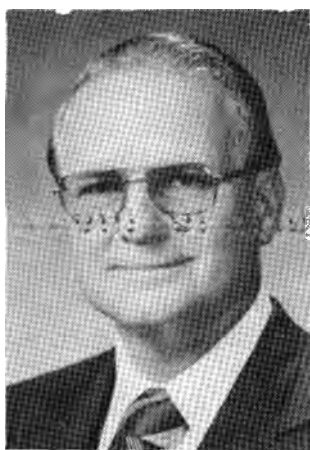
Jesus, who knows all men perfectly (John 2:25), knew that there was the problem of adultery in her life that must be dealt with before conversion (John 4:15-18). Apparently, she was uncomfortable with this subject and shifted the discussion to the proper place for worship (v. 20).

It is at this point that Jesus led her, and ultimately, the city dwellers to believe in him as the Messiah (vs. 21-42). Jesus identified himself as the Messiah (v. 26). He discussed with her the nature of true worship (vss. 21-24). The city dwellers were convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and expressed their belief (vss. 39-42).

The Great Commission had not been given at this time. They were not yet subject to the command to be baptized (Matthew 28:18-20). The sequel to this event is found in Acts 8. "Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them . . . But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women" (Acts 8:5, 12).

As we study the conversion of the Samaritans, we would do well to follow the example of Jesus. We too must contact, cultivate, and convert the lost to Christ. Each step is important. The process cannot be shortened and be successful. If we are not converting the lost to Christ, we need to look at what we are leaving out.

The Way It Was



Bobby Key

The idea of Restoration must not be forgotten. Restoration is always partial and is never completed. Each generation must commit the Word to faithful men who will teach others also. Our plea is constant -- we plead

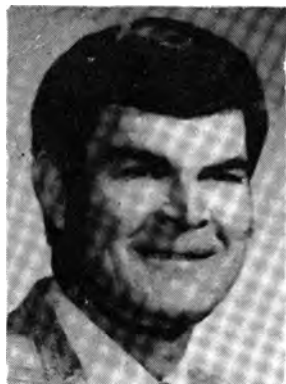
for people to return to a "Thus Saith the Lord" and to preach the Word without addition or subtraction.

In New Testament times, people who submitted to Christ were called believers, saints, brethren, disciples and Christians. They became a part of a local assembly, congregation, or church. Each church was independent of every other congregation. Denominations did not exist. Peter did not preach for one religious group, Paul for another, and John for yet another. They were all brethren in the Lord; they had fellowship with one another and labored for the same cause.

Every saved person was added to the church (Acts 2:47). No one talked of saved people outside the church. All people born of water and Spirit were in the kingdom of God (John 3:1-5). The church is the household or family of God, and as such it includes all the children of God. The church is the body of Christ, and every Christian is a member of it.

Salvation is not in the kingdom of satan; salvation is in God's family. There is but one body and that body is the church. On the day of Pentecost, the apostles proclaimed the gospel, exalted the resurrection of the Lord, and announced the conditions of salvation. People

May One Be Saved Without Submitting To Immersion In Water?



Ray Hawk

salvation. Those who believe in salvation by "faith only" do not have any passages which teach their doctrine. In fact the Holy Spirit teaches just the opposite.

"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone . . . Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only . . . For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without

Most religious people believe you are saved either by faith only, faith + repentance, faith + repentance + confession + prayer. Those who accept one of these philosophies deny that immersion in water has any-

works is dead also" (James 2:17, 24, 26).

Those who believe in faith + repentance or faith + repentance + confession do have scripture for these items. Each is essential in the chain of events leading to salvation from God. There isn't any one verse which contains all of these items as stated. Those who believe the above, must go to two or more passages where they find faith is essential to salvation, repentance is essential to salvation, and confession is essential to salvation. All three are put together from separate passages. Faith does not exclude repentance, nor do these exclude confession. Yet, when I do exactly the same thing, find passages which speak of immersion in water being essential to salvation, my discovery is discounted, ignored, and ridiculed. Why? If faith may be found in one passage being spoken of as essential to salvation, repentance in another, confession in another, and baptism in yet another,

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May One Be Saved Without Submitting To Immersion In Water?

Continued From Page 2

all must be accepted equally as related to salvation.

When baptism is found with repentance or faith, it **always stand between** these two and salvation.

--**Believeth** and is **baptized** shall be **saved**" (Mark 16:16).

--"**Repent** and be **baptized** . . . for the **remission of sins**" (Acts 2:38).

There is not one passage in the Bible which speak of prayer being a step one takes in becoming a Christian. In fact, Saul of Tarsus was told, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

Notice, the calling here is not prayer, but the response of arising and being baptized to "wash away thy sins." Although Cornelius prayed, he was still told to send for a man who would come and tell him "words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:14). It was not until Cornelius responded to those words, which contained commandments, that he and his house were saved (Acts 10:48).

It is also interesting that the Holy Spirit uses identical language to show what is essential. In spite of this, many continue to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit.

--"Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).

--"Be baptized . . . for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

If belief is for the "remission of sins" and baptism is for the "remission of sins," then both are essential to the remission of sins. No wonder Jesus himself said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believed not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

If Saved Without Baptism

If one is saved without or before baptism in water, then:

1. One is saved without being buried with Christ (Romans 6:3, 4).

2. One is saved without being raised with Christ (Romans 6:3, 4).

3. One is saved without putting Christ on (Galatians 3:27).

4. One is saved without reaching the blood of Christ since we are immersed into his death where he shed his blood (Romans 6:3, 4).

5. One is saved without the answer of a good conscience toward God (I Peter 3:21).

6. One is saved without his sins being remitted (Acts 2:38).

According to the Holy Spirit, one cannot be saved without submitting to immersion in water for the remission of his sins. If one continues to ridicule what the Spirit states, he is guilty of speaking against the Spirit.

Conclusion

Members of the churches of Christ stand ready to show what God teaches through his written word. We want to be pleasing to the one who gave us the Bible. He has given it to guide, comfort, and encourage us. Our plea is to return to the New Testament church of Christ and be just a christian, a member of the Lord's body.

--1490 Campbell St., Jackson, TN 38305.

The Way It Was

Continued From Page 2

In recent years a number of prominent preachers no longer plead for a return to the primitive order. Too many have relied on human wisdom, human inventions and human strength.

were admonished to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. About three thousand gladly heard the word and were baptized. In doing this they obeyed the gospel of Christ. Every day God added those who were being saved to the church. Since this was done each day -- the same day they were saved -- it follows that no saved person ever remained out of the church overnight!

The truths stated were once believed and preached by every gospel preacher. In recent years a number of prominent preachers no longer plead for a return to the primitive order. Too many have relied on human wisdom, human inventions and human strength. As a man has faith in God, he will implicitly follow God. As he lacks faith in God he will depend more and more on human wisdom. Men have always tried to substitute human wisdom for Divine Revelation.

How wonderful if we could all go back to the way it was. All the way back to the first century, following the New Testament pattern in doctrine and practice.

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

Beyond Treatment!

Continued From Page 1

be applied and analogies to be drawn.

As a result of some substance abuse, some abusers become "BEYOND TREATMENT!" That is, there is nothing that can now be done to reverse the damage to the body or brain and nothing can restore the proper function of lungs, brain, heart, kidneys, liver, etc.

Inhalants are now noted as "gateway" substances -- "gateway" because their use usually precedes the advancement to illegal substance abuse. Inhalants are breathable chemicals that produce mind altering vapors. Some of the most abused are spray paints, glues, solvents, and gasoline.

Effects of the inhalents fall into three categories: immediate, intermediate and long range. Effects on behavior tend to be irritability, depression, or aggressiveness. Physical effects may be irritation of lungs, nose and throat linings, and heart damage. Long range effects can be liver damage, bleeding kidneys, bone marrow damage, and permanent brain damage. Brain damage behavior resembles that of mental retardation. When this latter condition occurs, the abuser is usually BEYOND TREATMENT. These are not just scare tactics; they are the facts! For this cause education is vital. Prevention is by far the better course to pursue because often the abuser's destiny is BEYOND TREATMENT, including brain damage, addiction and/or suicide --DEATH!

"Gateway" behavior - behavior that precedes advancement to apostasy -- should be carefully noted by spiritual leaders and dealt with before it is too late.

Spiritual maladies are similar in process to substance abusers. Denial that we will ever get that far; that we can get "straight" whenever we want to; denial that we are spiritual abusers; it only happens to 'someone else;' movements toward modernism and liberalism . . . they all fit snugly into the pattern behavior. Too soon --and forever-- we find ourselves BEYOND TREATMENT! Jeremiah and Ezekiel were both informed by God that Judah in particular and Israel in general were BEYOND TREATMENT.

Again, prevention is better than treatment. Let's get ourselves educated to reality, to the facts. Abuse of God's love, longsuffering and grace will put one BEYOND TREATMENT! "Gateway" behavior -- behavior that precedes advancement to apostasy -- should be carefully noted by spiritual leaders and dealt with before it is too late. BEYOND TREATMENT MEANS FOREVER LOST!

--P.O. Box 75, Cave City, Arkansas 72521.

"To Fail To Plan Is To Plan To Fail"



Edsel Burleson

one has said: "TO FAIL TO PLAN IS TO PLAN TO FAIL."

Many church members accomplish practically nothing for Christ because they fail to set themselves a goal as individual Christians, and of course fail to lay out a plan of operation for their personal lives which will help them achieve that which the Father expects of them.

Likewise many congregations fail to reach more than a fraction of their potential because they move along haphazardly without a goal and without a plan of operation designed to accomplish that which God expects of them. Solomon said, "Where there is no vision, the people perish . . ." (Proverbs 29:18).

In Robert Schuller's book, "You Can Become the Person You Want To Be," he tells of a tourist who walked down a pier and watched a fisherman pull in a large fish, measure it, and throw it back. He caught a second fish, smaller this time, he measured it, and put it in his bucket. Oddly, all the large fish that he caught that measured ten inches or more he discarded. All fish smaller than ten inches he kept. Puzzled, the curious onlooker questioned, "pardon me, but why do you keep the little ones and throw the big ones away?" The old fellow looked up and without blinking an eye said, "Why, because my frying pan measures only ten inches across!"

We are living in a world with a "population explosion" and every child born represents a challenge to God's people. Either we must lay plans to meet the challenge or we will fail God and His Son. Remember: "To fail to plan is to plan to fail." Many of us are limiting our ability to effectively reach the multitudes because all we have is a "ten-inch" pan.

Several years ago John Gibson related a story by J. D. Gambrell about a farmer who sent his son into the field to lay by the corn. About the middle of the afternoon the father went out to check on his son. To his amazement he saw that Charlie was running and thrashing and making a great effort evidently to kill something. In the process he had beaten down and destroyed about half an acre of corn. He called out, "Charlie, what in the world is the matter?" Charlie explained that he had been lying down sleeping and a lizard ran over his face, and that he was trying to kill it. His father said, "Now, see what you have done; you have lost half of the afternoon, and destroyed half an acre of corn, and what is the use of killing the lizard anyway?" In disgust his father went on, "If you kill

him, he is worth nothing; if you don't kill him, he will do no harm.

We are living in a world with a "population explosion" and every child born represents a challenge to God's people. Either we must lay plans to meet the challenge or we will fail God and His Son.

Charlie replied, "I don't care; I am going to kill him if it takes the whole crop."

When we approach our tasks with such a lackadaisical attitude, it is so easy to get distracted.

What kind of goals are we working on for ourselves? Through the years men have considered their challenges and worked their plans to achieve their goals. David said, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His temple" (Psalm 27:4). The apostle Paul said, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).

Are my plans working toward my goals? Do I really have any goals?

"Give Of Your Best To The Master"



Don Williams

Therefore, he did not play them and the end result was that Portland won by forty-two points.

Los Angeles had already locked up the season, having the best record in basketball 63-19. In the decade of the '80's, Los Angeles reached the N.B.A. finals eight times, and won five championships. Still, the N.B.A. commissioner, David Stern, felt it to be improper that they would deliberately not play their regulars. The Portland team was reportedly outraged that they would play a sub-standard Los Angeles team. The \$25,000 fine is the largest amount ever levied against a basketball team for such an action.

Spiritually speaking, Jesus does not want sub-standard service rendered to him -- he demands that we give our very best to him everyday. The apostle Paul, likening the Christian life to an athletic event, writes: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly" (I Corinthians 9:24-26). Strict, disciplined training went into the winning of the crown of leaves -- so also determined, all-out effort must be given in running the Christian race

of life.

Jesus lay down the ground rules for his way of life when he said: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). Half-hearted servitude will not carry his cross very far. Apathetic worship will not carry his name further than the ceiling of the building. Indifferent living will not glorify his name in the least. To the one talent man who did not put forth his best effort he exclaimed, "and cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:30).

Half-hearted servitude will not carry his cross very far. Apathetic worship will not carry his name further than the ceiling of the building. Indifferent living will not glorify his name in the least.

And so the choice is ours. We can sing, "All To Jesus I Surrender," and "Give Of Your Best To The Master" as loud as we want to, but unless we DO it, we are singing and living a lie. No man will slap a fine on us-- that might be too easy-- no, the consequences of not living for Jesus are far more serious. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

--P.O. Box 593, Guin, AL 35563.

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Words Of

5

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

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 26

JUNE 15, 1990

NUMBER 24

"I Guess It Just Runs In Our Family"

James W. Watkins

A minister asked a group of children in a Sunday School class, "Why do you love God?" He received a variety of answers, but the one he liked best was from a boy who said, "I do not know, Sir. I guess it just runs in the family."

Think of the implications here, and then ask yourself this question, "Does the love of God run in our family?" It cannot, of course, unless, as Paul admonishes, ". . . ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath; but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

This teaching puts the knowledge of God's Word at the saturation level in every home. Any direction a child turns, or to whomever he looks for guidance or instruction it is given from God's Word. This is where the emphasis must be in our homes. The Sage of Israel teaches this same principle to parents when he says: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

The expression, "provoke not your children to wrath" seems to bespeak a lack of parental discipline which would enable a maturing child to understand and see clear cut distinction between right and wrong. His spirit becomes frustrated, his

power of discernment blurred and he gives up on spiritual things.

On the other hand, if we follow the inspired injunction of the ancient law-giver, as he instructs his people in the way of continuing righteousness, the love of God will be as natural and as welcome in our homes as the warming zephyrs of early spring. Here is his statement and the secret of continuing righteousness in the individual, the home and the nation; "and these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates" (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

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direction a child turns, or to whomever he looks for guidance or instruction it is given from God's Word. This is where the emphasis must be in our homes. The Sage of Israel teaches this same principle to parents when he says: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

Does this mean that if we teach them properly they will always be faithful? The word in the text is not "teach," it is "train." Some take training better than others. Brother Guy N. Woods writes: "Often, two sons in the same family, and with equal training, turn out to be vastly different in disposition and character -- the one faithful, the other wholly, worldly and sinful. This can properly be explained only on the ground of difference in the sons, and not in the training which they received." (Questions and Answers - Open Forum, F.H.C. lectures) None the less, the love of God in our homes is contingent upon example and teaching (Acts 1:1).

--305 West Church Street, Lewisburg, TN 37091.

A More Excellent Way

Shan Jackson

One of the most dangerous areas to travel in is down the road of giving advice. Yet one, Paul, was one to listen to in his advice. For Paul did not meet life's challenges sitting comfortably in his easy chair, but rather on the battlefield of life and for twenty centuries our world has declared him to be a great man.

In I Corinthians 12:31, Paul refers to an excellent way for us to travel. This excellent way is the shining path that leads from life to life eternal. And as Paul closes this chapter, leaving us with a questioning mind, he supplies the answer as he begins chapter 14 by saying, "Follow after charity (love)" (I Corinthians 14:1). He also uses

chapter 13, the chapter of love to preface his answer, "Follow after charity." Thus, he shows that following love is a personal virtue and if we practice love, then we will grow in love. Therefore, let us heed the advice of a godly man and "follow after love."

I. FOLLOW AFTER LOVE BECAUSE IT IS ESSENTIAL. Paul says that without this love a Christian is nothing but a hollow shell. Without love the essentials of life are missing for the reason for life is to show love. Christ died so that we might be saved for love. God's gift of eternal life is for the exercise of that abiding and eternal virtue.

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Words Of Truth

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-Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen

Joe T. Spivy Sr.
Associate Editor

"We Know So Much Better Than We Do"



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

In the TV TIMES, May 27 - June 2, 1990, there appeared an article in the PAUL HARVEY NEWS column concerning some Earth Day celebrations across this country. He mentioned several of the celebrations from the east coast to the west coast, and from north to south, noting that "we know so much better than we do." To prove his point he told of (1) well-intentioned demonstrators who carried picket signs protesting pollution as they smoked their cigarettes; (2) of the thousands of people who converged on the State Capitol in Baton Rouge, La., singing and pleading the cause of environmental cleanup, only to leave the seven member clean-up crew with enough litter to fill sixty-five (65) trash bins; (3) the protestors in the financial district of San Francisco, who carried banners reading: YOU'RE BUYING THE STOCKS THAT ARE RUINING MOTHER EARTH! These same chanting marchers smashed glass, threw eggs, overturned newspaper racks, hurled potted plants to the sidewalk and spray painted buildings with the words: STOP POLLUTING; and (4) he told of 750,000 who celebrated in Central Park in New York City, protesting pollution and then left behind one hundred and fifty (150) tons of non-recyclable trash.

After relating each of these nation wide celebrations, Mr. Harvey would insert the words, "we know so much better than we do." He ended with these well chosen words, "Often we know what's right yet do what's wrong because we are not motivated nearly so much by what we think as by how we feel. We don't really want a clean environment nearly so much as we want to talk about it."

How quickly when we begin reading the Bible we find that man has always known so much better than he has done. It is easy to relate that principle to these: Adam and Eve, Cain, Noah, Lot, his wife and daughters, Joseph's brothers, Achan, Samson, Saul, David and the list could go on and on.

"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), and "why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say" (Luke 6:46); only serves to emphasize that we know so much

better than we do.

Paul said, "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Romans 2:13). The words of James, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22) and "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17) stand as silent sentries to remind us that we know so much better than we do too often. Not to be exclusive, let it be said that this is true for saint and sinner alike!

It is easy to look to such scriptures as Matthew 28:19, 20, Mark 16:15, 16, Acts 2:38 and Romans 6:1-6 and wonder why so many people do not do differently to what they do. Study Matthew 7:3-5. The "mote-hunter" has a difficult time as he attempts to see past his own "beam."

Too often we know so much better than we do! In Matthew 25:41, Jesus said to those on the left: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." The reason he gave was, ". . . ye did it not to me" (Verse 45). Were they ignorant of such principles as those contained in Galatians 6:10, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men" and in Titus 3:8, "that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works," or did they just know so much better than they did?

Hebrews 10:25 reads, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together in the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; those who failed to assemble then; and those who refuse to assemble now (when able), would likely chide others for not obeying the gospel, but by failing to assemble, are they not guilty of knowing so much better than they do?"

People who live in glass houses should not throw stones! Remember the words of Mr. Harvey, "We don't really want a clean environment nearly so much as we want to talk about it." Placing that idea in the spiritual realm, we might see it somewhat like this, "We do not really want to do what is right so much as we just want to talk about it." We spend too much time in debating, discussing, or just talking about some situation until either the need does not exist any more or someone else has already done it. A plaque in my office is a constant reminder of such; it reads: "Those who say it can't be done are usually interrupted by others doing it."

• Let us not be hesitant in doing what we know is right. Let us stick by it today and tomorrow. Far be it from God's people, that it ever be truly said, "We know so much better than we do."

Snow Skiing In Baton Rouge



Joe T. Spivy, Jr.

"In the spring, in the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammorites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem" (II Samuel 11:1).

"Honey, I broke my collar-bone," he

said.

"Oh, no," she sympathized; then she asked, "How?"

"Well . . . I broke it snow skiing," he murmured.

"In Baton Rouge, Louisiana?" she asked incredulously.

It really happened! There is not enough room and time to explain how, but you can imagine the embarrassment of my friend, How does one do that in Baton Rouge? Simply put, he was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

There is a very biblical principle worth noting here. Trouble often begins when we are not where we should be. The prodigal son began his "riotous living" once he was in a "far country" away from his home.

David learned this principle. But by the time he had, a horrible price had been paid. Not only he, but others suffered many years after that because of his transgression of this principle. How different

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A More Excellent Way

Continued From Page 1

love. His point being, if we have not love we are nothing and we represent nothing. Then the greatest failure in man's life is not to love.

One of the true necessities of having love lies in the fact that no other virtue, no matter how grand, can substitute for it. We cannot substitute eloquence, knowledge, cleverness, or any other thing for the essential virtue called love. Nor can one evaluate faith as the equivalent of love, not benevolence, nor service, nor anything else. Love is essential as a necessity of life. True Christ-likedness is based on true love.

II. FOLLOW AFTER LOVE BECAUSE IT IS PROFITABLE. Love's profit is seen in its ability to ennoble our other traits. To be learned and possess a loving heart is essentially higher. We see men of real faith who have problems showing Christian love even to their brethren but, oh, to have both faith and love. How more profitable to add to our benevolent nature the quality of love. Such benevolent love the world has seen but once and they nailed Him to the cross. That love is above all, most profitable.

III. FOLLOW AFTER LOVE BECAUSE IT IS PRACTICAL. Paul shows that love can be released in practice. As he said, "Love suffereth long" to which he also adds, "is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up" (I Corinthians 13:4). Love, after all, is humble and humility is a practical virtue.

One of the true necessities of having love lies in the fact that no other virtue, no matter how grand, can substitute for it. We cannot substitute eloquence, knowledge, cleverness, or any other thing for the essential virtue called love. Nor can one evaluate faith as the equivalent of love, not benevolence, nor service, nor anything else. Love is essential as a necessity of life. True Christ-likedness is based on true love.

IV. FOLLOW AFTER LOVE BECAUSE IT IS VITAL. But what is vitality? Vitality is the desire and ability to grow. We mention the vital germ in a seed which allows that seed to grow and such is love in the life of a Christian. That spark of life in a tiny acorn can produce a giant oak tree and so can a spark of love produce a mighty soldier in the Lord's army. True, we can see only through a darkened glass and we cannot see what we will become, but through the eyes of love we can see

purpose, coupled with desire. Yes, love is vital.

V. FOLLOW AFTER LOVE BECAUSE IT IS ETERNAL. "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity" (I Corinthians 13:13). Faith, hope, and love -- these are the abiding things for these are eternal. We may "seek first the kingdom," (Matthew 6:33) but what is the kingdom but the reign of God's love?

VI. FINALLY, FOLLOW AFTER LOVE BECAUSE LOVE IS THE "MORE EXCELLENT WAY" TO WHICH PAUL REFERRED. When Jesus said, "I am the way" (John 14:6), He was referring to a new beginning. Our first step in

Christian love is taken in Christ. We love because He first loved. Just as He is the beginning of love, He is also the ending of love. The "more excellent way" is the way of Christian love, nothing more is needed and nothing less is accepted. If I am not love then I am nothing and life's uttermost failure is not to love. As the ancient poet wrote, "It is not where I breathe that I live, but where I love . . ."

--P.O. Box 904, Palacios, TX 77465.

(Editorial note: This "most excellent" article was taken from the Bellview Beacon and deserves reading).

Snow Skiing In Baton Rouge

Continued From Page 2

his life could have been if David had, in the time" when kings go off to war" joined his men.

Instead David stayed home and the sorriest chapter in his life began to be written. II Samuel 11

But David was in the wrong place. You know the rest of the shameful affair (read II Samuel 11 & 12). It is a story oft repeated in our day. Whether it be "the time when kings go to war" or simply when you should be at home with your family, the man (or woman) of God should take care to not "tarry in Jerusalem." Let us instead take care to be in the right place at the right time.

stands as one of the greatest falls of any man of God. All begun by one simple verse that lets us know that he was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Men most often blame Bathsheba for what happened. "She ought not to have been bathing naked on her roof-top." But many agree that most women bathed in that manner (does your wife wear clothes in the shower?). The only way to have warm water in sufficient amounts to bath was to let the sun heat it up. But with a "battlement" around each house (Deuteronomy 22:8) and the men either tired from work or away at war there should have been no one around to watch her.

But David was in the wrong place. You know the rest of the shameful affair (read II Samuel 11 & 12). It is a story oft repeated in our day. Whether it be "the time when kings go to war" or simply when you should be at home with you family, the man (or woman) of God should take care to not "tarry in Jerusalem." Let us instead take care to be in the right place at the right time.

--Route 7, Box 206, Fairmont, W. Va. 26554.

Proper Balance



T. Pierce Brown

group, we see evidence that the spirit of the scribes and the Pharisees still lingers with us today.

From what Jesus said, it appears that the scribes and the Pharisees were doctrinally sound. But they

Jesus said in Matthew 23:2, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works, for they say, and do not." Without making a specific indictment against a particular person or

did not practice what they preached! Of course "man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's heaven for" as Browning put it. That is, all of us who preach probably preach better than we often practice, for the standard we preach is the perfect will of God, but we fall short of it in our actual lives. Even Peter did! But there is a vast difference in what Peter did once through a weakness of the flesh and what the Pharisees and the scribes practiced regularly because it was their deliberate choice.

The things I wish to address in this article are some areas to which we need to give special attention. Many of us who think of ourselves "conservatives," who write and preach that we must "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3) a

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Proper Balance

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who continually emphasize the importance of keeping our doctrine pure should continue to do so. We speak and write in opposition to the "social gospel" which is apparently becoming more popular in various congregations of the churches of Christ. I hope we continue to do so. We warn against a religion which appeals primarily to the emotions, and I think our warning is valid. But if you do not feel any emotion when you meditate on the cross of Jesus Christ, or the suffering of a sin-cursed humanity, you may be spiritually dead.

It disturbs me to see evidence that our opposition to what we call the social gospel has apparently led some of us to conclude (insofar as our actions indicate our attitude) that our doctrinal soundness somehow makes up for, or substitutes for our lack of concern about the other needs of our neighbors besides their need to know the truth and be made free from sin.

I have heard preachers say, "In the judgment day, Jesus will not ask, 'Were you teaching correct doctrine?', but 'Where were you when I was sick or in prison or needed help in some area?' He does not say that we will be known as his disciples by what we teach, but, 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples. If ye have love one for another'" (John 13:35). The last statement is true, but the application made of it in this context is false. The implication is that our judgment will NOT be in terms of what doctrine we teach, and our discipleship is not contingent on the doctrine we believe and teach. The truth is that our eternal destiny will depend not only on what doctrine we believe and teach, but what we do with reference to it. Also, we must not forget that I John 5:2 says, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments."

Loving the children of God (and those in the world) is not properly indicated just by feeding them when they are hungry and clothing them when they are naked, but by keeping his commandments (obeying the doctrine).

Nothing we ever do or say should imply, suggest, or teach that our judgment will not be in terms of whether our doctrine was correct! But why is it that we must have someone who is considered a "liberal," who is so often so "far out" as to be almost, if not altogether out of fellowship with Christ, teach us the importance of showing love to the pitiful, weak, homosexuals, alcoholics, ungodly wretches of one sort or another who are the outcasts of a decent society?

It is a tragic fact that some wretched persons would not feel welcome (in fact, would certainly not BE welcomed) in some of our congregations which may try to stand up so straight doctrinally that they fall over backwards. This should not be! Paul said about the Corinthians, "Such were some of you" (I Corinthians 6:11). There is no good reason why we can not emphasize the foolishness of spending millions on facilities that are primarily to minister to the selfish needs of materialistic minded persons, and still emphasize the necessity

of ministering to the physical needs of suffering humanity.

There is on good reason why we cannot teach the absolute falsity and foolishness of "the social gospel" -- the idea that justification comes by being concerned about and ministering to the physical needs of mankind -- and still strive to be as concerned about them as Christ was. He did not fail to provide them with loaves and fishes although he knew that some would follow him for that very reason. But he did not fail to teach, "Labor not for meat that perisheth" (John 6:27). That is, providing for physical needs is very important, but it is the truth that makes men free (John 8:32).

Jesus began both to do and to teach (Acts 1:1). Would it not behoove us to strive to pattern our lives after that example? Jesus was probably the only perfectly balanced person in the world! He was the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, but he was also the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He was as gentle as he could be to penitent sinners, yet scathingly he rebuked and chastised the hardened, impenitent ones.

When a person says, "Jesus did not say we would be known as his disciples by the doctrine that we teach," it is probably that he is overlooking these simple facts: 1. There is no way a person can ever BECOME a disciple without knowing, believing and obeying the truth. 2. The world cannot see what we believe except by what they see us practice. 3. This has nothing at all to do with the idea that in the judgment day the doctrine we believe and teach will not be important. 4. But it does have something to do with the fact that merely TEACHING the truth about any subject will not be sufficient to justify us, but whether we also practice it. John put it this way, "Let us love, not in word neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (I John 3:18).

The purpose of this article will have been achieved if you see more clearly that you do not need to take a position which sounds like, "I would rather be found, like 'Mother' Theresa, doing good deeds than to be found like brother X, merely preaching true doctrine." What difference does it make, since neither is approved of God? What prevents us from stressing the absolute necessity of teaching the truth as God reveals it, neither going

beyond what is authorized nor falling short of what he requires, and then being zealous in showing love to humanity by ministering to their needs in whatever condition we may find them?

The fact that historically the "pendulum" may swing from "zeal without knowledge" to "knowledge without zeal" does not authorize us to approve of either.

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Can we not be conservative in our teaching, not going beyond the things that are written, yet liberal in our giving and living, going beyond our power (II Corinthians 8:3)? Can we not be conservative in our criticism and liberal in our praise? Is there any reason we can not have a more balanced life and teaching than we often have?

--Rt. 2, Box 244 X, Wartrace, TN 37183.

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Wo. . . .

Speak forth the

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 26

JUNE 22, 1990

NUMBER 25

By What Authority?



Brad T. Bromling

in religion was of utmost importance. Very few people would argue for anarchy (in religion or otherwise). Intelligent people realize that standards of some description are necessary for a peaceful existence among beings who possess free moral agency.

Strangely, however, Bible-believers are embarrassingly divided over what is and is not authorized in religion. Skeptics gleefully draw attention to such disharmony and impugn the Bible as being at fault. But those who accept the divine authorship (inspiration) of Scripture realize that the fault has its origin in humanity's rebellion. It stands to reason that the God who created this intricately precise Universe has the capacity to reveal His will in a way that all men could understand it alike. Indeed, He has -- in the Bible. Man must approach that holy book with the desire to learn what God has for Him, rather than to confirm man-made creeds (cf. John 5:39).

The Bible speaks of the possibility that a man may "twist" the Scriptures to his "destruction" (II Peter 3:16), and exhorts men to "handle aright the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). Logically, if all men approach the Bible in the same way, they may

"By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority?" These were two questions put to Jesus by the religious leaders of His day (Matthew 21:23). Although they were unwilling to accept His sovereignty, they did recognize that the question of authority

attain the same basic understanding of it. There are several principles which will help one come to an understanding of God's Word and thereby aid in ascertaining religious authority.


(1) It is important that man approach the Bible with good **common sense**. The Bible is a book about real people, for real people. One should expect to understand it. (2) Man should approach the Bible with confidence in its **verbal, plenary inspiration**. The Bible came from God (II Peter 1:20, 21). Its very words are inspired (I Corinthians 2:13), and it is completely inspired (II Timothy 3:16). [Belief in the inspiration of God's Word is based firmly upon sound evidence. One needs to approach the Scriptures for guidance **after** he has been persuaded of their inspiration.] (3) In order to understand the Bible properly, a man must employ his God-given abilities to **think and reason**. He should not expect to understand the Scriptures without exerting mental industry. (4) The Scriptures must be approached **honestly, and with a pure heart**, so as to avoid doctrinal perversions. (5) In order to understand God's Word one must study from a **dependable translation of the Bible**. Although good translations are available, many books which bear the name "Holy Bible" are so polluted with human doctrines that they do not accurately convey the meaning of God's Word. (6) A general, thorough, and **correctly used education** will be a valuable asset in understanding God's Word. This is not to say that only scholars understand the Bible, but that a well-rounded knowledge of language, history, and geography will aid one in comprehending the divine message. (7) In order to determine biblical authority for a given practice or belief, one must understand the distinction between the Bible's major **covenant divisions**. Just because a practice was authorized under the

Mosaic covenant does not mean that it is acceptable today.

It stands to reason that the God who created this intricately precise Universe has the capacity to reveal His will in a way that all men could understand it alike.

While other similar principles may be enumerated, it is sure that if all men would follow even these few guidelines there would be far less confusion over what the Bible teaches. How can one apply biblical authority to a **particular** practice or doctrine? There are **basically** three ways by which God authorizes things through His Word. First, Jehovah authorizes through **commands and statements**. For example, because Peter commanded his audience to "repent and be baptized . . . for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38) we know that God requires repentance and baptism of those who desire salvation from sin. Often, the means of carrying out a command is left up to man. Such is the case relative to preaching the gospel. **That** we are to preach is explicitly required (Matthew 28:19, 20); **what** we are to preach is explicitly stated (i.e., the Gospel -- Galatians 1:6-9); but **how** we are to go is left up to us. We may use all legal and appropriate means. Much of New Testament Christianity is conveyed through commands and statements. Second, God authorizes through **implications** of Scripture. For example, we know that the great commission ("Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

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.

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Words Of Truth Lectureship



David Wade

After missing last year we are glad to be back on schedule with the Words of Truth Lectureship. This one will be the tenth lectureship held here at the Sixth Avenue facilities.

We have made an effort to advertise earlier and more effectively to boost interest and attendance. Our ad will be featured in the June and

August World Evangelist and July Gospel Advocate. My special thanks to A. L. Franks, Editor of Magnolia Messenger and Dalton Key, Editor of Old Paths who have volunteered to run our ad free of charge.

We believe the lectureship theme is very much needed. We have an excellent line-up of speakers who will be challenging us to greater service. We hope you are making your plans to be here.

Brochures on the lectureship are available on request. Please help us advertise. See you in August!

"Unavoidably Postponed"



Don Williams

Scan reading a church bulletin recently, the two previous words jumped out at me. These words were used to announce the postponement of an upcoming wedding. No other information was given -- only that the wedding of the two people has been "unavoidably postponed."

As I thought about these words, I thought of other postponements in life. In our area recently, a "benefit dinner" for a children's shelter was postponed for reasons "beyond the control" of those planning the event. Events or meetings are often put off due to the illness or sickness of those involved. The baseball season was postponed for several weeks due to financial differences between the players and owners.

In II Kings 20, one can read of the death of Hezekiah being postponed for fifteen years. Having a sickness that brought on certain death, he prayed to God, weeping greatly. God heard and answered his prayer, telling Isaiah to tell him, "I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years;" (verses 5 & 6). Today, through medical advances and procedures, doctors can delay and slow the process of eventual death, but they cannot postpone it.

Realizing that we cannot receive a new "lease on life" as Hezekiah did, and in light of the frailties of life, and the certainty of death, what decisions and/or actions should we NOT put off or



Joe E. Galloway

one's mind, or more specifically the change of one's will. It is caused in part by godly sorrow (I Corinthians 7:10) and results in a change of one's practice (Jesus' illustration in Matthew 11:29 says that the young man "repented, AND WENT," showing that the repentance brought about a change in his actions).

Once we understand these matters we should easily see that restitution must be a part of true repentance **when restitution is possible**. In sins of commission a thief could restore what he had stolen (see Luke 19:8) and would have to do so if he really repented. A murderer could not restore a life, yet could be forgiven (read Acts 2:36-38). So, we conclude that restitution is necessary when it is possible for one to make such. This principle would also hold true in sins of omission. Let's consider two common examples:

One common sin of omission is that of "forsaking the assembling of ourselves together" (Hebrews 10:25). It is impossible for one to "make

"Make Up" Work

As most of us understand, there are two main classifications of sins: 1) sins of commission (doing that which God has specifically condemned) and 2) sins of omission (failing to do that which God has required). In either case one must repent to receive God's forgiveness (Acts 17:30). Repentance is the changing of

up" (make restitution) when this sin is committed. One who repents of this sin will attend all services of the church, yet in doing this he merely does that which is his ordinary responsibility and in no way is "making up" an obligation which he once neglected. The very nature of this sin makes restitution impossible. It involves the proper use of one's time, and lost time can never be restored.

Another common sin of omission is that of not giving as prospered. This often is committed in connection with one's missing the assembly. A person may give as prospered when he attends, but if he misses a week he may fail to give for that week's prosperity when he returns. Whether or not he sinned in missing the service(s), he still has prospered to give and failed to do so. In this instance **restitution is possible, so is required!** One can "make up" the amount he failed to give while absent by giving this, along with present prosperity, when he comes back to services.

While considering the matter of "making up" what was missed when absent let's consider a closely related matter: What to do when attending at another congregation on Sunday morning? Our suggestion (and a usual practice among most mature Christians) is that you owe the most of your contribution to your local congregation back home. They are depending on you and YOUR contribution for the work program that has been planned and budgeted. Either leave the most of your contribution at home, send it back while you are away, or give it all when you return! This suggestion should help alleviate deficits which sometimes occur in local budgets. "Think on these things!"

--218 Pinecrest Drive, Greeneville, TN 37743.



Harold Hazelip



Bobby Duncan



Sue Crabtree



Don McWhorter



Milton Sewell



Jerry Jenkins



James Moffett



Don Flatt



Mac Lynn



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Wendell Winkler



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SUNDAY, AUGUST 26, 1990

6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00 - 8:00 p.m. What Manner Of Persons Ought Ye To Be Harold Hazelip

MONDAY, AUGUST 27, 1990

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Church Leadership And Organization Bobby Duncan
9:30 - 10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Women's Role In The Work Of The Church. Sue Crabtree
10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Current Problems Confronting The Church Don McWhorter
11:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00 - 2:45 p.m. Christian Education: At Home, At Church And At School Milton Sewell
3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Reaching Out To The People Jerry Jenkins
3:45 - 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00 - 8:00 p.m. Abounding In The Work Of The Lord James Moffett

TUESDAY, AUGUST 28, 1990

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Church Leadership And Organization Bobby Duncan
9:30 - 10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Women's Role In The Work Of The Church. Sue Crabtree
10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Current Problems Confronting The Church Don McWhorter
11:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00 - 2:45 p.m. Christian Ethics Don Flatt
3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Mission Opportunities At Home And Abroad Mac Lynn
3:45 - 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00 - 8:00 p.m. (Youth Night) How Shall The Young Secure Their Hearts? Jeff Jenkins

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29, 1990

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Church Leadership And Organization Bobby Duncan
9:30 - 10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Women's Role In The Work Of The Church. Sue Crabtree
10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Current Problems Confronting The Church Don McWhorter
11:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00 - 2:45 p.m. EXPO '90 - A World Evangelism Showcase Dennis Jones
3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Speak Thou The Things That Become Sound Doctrine. Wendell Winkler
3:45 - 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:30 - 8:00 p.m. The Same Commit Thou To Faithful Men Cecil May, Jr.

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By What Authority?

Continued From Page 1

every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned" -- Mark 16:15, 16) applies to us by implication (after all, we are creatures in need of salvation -- Romans 3:23). Third, if we find an **approved example** for an action, then we can be sure that it is authorized. A prime illustration of this relates to the Communion. Luke reported: "upon the first day of the week . . . the disciples gathered together to break bread . . ." (Acts 20:7). When is the Lord's Supper to be observed (I Corinthians 11:23-29)? By approved example we know we must partake of it the first day of every week.

If a practice or doctrine is not taught by command or statement, or by implication, and if there is no approved example of it in God's Word, then we are bound by the Scripture's silence to view it as unauthorized. Hence the plea: "Speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent" (cf. I Peter 4:11).

Some have disregarded this prohibitive power of

silence, and suggested that where the Bible is silent there is liberty. This position is neither logical nor biblical. How many doubt the prohibitive power of silence in everyday life? If a man asks his druggist for ibuprofen, must he also enumerate all the things he does not want (e.g., cyanide)? Obviously, what he specifies excludes all else. Just so, when God specifies, He thereby rules out everything else. This is the lesson of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-3). Jehovah specified the type of fire the priests were to use; they tried to use "strange fire." For this rebellion, God consumed them with fire.

If a man wishes to please his Creator he must respect His Word. If all men would approach the Bible in the same honest, humble fashion, we could have the **unity** for which Jesus prayed (John 17), and would squelch the skeptic's criticism of religious confusion.

--Via Reasoning from Revelation, 230 Landmark Drive, Montgomery, AL 36117.

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Motivation Makes The Difference Between Success And Failure



Edsel Burleson

Motivation is a vital ingredient in success. Every winning athletic coach knows that his ability to motivate his players to put forth their best effort is one of the most important factors needed to gain the victory. The successful business manager understands that moti-

vation is a requirement to increase the productivity of the workers he supervises. The scientist is familiar with this principle when he recognizes that every experiment needs an effective stimulus to achieve the desired response.

Loudon and Ella Bitta define a motive as "an inner state that mobilizes bodily energy and directs it in selective fashion toward goals usually located in the external environment." The American Heritage Dictionary defines a motive as "an emotion, desire, physiological need, or similar impulse acting as an incitement to action."

Motivation is a powerful force. It makes the difference between success and failure, getting the job done, or it going undone. It is that element within the individual that can cause a person with meager talents to accomplish tasks of noteworthy merit. The absence of this element can mean that a person with tremendous ability will fail in the accomplishment of even a commonplace project or work.

Fear, concern, love, greed, selfishness or self-interest, all play roles in motivation. They all have

a tremendous impact upon the utilization of our abilities in the accomplishment of a given work, or the failure to do so.

Jerrie Barber, in the November, 1982, *Christian Bible Teacher*, told this story. A fine woman pianist once gave a performance for a large group of women. Afterwards, over coffee, a woman gushed to the virtuoso, "I'd give anything to play as you do." The woman who had given the concert took a sip of her coffee and fixed the red-faced, slightly perspiring matron with a cold gaze. Then she said, "Oh no, you wouldn't." A hush fell over the group, coffee cups stopped on their way to and

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from saucers, and the perspiring matron squirmed in sudden embarrassment. Looking about her she repeated, but in a softer voice, her original statement, "I would too, give anything to play the piano as you do." The female virtuoso continued to sip her coffee and shake her head. "No, you wouldn't," she repeated. "If you would, you would play as well as I do, possibly better, possibly a little worse. You'd give anything to play as well as I do, except time . . . except the one thing it takes. You wouldn't sit and practice, hour after hour, day after day, year after year." Then she flashed a warm smile, "Please understand," she said, "I'm not criticizing. I'm just telling you that when you say you'd give anything to play as I do, you really don't mean it. You really don't mean it at all. (This is Earl Nightengale, by Earl Nightengale, 319).

Paul said, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13, 14).

When we determine that we REALLY want to go to heaven we will be motivated in the direction of greater Christian service. Paul also said, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).

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

"Unavoidably Postponed"

Continued From Page 2

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postpone?

(1) Our decision to become a Christian. Every responsible person needs to heed the wisdom of Solomon as he wrote, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years drawn nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them:" (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

(2) Our decision to make our lives right with others. A nurse recently recounted the story of a dying patient of hers in a nursing home, talking about her refusal of forgiveness for her brother. Words had been said years ago, and she still carried the grudge with her. "And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Ephesians 4:32)

(3) Our decision to live for Christ now. "No man, having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 10:62). The fields of Jesus will not be plowed with good intentions, or "someday" promises, but only as his laborers work and sweat and toil in the present sun. May we not avoid to make that decision now

to faithfully serve Jesus all of our lives. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." (Matthew 25:21)

--P.O. Box 593, Guin, AL 35563.

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—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 26

JUNE 29, 1990

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"Thorns" That Hinder



Edsel Burleson

Alexander Cruden said: "There are some 18 or 20 Hebrew words which point to different kinds of prickly shrubs . . . Probably there is no other country where so many plants of this sort exist as in Palestine. There are at least 200 different species of thorny plants found there."

These inhabitants would have understood well the pain and continuing handicap to be borne by a "thorn."

Consider the following passages which suggest spiritual hindrances. "The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain" (Proverbs 15:19). Laziness limits one's success in every area of conduct and certainly hinders the effort put forth for the Lord.

Israel was commanded to drive out the enemies when they crossed over Jordan into Canaan. They were to "destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places." They were told, "But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell" (Numbers 33:55). Their failure to fully obey God's instructions brought them serious consequences. Incomplete obedience is really no obedience at all. If our "respect" for God leads us to do only the things we want to do, "we" become our authority. Jesus said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words" (John 14:23).

The consequences suffered by Adam for

disobeying God's instructions in Eden caused God to say, "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field" (Genesis 3:18). Partaking of forbidden things always brings consequences that make life harder. And, such participation jeopardizes our souls.

There are countless "thorns" which hinder the Lord's work now. The thorn of immorality, with barbs of lasciviousness, adultery, indecency and revelry, gives Jesus more concern than did the literal crown that was thrust down on his brow centuries ago. This one is sometimes in the hands of would-be friends -- even members of one's own family.

The thorn of immorality, with barbs of lasciviousness, adultery, indecency and revelry, gives Jesus more concern than did the literal crown that was thrust down on his brow centuries ago.

The thorn of division, with briars of compromise, discord, strife and confusion, is so

common today. Churches are being divided over opinions of a few who think they alone are reasonable, and that wisdom will perish when they die.

The thorn of selfishness, with stickers of covetousness, envy, pride and hatred, inflicts wounds that are far more painful to Jesus than anything the Roman soldier could have done with the crown he platted. The thorn is in the hand of the one who serves for reward, distinction, and the praise of men.

The thorn of doubt, with needles of insincerity, fear, pessimism and indecision, the thorn of ignorance, with points of superstition, tradition, idols and ideas, cause much grief.

It is a serious thing to "hinder" others from obeying the truth. John says that all Christians should be "fellow helpers to the truth" (III John 8). Paul warns that "no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (Romans 14:13).

Someone has written:

"To each is given a set of tools,
A shapeless mass and a book of rules
And each must build ere life is flown,
A stumbling-block or a stepping-stone."

--420 7th Street S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

The Bare Truth


Douglas G. Young

It is a bewitching, ironic sight each year about this time. As things of nature become MORE fully clothed, people become less. The stark, bare look which the lesser creation wore in the winter deadness is giving way to blossoming cover -- what beauty! But the reverse is true with people. A basic difference between the two is that one is

created with sense, and one is not.

Modest IS a relative subject, I admit. Precisely as giving is or loving, or kindness. The yardstick of God's new covenant comes without every inch broken down into pieces. He expects those who hope to be saved through its promises to be

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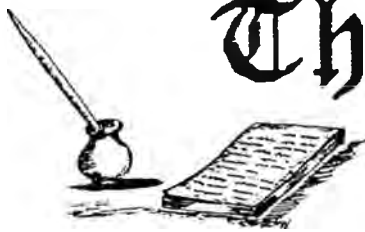
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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Safe In The Arms Of Jesus



David Wade

Recently, a tragic accident happened in our area which claimed the lives of three children, five years and younger. We are saddened to learn of the death of adults, but we are especially appalled to learn of the death of little children. We feel sorrow for their families realizing

the extreme grief and loneliness they must be experiencing.

One great consolation that we have in the death of little children is that they are safe in the arms of Jesus. However, not all people who profess to be Bible believers hold this view. Many still hold to the Calvinist theory that children are born totally depraved and separated from God. A favorite proof text is Psalm 51:5. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Truly, David was born into a sinful world, but the passage says nothing about the infant David being a sinner. Another favorite passage is Psalm 53:2-3. "God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." While this passage describes the evil of those who have "gone back" and have "become filthy" it in no way describes the spiritual state of little children.

Jesus describes the spiritual state of little children in no uncertain terms. "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the

greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. 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 . . . Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 18:1-6, 10).

"Then were there brought unto him little children; that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence" (Matthew 19:13-15).

These verses depict the innocent state of little children. They inherit no sin from Adam or their parents. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father" (Ezekiel 18:20). God is the Father of our spirits (Hebrews 12:9). Children are not "saved" because they have never been "lost." They are "safe." In view of his infant son's death David exclaimed, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (II Samuel 12:23).

The burden of grief is heavy to bear when little children die. Human traditions and assumptions about the eternal estate of little children compound those burdens.

A Lady Named Lydia

I don't know that I have ever met anyone by that name. But, I know of such a person. You can find her referred to in the record Luke gave us. It will be found in the book of Acts. He says, "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira"



Winfred Clark

(Acts 16:14). That is the way she was introduced

to us. We thus know her hometown and also what she did. She was a merchant of fine goods. But that is not all we are told. There are additional facts that will prove to be very interesting.

Here is a lady who seems to have a great deal of this world's goods. But there are also some other things she possessed, things that all of us need. Though we may not have a business, there are some other things like hers that we can have.

I. She had great respect for God.

You will notice that Luke will say, "which worshipped God" Yes, we are aware that she was following the Old Testament system of worship, but she had not yet learned of the New Testament

The Bare Truth

Continued From Page 1

measured by timeless principles, truths that defy a legalistic, speck-hunting view. IN ALL THE HISTORY OF OUR WORLD, MEN HAVE NEVER BEEN SO MEASURED!

When we appeal to Christians, to show more character than skin, we brace for the slings and arrows of "outraged dignity." We ricochet the names and claims of our fellow saints, trying hard to believe they love God and us. A few listen. Occasionally one will determine a better attitude and accept the light of scripture as a guiding star. For these, we are most thankful -- in our weakness as God's messengers, you offer a consoling reminder of what we should believe anyway: God's word, fitly taught, will not return void.

I have tried many things seeking to convince people of the worth of modest dress. I never get very far away from I Timothy 2:9 or James 1:27. They, like other scripture texts, offer better advice than I could ever construct on a subject that has become increasingly more "touchy" all the time. I have not quit believing that Christians who profess to serve Christ with their entire self will, some of them at least, take a second look at modesty.

If Christians choose to display themselves to the depraved eye of public hunger, there is no way to force a change. If they care so little for the sanctity of themselves and the safety of men's hearts that they continue the parade of immodesty, no earthly law forbids it. But it is to be hoped, even expected, that a gift of grace through Christ might make the difference in such lives. He makes it possible to be different, for a reason that raises the premium on virtue and holiness above the common -- and restores a sanctified sensitivity to a person's soul.

--Via The Pillar, P.O. Box 75, Cave City, AR 72521.

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Parents Are Obligated



Bobby Key

Not too many years ago we were a people few in number, possessing the poorest equipment. Our buildings were in out-of-the-way places down back of the jail or on the wrong side of the railroad tracks.

In the eyes of the worldly minded we had little that was desirable and many times we were the object of scorn. We have outgrown the little houses of yesterday, and greater in number and money, we have moved our church buildings up on Front Street. In general we have become a very respectable people. At the same time we have relaxed our fight against religious error and all but given up any attempt to indoctrinate our children.

In the days of yesterday most of our children remained faithful to the Lord. This is not true today! We just as well face the truth. Many children growing up in the church do not share the faith of their parents. Parents, we are under obligation to God and our children. Let us notice three obligations briefly.

1. We are obligated to teach our children the Word of God. Timothy was told to abide in the things he had learned and been assured of, "Knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto

salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 3:14, 15). The faith that was in Timothy was first in his grandmother Lois and in his mother Eunice. "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

2. We are obligated to discipline our children. "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." (Proverbs 13:24) If you refuse to discipline your child, it proves that you do not love him. "Don't fail to correct your children; discipline won't hurt them! They won't die if you use a stick on them!

Punishment will keep them out of hell" (Proverbs 23:13 Living Bible Paraphrased).

3. Parents are obligated to live the principles of Christianity before their children. Your children learn by watching you. If your teaching is to have the desired results, you must live the principles you teach. Your children will learn to pray by observing you pray. Children had rather see a sermon than to hear one.

"A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him" (Proverbs 17:25). "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right" (Proverbs 20:11).

--324 17th S.W., Miami, OK 74354.

"Dull Of Hearing"



Dean Fugett

which they suffered, but a self-inflicted spiritual malady. They simply refused to listen with

In Matthew 13:15, Jesus accused the Pharisees of "dullness of hearing." In the Hebrew letter, the Hebrew Christians were told that they were "dull of hearing" (Hebrews 5:11). In neither case did this mean that they needed mechanical hearing-aids. It was not a physical illness from

understanding to the things being taught that could have brought them to a closer relationship with God. They didn't want to hear anything other than that which they already believed!

Many today suffer from this same affliction. They refuse to even listen to something that is different from their present beliefs and opinions. They have already determined what they will believe, what they will listen to, and thereby have closed the door to any blessings that may come through the hearing of the truth of God (John 8:32). Some have concluded that there is no truth of which they are not presently aware and in which they are not presently occupied.

We should never become so foolish, prideful, or prejudiced in religion that we will refuse audience to anything other than that which we already believe.

This prejudice has completely deafened many to any effort of God to convert them. They have concluded that they will not be judged for what they have not heard. In this they are willingly ignorant of the truth that they are accountable to God for all unused opportunities. This includes the opportunity to hear! Many are failing to avail themselves of the opportunity to 'hear' by forsaking the assembling of themselves together (Hebrews 10:24-25). Thus they fail to receive the exhortation that could be the very deciding factor in their external salvation.

This "dullness of hearing" is within the church as well as without. Note that Matthew's account was of the Pharisees (who "thought" they were righteous) and the Hebrew account is of Christians who were in the kingdom. In either case, when we refuse to hear or refuse to take advantage of opportunities to hear, we leave ourselves without excuse.

We should never become so foolish, prideful, or prejudiced in religion that we will refuse audience

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A Lady Named Lydia

Continued From Page 2

order of things. Here is the case of one who demonstrated her respect for God by worshipping him. She is doing so even though she is not in her hometown. She will still worship him even though she finds herself in a distant place from home. This you will have to admire about this lady named Lydia.

II. She had a willingness to listen.

Notice what Luke has to say, "heard us;" (Acts 16:14). That tells you that she would listen what was being said. You would not have to try to encourage her to listen to what was being said. She is willing to do this. She does not close the ears, but she would listen. That is so important. Just think of what would have taken place if those in Corinth had not been willing to listen. You would never have that statement which says, "and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized" (Acts 18:8). They had to be willing to listen. This was surely the case with the lady named Lydia.

III. She had a heart that could be touched.

Luke tells us something of her heart when he says, "whose heart the Lord opened" (Acts 16:14). This tells you that the gospel that was being

preached was calculated to reach the heart. It did so in the case of those who listened to it preached on that first Pentecost after the resurrection of our Lord (Acts 2:37).

Remember that Paul and Silas are preaching the same gospel that was preached on that day. They are thus seeking to reach the hearts of those like Lydia in the same way.

IV. She had a readiness to obey.

Luke just records a simple fact, "and when she was baptized" (Acts 16:15). You do not find them seeking to persuade her to do what she knows she is to do. She is ready to do what she learns to be the right thing. You would not have to urge such a person to do what they know they should do. They are ready to do so when the opportunity presents itself.

V. She had a concern for others.

Note what she will say, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there" (Acts 16:15). She now wants to do what she can to help those who are involved in trying to get the gospel to others. This was quite a lady named Lydia.

--P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

"Come Back Home"



Don Williams

I have just finished reading Luke 15. I have read it many times before but once again I am impressed by its simplicity, and its statement of love for the lost. As I read this chapter, four words or phrases jump out at me.

Verse 11 - A certain man had

two sons. Why are names given in Chapter 16, but not in Chapter 15? Why did Luke say he was a certain man? It seems to me that he is telling us that first, this was not just any man. It would take a special man to be willing to forgive in the manner that he did. Secondly, the shift of importance is not on their names, but rather on their actions. The younger rebellious son lived in a terrible manner, but was forgiven by a marvelous, loving father.

Verse 13 - riotous living. Again, the word is not defined for us. Does it mean, as the elder brother suggests, that his brother has "devoured the father's living with harlots"? (15:30) Was the older brother only suggesting what he would have done, had he been in his brother's shoes? Perhaps, God does not define the word, lest we should think ourselves better than others when we forsake his way, but do not live in a riotous manner. A person is equally lost, whether he drowns in the "low life" of sin, or simply forsakes Christ and the church, and willingly dismisses himself from the Christian life he once lived. He may live a "good" life in the eyes of his neighbors, being kind and nice -- yet still be just as lost as the one who becomes the "scum" of the earth.

Verse 18 -- sinned against heaven and before thee. When the young son realized where his sinful life had led him, he was ready to return home. He would come, asking forgiveness of God in heaven and also his father on earth. He had sinned and brought shame on both fathers-- Almighty God and his earth father. Is it not the case today that public sin brings shame and reproach to Christ, and the people that make us his Church? Thus, there is a need for public confession of wrong when one "quits" church, lives in the "world," and this decides to come back. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed." (James 5:16).

The final words - Verse 24 - dead - alive - lost -

"Dull Of Hearing"

Continued From Page 3

to anything other than that which we already believe. If we refuse to listen to another side and give critical examination to what we hear, we have become "DULL OF HEARING." That will condemn us!

--P.O. Box 62, Cave City, Arkansas 72521.

found. They describe where the younger son once was, and where he now is. The son was lost to the father -- the father did not know where he was living, and it was as if the younger son were dead -- in fact, he could have been dead, for all the father knew. Now, though, he was found -- he was back home, sleeping and eating where he ought to sleep and eat. He was alive and happy once again in the security of his home.

Are you lost today as a former Christian, having allowed sin to cause you to drift away from Christ and his Church? Please realize that there is no hope outside of Christ. Come back home and be

found in Christ's church once again, being alive and active in his work. Come back to him, repenting and confessing your sins. We'll be glad to pray with you and for you for your forgiveness. **COME BACK HOME!**

Dear friend, are you lost today, having never become a follower of Jesus? Then, today, while you have time and opportunity, come to Jesus believing in his word, repenting of your sins, confessing your faith in Jesus, and being baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Dear friend, **COME HOME TODAY!**

--Route 2, Box 713, Guin, AL 35563.

"Wrong Is Always Wrong"



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

In the March 1984 issue of Christian Bible Teacher magazine, Pat McGee wrote, "Wrong is wrong, even if you don't get caught. Let us remember that 'The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good' (Proverbs 15:3).

Wrong is wrong, even if you do it for

an honorable purpose does not justify a dishonorable deed or action. The end never does justify the means. All sin is transgression of the law (I John 3:4).

Wrong is wrong, even if others are doing worse things. It will be of little comfort in the day of judgment if you should be lost, that others you knew did things which you considered to be worse than your own sins. Remember, 'The thought of sin is foolishness' (Proverbs 24:9).

Wrong is wrong, even if it does not bother your conscience. The conscience can be trained or educated to accept wrong doings, but even an honest sin or evil done in sincerity is sinful in the sight of the holy God. ". . . whatever a man sows, that shall he reap" (Galatians 6:7).

How true it is that wrong is always wrong. I am reminded of a young boy who skipped school to attend a steer show. The next day he had a note from his parents stating that he had been sick. A certain young girl missed school to go to town and buy a prom dress. She had a parental note the next day saying she had been sick and had to stay out of school.

A lie is a lie regardless of how it is "dressed up." A peanut is still a peanut, even if you dress it up in chocolate and sprinkle sugar over it. The fact that it has chocolate on it does not change the fact that it was and will continue to be a peanut. It matters not about the rhyme or reason for telling a lie, even blaming it on someone else, a lie is a lie and will remain such.

Lying is wrong and any sin not repented of (even a "little white lie") will keep a soul from heaven. Sin is always wrong regardless of circumstances.

--1400 6th Ave., Jasper, AL 35501.

Oxymora . . .

Bill Bagents

Plural of oxymoron. Commonly misrepresented as "oxymorons." Term for a combination of contradictory or incongruous words, as cruel kindness, jumbo shrimp, etc.

Some words just do not belong together. Even if we understand and accept such combinations as figures of speech, we still recognize the inherent contradiction. At least, I hope we do. Please consider the following examples:

"Harmless gossip." Gossip considered sufficiently true, sufficiently false or sufficiently trivial as to cause no harm. At the very least, gossip always harms the heart and soul of its "teller."

"Social drink." Consumption of alcohol in an effort to fit in and feel at ease with others engaged in the same activity. Can ingesting a poisonous, addictive drug which impairs judgment and motor skills really make a person more sociable?

"Meaningless affair." Adultery which lacked affection and commitment. The phrase is

commonly employed in attempts to ease the pain of those deeply hurt by the sin. Never works. Adultery always means, "You lied. You sinned. You hurt me to the core."

"Boring worship." Description of a religious assembly which failed to meet the expectations of the attendee. If we accept as a basic definition of worship, "reverence for and devotion offered to God," how could anyone find it boring? Answer: attendees who use such language likely did not worship. They merely attended.

"Little sin." Common description of my sin as compared to yours. To the extent that ALL sin is against God, NO sin can be little.

"Cheap grace." View of grace promoted by those who see the grace of God as requiring no response and making no demands of us. Grace extended through the cross of Christ must never be so described!

--Bulletin, Florence Blvd. Church of Christ, 2502 Florence Blvd. Florence, AL 35630.



(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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Live It Every Day

Elwood Holt

The religion of Jesus Christ is a religion to be lived every day. It is not a Sunday religion only. One man said, "Measure not men by their Sundays, without observing what they are all the week after." This is good advice, for many do not live through the week days like they appear to live on Sunday. The Christ-like personality must be reflected in the Christian every day he lives. He must live each moment as if it were the last moment he would ever have upon this earth. This life is a time for preparation. We must prepare for the next life. If we fail to make our preparation now, it will be too late for us to be saved after we are gone.

All the prayers that can be prayed, all the money that can be spent, will avail nothing if we die lost and alienated from God. It is not possible for us to be transformed from a sinner into a saint after we are dead. We must die as saints if we are to live as saints in the next world. A saint is one who has been separated from sin. Paul addressed the "Church of God which is at Corinth, and to them sanctified in Christ Jesus" (I Corinthians 1:2). So there were living saints in the Corinthian church. To be a saint is to be a Christian. Some think that a saint is a person stricken with old age; others, one who has been exalted to sainthood long after he is dead. Now many aged persons are saints, but many young ones are, too. But, if one dies unsaved he can never be a saint. The Bible does not teach that the efforts of the living can atone for the lost condition of the dead. It does say, "As a tree falleth, so there shall it be" (Ecclesiastes 11:3). This simply means that no one falls in death, so will he stand in the eternal judgment.

One man informed another who wanted to pray for him and prepare him for death, that he did not need his prayers for that purpose. He had made preparation in his lifetime, had faithfully served his God, and had been a member of the body of Christ. I am afraid of death bed repentance. When a person has the opportunities that we have today

to hear the truth and live for the Lord, but dissipates his opportunities and spurns the invitation of love, I fear he will be standing outside when the storm begins to lash and the fury of the dreadful moment presses upon him. Is it fair to the Lord who died for us, to give our lives to the devil, and shun every overture of mercy when we have our health? Then when death lurks on the threshold we reach out in fright for that hand that beckoned in our direction for so long when we were sound of body and mind and could serve him by serving others. I ask, is it fair? Friends there is not a more dangerous doctrine than the one that says one can cry out, "Lord, save me," on his death bed, that he has license and liberty to do as he please, when he pleases.

The gospel of Christ demands obedience (Hebrews 5:9). It demands that one, "work out his salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). He is commanded to "stand fast" and to "abound in the work of the Lord." When he spends his life standing fast in sin, and abounding in iniquity, do you think the Lord will hear him when he comes to die? If you were in the Lord's position what would you do? God cannot forgive until the

I am afraid of death bed repentance.

guilty repents. This is a fact not even to be argued. Man must repent or perish (Luke 13:3). Friends, repentance is not just being frightened. Too many try to repent on their deathbeds, then retract it all when they learn that they are going to live. Just who do we think God is anyway? Is He one we can run over, trample under foot, push back in the corner, slap in the face, then throw our arms around him, so to speak? Oh no, repentance is a genuine turning from sin, and it involves restitution. The man who out of fright tries to repent on his death bed has no time for restitution. But repentance is never complete without restitution where it is possible.

What is the safe course? We all know that it is to hear the Lord's will while we can, and accept it. We plead with you to learn the truth as the Bible gives it. AND BE FREE.

Is The Other Side Winning?

John Gipson


Sometimes I get tired of reading the paper. Elderly people are being swindled out of money; Stop and Rob stores are losing their cash, and the workers are losing their lives; homes are being broken into; fires are being set; women are being raped; policemen are being killed; purses are being snatched; people are being mugged; gang wars are breaking out; drug dealers are being slain; children are being abducted, etc.

Enough! Why do I read the same stories day after day? No wonder the fellow wrote:

God's plan made a hopeful beginning;
But I squandered my chances by sinning
We trust that the story,
Will end in God's glory,
But at present, the other side's winning.

I even read that a London church found it

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Proof Texts Used By Modern Day "Healers"



David Wade

If other areas of the country are like our area, then they too are "blessed" with an abundance of religious hucksters who claim power to speak in tongues and perform miracles of healing. They, of all people, know they are fakes and do not duplicate the miracles of the First Century. It is appropriate to note some of their proof-texts and expose their errors.

1) "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). It is argued from this verse that atonement includes healing of the body. Even a casual reading of the immediate context reveals that healing of the soul is what is under consideration (v. 6). Jesus healed numerous afflicted persons without ever dying. His death on the cross was necessary in order to heal sin-sick souls. Jesus died for our sins, not our sicknesses (I Corinthians 15:3).

If healing of the body is also promised in Isaiah 53:5, then a person who receives forgiveness should expect healing of any and all physical problems. However, such was not the case even when the true miracles were evident in the First Century. Paul had a thorn in the flesh which the Lord would not remove (II Corinthians 12:8-9). Timothy had a stomach ailment (I Timothy 5:23). Paul left Trophimus at Miletus sick (II Timothy 4:20). If divine healing were a part of the atonement, no Christian should ever suffer disease or die. However, we know that faithful Christians

suffer disease and die just as the wicked do.

2) "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8). It is argued that Christ is the same today and since he miraculously healed in the First Century, he must do the same today. This is simply a perversion of what the text is saying. For example, "God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). Does God continue to make man in this way? God rained "bread from heaven" (Exodus 16:4). Does he feed us with manna today? Hebrews 13:8 tells us of the eternal nature of Christ. It implies that Jesus is same in character but it does not imply he is same in method. That which proves too much proves nothing.

3) "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:17-18).

These signs followed believers but there is no proof they followed all believers or that they follow believers today. The signs did not follow believers in Samaria for a period of time. It was necessary for the apostles Peter and John to lay hands on them to impart the gifts (Acts 8:18). Philip performed miracles but could not impart the gifts (Acts 8:6).

The purpose of miracles was to confirm the Word of God. "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20).

When the word of God was confirmed, the signs were to halt (I Corinthians 13:8).

No person has been miraculously healed and not one dead person has been raised to life this side of the apostolic age. Do not be deceived, my friends!

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Is The Other Side Winning?

Continued From Page 1

necessary to post this notice: "Not everyone who goes to this church is converted. Watch your hat and coat."

It's pretty bad when you can't trust those who attend worship services. But there was a Judas among the apostles, and an Ananias and Sapphira in the early church. So it really shouldn't shock us to find a few hypocrites in the church today. But that is a handy excuse for not becoming a Christian. One fellow was complaining about this problem when he was advised by a quick-minded friend: "If you ever find a perfect church, don't you go in!"

"Why?"

"It will cease to be perfect when you enter!"

There's evil in the world; no doubt about it. But there is also good. This world is a mixture -- that's for sure. But one day it's all going to be straightened out.

For now we see weeds and wheat growing together. But Jesus says, "Let both grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn" (Matthew 13:30).

--Via Keynoter, Little Rock, Arkansas.

What's The Value Of One Member?

Ten little members standing in a line.
One disliked the president, then there were nine.
Nine ambitious members offered to work late.
One forgot her promise, then there were eight.
Eight creative members had ideas good as heaven.
One lost enthusiasm, then there were seven.
Seven loyal members got into a fix.
They quarreled over programs, and then there were six.
Six members remained with spirit and drive.
One moved away, then there were five.

Five steadfast members wished there were more.
One became indifferent, then there were four.
Four cheerful members who never disagree--
'Til one complained of meeting, then there were three.
Three eager members. What do they do?
One got discouraged, then there were two.
Two lonely members, our rhyme is nearly done.
One joined the bridge club, then there was one.
One faithful member was feeling rather blue--
Met with a neighbor, then there were two.

Two earnest members each enrolled one more--
Doubling their number, and then there were four.
Four determined members just couldn't wait--
'Til each won another, and then there were eight!
Eight excited members signed up sixteen more.
In another six verses, there'll be a thousand twenty-four!
--Via BULLETIN, 2502 Florence Blvd. Florence, AL 35630.

How Important Are Worship Assemblies?



Edsel Burleson

Mid McKnight once wrote the following most thought-provoking article which he entitled "A Modern Parable."

"A woman was hired as a servant in a home. She was a good cook and prepared excellent meals, but none of the family showed up to eat. Naturally she asked why her meals were

untouched. This was the reply she got: 'We furnish you the house and the food; we pay you a salary. Now it is up to you to get us to eat.'

"Again: A school hired a teacher, paid him a salary, furnished him with a good building and equipment. He came to school prepared to teach and the first morning no students came. Naturally he wondered about it. They replied, 'We pay you a salary, furnish you a nice building and equipment. It is up to you to get the pupils here for the school.'

"Again: A church secured a preacher, erected a nice building, and supported the preacher. He prepared his sermons and delivered them, but many of the congregation did not come. Naturally, he wondered about the situation. Upon inquiry, he

was informed, 'We pay you a salary and furnish a building for the audience. It is up to you to come around and beg us to come hear you preach.'

"Which of these stories do you regard as the most foolish? Or is there really any difference in them?"

To many people it seems most unreasonable that anyone should even be expected to attend all services of the church.

In reality, a devout Christian doesn't give a second thought to the question of whether or not he should be present. Can you imagine a rabid football fan whose son plays on 'first string' asking: "Must I go to every game?" It isn't a question whether he must go. He wants to go, and will go if at all possible. He will even arrange his business appointments and social engagements so they will not conflict with game schedules.

Many Christians, likewise, arrange their schedules so there will be no conflict with any of the services of the church. Many who miss Sunday night and Wednesday night do so by choice rather than by conflict of schedule. A conflict of interest means that one needs to work on his priorities.

James said ". . . to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). Any service where the Bible is taught, prayer is made, and God is worshipped is good. Jesus has never missed a service where saints were gathered. "Where two or three are gathered

together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

When one "chooses" to miss opportunities to worship God he is guilty of sin. Such choices reveal a spiritual disorder, a wound, an infection, a "fever" that needs some immediate and special attention.

Don Gardner once told of the action of a church member which revealed a sensitive conscience about the need to worship the Lord. The member came requesting prayer because she felt she had done something that merited such action. She brought the following letter which explained her response and one which all may read with interest and profit:

"I count it a precious privilege to meet at the appointed time to worship God, and on this last Wednesday night I failed to meet that appointment.

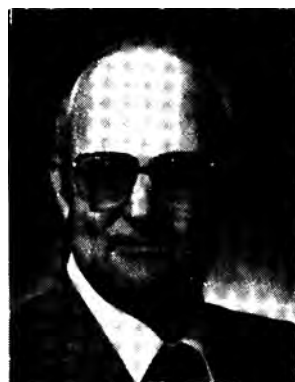
"Years ago I missed a day's work every third Wednesday rather than to miss the appointed hour on those evenings, and I do not want anyone to think that I count it less important now.

"However, on last Wednesday evening I started too late to do some things that might have waited until Thursday. I got too busy finding places and verifying orders that I forgot about the service until it was too late to come.

"I have asked the Lord to forgive me, but I need your prayers and forgiveness, too."

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

Bible Classes And Spiritual Growth



Dean Fugett

One cannot be acquainted with the Scriptures and discount the importance of regular Bible Study. Ever since God started putting his Word into written form, he was willed that it be read, understood, believed and obeyed. He commanded the Israelites to teach it to their children in each

generation to keep their faith constant. We can do no less.

It cannot be denied that there is serious trouble in spiritual Israel today. Every poll shows that we are losing large numbers of our young people. That "we" is not the church; it is the parents. Our children are not being prepared for the challenges to their faith. That failure begins when parents do not emphasize the need for Bible Study and do not demonstrate by personal example.

Some children may still be lost even when parents do stress regular Bible Study and attendance at the Bible Study periods of the local congregations, but what chance do the children have whose parents are not careful to maintain regular presence at the Bible classes and follow up

that attendance with study at home where the children can observe that study and even be involved in that study.

Every poll shows that we are losing large numbers of our young people. That "we" is not the church; it is the parents.

Parents begin to lose their children in religion when they devalue Bible study at home and in the local congregation. When that foundation is not laid and reinforced, young people have no foundation for the ethical and moral decisions that they are called upon to make. Thus, their decisions are based on less than that which is acceptable to God. The decision is made that sets their feet on the path away from God rather than toward him. The source of their decision making process is other than the objective guide provided by God. It is still not in man that walks to direct his own steps (Jeremiah 10:23). Whenever he tries, he is doomed to tragedy.

The children of all church members are provided with an opportunity to learn about God and his will as revealed through Christ in the Bible Study periods of the local congregations. We cannot over-ride the parents actions and steal the children away from the home for the Bible

Classes. It will do no good even if we could.

--P.O. Box 62, Cave City, Arkansas 72521.

**Announcing the 1990
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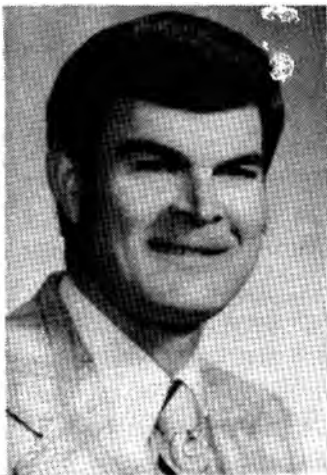
August 26-29, 1990

Theme

"Back To Basics"

**to be held at the Sixth Avenue
Church of Christ, Jasper, AL
Speakers and Topics
to be announced.**

Big Money Blessing



Ray Hawk

Not too long ago I received a special letter from "Rev." Ike. "Reverend" Ike is a hustler that passes himself off as a preacher. His letter contained these large, bold statements,

"I give you this Blessed, Special Silver Dollar to help you claim that Big Money Blessing . . .

Do you want to claim that blessing? Are you ready for yours? How big of a Money Blessing do you want?"

At first I thought I was getting something. The letter states that "Rev." Ike is sending me a silver dollar which I am to keep in my pocket. His letter states,

"I'm sending you this silver dollar I made for you. It's just like the real one I carry in my pocket. I want you to keep one of the silver dollars as a point of contact for you and me to agree on in God's Spirit to drive out Evil, get rid of Bad Luck

and solve all money problems."

"Rev." Ike did not send a real silver dollar. He sent two paper prints of silver dollars! I am suppose to send one back to him and keep the other paper silver dollar in my pocket "to drive out Evil, get rid of Bad Luck and solve all money problems." On the back of the paper silver dollar I am to return to Ike, there is a place for the date I need the money and the amount of money I need to help me "solve all money problems." As Johnny Campbell says, that would be enough money to pay off all my debts, get the things I feel I need, and then in addition have \$25 in my pocket! Of course, "Rev." Ike doesn't do this for free. No. You are requested to send, not only the paper silver dollar, but a \$20.00 donation. Doesn't that seem peculiar to you? If he has the power to put all the money you need in your pocket, why can't he do the same thing for himself? "Rev." Ike puts money in his pocket from your billfold!

"Rev." Ike gives one passage of scripture to show that God will give you the money of your dreams if you will contribute to "Rev." Ike's money ministry.

"But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he

may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day" (Deuteronomy 8:18).

If he has the power to put all the money you need in your pocket, why can't he do the same thing for himself?

It is sad how TV evangelists, the "Rev." Ikes, and other self aggrandizing preachers can bilk the American public out of millions with the blessings of those who are robbed in the name of religion. The above passage was a promise to Israel under the old covenant. Our blessings today are spiritual (Ephesians 1:3). When Jesus stopped providing the loaves and fishes and started feeding the people spiritually, they left (John 6:66-69). People need to recognize what Pilate could not, that Jesus' kingdom "is not of this world" (John 18:36).

--1490 Campbell Street, Jackson, TN 38305.

Guilt By Association



Cecil Corkren

Will God judge us collectively as a congregation? Some people seem to think so. Some think they will personally be held accountable for anything and everything that is wrong in the congregation where they worship. They seem to be unable to tolerate error or wrong on anybody's part. Some believe the

church should be perfect, therefore they believe they will be held guilty by association with unfaithful members of the Lord's church. Jesus said in Revelation 3:4, "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: FOR THEY ARE WORTHY."

Is it right to think you are guilty because of the wrongs of others? Many today use this for a reason for not attending worship services. Are they right? NO! II John 11 states, "For he that biddeth him God speed is a partaker of his evil deeds." We should never bid one God's speed when he is in error, but kindly point out his error or wrong. We can cover a multitude of sins by trying to improve the guilty persons (James 5:19-20). "Continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel" (Colossians 1:23).

Many are discouraged in the church today when

they see sin in the lives of Christians. Their love waxes cold, they become discouraged and some quit attending and stay at home to just worship with their family. Paul faced false brethren, trials, etc., but he says, "None of these things move me, neither count my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy" (Acts 20:24). Some of the last words of Paul were, "I have kept

BEHAVING as a Christian is a 24 hour a day responsibility -- not just when you are in the assembly of the saints.

the faith." He did not quit because of "false brethren."

So, brother and sister, keep the faith in these trying times when you see so much hypocrisy and feel guilty by setting on the same pew with someone whose life is un-Christian in conduct. Paul said to Timothy, "But if I tarry long that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to BEHAVE thyself in the house of God, which the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." (I Timothy 3:15). Behaving as a Christian is a twenty-four hour a day responsibility -- not just when you are in the assembly of the saints. If you worship where the elders as well as many members are unfaithful try to improve the situation rather than quitting and losing your own SOUL!

--1705 Sandra Lee Drive, Jasper, AL 35501.

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Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble men, but I speak the words of truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 26

JULY 13, 1990

NUMBER 28

Can One Learn About God From Nature?



Brad T. Bromling

"Man can learn absolutely nothing about God from an examination of nature." This statement has often been made, but is such a position valid?

It is true that there is much that man cannot learn about God without written revelation. Man will be unable to deduce from the natural realm

what he should call the Creator, the price the Creator paid to secure man's salvation from sin, or what He requires of man to obtain that salvation. Likewise, man will fail to learn how to worship God, or how to prepare for death. These are but a few of the things which man may learn only by searching the Scriptures.

However, acknowledging the limitations of a thing does not thereby dismiss its value. For instance, the Bible teaches nothing of how to remove cataracts, but this limitation does not repudiate the ability of the Scriptures to cure spiritual blindness. Although there is much that the creation cannot tell of the Creator, the Bible itself teaches that man may know **something** of God from nature. For example, David boldly exclaimed: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). Such declarations are sufficient for the purpose intended: "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). The available information leaves man without excuse. Some assert that this passage only refers to men who had been exposed to the written Word. However, nature's testimony of God is not withheld from

those who have never heard the Gospel -- it speaks from every atom to every man, everywhere! This proclamation is as universal as the weather. Jesus said: "[God] makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 6:45). Herein is a powerful witness to God's existence. This point was made by Paul: "[God] in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons . . ." (Acts 14:16, 17). Thus, inspiration claims that nature does teach man about God.

What, then, may one learn of God from the natural realm? The main arguments for God's existence yield different information about the Almighty.

Although there is much that the creation cannot tell of the Creator, the Bible itself teaches that man may know something of God from nature.

The Cosmological Argument

This is perhaps the strongest argument for the existence of God. It affirms that every effect must have an adequate cause. Hebrews 3:4 contains a simplified form of the argument: "For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God." No sane person assumes that a house created itself or that it has always existed. Likewise, we are right in questioning the sanity of one who looks at the vast universe with all of its intricacies and exclaims: "There is no God!" Little wonder that David called the atheist a "fool" (Psalm 14:1). Scientific inquiry leads us to conclude that since the universe is made up of matter, and matter is neither eternal nor capable of bringing itself into

existence, it must have been created. If the universe was created, a Creator must exist. With this argument, man may reason that God is infinite in His power. He must be all-powerful, in order to be superior to all He has created (the thing created is never greater than its creator). Since life, intelligence, and love exist, we may properly conclude that God possesses these characteristics as well.

Two criticisms of his argument have been raised. First, if everything has a cause, then God must have a cause. This misses the point of the argument, which says: "every effect has a sufficient cause." God is not an effect, He is a cause -- the first Cause. Second, since evil exists, and must have a cause, is not God evil? While it is true that evil is an effect, it does not follow that God is evil. God created man with the ability to choose right from wrong. In so doing, He allowed man the option of introducing evil into his world. Had man never sinned, evil would not now plague him. Man has himself to blame (Romans 5:12). One might complain, "God is still responsible since He created man with the ability to choose wrong!" This complaint fails to recognize the importance of free-will. Is there a man who would wish to give up his free-will? Finally, the problem of evil was resolved on Christ's cross, anyway. Freedom from the tyranny of evil is available to all who accept the salvation offered by God.

The Teleological Argument

This argument is closely related to the cosmological argument in that it also argues from effect to cause. The difference is that the teleological argument begins with a design and argues for the existence of a Designer. The most popular example of this argument was formulated by William Paley in 1802. Paley reasoned that if he were to stumble upon a rock in a field he might conclude that it had always been there. But if he

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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David Wade Editor

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Can One Learn About God From Nature?

Continued From Page 1

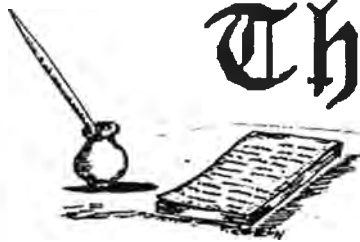
were to come upon a watch, such a conclusion would be absurd. The truth is, a watch bears every mark of being crafted by an intelligent watchmaker. Likewise, the universe bears every mark of intelligent design and, therefore, points to the existence of an intelligent Designer. The order and elaborate design of our grand Universe tell us that God is orderly and intelligent.

The Moral Argument

Once again arguing from effect to cause, this argument suggests that if there is a moral law in man, a moral Lawgiver must exist. It is a matter beyond dispute that wherever man is found, regardless of how advanced or primitive his culture may be, he operates according to the concept of right and wrong. While cultures often differ over what things are prohibited or allowed, no culture exists which fails to recognize a distinction between the two. Whence came this moral sense? Moral capacity is an effect which has God as its adequate Cause. This truth of nature tells us that God is a moral Being desirous that His creatures do right.

Conclusion

While man's knowledge of the Almighty is severely limited without the written Word, it is clear from sober reasoning that the creation testifies, unmistakably, of the supreme, intelligent Creator we call God.



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Four Views Of Death



David Wade

For some, death is their greatest fear. To others, death is the doorway to their greatest hope. How do you view death? Let us be impressed with four views of death we find in the Scriptures.

First, consider God's feelings toward the death of his saints. David said, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15). The death of his saints is precious to God, because it is costly. It cost the blood of Jesus on the cross for our sins. Christians are redeemed by the "precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:19).

Notice also that the precious death of the saint is "in the sight of the Lord." Speaking of the "valley of the shadow of death," David exclaimed, "thou art with me" (Psalm 23:4). When Lazarus died, his spirit was "carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom" (Luke 16:22). When a faithful Christian dies, he does so in the attentive presence of our loving God. The death of a saint is precious in God's sight.

Consider the view of death held by the faithful departed Christian. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Revelation 14:13). They are blessed or happy. "Blessed" is the same word Jesus used to introduce the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12). Jesus said of Lazarus that "he is comforted" (Luke 16:25). The faithful Christian is able to enjoy an eternal rest from all labor, pain, sickness and death (Revelation 21:14).

In addition, the influence of the faithful Christian lives beyond his earthly pilgrimage to influence others for good. The faithful example of righteous Abel speaks eloquently to us even to this day (Hebrews 1:4).

Consider the view of death Paul urges for every faithful saint this side of eternity. "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). Our lives must be centered in Christ, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). Further,

Death is an ever-present reality. We may deny our mortality and we may "run" from death. However, eventually, every person must face his appointment with death. "And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

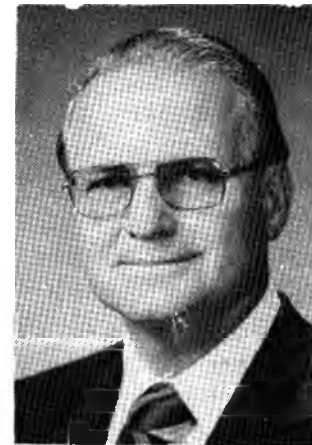
People view death in different ways.

Paul said, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you" (Philippians 1:23-24). The faithful Christian enjoys all spiritual blessings in Christ now (Ephesians 1:3). One can look forward to the "gain" that is "far better" when this earthly life is over.

Consider the view of death held by the unredeemed when they suddenly discover they have squandered their last opportunity to serve God. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:3). When that day comes the falling rocks and mountains cannot hide the unredeemed from the wrath of the Lamb (Revelation 6:16). They will hear the fateful words, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

What is your view concerning death?

To Love God



Bobby Key

A member of the church says, "since other denominations love God, surely they will be saved." This brother speaks of "other denominations" indicating that the church of Christ is a denomination. I deny this! If the church were a denomination we had just as well be a member of other denominations. I had

as soon belong to one human organization as another. The truth of the matter is that all denominations are sinful. I read of the one body, which is the Lord's church in the Bible (Colossians 1:24); however, search as I may, I am unable to find a single denomination on the pages of the sacred text. The Word of God knows of no denominations and makes no promise to them.

It is not my place to offer hope of salvation to any person who has failed to obey the gospel of Christ (II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Now to the thought on love -- the only love for God that will do a man any good is that love which leads him to obey God. "If a man love me, he will keep my words," said Jesus (John 14:23). Again we read: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he is it that loveth me . . . He that loveth me

Continued On Page 4



Harold Hazelip



Bobby Duncan



Sue Crabtree



Don McWhorter



Milton Sewell



Jerry Jenkins



James Moffett



Don Flatt



Mac Lynn



Jeff Jenkins



Dennis Jones



Wendell Winkler



Cecil May, Jr.

**WORDS OF TRUTH LECTURESHIP
AUGUST 26-29, 1990
SIXTH AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST
1501 Sixth Avenue • Jasper, Alabama 35501
Telephone (205) 384-6446 or 387-1670
THEME: "BACK TO BASICS"**

TUESDAY, AUGUST 26, 1990

- 6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
- 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. What Manner Of Persons Ought Ye To Be Harold Hazelip

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27, 1990

- 9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Church Leadership And Organization Bobby Duncan
- 9:30 - 10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Women's Role In The Work Of The Church..Sue Crabtree
- 10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Current Problems Confronting The Church Don McWhorter
- 11:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
- 2:00 - 2:45 p.m. Christian Education: At Home, At Church And At School... Milton Sewell
- 3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Reaching Out To The People Jerry Jenkins
- 3:45 - 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
- 6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
- 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. Abounding In The Work Of The Lord James Moffett

THURSDAY, AUGUST 28, 1990

- 9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Church Leadership And Organization Bobby Duncan
- 9:30 - 10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Women's Role In The Work Of The Church..Sue Crabtree
- 10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Current Problems Confronting The Church Don McWhorter
- 11:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
- 2:00 - 2:45 p.m. Christian Ethics Don Flatt
- 3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Mission Opportunities At Home And Abroad Mac Lynn
- 3:45 - 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
- 6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
- 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. (Youth Night) How Shall The Young Secure Their Hearts? ..Jeff Jenkins

FRIDAY, AUGUST 29, 1990

- 9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Church Leadership And Organization Bobby Duncan
- 9:30 - 10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Women's Role In The Work Of The Church..Sue Crabtree
- 10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Current Problems Confronting The Church..... Don McWhorter
- 11:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
- 2:00 - 2:45 p.m. EXPO '90 - A World Evangelism Showcase Dennis Jones
- 3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Speak Thou The Things That Become Sound Doctrine.. Wendell Winkler
- 3:45 - 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
- 6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
- 7:30 - 8:00 p.m. The Same Commit Thou To Faithful Men Cecil May, Jr.

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"Keep Thyself Pure!"



Edsel Burleson

Paul said, "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be a partaker of other man's sins: keep thyself pure" (I Timothy 5:22). "KEEP THYSELF PURE." What a challenge! Especially since the word "pure" sounds so strange to modern ears. We live in a time when anything goes. Obscene language fills the

pursue pleasure and recreation, fun and excitement by watching sex in the movies, T.V. and porno literature. Who would deny that such appeals to our lower nature. John calls this the "lust of the flesh" (I John 2:15-17).

In a vain desire to be thought well of, many are tempted to go along with the crowd, accept the verdict of the majority and abandon all moral standards.

In a vain desire to be thought well of, many are tempted to go along with the crowd, accept the verdict of the majority and abandon all moral standards.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary gives this definition of purity: "Quality or state of being pure. a. Freedom from foreign admixture or deleterious matter. b. Cleanness; freedom from foulness. c.

Freedom from guilt; innocence; chastity. d. Freedom from sinister or improper motive. e. Freedom from foreign words or idioms, or from barbarisms."

"KEEP THYSELF PURE!" Purity is related to a word that appears more often in the Bible than pure or purity. That word is HOLY, which literally means to be separate. It means to be like the Lord. Are we trying, striving (honestly and consistently) to be like Jesus?

Larry F. Palmer wrote the following interesting story emphasizing purity. "In many northern countries of the world there lives a little animal called the ermine. Its snow-white fur is extremely valuable and is used in many countries to decorate the state robes of judges. The whiteness of the fur is symbolic of purity and honor.

"The ermine takes great pride in the white fur coat and protects it against anything that would spoil it.

"It is said that fur hunters take cruel advantage of the ermine's care to keep his coat clean. To catch him, hunters will find his home and daub the

airways, the printed page, the streets and many homes; nudity is expected in movie and television productions; most popular and country songs are filled with references to sin; living together without the benefit of wedlock has become an accepted arrangement and homosexuality is scarcely frowned on any more.

Calvin Conn wrote in the Chattanooga Valley Bulletin, "America today is a land that preaches and practices recreational sex. Many Americans

The Necessity Of Continued Study



Cecil May, Jr.

E. H. Ijams, preacher, teacher and college president, was still teaching vibrant, relevant Bible classes after age 90. One key to his lengthened usefulness is the quality that caused him to take Greek at Harding Graduate School in 1955, at age 70.

Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell

Holmes began the study of classical Greek at the age of 94. Asked why, he replied, "Why, my good man, it's now or never."

University of Chicago Physics Professor James Cronin, on the day he won the Nobel Prize, was not in the teachers' lounge where his award was being discussed. That conversation turned to how a Nobel Prize winner spends his day. A colleague answered, "He is spending this day like he spends every day. Right now he's in class."

"Oh," came the inquiry, "what's Jim teaching this quarter?"

The reply: "He isn't teaching the class he went to this morning. He's taking it."

Leaders of God's people must study. People gravitate to where they learn and are helped. Preachers who quit studying grow stale, and lose even what they used to know (Matthew 13:12). Continued study makes for continued usefulness. "Give heed to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (I Timothy 4:13).

We must study the Bible carefully and systematically, to thoroughly and accurately know the word we are to communicate to others. Just as

people with serious physical ailments seek help from those knowledgeable in medicine, and people with legal difficulties go to those educated in the law, so people needing spiritual direction are attracted to those they believe know the word of God.

There are outstanding preachers who have never been to college, but there are none who have not studied and learned.

We should read religious books and periodicals. It is foolish to believe we cannot be helped by reading what others think. We must read critically, of course. Human writings, brotherhood or otherhood, are not the word of God and not, therefore, infallible, but they can be helpful. We are not infallible either, but we expect others to

listen to us.

We should read some things we disagree with. (I suspect some brethren never do, because, from arguments they make, it is obvious they have no idea what those they are arguing against are really saying.) There is no validity to the idea that, because someone does not know a particular thing I know, he cannot possibly teach me anything. As Will Rogers used to say, "We are all ignorant, just on different subjects."

We need also to be aware of how people in general society are thinking. The literature, poetry and music of an age has a great deal to do with how that age functions, and to what it will best respond. Like the men of Issachar, we need "an understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (I Chronicles 12:32).

There are outstanding preachers who have never been to college, but there are none who have not studied and learned.

--Magnolia Bible College, P.O. Box 1101, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

To Love God

Continued From Page 2

not keepeth not my sayings" (John 14:21, 24). These passages show plainly that God loves and recognizes only those who love him so far as to keep his commandments. One of the Lord's commandments is to be baptized in water for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Most denominations do not believe that baptism has one thing to do with remission of sins or eternal salvation. Is it possible for one to love the Lord while ignoring this simple command? In fact, if everybody loved the Lord according to the above passage there would be no denominations on the face of the earth.

We need to study again the undenominational nature of the church found in the New Testament. The church is the body of Christ, and every Christian is a member of it. There are two

We need to study again the undenominational nature of the church found in the New Testament.

kingdoms on earth -- the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. All who obey God are added to the church -- the kingdom of God (Acts 2:47). Christ is the head of his church and the Saviour of his body. For this reason there is no promise of salvation outside of the Lord's church. Why should anyone belong to anything else?

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

"Keep Thyself Pure!"

Continued From Page 3

entrance and interior with filth. Then the dogs start the chase. Frightened, the ermine flees to his home, his only place of refuge. Finding it daubed with uncleanness, the ermine will not spoil his coat by entering. He had rather face the yelping dogs and preserve the purity of his fur at the cost of his life than to spoil it through uncleanness. The ermine is right! Purity is dearer than life!"

Robert Freeman said it well in these lines entitled "PURE -- TRUE."

White Captain of my soul, lead on;
I follow thee, come dark or dawn.
Only vouchsafe three things I crave.
Where terror stalks, help me be brave!
Where righteous ones can scarce endure
The siren call, help me be pure!
Where vows grow dim, and men dare do
What once they scorned,
Help me be true!
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—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 26

FRIDAY, JULY 20, 1990

NUMBER 29

Lessons Learned From Tearing Down A Shed



Don Williams

Before my grandmother died, I spent some time at her house, doing some work out in her yard. Along with my father and brother-in-law, we spent most of one day tearing down two old storage sheds. They were at least fifty years old, and were the only remains of the original homeplace that had

stood on this land. It was a little sad to see these remembrances come down.

As we worked knocking out the side-boards, taking off the tin roof, then the corner beams and finally breaking up the concrete foundation, I could not help but think of some analogies to this and the church. The Bible tells us that Jesus is the foundation of his church: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 3:11). Other verses refer to him as the chief corner stone of his building (Matthew 21:42; I Peter 2:6-7). In tearing down the sheds, we found the corner stones the hardest to remove. Try as man will, Christ and his church will not be torn down or removed. As he himself said, "I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

As Christians, we too are a part of the structure of the church. We can be seen as the planks or bricks (or stones) that make up the walls of the building. We found that in tearing down the sheds, the supporting planks come off easily. Later, these same planks were taken to the landfill, to be burned up and destroyed by fire. We too, as part of the church, can easily become separated from the structure. Angry words said to one another can cause hard feelings that loose us from the structure (Ephesians 4:31). Lack of care and concern

expressed for each other can cause discouragement that often leads to separation from the church (James 2:15-16). These and many other things are seen as blows that loosen the Christian's life from the structure of the church. Whether right or wrong in terms of a proper reason, this often is the way it happens.

There is one other lesson I learned in this day of demolition: It is much easier to tear a building down than it is to build one. Sheds that would have taken several days to construct were brought to ruins in about eight hours of work. Electrical work, in a shed that took my uncle all day to install, was pulled out and dismantled in just a few minutes. It is the same way in the church. It is very easy, by the use of words or by doing nothing, to tear down and bring discouragement to the lives of fellow Christians and friends.

Let us be builders and not wrecking crews!

Let us be builders and not wrecking crews! Let us be people that build up and encourage and exhort the lives of others. In cards, dishes of food, prayers and other acts of kindnesses, let us show that we care and love those around us. By doing so, others will desire to be like us and one of us, and ultimately Christ will be glorified (Matthew 5:16). May the words of Ephesians 4:29 be our goal to strive for: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

--Route 2, Box 713, Guin, AL 35563.

Make It Plain!



Johnny Ramsey


was to be made so plain that those who ran could read it (Habakkuk 2:2). That is always the kind of preaching the world and the church needs. Nebulous, halting, compromising pronouncements never saved or strengthened anyone. Such wishy-washy proclamation weakens people who need to be challenged by the clarion call of gospel truth. Woe to the preacher who heralds a message of cheap grace and false hope when his audience is dying in ignorance and shame.

One of the truly supreme chapters of the Bible is the second stanza of Habakkuk. The background to this unknown part of the prophets can be found in Jeremiah 25:9 where the ruler of Babylon is called the servant of God! Yes, Jehovah used an evil nation and a ruthless leader to subdue Judah for her sin of rebellion. Truly, as Daniel 4:25 affirms so the inhabitants of Jerusalem learned: "God rules in the kingdom of men."

Instead of arguing and complaining Judah was told to hush and let God do the talking (Habakkuk 2:20)! The message of Jehovah's sovereign power

Woe to the preacher who heralds a message of cheap grace and false hope when his audience is dying in ignorance and shame.

Continued On Page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Yes, The Young Die Too!



David Wade

and the rest of the family. At best, grief recovery will be difficult and slow. The one big consolation we all have is that he was a Christian. I remember

Recently a dear friend of mine was killed in a tragic auto accident. He was in his early twenties with prospects for a bright future ahead of him. Suddenly, and without warning, his life was taken from the earth.

I cannot begin to imagine the enormity of the grief now felt by his parents, his sister,

well the expression of joy on his face as he arose from baptism to live the Christian life.

Such tragedies should serve as a warning to young people and to all. We don't have any guarantee of tomorrow. Youth is not "eternal." Therefore, we must live each day ready to meet the Lord. In the words of Edmund Vance Cook,

"Death comes with a crawl, or comes with a pounce,

And whether he's slow or spry,

It isn't the fact that you're dead that counts,

But only, how did you die?"

Life must be measured, not by the abundance of years, but by years of abundance. The only true source of abundant living is Jesus Christ. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Make It Plain!

Continued From Page 1

The Creator has a proper claim upon all mankind and we dare not forget the demands of His revelation to the lost and dying world! The most cowardly man on earth is the one who holds salvation's requirements from those perishing in sin. There is no honesty or safety in by-passing the commandments of Christianity when the souls of men cry out for deliverance. Make it plain or their blood will God require at our hands was the sterling message of Ezekiel 3:17-19.

A lack of distinctive preaching today is one of the leading contributions to an aura of apostasy one can detect in our midst. Swelling numerically is not necessarily the sign of spiritual growth -- just ask Gideon (Judges 7:2). Such "growth" (?) might even be a contradiction of Christ's parable of the mustard seed (Matthew 13). It could be the result of calculated scheming in view of the psychological weaknesses of humanity instead of deep respect for the plan of the Lord.

In God's plan, men must "obey from the heart that form of teaching" the Savior demands instead of being coerced and **bamboozled** by slick techniques of personal work experts (Romans 6:17). There is a difference in fakery and the genuine! Success in the kingdom of Christ does not come by aping sectarians with gaudy programs and trappings. It comes only by being faithful (Revelation 2:10) to the ONE who alone does the adding anyway (Acts 2:47; I Corinthians 3:7). It is our task to make the message clear and plain -- in word and deed (James 1:22). God takes care of the numbers and no human gauge can measure that. Only heaven knows, so there are no human experts . . .

--Via The Pillar, P.O. Box 75, Cave City, Arkansas 72521.

Man Is His Own Worst Enemy



Cecil Corkren

reprobates" (II Corinthians 13:5).

It is easy for me to say this with my mouth but not really say it from the bottom of my heart. Too many times we are not honest with ourselves. David said, "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden parts thou shalt make me to know wisdom" (Psalm 51:6).

Fault finding is a destructive habit that destroys us. We might be surprised when a serious inward look at ourselves reveals the same faults that we have been so quick to find in others. The time we spend being critical of others will promote more ulcers, lose more friends, and deplete our nervous systems than almost anything. Man has the habit of looking in the wrong places for his problems! Habits become "trait" jackets. Don't allow the habit of always being critical of others, as well as being critical of yourself, to ruin your possibilities for happiness.

Take a careful look at yourself today. Was your

A principal step of progress for man is for one to cogitate on himself, and realize that he is his own greatest problem. Paul knew this when he said, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your ownelves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be

first statement this morning one of appreciation or criticism? Would you like to associate with someone like yourself today? We make better critics when we first criticise ourselves. Have you expressed today an attitude of gratitude to God, as well as to your fellowman?

We make better critics when we first criticise ourselves.

There is no greater problem than the human heart. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). So, when we examine ourselves we should look for the defects, and the blemishes we all have and the forgiveness we are all in need of. Have you been working on yourself as your greatest problem? Jesus' approach was "pull the beam out of thine own eye; then shall thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matthew 7:4-5).

--1705 Sandra Lee Drive, Jasper, AL 35501.

NO CLOUDS, NO SHOWERS

"An old Christian speaking so joyously of God's love as though she had never known a trial was asked, 'Have you never had any clouds?' She replied, 'Why, of course, elsewhere would all the showers have come from that refreshed and blessed me so?' No clouds, no showers."

via Fayetteville, TN

God Does Not Require Results But He Does Expect Effort



Edsel Burleson

Someone has said, "Everything worth while has a wall around it -- but always there is a gate and a key." God has never required results but he does expect effort. Paul said of the establishment and growth of the church at Corinth, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase"

(I Corinthians 3:6). The planting and watering are the responsibilities of Christians. The increase is God's business. We can be assured that if we are diligent about our work, God will be faithful in His.

We can be assured that if we are diligent about our work, God will be faithful in His.

Several years ago Personal Journal contained this statement: "The wayside of business is full of brilliant men who started out with a spurt, but lacked the stamina to finish. Their places were taken by patient and unshowy plodders who never knew when to quit." It is sad that so much of the Lord's work is done in "spurts." We look for new and different ways to get jobs done. Somebody comes up with something which causes a little excitement and we take hold of it believing we have found the answer to growth and development, only to learn that this is not the answer. Nothing will ever take the place of steady effort.

There are going to be discouragements. Not everything will be successful. But Paul assured Corinth, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58).

Several months ago Bulletin Digest included an article from a Sugarland, Texas, bulletin which showed the importance of effort in reaching our potential. "A man found a cocoon of the emperor moth and took it home to watch it emerge. One day a small opening appeared and for several hours the moth struggled but couldn't seem to force its body past a certain point.

"Deciding something was wrong, the man took scissors and snipped the remaining bit of cocoon. The moth emerged easily, its body large and swollen, the wings small and shriveled.

"He expected that in a few hours the wings would spread out in their natural beauty, but they did not. Instead of developing into a creature free to fly, the moth spent its life dragging around a swollen body

and shriveled wings.

"The constricting cocoon and the struggle necessary to pass through the tiny opening are God's way of forcing fluid from the body into the wings. The 'merciful' snip was, in reality, cruel. Sometimes the struggle is exactly what we need."

Billy R. Helms wrote the following, entitled, "That Little Extra Effort," which appeared in the Gospel Advocate.

"The difference between success and failure is often determined by the willingness to put forth that 'little extra effort.' The margin of success may be very small but usually it is that 'little extra effort' that spells success . . .

That 'little extra effort' that gets us to Bible class as well as worship on the Lord's day morning.

That 'little extra effort' that brings us back to the evening worship and mid-week Bible study.

That 'little extra effort' that causes us to spend more time in private study of God's Word.

That 'little extra effort' that reminds us to frequently claim the privilege of prayer.

That 'little extra effort' that helps us to be more sacrificial in our giving as measured by our prosperity instead of our carnal nature that says give as little as possible.

That 'little extra effort' that keeps us at the home congregation except in cases of necessity.

That 'little extra effort' that leads us into a compassionate concern for the lost and wayward and reminds us to speak to them about their spiritual condition.

That 'little extra effort' that helps us engage wholeheartedly and attentively in all phases of our worship.

That 'little extra effort' that involves us in every activity of the work of the local church."

God does not require results, but He does expect effort!

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

Fanatics??



Jerri Manasco

something and they stand AGAINST some things. Jesus did stand for truth and right. Does that make him a fanatic? He stood resolutely in his Father's will (Matthew 16:21-23). Does having a firm and noble resolve make one an extremist? Jesus did preach rather heavily at times (Matthew 23)! However, Jesus was not an unapproachable, unreasonable fanatic who made unrealistic demands of the public.

Spiritual emphasis seems extreme to those who have no inclination to take the time to investigate the rationale for spirituality. Jesus stated it clearly, "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (John 3:20). One whose eyes have been long shut will find the light unbearable. Where spiritual darkness has long enshrouded the soul, there is less likelihood that light will be welcome. Where sin has hardened the heart, the warmth of truth may not be able to soften the sensitivity to righteousness.

The world the apostles knew was one of intense wickedness. Paul's graphic portrait of the moral decline of mankind testifies to that fact (Romans

1:18-32). In another place, Paul refers to those "having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Ephesians 4:18, 19). This is so typical of a sin-saturated society. Sin is so open and ungodliness so prevalent that evil is practiced "greedily" and even sought after passionately. Any who denounce this evil is regarded as a fanatic and an extremist.

When a person forsakes his old life of sin and ceases to frequent his old places of evil practice, he is regarded by his former "friends" as a strange creature! Peter offers an interesting observation along this line. "For the time past of our lives may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you" (I Peter 4:3, 4). Those who had been their friends in sin now spoke evil of them! How ironic! These who had become Christians were considered "good ole boys" while they walked in evil. Now they were rejected as being unworthy the association of their "buddies." These who remained in sin and incapable of judging others were nevertheless critical of those whose lives far outshined theirs in goodness! Christians were being "evil spoken of." Perhaps they were being called fanatics and extremists! Isn't it ironic that people who have neither the courage nor conscience to forsake sin mock those who do?

The rich young ruler who approached Jesus must

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Fanatics??

Continued From Page 3

have found Jesus' answer a bit too extreme for his taste. Perhaps, too, he thought the way of the Nazarene somewhat fanatical. It should be noted here that the young man came running to Jesus; it wasn't Jesus who came running to the young man! It was the young man who posed the question; it wasn't Jesus who forced the issue! The answer given was the one least preferred. When instructed to sell his possessions and distribute to the poor, the man went away grieved (Matthew 19:16-22). Sure, the Lord's demand was firm, but the young man was none the happier for rejecting the Lord's appeal to him.

Much of what is taught in the New Testament is marked off by this ease-loving generation as fanatical and extremist. The irony is that Satan has successfully led a generation to the most shocking extremes in sin and ungodliness, yet the sin-filled world cannot see its own fanaticism to practice sin! The world cannot see the trail of ruin and desolation Satan has left. Broken homes, ruined bodies, confused children, disappointed expectations, wrecked morale, and pointless living are the stains left behind. The extremes of sin have been followed with disastrous results, yet the Bible, with its emphasis on peace of mind and purposeful living, is cast to the side as a fanatical book!

The extremes of sin have been followed with disastrous results, yet the Bible, with its emphasis on peace of mind and purposeful living, is cast to the side as a fanatical book!

Is it too demanding to expect people to live responsibly? Is it an extremist position to call upon people to aim for noble and pure ambitions? Is it far out and fanatical to insist that people seek after temperance, faith, and godliness?

Is it really fanatical to call for nonconformity to the world? The most careless observer can see the inconsistency of the world. All we hear today is "do your own thing." Yet when the Christian "does his thing" and follows Jesus, he is laughed to scorn! Is it fanatical to refuse to follow the crowd when you know there is a way that is better?

Actually, the criticism that falls upon the Christian comes about because of the obvious difference between the Christian's way and the way of the world. The godly life puts to shame the ungodly life. The purposeful life casts the aimless life in a bad shadow. The temperate life exposes the weaknesses of the intemperate.

Jesus was hated without just cause (John 15:25). He constantly exposed the sin and hypocrisy of those in places of prominence. He exposed the sins of all who brought their hearts to him. It was this exposure to light that the darkness resented. The world does not delight in being exposed for

what it really is: a pleasure-mad people with little moral strength. There are no logical arguments to be made against truth. If no viable alternative to Christianity can be given, then stick a negative label on Christians and cast the insult of "FANATIC! EXTREMIST!"

What can Christians do about all this? THEY KEEP ON LIVING FOR CHRIST!! So live that

the accusations hurled against us will prove false (I Peter 2:12; 3:16). The Christian cannot shout the world into obedience. He cannot exert force to bring the world to Jesus. Only by teaching, moral persuasion, and living the transformed life to prove the superiority of God's way (Romans 12:1, 2) can the Christian be clear in his responsibility.

--Rt. 7 Box 428, Boaz, AL 35957.

"I Leebin An I Neber Comin Back!"



Dean Fugett

We have a little granddaughter who has a unique way of dealing with any frustration of being told "NO" or being corrected for unacceptable behavior. She just turns her back on the problem at hand and makes that statement, "I leebin and I neber comin back!" That's cute -- right now -- and it conjures

up a smile from a doting grandfather or grandmother every time. But she is a two-year old. That is to be expected, but it is a different situation altogether when an adult acts that way.

We have some in the church, who act rather infantile when it comes to dealing with frustrations, corrections, or just not getting their way. They, like our little one, often respond to such situations with, "I'm leaving and I'm never coming back!" That was cute and funny in a child, but we expect better from an adult -- especially a Christian adult.

We have enough problems carrying out the Lord's commission and dealing with challenges from the Devil without being a problem for the local congregation ourselves!

We have heard a new preacher talking to the previous preacher about individuals and problems in the congregation, and it comes to light that brother problem who left mad at some truths preached by the preceding preacher, slides back in when a new preacher arrives. With the passing of time, the same thing happens. When people get mad at the truth, they will get mad regardless of who tells it. Brother problem will not be there too long until the new preacher comes across the same

truth in a sermon. Then, he too is met with that statement, "I leebin, and I neber comin back!"

Sometimes doctrinal issues arise that necessitate that those who cannot live with their conscience and live with the doctrine will be forced to change congregations. Today, more often than not, people change congregations within a local area simply because they got mad, didn't get their way, wanted to engage in some practice that was unscriptural and were being disciplined for it, or just want to float without having any local responsibilities. We hope that if you find yourself among that number that left without scriptural cause will return to your home congregation, make things right, and settle down to grow in spiritual maturity and help with the work of the local congregation and stop "leebin" from here to there. We have enough problems carrying out the Lord's commission and dealing with challenges from the Devil without being a problem for the local congregation ourselves!

--P.O. Box 75, Cave City, Arkansas 72521.

**Announcing the 1990
Words Of
Truth**

Lectureship

August 26-29, 1990

Theme

"Back To Basics"

**to be held at the Sixth Avenue
Church of Christ, Jasper, AL
Speakers and Topics
to be announced.**



Words Of C...

"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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Restoration Or Restructuring?



T. Pierce Brown

There are those who are bent on "restructuring" the church. We have not seen any definitive statements concerning exactly what they mean by that. Some of them may want to change the order of services from two songs and a prayer to one song and two prayers, or something equally as insignificant. Others think it would make a great deal of difference to have the sign out in front read "God's children meet here" or something of the sort instead of "Church of Christ." We have heard some brethren who seem to get excited about the fact that some have a sign at the building which says, "Church of Christ," when we know that neither the sign nor the building are the church. So they may think they have "restructured" the church when they change the sign to say, "The church of Christ meets here." From that group, there will probably arise one or more astute ones who suddenly realize that the sign is wrong, for it should read, "The church of Christ meets there," with an appropriate arrow pointing toward the building. Not long ago a person withdrew from the congregation where he was meeting because of the lack of spirituality of the member. How he knew there was no spirituality was, he said, that when the Lord's Supper was served, not a tear stained a cheek, and not a chin quivered. How he knew about all those people behind him and on each side, or even in front of him during that time I could never find out, but he thought the church should be "restructured" so it would be more spiritual.

Another thought it was too formal, so he started his prayers with "Dear Dad," which was his way of

"restructuring." Another thought the mundane way we take the Lord's Supper needed more dramatic flair to make it more meaningful, so he had all the lights turned down, and a red spotlight, suggesting the blood of Christ, be focused on the table as proper remarks were made.

Others do not see those things as anything more than "cosmetic changes" and have in mind "restructuring" by introducing such things as women preachers.

In a very real sense, every New Testament church of which we read, from Jerusalem on down needed to be "restored" in many things, for in every one of them there was a failure to meet the pattern God designed in all respects.

Whether we consider ourselves as "conservative" or "progressive" or in some other category, surely all of us recognize the truth that there are many things about our ways of doing things that are merely cultural or incidental and Paul would not recognize nor necessarily personally appreciate the way we do many things. He may have felt more at home sitting on the bare floor with his legs crossed in a small circle as they sang psalms, hymns, or spiritual songs to each other.

In a similar way, there are those who say, "The church of our Lord has not been restored," and point out many things we lack that we should be doing, such as the spirit of sharing or evangelistic zeal evidenced early in Acts, or the spirit of giving mentioned in II Corinthians 8. On the other hand,

there are those who are terribly disturbed by that statement, and respond, "What do you mean that the church has not been restored? If it has not been restored, what do you think I am a member of? And how can we be saved in the church, if it has not been restored?" So, as usual, there is more heat than light generated.

We are confident that some of those who say, "The church has not been restored" actually feel that the idea of "restoration" is ridiculous in the first place, and that the church is supposed to be a growing, changing institution that keeps pace with the society in which it exists. I had a preacher of the Christian Church tell me that about 40 years ago. He said, "You have an easy task. All you have to do is find what is authorized in the Bible and do it. I have to change the message to keep up with the changing social conditions." At that point, I closed the Book and said, "We have no basis on which to discuss the Bible any longer, it seems to me."

Part of our problem in the matter of "restructuring" and "restoring" is the area of semantics and communication in general. I have been in many congregations in which I thought many things needed "restructuring." But this is what I mean. In those congregations, the preachers did the work of elders, the elders did the work of deacons, the deacons had mostly a title, and did very little of anything, although in some cases they wanted to do so, but were not allowed to do so. In many congregations, a teacher is appointed (dragged unwillingly to take a class) and left to carry it on to the best of his or her ability without proper help, encouragement, supervision or supplies. Whatever changes need to be made in such situations (and they were numerous), could easily be called "restructuring."

I am neither ashamed nor afraid to suggest specific changes that I think should be made in the

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

"God Said It. I Believe It. That Settles It."



David Wade

to have in it.

The Psalmist declared, "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven . . . Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever . . . My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness" (Psalm 119:89, 160, 172).

Each time we study the Bible we should realize that we have access to "the mind of Christ" through "words . . . which the Holy Ghost

Perhaps you have seen or heard this declaration of faith in God's word. As good as it may sound, it falls short of what ought to be said. "God said it. That settles it, whether I believe it or not," more accurately describes the true nature of God's word and the faith we are

teacheth" (I Corinthians 2:13, 16). "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 2:21). Since God inspired the speakers and writers of his word, Peter could affirm that, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; where unto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn" (II Peter 1:19).

When we are inclined to disagree with any part of God's word, we need to remember that "the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). When Paul resisted the word and railed against the church, he was hurting himself (Acts 9:5; I Timothy 1:13). To resist the truth is folly (II Timothy 3:8-9). If we refuse to do the will of the Father, Jesus will say in judgment, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-23).

God's spiritual blessings are pronounced only upon those who hear, believe, and obey his word (Matthew 7:21). God said it, and that settles it. Period.

"Do Not Lose Heart"



Cecil May, Jr.

ing. Jesus told a parable designed to teach us "to pray and not to lose heart" (Luke 18:1). It illustrates the power of persistence in petition, even when the person petitioned has no regard either for the petitioner or for justice. It is easy to grow discouraged in prayer. We often pray and feel unheard. But whether God hears our prayers is determined not by our feelings but by his promises. We are not promised that we will get exactly what we ask for; we are promised a hearing and a blessing when we ask. Keep praying, and do not lose heart.

Do not quit preaching. Paul was speaking of his preaching when he said, "we do not lose heart" (II Corinthians 4:16). Because his preaching brings to

Both Jesus and Paul, when encouraging us to keep on keeping on, use an expression that is variously translated, "faint not," "do not grow weary," "do not lose heart" (Luke 18:1; II Corinthians 4:1, 16; Galatians 6:9; Ephesians 3:13; II Thessalonians 3:13).

others the same mercy he has received, he does "not lose heart" (II Corinthians 4:1). Preaching is often a discouraging task. The preacher preaches, but problems remain. He answers questions, but those who asked them seem not to hear. Often he sees little result. But God's word is still powerful. It brings life from death. It can draw the sinner to God, open his heart, and save his soul. "Preach the word; be instant in season and out of season" (II Timothy 4:2). God's word will accomplish its purpose. Keep preaching, and do not lose heart.

Do not quit good works. "Do not lose heart in doing good" (Galatians 6:8; II Thessalonians 3:13). We are saved to do good works which God has ordained. But it is hard work. It is easier to sit at home and watch television. It is easier to pass by on the other side, than to get messy and dirty helping the unfortunate, bleeding stranger. It is easier to say, "The government ought to do something about that," than to give the hungry our food or the cold stranger the coat off our back. Besides, one's good is often evil spoken of. The good we do is as often misused as appreciated. But God remembers, and God's reward is sure. Every cup of cold water given in his name redounds to the glory of God and the credit of the giver. Our labor is not in vain in the Lord, if we do not quit. Do good, and do not lose heart.

--P.O. Box 1101, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

Can't Hold It In!



Joe Spivy, Jr.

"But if I say, 'I will not mention him or speak any more in his name,' his word is in my heart like a burning fire, shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed I cannot" (Jeremiah 20:9, NIV).

Jeremiah, the brave prophet of God, had a great message for the people of God.

Impending doom, a result of their own wickedness, was in their future. "The End Is Near" has never been a message calculated to bring about widespread popularity. Mockery, persecution, and eventually being stoned to death (according to one tradition) was the form of recognition that Jeremiah received for his faithful telling of God's word.

Jeremiah, overwhelmed by his message, had to preach it, and so should we feel compelled today.

Viewing this background, maybe we can understand why he would be tempted to refrain from declaring this message to the people. Through silence, maybe many of his troubles could be avoided. Not unlike many, even today, he made a decision against speaking out.

He tried to keep the message inside; but he could not! The urgency of the message was such that it could not be bottled up. It burned within him

Continued On Page 3

Restoration Or Restructuring?

Continued From Page 1

way congregations do, or fail to do, their work. And if I should call it "restructuring," I would try to clarify what I meant.

And if I should say that the church has not been restored, I would try to proceed to point out at least the following facts. First, when we talk about "The New Testament Church," we should make clear whether we are talking about the **divine pattern which God ordained**, or the imperfect way those early churches followed that pattern. Do you want the church to be restored to the kind of church we find pictured in I Corinthians, or Revelation chapters 2 & 3? In a very real sense, every New Testament church of which we read, from Jerusalem on down needed to be "restored" in many things, for in every one of them there was a failure to meet the pattern God designed in all respects.

When the pioneers of what we call "The Restoration Movement" were thinking of "restoring the church," they had in mind the fact

that they were surrounded by many denominations, none of which were ordained of God, and none of which had any connection with salvation, as admitted by all of them. That is, none of them contained all of the saved, and one could be saved without being a member of any of them. They all taught that, and still do, as far as my knowledge and experience goes.

The church of the Lord was and is different. It is not and cannot be a "big sick denomination," for although there are members of it (or those who claim such) who are filled with denominational ideas, and are spiritually sick, the church of the Lord is still different from any man-made religion under heaven. That is, when a person hears, believes and obeys the gospel of Christ in the way God ordained, he is automatically a member of the Lord's church. He does not become a member of any denomination by that process! The pioneers of whom we referred in the previous paragraph were speaking of restoring the church in the sense of

providing a means by which a person could be born into the family of God, be saved from his sins, and be a part of the church of the Lord. When the "Restoration Movement" got far enough along that the way to be saved and worship and serve God acceptably could be understood and done, it was complete in the sense that it had made it possible for the church of the Lord to be present when only a denomination of man had been present in that locality before.

But they recognized then, and all the great leaders in the church have recognized since, that the restoration was not then complete and will never be complete in the sense that either congregationally or individually we have attained the perfection which the Lord ordained for us to have.

--Rt. 2, Box 144X Wartrace, TN 37183 (615) 454-9042.

Can't Hold It In!

Continued From Page 2

until he finally proclaimed it to all, realizing the consequences of that decision.

As a song asked many years ago, "Can you relate?" The message of repentance of sin to a society which recognizes no such concept will never be popular. The intelligentsia ridicule those who lack depth of understanding, while the

populist speak of "One Way," but balk when the one way is preached.

The world needs more Jeremiahs. Men and women are needed who will boldly proclaim to all the message of Jesus Christ. Jeremiah, overwhelmed by his message, had to preach it, and so should we feel compelled today.

In the face of certain mockery it is an easy thing to try to "shut it up." Do any who are sane seek after difficulties? Still, when the power of the message of God is realized, the messenger of God will certainly feel that "fire in their bones" even today! And then there's no choice but to tell others of the "good news."

--Route 7, Box 204, Fairmont, W.Va. 26554.

Attitudes Toward The Bible



Jerri Manasco

"Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded" (Proverbs 13:13). Modern reviewers would reverse the order of this great text by having Solomon say, "The word is of no consequence; all one must do is love God and his fellow

just recompense of reward" (Hebrews 2:2). Though God had sent his prophets time and again to these people, offering them peace and pardon, "they mocked the messengers of God, and DESPISED HIS WORDS, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of God arose against his people, till there was no remedy. THEREFORE he brought upon them the king of the Chaldeans, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young men or maidens, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave all into his hand" (II Chronicles 36:16, 17). Yes, "whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed."

There is despite shown today toward the word of God. To despise means to show contempt or disdain for something; thus, to despise the word of God is to show contempt for it! Some people unintentionally show despite for the word while others do so in open defiance of what God has said. Despite for the Bible is shown in many ways.

By rewriting what God has revealed some people show their contempt for the Bible. This rewriting can be in the form of a "new translation," which often proves to be no more than a personal

interpretation! Our land proliferates with these now.

Fearing the commandment means to take it for what it says, believe it for what it is, practice it for what it teaches, and lay hold on the hope that it offers.

Some of the more frequent "rewrites" have nothing to do with the actual text of the Bible. Many people who would never think of rewriting the Bible text change the teaching of the Bible in **practical application** (or misapplication) of it. It is as bad to **practically** revise the Biblical statements and teachings as it is to **physically** alter the text. After all, what is the **REAL DIFFERENCE** in one who rewrites the Bible itself

man, abstain from 'law religion' and all will be well with him." The modern rejection of Solomon's observation also makes void the repeated admonitions in other passages in the Bible concerning fidelity to the word! God has magnified his word (Psalm 138:2). To despise the word is to despise the God who gave it! Certain destruction befalls those who reduce the Bible to nothing more than an advice column.

The people of Judah learned by experience that "every transgression and disobedience received a

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Attitudes Toward The Bible

Continued From Page 3

and one who simply neglects to obey the Bible as it is written?

The serpent in Eden is a good example of what we are talking about. The serpent revised the "text" and Eve revised the application! God said, "Thou shalt surely die." The serpent said, "Thou shalt not surely die." (Genesis 3:4). The serpent convinced Eve that a textual error had occurred and that what she heard is not at all what God meant to say! Things have not changed much since that time.

The controversy among brethren over the use of instruments of music in worship revolves around what God said and did not say! The Bible instruction is simply stated: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19). The words **speaking, singing, and making melody in your heart** are enough to settle the matter, but someone has to come along and supply the phrase, "and add some instrument." This is tampering with the word of God, i.e., showing despite for what God has said and is dangerous. Heed the last clause in Proverbs 13:13!

Others despise the Bible teaching on Christian deportment. While the Bible insists on modesty and proper influence, some insist that this doesn't apply in their case or that the times have changed and so have the rules. The Bible, however, still contains I Timothy 2:9, 10! Many members of the church will agree in the Bible class over certain issues, and then they revise their beliefs Monday through Saturday! This shows practical neglect of the word of God.

Taking Bible passages out of context is another way that some have of demonstrating despite for the revealed will. Many "teachers" abound who use Bible passages in ways not intended by the inspired writers. The devil is an expert at this art(?) of pseudo-application. He proved his expertise when he approached Jesus with misapplied scriptures. "Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Matthew 4:5, 6; quoted from Psalm 91:11). The quotation was accurate, but the application was not. Jesus was not sent to do foolish things at the insistence of his arch-enemy! The Lord replied with another quotation, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matthew 4:7).

This is not a case of one scripture contradicting another, but of one scripture qualifying another. There are unscrupulous (or self-deceived men, perhaps) who quote verse after verse to entice unsuspecting souls to send sums of money to fill the coffers of some "ministry." How long will it be before the Lord's church will be defiled by this technique? (Or it is already in some places).

When one chooses to live in error he will show

contempt for the Bible by rejecting what the Bible says. Jehoiakim physically mutilated a revealed text of scripture (Jeremiah 36). Though others may not have done as Jehoiakim did, their disdain for the sacred revelation is shown in their attitude toward what God has revealed.

Amaziah the false priest ordered Amos the true prophet to cease preaching in Samaria. "Prophecy not any more at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court" (Amos 7:10-13). Amaziah apparently supposed that if he didn't have to listen to the inspired words he wouldn't have to be bothered by the divine judgment that followed from disobedience. The people of Jerusalem thought that if the prophets would just quit preaching about judgment, then it would not come to pass (Isaiah 30:8-10). The fact is that you cannot erase the word of God by refusal to listen to it! Rejecting truth will not release us from its demands.

Retaining tradition when that tradition is contrary to the Bible shows despite for the Bible. While not openly denying the Bible, those who uphold the preciousness of human tradition are compelled to read into the scripture text something that will justify their error. The doctrine of infant baptism is lamely defended on the ground of a "household baptism" that one must insert into the text in Acts 16:14, 15, 33-34. The doctrine of proxy baptism is based on an abuse of I Corinthians 15:29. The doctrines of the rapture, premillennialism, impossibility of apostasy, and many other such traditions are defended through perversions of scripture. Such mishandling of the Bible makes it of none effect (Matthew 15:6; Mark 7:9).

When imagination is exalted over revelation, the Bible falls into the bin of contempt. For example, Bible prophecies have been pushed into every scheme that human minds can concoct. Latter day "prophets" have applied the Book of Revelation to just about every conceivable historical event! The Book of Daniel has been abused by the sensationalists. Imaginations have run wild in the last few years as some religious charlatans have claimed to have the special "key" to Bible prophecy. Infidels have likewise had a field day in pointing out these failed prophecies. The fact is **THESE PROPHECIES HAVE FAILED BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT BIBLE PROPHECIES BUT ARE THE SPECULATIONS OF OVER-ACTIVE MINDS!!!**

One who loves the truth will not despise the Bible. The word of God is the delight of all who want to know God's will (Psalm 119:105; 1:1; 119:97). People who love the Bible are content to discover and obey the truth revealed in the sacred scriptures.

The rich man in Luke 16:15-31 learned all too late that the revealed word is the only word God has provided. After asking that Lazarus be allowed to return from the dead to his brothers, the

rich man was told, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." **IF ONE DESPISES THE LIVING WORD, HE WILL NOT BE MOVED BY THE APPEARANCE OF ONE FROM THE DEAD!** Sign seekers have no faith at all in the word that has been confirmed (Hebrews 2:3, 4; Mark 16:20).

Destruction is inevitable for those who despise the word of God. But the positive side is that "he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded" (Proverbs 13:13). Fearing the commandment means to take it for what it says, believe it for what it is, practice it for what it teaches, and lay hold on the hope that it offers.

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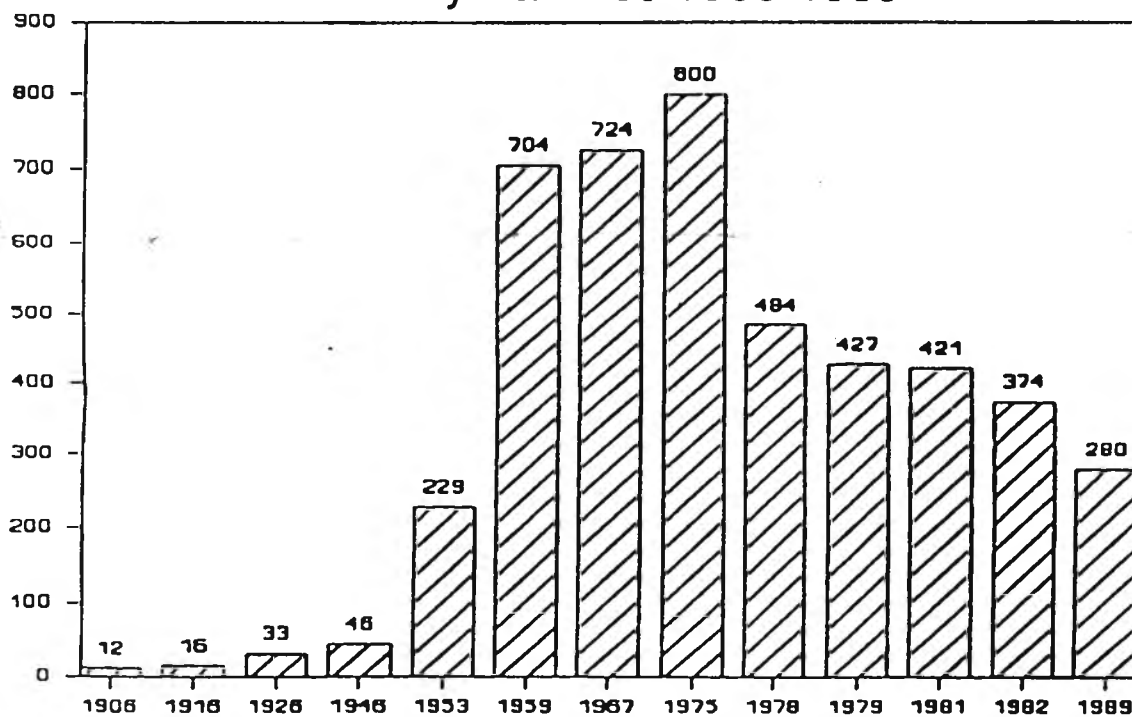
FRIDAY, AUGUST 3, 1990

NUMBER 31

Missionaries -- A Vanishing Breed

Gerald Paden

Missionary Families 1906-1989



Recently two research projects have been conducted by the Sunset School of Missions. The first related to the church and the extent to which our mission emphasis has changed in the last ten years. Attention will be given to that study in a subsequent article. The burden of this article is the result of the second research project, which investigated the number of American missionaries who are presently serving on foreign soil. The information secured from this second project is alarming and at the same time it confirms the negative trends underway in our missionary staff since 1975.

In the August 1983 issue of the Christian Chronicle, Brother James O. Baird presented results of a study he had made on the number of missionaries the Church of Christ has fielded from 1906 to 1982. His article was entitled: "Missionary Decline Summarized." That research showed that the number of families on the field peaked in 1975 at about 800. There was a critical decline in

numbers over the next three years. From 1978 to 1982 the drastic erosion of missionaries is evident from the chart.

Brother Baird's research should cause alarm to all who know the Great Commission and the Lord's imperatives for the church in relation to that assignment. Our concern prompted us to update the research and to find out where the number stands. The alarm is more than justified. For it is evident from the last column on the chart, covering the year 1989, that the downward trend has continued unabated. For we have approximately 280 American missionary families on foreign fields today. And from the research feedback it is evident that number is destined to drop below 200 by the end of the year. It is clear that we cannot stand another decade like the one just closed!

To accomplish a reliable research on our present American missionary force serving outside the

U.S.A., we sent a research questionnaire to every nation where we know missionaries are now serving or have served. We selected men in the 180 fields where past or present mission work has been and is being done. We received responses from all but five nations. We made a generous guess on those non-responding countries to come up with the overall figure of 280 missionaries. This number must be very close to the actual head-count.

Observations On The Decline

The reasons for this decline in mission personnel must be discovered and remedies must be found. Otherwise we will passively witness the death for foreign evangelism in our generation. Probably no one person can explain all the factors involved in this loss, but at least the following list covers some of the major reasons.

1. Devaluation of the American dollar abroad, increasing the cost of maintaining the missionary on the field.

(It is true that the American dollar has lost much of its value in several nations. This simply means that the day of cheap mission programs is over. We acknowledge the need to increase salaries of personnel on the local front to offset inflation. Why do we not automatically make the same concession on the foreign front? Too frequently we hear of missionaries whose supporting congregations inform them that: "We cannot afford to keep you there." In reality, it ought to be self-evident that we cannot afford NOT to keep them on the field).

2. Inflation in domestic economy that absorbs a larger slice of our church budget to keep up the local operation.

(Increased domestic inflation definitely erodes the resources we have available for mission work -- but only because WE DECIDE to erode

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Words Of Truth

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

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David Wade Editor

Joe T. Spivy, Sr. Associate Editor
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Expo '90

More than 10,000 people are expected to attend EXPO '90, A WORLD EVANGELISM SHOWCASE, September 26-29 on the campus of International Bible College in Florence, Alabama.

"It's time for the churches of Christ to recognize all the good things being accomplished by the Lord's people throughout the world," says Dennis Jones, President of International Bible College. "Let's have an expo where we bring together representatives of all great evangelistic ministries. Let's provide a forum, where the missionaries from around the world bring encouraging reports from their regions. It's time to recognize that churches of Christ have good people, with good hearts and motives, and that many good things are being done," Jones further stated.

EXPO '90 will have three major components. First, one of the largest exhibitions of brotherhood good works ever assembled in one place will be present. All ministries and church programs are invited to participate and generous booth space will be provided. Booths can be reserved by contacting Charles Payne at IBC.

Second, church growth programs featuring special speakers and seminar leaders with special classes on family, leadership, and evangelism is planned. Included will be workshops for elders, preachers, women, and young people.

Third, conferences for all those interested in special areas of evangelism will be provided. Scheduled conferences include: Eastern Europe, Africa, South America, India, Asia, and the Caribbean. In addition, Medical Missions, Lads to Leaders, Stateside Evangelism, and Mass Media Evangelism will also conference at the EXPO. Also, daily "brainstorming" sessions will be hosted to explore possibilities for world evangelism. Those interested in attending or participating in

Continued On Page 4



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Observations On Mission Work



David Wade

Although I have never worked full-time in foreign missions, I have had the opportunity of working closely with missionaries on the sponsoring side. In my limited experience, I have gained some convictions as to some of the things we need to do to help the missionary shortage.

Sponsoring churches would do well to demand that potential missionaries receive adequate formal training before going abroad. Foreign mission work is not for the weak, faint hearted, ill-prepared, or those who have "bombed out" in stateside local work. Almost any preacher can work hard enough and long enough and find enough congregations to salary him abroad. Zeal may get you there but zeal alone has never accomplished God's work (Romans 10:2).

You can be sure there will be many problems and discouraging situations that will weigh heavily on the missionary family. Poor preparation can only exacerbate the problems that arise in the mission field. The missionary must study the culture, customs, and language of the country he is entering. Most foreigners do not even begin to think or act as we Americans are accustomed to. Culture shock has sent many an ill-prepared missionary scurrying back home. The missionary must always remember that he is not trying to make "Americans" but to make disciples for Jesus.

Sponsoring churches must look closely at the

missionary family unit. Is the wife prepared to help her husband in mission work? He cannot effectively pursue mission work if his wife and family are non-supportive. I knew of a situation where the wife, who was near the time for delivery, could not accompany her husband on the trip to consider a mission position to be filled. She was faced with making the important decision to go based solely on the information she received from her husband. Once they arrived, their desire to work there deteriorated rapidly. Her inability to adjust to the new culture diminished his effectiveness. The sponsoring church had no choice but to get them back stateside as soon as possible. At last report, they seem to be well adjusted in a stateside work and are accomplishing a good work for the Lord.

The number and age of the children must be considered. Some countries place a quota on the number of children in a missionary family. Schooling needs for the children must also be considered. The missionary needs to be able to stay in the mission field at least three to four years in order for the tenure to be cost effective.

Sponsoring churches would do well to encourage older, experienced men, who have already reared their children, to consider a missionary tour. They are more likely to possess the maturity needed, along with years of experience, that would serve them well in the mission field.

As ministers of the gospel we must keep the call to mission work before the church (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). We cannot go unless there are those who send. The church will not send unless brethren are educated to the needs of world missions. That responsibility rests heavily upon gospel preachers.

"Which Life For Your Child?"

Connie Lee Krute

When is the right time to decide to be a missionary? Is there such a thing as being too young?

As a child I had a dream to become a missionary, just like this grown up friend of mine. She and her husband would send us the most interesting letters about their family and reports about their work in Europe. I just knew that I wanted to grow up to be part of a missionary family, just like my friend.

The years went by and the Womens' Movement of the '60s and '70s prevailed. Although I attended a Christian college for two years, I finished at a private secular university near by hometown. My

college advisor, who tried to influence me heavily, was on the National Board of Directors for the National Organization for Women (NOW). It seemed that the main goals of education were to learn to be aggressive, to learn to make lots of money, and to learn to do everything a man could do -- only better. These were rather foreign ideas for a girl who originally wanted to grow up, marry a Christian, have a family, and do mission work.

After a number of years of trying this "world system," I finally found my way into mission work. Had I known how satisfying it is to work for the Lord full-time, striving to do His will, I would

Continued On Page 3



Harold Hazelip



Bobby Duncan



Sue Crabtree



Don McWhorter



Milton Sewell



Jerry Jenkins



James Moffett



Don Flatt



Mac Lynn



Jeff Jenkins



Dennis Jones



Wendell Winkler



Cecil May, Jr.

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6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00 - 8:00 p.m. What Manner Of Persons Ought Ye To Be Harold Hazelip

MONDAY, AUGUST 27, 1990

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Church Leadership And Organization Bobby Duncan
9:30 - 10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Women's Role In The Work Of The Church..Sue Crabtree
10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Current Problems Confronting The Church Don McWhorter
11:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00 - 2:45 p.m. Christian Education: At Home, At Church And At School..Milton Sewell
3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Reaching Out To The People Jerry Jenkins
3:45 - 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00 - 8:00 p.m. Abounding In The Work Of The Lord James Moffett

TUESDAY, AUGUST 28, 1990

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Church Leadership And Organization Bobby Duncan
9:30 - 10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Women's Role In The Work Of The Church..Sue Crabtree
10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Current Problems Confronting The Church Don McWhorter
11:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00 - 2:45 p.m. Christian Ethics Don Flatt
3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Mission Opportunities At Home And Abroad Mac Lynn
3:45 - 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00 - 8:00 p.m. (Youth Night) How Shall The Young Secure Their Hearts? ..Jeff Jenkins

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29, 1990

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Church Leadership And Organization Bobby Duncan
9:30 - 10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Women's Role In The Work Of The Church..Sue Crabtree
10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Current Problems Confronting The Church..... Don McWhorter
11:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00 - 2:45 p.m. EXPO '90 - A World Evangelism Showcase Dennis Jones
3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Speak Thou The Things That Become Sound Doctrine..Wendell Winkler
3:45 - 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:30 - 8:00 p.m. The Same Commit Thou To Faithful Men Cecil May, Jr

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"Which Life For Your Child?"

Continued From Page 2

have gone into mission work much sooner. If only I had kept sight of my childhood dream!

Granted, children are very impressionable. And some might say we are "indoctrinating" our children if we have the "audacity" to suggest that mission work might be a great way of life for them when they grow up. We might be closing them off from the world. But if you look around, others are "impressing" our children with the world systems of today-- large doses of foul or highly suggestive language in music and video programs of all types (have you REALLY watched and listened to the PG rated and above programs, or so-called childrens' television shows?); clothing styles are once again embarking upon the immodest look; the drug culture, although statistically going down in popularity, is ever present -- even on grade school campuses; and many science programs now claim that evolution is a FACT, not just a scientific theory (and many places do not allow the mention of Biblical creation in the science classroom).

I've seen what the world has to offer our children: greed, hatred, distrust, racism -- and

those are some of the "nicer" values. But what does the Lord have to offer our children should they turn their lives over to Him? Since going into mission work I've now witnessed the true "fruit of the Spirit . . . love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control . . ." (Galatians 5:22, 23). That's a mighty nice list of values for a child to live with.

Some might say we are "indoctrinating" our children if we have the "audacity" to suggest that mission work might be a great way of life for them when they grow up.

Maybe I don't have a lot of earthly goods to offer my child, or wise suggestions for getting ahead in the business world. But if she were to learn only one thing from me it would be to "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all

these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). And what better way is there for her to do this than to grow up to be a missionary?

--Staff Writer -- WORLD EVANGELISM, Route 2, Box 156, Winona, MS 38967.

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Missionaries -- A Vanishing Breed

Continued From Page 1

mission work rather than some other lower priority expenditure at home!)

3. Significant increase in the number of salaried ministers serving the already saved in local congregations.

(Recent research confirms the increase of salaried staff serving local congregations -- and that by 23% in the last ten years. It ought to be clear that every addition to the local staff absorbs the potential salary of one more missionary -- and often even two! More will be said on this in later articles).

4. The missionaries are not able to maintain congregational motivation toward the evangelization of the lost.

(It should not be the expected task of the missionary to keep the sending church's evangelistic fervor burning. It is clear from Philippians 2:25 that in New Testament times it was the other way around! For the Philippian church kept the missionary's spirits kindled by sending its "messenger and minister" to bolster the morale of its imprisoned missionary).

5. Fewer families are inspired with the challenge of planting the church in new fields.

(Fewer families are being asked to consider mission work. In New Testament times the church members themselves consistently chose their representatives for any and all missions -- whether of mercy or of evangelism. Neither elders nor preachers shoulder tap potential prospects for missions, and the practical result is that even those who would be good missionary material never consider themselves in that light).

6. Fewer churches are taking the initiative in the selection, training and fielding of missionary families.

(In the early church, when the Holy Spirit was ready to begin the first foreign mission enterprise, He chose simultaneously the SENDING church: Antioch, and the GOING team: Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:1-5). This format keeps the missionary from being a "one-man" promoter of his cause. And it keeps the church from developing the attitude that it is helping him do his work! For the church sees itself as a partner in a collective assignment).

7. General decline in numbers of churches and a significant decrease in membership in those churches -- with the automatic result in fewer contributors to mission funds and fewer potential supporting churches.

(There may well be a natural relationship between the disappearing missionary abroad and a declining church at home. God's Word assures us that as we invest more of our resources and personnel in the salvation of others, there is an expected corollary benefit that is harvested on the home front: II Corinthians 9:6 assures us that "bountiful sowing" results in "bountiful reaping." And mission expenditures abroad always result in "fruit that increases to the account" of the giver (Philippians 4:17). See also II Corinthians 9:8-11).

8. Loss on the part of the members of the

conviction that the lost are really lost.

(Why try to save the lost if we do not really feel that they are in eternal jeopardy or spiritually lost? Of course the cross of Christ says they are lost! And the Great Commission says they are lost! And the number of Scriptures that insist upon that fact are literally too many to list here. See: I John 5:19).

9. Significant increase of national preachers on American support, which appears to be a more economical approach to church planting in foreign nations.

"There are two methods utilized by the gardener to cultivate flowers. One involves planting the seed in flowerpots, and the other method consists in planting the seed in the open field. Many times it turns out that the plant grown in the flowerpot, by giving it special care, fertilizer and other attention, grows tall and beautiful, much better than the plant set in the ground outside. But if we abandon the plant in its flowerpot and leave it to its own devices, it will quickly fade and die while the plant in open ground will continue to grow in its natural environment. And even more, at the appropriate time it will reproduce by itself. This contrast illustrates the difference between the native directed church and the foreign missionary directed church." -- Bert Perry

(In the quest for cheaper ways to do mission work, we are putting more and more foreign

nationals on American support. That is a very unhealthy trend and counter-productive to the national preacher and the national church. This practice will be examined in a later article).

10. The practical consequence of believing that mission work is an optional assignment for the local church.

(Jesus' last commandment to the chosen disciples was the Great Commission. He did not ascend to heaven until that mandate was given and understood (Acts 1:2). And He had earlier stated with Divine clarity that "he who gathers not, scatters" (Matthew 12:30). He implies in this statement that anyone who is not involved in the spread of the Gospel automatically becomes a hindrance to its spread. And such can become the status of congregations as well as individuals. So mission work is an option ONLY for those who are willing to accept the consequences of being judged by Jesus as "scatterers.")

With those serious considerations in our minds, it is hoped that we are now ready to examine the results of some other research that has been done on our brotherhood. The next articles will explain and evaluate other aspects of this extensive research project.

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Expo '90

Continued From Page 2

any of the conferences should contact the college for more information.

More than 100 speakers will be on hand. Speakers such as Juan Monroy, Otis Gatewood, Jule Miller, Larry West, Randy Becton, Mac Lynn, Parker Henderson, Harold Taylor, Mladen Jovanovic, and J. Wayne Kilpatrick will be participating. Ministries such as Eastern European Mission, Herald of Truth, World Bible School, World English Bible School, World Radio, World

Christian Broadcasting, One Nation Under God, Campaigns for Christ International, Christian Satellite Network, and many others will be represented.

Information about lodging opportunities to participate and EXPO '90 details can be obtained by contacting International Bible College, P.O. Box IBC, Florence, AL 35630, (205) 766-6610.

"This will be the most encouraging event you have ever attended," predicted Dennis Jones.

West Alabama

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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 26

AUGUST 10, 1990

NUMBER 32

Does The Stranger Still Feel Like A Stranger?



Edsel Burleson

Are we careful to welcome strangers as we should welcome them? Does the stranger still feel like a stranger when he leaves the building, or does he feel he has been among friends? It is said of Sir Walter Scott that when he shook hands with one, he was never the first to withdraw his hand.

The Bible has much to say about Christians and hospitality. An elder was required to show hospitality (I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8). Widows, who were enrolled in the number to be cared for on a permanent basis, had to meet the requirement of hospitality (I Timothy 5:10). The Hebrew writer required his readers, even in time of approaching persecution, to be courteous to strangers (Hebrews 13:2). Paul exhorted the Romans to be "given to hospitality" (Romans 13:8).

A denominational periodical recently reported a survey taken at a meeting of young adults. The survey was an effort to determine what impressed them most when they attended a church in a new community. Among the items listed were: the preacher's sermon; the architecture of the building; location of the building; parking facilities; nursery care; and the friendliness of the people.

The item "friendliness of the people" was placed in the middle of the list so people would not automatically check it first. Yet, that item won over all the rest by a wide margin. "The minister's sermon" was a distant second.

If the "friendliness of the people" is such a vital factor in reaching others for Christ, we should give careful attention to communicate to others our genuine concern.

Visitors quickly sense whether or not they are warmly welcomed. If it is mentioned that someone

did not find the church friendly, there are usually such defenses as, "Well, they rush right out after dismissal; how can we be expected to greet them?" Or, "It's impossible to greet everybody!"

Several years ago Bob Mize wrote about a woman who visited eighteen churches in order to evaluate their friendliness. She sat near the front, walked slowly to the rear of the auditorium, then returned to the front using another aisle. She was dressed neatly, and with a smile asked at least one person to direct her to some particular area of the church facilities. She rated the reception she received on the following scale:

- 10 for a smile from a worshipper
- 10 for a greeting from someone sitting nearby
- 100 for an exchange of names
- 200 for an invitation to return to the services
- 1,000 for an introduction to another worshipper
- 2,000 for an invitation to meet the preacher

All eighteen churches she visited rated fewer than 100 points. She concluded: "The preaching may be Biblical, the singing inspirational or the sermon uplifting, but when a person finds no one who cares about a visitor's presence, a return visit is unlikely."

For people to visit the church and go away feeling that it was cold and unfriendly is inexcusable. Listen to some of the things Paul

wrote to the Christians at Rome. "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; . . . be given to hospitality . . . Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits" (Romans 12:10-16).

An unknown author wrote these challenging lines entitled "To Whom Do You Speak?"

I see you at the services, but you never say "Hello,"

You're busy all the time with folks you already know.

I sit among the members; still I'm a lonely guy,

The new ones sit with me, as you quickly pass us by.

You folks have asked us in -- and talked of fellowship,

You could step across the room, but you never make the trip.

Why can't you just nod or stop and shake my hand;

Then go and join your old friends? That I would understand.

I will be at the next service, on that you can depend;

Please stop and introduce yourself--
AND BECOME MY FRIEND!

--420 Seventh St., S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

About Our Speakers



David Wade

Time is drawing near for the 1990 Words of Truth Lectureship and we are anticipating high interest and good attendance. Our thirteen guest speakers have distinguished themselves in faithful Christian service. In this editorial I wish to say a few words by way of introduction about each of them.

Harold Hazelip began serving as President of David Lipscomb University in 1986. Prior to this appointment, he served as Dean of the Harding University Graduate School of Religion. For several years brother Hazelip has been a regular speaker on the Herald of Truth television program. Brother Hazelip is the author of several books, among them: *Anchors in Troubled Waters*, *Lord, Help Me When I'm Hurting*, *Happiness in the Home*, and *Becoming Persons of Integrity*.

Bobby Duncan, minister of the Adamsville Church of Christ, at Adamsville, Alabama has served only three churches in his thirty-four years of ministry. He served as minister of the Sixth Avenue congregation and editor of Words of Truth 1976-1983. Presently, brother Duncan edits Vigil, a monthly publication begun by himself and the Adamsville church in 1973. Most recently, he has authored the book entitled, *The Elders Which Are Among You*, which is a study of the qualifications, appointment, and the work of elders.

Sue Crabtree has been involved in Christian Education for thirty years and presently teaches in the Education Department at Faulkner University, Montgomery, Alabama. Sister Crabtree's husband, James, also works at Faulkner. They are members of the Vaughn Park congregation. Sue recently wrote a book for teachers in the preschool and elementary grades entitled, *Let's Be Great Teachers*. We are pleased to have sister Crabtree conducting our morning ladies classes.

Don McWhorter is pulpit minister for the church in Fayette, Alabama, a position he has filled for more than sixteen years. A veteran of thirty years in gospel broadcasting, he now speaks on an internationally syndicated radio and television program for which he has received a **National Award for Distinguished Service to Religious Broadcasting**. He has spoken in more than 1300 gospel meetings and campaigns in this country and around the world. His latest book, which he co-authored with his wife Jane, *Living Together In Knowledge*, is a book on marriage that shows

what husbands and wives can learn about marriage from each other.

Milton Sewell returned to Freed-Hardeman University as President in June of this year. From 1976 until 1983 brother Sewell worked with Freed-Hardeman as Director and Vice President for Institutional Advancement and Planning. From 1983 until the spring of this year, he served as President of Mars Hill Bible School in Florence, Alabama. Brother Sewell is listed in the Outstanding Young Men in America and Outstanding Educators of America. He was honored Educator of the Year -- Freed-Hardeman College, 1988.

Jerry Jenkins is minister of the Roebuck Parkway Church of Christ in Birmingham, Alabama. Brother Jenkins has been the regular speaker on The Living Word weekly telecast for the past twenty years. In addition, he produces a weekly radio program broadcast in Belize, and television programs aired in Punta Gorda, Belize City and Dangriga in Central America. Jerry is co-founder of Maywood Christian Camp and Jefferson Christian Academy. He is the author of *God Speaks Today*, *God's Plan For My Life*, and *Lovingly Leading Men To The Savior*.

James Moffett has worked with the church in Tishomingo, Mississippi; Earle, Arkansas; Hialeah, Florida; and Memphis, Tennessee, serving two churches in Memphis -- Park Avenue and Raleigh. He has worked with the Raleigh church for thirty-three years. Brother Moffett serves on the Advisory Board of Freed-Hardeman University. He is a member of the Board of International Bible College. He helped organize the Alumni Associates of Harding Graduate School of Religion in 1967 and served as the president. In 1973 James was selected by Harding Graduate School of Religion to receive the first "Alumnus of the Year" award.

Don Flatt has been a member of the history faculty at Morehead State University, Morehead, Kentucky since 1962 and has served as department head for eight years. Don has been a member of the Flatt Brothers' Campaign for Christ since 1963, along with Leamon, Bill, and Dowell. Although brother Flatt preaches in regular gospel meetings on general evangelistic themes, he is available to speak on a wide variety of topics, among them: Saving the Family in America, Church Leadership in the Twenty-First Century, and How to Cope as a Christian Teenager in a Worldly Society.

Mac Lynn is Chairman of the Bible Department of David Lipscomb University. Mac has served the local church as a minister, as a minister of

Christian Fellowship



R. W. Gray

Of those early saints Luke recorded, "And all that believed were together, and had all things common (koinos)" (Acts 2:44). The togetherness and the common-sharing derived from the fellowship (koinonia) enjoyed by those who "continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts

2:42). They had thus become sons of God partaking of a common faith (Titus 1:4). Answering the gospel call they had been initiated into the fellowship of Christ (I Corinthians 1:9). Continuing in the faith delivered them they enjoyed a common salvation (Jude 3).

So highly treasured was this fellowship that Paul warned those who visited pagan temples that they became "companion" with idol gods in the cultic meals eaten therein (I Corinthians 10:19-21). The Jews who partook of the altar sacrifices were entering into fellowship with the presence of the God thereon represented (I Corinthians 10:18). By analogy, Paul reasons, those who partake of the Lord's Supper have fellowship with Christ. They become "companion" with him (I Corinthians 10:16, 17). It was not consistent, argues Paul, that Christians associate themselves with pagan feasts in a manner that suggested participation, communion, or fellowship with idols (I Corinthians 10:20). Such fellowship would present

Continued On Page 4

Continued On Page 4



Harold Hazelip Bobby Duncan Sue Crabtree Don McWhorter Milton Sewell Jerry Jenkins James Moffett Don Flatt Mac Lynn



Jeff Jenkins Dennis Jones



Wendell Winkler Cecil May, Jr.

**WORDS OF TRUTH LECTURESHIP
AUGUST 26-29, 1990
SIXTH AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST
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THEME: "BACK TO BASICS"**

NDAY, AUGUST 26, 1990

6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00 - 8:00 p.m. What Manner Of Persons Ought Ye To Be Harold Hazelip

NDAY, AUGUST 27, 1990

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Church Leadership And Organization Bobby Duncan
9:30 - 10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Women's Role In The Work Of The Church Sue Crabtree
10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Current Problems Confronting The Church Don McWhorter
11:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00 - 2:45 p.m. Christian Education: At Home, At Church And At School Milton Sewell
3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Reaching Out To The People Jerry Jenkins
3:45 - 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00 - 8:00 p.m. Abounding In The Work Of The Lord James Moffett

ESDAY, AUGUST 28, 1990

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Church Leadership And Organization Bobby Duncan
9:30 - 10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Women's Role In The Work Of The Church Sue Crabtree
10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Current Problems Confronting The Church Don McWhorter
11:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00 - 2:45 p.m. Christian Ethics Don Flatt
3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Mission Opportunities At Home And Abroad Mac Lynn
3:45 - 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00 - 8:00 p.m. (Youth Night) How Shall The Young Secure Their Hearts? Jeff Jenkins

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29, 1990

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Church Leadership And Organization Bobby Duncan
9:30 - 10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Women's Role In The Work Of The Church Sue Crabtree
10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Current Problems Confronting The Church Don McWhorter
11:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00 - 2:45 p.m. EXPO '90 - A World Evangelism Showcase Dennis Jones
3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Speak Thou The Things That Become Sound Doctrine Wendell Winkler
3:45 - 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:30 - 8:00 p.m. The Same Commit Thou To Faithful Men Cecil May, Jr.

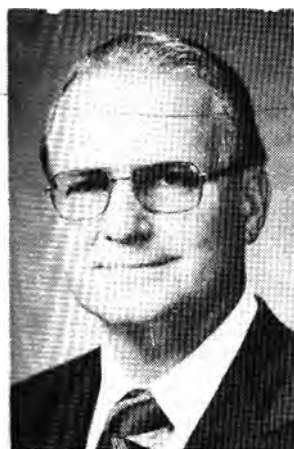
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Division



Bobby Key

Perhaps no greater curse has befallen the people of God than division. Most of the division and disunity of the past one hundred years has been senseless. A partisan brotherhood has produced strife, contentions, animosities, alienations, envyings, and rivalries among Christians causing open division in the body of Christ. What awful and distressing effects these ugly divisions have produced. When a congregation is broken to pieces the devil has a field day. Christians are thrown into confusion with reproaches, backbitings, evil surmisings, angry contentions, enmities, excommunications and even persecution! And this will continue to be true as long as schisms exist, for the Lord said where there is envying and strife, there is confusion and every evil work. Division is a work of the flesh demonstrating a carnal mind (I

Corinthians 3:3).

In spite of the sin of division some brethren seem proud of the church fusses and splits they have taken part in. One brother in a certain place stuck out his hand and proudly announced, "My name is Maytag; I love to agitate." Restlessness, resentfulness, and rebellion are usually the steps leading to open schism. First someone becomes restless because the congregation is not all it should be, the work is not to his liking, the elders are not qualified to lead, and the preacher not the man for the job. He was passed over in the last appointment of elders and deacons, and he made some suggestions in the business meeting that were ignored. The next step is to resent with bitter contention the leaders and members who follow their leadership. He attends the services to pick at the faults of those who lead and soon imagines that the elders, preacher and others are ignoring him. It is not long until he is defending himself and condemning the members. There is something about human pride which makes us want to defend ourselves! The final step finds this restless, resentful person openly rebelling against the elders, attempting to rally a sect around himself to

overthrow the power structure. If this fails and he doesn't get his way, then it is time to gather his sympathizers and walk away from the old established church and start a "loyal and faithful" church somewhere else.

Differing with brethren is not a sin, but dividing brethren is.

Now, brother, please don't write me and say I am talking about your situation. I am speaking of many such sad experiences over the brotherhood. Neither am I encouraging brethren to ignore their differences. We must recognize our differences, and it doesn't help to sweep them under a rug. Some differences are real while others are imaginary. Discuss them, but discuss them as brethren. Where did we ever get the idea that we cannot disagree without hating and enmity? A brother is not your enemy because he doesn't agree with you on some point of opinion. Differing with brethren is not a sin, but dividing brethren is. It is a work of the flesh. Jesus said, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have

Continued On Page 4

Christian Fellowship

Continued From Page 2

a measure of credence to the existence of such gods. And since we are complete in Christ we have no need for fellowship with error, darkness, and sin, nor any pretended rival with him (Colossians 2:10).

It is not the will of Christ that his companions extend the right hand of fellowship to those who stand in opposition to truth (Galatians 2:9). God-speed is not to be extended to those who go beyond the teachings of Christ. To do so is to become "partaker" (koinoneo) with them in error (II John 9-11). Unfruitful works of darkness are to be rebuked, not fellowshiped (Ephesians 5:11). Here, fellowship translates from a word meaning "a joint partaker." In context Paul writes specifically of immoral practices, but states we are to avoid joint participation with anything that is opposed to goodness, righteousness, and truth (Ephesians 5:9).

Biblical fellowship is a common bond enjoyed by those who are the companions of the Lord. It is a communion, a sharing, an extending of the hand, to all of "like precious faith" (II Peter 1:1). We are not to engage in any fellowship that encourages sin and error. Our fellowship with God and with one another, writes John, is conditioned upon our walking in the light (I John 1:3, 6, 7). In the following chapter of the same letter John states that we may "know" of this relationship, or, if you please, "fellowship," by the keeping of the word of God. If we present a front of fellowship with God while walking in darkness, i.e., outside the commandments of the Lord, we are liars and self-deceived (cf. I John 1:3-7; 2:3-5). A necessary inference from these verses is that to walk in the

One might conceivably take a pagan "out to lunch" as a gesture of friendship, seeking an opportunity to lead him to the truth. But he dare not enter the pagan temple to offer sacrifices with him. . . . By the same token, we may enjoy association with teachers of error, but we sin when we engage with them in false worship or teaching.

light is to walk after the commandments of Christ.

In none of the foregoing do we find any hint of a limited or "lower case" fellowship as opposed to a full or "upper case" fellowship. Rather we find that they all agree with Paul's instructions to the Romans: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and AVOID them" (Romans 16:17).

Since it is the case that we are to avoid those who teach and walk contrary to the Lord's will, to withhold God-speed from those who transgress his laws, to reprove the unfruitful works of darkness, and to avoid fellowship with devils, it follows that we are provided the means of identifying all such

sin and error (I John 4:1-2; Acts 17:11). If we are to let those "alone" who are blind guides and who worship God in vain, it follows we are capable of knowing when men so live and teach (Matthew 5:9-13).

Withholding Christian fellowship, however, does not equate with total isolation from the individual caught up in error. Jesus ate with publicans and sinners without giving sanction to their sinful ways (Luke 15:1-2). Christian men or women, through a right relationship with an unbelieving marriage partner, may win them to Christ (I Peter 3:1; I Corinthians 7:16). Withholding fellowship, then, does not suggest a total rejection of the "person" involved in sin. One disciplined publically by the church should be admonished as a brother or sister (II Thessalonians 3:14-15). But with all such we must refuse the "fellowship" (koinonia) that belongs to those who walk in the light. It is in this sense that both the person and his doctrine must be refused (I Corinthians 5:11).

Regarding those in sin, we find at least two classes: (1) Those so opionated as to be classified "heretics." Such demonstrate by word and action a lack of love of or desire for truth (Titus 3:10; II Thessalonians 3:10-11). (2) Those like Saul of Tarsus who have a good conscience, who sincerely desire to serve the Lord, but are caught up in error and sin. The former are to be rejected after a reasonable effort has been made to save them (Titus 3:10). Toward the latter we should extend much love, patience, and kindness. While it is mutually agreed that we are not holding a common faith, it is also perceived that we possess kindred spirits. We should seek to cultivate friendship and find mutual interests that may be shared with such folk (I Corinthians 9:22). But there is a distinct difference in this kind of association and the sonship belonging to those of the household of faith (Ephesians 2:11-18).

One might conceivably take a pagan "out to lunch" as a gesture of friendship, seeking an opportunity to lead him to the truth. But he dare not enter the pagan temple to offer sacrifices with him. It is the latter that lends encouragement to and offers tacit approval of idol gods. By the same token, we may enjoy association with teachers of error, but we sin when we engage with them in false worship or teaching.

Division

Continued From Page 3

loved you" (John 15:12). If we loved one another as we ought, sympathized with one another as we should, and were ready, willing and anxious to forgive one another and to bear one another's burdens most of our division would disappear. As long as we only like those who like us, and love those who love us, and despise those who differ from us, and avoid those who don't like us, we are no better than the world (Matthew 5:46, 47).

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

About Our Speakers

Continued From Page 2

education, and as an elder. He often conducts or participates in church growth, education, and leadership workshops. He preaches on appointment and in gospel meetings. His special interest is in world-wide research on Churches of Christ and in church plantings. Brother Lynn has a wealth of information to share with brethren on church plantings.

Jeff Jenkins as minister of the College Church of Christ in Montgomery, Alabama. Brother Jenkins holds an average of six gospel meetings each year and is a frequent speaker at youth meetings, workshops and lectureships. Jeff serves on the board of Maywood Christian Camp and Christian Family Development Ministry. He is co-host for The Living Word telecast in Birmingham, Alabama. Since 1980, Jeff has been listed six times in Outstanding Men of America.

Dennis Jones serves as President of International Bible College. Brother Jones is a native of Florence, Alabama and graduate of I.B.C. He has conducted over 150 gospel meetings in the past six years. Dennis is well known as an after-dinner and banquet speaker. He is a member of the National Speakers Association. Dennis was selected as

"Outstanding Young Religious Leader" in 1982 by the Jaycees organization.

Wendell Winkler serves as Bible Department Chairman at Faulkner University. Prior to his tenure at Faulkner, brother Winkler served as director of the Brown Trail Preacher Training School in Fort Worth, Texas. He has held meetings, or otherwise preached in twenty-five states and has appeared on a number of college lectureship programs. Brother Winkler has written numerous articles for brotherhood publications including Words of Truth. Wendell was listed in Personalities of the south, 1982-83.

Cecil May, Jr. has served as President of Magnolia Bible College, Kosciusko, Mississippi since 1980. During his tenure the school gained accreditation with the American Association of Bible Colleges. Under his leadership Magnolia Bible College has been awarded Candidate Status for Accreditation with the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Brother May is a frequent speaker on college lectureships. He has preached in fourteen states and the Cayman Islands.



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Words Of Truth

"I am not made of words of truth"

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 26

AUGUST 17, 1990

NUMBER 33

Modern-Day Eve



Brad T. Bromling

ing singing -- virtually everything but public preaching is being condoned and "justified" by that congregation. Is this the face of the future?

The perilous times that are upon us have as a trademark the involvement of women in unauthorized (unscriptural) activities. Just yesterday, I was given a fistful of material which documents the participation of women in the public assemblies of a "church of Christ" in Texas. Women leading prayer, reading Scripture, lead-

ing singing -- virtually everything but public preaching is being condoned and "justified" by that congregation. Is this the face of the future?

image of God to whom the blessing of salvation is freely offered (Genesis 1:26; Galatians 3:28). She has free access to the Throne of mercy, forgiveness, and prayer (I Peter 2:5-10). She has the right to independently study the Word of God and to teach the same in appropriate settings (Acts 17:11; Titus 2:3-5). She has much work to do in the church which is every bit as important as the work given to men. In fact, she will be judged for her obedience with the same exactness as will the man (II Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 7:21). The Bible is plain about it. Men and women are different in function -- but equal in worth.

Why is this difference in function the source of so much difficulty? Ignorance and rebellion are the two most likely reasons. Many pulpits sound forth jokes, messages about a positive mental attitude, and the latest popular psychologies -- all the while

failing to present the Living Oracles. Yes, ignorance is part of the problem. But, rebellion is undoubtedly the major factor -- rebellion on the part of women who, like Eve, feel slighted by God's restrictions. Like their mother, they are blinding themselves to the enormous freedoms and opportunities that God's plan affords them. Rebellion is also seen on the part of men, who like Adam, go along with these erring women. Regardless of the factors that may apply, the result is the same -- death. Faithful brethren must fight the battle if we will save the first century church from this 20th century apostasy.

Director of Biblical Research
Apologetics Press, Inc.
230 Landmark Drive
Montgomery, AL 36117

Woman has not been slighted by Inspiration -- she has been blessed. She is not considered a slave or sex-object, she is considered a person created in the image of God to whom the blessing of salvation is freely offered.

The Word of God is abundantly clear on the role of women in the church. It does not include becoming elders (I Timothy 3:1-7), deacons (I Timothy 3:8-13), preachers (I Timothy 2:12), or even taking a leadership role in the public assemblies (I Timothy 2:11-15). **True**, women's liberation reaches its highest potential when the Scriptures are believed and obeyed. Woman has not been slighted by Inspiration -- she has been blessed. She is not considered a slave or sex-object, she is considered a person created in the

Recurring Controversy



R. W. Gray

forth, brethren alienated, the church harmed, with very little progress toward a uniform understanding of this difficult matter realized.

The problem for us is further complicated by some in the political arena who feel the courts should invade the domain of churches, dictating

Reports from many quarters, including articles in highly regarded publications, reveal that we seem destined to repeat the controversy of the past with reference to the place of women in the public assembly. We fear that as in the past, so with us today, a wide spectrum of views will be put

Views will be put forth, brethren alienated, the church harmed, with very little progress toward a uniform understanding of this difficult matter realized.

church policy. The media seeks to make it an emotional issue, assuming in their preachments that churches that restrict women in any capacity are discriminatory, and are subjects of ridicule and litigation.

Against a background of changes in attitude toward women in public life, the church faces its greatest challenge in reaffirming, restudying, and enforcing heaven's rule in this matter. Are we equal to the task? Are we as concerned for a "thus saith the Lord" as were brethren of generations past?

We have traditionally found it difficult to arrive at a uniform understanding of the role of women in the public life of the church. While few, if any, have sanctioned women evangelists or elders, some have imposed greater restrictions than others on their teaching role. Within the last two decades we see a trend to use women in teaching roles

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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David Wade Editor

Joe T. Spivy, Sr. Associate Editor
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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Deacons: Male And Female?



David Wade

The subject of female deacons in the church is the theme of brother J. Stephen Sandifer's new book entitled, *Deacons: Male and Female?*

Brother Sandifer holds BA and MA degrees from Abilene Christian University. He worked as a missionary in England for six years before joining the staff of the Southwest Central

Church of Christ in Houston, Texas in 1977.

His book is unique in Restoration circles. He has brought together an unparalleled collection of information on this subject dealing with textual considerations, historical development, the Restoration Movement, and contemporary implications. His conclusions in this debate are most interesting and noteworthy.

Brother Sandifer sees as much evidence in the New Testament for the work of female deacons as he does for the male deacons. He believes that I Timothy 3:11 is "most naturally understood" if applied to female deacons, rather than wives of deacons and elders, or some other un-named group (p. 41). When discussing the special qualities for women (I Timothy 3:11), brother Sandifer assumes that these women are female deacons (p. 61). The NIV translates the verse, "In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything." (The NIV is cited here, for this is the version brother Sandifer uses for all scripture quotations, p. ii). It is apparent that the majority of the NIV translation committee on I Timothy understands the "women" to refer to

"their wives." The minority opinion given in the footnote is "deaconesses." The KJV and NKJV also render it as "wives" while the ASV and RSV render it "women," leaving the matter to the reader's interpretation.

In his book, the author admits that I Timothy 3:11 is the only verse he finds giving the requirements of those he assumes to be deaconesses (p. 220). If we accept his assumption as the correct interpretation, we are faced with two conflicting lists of qualifications for the male and female deacon.

Why are the deacons required to be the "husband of but one wife and must manage his children and household well," and no such requirements are placed upon the "deaconesses?" Are we to assume that an unmarried, childless woman may qualify to serve as a deaconess, while an unmarried childless man cannot qualify to serve as a deacon? There are also other qualities the deacons must possess that are not specifically stated for the women of I Timothy 3:11. Why is God more demanding of the deacons and more lenient to the assumed deaconesses as far as the qualifications are concerned? Brother Sandifer does not address this problem. He assumes that the qualities in this passage are not meant to be a formal and complete check list (pp. 62-63). Obviously, I Timothy 3:11 is "most naturally understood" if applied to the wives of both elders and deacons, as the context demands.

In this matter, brother Sandifer appeals to the example of Stone and Campbell who, he believes, set a pattern of unity in diversity without sacrificing the validity of scripture. Therefore, he envisions in years to come congregations with no deacons, congregations with deacons, and congregations with deacons, male and female. It is his hope there will be unity in their diversity (p. 193). Most likely, his hope will never be reality.

Neither Male Nor Female

R. W. Gray

The subjection of woman to man authenticated by both Old and New Testaments is clearly set out by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians. Having reaffirmed the divine roles he adds, "Nevertheless, neither is the woman without the man, nor the man without the woman, in the Lord" (I Corinthians 11:11). This mutual dependence, as well as the dual role of the sexes, is not forgotten by Paul when he writes that "in Christ . . . there is neither male nor female" (Galatians 3:28b).

That both men and women were to function in important teaching roles is seen by Joel's vision for the last days. " . . . And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, . . ." (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17, 18). Philip had four daughters, virgins, "which did prophesy" (Acts 21:8, 9). Paul instructs that godly women be "teachers of good things" (Titus 2:3, 4). That there was a time and a place where women would both pray and prophesy is demonstrated by Paul's injunction, " . . . Every woman praying or prophesying with her head uncovered (unveiled) dishonoreth her head. . ." (I Corinthians 11:5).

From the beginning of the church age women have played an important role in the ongoing of the gospel. An impressive number of those who serve as elders and evangelists in the church today will attest to the truth that they were influenced first by a woman to become a Christian, and that women were a driving force in their decision to pursue a leadership role in the kingdom.

God forbid that we minimize or overlook the indispensable contribution of our godly women in the family of the Lord! We must not fail to recognize and to "help those women who labor with us in the gospel, . . . whose names are in the book of life" (Philippians 4:3).

Even though we rightfully and respectfully speak

of wife and mother as queen of the home, keeping her home as scripture prescribes, we cannot ignore the reality of the God ordained headship of husband and father (Titus 2:5; Ephesians 5:23-26).

Man's headship does not place him in some sort of dictatorial role, but it does impose a responsibility he cannot shirk with impunity. He does not have the prerogative, should he seek to exercise such, to relegate this leadership role to his wife. Woman has no divine right to assume the headship of the home, even if her husband should verbally grant her "permission" so to do. Neither may permissibly bypass the inspired edict, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as

unto the Lord . . . Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything" (Ephesians 5:22, 24).

The rule of subjection that existed from the time of creation, and was bolstered by the ruin that followed mother Eve's leadership trial, remains now as it has from the beginning. Adorning themselves with good works, Christian women were to "learn in silence with all subjection" (I Timothy 2:9, 11). They are forbidden to either TEACH or USURP AUTHORITY "over the man" (I Timothy 2:12). Why? "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman BEING DECEIVED was in the

Continued On Page 3



Harold Hazelip

Bobby Duncan

Sue Crabtree

Don McWhorter

Milton Sewell

Jerry Jenkins

James Moffett

Don Flatt

Mac Lynn

Jeff Jenkins

Dennis Jones

Wendell Winkler

Cecil May, Jr.

**WORDS OF TRUTH LECTURESHIP
AUGUST 26-29, 1990
SIXTH AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST
1501 Sixth Avenue • Jasper, Alabama 35501
Telephone (205) 384-6446 or 387-1670
THEME: "BACK TO BASICS"**

UNDAY, AUGUST 26, 1990

6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00 - 8:00 p.m. What Manner Of Persons Ought Ye To Be Harold Hazelip

MONDAY, AUGUST 27, 1990

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Church Leadership And Organization Bobby Duncan
9:30 - 10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Women's Role In The Work Of The Church..Sue Crabtree
10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Current Problems Confronting The Church Don McWhorter
11:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00 - 2:45 p.m. Christian Education: At Home, At Church And At School ..Milton Sewell
3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Reaching Out To The People Jerry Jenkins
3:45 - 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00 - 8:00 p.m. Abounding In The Work Of The Lord James Moffett

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9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Church Leadership And Organization Bobby Duncan
9:30 - 10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Women's Role In The Work Of The Church..Sue Crabtree
10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Current Problems Confronting The Church Don McWhorter
11:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00 - 2:45 p.m. Christian Ethics Don Flatt
3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Mission Opportunities At Home And Abroad Mac Lynn
3:45 - 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00 - 8:00 p.m. (Youth Night) How Shall The Young Secure Their Hearts? ..Jeff Jenkins

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29, 1990

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Church Leadership And Organization Bobby Duncan
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11:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00 - 2:45 p.m. EXPO '90 - A World Evangelism Showcase Dennis Jones
3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Speak Thou The Things That Become Sound Doctrine ..Wendell Winkler
3:45 - 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:30 - 8:00 p.m. The Same Commit Thou To Faithful Men Cecil May, Jr.

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Neither Male Nor Female

Continued From Page 2

transgression (I Timothy 2:13, 14). Wives of the inspired prophets at Corinth, because they were women, were forbidden to deliver a discourse before the church, and were reminded they were to be "under obedience, as also saith the law" (I Corinthians 14:34, 35). The "law" to which the apostle refers is doubtless found in the creation account: ". . . And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Genesis 3:15; Numbers 30:3-12).

It is neither fitting for man to flaunt any supposed superiority because of the order of creation, or the inspired edict that flows therefrom, nor for the woman to vaunt an independence she does not possess. Both must respect the law of the Lord, submitting themselves one to the other in his fear (Ephesians 5:21). Woman is not degraded, Women's Lib to the contrary notwithstanding, by the subordinate role assigned by her Creator. Being the apex of divine creation, she, like man, reflects the glory of the God in whose image she is made (Genesis 2:27). God elected that the Saviour should be born of the "seed of the woman"

Current efforts to place the subordination of woman to man in the home and the church in the realm of mere human custom and/or tradition will not stand the test.

(Genesis 3:15; Galatians 4:4; I Timothy 2:15).

So long as the church is under the headship of Christ she will recognize the distinctive roles of male, female, husband, wife, elders, members, etc. (Colossians 1:18). Any digression from the divine intent will indict us as lawless men and women before God (I John 3:4). We are not at liberty to set aside his will simply because we do not find ourselves "comfortable" with what is clearly revealed. The word of God came to us and not from us (I Corinthians 14:36, 37).

Current efforts to place the subordination of

woman to man in the home and the church in the realm of mere human custom and/or tradition will not stand the test. We must be soberly concerned when we hear brethren state that "a greater leadership role for women in the church is the wave of the future." Others who scoff at the conservative views of those who insist upon God's arrangement in this matter must come to realize the seriousness of their attitudes. It is yet the case that each of us will be judged by the word of Christ, not by our own desires, wishes and inclinations (John 12:48; II Corinthians 5:10).

The liberties that some now assume, falsely stating that women may "speak before an audience of Christian men if some man has granted her permission so to do," seems to have had its inception around the camp fire in our youth programs. It was next observed when our women began to speak out in what was known as "chain prayers." One step led to another, and now serious problems have developed with men consistently attending Bible classes, lectures, etc., taught by

Continued On Page 4

Recurring Controversy

Continued From Page 1

where men are present, and to lead prayers and songs in a manner that violates scriptural principles.

The pretext for using women in forbidden roles stems from two assumed premises: (1) Passages restricting women in the assembly had to do with regional customs and culture, thus have no application in today's world. (2) Since there is "neither male nor female" in Christ we have no right to impose "our rules" upon them.

Inasmuch as some customs and culture of New Testament times are recognized as relating to geographical areas and certain time frames, we must ascertain by prayerful analysis if familiar proof texts in connection with woman's role in the church admit to this limited application.

It behooves us as well to examine the significance of Paul's affirmation that there is neither male nor female in Christ (Galatians 3:28). In recent times we have demonstrated a tendency to assume that such questions have been settled once for all, and that all who question our applications are either liberal or moss-back conservatives. We must abandon this "new" approach to brotherhood issues. More time and space must be devoted to reasoning from the scriptures.

To the law and the testimony, "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection" (I Timothy 2:11). Regarding this verse David Lipscomb observed, "The position of women in public worship is that of a quiet learner in manner and in act, yielding submission in all lawful respects to the position God had placed man as the leader of the worship in the public assembly of the church." Paul continues, "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man . . ." (I Timothy 2:12). Of this the learned Lipscomb said, "The point guarded against here is woman's assuming authority over man. It is not wrong for her to teach . . . , but wrong for her to teach in a way that assumes authority . . . over man (Titus 2:5)." Paul gives the reasons for heaven's prohibition: "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (I Timothy 2:13-14). Nothing regional or limited in scope is herein suggested. Eve was from Adam and was subordinate to him (I Corinthians 11:9; Genesis 3:16). The catastrophe of Eden is the beacon for all generations when the sexes exchange their distinctive roles. In view of Eve's being deceived, the inspired writer states she should not assume the leadership role. Again we see nothing in context that suggests a limited application of this universal rule.

Paul's instructions to the Corinthians in this connection has undergone closer scrutiny and occasioned more controversy than the so-called pastoral epistle. "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law" (I Corinthians 14:34). In the next verse he adds, ". . . for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

Both those possessed with the gift of tongues and

the women were to remain silent in the assembly (I Corinthians 14:28; 34, 35). Many good men have suggested that this proof text is not allowed since Paul is regulating the conduct of those who had spiritual gifts. That this is the primary emphasis cannot be successfully challenged. But do we correctly infer from this that the verses regarding women have no present day application? Does not the principle set out accord with that of I Timothy 2:11-13? Did not the apostle suggest a general rule for all women for all time when he says, "for it is a shame for women to speak in the church?" Does he not go beyond a local application when using the "law" as a background for his restriction?

We must be careful never to restrict women where God has assigned them a role. Nor should we grant them "permission" to do that which God says they are not to do.

The "shame," it is suggested, has its basis in the culture of the time. While there may be merit to this claim, the custom had prevailed from the time of Genesis 3:16 when God said, ". . . and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." The "law," if we infer that Moses' law is included as well as the Genesis account, did admit rare "exceptions" to the rule in times of moral and spiritual decline -- in times of lethargy on the part of men (Exodus 15:20; Judges 4:4, 5; II Kings 22:14; Luke 2:36, 38). Exceptions, however, do not permit a dismissal of the rule.

Some register an objection to the Corinthian passages on the grounds that Paul speaks specifically to the prophet's wives. "Your women," it is observed, "has the prophets of verse 32 as its antecedent." The fact that these could "learn from their husbands at home" suggests the correctness of this affirmation.

What may be ignored, however, is that the reason for imposing the restriction upon these was not that they were prophet's wives, but that they were women. The "law" was not written solely for the sake of women who marry prophets. Thus, while some matters in I Corinthians 14 are confined to the apostolic age, there are a number of principles that apply in any assembly at any time. It is yet indecent, even for the uninspired, that two or three men speak at the same time in the public assembly. It is yet the case that all things should be carried out in decency and in order as set out in I Corinthians 14:40. The fact that spiritual gifts are herein regulated does not negate the application of it to women everywhere and at all times.

But what is Paul's meaning, "There is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus?" (Galatians 3:28b). We may as well inquire what he means when he says "there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond or free . . ." (Galatians 3:28a). Whatever may be intended it is not that Jews and

Greeks had forfeited their national origin, nor that slaves were immediately set free by their masters. Nor does it imply that women cease to be females and that men cease to be males. Husbands are still husbands, and wives are still wives in Christ. Paul regulates the behaviour of both husband and wife, spelling out their distinctive roles in the home (Ephesians 5:23-30). What confidence could we have in Paul if he intends to negate in Galatians 3:28 everything he says elsewhere about the husband-wife relationship? How would we regard him if we are to infer that he herein discounts everything said to Timothy and the Corinthians regarding the role of women in the church?

Well did a distinguished brother of a former generation observe, "Male and female are equally accepted in Christ, . . . it does not mean that they could indiscriminately perform all the works and duties of the church" (Commentary on N.T. Epistles, David Lipscomb, pp 236-237). Husbands and wives are "one," but men do not bear children and women are not the head of their husbands (Ephesians 5:31b). All are "one in Christ," but not all are elders, deacons, or evangelists (John 17:21; I Timothy 3:1-13).

That women were to have an important role in the matter of teaching is evidenced by Joel's prophecy, as well as by a number of New Testament statements and examples (Acts 2:16, 17; I Corinthians 11:5; Titus 2:3, 4; Romans 16:1). We must be careful never to restrict women where God has assigned them a role. Nor should we grant them "permission" to do that which God says they are not to do. Women must neither "teach" over -- nor "usurp authority" over the man (I Timothy 2:11-13). Men have no license to lift both restrictions by saying, "I gave her permission."

--563 McGukin Road, Bremen, GA 30110.

Neither Male Nor Female

Continued From Page 3

women. The "logic" (?) employed by some would demand that women may serve as pulpit evangelists in our congregations when some men, especially elders, grant her permission to so serve.

Let us pray that the problems herein discussed are not symptoms of a greater crisis, a lack of faith in the all sufficiency of the scriptures as our sole guide in religious life. So long as brethren pledge to speak where the Bible speaks, and to remain silent where it is silent, our differences can be settled and our errors corrected. When we say with the ancient Jews, "We will not walk therein," the cause is lost (Jeremiah 6:16). It may be later than we think.

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Words Of



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

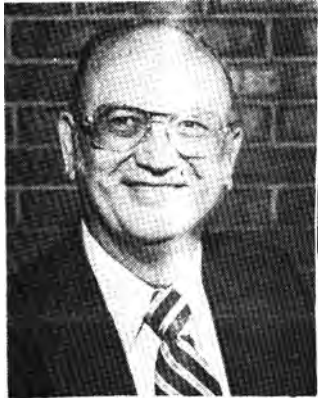
—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 26

AUGUST 24, 1990

NUMBER 34

Crossroads At The Crossroads!



T. Pierce Brown

I was at the Spiritual Growth Workshop in Orlando on July 28, 1990 and witnessed a scene about which I had prayed for years. The elders of the Crossroads Church of Christ, of Gainesville, Florida stood before the assembly and confessed their error and asked forgiveness

for their part in allowing the abuses to develop in what has been known as the "Total Commitment Movement" and "The Crossroads Movement."

They said that they had not meant for it to develop as it did, and I never doubted that. In the past, I had only questioned what seemed to me apparent and deliberate blindness that allowed them to be shepherds of a flock where such ungodly things were happening. They had been pointed out by many persons from many places and warnings had been given.

Their confession, repentance, and desire to be again in fellowship with the rest of us who are also trying to do the will of God moved many of us to tears. I put my arms around them and offered my services in trying to heal the breach and bind up the wounds that have been caused by the insidious, divisive and unscriptural things that have gone on as a result of the methodology of that movement. Since I was going to be in the area, I volunteered to come and preach for them Sunday evening of August 5, speaking on the ONE NATION UNDER GOD program, or to help out in any other way to heal the wounds and eradicate the damage that has been done.

I am aware that many brethren will not approve of such an action, for it is the attitude of many to "let them prove themselves for a year before you have anything to do with them." I deeply regret that attitude, for Jesus said, "And if he sin against thee seven times in a day, and seven times turn

again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him" (Luke 17:4). Of course, I am aware that they need to prove themselves. I am also aware that the terrible tragedies, broken lives and divided church throughout the brotherhood for which that movement is responsible cannot be undone in a few days. That is no reason for us to keep reminding them of it every week.

Their confession, repentance, and desire to be again in fellowship with the rest of us who are also trying to do the will of God moved many of us to tears.


Would it not be a tragic lack of love for us to respond that way to anyone? The alcoholic father whose children have turned to a life of crime, never to be reclaimed, does not, when he repents of that and is restored, need to be constantly reminded that he is responsible to a large degree for his own children being in hell. He knows that far better than we. At that point his heavy and broken heart needs to be lovingly healed. We may need to watch that alcoholic father to help him

make sure he does not make the same stupid, ungodly mistake again, but we need to receive him in love and treat him with gentle kindness.

Since I wrote an article, "Cultism in the Church" that exposed the dangers of the cultish practices which went on at Crossroads and has led to the Boston Movement with all its errors, I think it appropriate that I try to do all within my power to help those who want to be helped in the correction of those errors. It is my hope that those papers and preachers who were so eager to criticize the movement, and were so adamant in their denunciation of anything that sounded as if it might be tainted with the dread disease of "Crossroadism" will be just as quick to spread the good news of the statement of the elders and pray for the continued efforts to correct their past mistakes. We know that a person with a contagious disease, contracted as he engaged in a persistent sin, can repent and be forgiven of the sin. However, the actual cure of the disease may take a little longer, so be patient. Although there needs to be watchful care that you do not contract the disease, there must not be a refusal to forgive and lovingly help when a person has repented. Praise God for his grace!

--Rt. 2, Box 144X, Wartrace, TN 37183 (615) 454-9042.

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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-Acts 26:25*

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Where Are The Others?

T. Pierce Brown

When the elders of the Crossroads church in Gainesville, Florida made a confession of their sin in allowing the abuses of the "Total Commitment Movement" under their direction, that confession and statement of repentance was accepted as Jesus commanded in Luke 17:3-4. Many embraced them as an indication of it. No one brought up the fact that for more than a decade they had denied those abuses, for most of their critics had never implied or stated that they MEANT for them to happen. The problem was that it seemed that they were either lying about it, or that they were willfully blind to what hundreds of persons were telling them was taking place. Whatever the reason they could not see it, when a person repents, he should be forgiven. Then he should "bring forth fruit worthy of repentance" (Luke 3:8).

There is little doubt that one of the things that brought them to the awareness of the monster they had created was that their child came home to devour them. The Boston movement, which is the natural culmination of the abuses that they had denied, tried to take over the control of the Crossroads congregation, and was rebuffed for so doing. There is little doubt that the elders never meant for those abuses that they allowed and denied to go that far.

Although all should recognize that even sins of which we repent will have consequences far beyond what we thought, as in David's case and in all others, it is not our purpose to "rub salt in an open wound" by dwelling on that fact. It is our purpose to raise what we consider a pertinent question regarding others who partook of their sins and also denied the fact.

What about all those men and congregations who

Continued On Page 4



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

A Step In The Right Direction!



David Wade

or have given tacit approval to all the sinful abuses of this movement. Perhaps a statement of clarification will be forthcoming on this and other lingering questions that so many have.

Their statement will be immediately rejected in many quarters because they did not get into a lot of specifics about the things of which they were repenting. However, we should remember that King David did not recount his sins "one by one,"

We are encouraged by the confession and repentance of the elders of the Crossroads Church of Christ in Gainesville, Florida. We can only hope that this statement also reflects the repentance of the Crossroads staff and all members who have participated in and/

but simply confessed, "I have sinned against the Lord" (II Samuel 12:13). The Prodigal did not mention the "harlots" to his father. His elder brother would do that (Luke 15:30). The son said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, I am no more worthy to be called thy son" (verse 21).

The Crossroads elders cited, in very general terms, two abuses of the Crossroads movement. They state, "We hope these examples will illustrate our hearts and desire to repent of every abuse. We are sorry for them and pray for your forgiveness." This declaration is much more straight forward than some I hear, "If I have said or done . . . , "I may have used bad judgment . . ." etc.

Their most incredible statement for me to understand is, ". . . we did not approve of the abuses. . ."

We can only hope that their confessions, indeed, to be a step in the right direction! The "fruit worthy of repentance" demands that they use their influence to at least try to repair the damage they have done. This must begin at Crossroads.

Dear Brethren

CONCORD STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST
626 East Concord Street
Orlando, Florida 32803
Telephone: (407) 423-4301
August 7, 1990

Dear brethren:

A great event occurred on Saturday, July 29, at the Spiritual Growth Workshop in Orlando. We want to share that event with you and the brotherhood of the church throughout Florida and beyond.

The impact of that event will greatly affect the Lord's church and his cause for years to come. In order that you may fully know of that occurrence we have enclosed a copy of the statement and confession made by the elders from the Crossroads Church of Christ of Gainesville, Florida. It required repentance, courage and dedication to God to make such a confession before this great assembly. We rejoice with these elders in this great decision for the Lord.

We urge you to make your congregation aware of the Crossroads repentance and their desire to be restored to full fellowship of the brotherhood of the church. Perhaps you may wish to read their statement to your assembly.

Tape recordings of the entire events of this great day are available if you desire to have such for your records. Tapes may be obtained from Gaylor

Multi-Media Communications, 904 Flintlock Place, Nashville, TN 37217. If you would like to order by phone the number is (615) 361-3611.

In the meantime, pray with us that we may all be one in the Lord.

In His service,

John Forsythe
Concord Street Church of Christ Elders:
Tom Craven, John Forsythe, Don Jacobs,
Chuck Lipford, Arnold Smead

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Radio
Broadcast
On
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Milton Sewell



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MONDAY, AUGUST 27, 1990

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Church Leadership And Organization Bobby Duncan
9:30 - 10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Women's Role In The Work Of The Church..Sue Crabtree
10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Current Problems Confronting The Church Don McWhorter
11:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00 - 2:45 p.m. Christian Education: At Home, At Church And At School.. Milton Sewell
3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Reaching Out To The People Jerry Jenkins
3:45 - 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00 - 8:00 p.m. Abounding In The Work Of The Lord James Moffett

TUESDAY, AUGUST 28, 1990

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Church Leadership And Organization Bobby Duncan
9:30 - 10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Women's Role In The Work Of The Church..Sue Crabtree
10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Current Problems Confronting The Church Don McWhorter
11:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00 - 2:45 p.m. Christian Ethics Don Flatt
3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Mission Opportunities At Home And Abroad Mac Lynn
3:45 - 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00 - 8:00 p.m. (Youth Night) How Shall The Young Secure Their Hearts? ..Jeff Jenkins

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29, 1990

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Church Leadership And Organization Bobby Duncan
9:30 - 10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Women's Role In The Work Of The Church..Sue Crabtree
10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Current Problems Confronting The Church..... Don McWhorter
11:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00 - 2:45 p.m. EXPO '90 - A World Evangelism Showcase Dennis Jones
3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Speak Thou The Things That Become Sound Doctrine.. Wendell Winkler
3:45 - 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30 - 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:30 - 8:00 p.m. The Same Commit Thou To Faithful Men Cecil May, Jr.

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A Transcript Of Statement Made By Crossroads Church Of Christ Elders

"Our hearts are really full. The elders of the Concord Street church have been so gracious and so helpful. Brother Bill and I really appreciate that and want to thank them, and from the bottom of our hearts.

"Most people who know me understand that I don't do many things without referring to God's word. So that's where I want to begin.

"God's word teaches that we are to have a sincere love for our brothers. That we are to love one another deeply, with all our hearts (I Peter 1:22). This love is not only to individuals, but also must extend to the brotherhood of believers (I Peter 2:17). If we do not love our brothers, we cannot love God. The elders of the Crossroads congregation have a statement on their hearts which we want to share with everyone in this conference.

"The elders of the Concord Street congregation support our making this statement. We all hope that this will bring about the love, and restore the fellowship and the unity for which Christ prayed in

John 17.

"Over the years many things have been attributed to the Crossroads congregation as a body, which grew out of the abuse by some Christians which caused others to hurt. And though we did not approve of these abuses, we are sorry that they occurred and ask your forgiveness for these sins. Some examples of these abuses involved one Christian trying to control another Christian, or one congregation exercising control over another congregation. We do not believe that any Christian has the right to control another Christian (Ephesians 5:21). We do not believe that . . . excuse me, we do believe that every Christian should practice all the one another relationship passages in the scriptures. We do not believe that any congregation has the right to control another congregation. We do believe that the elders of each congregation are to direct the affairs of their congregation (I Timothy 5:17 and I Peter 5:2). We hope these examples will illustrate our hearts and desire to repent of every abuse. We are sorry for

them and pray for your forgiveness. This is signed by my bishop, brother Hogle, and myself. God bless you."

--Richard Whitehead, elder
--Bill Hogle, elder

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Where Are The Others?

Continued From Page 2

upheld Crossroads in their sinful and divisive practices and also denied that they were doing it? Are they willing to have the courage and honesty to admit their error and forsake the same as the Crossroads elders have indicated they want to do? There are some who will refuse to accept the confession of the Crossroads elders because they said, "We did not mean for it to happen." Most of those who heard it are not in that category. They never accused Crossroads elders of planning for all the bad things to happen that took place. They simply said, "These things are happening. They are wrong and sinful." When David took Bathsheba, he did not mean for it to lead to the killing of Uriah, but that did not change the fact. He did not mean for it to lead to his sons' disrespect for him and rebellion against him, but that was a part of the consequence. Yet, he was forgiven, though it did not remove the consequences.

Since they had the courage to confess their sin and indicate that they would turn from it, would you do the same to try to heal the wounds of a divided brotherhood that you helped to make? Would you confess your sins of dividing congregations and practicing methods of mind control over individuals?

The point I am now raising for the benefit of those who did the same things Crossroads was doing, and received their training and direction from them is: Since they had the courage to confess their sin and indicate that they would turn from it, would you do the same to try to heal the wounds of a divided brotherhood that you helped to make? Would you confess your sins of dividing congregations and practicing methods of mind control over individuals? Even if you feel the need to say, "We did not mean for it to happen," will you now be honest enough to admit that it did, for it was automatically built in the system that you practiced?

Many who were involved in mind control may well have been unaware of the mechanism that caused it, and would deny that they were doing it. There is little doubt that the followers of Jim Jones, as they prepared to take poison that he told them to take, would deny that they were victims of mind-control. That should help us to be aware that not every person who was involved in the sinful and divisive practice that became known as "Crossroadism" was deliberately lying when they denied doing it.

However, it does make us wonder about those

who still ignorantly or sneeringly raise the question, "What is Crossroadism?" after all the evidence from all across the country by thousands of earnest, honest, evangelistic brethren. This confession that there were the abuses they were accused of should answer the question, "What is Crossroadism?" It also should bring shame and penitence to those who reviled the ones who recognized the abuses and presented the evidence of them.

If you were one of those who denied the truth and refused to believe those of us who pointed out the errors, would you have the courage and humility to confess your wrong and try to bring unity to the brotherhood on this divisive and sad situation? Or do you think if you simply remain quiet long enough, your sin will automatically evaporate?

--T. Pierce Brown, Rt. 2 Box 144X, Wartrace, TN 37183. (615) 454-9042.

The Work In Vreed-En-Hoop



Guy F. Hester

This will be my third trip to Guyana this year. I made five trips in 1989 and if all goes as planned will make four in 1990. The two previous trips this year have been very fruitful. Several have been baptized and restored, the church and school have been strengthened.

I was first introduced to this work in February 1987 by the elders of the Heath church of Christ, Kevil, Kentucky, when they sent me with two of their deacons, Steve Miller and Roger Brandon, to preach in a campaign in Vreed-en-Hoop. It was then that I met brother Bhola, who had been converted by brother Steve Miller, on a mission trip that he had made to Guyana some two or three years earlier. Brother Bhola was then preaching for the Christian Catholic Church. But, having a good and honest heart, brother Miller was able to teach him the truth in a few hours of study, he renounced his error and was baptized into Christ for the remission of sins. He is now, and has been, since his conversion, a sound, dedicated, gospel preacher.

It was on that first trip in 1987 that brother Bhola first mentioned to me his desire to start a school to train other natives of Guyana to preach and teach the gospel to their own countrymen. In September 1988 the Vreed-en-Hoop School of the Bible was started.

On September 1, 1988 the school was chartered and began having classes on September 5, 1988 with fourteen students enrolled and about twenty others who chose to attend without enrolling.

The Lord willing, Ronnie Whittemore and I will leave for Guyana South America on August 30. For two weeks we will be working with brother Harri-chand Bhola, preaching and teaching in the Vreed-en-Hoop church of Christ and the Vreed-en-Hoop School of the Bible.

COPY OF CHARTER
Vreed-en-Hoop School of the Bible
(VSB)
Statement of Charter

On this day, Thursday, September 1, 1988, an organizational meeting was held with Guy F. Hester, Allen Charmichael, Larry G. Davis, Timothy E. Hester, and Ronnie Whittemore, at 31 Old Road in Vreed-en-Hoop, Guyana, for the purpose of establishing the School of the Bible in Vreed-en-Hoop. The purpose of the school will be to train gospel preachers, personal workers, Bible school teachers, and brethren in all phases of church work. Guy F. Hester will serve as director of the school under the oversight of the elders of the Zion church of Christ, Parrish, Alabama. All activities of the school will be under the direct supervision and/or approval of Guy F. Hester and the Zion elders. Harri and Bhola will serve as instructor in the school. The elders of the Heath church of Christ, in Kevil, Kentucky, and those whom they send as missionaries to work in Vreed-en-Hoop and other designated areas of Guyana, shall serve in advisory capacity, and as needed, such as, instructors and teachers in the school. The first class of the VSB will meet on Monday, September 5, 1988 and shall continue to meet on a regular basis from that date.

Signed: Guy F. Hester -- Ronnie Whittemore --
Timothy E. Hester -- Allen

Carmichael -- Larry G. Davis -- Sept. 1, 1988

We hope to have our first graduation exercise early next year. Some who were new converts when VSB had its beginning are now able to preach, teach Bible classes, do personal work, etc.

Not only are we grateful for the efforts and sacrifices of the ZION and HEATH churches and elderships, but also the other churches and individuals who have had and continue to have fellowship with us in this work through their prayers and financial support.

Any who wish to help us in our work should make their checks to ZION CHURCH OF CHRIST GUYANA FUND and mail them to Zion church of Christ, c/o Garrison Short, treasurer, Parrish, AL 35580.

--1101 Airport Circle, Jasper, AL 35501.



(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 26

AUGUST 31, 1990

NUMBER 35

How Much Is Your Child's Soul Worth



Elwood Holt

A few years ago there was a tragic story related in the papers about a little 19-month-old baby boy who is believed to have drowned near his ocean front home. The child, according to the heart-broken mother, must have gotten out of the fenced yard where he was play-

ing. A young woman reported to police she saw a baby floating in the water, but by the time they got to the place, the body was gone. Lifeguards kept a constant vigil to no avail. The father had to be restrained to keep him from going out into the water in search of his baby. Boats dragged for the body, but evidently the little one was forever gone. This is especially a heart-breaking story to those of us who have little ones of our own. Our hearts go out to this grief-stricken father and mother, (and it isn't too hard to put ourselves to a degree in their places and know how consumed with sorrow we would be should such a catastrophe happen in our families). If we could, we would have done anything to have helped this family. But there is nothing we can do. We were not there.

Friends, I use this as the introduction to a few remarks which I believe are needed. While we are willing to do anything, reasonable or unreasonable, for the physical welfare of our children and our neighbor's children, what are we doing to guide our responsible youths in the right direction? What are we doing for their souls? I am speaking now of young people who are old enough to stand accountable before God, not little irresponsible infants. When infants die they rest secure in the bosom of Jesus the Lord, not withstanding the teachings of various dogmas. But, young people of accountable age are going in the paths of

delinquency and sin, and instead of trying to help them, instead of reaching into the current of sinful destruction to haul them out, many older ones seek to justify their misdemeanors. Foolish, overly ambitious fathers and mothers are encouraging their sons and daughters in evil pursuits. They say that they want them to be fashionable and to reach the top rung in the ladder of social acceptability. They will do anything to preserve their bodies but are working for the inevitable downfall of their precious souls.

The tide of sin is coming in . . . it is reaching for our children . . . if it claims them it may carry them beyond our reach forever, then we will have the rest of our miserable lives in which to stand condemned in the judgement seat of our own hearts.

If we stand by and watch our children as they are swept out into the dark ocean of sin, God will certainly hold us accountable. All boys and girls who go bad are not bad at heart. They fall in with the wrong crowd, and "evil companionships corrupt good morals" (I Corinthians 15:33). Too many parents think they have discharged their duties to their children when they send them to Sunday school and church. When services are over, they will pick them up. And many wonder what they can do that is more effective? I will tell you, in the language of a Juvenile Court judge. Said he, in speaking on a problem increasingly serious in America, "Don't send your children to Church -- take them." Many parents are not

interested enough to go with their children. Parents, hear me. The time will come when you can no longer send them! Many are leaving their children to themselves. The wise man said, "A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame."

It is a poor, unworthy parent who would rather his son or daughter be popular than to be a worker in the Church of the Lord. Juvenile delinquency is at an all-time high. Are children worse than they once were? Maybe not, but as one man said, "They just know that temptations are keener than they were when we were children. Sin has been streamlined. But it is still the vicious disease that it has always been, and, unprepared to stand before God in judgement. If parents have neglected them, then they will stand guilty of their blood some day. The tide of sin is coming in . . . it is reaching for our children . . . if it claims them it may carry them beyond our reach forever, then we will have the rest of our miserable lives in which to stand condemned in the judgement seat of our own hearts.

Let us throw out the life line to our children while we can. TOMORROW MAY BE TOO LATE.

--P.O. Box 978, Grand Bay, AL 36541.

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-Acts 26:25



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Faulkner University Annual Lectureship

Faulkner University's Annual Lectureship will be held October 7-10, 1990, on the University's Montgomery, Alabama campus.

Entitled, "Balance in a Day of Extremism," the lectureship will feature 40 speakers, including daily talks by William Woodson, Hugo McCord, and Franklin Camp.

"Balance in a Day of Extremism" will also include youth night, ladies activities, chorus performances, lessons designed for those in the field of law, exhibits and special luncheon messages by Jack Wilhelm, Wayne Kilpatrick and Doyle Kee.

Faulkner University's Annual Lectureship will be held October 7-10, 1990, on the University's Montgomery, Alabama campus.

The lectureship will address such topics as "Distinguishing Between the Cultural/Custom and Abiding Principles/Laws," "The Future of the Church in the Next Two Decades," "You Can't Live Better Until You Learn to Love Better," and "Biblical Grace -- Have We Discovered Something New?"

For more information contact Wendell Winkler, Lectureship Director, 5345 Atlanta Highway, Montgomery, AL 36193.

Do You Have Time For Your Children?

One father, after his son was beyond the time of persuasion and punishment, said, "I planned to go out with my boy and be his companion -- when I had time. I resolved to attend church services regularly to take him with me -- when I had time. I hoped to interest him in young people's activities -- when I had time. I promised I would talk to him like a father should to his son -- when I had time.

Continued On Page 4



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

The Duty Of Youth

Sermon



David Wade

INTRODUCTION

1. The Bible teaches that you have many duties.

2. What are these and how can I fulfill my duty?

DISCUSSION

I. DUTY TO GOD

A. (Ecclesiastes 12:1)

B. (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

C. (Ecclesiastes 11:

B. (I Timothy 4:12)

C. (I Corinthians 16:10-11)

IV. DUTY TO NEIGHBOR

A. (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:39)

B. (Luke 10:29)

C. (Galatians 6:10)

V. DUTY TO YOUR COUNTRY

A. (Romans 13:1-7)

B. (I Peter 2:13-17)

C. (Acts 4:19; 5:29)

VI. DUTY TO SELF

A. (Psalm 119:9-11)

B. (I Timothy 5:22)

C. (Lamentations 3:27)

CONCLUSION

1. Your duties are many: to God, family, church, neighbor, country, self.

2. Application

3. Invitation

9).

II. DUTY TO FAMILY

A. (Ephesians 6:1-3; (Colossians 3:20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16)

B. (Proverbs 20:20)

C. (Proverbs 10:1)

III. DUTY TO CHURCH

A. (I Timothy 3:15)

Who Destroyed Their Faith?

(This article was written in 1981 by Dr. Paul Cates, former campus minister at Auburn University. It remains a timely article. Though the numbers of students change from year to year, the statistics remain the same. Please give this article a thorough listening. -- Jim Brinkerhoff, Auburn Church of Christ, Auburn, AL 36831.)

(Part I)

I came to be a campus minister for the church here at Auburn University twelve years ago after having been educated for 12 years in a Christian High School and two Christian colleges. For those twelve years I heard, and sincerely believed, that secular institutions of higher learning destroy the faith of many of those Christian students who attend them. After 12 years in the campus ministry I cringe when I hear my brethren speak broadly of how the faith of our young people is being destroyed on state campuses. Such statements are often made as part of a sales pitch for attending one or another Christian school. I am even more convinced that such statements are made as propaganda, not insincerely, but ignorantly. The loss of our young people who go away to college is all too real. This assumption made as to the cause, however, is too simplistic. It sounds good -- it's just wrong.

The cause (as nearly always stated) is the ungodly teaching of atheistic professors which robs weak young Christians of their faith. In our experience the number of our young people who lose their faith as a result of teaching they receive

in the classroom is miniscule. Our experience this Fall quarter supports this conclusion. Of the 112 new students at AU, freshmen and transfers, who list the Church of Christ as their religious preference, 57 have attended at least one service of the church (Auburn or Opelika) and filled out an attendance card. Many of these are very regular in attendance, obviously strongly committed to the church. Some are only nominal church attenders. But the revealing figure is the 49 percent who have not attended the first service here in Auburn, though they have received, and continue to receive, considerable communication from us encouraging their attendance.

We are losing our young people who go off to college, but we are losing them before they ever leave. We're losing them in the home and in the church. We are failing to instill in them the kind of faith which will carry them through life faithful to our Lord and to his church.

Continued On Page 3

Who Destroyed Their Faith?

Continued From Page 2

These statistics, consistent with our past experience, indicate not that faith is being destroyed on the college campus but that sufficient faith does not exist in 50 percent of our young people to motivate them to attend even a single church service when they get away from home.

We are losing our young people who go off to college, but we are losing them before they ever leave. We're losing them in the home and in the church. We are failing to instill in them the kind of faith which will carry them through life faithful to our Lord and to his church. Sadly, in half of them, we are not even producing a faith sufficient to get them to one service after they leave home.

I have little fear of atheistic teaching for those students who are faithful to the church. Those who are not faithful will be more susceptible to that teaching as a rationale whereby they may justify their unfaithfulness. But even for them it is rarely the true destroyer of their faith. They likely never had a genuine faith to be destroyed.

The conclusion is further supported by other facts which I have observed in my 12 years of campus ministry. Our experience with students who transfer to Auburn from our various Christian colleges is not appreciably better than with those who come straight from home as freshmen. About the same percentage are strongly committed, about as many are nominal church members and about the same number are unfaithful when they arrive in Auburn. What these facts indicate, I believe, is that even our Christian schools have little power to overcome the failure of the home and of the church to instill a faith that is active and alive.

Parents and brethren, we had better take seriously our opportunity to train up our children, while we can -- the clay is already very much hardened by the time they are off to college.

Part II

In a previous bulletin (Oct. 15, 1981), I wrote under this title the sad statistics we have observed over the years concerning the faithfulness of the Christian students who come to Auburn. Nearly fifty percent this year have not attended the first of our church services, a fact for which their homes and their home churches must take responsibility. If we believe the proverb; "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," we must seriously examine the training we are providing our children, both in the home and in the church. In this article I would like to focus on the role of the home church in the process of building faith and installing faithfulness.

I have been continually impressed over my twelve years in campus ministry with the corporate personality of congregations as they are reflected in their students who come to Auburn. When a congregation has ten or twelve young people representing it at Auburn and only one or two are even nominal church attenders, it says something which is not good about that church. In contrast, when another congregation is represented

consistently over the years by a high percentage of young people who are deeply committed to the Lord's church, you know that church is doing something right. It is possible to see through their young people that some churches that have a name for being alive are really dead, that others who have a reputation for defending the faith are not instilling faith in their own youth, and that others who have no particular "reputation" are doing a commendable job of bringing their children to genuine faith.

If we believe the proverb; "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," we must seriously examine the training we are providing our children, both in the home and in the church.

A recent report by Robert Johnson Co. Inc., for the National Board of Junior Achievement, concluded that the need for acceptance in a group is the most powerful of the forces which mold young people's decisions. In 1960 they found parents to be the greatest influence on young people. Teachers were second and friends and peers were the third most influential. Television was eighth on the list.

By 1980 the situation had changed so much that friends and peers had assumed the number one position and parents had been displaced to the second most important influence. Television, radio, and cinema had taken over third place ahead of teachers who had dropped to fourth place.

Two very obvious conclusions should stand out to everyone in the light of these findings. First, our churches can have enormous impact on young people, our own and others, if we will provide the leadership necessary to establish strongly spiritual youth groups.

A second conclusion is, if we do not establish strong, comprehensive programs of activities for our young people and encourage them to identify strongly with their peers within the church, they will develop those strong ties outside the church. The result will continue to be what we see in so many. Too many of our churches' young people come off to Auburn more interested in some fraternity or sorority or the sports program or the band or the group of friends who have come from their hometown high school than about the church of their Lord.

Why do we not attract them to the Auburn congregation with all our attempts to do so? I think largely because for them church has not been "where it's at" in the past and they don't expect it to be so now. They are away at college, on their own and free to "do their own thing." And if the church was not the center of their spiritual and social life

back home they certainly won't be inclined to look to a strange new congregation to provide what their home congregation didn't. At best they may attend spasmodically to do their duty, without making any genuine commitment to the body of Christ.

Too often we have feared that we are going to spoil our young people by having too many special programs and too much entertainment for them. I must agree that if entertaining is all we do for them, we shouldn't bother. The world can entertain them much better than we can. And they will likely see the shallowness of what we are doing in the name of Christ and not be attracted by it anyway. But if we are challenging them to grow spiritually, to serve others, to bring friends to Christ, to have great fellowship with one another in Christ, then they will entertain themselves as a natural by-product.

And they will accept the church as the body of Christ, in which is to be found their very existence and identity, the community of the redeemed with whom their lot is eternally cast.

We as leaders in the church must be giving our energy and time and effort into the growth of a youth group whose activities rival the description in Acts 2:42-47 of the early church, we must not deceive ourselves with the platitude that the job of rearing children is totally the responsibility of the home. The atmosphere among the teens in your congregation will affect powerfully the future spiritual life of your child. The record of various congregations' young people who come to Auburn prove it true over and over again.

--8223 Halford Place, Brentwood, TN 37027.

She "Danced Before Them"



Dalton Key

(vs. 7-12).

According to Barclay, Herodias' daughter,

"But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod" (Matthew 14:6). Students of the New Testament will recall the direct and shameful consequences of this dance -- John the Baptist lost his head

Continued On Page 4

Will Your Children Go To Heaven?



Cecil Corkren

souls of precious boys and girls who were once thrilled with Bible study as little people, grow cold and uninterested in the Lord's work and worship as they get older.

There have been some in-depth studies of the underlying causes and factors concerning our youth, and with an eye to learning what might be done to help solve the problems. What do we do? Should we have more youth programs? More rallies? Special youth ministers and teachers? Granting all of these, if properly conducted and attended, we can see some good from these activities; however, these are not a panacea for the spiritual delinquency we are witnessing among our youth today.

From the available information published in these studies, it seems to me that one great central truth has begun to surface. Faithfulness of the young person to Jesus is not dependent on special programs or teachers or preachers. It is not a

She "Danced Before Them"

Continued From Page 3

Salome, was sixteen or seventeen years of age at this time and "acted as a dancing girl." He further observes, "The dances which these girls danced were suggestive and immoral." According to McGarvey and Pendleton, "The dancing of the East was then, as now, voluptuous and indecent."

No doubt this type of cavorting and gesticulating was at least a part of what the inspired apostle Paul had in mind when he listed "lasciviousness" as one of the damning "works of the flesh" (Galatians 5:19). The Greek word Paul used, aselgeia, is defined as, "sensuality . . . wanton acts or manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females." That which Salome performed, considered aside from the murderous outcome, was still both wrong and sinful in view of Paul's letter to the Galatians.

But what does all this have to do with us? Just this. We realize that Salome was dancing "before them," as a lecherous, drunken mob ogled her every move. But what if Herod and the others had danced with her? Would her dancing have been any less wrong?

And just what is the difference in then and now?

--Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.

Elders and church leaders everywhere are deeply concerned about the great decline of spiritual interest on the part of our youth! The drop-out rate is staggering. It is a colossal tragedy to lose a great number of our youth to the world. The home suffers as well as the church. The

dependent on whether they are members of a large or small congregation. The single and most important factor is their own immediate family!

If we want our children to be in heaven and we want to be with them, parents will need to face the facts and place the blame where it belongs.

The studies found that when both parents were faithful to the Lord, and that included active interest in the local congregation's programs of work, 93% of the youth remained faithful. On the other hand, if only one parent was faithful that

figure dropped to 73%. Where the parents were only, reasonably active in the Lord's work, only 53% of the young people maintained their faith. So, as parents and grandparents, we would do well to read again Proverbs 22:6. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Now, here comes the most shocking report of all. In those homes where both parents attend Bible Study and worship services only occasionally, the percentage of their children who remain faithful to the Lord dropped to 6%. If we want our children to be in heaven and we want to be with them, parents will need to face the facts and place the blame where it belongs. The home is where we are to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

--1705 Sandra Lee Dr., Jasper, Alabama 35501.

The Best Way Is God's Way



Cecil May, Jr.

Some speak of the commandments of the Bible, the laws of God, as if they were arbitrary or capricious. They are perceived as hindrances to man's freedom and happiness. In reality, the opposite is true.

God's original intent regarding man, woman, marriage

and sex is set forth in the words, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Jesus said those were God's words and that in marriage it is God himself who makes the two one (Matthew 19:3-6). The Bible also shows that the expression "one flesh" involves sexual union (I Corinthians 6:16). God forbids fornication, adultery (Galatians 5:19-20), and turning from one wife or husband to another as putting asunder what God has joined together (Matthew 19:6-9).

God's purpose is not to limit his creatures' happiness, but to help them find fulfillment. God made mankind to find its highest happiness, not in promiscuity like animals, but in a loving permanent relationship built on trust and commitment.

Interestingly, some modern songs acknowledge the validity of God's way. In "A Modern-day Romance," sung by The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, a pick-up driving cowboy is picked up by a beautiful woman for a one-night (or, maybe, weekend) stand. The intent is to have fun, with no strings attached, but when the trysting is over and the girl has left, the cowboy reflects on the unhappiness of it all. The refrain goes,

"It's a modern-day romance, a new kind of game;
No time to slow dance -- in the fast lane!
I tried to love her without any strings,

But a modern-day romance has left me with old-fashioned pain."

One of the real travesties of modern slang is the

use of the expression, "going all the way," to describe illicit sexual union. What is experienced in an atmosphere of guilt, fear of discovery, and anxiety about unwed pregnancy or social disease is not only not all the way, it is not even one-tenth of the way to the bliss of union intended by God between a man and a woman who know they belong to each other alone, and who blend their hearts and their mutual trust as well as their bodies in their relationship.

God wants what is best for us. That is why he gave his law.

--Magnolia Bible College, P.O. Box 1101, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

Do You Have Time For Your Children?

Continued From Page 2

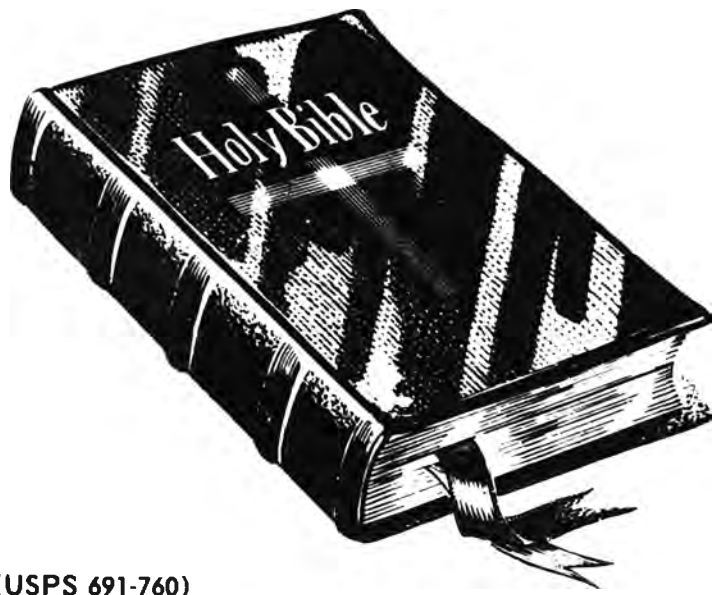
But for over twenty years for every one thought of my son I had a hundred thoughts of my business."

Do not pity the child who does not have a bicycle or whose parents cannot afford an encyclopedia. Pity the child whose parents do not have time to live with him, to teach him, to play with him, to express their love for him in many, many ways. The child without the bicycle and other material possessions but with the warmth of parental love is far happier than the poor rich child who has everything money can buy but lacks the needed security which comes through being loved "in deed and in truth."

Sometime ago a judge shared the answers he received from a young law breaker when he reminded him of his fine respected father. "I've often heard my father was a fine man," said the young man. But I never knew him. He didn't have time for me."

Maybe if we stopped sometimes to consider we would see that a little dust on the furniture, spotless floors, the multiplicity of things and the round of social activities are not nearly as important as we thought. King Solomon wisely said, "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a fatted ox and hatred with it" (Proverbs 15:17).

--Author unknown. Via Sharpe Church of Christ Bulletin, Route 6, Box 248, Benton, KY 42025.



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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 26

SEPTEMBER 7, 1990

NUMBER 36

What Do You Pay Your Preacher?



J. C. Choate

I am not opposed to paying preachers. Jesus said that "the labourer is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10:7). After having somewhat to say along this line, Paul finally concluded, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (I Corinthians

9:14). On another occasion he said, "For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward" (I Timothy 5:18).

Some preachers are not paid enough for their services. When a congregation can't do better, and the preacher is willing to make the necessary sacrifices to continue, then this is commendable. But where a congregation could provide a living wage but does not, those brethren are wronging their preacher, and no doubt he is also wrong to permit them to treat him in such a manner.

The other extreme is where a preacher is too demanding and the congregation pays him an excessive salary. In more recent days, I have been hearing of preachers who are paid \$100,000 a year, plus benefits. I personally think that such preachers are as wrong as they can be to take such salaries. *I cannot imagine a circumstance which would justify robbing the Lord and His church in such a manner.* I also think that the churches paying such salaries are wrong in their stewardship of money which actually belongs to God.

What kind of an ego would a preacher have, to feel that he is worth such a large amount? What could he do to earn his salary? Making that kind of money, he probably would be too "big" to do very much actual work. I have always said that -- on the whole -- the more a preacher earns, the less he

does, and the less he is actually worth, and I believe that is true. If he got out and worked among the members and non-Christians like the average preacher, he would ruin his "image." In other words, such a man becomes a figure-head, directing others in doing the actual work. Gaining a reputation for that kind of position and salary, he would be used exclusively by similar congregations, but he would have little in common with most brethren.

What kind of elders would take the contributions given by the members to the Lord, and would turn around and pay such an outrageous salary to their preacher? To say that they must offer that amount of money to get a good man is ridiculous. Would they be good stewards of what God has put into their hands? If they must pay their preacher such a salary, they would surely have to have a large staff for him to direct, and in that case, what would they pay each one of them? Then with most of their money tied up with that kind of salary, *what would be left for mission evangelism, benevolence, or anything else?*

How can we encourage our young men to be missionaries when we are telling them that by staying at home they can hope to "move up the ladder" to eventually get one of these big salaries?

Continuing, what kind of members would allow their contributions to be used by their elders to pay such a salary to any man? I must tell you that my conscience would not allow my contributions to be used like that. *To me, such elders and members have lost sight of what*

Christianity is all about. They are materialistic and full of pride. I cannot see how such a procedure could ever be justified. Surely the Lord would never approve of it.

No wonder our mission work continues to decrease! How can we encourage our young men to be missionaries when we are telling them that by staying at home they can hope to "move up the ladder" to eventually get one of these big salaries? Furthermore, how can congregations pay out such wages and have anything left for missions?


Am I jealous? Do I feel left out or "second rate"? Would I ever be considered for such a salary? To all of these questions, a thousand times NO! I have brought up these matters only because they are happening and we *desperately need to wake up to what is going on around us.* Let us give of our income as the Bible teaches, but let us then use whatever is given to further the cause of Christ, not to glorify men. *The money, after all, belongs to God.* To waste it while the unevangelized world is condemned is a grievous sin.

The acid test: Put the apostle Paul in your preacher's place. What do you see?

--World Evangelism/J. C. Choate Publications, Rt. 2, Box 156, Winona, MS 38967 (601) 283-1192.

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Words Of Truth Lectureship



David Wade

If you desire the video tapes, please write or call the church office 1501 6th Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501 (205) 384-6446.

The lectureship was well attended and was a great success. All the speakers did an excellent job in addressing the topics assigned to them.

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Self Examination

Connie Lee Krute

But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, Every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way (Romans 14:10-13).

How many times, when visiting another congregation, have you thought, "These people aren't very Christian -- why, they haven't even come over to meet me or ask me home for a meal. Very uppity, if you ask me. I just don't care to associate with anyone who acts like that!"

I will be the first to admit that this has happened to me on various occasions over the years. Believe me, there were times when I needed a friendly greeting and a nice meal, especially when I was by myself and didn't know my way around the city well enough to find a good restaurant. If I had been giving this group a test they would all have flunked! You could see steam coming out of my ears as I left because of "those selfish people"!

But let's take a good look at the real selfish party. First, I took it upon myself to be the judge in these cases. I did not take the time to collect evidence or witnesses, I just passed immediate judgment on these poor souls who "wouldn't greet me properly." Next, I assumed that everyone in the place was the same, totally uncaring about me. I was oblivious to their circumstances at that time. And, finally, should the truth be known, I probably didn't give the people a fair chance to introduce themselves, nor did I introduce myself to others. Like many of you, I have sometimes been shy or overwhelmed

Continued On Page 3

"Home Is Where The Heart Is"

Bernice Vansant

In February 1991, the Homestead Church of Christ at Homestead, Florida will host the "Ladies Day." They are expecting upwards of three hundred women from Orlando to Key West. I hope to be present for it. Their theme will be, "Home is Where the Heart is."

Now with that said, let us begin to study the topic in light of our lives as a mother, homemaker, wife and child of God. The last is the most important.

The first home mentioned in the Bible is in Genesis 2:15-25. God made a beautiful home for Adam and Eve. He put everything the heart could desire there; but all too quickly something changed that. The beautiful home they shared was closed to them forever because of sin (Genesis 3:23-24).

We know from Deuteronomy 24:5 that when a man and woman marries they are to go to their own house. The husband is to cheer his wife and make her very happy. Happiness is where the heart is. If we are happy and have the proper kind of love for each other that God intended us, our home will be a happy one. As a woman we need to bear children and bring them up in a manner pleasing to God. We can only do this when we have a Christian environment for our children to grow in, in heart and home.

The home needs to be one where the Bible is read, studied and taught daily. I feel this is more the responsibility of the mother; since the father has a duty to make a living for his family. If the home is made on a solid foundation of truth and love, the heart will truly be there.

I know there are many mothers that are forced to work to help or to support her family. I do not have any argument there. I wish it were possible for

wives and mothers to be able to devote their time doing what God's intentions were from the beginning, keepers of the home and family. If we mothers keep our homes and hearts clean both materially and spiritually, the ones round about us will know where our hearts are.

Titus 2:3-5 tells us the duties of older and younger women in our homes. We older women need to teach the younger women how to make our homes a wonderful place to live.

Let us remember that, "there's no place like home." If the heart is there and God's love abounds, then we truly know that: Home is where the heart is.

--104 Graham Road, Wetumpka, AL 36092.

Some Good Advice



Dalton Key

Just when I first heard the phrase, I do not recall. And from what I have discovered, most everyone grew up with the same advice -- "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all."

The trouble is this. If this rule were applied in our relationships with some people, we would never have anything to say! Perhaps you have heard of the exceedingly wicked

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Self Examination

Continued From Page 2

when in a new place, sat at the back, then hurried out right after services.

Do you see a pattern developing here? "I", "me" and "myself" sure do seem to be in the limelight. But is this the emphasis that I, as a Christian of 20+ years, should place on this situation? Appropriate Christian behavior doesn't just apply to them, it applies to me. Jesus, himself, taught us "whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them" (Matthew 7:12).

In spite of Christ's teaching, I used to let this bother me -- a lot. But something strange has been going on in the last number of years, shall we call it "Christian maturity"? It finally dawned on me that I cannot control the actions of others, but I can control and improve upon my own actions. Upon a thorough "self examination" I've discovered that I couldn't pass my own test either! It seems I am lacking in a number of areas. But now is the time to put aside this selfish side, let God take over my life, putting His will first, and stop being quick to blame others for actions I have been guilty of myself.

It finally dawned on me that I cannot control the actions of others, but I can control and improve upon my own actions.

Perhaps you have been examining yourself lately. Do you see a reversal in your selfish attitudes? Are you looking for ways to conquer self and help others? Are there occasions where you might start changing your own ways, instead of being the first to "cast the stone"?

Following are some simple exercises for helping you pass a "self examination" given the same situation. Remember, these are for your own benefit. Don't bind them on others!

If you are the member:

Try sitting at the back of the auditorium. (I realize the preacher might not like this, but you can always tell him you have the following reason.) Immediately after services hurry to one of the doorways, put on your biggest smile and shake the hand of every person who comes out. It is also permissible to hug and even kiss (remember Romans 16:16). If you do not know the person by name, introduce yourself. (Yes, it might be embarrassing if you've seen their face for years, but it is about time you learned their name. After all, you might want to say "hello" when you get to heaven!) If you already have official greeters, don't worry. They can always "scoot" over a little and make room for an extra one!

When talking to the visitors, and even those "regulars with the familiar faces but no name," try to get to know them. Find out if they are Christians (you would be amazed at the number of good "church-goers" who have never obeyed the first Gospel steps!!!) and learn the name of the visitors'

home congregations. Some of the people may have special requests or needs. Offer to help or find someone who can assist. Be aware of any special classes or services which the congregation offers to prospects and new Christians.

Now that you have greeted the brotherhood properly, why not continue your kind hospitality? In our age of modern conveniences most of us can have a nice dinner almost ready by the time we get home from worship services. Why not invite one or more of those visitors to share a meal? The Hebrews writer encourages us in Chapter 13, verse 2: "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels" (Hebrews 13:2). If you can't find a hungry visitor,

you can always invite one of the regulars. I've found they like to eat, too!

If you, as a Christian, are the visitor:

Try all of the above! The members will love you, and some lost soul who has wandered into the group just might see Jesus through you!

Won't you take a thorough "self examination" today and see if there are any areas in which you need to improve before that final exam on judgment day?

--Connie Lee Krute, Staff Writer WORLD EVANGELISM/ J. C. Choate Publications, Rt. 2, Box 156 Winona, MS 38967, (601) 283-1192.

Our Closed Homes



Betty Burton Choate

In totalitarian communism, the system provides for the the care of children to be taken from "amateur" parents and put into the hands of trained professionals, in government-run centers.

Also in totalitarian societies, such as Burma, social interaction is greatly controlled, with permission having to be sought from the government even to stay overnight away from one's assigned place.

In America, we would not have tolerated such restrictions. "Freedom" and "right of choice" are holy words to us. We would defy anyone who would force us to accept such interference in our lives and homes.

Satan is cunning. What we would refuse under one name, he makes enticing under another. The system he has used for America's take-over is "secular humanism."

But he has eased his system in on society's blind side. Most of us don't realize there is a system or that it has a name and a philosophy and a resulting way of life. We simply "go with the flow." There are many things we may not like about today's America, but we pass it off as, "That's just the regrettable way it is" -- and we go on with "making do" the best we can.

But Secular Humanism has insidiously crept into every pocket and corner of our society (the creeping "Death Plague" as visualized in the film "The Ten Commandments" is my mental image of the silent horror consuming us). It is a system, in the same way communism is a system, and we are as wrecked by its effects as community countries have been ravaged by that system. **Our problem is that as a people we haven't yet identified the culprit and, until we see that factor, there will**

be no defiant uprising to throw it off, as has been happening under totalitarian regimes.

Secular Humanism has refrained from saying, "You are forced to do so-and-so." Its method is to portray everything as a freedom, a privilege, a progression, a right-of-claim.

So, in the name of progress, our wives and mothers have rushed from the home to the "progress" of individual development in education and careers.

Older children have become "latch key kids." The father is off at his job, the mother is off at her job, the kids are in the day care center, then at school, then at home or who-knows-where, bringing themselves up.

The "home" has been completely re-defined. Women have surged forward with their "rights"; men have regressed. Manliness has fallen under the cloud of being "male chauvinism" in disguise, so men have become inhibited about being men.

Of course, working mothers have the "right" to child care centers in which they can place their little ones. What we would have rebelled against in a totalitarian society, we have clamored for as our privilege under the prompting of our system of humanism. So the training of our children's minds is given over to others.

Older children have become "latch key kids." The father is off at his job, the mother is off at her job, the kids are in the day care center, then at school, then at home or who-knows-where, bringing themselves up.

Homes are no longer homes. They are places to store possessions and to meet in passing. The

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Our Closed Homes

Continued From Page 3

inmates often hardly know each other. Children may be on drugs, and the parents may be totally unaware. There may even be the trauma of an abortion, with all of its psychological consequences, while the parents live in total unawareness of the problems.

All in the name of progress and freedom and right, the fabric of the home has become rotted. The very thing people are trying to secure with their "extra" income, they are destroying in the process. A situation of families -- strangers -- living together has created all kinds of abnormal and perverted results: incest is mushrooming, physical abuse and violence in the home are nation-wide plagues.

And divorce is the ready answer to all problems -- again, with its scenario of inherent results: children scarred and warped emotionally, warred over by parents or discarded; morals, standards, emotional stability, all our precious values being fed to the insatiable machine.

At least in totalitarian societies there are punitive consequences for "getting out of line" in ways that are destructive to society as a whole. But in our land of freedom, we have the guaranteed right to eat our hearts out and no one can stop us. We're doing that, rushing headlong into humanism's "progress": In 1940, what percentage of the mothers worked? What percentage of the marriages ended in divorce? What were the rates on child abuse, incest, drug use, abortion, teenage illegitimate pregnancy, mental and emotional problems, crime of all types? Of course those things were there, but only a blind person would deny that every one of these critical problems has increased in direct proportion to the number of mothers working full-time outside the home.

We must cry over what is happening to our nation, but the greater tragedy is that the church has not been the bulwark of defense against these wrongs. Christians should have been equipped to avoid the pitfalls. The answers and guidelines are there in God's word for all who choose to listen to Him.

But even in the church, in the name of social and economic progress, years ago it became unpopular to teach that the mother needed to be in the home to care for the family. Such lessons were labeled as "old fashioned" and "fanatical." Preachers who warned about the evils of divorce were accused of offending the one or two in the congregation who had been caught up in such an unfortunate thing.

The church always lags a few steps behind the secular world, but eventually we are swept up into any growing thing. Thirty years ago there was only a sprinkling of broken homes among Christians. Now unscriptural divorce and remarriage are common. So are the plagues following in the wake of such steps.

Thirty years ago in the church most of our wives and mothers were trying to be good homemakers. Now we are "liberated" and economically progressive. We have our higher education and we are out there in the world competing with the best of them.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not against development

and using our talents and brains. I am simply against the system of values we have accepted, the rules that determine secular priorities for us and place them far above spiritual and emotional family needs. We ought to be able to look honestly at the consequences of these decisions in our society and see that something is seriously wrong.

Can't we look around, honestly and objectively, at the lives to those who are ten years ahead of us on this road and see the potential costs? Can't we decide to choose a simpler life and to devote more of our attention to making a real home for our families?

Under Secular Humanism, what has happened to "the Christian home"? Like the homes of the world, most of ours are "closed." They are way-stations where members pass each other, coming and going. Fifty percent -- some say as high as 70% -- of our children are falling from the faith as they grow to maturity. Many are prey to the same behavioral and emotional problems beleaguering the children of the world.

It is time for Christian families to stop and count some costs. Maybe, individually, we can't affect the world around us. Maybe, at first, we might have little or no effect in the homes of fellow Christians. But, first of all, let us take stock of our own families and homes, for our own sakes. **What are we doing to ourselves?**

Is the price tag for that new car \$Our Marriage? Will those extra "goodies" that "better" life cost \$Our children?

Can't we look around, honestly and objectively, at the lives of those who are ten years ahead of us on this road and see the potential costs? Can't we decide to choose a simpler life and to devote more of our attention to making a real home for our families? Let's have time for our children, to know them thoroughly, and to be known by them, to teach them God's truths all along the way. Let's do things with them, and make our homes centers for their friends. Let's be a strengthening factor for children in the church.

Let us -- as individual Christian families -- decide to open our doors and be at home. Let's build family life again. Let's have time to invite people over, to get to know them, to draw from their strengths, to share their problems.

At least in the church, our homes should be the oases in the desert, the havens in the storms. It is our decision; our homes will be what we want them to be, because we can follow the path of our decision to make them so.

But when we stop to consider -- when we choose between the Secular Humanism of the world or the separate course of the Christian life-style, **are we willing to pay the cost for what we want? Neither way is free.**

Therein lies our misunderstanding. On the one hand we have realized that to achieve goals in the secular world, hard work was required. But, too often, Christians mistakenly think that they can attach themselves loosely to the Christian community and that they will automatically reap all the "Christian benefits" as the natural by-product of the attachment, no effort involved. But they are wrong. **We cannot be lazy about our Christian work; we cannot slide effortlessly through the Christian life. To succeed in gaining this most precious prize requires a great price: struggle, diligence, determination, sacrifice.** Those are not empty words; they carry with them a life-time price tag.

Jesus asked the serious question: ". . . what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" His very question states that there is a price which must be paid by every recipient of salvation. It is time for each Christian to ask, "What is it worth to me and to my family . . . ?"

--Rt. 2, Box 156, Winona, MS 38967. (601) 283-1192.

Some Good Advice

Continued From Page 2

man who died and left the preacher wondering what good thing he could possibly find to say about him at the funeral. After much thought, and no little mental anguish, the preacher finally eulogized, "Williams was not nearly so mean sometimes as he was usually." Sometimes, there is just not much good to be said.

"If you can't say something nice -- but something must be said -- say it as nicely as possible."

As is the case with most adages, this one is generally true, but should not be taken to the extreme. John the Baptist, though neither mean-spirited or hateful, could not remain silent at Herod's adulterous relationship with Phillip's wife. Truth demanded conviction and correction, nice or no nice. He didn't waste words commending Herod's finer points of bravery or leadership; he didn't take the Dale Carnegie approach and compliment his taste in lady friends; John said simply and plainly, "It is not lawful for thee to have her" (Matthew 14:4). Though John had nothing nice to say, he said it anyway.

But this gives us no license to run rough-shod over the feelings of others, with no regard for kindness or propriety. The truth must be spoken, but spoken in love (Ephesians 4:15). Truth should never be confused with meanness. Perhaps a better rule would be, "If you can't say something nice -- but something must be said -- say it as nicely as possible."

Briefly put, follow the example of Christ.

--Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am not r
Words of Truth and soberness.

rth the
—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 26

SEPTEMBER 14, 1990

NUMBER 37

Why Must I Suffer?



Joe E. Galloway

loss of property, or the breakup of a home. It also comes to us by means of our loved ones having to suffer. One common pain that seems at times almost too difficult to bear is the death of a close family member or a friend.

Probably everyone reading this has suffered intense agony due to at least one of the above (or other) painful experiences recently. Sometimes we become very discouraged, perhaps even wondering why God would allow such misery and distress to affect us. The atheist uses this as his "winning argument" to tear down faith in God. While we will not in this article attempt to deal with this aspect of the topic, we do need to point out the facts that: (1) Man is a creature of choice, (2) This ordered world operates by uniform natural law, (3) Imperfect people must live together, (4) This world was never intended as a permanent dwelling place for man, and (5) Not all suffering is bad -- suffering often benefits man. Understanding the ramifications of these five statements will show that an all-powerful and loving God not only could, but must, allow human suffering.

In this article we shall expand on the last of the above basic facts, that suffering is often beneficial to man, to help us understand why we must suffer.

Suffering May Turn Us Toward God

Just as physical pain may cause us to finally

While few of us have to experience intense persecution for our faith, as did the apostles and many others in the early church, we all still suffer in many other ways. Suffering is the common lot of all humanity. Suffering may come through sickness or accident. It may come to us by the loss of a job, the

consult a doctor where treatment is available, sufferings of all sorts may turn us toward God. In the great Psalm on the power of God's word, Psalm 119, the inspired psalmist wrote: "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word: (v. 67). "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes: (v. 71). Man's principal reason for existence is to glorify God (Isaiah 43:7). We glorify God by doing his will; by becoming as Godlike as possible (Ecclesiastes 12:13). So, anything that brings one closer to God is good.

Suffering, then, may be good, for as the above quotations show, such may turn us toward God. Often when intense suffering is experienced one will begin reading God's word, and almost always, we turn to prayer when life becomes difficult and unpleasant. If one will learn, believe, obey, and begin living by God's word as a result, suffering has surely been good for him!

Suffering Builds Character

Just as a great oak tree has become deeply rooted as it has weathered many storms and droughts, a Christian becomes deeply rooted in the faith of the gospel when he successfully weathers the storms of life (Colossians 2:7). This is the reason Paul said he would "glory in my infirmities" (II Corinthians 12:9). He said, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (v. 10).

Instead of God's love for his people causing him to shelter them from all adversity, God permits "chastisement" of his people to make them better. Hebrews 12:6-11 likens this to a loving father chastising a child. In both instances there is suffering for awhile, but the suffering results in better behavior. Showing this benefit of suffering, Paul wrote: "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope:

(Romans 5:3, 4).

Suffering Can Bring Out The Best In Us

When we have undergone some crisis in life we ought to appreciate more the gift of life. Such often causes thinking people to be more thankful for family, friends, physical blessings, and for the hope we have in Christ. We learn better how to sympathize with others. Learning of our own weakness and vulnerability should make us more humble and more forgiving. It should help turn us away from self-centeredness.

Suffering Shows What Is Really Valuable

When we suffer much we should be in position to better come to a proper sense of values. We should learn that riches, honors, and pleasures are of little value when we are faced with crucial matters of life and death. We learn that material things can only help in a limited way while there is still life. We learn that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). The importance of pursuing this life's pleasures suddenly disappears when we are faced with matters that are crucial. We learn that "the pleasures of sin" are truly only "for a season" (Hebrews 11:25).

Sufferings Keep This World From Looking Too Attractive

When some critical illness strikes us or a loved one, or when death separates us from some one we loved more than life itself, or perhaps when problems which seem to be insurmountable come our way, we have more reason to look forward to a better place. Living on this earth on and on looks less attractive. We begin to understand why Paul wrote of his "desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" (Philippians 2:23). If sufferings never came, this world would be too attractive and we would never wish to leave it. It has been our general observation that the older a Christian becomes, having experienced the sufferings of this life, the more willing he is to

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Words Of Truth



(USPS 691-760)

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

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David Wade Editor

Joe T. Spivy, Sr. Associate Editor
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Suicide



Bobby Key

Each year over 25,000 Americans commit suicide -- 55 per day. Authorities confess that 50,000 other deaths might be attributed to suicide, but cannot be proven.

Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in our nation. It is the fourth leading killer of teen-agers, and the number two cause of death among college students. Well over 1,000 persons take their own life each day around the world. This would amount to more than three million every year.

All kinds of people, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, high and low in society, commit suicide. No category is exempt. Even though only about one in ten of those who attempt suicide are actually successful, it is a myth to believe that those who talk about suicide will never take their own life. Studies show that 80% of those who threaten suicide will eventually do so.

Sociologists have noted that suicidal tendencies are not inherited. Their studies reveal suicide to be highest among Protestants, and Jews have a lower suicide rate than Catholics. This problem is seldom discussed among us, but nevertheless is prevalent

Continued On Page 3



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Myths About Suicide



David Wade

religious backgrounds, social and economic strata. It has been observed that among some classes of people the suicide rate is lower. However, no class of people is left untouched by suicide.

3) People who talk about suicide do not commit suicide. Not so! Not everyone who talks about suicide commits suicide, but on the other hand, the person who gives a suicidal hint or threat should be taken seriously. Personal and professional help should be sought for them.

4) Once a person is suicidal he is always suicidal. Not so! We would probably be surprised if we knew the percentage of people everywhere who, at one

time or another, had entertained the thought of suicide. The vast majority of such people do not involve themselves in suicidal activity such as gathering the means to do it. The suicidal often find new ways of coping and live to face new challenges and opportunities. The Philippian jailor is an example.

1) Suicide and attempted suicide are in the same class of behavior. Not so! A suicide attempt may be a cry for help rather than an effort to take one's life.

2) Suicide is a problem of a specific class of people. Not so! The incidence of suicide cuts across all races and nationalities,

time or another, had entertained the thought of suicide. The vast majority of such people do not involve themselves in suicidal activity such as gathering the means to do it. The suicidal often find new ways of coping and live to face new challenges and opportunities. The Philippian jailor is an example.

5) Suicide is inherited and runs in families. Not so! When the incidence of suicide riddles a particular family, it is the exception and not the rule. There has been no biological connection demonstrated in the incidence of suicide.

6) If a person is a Christian he will not commit suicide. Not so! The Lord's church is affected about equally with other religious and non religious groups.

7) Suicide and depression are synonymous. While it may be demonstrated that most suicide victims are depressed, not all depressed people commit suicide. It is a fact of life that all people are at times affected by some level of depression, whether mild or severe. It does not follow that all people are suicidal.

8) Improvement after a suicidal crisis means that the risk of suicide is over. Not so! Only a small percent of people are successful at the first attempt. Because a person is perceived to be doing better is no guarantee that the symptoms cannot return.

It behooves us to educate ourselves as best we can on this subject. The person who is most often available to give help on the spur of the moment, is not the trained professional, but rather a friend or acquaintance.

Splinter Wounds

Bobby Dockery

Division within the family of God is always a tragedy. When God's children use up their energies feudin', fightin', and fussin' they dishonor the Father whom they claim to serve. The Bible makes it plain that God expects unity, harmony, and love to prevail among His people.

To the Romans Paul wrote: "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 15:5-6).

He stressed the same principle of Unity in his letter to the Galatians: "For the Law is fulfilled in one word, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed of one another" (Galatians 5:14). John warned that the failure to love our brethren is an indication of a lack of love for our father! Attacking one another with slanderous sarcasms and vicious accusations is tantamount to attacking God!

Note some of the ways in which our quarrels within the body are actually a slap against God:

1. Our Attention Is Diverted From Our Real Enemy. It is Satan who sows discord among brethren. He knows we cannot concentrate our efforts against him as long as we are mauling one another. Before the great naval battle at Trafalgar,

Admiral Nelson discovered two of his sailors fighting. He separated them and pointed to the French fleet on the horizon with the observation that "the enemy is over there." Some within the church seem to have forgotten who the real enemy is!

2. Our Efforts Are Weakened. A divided army is an ineffective army. Jesus said: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand" (Matthew 12:25). Slaughtering one another will never win the world for Christ.

3. Interest In Our Cause Is Destroyed. Nothing is more unattractive than a family brawling among its own members. It is difficult to build interest in a church which is splintered by factions and strifes. Jesus said: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). When the world fails to detect any evidence of love in our dealings with each other what will it conclude about the sincerity of our Christianity?

God is served by unity, harmony, love. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Corinthians 1:10).

--Via The Pillar, P.O. Box 62, Cave City, Arkansas 72521.

Suicide

Continued From Page 2

and serious. I have been called on to preach the funeral service for a number of suicide victims.

There are six recorded cases of suicide in the Bible: Samson (Judges 16:30), King Saul and his armor-bearer (I Samuel 31), Ahithophel (II Samuel 17:23), Zimri (I Kings 16:18), and Judas (Matthew 27:4, 5).

Many reasons may be given for one's taking his own life. Some important personalities, who are found guilty of dishonesty or disloyalty, choose death rather than shame and humiliation. Some are filled with remorse and despair, leading to serious depression. Sometimes a person takes his own life in an effort to punish another, hoping to make him feel guilty. Adolescent children have been known to do this to their parents. Aged parents may also follow this route, and partners in an unhappy marriage have been guilty of this crime. Others feel unable to cope with their problems, and come to the conclusion that life is not worth living. Still others are just lonely and dread what the future may hold. We live in a pressure packed society, and stress drives many to extremes.

"Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13, Romans 13:9). When one kills himself, he has committed a sin of which he cannot repent. Suicide is self-murder, and the very nature of the deed makes it impossible to repent and ask forgiveness. One who takes his own life shows a lack of trust and confidence in God. The suicide victim treats life, a priceless gift of God, as if it were worthless.

Suicide is self-murder, and the very nature of the deed makes it impossible to repent and ask forgiveness. One who takes his own life shows a lack of trust and confidence in God.

It has always appeared to me that the suicide victim is selfish. He shows no consideration for those who are left behind. In every case, suicide is a selfish decision which does not take into account the pain of the survivors. Family members often spend years after the event scrubbing blood out of their memories, and talking of a ghost member of the family who left them with nothing but emptiness. In many ways, suicide is the ultimate injustice to family and friends. The potential suicide victim should ask himself whether or not he would like to be the one left behind.

Survivors are left to endure the shame, the sorrow, and even the guilt, and there is always anger to deal with. The nagging question, "Why?" will hang around for years. The death of a loved one usually brings some of these feelings anyway, but death by suicide multiplies them many times over.

Things are seldom as bad as they seem. No matter how heavy the burden, how dark the night,

nor how intense the pain, let us never even entertain the thought of suicide. God will not forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). King David said, "When my father and mother forsake me, then God will take me up" (Psalm 27:10). Let us learn to accept our lot in life. God has a purpose for our being, and expects us to be faithful. If depression becomes a problem, talk to a friend and, by all means, seek help. Suicide has never solved any problem.

We have the tendency to place the blame on society, while taking away individual responsibility. However, God's law states that

every man must bear his own burden and answer for his own actions. Most people become depressed from time to time, yet the majority do not attempt suicide.

The suicide destroys his body, which is not his own (I Corinthians 6:19, 20). He violates the commandment, "Thou shalt not murder." Suicide is pre-meditated self-murder (Exodus 20:7, Matthew 19:18). God's help in time of trouble is refused (Psalm 50:15), and eternal life is forfeited (I John 3:15). Suicide is always the wrong way out.

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

The Joy Of Christianity



Edsel Burlison

One of the most prominent concepts in both the Old and New Testaments is joy.

There is a difference between happiness and joy. Happiness depends more on what happens, or the circumstances of life; while joy depends upon our relationship with God and is independent of circum-

stances. Someone has illustrated this distinction by comparing happiness to the surface of the sea, sometimes turbulent, at other times calm; while joy is like the bed of the ocean which is untouched by anything on the surface.

Someone has illustrated this distinction by comparing happiness to the surface of the sea, sometimes turbulent, at other times calm; while joy is like the bed of the ocean which is untouched by anything on the surface.

When the Christian takes a good look at himself, seriously pondering what has been done for him, what is being done to him, and what is in store for him, there swells in his heart that "unspeakable joy and full of glory."

We need to learn that joy is not just a feeling: it is a state of mind. Poor people can be joyous. Sick people can be joyous. Surely we are familiar with people who have gone through a lot and still have joy in their hearts. They see that true joy comes from being at peace with oneself and from being content with one's situation, no matter what it may be. And true, lasting joy can only be found in Jesus

Christ.

The Psalmist said, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24). The Christian should find every day a delight. Every person whose life touches ours should be able to see the joy of our heart by the expression on our face. "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by the sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken" (Proverbs 15:13). Even trials and disappointment do not dampen the joy of Christianity. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:2, 3).

An unknown author beautifully expressed the concept of joy in the following lines entitled "Hidden Sunshine."

Oh, the world is full of gladness,
Sunny corners round about,
There's a joy for every sorrow,
If we would only seek it out.
There is sunshine mid the shadows,
There is beauty everywhere;
In the depths of hidden glories
If we would only seek it there.
When the clouds of life hang heavy
Rifts of sunshine will break through
Why not seek the hidden treasures--
You will find them if you do.
Spend your days in helping others,
Struggling not for fame or pelf;
Praise Jehovah for his goodness,
Love your neighbor as yourself.
Blend your tears with those in sorrow,
Share their gladness with them, too;
Seeking for the hidden beauties--
You will find them if you do.
Oh, the world is full of gladness,
Love lies scattered all about;
Little corners full of sunshine,
If we would only seek them out.

Kenneth Free once wrote: "Joy is a state of mind, a quality of character, a fruit of the Spirit, a gift from God and is reflected in the life and

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Blaming God

Bill Denton

Many times following a tragedy or some extreme difficulty, I have heard people blame God for the terrible pain and suffering. Deaths, illnesses, accidents, divorces, drug or alcohol abuse, or a host of other things become God's fault because we can't explain them any other way. The thinking is that since God is all powerful, and nothing happens that God doesn't want to happen, then it's God's fault when things go wrong. Though we may not effectively answer every question, we must realize that blaming God sets us up for a terrible spiritual failure. Too, it can cause us to miss opportunities for solutions and honest answers that might relieve the burden of our suffering.

I have long believed that the single best argument that atheists make to support their lack of belief in God has to do with questioning how an all-loving, all-powerful God could allow the terrible atrocities that occur daily among us humans. Their argument is not good because it disproves God. It is good because people who believe in God don't deal well with tragedy. We don't have many good answers, and when tragedy comes our way, too many of us put the whole problem off on God. Essentially, we end up agreeing with the atheist. "How could God do this to me?" is not too far from "How could an all-loving, all-powerful God allow this to happen?" Christians need to do better.

The Bible boldly proclaims the righteousness and holiness of God. How righteous is righteousness? How holy is holiness? Very simply, God is totally righteous, totally holy. With God there is not even a shred of evil. Whatever God does, then, is necessarily righteous and holy. God does no evil, else He would cease to be God as proclaimed in Scripture. Somehow, we must make application of these truths to the practical matters of evil and suffering in the world, especially when it hits near home.

"Why doesn't God do something about all this suffering and tragedy?" That's a good question. If God exists, and if He is all-loving and all-powerful, we should expect Him to provide answers to the problems. Would it surprise you if I were to tell you that God already provided an answer? His answer is a bit hard for some people to understand and accept. You see, our view is that if God is going to provide an answer, then He's got to fix everything like we want it done. In other words, if someone is sick or maimed, God ought to make them well. If they are poor and destitute, then

God ought to make them wealthy. If people are starving, then God ought to send them some food. If a hurricane hits and washes people away, well . . . well . . . God shouldn't have done that! It is not easy for us to see that God never intended to solve all the problems in this life on this earth. His solution came in the form of His own Son, who lived, experienced all the temptations and stresses of any human, then gave his perfect life to redeem us from the disaster of this present world. Christians must be more future oriented, not toward a better government, nor a better society, but toward heaven. We don't hear much about heaven, but there is God's ultimate answer. The gospel of Christ provides the medium by which we move from this world to a much better one. In heaven there is no more sorrow. There are no tears shed there. Problems, tragedy and all that causes pain and suffering are gone. God provided the way to get there and heartily invites us to join him in an eternal home.

If we could ever get our perspective right, instead of blaming God, we'd praise God. Many years ago, sitting in a jail cell, surrounded by enemies, and facing circumstances none of us would want, the apostle Paul wrote to the church in Philippi,

Bobby Key

"Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble" (Job 14:1). One cannot think of suffering without thinking of Job. There is no experience more universally peculiar to the human family than that of suffering.

Suffering may be physical, or it may be mental. Its source may be that of nature, the great benefactor of man which blesses us, and then indiscriminately inflicts insurmountable suffering upon her subjects, or its source may be man himself as he wounds and hurts his fellowman. Suffering may be self-inflicted, either willfully or in ignorance. Regardless of where it originates, suffering is the common lot of man.

The question is not, "How may I avoid suffering?" Rather, "How shall I deal with suffering," and "What use shall I make of it?"

The best source of comfort and help comes from above. "Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who

It is not easy for us to see that God never intended to solve all the problems in this life on this earth. His solution came in the form of His own Son, who lived, experienced all the temptations and stresses of any human, then gave his perfect life to redeem us from the disaster of this present world.

"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice" (Philippians 4:4, NKJ). How could Paul say that? He knew that God is truly a God of answers. That gives hope. Hope doesn't blame, it looks forward to better things.

-- via Living The Word, P. O. Box 623, Forest Park, GA 30051.

Suffering

The question is not, "How may I avoid suffering?" Rather, "How shall I deal with suffering," and "What use shall I make of it?"

comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation abounds through Christ" (II Corinthians 1:2-5).

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

Why Must I Suffer?

Continued From Page 1

make the change from this world to the one to come. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

Suffering, then, is not all bad! It has its rightful purpose in all our lives. Even though we certainly would not pray for sufferings to come, let us be ready to profit by them when they do come. And, come they will!

--218 Pinecrest Drive, Greeneville, TN 37743.

The Joy Of Christianity

Continued From Page 3

countenance of the child of God. Joy is the continued state of well-being which results from knowing that the life you are living pleases God who gives present and eternal rewards. If you haven't become a New Testament Christian you can't have this joy that is in Christ.

"Joy is seeing the good through the bad;

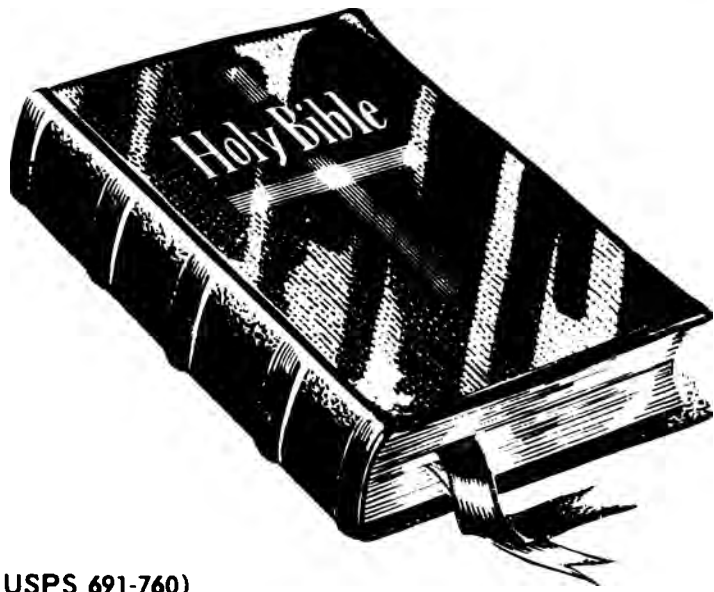
Joy is getting blessings from things sad;

Joy is remaining calm when you get mad;

Joy is an attribute of the Christian and aren't you glad?"

If you are a Christian, be thankful for the joy you have in Christ. Be grateful for the peace that passes understanding that is not dependent upon changing circumstances.

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



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Words Of Truth

"I am not man
Words of Truth

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What Are You Working For?



Edsel Burleson

"The Christian Home," August, 1970, contained a story of a traveler who came to a place where three men were working with large stones which they were chipping and shaping into building blocks. When he asked what they were working for,

one replied, "I am working for a dollar a day." The second answered, "I'm working for my family." While the third smiled and declared, "I'm building a cathedral."

What are you working for? It has been said, "Many Christians have just enough Christianity to be miserable." Please note, however, it is not that Christianity fails, but the Christian. The system is good, man is the weak link! Some could never "set the world on fire," while others could have it aflame in a minute. One thing in particular stands out when you meet such a Christian, he has a positive attitude.

One who is really sold on the church and what it represents will have a positive attitude. Just meeting and talking with him will enable you to see that he's sold on Christianity. Through such a person, all who come in contact with him know he firmly believes in the work of the Lord. He promotes the church wherever he goes, and others are benefited by his presence.

All Christians should act as public relations persons and promote the Lord's work by everything they do and say.

Someone came up with these ten suggestions for improving attitudes within the church:

1. Tell yourself over and over that since you are not perfect, you would not fit into a perfect congregation if one existed.

2. Instead of picking out the worldly members to point to, pick out the sincere, dedicated, spiritual members and thank God for them. You will find what you seek.

3. If you are old, treat the young with consideration you desired as a young person. If you are young, treat adults with the respect you will want when you are mature.

4. When you are tempted to criticize others be sure to pray earnestly for them first. This may not change them, but it will do wonders for your attitude.

5. When you see a work neglected, instead of being critical, offer to help.

6. Never, NEVER blame others for your own failures. . . Every individual can be faithful to God in spite of the bad examples and discouraging attitudes of others if he is determined to be.

7. Remind yourself every day that the only way you can improve the world or the church is to begin with self.

8. Consciously look for the good qualities in every brother and sister in Christ. When you think of a brother or sister, make a mental note of the good points each possesses.

9. Constantly strive to increase your circle of associates in the church. Try to do something good for each.

10. Every church has problems. Constantly ask yourself, "Am I a part of the problem or am I a part

of the solution?" -- "Am I trying to be merely a critical spectator?"

What about you? Do you have an upbeat attitude? Do you look a difficult task squarely in the eye and say with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

The Gloster Street Messenger, from Tupelo, Mississippi, recently included the following article entitled: "Your Attitude Makes the Difference."

"A young lady who had lost her eyesight two years earlier was talking with her preacher. He was surprised to see her enthusiasm and love for life. She said, 'Do you know what I've discovered? I have found that most unhappy thoughts come from seeing.'

"With her face all aglow she continued, 'Before my accident I saw women wearing expensive clothes, and I became dissatisfied with what I had. I noticed beautiful people, and I was unhappy with my own appearance.'

"She added, 'Then it came to me. Most joy-producing thoughts come into people's minds in the dark! You close your eyes when you kiss the one you love. You close your eyes when you listen to soft music. You close your eyes when you talk to God. I don't really need to see to enjoy life!'

What about you? Are you working to promote the Lord's work with a positive attitude in everything you say and do?

What You Set Your Mind To Do


Bill Denton

The vast resources and capability of the mind amazes me. Since elementary school days, I remember teachers saying that man used only a fraction of his mind power. Someone estimated that we perhaps use ten percent of all the mind's true ability. It seems a shame to allow 90% of something go unused or wasted.

I like what James Russell Lowell put into verse:

Life is a leaf of paper white
Whereon each one of us may write
His word or two, and then comes
night.
Greatly begin! though thou have time
But for a line-- be that sublime--
Not failure, but low aim, is crime.

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

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The Editor's Pen
David Wade

Heresy



David Wade

Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words defines heresy as "a choosing, choice (from *haireomi*, to choose); then, that which is substituted for submission to the power of truth, and leads to division and the formation of sects, Galatians 5:20 (marg., "parties"); such erroneous opinions are

want everything to "look bad." They think their divisiveness is justified if things are made to look bad.

The scriptures are very specific in condemnation of heresy. "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 times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19-21). "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).

Nowhere in scripture does God sanction the factious who withdraw themselves and draw away other disciples after them. Furthermore, Christians who lend their support, attendance, and in general, bid them "God speed" become "partaker" of their "evildoings" (II John 10-11).

The closing admonitions of Jude are most needful for faithful Christians to follow in overcoming of heresies. "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 20-23).

Defying Authority

Elwood Holt

Out in Colorado there is a scenic bridge which spans the Royal Gorge of the Arkansas, a thousand feet above the roaring waters. One day some people were photographing the great chasm, and seeking a better view, climbed out on a rugged peak. Officials ordered them back, explaining that it was against the rules to climb to such dangerous places. One young man defied the officials and protesting visitors, saying he was tending to his own business, and inviting them to do likewise, he willfully disobeyed by climbing farther. Then he slipped and was hurled three hundred feet to a narrow ledge from which his rescuers on long ropes recovered his lifeless body hours later. He had defied authority, thinking he knew better, and had paid with his life.

We are saddened when we look all around us in
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Isaiah Saw His Glory



Bobby Key

The king was on his deathbed. Morale in the kingdom of Judah was ebbing along with the royal life. Uzziah had reigned for 52 years -- a very long time by today's standards. His death would bring great changes. Isaiah, newly installed court reporter for

the royal family, was walking toward the temple. He knew better than most that Judah was in a sorry state.

Two hundred and fifty years had passed since David had unified the nation of Israel and fortified and expanded her borders. Solomon's temple had been dedicated more than 200 years ago. The days had long passed when the heathen nations surrounding Judah feared the God of Abraham. The present situation was a far cry from Solomon's kingdom. For nearly two centuries Israel had been divided into two kingdoms. The northern kingdom, ten tribes strong, had its headquarters at Samaria. The southern kingdom, composed of only two tribes, retained Jerusalem as its capital. A long line of kings, mostly evil, had reigned in each part of David's ancient empire. Morality, both public and private was mostly ignored. Idol worship had replaced worship of the true God on a number of

frequently the outcome of personal preference or the prospect of advantage; see I Peter 2:1, where "destructive" (R.V.) signifies leading to ruin . . . Many translations, this side of the King James Version, render the term as "faction" or "division."

Some have erroneously concluded that the term "heresy" is used in scripture only in the narrow sense of division over some great doctrinal error, such as "denying the Lord" (II Peter 2:1; cf. Jude 4). To the contrary, it should be pointed out that the "nature" of any doctrinal error is not inherent in the word "heresy." The word simply denotes division. This division may be over anything, whether doctrine, opinion, preference, etc. over which the heretic desires to divide the church.

Commenting on heresy, David Lipscomb said, "A heresy is a schism, a division or a party. Whatever produces schisms or parties in the church of God is heresy, and is condemned in the Bible as sinful (Questions Answered, p. 310).

The heretic's "great doctrinal error" may be nothing more than his blatant disregard of the doctrine of unity as described in John 17:21-23, I Corinthians 1:10 and Ephesians 4:3-6. While paying lip service to this teaching, the heretic does right the opposite and devises ways in which he attempts to destroy unity and get members "on his side." They speak "feigned words" and "speak evil of dignities" (II Peter 2:3, 10; cf. Jude 8). "But these speak evil of those things which they know not" (Jude 10). "They are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words having men's persons in admiration because of advantage" (Jude 16).

And may we ask what motivates the factious? They are covetous (II Peter 2:3). They "despise dominion" (Jude 8). They "despise government" and are "presumptuous" and "self-willed" (2:10). "These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit" (Jude 10).

They speak "perverse things to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30).

Quite often, the factious refuse to contribute on a regular basis to the local church as they have been prospered. Quite often, they refuse to participate in any planned work of the church. They cannot do anything to help the church "look good" since they

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Defying Authority

Continued From Page 2

the spiritual world and see the same reckless defying of authority. Only when we defy the authority of Christ and the Word, our daring is more pathetic than the young man who defied the earthly authorities. We are jeopardizing our SOULS, not our bodies. Nothing in all this universe is as important as the immortal souls of men. Yet the average person plays with his soul by feeding it upon chaff and not upon the stipulations of God's word. The record very clearly teaches us, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). It is not within man's power to map out his own way from this life to the next. He is not the captain of his own fate. Christ is the captain and if it is otherwise, fate will be man's. Jesus taught that "wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby" (Matthew 7:13). The fellow who follows the masses will walk in that broad way. The one who walks in the strait and narrow will not be crowded out because of the multitudes. Why do so many prefer the broad way to the narrow one? Simply because they can't walk in the narrow one and have their own way. They want to be their own bosses, their own captains, they want to charter their own courses, and others also -- in short, they don't intend to have anyone telling them what they can do, or not do, including the Lord of Glory! Now just how long can we escape if we maintain this attitude? It is open, flagrant, defying and denial of divine worship. When God says a thing it is so! It can be so whether He says so or not, but out of love for the human race he has made the way so plain that it admits no justifiable

confusion. When God tells us what to do, what to believe, how to walk, how to talk, then we must accept that as the last WORD of authority.

When He tells in a positive manner what He wants us to do as worship, who are we to question and finally do something else that we like better? When God tells us what the Church should do and how to do it, why should we question God's authority? "Oh, but it is so nice!" People say. Or, "It just looks better to do this or that instead of doing what the Bible says." Again who is puny man or woman to withstand God? We are taught, "let God be true but every man a liar" (Romans

Why do so many prefer the broad way to the narrow one? Simply because they can't walk in the narrow one and have their own way. They want to be their own bosses, their own captains, they want to charter their own courses, and others also -- in short, they don't intend to have anyone telling them what they can do, or not do, including the Lord of Glory!

3:4). A person said to me once when he noticed certain ways we carry on the Lord's work, "I just don't see how you get along without this or that." My reply was, "We get along fine, for we are seeking to please God." The Good Book tells us that "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. 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).

This should forever settle the matter. Who should we follow? -- men or GOD. Our own dictates or the dictates of his WORD? Jesus said, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). Now what in the realm of authority is left for man or woman? NONE AT ALL. When men begin to legislate for the Lord, or, to use a more modern expression, "when they begin to think for him, and put words in his mouth," they have overstepped their authority and are shaking his end of the rope. God who made us surely has enough ability to guide us across this fitful life. He knows what we should BELIEVE, DO, and think. Let us seek to bring our hearts into union with His by doing what He says, whether we can see a reason or not -- we are to walk by faith, not by sight (II Corinthians 5:7). The young man lost his life by ignoring authority. Let us take heed lest we lose our never-dying souls in the same way.

Let Us Reason Together

Mark N. Posey

In Isaiah 1:18 we read, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." In Isaiah chapter 1, especially verses 16-20, God is calling His people back to righteousness through reason. Through reason many have been called out of sin by the Gospel into a faithful existence. But how does reason play a part in God's plea, Christ's sacrifice, and the holy scriptures? Reason is that motivating factor which foundations are built upon. Reason is the light at the end of the bewildering tunnel. For example: Would a person be reasonable about how to make a million dollars, or how to get and stay out of debt? Certainly! Most people pride themselves on their reasonableness. Paul said, "And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for all men have not faith" (II Thessalonians 3:2). Thus reason is an outlining factor in showing people the value of their soul.

A soul is the most important thing in all the world. Thus, I see the job of a gospel preacher is to reason with people about their soul. Peter and the other Apostles, on the day of Pentecost, reasoned with the people about the condition of their soul.

Isaiah Saw His Glory

Continued From Page 2

occasions. The government was in disarray; foreign enemies were threatening.

Now the king was dying. King Uzziah had been, by and large, a good king, but even godly Uzziah had grown proud. He had dared to offer incense to the Lord -- a job specifically reserved for priests, absolutely prohibited for all others. During that very act of unlawful worship, Uzziah had been stricken with leprosy, and thus had to be quarantined for several years. His son, Jothan, had acted in his stead.

We will never know the thoughts going through the mind of the prophet as he walked toward the temple. "Where is our country headed?" "How will the death of the king affect the people?" Isaiah could gaze at the curtain which divided the holy place from the most holy, the room at the back of the temple where God's law was preserved in the ark, the hidden place seen only by the high priest once a year, on the day of atonement.

Suddenly Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above God's throne stood angelic beings speaking praises to God in voices so powerful that the posts of the door moved and the house was

filled with smoke. "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts," called one angel to another. "The whole earth is full of his glory."

The majesty and glory of this scene caused Isaiah to exclaim, "Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts." Standing before God he felt unclean, naked, and vile.

One of the angels leaves his place, takes a live coal from the altar, and laid it upon the prophet's mouth saying, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged." Then the voice of the Lord was heard saying, "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?"

Immediately the prophet responded, "Here am I, send me." Isaiah was permitted to speak for the Lord. He told of the coming of the Messiah, His birth, His life, His suffering, His death, and His resurrection. In the midst of a trying time, Isaiah spoke of a glorious future -- not only for Israel but for all of mankind. He authored one of the most frequently quoted books of the Old Testament. Through Isaiah, we, too, see the glory of the Lord.

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

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Let Us Reason Together

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They said, "Save yourself from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40). Jesus said, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26). Jesus was stressing the importance and value of a soul. So, through reason the importance of a soul is shown. However, what about the unreasonable person who receives a reason packed message but rejects it?

In Acts 24:22-26 we have just such an example of a reasonable message rejected by an unreasonable man. Paul reasoned with Felix NOT how to be a better Governor, NOR how to ultimately become the Caesar of Rome, but HOW TO BE SAVED ETERNALLY. No doubt this was characteristic of Paul, because we read in Acts 17:2, "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures."

Paul saw the value and importance of Felix's soul. Thus he reasoned with him concerning three of the most important principles in all the Bible: righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.

Righteousness has been defined, and rightfully so, as "doing right." Solomon said, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). Paul told Titus in 2:12 that we should live three ways: soberly, righteously, and godly. "But how can a person live righteously," many ask. Zacharias and Elisabeth are a great example and ultimate answer to this question. Luke 1:6 says, "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." They were servants of righteousness. Christians must be servants of righteousness. Paul said, "Being then made free from sin, ye become the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:18).

Secondly, Paul reasoned with Felix concerning temperance. Temperance simply means self control. Christians must have a controlling agent in their lives. Marshall Keeble once said, "Man must be gospelized." The controlling agent of a Christian must be the gospel. Notice what Peter said, "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). James has much to say about self control in chapter 3 of his letter. He says in 3:3 that we put bits in a horse's mouth to control him. In 3:4 he talks about the help of a ship, how small it is but it is able to turn a great ship. That is self control. Man has four basic needs in life: 1. a priest to represent him before God, 2. a sacrifice to approach God, 3. a prophet to reveal God, and 4. a King to control his life. Christians must have temperance and allow the King to control their lives.

Thirdly, and finally, Paul reasoned with Felix concerning judgment to come. There are some things that man must do, and there is no avoiding them: 1. Make choices (Matthew 6:24), 2. Must die (Hebrews 9:27), and 3. Must face Christ in Judgment (II Corinthians 5:10). Judgment is

coming whether we are ready or not. There is a great song that says: "Are you ready for the judgment day." In the great judgment scene of Matthew 25, Jesus compares the lost and the saved, sheep and goats, those on his left and those on his right. In verse 46 Jesus said, "And these (lost) shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

I love a story with a happy ending, however, this one ends on a very sad note. Felix, after hearing the wonderful gospel reasoned through three outstanding avenues, rejected the powerful reason

of the message. Acts 24:25b says, "Felix trembled and answered, Go thy way for this time: when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." What a shame. We are not told if Felix ever responded to the reason of the gospel. We can only hope that at some later point in time he found his convenient season and obeyed the gospel. But the gospel must be preached. Some will listen, some will not. Unreasonable men abound and reject a reason packed gospel. We must endure. Remember what Paul told Timothy, "Preach the word" (II Timothy 4:2).

--P.O. Box 376, Arab, AL 35016.

What You Set Your Mind To Do

Continued From Page 1

Charles Swindol wrote, "Call me a dreamer, but I'm convinced that achieving one's full potential is still a goal worth striving for -- that excellence is still worth pursuing even if most yawn and a few sneer. And, yes, even if I should fail occasionally while reaching. Failure, remember, is not the crime."

Lest you think that humans discovered this great truth on their own, take note of the fact that God encouraged us to seek our full potential all along. Proverbs 23:7 stands as one of the most profound statements ever. "As a man thinks within himself, so is he." What you think, you are. That might explain a lot. It is with man's mind that God communicates. It is with man's mind that Satan tempts us to stray. Our mind is the center of conscious thought, the seat of learning, the crucible of our will, and the fire of emotions. It is not going too far to say that the mind is the essence of humanity. To the extent man's mind functions well and positively, we achieve our greatest successes. To the extent man's mind falters or follows the path of negativism, we plunge to our sorriest depth.

It may amaze you to know how well David had things together. Consider the advice he gave to his son Solomon in I Chronicles 28:9. "As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts . . ."

David knew that a man's thoughts may very well keep secrets from others, but no man's thoughts are hidden from God. God knows this is the battle ground where man either wins or loses. Since this is the case, we need to see that using our minds to the fullest extent possible moves us toward God's design for us.

Though in this case, man rebelled against God, there is a statement in Genesis 11:6 that underscores how powerfully man's mind can act. "And the LORD said, 'Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.'" What possibilities

To the extent man's mind functions well and positively, we achieve our greatest successes. To the extent man's mind falters or follows the path of negativism, we plunge to our sorriest depth.

might exist should God's people ever realize the potential within ourselves. If we harnessed that power for good as the people on the plain of Shinar harnessed it for evil, we could do truly great things for God. Why haven't we done so already? Our aim has been too low. We figure we can't do any more. We decide we can't do any better. We think that great works are just a bit out of our reach. So what we do is less. Would you like to change all that? Then aim higher. Aim higher personally. Aim higher as a church. Aim and keep shooting. Dream big and then try for it. What do you think would happen if people/churches did just that? What do you say you and I find out?

--Via *Living The Word*, P.O. Box 623, Forest Park, GA 30051.

HOME COMING

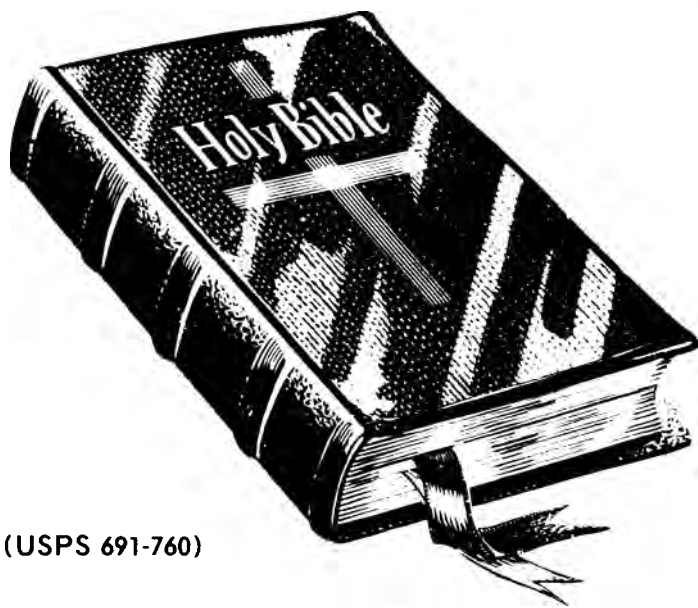
Sixth Avenue

Church Of Christ

Sunday, November 4, 1990

Guest Speaker:

Glenn Posey



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am not
Words of

forth the

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 26

SEPTEMBER 28, 1990

NUMBER 39

He Only Missed Two Wednesday Nights!



Don Williams

Back in May, when we were on vacation, we stopped off at a church just over the Florida line for Sunday morning services. The older preacher spoke of Memorials, it being Memorial Day Weekend. He talked of the Lord's Supper and the need to honor Christ by our regular obser-

vanance of His Supper.

As the invitation was extended, one man responded. The preacher, in taking the man's confession, announced that as one of the elders of the congregation, this brother was sorry for leading others astray. He had recently missed two Wednesday night church services in an effort to get his crops in (He was a farmer.). In the words of the elder: "On my farm, I am the boss -- I did not have to miss." What he had done offended some, and he was sorry for missing, as well as not setting the proper example for others.

"On my farm, I am the boss -- I did not have to miss."

As I drove toward my destination later that afternoon, I thought back to what the elder said. Although, I had never met the man, I appreciated him more because of his willingness to admit wrong, and his desire to set forth a proper example. Elders must be blameless, and also must "hold forth the faithful word as he hath been taught" (Titus 1:7, 9). Preachers that would miss church services would be fired in an instant. In fact, I recall hearing of such a preacher that coached a little league football team. On the last night of THEIR Gospel Meeting, he missed in order to coach his team in the football championship game. He was immediately relieved

of his job, as he had not sought "first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33).

But what about members of the church? Are they held any less accountable by God for "forsaking the assembling of ourselves together," as Hebrews 10:25 teaches? Does God not expect from them, as well as from elders, deacons, and preachers, regular and faithful attendance in worship services? If not, why not?

Someone has told the story that on judgment day, as all were lined up to appear before Jesus, that a

cheer went up from the front of the crowd. When asked what the cheering was about, someone yelled back, "They say he's not counting Wednesday nights!" Laugh if you will, but it's not funny to me. Those who willfully miss regular church services when they could have been in attendance have a spiritual sickness -- of the heart and not of the body. May anyone in this condition, correct it and repent before it be too late.

--Route 2 Box 713, Guin, AL 35563.

How Far Is It To Church?



W. T. Allison

his office every day. The man remarked, "Well that is different."

How far is it to church? It is a long way for that person who finds no joy in worshipping God in the company of like-minded men and women. It was no distance at all for the man who said, "I was glad when they said to me, let us go into the house of the Lord."

How far is it to church? For some it is as near as the fulfillment of their determination to support the church with their presence, their influence and their prayers. For others, it is as far away as the weather, an extra hour's sleep or a good time at the

Greeting a church member who had been absent from worship services, the preacher said, "We have missed you." The member answered, "We have moved, and we now live too far away to attend regularly." The preacher called attention to the fact that he was also farther from his work, but that he still went to

lake or week-end trip with God left out.

How far is it to church? It is as near as one's loyalty or as far as his lack of interest. Of course, the road seems long and difficult when it is filled with chuckholes of negligence and barricades of apathy.

Faithful worship renews our faith, quickens our spiritual sensitivity and increases our reverence for issues of eternal consequence.

How far is it to church? Loyalty to Christ and appreciation for the work of His church makes any distance short. Faithful worship renews our faith, quickens our spiritual sensitivity and increases our reverence for issues of eternal consequence.

How far is it to church? It is a very short distance for the one who has made his life a spiritual sacrifice for Jesus Christ during the week. Collective worship on Sunday is but a continuation of what the worshipper has done during the week.

--1901 Schillinger Rd., Mobile, AL 36695.

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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Congregational Pride

Not long ago, I heard a Christian speaking of the congregation where she worshipped. She loved the elders, enjoyed hearing the preacher, and bragged about the Bible classes. At first, I felt that she was too much in love with her home congregation. And then, I had some second thoughts.

There are far too many church members who never say a good word about the home church, never feel any attachment to the home congregation.

What's wrong with a Christian loving their home congregation? What's wrong with our appreciating our elders, deacons, and preacher (and telling them once in a while)? What's wrong with our being a little proud of our program of work and the joy we have in the worship of our local congregation? What's wrong with praising our song leaders and giving them our full support as they direct our singing from time to time?

There are far too many church members who never say a good word about the home church, never feel any attachment to the home congregation. It is always referred to by some as "they," and not "we."

Let every member be proud and thankful for the home congregation and feel that we are a definite part of the work and worship of the local church.

--Selected

HOME COMING

Sixth Avenue Church Of Christ
Sunday, November 4, 1990
Guest Speaker: Glenn Posey



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

The Harvest



David Wade

members of the Lord's church should be acutely aware of the truthfulness of these words of our Lord. New opportunities are opening up almost everyday to share the gospel in nations heretofore unevangelized. Will we respond to the harvest?

Presently, members of the Sixth Avenue congregation are working with approximately 500

Jesus said, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35).

In view of recent world-wide political developments, mem-

bers of the Lord's prospects in West Africa through World Bible School. In addition we are awaiting a list of English speaking prospects from Romania. Many congregations, like us, are only touching the "hem of the garment" of what can and must be done to carry the gospel to all nations.

Jesus describes the situation. They are "scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd" (Matthew 9:36). Jesus speaks of the shortage, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few" (verse 37). Jesus also declares the solution, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (verse 38).

We must awake to the need and meet the opportunities for evangelism, both local and abroad. If the church fails, opportunities are soon lost, and they are lost forever. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved" (Jeremiah 8:20).

Why Are We Not More Evangelistic?

Jack Wood Sears

Some years ago an infidel is supposed to have written the following: "Did I firmly believe, as millions say they do, that knowledge and practice of religion in this life influences destiny in another, religion would be everything to me. I would cast aside earthly enjoyments as dross, earthly thoughts and feelings as vanity. Religion would be my first waking thought and my late image before sleep sank me into unconsciousness. . . I would go forth to the world and preach to it in season and out of season, and my text would be, 'What Shall It Profit a Man If He Shall Gain the Whole World and Lose His Own Soul?'"

Last summer when I had finished a series of lessons on "Discipleship" I felt that something was lacking. The more I thought about it, the more I was sure that much of our problem of really being disciples of Christ was to be found in our failure to comprehend psychologically the urgency of our mission as emissaries of Christ, sent to save a lost world. We do not see our good neighbors and friends who are out of Christ as lost. We know they have not obeyed the Lord and come into a saving relationship in Christ through faith, repentance, and baptism into Christ, but they are such nice people. They just can't be lost!

We give lip service to the idea of eternal hell where there is intense suffering forever and ever,

but psychologically we really don't want to recognize the fact. I know it is not pleasant to contemplate eternal, never-ending torment. Yet the message of Scripture is plain. Man without Christ is lost! "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). "For all have sinned" (Romans 3:23). Every accountable person is lost without the forgiveness of Christ. Christ came and died the horrible death on Calvary because this is true. If it is not true, Christ died foolishly and for no reason.

Those without Christ, who are not in Christ, are represented in Scripture as "having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). From the Bible I can offer no hope to those outside this saving relationship in Christ. I wish it were not so. To imagine anyone being in everlasting torment is more than I can stand. But hell is real and sure! Just as heaven is real and sure. To paraphrase the words of the Apostle Peter, "seeing this is so, how should we act?" (II Peter 3:11). When a person is in danger of drowning, we do not worry if we bruise his legs as we pull him into the boat to safety. When a person is lost, we should not be timid about using all proper means to save him. Like Christ, I "must be about my Father's business" (Luke 2:49).

--Via The Chandler Street Church of Christ Bulletin.

Deception -- Satan's Most Effective Weapon



Edsel Burleson

The story is told of a man who was reading the epitaphs in a certain cemetery. He paused and read these words on a stone: "I am not dead -- I sleep." Hurrying away, he said, "You can think that if you want to, but you ain't fooling nobody but yourself."

It is possible that Satan's most powerful and effective weapon is deception. God has sounded a warning of the master deceiver saying, "Satan, which deceiveth the whole world" (Revelation 12:9). Lest we be led away by false teachers, Paul wrote: "Let no man deceive you" (Ephesians 5:6). James spoke of the possibility of "deceiving our own heart" (James 1:22).

It is such a tragedy that many professed Christians never see themselves as an active force in the Master's work but have been deceived into believing that it really doesn't make that much difference.

It is such a tragedy that many professed Christians never see themselves as an active force in the Master's work but have been deceived into believing that it really doesn't make that much difference.

Too many are like the boy on a college football team who never did throw himself into the game enough to make the first team. One day the coach was in a tight spot in a crucial game. He had a team member who had ability, and who could be a great player if he would only stirred up about the game. The coach said to him, "What would you do if the team was behind and on the one yard line, and we had one more down and less than a minute left in the game?"

The boy immediately answered, "I would move down to the end of the bench so that I could see the play better."

Many church members have allowed Satan to deceive them into believing that the work of the church is for the other members. They fail to see themselves as a part of the team.

Several years ago a religious census was taken in Dallas County, Texas. Some 44,000 persons declared themselves to be members of the church of Christ. At the time the congregations of the city and county of Dallas listed a total of only 24,000 names on their membership rolls. What about the other 20,000? It is highly likely that the story would be about the same in any other area of our nation.

A preacher was once asked by an oldtime friend whom he met in a distant city: "How many

members do you have in your church?"

"One thousand," the preacher replied.

"Really!" the friend exclaimed. "And how many of them are active?"

"All of them are active," was the response. "About two hundred of them are active for the Lord; the balance are active for the devil."

Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matthew 12:30).

There will never cease to be a need to conquer the foes outside the church, but it is obvious that much more time needs to be given to combatting the alarming spiritual indifference among many in the church.

Mardell Lynch has written that "The indifferent

are probably the most difficult of all people to reach. If a man openly opposes you, there is a possibility of reaching him by good and effective response to his objections. A divided heart has some interest in things spiritual, but the indifferent just do not care! The backslider may have some treasured memories of the past that his estrangement has not obliterated and with proper admonition may be influenced to return. But you have no handle by which to get hold of those who are indifferent, not interested, who just don't care!"

Jesus had John tell the Laodiceans, "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:16).

--420 Seventh St., S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

Have We Left Evangelism To The "Professionalism"?

Jim Laws

In John 4:35 our Lord said, "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white already unto harvest." Jesus in this passage is stressing the urgent need to open our eyes and see the lost who are all around us. The need to do this was not given to a select few. It is everyone's responsibility to be involved in the work of teaching others the word of God. Did not Jesus say, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away" (John 15:2)? Indeed, He did. The responsibility of seeking souls with honest hearts lies with us all. Peter spoke of that "spiritual house" in Peter 2:5. He was not referring to a visible edifice, but a spiritual house which is His church. In verses 4-8 of the passage, stones are spoken of as illustrations of Christ and His people. He is the living stone, the foundation and corner stone (verse 6). His people are living stones which make up this spiritual house, the church of God. Every stone in the building is expected to carry its own weight. If individual stones are weak, crumbling as chalk, then, the entire building's strength is threatened. So, every Christian is a stone in the structure and must bear his own weight. The fine art of seeking sinners with sincere and honest hearts is to be developed by all.

Mark 16:15 indicates that effort is required on our part to do this. He challenges every child of God to

"go and plant" the seed of the kingdom, and we are promised that God will give the increase. But, to whom shall we go?

Go to visitors at the assembly. Those who attend our worship service are indicating by their presence an interest in the work and worship of the church. Many prospects may be found among our visitors.

Go to the unconverted spouse. The companions of some members attend the services of the church but have never obeyed the gospel. Our efforts should include them so they may obey before it is too late.

Go to our relatives. Let us pray and work to teach members of our own family.

Go to unfaithful members. This is a neglected area. They need to be restored and brought back.

Go to friends of members. List your friends who have not obeyed the gospel. This may stagger your mind. Be a true friend and win them to Christ.

By now you can see that there are many avenues of teaching possibilities. The problem does not lie with opportunity but perhaps with a mistaken attitude which says, "Teaching the lost is the responsibility of a few professionals and not with me."

--Via Bulletin, Ninth Avenue Church of Christ, Haleyville, AL 35565.

Church Found Missing On Sunday

Bill Denton

Tuesday morning, July 10, 1990, somewhere around 11:00 a.m. Barbara sneaked into my office earlier and laid on my desk the absentee report from this past Sunday. I pick it up and casually flip through each Zone. The list is awfully long. I count the names of people absent from services and the total is 111. We've got more people absent

than the average American church has in attendance.

I want to be honest with this list, so I look harder to see who was absent. Sure enough, there are the folks gone to Freed Hardeman to CTS. Ah, there were at least two families who told me they were going to Alabama to see relatives and I know they

Continued On Page 4

'Be Honest With Yourself'



Cecil Corkren

The world is plagued with people who are afraid to just be themselves. This problem may be the harvest of many years of over-ambitious parents who have convinced their children that they can become something they are not able to achieve in life. Many parents have certain goals for their children when the child may not be the candidate for the position or job. Just because you as parents were achievers in a certain field does not mean that your children will be suited for the position. Many times children cannot reach goals dad and mom reached. The child may be suited for a different career and could reach greater goals in life.

It is a great day in one's life when he stops trying to be someone else. The greatest gift any man can offer to his fellowman is himself -- his best self.

We as parents create a frightening world for our children who live behind a facade of make-believe. Politicians have assured us that we can become "what we want to become -- there is absolutely no limit." School teachers have pushed children in saying, "hitch our wagons to a star." Children have been frightened and frustrated in thinking only the best will do. Many parents try to plan the future for their children. As Paul Harvey says, "Now you know the rest of the story" many children feel they are failures because they failed their parents. Some go through life covering frustrations and the deep feeling of insecurity with a veneer of make-believe.

We forget that our strength does not come from our parents alone. Those who trust in the Lord are like David who said, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help (from whence shall my help come?)" (Psalm 121:1). It is a great day in one's life when he stops trying to be someone else. The greatest gift any man can offer to his fellowman is himself -- his best self. When we stop and think all God requires of any man is that he simply be himself at his or her best.

Jesus rebuked the one talent man, not because he did not have five, but because he buried his Lord's money. His failure was not because he could not have gained others, his failure lay in the fact that he refused to be himself. We fail when we do not use what God has given us. Dwight L. Moody

expressed it: "I'm not much, but God is going to have all there is of me." Romans 12:4-5 teaches we all have different talents and hold different offices or talents. When we read Philippians 4:13 Paul said, "I can do all things THROUGH CHRIST which strengtheneth me." God gives us our talents, and if not used, he will take them away.

--1705 Sandra Lee Drive, Jasper, AL 35501.

Training Children To Worship



Cecil May, Jr.

Obviously there is a time in infancy when keeping a child contentedly occupied is the best a parent can hope for. Bringing a quiet toy, paper and pencil or crayons, which the child can enjoy while the parent participates in worship as much as possible, is the wisest course during that stage.

However, too many parents prolong that stage beyond the time it is profitable.

As soon as children can sing nursery rhymes, they should be encouraged to sing hymns, by parents pointing in the song book to the words being sung. Very early, children can be taught to bow their heads during shorter prayers, and recognize that they are talking to God. Similarly, when scripture is read, they can be taught reverence by having their own Bibles opened to where the word of God is being read. This is profitable even before the child learns to read.

As soon as they can write, they should be encouraged to make notes on the sermon, writing down scriptures cited and other items of interest. Elementary school children have shown me outlines they made of my preaching that were better than the outline I was preaching from!

Children old enough to go to school but still spending the whole worship hour with toys and coloring books, from before the announcements to after the benediction, with no cognizance at all of what is taking place, are missing out on several blessings including the experience of worship, opportunity to feel they are being treated as "grown-up," and valuable training in why people gather for worship.

Some diversion is necessary for children. Begin with a little participation, and gradually encourage more. Children can learn to participate in worship sooner than many think. And the sooner the better, both for them and their parents!

My wife dealt with our four children as I watched from the pulpit, so this advice is based on what she did and how it turned out, but I saw it work.

--Magnolia Bible College, P.O. Box 1101, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

Church Found Missing On Sunday

Continued From Page 3

attend assemblies while there. There are the names of some who are sick, and I didn't expect them to attend. I remember seeing a few people, so maybe they didn't fill out an attendance card. However, the vast majority are unaccounted for.

You may think you feel closer to God at the lake or in the mountains, but God says the assembly is where He wants you (Hebrews 10:19-25).

When I was in the Air Force, we occasionally did real military things like falling in formation. One of the things formation accomplished was attendance check. Those present indicated so, and those absent had to be accounted for. The final report went to the officer in charge -- "All present and accounted for, Sir!" I'd hate to have to give that report about the church. There are too many I can't "account for."

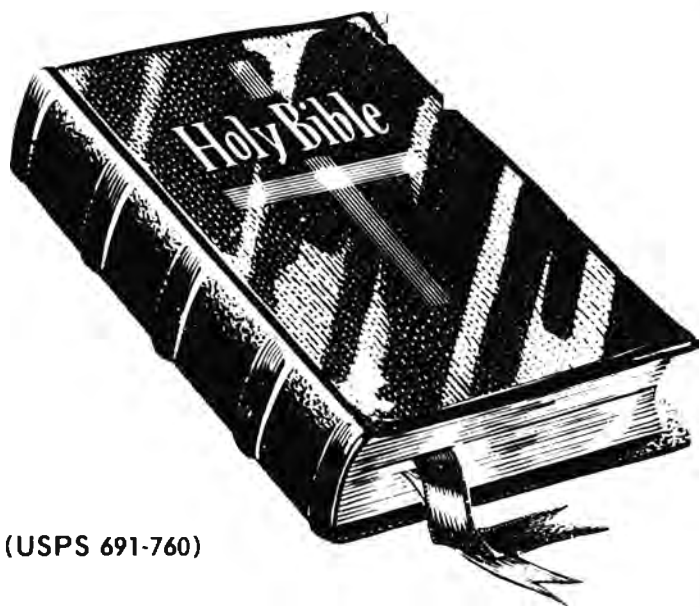
Does it really matter? Surely it does. The assembly accomplishes two things. First, we offer our worship to God. This is by His design. You may think you feel closer to God at the lake or in the mountains, but God says the assembly is where He wants you (Hebrews 10:19-25). Second, we encourage and strengthen one another. When faith weakens, attendance is often the first thing to suffer. Yet, that's when we really need to go.

That same passage in Hebrews speaks of us thinking about each other and motivating each other to love and good works. The assembly is far more important than we sometimes imagine.

There are two groups I especially worry about. One is that group we call "delinquents." These are people who are perpetually absent. Their faith is weak and many may have given up faith for the world. We all need to encourage this group. The other group are those who give only marginal support to the congregation of which they are members. They view their Sundays as opportunity to travel, to visit, enjoy recreation. They don't really see it as the "Lord's day," a day of worship and praise to God, and sincere involvement with brothers and sisters. Does the Lord and His church really come first for these people, or is it more a matter of convenient religion? God gets scheduled in with all the other stuff they are doing. Some of these people would go into shock to know that I think they fall into this category.

For the church to accomplish the work before us, we must have the support of the members. A lot of people miss sermons they needed to hear. They miss opportunities to give and serve. The corporate strength of the church drains slowly away. It could have been, should have been so different.

Where were you Sunday? Why were you there?
--P.O. Box 623, Forest Park, GA 30051.



(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 26

OCTOBER 5, 1990

NUMBER 39

Historical Account Of The First Meeting Of The Church Of Christ In Jasper, Alabama 1921-22

Dona Karrh

When these students: Florence Plylar, Parrish,

Alabama; Thelma & Verna McCaleb, Fayette
County; Irene Grace, Oakman, Alabama; Clarence

Mullinax, Oakman, Alabama; Malcomb, Pauline,
& Hue Gibson, 1601 6th Avenue, Jasper, Alabama;
and Dona & Ezra Evans, Route 2, Oakman,
Alabama entered Walker High School, they found
no place of New Testament worship and met to
discuss the finding of a place. Mrs. Will Gibson,
mother of Malcomb, Pauline & Hue, kindly invited
the group to meet in her home. Three or four
Sundays they were unable to meet at this home and
met at the home of Brother Avery Fike, 907 7th
Avenue, Jasper, Alabama. This group met at Mrs.
Gibsons' home the remainder of their school year.

The meeting place was moved from Sister
Gibson's home, to the Phillips and Stanley
Building, and from there to the Court House, then
to the Fifth Avenue Church in 1927.



A Brief History Of The Fifth Avenue Church Of Christ

*(Editor's note: The following is a speech
delivered by Avery Fike at the mortgage burning.
We could not determine the exact date).*

Avery Fike - (1891-1963)

The book of Acts of Apostles gives a brief history
of many of the congregations established by the
apostles. From a study of these congregations we
learn what God wants a congregation to be today.
The word of God, which is the seed of the
kingdom, produces congregations now that are
identical with the "Churches of Christ" in the New
Testament, in name, origin, doctrine and practice.
The Fifth Avenue Church of Christ is such a
church. It came from the seed, the word of God.

Its Origin

Back in October, 1924, the first Sunday night in
the month, brother Gus Nichols, who at that time
was laboring part time with the church in Cordova,

Ala., came to Jasper, and held a meeting in the
hope of starting a congregation here after the New
Testament pattern. Before this time we had no
congregation of the New Testament order in
Jasper. The few members that were here seemed
not to know each other, some of them going out
into the country to worship, and others falling in
with what they believed to be false worship. Still, a
few others worshipped nowhere.

Brother Forney Roberson, now of Mobile, lived
here at that time, but worshipped regularly at
Cordova. Anxious to start a congregation in Jasper,
he talked the matter over with brother Nichols at
Cordova, and obtained a promise that he would
come here for a mission meeting, provided a place
could be obtained for the meeting. The first man to
whom brother Roberson talked about getting a
place for the meeting, and the first man invited to

the meeting, turned out to be Brother S. J. Okley,
who, with his wife, was a member of the church.
While brother Roberson and brother Oakley had
been having business dealings with each other for
many months, neither knew that the other was a
member of the true church.

Brother Oakley obtained the Odd Fellows hall
over the Phillips and Stanley building for the
meeting. The meeting started with about eight
members present who lived in Jasper, and about
the same number present as visitors from Cordova.

Wednesday, after the meeting started, I was
walking down the street and in front of the
Christian Church and saw an arrow drawn on 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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David Wade Editor

Joe T. Spivy, Sr. Associate Editor
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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Homecoming



David Wade

Sixth Avenue's homecoming will be held Sunday, November 4, 1990. Brother Glenn Posey of Cullman, Alabama, who served as associate minister in the mid 1960's, will be the featured speaker for the day's worship services. Services will be held at the regular times: 9:30 Bible Study, 10:25 a.m. Morning Worship and

6:00 p.m. Evening worship. We urge all out of town guests not to bring food.

We're advertising Homecoming through Words of Truth, our daily radio programs, and letters to area congregations. We are also urging our members to join in with their letter writing to reach former members of Sixth Avenue.

In this issue, we are featuring materials gathered by sister Dona Karrh about the early years with all its trials and struggles. The Sixth Avenue congregation has a rich and illustrious history and is known around the world for her good works and soundness in the gospel.

My apologies are offered for not mentioning every name that should be mentioned. There is a wealth of information we just didn't have room to print.

6:00 p.m. Evening worship.

We will be providing a fellowship meal after the

Sixth Avenue Church Of Christ

Dona Karrh

The Fifth Avenue Church of Christ, of Jasper, Alabama moved into the new Sixth Avenue Church of Christ building July 21, 1957, for our regular worship service. Brother Gus Nichols preached the first sermon Sunday morning.

The formal opening service was given by brother B. C. Goodpasture, of Nashville, Tennessee, Sunday afternoon, July 21, 1957, at two o'clock. The house was filled to overflowing with a seating capacity of eight hundred or more. This was a wonderful beginning for the first gospel meeting in our new building.

Marlin Wade was the first person to be baptized in our new building, July 24, 1957.

Joan Wade and Raymond Kimbrell were the first members to be married in the church.

Sister J. R. Dobbs was the first funeral service to be conducted December 10, 1957.

The first Vacation Bible School was held August, 1957, and the first audio-visual or television picture was filmed April 12, 1958. C. M. Karrh presented brother Gus Nichols, and preacher of the hour. Avery Fike led the prayer, H. G. Dill directed the singing, and Sam Evans and E. R. Tarence served at the Lord's table for worship. The Jasper church was honored to be selected for a gospel sermon that would be preached to all nations on "The Herald of Truth," Abilene, Texas.

During the summer of 1962, Wade Isaac Johnson worked as the first assistant minister with brother Gus Nichols. He did the preaching when brother Nichols was away doing other work.

In 1962, friends of brother and sister Nichols gave them a tour of the Holy Lands. They visited Cairo, Egypt; Rome, Italy; Palestine, Greece, and many other Biblical and historical places. They

brought many slides and films of factual places, which are wonderful to see. Many churches have had the opportunity of seeing places they probably won't ever visit.

Brother and Sister Clyde Tirey are faithful members of the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ. Bro. Clyde went with his parents, brother and sister A. J. Tirey, to services in the Philips-Stanley building, the Odd Fellows' Hall, and in the Courthouse. He later went into Service for his Country and was not here to share the joy of the dedication of the Fifth Avenue Church. Many other young boys, who helped, worked and sacrificed for the Church in those struggling days, were also away.

Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Tirey came to Jasper before the old Fifth Avenue Church was built. They were charter members of the Fifth Avenue Church from the beginning.

The Fifth Avenue church was dedicated in October, 1927, by brother N. B. Hardeman, and the Sixth Avenue church was dedicated thirty years later in 1957 by brother B. C. Goodpasture.

Brother and sister Tirey attended church when it began worship in Odd Fellows' Hall, of Philip and Stanley building. They also worshipped in the large court room in the Court House, and later at Fifth Avenue church from its beginning.

HOME COMING

Sixth Avenue Church Of Christ

Sunday, November 4, 1990

Guest Speaker: Glenn Posey

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A Brief History Of The Fifth Avenue Church Of Christ

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side walk with crayon which said, "GOSPEL MEETING, FOLLOW THE ARROW." This had an interesting ring to it, and through curiosity I followed the arrows around the block to the foot of the stairs where the arrow pointed upstairs. I followed on and wound my way around, and around, until I came to a door upon which was tacked a notice which said, "GOSPEL MEETING -- SERVICES 7:30 P.M. each evening. WELCOME. Gus Nichols Minister, Cordova Church of Christ." I departed and passed down by the Post Office and received a card from brother Nichols stating that he had heard I was a member of the Church of Christ. It contained an invitation to come to the meeting. That night, my wife and I and our three babies were at the meeting. That night marked the beginning of my connection with the congregation and the work here.

The meeting was poorly attended, as would be expected under the circumstances, perhaps there were fewer than twenty persons present at any service. But by the close of the meeting the following fourteen members had taken their stand and expressed their determination to work and worship together as a congregation under the guidance of the New Testament as their only rule of faith and practice:

Brother and Sister Forney Roberson
Brother and Sister S. J. Oakley
Brother and Sister John Ellis
Brother and Sister Jack Tirey
Brother and Sister Craig
Sister Columbus Deason,
(Daughter of Brother C. A. Wheeler)
Brother R. O. Conner
Mrs. Fike and myself

Since none of us had taken any leading part in the worship, and all of us felt unable to carry on without help, brother Nichols promised to come and teach a class on Tuesday night of each week and try to train leadership. He also promised to be with us each Sunday afternoon and preach for us, and help otherwise in the worship. We soon began to grow in number, for we found others like ourselves who wanted to worship just as it is written. Brother C. A. Wheeler occasionally worshipped with us, when he was not away preaching, or at his home congregation at Shiloh. Brother R. N. Moody spoke for us once and gave us great encouragement.

But one of our darkest hours came when after a few months we came to worship one cold Lord's day and found that they had turned the hall in which we were to meet into a dance hall, and by a notice tacked on the door, informed us that we were OUT. With voices trembling with deep emotion, and nearly every eye moistened with tears which came like blood from a pierced heart, we turned and passed out into the cold and piercing wind at the public well, with a unanimous decision to worship on the lawn in case we could do no better.

We had not stood around the well any longer than it took to get cold before Mr. Farm Kilgore, the sheriff at that time, came by and spoke to us. Mr. Kilgore was a neighbor to Brother Nichols, and was known to be a kind-hearted man. Brother Nichols made known to him our sad plight, and asked permission to worship that afternoon in the court house, with a promise that if he would give us permission just this one time, we would seek other quarters by the next weekend. The sheriff broke all precedent and granted us permission to use the small court room that afternoon. The Bible study being over, brother Nichols preached a most touching sermon about the trials and persecutions of the apostles and early Christians, and assured us that things would work out in our favor. The sheriff and another prominent citizen came in and heard the sermon that afternoon. At the close of the service the announcement was made that we would meet the next Lord's day at the public well, and if any place could be obtained we would go there from that point to the place of meeting. But after we were dismissed the Sheriff came around and gave brother Nichols permission to continue to use the small court room as long as he so desired.

At the court house our little band grew much more rapidly; and soon we had from fifty to seventy five persons meeting with us, many of them being outsiders. We advertised our work as best we could, and other members of the church were added to our number.

In April, 1925, brother G.A. Dunn, Jr. who as a prominent younger preacher, came and preached for us in a meeting. Some few were baptized, and some other members were added to our number. In October of the same year, Brother Dunn returned to preach in another meeting at the court house, during which a few others were baptized, and some placed membership with us who had moved into town.

At this time we began to look around for a lot upon which to later build a meeting house. We called Brother John T. Lewis of Birmingham to come and advise us just as to what lot would be most desirable. Upon his recommendation, we bought the lot on which this building stands, and agreed to pay \$1352.25 for it, \$500 cash, and the balance in twelve months. In the meantime, brother Nichols had moved from Cordova to Millport, Alabama. The church at Shiloh Park, Tennessee, furnished us a tent, and in August we had brother N.B. Hardeman, President of Freed-Hardeman College, with us in a meeting. The tent was pitched just across from the Collins Hotel. About 22 were baptized in this meeting, and we were being strengthened all the time.

Feeling the need of someone to work with us as part time preacher, we consulted brother Hardeman about the matter, and he recommended brother L. R. Wilson, whom we engaged; and he moved here and began work with us the first Sunday in January, 1927. The churches at Parrish and

Oakman very generously agreed to pay two-thirds of brother Wilson's salary and let him live with us and preach half-time here. For this we owe them a debt of gratitude.

Our number grew steadily and in August after brother Wilson began to labor with us, we broke the ground and started this building. Two months later brother N.B. Hardeman preached what might be called the dedication sermon. However, we had met for worship in the basement before this. The first service in the building was on the first Sunday in October, 1927.

When the building was completed, we had raised and spent about \$2500.00 and still owed about ten thousand dollars. We obtained a loan of eight thousand dollars, giving a mortgage on the property, and almost all of our male members signed the mortgage, thus personally obligating themselves for the debt. But we still lacked two thousand dollars of having enough to pay off our contractor for the building. This amount was borrowed from banks and individuals, upon our personal security. We obligated ourselves to pay a little above \$90.00 per month on the mortgage, and also to pay interest and a part of the principle of the other two thousand dollars every three months. For about two years we met our obligations promptly in meeting payments on the eight thousand dollar mortgage, and paid interest and a part of the principal on the other debts. We kept all of our creditors satisfied.

About this time came the world wide depression, and we could not meet all of our obligations. We paid all we could, and our creditors were of understanding hearts, and very kind and lenient in dealing with us.

Brother Wilson left us in June 1929. We used brother John McCleskey, who was then a young preacher. For a time, brother A. M. Plylar, and other young preachers also lent assistance by preaching for us when possible. Brother W. A. Black labored with us half time part of the year 1932.

Then in January, 1933 brother Gus Nichols moved here from Millport, and began laboring half time with us, and preached at Cordova, and Carbon Hill the rest of the time. The depression was then at its worst, and everything looked gloomy ahead. Brother Nichols went to work to train leadership, hold missions meetings, and preach in weak places. All were taught and encouraged to give and work and pray to pay off our indebtedness regardless of the sacrifices to be made. We were cheerful and hopeful, but with nearly all our members out of employment, and starvation and suffering all around us, we could do little more than hope and pray for better days.

After two or three years of part-time work with us, brother Nichols began full-time work with us for one hundred dollars per month. We increased

Continued On Page 4

A Brief History Of The Fifth Avenue Church Of Christ

Continued From Page 3

his support as we could, but still he has made a financial sacrifice to stay with the work.

In addition to the ten thousand dollars we owed when the building was completed, we have paid out in fifteen years thousands of dollars in interest. However, a few years ago brother L. C. Garrison paid off the old mortgage, and let us make him a new one, which he carried until paid, without charging the church any interest. This amount was little less than three thousand dollars.

We have not confined all of our efforts to paying this debt. We have, through our preacher, held many mission meetings all over this section of the country. We have been able to start five other congregations, and now have brethren going out to weak places each Lord's day to help where leadership is lacking. We built seats, bought a tent and public address system, which is paying great dividends in starting the work in mission points. We also have bought and paid for the nice lot joining our property on the north. Our building has been kept up, and improvements have been made all along.

Our teaching program has kept brother Nichols very busy. He has taught and trained local leadership. From his weekly training class there have been dozens of younger preachers who have

either started preaching, or have made first-rate gospel preachers. Some of our own members have developed into gospel preachers. Other members have gone elsewhere to become splendid leaders in some mission effort. We have not worshipped our meeting house, but have tried to use it as a means through which to work.

More than thirty of our faithful members are in the service of their country, and are scattered in several nations. Some of them are now in far-flung battle fields. Most of them have made sacrifices before going away that we might carry on. They cannot join us this afternoon in this special service. But let us remember them, and not forget that they helped to make it possible for us to burn our mortgage at this hour.

Our debts are paid! We are free from the bondage of debt! But let us thank God for bringing us to this hour. Had it not been for his goodness, and for the means he gave us, we would have failed and gone down in disgrace as a church. We could not see our way in the beginning, but were compelled to walk by faith every step of the way, or not go at all. We have reached this hour because we have pulled together and labored in unity and peace. God will not forget our sacrifices and patience. We have, however, done no more than what was our

duty to do. Maybe we have fallen far short of what we could have done.

While we have paid our indebtedness as far as money obligations are concerned, we are indebted to many. We owe a debt of gratitude to so many people that we could not begin to mention them. Instead of being out of debt, like Paul we are debtors to all men. We are just now ready to begin our greatest work. We owe the pure gospel to all in our reach who have it not. We can now begin to have more fellowship with those in need of material aid in our midst. Instead of slackening in our efforts, I think I know this congregation is determined to keep going forward.

Just as the destiny of the congregation has been in our hands in the past, so will its future depend upon us. It cannot now rest on its past achievements. A program which called for hard work has made us what we are, and without ambition and a goal toward which to work we shall in the future find ourselves back at the foot of the hill where we once started. Such are some of the facts in our history, and thank you for your attention.

To The Members Of The Church Of Christ Of Jasper, Alabama

October 22, 1937

Fourteen years ago this October, the church of Christ in Jasper began meeting in what was then known as the Odd Fellow Hall, in the Phillips & Stanley Building. Since then not a Lord's Day has passed without the regular worship being carried on. Many of us will never forget the embarrassment and hardships endured until 1927, at which time we moved into our present meeting house. Through the cooperation, advices and suggestions of our ministers, deacons, teachers, business and professional men and the individual efforts of every member, we have grown from about a dozen members to more than 250 and have a congregation today that we are justly proud of.

The last day of September brought to a close one of the most successful years of the church's history, not only in membership and spiritual growth, but in a financial way as well. We trust the Lord is as well pleased with your individual efforts during the last year as your Elders are with the progress of the church as a whole.

At the beginning of last year we called a business meeting of the church and outlined our budget for the entire year. This included all the necessary expenses such as: preacher's salary, payments on church indebtedness, revival meeting, coal, lights,

water, janitor and various miscellaneous expenses. We found the budget to be \$2172.24 for the twelve months period. At the end of this time we had met all obligations and it was not necessary to make a public or private appeal for funds. Our budget for this year is approximately \$200.00 more than for last year due to giving Bro. Nichols twelve months support instead of ten.

One of the church's greatest assets is that we are at peace among ourselves. May God forbid division coming among us. Our minister's faith in God, reverence for His word and love for the church is an asset few of us can thoroughly appreciate.

One of the church's greatest assets is that we are at peace among ourselves. May God forbid division coming among us. Our minister's faith in

God, reverence for His word and love for the church is an asset few of us can thoroughly appreciate. Let us continue our loyalty to him by giving him our presence and cooperation, and purposing to make a special contribution each Sunday for his support. Our minister's salary constitutes about fifty percent of the total expense of the church, therefore we have prepared special envelopes to be used for this purpose assuring each individual that his contribution is used as he wishes.

Your continued cooperation for the upbuilding of the cause of Christ in our city is earnestly solicited.

Yours in His love,
Avery Fike,
C. M. Karrh, ELDERS

HEMOCOMING
Sixth Avenue Church Of Christ
Sunday, November 4, 1990
Guest Speaker: Glenn Poseu



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

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ak forth the
—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 26

OCTOBER 12, 1990

NUMBER 40

What Lies Ahead?



R. W. Gray

Doubtless apprehensive about the ominous clouds of war gathering on the horizon, the puppet King, Zedekiah, of Judah, consulted in secret with Jeremiah, inquiring, "Is there any word from the Lord?" (Jeremiah 37:17). There was word from the Lord, and the prognosis spelled doom and captivity for the king and his kingdom.

With the sons and daughters of a number of nations sweltering in the sand and heat of an Arabian desert, poised and ready to sacrifice themselves, if need so require, to the god of war, we, like Zedekiah, desire to see into the future. With world tensions mounting, with national debts soaring, with recession's threat at the door, and with mad men ruling in high places, we are made to become apprehensive about events that lie ahead.

With world tensions mounting, with national debts soaring, with recession's threat at the door, and with mad men ruling in high places, we are made to become apprehensive about events that lie ahead.

No gazing at the stars or a crystal ball is permissible or reliable. No would-be psychic holds the key. From such sources God's people are forbidden to seek information (Deuteronomy 18:10-11; Galatians 5:20).

Economic forecasters have their opinions, and

they are quite vocal in expressing their view of the future. Scientists assures us we've seen nothing yet in the field of medicine, communication, travel, and conveniences. Science holds the key, so they believe, to a prosperous future. Politicians promise a bright tomorrow if we vote for their party and candidate. The military establishment of our nation forecasts our superiority over would be enemies so long as congress appropriates the funds and manpower they request. Many voices speak, but who are we to believe?

In the long list of prognosticators we would not forget the religionists. As with every world crisis, and particularly a crisis involving Middle East nations, TV and radio evangelists, joined by a loud chorus of "me too" Protestant pulpits, tell us that these events herald the soon coming of Christ, and that his utopian Kingdom set up in old Palestine will bring us the wonderful world of tomorrow.

Religious forecasters who seemingly see prophetic significance at every turn in a fast changing world overlook a number of salient facts: (1) Their prognosis of the meaning of the last rattling of sabres and/or wars and rumors of wars went awry. And just a little investigation would reveal that this kind of misuse of scripture has embarrassed hundreds who have gone before. (2) Those who forecast future events that do not come to pass are exposed by Jehovah as false prophets. "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken . . ." (Deuteronomy 18:22). (3) The Bible verses upon which they base so many of their forecasts of the Lord's soon coming, refer to the coming of Christ in judgment upon Jerusalem and the Jews, and not to the second advent of Christ.

(4) No one of the seed of Coniah would be permitted to sit on David's throne in Jerusalem (Jeremiah 22:28, 30). Jesus was of his seed, and therefore, will not prosper on David's throne in Judah (Matthew 1:11-12). The Christ was to be, and is, a priest upon his royal throne (Zechariah


6:12, 13; Hebrews 7:1, 2). On earth, Christ could not serve as priest (Hebrews 8:4). Thus he would not sit upon his royal throne. Peter affirmed at Pentecost that God had raised Christ from the dead to "sit on David's throne" (Acts 2:25-36). Jesus is now sitting with his father on his throne (Revelation 3:21). All power has been given, not is to be given, to Christ (Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 1:19-23; I Corinthians 15:25-27). (5) Christ is not coming to establish a kingdom but to deliver his established kingdom to the Father (I Corinthians 15:24). This is the kingdom, or church, set up in the days of the Roman kings as foretold by Daniel (Daniel 2:44). This is the kingdom received by the Christ when he came on the cloud of heaven to the Ancient of Days, (Daniel 7:13, 14). (6) The coming of the Lord will be as a thief in the night (II Peter 3:10; I Thessalonians 5:1, 2).

Inasmuch then as we must be reluctant to hear zealous religionists whose words have fallen to the ground again and again, do we have a source from which we may draw valid conclusions regarding what lies ahead in our nation and world? It is the case, of course, that we have no information revealed since the close of that First Century era when God completed his revelation to man (II Timothy 3:14-17). There are principles, however, set out in the Bible from which we may ascertain certain facts regarding the future of both individuals and nations.

Three facts combine to give us insight into our nation's future: (1) The spiritual, moral, and religious climate of our age. (2) God's unchanging nature. (3) God's dealings with men and nations in the past.

We are reminded daily of the moral, religious, and spiritual decline of our great nation. The Bible is viewed by many in America as a book of myths. The preacher is depicted as an immoral fool. Sin, immorality, destruction of the home, crime increasing and going unpunished is placed before

Continued On Page 3



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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-Acts 26:25


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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Prayer Posture



David Wade

There are those who seem somewhat inclined to require of the men that they pray only on bowed knees. Certainly, scripture uses the expression, "I bow my knees unto the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 3:14). "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given

him a name which is above every name! That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (Philippians 2:9-10). Most likely, Jesus was on his knees in Gethsemane when he "fell on his face, and prayed" (Matthew 26:39).

While bowing the literal knee is an appropriate prayer posture, it is not the only posture recognized in scripture. Both the Pharisee and publican stood in prayer (Luke 18:10-14). The Pharisee's prayer was not rejected because he stood and prayed, but rather because he exalted himself before God. The publican, "standing afar off" was "justified" because he humbled himself before God. Obviously, the expression "bow the knee" is not intended as a decree on posture, but denotes humility of heart and submission to God.

Interestingly, those who would enforce one being on his knees in prayer, do not usually demand one lift up his hands in prayer. "I will therefore that

men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (I Timothy 2:8). This passage has reference to holy living, rather than one literally holding his hands in the air during prayer. The one who demands the former is obligated to also obey the latter.

What is the correct posture in prayer? Here is a little poem I ran across that deals with the matter.

"The prayer way . . ."

"The proper way for a man to pray," said deacon Lemuel Key,

"And the only proper attitude is down upon his knee."

"No, I should say the way to pray," said preacher Derek Wise,

"Is standing straight with outstretched arms and wrapt and upturned eyes."

"Oh, no, no, no!" said elder Snow. "Such position is too proud."

"A man should pray with eyes fast closed, and head contritely bowed."

"Well, it seems to me his hands should be austere clapped in front with both thumbs pointing to the ground," said evangelist Donald Blunt.

"Last year I fell in Whitscomb's well head first," said Cyrus Brown,

"With both my heels a stickin' up, and my head a pointin' down.

And I made a prayer right then and there;

The plainest prayer I ever said, a standin' on my head."

Hypocrites



Bobby Key

The world has begun to associate Christianity with hypocrisy. In fact the two words are synonymous as far as many are concerned. Numerous people throughout the country refuse to have anything to do with organized religion because of their perception that all churches are filled

with hypocrites.

The church is composed of imperfect human beings, saved by the grace of God. When one obeys the gospel of Christ, he is added to the church of Christ (Acts 2:37-47). The church has a perfect head, Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22, 23). The church is governed by a perfect law, which is the New Testament (James 1:25). However, the church is composed of imperfect human beings, like you and me.

An unhappy brother came by my office several years ago, and declared that he and his family were planning to withdraw their membership and find another congregation. He said they would be able to find a perfect church with no hypocrites, and become members of it. My response to this disgruntled brother was, "What! And ruin a perfect congregation!" After mulling this over for a few days, he decided to stay where he was.

Surely people who refuse to attend worship because of hypocrites would not refuse to go to a

Continued On Page 3

Make It Plain!



Johnny Ramsey

One of the truly supreme chapters of the Bible is the second stanza of Habakkuk. The background to this unknown part of the prophets can be found in Jeremiah 25:9 where the ruler of Babylon is called the servant of God! Yes, Jehovah used an evil nation and a ruthless leader to subdue Judah for her sin of rebellion. Truly, as Daniel 4:25 affirms so the inhabitants of Jerusalem learned: "God rules in the kingdom of men."

Instead of arguing and complaining Judah was told to hush and let God do the talking (Habakkuk 2:20)! The message of Jehovah's sovereign power

was to be made so plain that those who ran could read it (Habakkuk 2:2). That is always the kind of preaching the world and the church needs. Nebulous, halting, compromising pronouncements never saved or strengthened anyone. Such wishy-washy proclamation weakens folk who need to be challenged by the clarion call of gospel truth. Woe to the preacher who heralds a message of cheap grace and false hope when his audience is dying in ignorance and shame.

Woe to the preacher who heralds a message of cheap grace and false hope when his audience is dying in ignorance and shame.

Continued On Page 3

Many People Are Looking Your Way!



Edsel Burleson

Influence is defined as "power of persons or things to act on others." Luther E. Bradfield once wrote: "The power of influence is tremendous. Influence is thought of as the act or power of producing an effect upon others. This could be a guided or misguided influence. Whether intentional or unintentional, our influence

upon others is something that should not be overlooked. Many techniques are used to win and influence people in a positive way. Our words and actions are powerful forces of influence. Children feel that whatever parents and teachers say and do

are exactly right and look to them as models of behavior."

The power of leading others by our influence is inevitable, and by so doing we will determine by our example the life of someone else. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said to his disciples, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). Disciples are to live to be as a radiant light sending forth its beams in all directions.

Dennis Stackhouse once wrote: "The National Science Foundation financed a study a few years ago to try to find out what determines whether or not people will help one another. A series of experiments were conducted in which wallets containing money and identification were deliberately lost. In some cases, the newly found wallets were sent intact to the 'owner,' which was in reality a fictitious name with the address of the experimental headquarters. Some finders kept the

money and returned the wallet. Others took the money out and dropped the wallet into a trash can where it was later recovered. But when an added refinement was made to the experiment an interesting pattern developed. A letter was enclosed in the wallet, supposedly from a person who had found it and was going to return it, but who in turn had lost it. In this letter the first finder wrote that he was returning the wallet just as he had found it and expressed his sympathy for the predicament the loss of the wallet had been for its owner.

"An outstanding high percentage of these finders who picked up the wallet with the note enclosed followed the intention of the letter and proceeded to return the wallet to the original owner. The study concluded that people are very definitely influenced by models in their behavior. The honest first finder letter was the model of behavior for the second finder."

Good habits in words and deeds reflect a positive influence on others. People do things because

Continued On Page 4

Hypocrites

Continued From Page 2

hospital because some of the patients were not responding to treatment!

Surely people who refuse to attend worship because of hypocrites would not refuse to go to a hospital because some of the patients were not responding to treatment!

The Bible condemns hypocrisy in no uncertain terms, but it does teach that there will be tares among the wheat. A Christian may stumble, through weakness, and do wrong, but that does not mean that he is a hypocrite. A hypocrite is a person who claims to be something that he is not. He has two faces under one hat.

Jesus said, "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias 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" (Matthew 15:7, 8). "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward" (Matthew 6:5). "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shall thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matthew 7:5). "But woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer them that are entering to go in" (Matthew 23:13).

Hypocrites "profess that they know God, but by their works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:16). The hypocrite will not escape the judgment of God. Don't you be one. Don't let a few hypocrites keep you out of the kingdom.

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

What Lies Ahead?

Continued From Page 1

us via the media and other sources to such a degree righteous souls are vexed.

Through his prophet Jehovah has said, "I am the Lord, I change not . . ." (Malachi 3:6). "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

"The wicked shall be turned into hell (sheol), and all the nations that forget God" (Psalm 9:17). In his rule over kingdoms of the earth the Most High God uses events and circumstances to punish those men and nations who forsake his law (Daniel 4:17; Isaiah 1:18-20; Jeremiah 6:16-19). He is ever ready to hear from heaven, to forgive sin, and to

heal the nation that turns to him again (II Chronicles 7:14).

In a real sense, we determine the future of our nation. Ten righteous souls in Sodom would have been sufficient to save it (Genesis 18:32). With Jeremiah we must cry, "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16). In Jeremiah's day they refused to walk in the old paths and God's wrath consumed them. What we do with his word determines our future (Hebrews 4:9). -- 563, McGukin Rd., Brennen, GA 30110.

Make It Plain!

Continued From Page 2

The Creator has a proper claim upon all mankind and we dare not forget the demands of His revelation to the lost and dying world! The most cowardly man on earth is the one who holds salvation's requirements from those perishing in sin. There is no honesty or safety in by-passing the commandments of Christianity when the souls of men cry out for deliverance. Make it plain or their blood will God require at our hands, was the sterling message of Ezekiel 3:17-19.

A lack of distinctive preaching today is one of the leading contributions to an aura of apostasy one can detect in our midst. Swelling numerically is not necessarily the sign of spiritual growth -- just ask Gideon (Judges 7:2). Such "growth" (?) might even be a contradiction of Christ's parable of the mustard seed (Matthew 13). It could be the result of calculated scheming in view of the psychological weaknesses of humanity instead of deep respect for the plan of the Lord.

In God's plan, men must "obey from the heart that form of teaching" the Savior demands instead of being coerced and bamboozled by slick techniques of personal work experts (Romans 6:17). There is a difference in fakery and genuine! Success in the kingdom of Christ does not come by aping sectarian folk with gaudy programs and trappings. It comes only by being faithful (Revelation 2:10) to the ONE who alone does the adding anyway (Acts 2:47; I Corinthians 3:7). It is our task to make the message clear and plain -- in word and deed (James 1:22). God takes care of the numbers and no human gauge can measure that. Only heaven knows so there are no human experts

...

--Via The Pillar, P.O. Box 75, Cave City, Arkansas 72521.

Many People Are Looking Your Way!

Continued From Page 3

others do, more than for any other reason. A little of this pulling power rests in every one of us. Someone is being led by each of us. We should keep before us the fact that we cannot lead others where we do not go ourselves.

There is not a person in the world that does not possess influence. The real question in regards to

There is not a person in the world that does not possess influence. The real question in regards to influence is whether it will be for good or for bad.

influence is whether it will be for good or for bad. After Lazarus had the wonderful experience of being raised from the dead, it is said that, "Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus" (John 12:11).

May we be constantly aware that we possess a powerful influence, and may we continually determine that our influence will be the best possible.

An unknown author said it this way:

When I am tempted I dare not stray
For many people look my way.
Loved ones to sicken and disgust
If I betray my sacred trust.
Weak ones to stumble and to fall
If I should heed temptations call.

Young ones to follow in my wrong
If my heart is not pure and strong.
Older ones to mourn and to grieve
If I the way of truth should leave.
The Holy church to suffer too
If my soul is not right and true,
My charge is plain, my duty clear
My soul to keep, my Lord to fear.
My light to shine, my Savior keep
Truth to teach, souls to reap.
A hope to gain, a crown to wear
A race to run, heaven to share.
When I am tempted I are not stray
Too many people look my way.

--420 Seventh Street S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

Behavior Toward "One Another"



Joe T. Splvy, Sr.

"A Christian is God's gentleman." "A Christian is the highest style of man." "A Christian is one who rejoices in the superiority of a rival." "A Christian is the keyhole through which other folk see God." These are just a few comments which men have made when faced with the task of

identifying a Christian and his lifestyle.

Paul, the great apostle, by inspiration gave us these words, "Be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others" (Philippians 2:2-4).

In setting forth the behavior which is characteristic of a Christian Paul presents three requirements as to how Christians should act toward one another. Those three requirements are (1) harmony of feeling toward one another, (2) humility of conduct toward one another, (3) generosity toward one another. Let's look at these in order as given.

1. Harmony of feeling toward one another! Paul used such terms as "same mind," "same love," and "one accord." These terms point to harmony among brethren. They leave no room for one to bicker and wrangle over our opinions or backbite one another do they? There is only one way that this harmony can really exist as Paul desired for the Philippians, and that is by everyone allowing love to reign supremely in their hearts.

Recognizing that the members of an average congregation have different talents and vastly different social and educational backgrounds, we realize that they can still be united in feeling and in

mind if their love centers in the same object -- the beloved son of God. All differences will become so insignificant when we look in the same direction because in so doing we are looking away from self. Selfishness is a combatant with the "one another" feeling that the child of God needs, and we will discard that when we begin to look to Christ and God. The design of the gospel has always been to cause man to center is love on Christ, "looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2).

2. Humility of conduct toward one another! J. B. Phillips' Letters to the Young Churches says, "Never act from motives of rivalry or personal vanity, but in humility think more of one another than you do of yourselves" (Philippians 2:3). A Christian should do nothing thinking only of his personal influence or personal glory. Christians are "one another" people. Christians count others worthy of higher consideration in matters of honor than self. Paul told the Galatian Christians "Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another" (Galatians 5:26).

A Christian should do nothing thinking only of his personal influence or personal glory. Christians are "one another" people.

Preachers, elders, deacons, Bible class teachers, song leaders, and every member of the body of Christ need to remember the "one another" principle and seek to promote harmony and unity. All too often we find that self-assertion, quick temperedness, rashness in decision making, mule-headedness and haughtiness only serve to disrupt the peace and harmony of congregations and destroys the picture of fellowship which Paul painted to the Philippians.

3. Generosity toward one another! Brother Hugo McCord renders Philippians 2:4 thusly, "Have

regard, each of you, not for your own things, but each one for the things of others." The New Testament In the Language of the People, by Charles B. Williams says here, "Stop looking after your own interest only but practice looking out for the interest of others too."

Paul would not have us neglect our own thing, our own feelings, but would have us deeply concerned about one another. Certainly there are things that everyone must be concerned about with reverence to self -- health, livelihood, etc. Yet in the pursuit of those items which are necessary for self, we must not, we can not neglect the concerns and needs of others and still be Christians. One strange derivivity of being generous toward one another is that it always brings happiness to the generous heart. Remember the words of Paul to the church at Corinth, "Love . . . seeketh not her own" (I Corinthians 13:5).

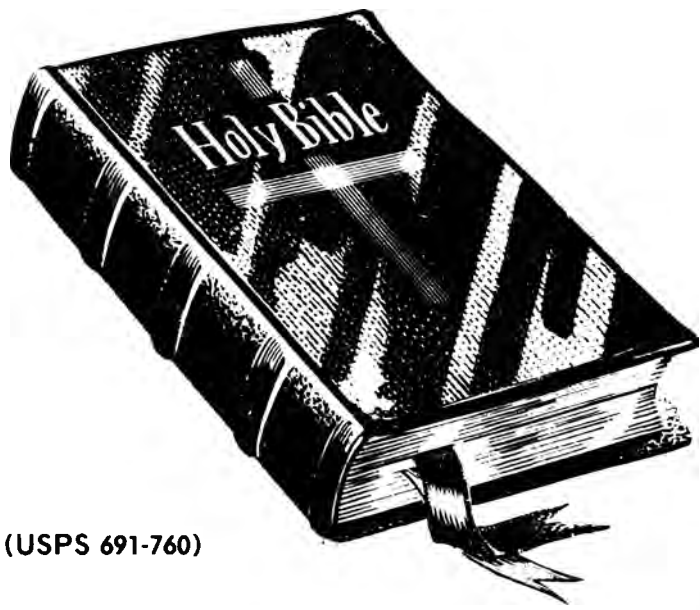
Do we as God's people meet the three requirements which Paul sets forth? If not, are we striving to reach that higher plateau? With reference to "one another," do we have (1) harmony of feeling toward one another, (2) humility of conduct toward one another, and(3) a generous concern for one another? We must!

--1400 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501.

HOME COMING

**Sixth Avenue
Church Of Christ
Sunday, November 4, 1990**

**Guest Speaker:
Glenn Posey**



(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 26

OCTOBER 19, 1990

NUMBER 41

People Who Know God



Winfred Clark

Israelite would face. It would be Daniel who would say, "And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries; but the people that know their God shall be strong, and do exploits" (Daniel 11:32). Daniel had been through the fires of pain and persecution and he would know what the knowledge of God could cause a man to do. All you have to do is retrace the first nine chapters of this book and the evidence will be seen.

There are numerous times when one can see how the knowledge of God would give support to his life. We would do well to notice some of these places. We can see God in various situations and circumstances of life.

I. THE GOD OF THE SECOND CHANCE

The prophet Jeremiah was told to go down to the potter's house. This he did and saw a vessel that was being made that was marred in the hands of the potter. As he beheld another vessel was made, as seemed good to the potter (Jeremiah 18:1-5). This was to be a picture of what God could do with Israel in spite of their failures. Though the clay is marred it is not discarded. It is not thrown away as worthless. It is given a second chance.

How many of us can identify with that thought. How many of us can see how far short we have fallen from the divine expectation. How many times have we seen people disappointed in us, but

we were more disappointed in ourselves. How many marriages have shown so much promise, only to find that they were headed for failure. Aren't you glad that he is the "God of the Second Chance"?

Just think of Jonah. He failed the Lord and himself when he turned from doing what the Lord told him to do. Yes, he would have to pay the price but aren't you glad there was "the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time"(Jonah 3:1)? He received the second opportunity.

The same could be said of Abraham and the prodigal. Both of these found themselves in situations of their own making that was against that which was right. But we can be so thankful that they were under a "God of the second chance." We can be so thankful for his patience and loving kindness.

II. THE GOD OF THE FOURTH GENERATION

There was a time in the life of Abraham where he needed support and reassurance. It is at that point that God stepped in to reassure him that his promises would be fulfilled. Listen as God talks to him, "And thou shalt go to they fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again;" (Genesis 15:15-16). What does all of that mean? Well for one thing, it means God has given his word. Now can it be trusted? Can one depend on what he has to say? All you need to do is move to the book of Exodus. Read the sixth chapter and there you will see Moses in that generation. Move on of Exodus 12:41 and you will find these words, "and it came to pass at the end of four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the host of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." Now does that surprise you? Are you amazed by this? Do you think this is only a matter of coincidence? This is not the case for those who know the Lord. They know something of the God of the "fourth generation." They know that when God speaks that is the way it will be.

How will such translate into our daily lives? The same God that gave this promise is still the one

who has given promises for us today. When he says a thing shall be, then it shall be. The passing of time will not erase or wash away that promise. It is backed by the integrity of the "God of the fourth generation." We do not have to wonder whether his word will stand whether it be by promise or by warning. It shall surely come to pass.

III. THE GOD OF THE FIFTH SPARROW

Jesus wanted his disciples to know that God cared and was concerned about their welfare. he would use various object lessons to try and impress this upon the minds of the people. One of those involved the matter of sparrows. He said, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?" (Matthew 10:29). Yet, he would say, "and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father." That tells you God sees and that God cares. That says God is concerned. But what about that fifth sparrow? Move over to the book of Luke and there you will find the record where Jesus says, "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?" (Luke 12:6). Now remember that in Matthew's record that he says two sparrows are sold for a farthing. Now we learn that five are sold for two farthings. That means the fifth one is just cast in extra. But even that one does not escape the eye of the Lord. He cares and is concerned about even that which men do not place that much value upon.

Now what is all of this saying to me? If I am to know God as if should then surely, I must be aware that if he will care for that which is considered worthless he will surely care for man who is of great value. He will care when men do not. He will care when men do not know.

IV. THE GOD OF A THOUSAND HILLS

Sometimes man will have some difficulty knowing what his relationship should be to the things that are around him. Sometimes he can find himself wrapped up with materialism. When this

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Do You Know The Answer To This Puzzle?



David Wade

This puzzle was written by a lady in California in response to an offer from a gentlemen in Philadelphia that he would pay anyone \$1,000 who could write a puzzle he could not solve. He failed to do so and paid the \$1,000. The answer is one word and appears only four times in the Bible.

Adam, God made out of

A soul from me God did claim

And took from me the soul again.

So when from me the soul has fled

I was the same as when first made

And without hands, or feet, or soul

I travel on from pole to pole.

I labor hard by day, by night

To fallen man I give great light.

Thousands of people, young and old

Will by my death great light behold.

No right or wrong can I conceive

The scripture I cannot believe.

Although my name therein is found

They are to me an empty sound.

No feat or death doth trouble me,

Real happiness I'll never see.

To heaven I shall never go

Or to hell below.

Now when these lines you slowly read,

Go search your Bible with all speed

For that my name is written there

I do honestly to you declare.

(Editor's note: Spend some time and thought on the answer. If you are completely stumped, then check the following four references: Genesis 1:21; Job 7:12; Ezekiel 32:2; Matthew 12:40)."

Mark Them!



Cecil May, Jr.

Have you ever been marked? Have you ever marked anyone?

We are to mark those who follow a proper example of godliness. "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example (Philippians 3:17).

The apostle is not here suggesting that he

is the standard by which proper conduct should be measured. He has already referred to the "rule" or "canon" by which we are to walk (verse 16). But in contrast to some who are "enemies of the cross" and "whose god is their belly," Paul has his mind on Christ, his will tuned to obedience to God and his heart set on heaven. He urges us to walk in the same way and to mark those who live and work as he does, in accordance with the will of God.

We are to mark those who cause divisions and offenses. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them" (Romans 16:17).

There are those today, as there were then, who teach things contrary to the gospel, and by their teaching cause division. We are to mark them. There are also those who cause division, not over doctrine but over personality, out of a desire to rule or to continue to receive a salary, or out of envy and factionalism. To cause such division is "contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned," for that doctrine has taught us to be one (Ephesians 4:1-4), to subjugate our own interests for the good of the body (Philippians 2:3-4), and to settle

Continued On Page 3

dust
But thought it best to make me first,
So I was made before man
To answer God's most holy plan.
A living thing I became
And Adam gave to me my name.
I from his presence then withdrew
And more of Adam never knew.
I did my maker's law obey
Nor ever went from it astray.
Thousands of miles I go in fear
But seldom on earth appear.
For purpose wise which God did see,
He put a living soul in me.

Oneness Of God's Plan



Bobby Key

"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). These verses reveal the oneness of God's plan.

There is one God. "I am the Lord thy God . . . thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:2, 3). We are taught to love God with all the heart, with all the soul, and with all the mind (Matthew 22:37). "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments" (I John 5:3).

There is one Lord. "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). "Lord" means ruler or master. Christ has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). God "hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all

things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22, 23). The church of Christ has one head -- Jesus Christ, our Lord -- and He resides in heaven.

There is one Spirit. Jesus promised the apostles. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). The Holy Spirit guided the apostles and prophets in setting forth the word of Truth. Paul claimed that the words he spake were taught him by the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 2:13).

There is one body. "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 there are many members, yet but one body" (I Corinthians 12:20). Since His Body is the church, "For his body's sake, which is the church" (Colossians 1:24), we must conclude that only one church exists with God's approval.

There is one faith. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Faith is used to describe that body of truth known as the gospel. We are to believe the same

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Don't Just Lecture Lead!



Dalton Key

The most effective leadership is always firmly rooted in example, example and more example. To encourage others to do what we are enthusiastically doing is not all that difficult, but getting them to do what we are unwilling to do -- this is next to impossible.

Or to put it another way, leadership is action, not position.

Joan of Ark was once asked the secret of her successful command. She explained, "I go into battle, and my troops follow." She didn't drive the troops into battle -- she led them.

The important principle of example -- based leadership is especially needed in the home. Children follow what they see more often than they comply with what they are verbally taught. The great thinker, Albert Einstein, was asked his opinion as to the most important considerations in rearing children. He said, "There are three principles: example, example and example."

Parents, what kind of example are we setting for our children? Do our children see kindness in us? Do they see honesty in our dealings with others? Do they see sincere conviction in our Christianity? Do they see moral purity in our lives? Do they see Christ living in our lives?

Bringing our children up "in the nurture and

admonition of the Lord" requires, above all else, a Christ-like example reflected by us as parents. Parents, let's not just tell -- let's teach; let's not just lecture -- let's lead.

Marriages are crumbling, divorce is rampant. Many are pointing to a happy home as a relic from the dark ages. Is there no hope for the home? Is a happy home merely a thing of the past? No, we believe there is hope. But the future of our families depends on us. To assure ourselves of a happy home, we must build upon the C's.

A HAPPY HOME IS BUILT UPON CHRIST. Our Lord is the ultimate and final foundation for all things good and proper. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 3:11). Christ is always a partner in every happy, heaven blessed home.

A HAPPY HOME IS BUILT UPON CONSIDERATION. Selfishness destroys relationships; selfless love builds them up. The Christ-filled husband loves his wife as Christ loves the church (Ephesians 5:25-33). The Christian wife has learned to love her husband (Titus 2:4). This love is more than mere emotional infatuation; rather, it is the will which freely gives itself up in service to the one loved.

A HAPPY HOME IS BUILT UPON COMMITMENT. "As long as we both shall live" has been replaced with "as long as we both shall love," and

the word love is used as nothing more than a weak substitute for "turn each other on." God still hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). He that made them at the beginning, who made them male and female, still joins husband and wife together in marriage today. "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6). Those contemplating marriage had best be mature enough to understand the nature of lifetime commitment. Marriage is not a suit of clothes, but rather a second skin.

Yes, a happy home is possible, but not without effort -- not without your help. As someone has said, "Marriages aren't made in heaven; they come in kits and have to be put together."

--Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.

HOME COMING

**Sixth Avenue
Church Of Christ**

Sunday, November 4, 1990
Guest Speaker: Glenn Poseu

Bible Study: 9:30 a.m.

Morning Worship: 10:25 a.m.

Evening Worship: 6:00 p.m.

Fellowship Meal

After Morning Worship

People Who Know God

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occurs he needs to come to know God better. Remember what David said, "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills" (Psalm 50:10). This is in complete harmony with another statement by David when he said, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; and the world, and they that dwell therein," (Psalm 24:1). That ought to settle for all of us the matter of ownership. It all belongs to God. He owns the hills and all that the hills produce.

When we give into his service he is the one who supplies that which we give. He is the one that ministers seed to the sower. This enables the sower not only to eat but also to have that with which to sow. So we can see ourselves under the "God of a thousand hills" as stewards of that which he has placed in our hands.

Yes, people who know their God are the strong ones. They are the ones that make the differences that really matter.

--Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

personal disputes without causing disturbance in the Church (Philippians 4:2). Those who cause such offenses and strife practice deceit and "serve not the Lord Jesus Christ but their own belly" (Romans 16:18). We are to mark and avoid them.

In other New Testament passages the word translated "mark" is rendered "look," "take heed" and "consider" (Luke 11:35; II Corinthians 4:18; Galatians 6:1; Philippians 2:4). Usually the context suggests taking note of a difference, discriminating between opposites.

Some preachers make a fetish out of claiming to be sound, but strife, personal bitterness and

Mark Them!

Continued From Page 2

division spring up wherever they go. Some make a show of seeking unity by being broad-minded, but create division by leading weak members away from the truth. These passages urge us to note, not so much what such men say, as what they do. Are they walking in unity, in service, in truth? Are they walking after the Spirit? Mark them! Are they creating strife, encouraging disobedience, seeking their own gain? Are they walking after the flesh? Mark them! "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). You can tell the difference by their life and by their work. Mark that!

--Magnolia Bible College, P.O. Box 1101, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

Oneness Of God's Plan

Continued From Page 2

thing, and obey the same faith. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Corinthians 1:10). We are to have no book but the Bible, and no creed but Christ.

There is one baptism. This baptism requires water, going down into the water, and coming up out of the water (Acts 8:36-39). Baptism is a burial in water (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12). This

baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16), and it will cause you to be added to the church (Acts 2:41-47). It puts you into Christ (Galatians 3:27).

There is one hope. "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Christ is our hope (I Timothy 1:1).

This is God's perfect plan for unity and eternal life. It is simple, yet profound. There is no way we can improve God's plan.

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

The Lord's Church Is A Sleeping Giant!



Edsel Burleson

Many professed Christians seem not to understand the seriousness of dedicated service to the Master. The church is truly a "sleeping giant." We have the talent, the money, the time, and the "know-how" to accomplish great things for God. The trouble is that comparatively few are

truly involved in the greatest work on earth. The Lord never intended for his children to have only a "casual acquaintance" with him, but many do not have a close relationship with the Lord because they are too busy with their own interests. When what one wants becomes more important than what God wants, there is a real problem of priorities.

Before one can be of great value to the Lord he must possess the "we" feeling. As long as one has the "they" feeling, he will do little. When one talks about the local work does he say, "We are going to do such and such;" "We have done this or that;" or does he say, "They did thus and so;" "They are planning to do such and such?" The use of "they" indicates that one has no feeling of responsibility to do his part, no feeling of belonging. Such feel they should be ministered to rather than minister, that they should be visited instead of visiting, that they should be sought instead of seeking, that they should be the recipient of friendliness instead of being friendly.

Richard M. Williams once wrote: "Will you please tell me in a few words," said a Christian woman to a teacher, "what your ideas of consecration are?" Holding out a blank sheet of paper, the teacher replied, "It is to sign your name at the bottom of this blank sheet of paper, and then let God fill it in as he will."

What we need is to take a blank sheet of paper (our lives -- for that's what our lives are when they are not consecrated to the Lord) and dedicate it to his cause, and say, "Lord, fill it until it overflows. Speak to me Lord through thy word, I'll listen. Look no further Lord, for, here am I, send me. Lord what wilt thou have me do? Here's my life Lord, fill it with the Father's will."

An excellent example of this kind of dedication is seen in the following article which appeared many years ago in the Palo Verde church bulletin, from Tuscon, Arizona. It was about a family placing membership with a church in Arkansas in March, 1979. They handed the elders the following letter. ". . . We are asking to commit the welfare of our souls to your care. Although the weakness of the flesh often betrays us, the prime objective of our lives is obtaining salvation for ourselves, our children, and our fellowman. We therefore ask with all sincerity that you help us in every way possible to be successful in this endeavor. Besides spiritual food, encouragement and fellowship, we fully expect that the help you give might will take

the form of numerous requests to serve, instruction, correction, and if necessary, even discipline. With this in mind, we ask that when and if either of us request in a negative fashion to a request or fails to measure up to a given task that you do not write us off, but help us grow and as soon as possible try us again. We view membership in this congregation as an obligation to be subject to its eldership, to be helpful and encouraging to all its members and to take an active part in its work. We therefore state that our intentions are to give freely of our time, our talents and our money in order to fulfill that obligation."

Before one can be of great value to the Lord he must possess the "we" feeling. As long as one has the "they" feeling, he will do little.

Paul urged this kind of consecration when he wrote to Corinth, ". . . Be ye stedfast, unmovable,

What Standard Of Authority



Wendell Winkler

By what authority do you practice the things you do in religion? Let us observe the following questions:

IS THE MAJORITY THE CORRECT STANDARD AUTHORITY? Surely not. Through time the majority has been in the wrong. Where was the majority when the flood came? What

about Sodom and Gommorrah? Jesus said many would go in the broad way that leadeth to destruction (Matthew 7:13, 14). The majority is not the correct standard of authority.

ARE KINSMEN THE CORRECT STANDARD OF AUTHORITY? Surely not. If they were then every religion, even those that deny the divinity of Christ and reject the Bible as the infallible guide in matters of religion, would be all right if such was accepted by kinsmen. Kinsmen are not the standard of authority.

ARE THE CREEDS OF MEN THE CORRECT STANDARD OF AUTHORITY? Surely not. They

always abounding in the work of the Lord, foreasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58).

An unknown author illustrates the commitment of one humble servant in these lines entitled, "The Man With The Consecrated Car:"

He couldn't speak before a crowd,

He couldn't teach a class;

But when he came to Sunday School

He brought the folks en masse.

He couldn't sing to save his life --

In public he could not pray.

But his "jalopy" was always crammed

Every single Lord's day.

And though he could not sing,

Nor teach, nor lead in prayer,

He listened well, he had a smile,

And he was always there,

With all the others whom he brought

Who lived both near and far,

And God's work greatly prospered,

For he had a consecrated car!

--420 Seventh St. S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

are contradictory to the inspired and infallible word of God. They contain the doctrines and commandments of men, concerning which Jesus said, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9). The creeds of men are not the correct standard of authority.

IS "I THINK" THE CORRECT STANDARD OF AUTHORITY? Surely not. In Jeremiah 10:23 we read, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Also, observe Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." "I think" is not the correct standard of authority.

CHRIST AND HIS TESTAMENT IS THE CORRECT STANDARD OF AUTHORITY. All authority in heaven and in earth has been given unto Christ (Matthew 28:18). His Testament is complete, final and all-sufficient (John 16:13, Jude 3). Religious practices are to be based upon such. Peter wrote, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11). In view of such, can you give book, chapter, and verse from the New Testament for that which you practice in religion?

--Faulkner University, Montgomery, AL 36193.

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(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I ...
Words of Truth and soberness."

ak forth the

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 26

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NUMBER 42

The "New" Hermeneutic? Some Things Just Do Not Change

W. Joe Hacker, Jr.

The scripture abounds with examples of persons who disregarded the changeless, eternal nature of God and revealed truth. Adam had his problems with it and was driven from the garden. Paul reasoned with the philosophers of Greece and was dismissed as being foolish. The classic definition of wisdom coming from God was offered to the Corinthians. This was a wisdom based upon the changeless spiritual nature of God rather than upon the self-autonomous investigations of man.

Leadership in the denominational world has cried for a change in methods of interpretation of the scripture for almost a century now. The "new hermeneutic," as it is called, has itself changed in those circles over the years of this century. New methods of interpretation usually spring from a new theology. Denominational theology has changed from a rationalistic naturalism (old liberalism) to neo-orthodoxy (new liberalism) to a neo-orthodox existentialism (contemporary liberalism). As these basic views of God, man, and the scripture have changed so has the art and science of hermeneutics.

Denominational literature is full of "new hermeneutics." It has been a long time since many denominational leaders have taken the Bible or their sixteenth century creeds seriously. The result is a rift among them between evangelical and liberal groups. There always has to be an underlying theological reason for a new hermeneutic. Wait long enough, press hard enough, and it will emerge.

For example, until the Protestant Reformation there was little change in the history of biblical interpretation because there was little change in theology. The Protestant Reformation resulted in a more literal interpretation with each Christian his own interpreter. Luther saw the scripture through his doctrine of justification by faith. Calvin began

with his view of predestination. With the coming of modern scientific thought, human reason and the scientific method became dominant. The scripture began to be viewed as literature. The debate and the method of interpretation rested upon whether one viewed scripture as sacred or secular literature.

Today the "new hermeneutic" refers to the new existential theology. It reflects the neo-orthodox understanding of the Bible and the nature of God and man. The classic description of fallen humanity given in the Roman letter is no longer accepted by the hermeneutics of denominational leaders today. Male and female homosexuals are not only accepted into Christian fellowship, but are allowed positions of leadership in the name of accommodation of Christianity to social change. In the wake of the sixties revolution, women have moved up from the position of pastor to that of bishop. This liberal social hermeneutic is the natural outgrowth of the theological ideas long expressed by both naturalistic and existential theologians. The latter suggests the Bible can be historically wrong and religiously right. Therefore, one must seek the truth hidden behind the mask of the first century interpretation. A change in theology leads to a change in methods of interpretation.

When one accepts an evolutionary view of a constantly changing universe or of a constantly changing social order he looks at the scripture differently. From that point of view, the Old and New Testaments have no historical value. He considers Genesis a Hebrew myth which grew from association with other cultures. Moses refined the idea of monotheism which he may have gotten from some Egyptians. A new method of interpretation follows.

When the view of creation is changed by evolution a new interpretation of II Corinthians five must be

developed, if one is to continue in the Christian stream of history. Thus a new hermeneutic broad enough to accommodate an evolving changing culture is necessary. Place neo-orthodoxy on top of this and the scripture must be interpreted as a subjective "language event" where faith is produced according to the subjective interpretation of the reader rather than through an objective analysis through rational processes. A new hermeneutic based upon subjective feeling is the result.

A person who determines the way to truth is through a return to the original ground of the apostles will look to the world view of the apostles as the basis for interpretation. The apostles viewed God as the creator of the world in which we live. Paul tied the creative act of a changeless God in Eden with the recreation of every person born again into Christ. From that faith fact he led the Corinthians to understand how one propositional faith fact relates to another propositional faith fact. Paul never tried to change his message to accommodate the science and philosophy of his age. On the contrary, his goal was to preach the truth through his weak, though intellectually astute, earthen vessel.

Paul applied secular literature to his Greek audience as an effective aid. The God of the Old Testament was presented in a manner that the philosopher of his day would understand and accept a changeless creator. For Paul, God established the limits of the entire universe including the mental universe of humanity. He tied the authority of his message to the changeless eternal promise of God authenticated by the resurrection of Christ and confirmed with miracles

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

-Acts 26:25



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The Editor's Pen



David Wade

Word Pictures



David Wade

The word of God is likened unto several things that illustrate its nature, function and power. We shall briefly consider a few of these.

The word of God is likened to light." Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path . . . The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the

simple" (Psalm 119:105, 130). Many other passages develop this theme, among them: John 3:19-21; 8:12; II Corinthians 4:3-6.

God's word is compared to food. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4; cf. Deuteronomy 8:3). Jesus said, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35). The basics of the word are referred to as "milk" and the more complex matters are "meat" (I Peter 2:2; Hebrews 5:12-14).

The word is compared to fire. "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 23:29). "But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing" (Jeremiah 20:9).

Jeremiah also referred to God's word as a hammer. "Is not my word . . . like a hammer that

breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jeremiah 23:29).

God's word is a mirror.

"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass (mirror): For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:22-25).

God's word is like a sword. "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17; cf. Hebrews 4:12).

God's word is seed. "The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). "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 for ever" (I Peter 1:22-23).

These seven pictures well illustrate the completeness of God's word to supply our every need. "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, throughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16-17).

The Authority Question



Winfred Clark

One of the basic questions that has faced the Restoration Movement has been the question of "authority." This question is still very much alive and relevant to our day. It is still the case that one must have authority for that which is done in religion. We are still compelled by such language as,

"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).

We are aware that some will act without authority and will do those things for which there is no authority. But, this is not new. This was true in the apostolic age. You have a case that illustrates this in Acts fifteen. "Certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). Now remember that Paul would say, "whatsoever ye do in word . . . do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17). Here is something done in word. But they had no authority for such. This is made clear in the language used by the apostles. Listen to what they have to say, "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you

What About "Requiring" Children To Study The Bible?

David Lipscomb

I know of but one way of explaining the fact that a man claiming to believe the Bible can doubt the duty and obligation of parents to require their children to study the Bible. It is this: I knew an experienced and thoughtful lawyer that insisted every man had his crazy spot, and on some subject and at some point everybody is crazy . . .

As suggested, if it is not right to require children to study and learn the Bible, still less is it right to require them to practice what the Bible teaches -- "Thou shalt not lie," "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not kill."

For a parent to require a child to wash its face and keep its body clean, and not require it to learn and obey the Bible, is to teach it that the body is worth more than the soul, cleanness of the body is worth more than a pure heart and a clean and holy spirit. For a parent to require a child to learn spelling and reading and arithmetic, and not require it to study the Bible, is to teach it, by a forcible object lesson, that it is much more important to be qualified to

live in this world than to be fitted to live in heaven. There is no evading these simple truths. The parent that so treats and impresses his child is the worst enemy that child has. He will be made to feel this when he meets that child at the judgment of God. It is better to face the question honestly now. . .

For a parent to require a child to wash its face and keep its body clean, and not require it to learn and obey the Bible, is to teach it that the body is worth more than the soul, cleanness of the body is worth more than a pure heart and a clean and holy spirit.

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The "New" Hermeneutic?

Some Things Just Do Not Change

Continued From Page 1

and signs. Thank God for that.

Evolutionary or existential, the result is the same. For the evolutionist the scripture must fit into his model of a changing world evolving ever upward with man at the top of the stack. His view of scripture is through glasses colored with a false view of the universe. God is defined in terms of the progress of religious thought through the prehistoric periods up to this modern insightful age of the physical and social sciences. The existentialist is looking for feeling, meaning, autonomous relationships, meaningful levels of communication which seem always be born of crisis. For him the Bible is not the word of God but contains the Word of God.

The changing of the church to a generation acclimated more to higher levels of education, to more sophisticated levels of society, and to higher echelons of business often leads to a demand for a new hermeneutic and more stylish homiletic in the name of church growth, sophistication and relevance. The question of change can easily become an obsession, often at the expense of the changeless aspects of the gospel.

In both cases, the basis of interpretation rests upon a philosophical presupposition which redefines the nature of God, the universe, and man. With these new definitions in hand there follows a new hermeneutic. The Bible is interpreted to accommodate the evolutionary or existentialist society with man in the foreground and the Bible in the background. It is often presented as though truth is the exclusive discovery of this generation of mankind.

Social reform movements since the second world war have produced an increasing cadre of psychologists and sociologists who inhabit every level of society today. The behavioral sciences have a place in the ordering of the earth by man, just as the natural sciences do. The problem occurs however when those trained in communications, business, sociology and psychology dress their secular view of man in Christian robes. Show me a man's hermeneutic and I will tell you his theology.

The changing of the church to a generation acclimated more to higher levels of education, to

more sophisticated levels of society, and to higher echelons of business often leads to a demand for a new hermeneutic and more stylish homiletic in the name of church growth, sophistication and relevance. The question of change can easily become an obsession, often at the expense of the changeless aspects of the gospel.

Thank God! The scripture is infallible and does

not change. Thank God! The faith once delivered to the saints does not change. Thank God! We changing humans can repent and turn to the changeless truth of a changeless God who loves us and will redeem us through the blood of His Son. Thank God for that. Some things just don't change.

--Via Pulse P.O. Box 210888, Dallas, TX 75211.

The Necessity Of Continued Study



Cecil May, Jr.

E. H. Ijams, preacher, teacher and college president, was still teaching vibrant, relevant Bible classes after age 90. One key to his lengthened usefulness is the quality that caused him to take Greek at Harding Graduate School in 1955, at age 70.

Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes began the

study of classical Greek at the age of 94. Asked why, he replied, "Why, my good man, it's now or never."

University of Chicago Physics Professor James Cronin, on the day he won the Nobel Prize, was not in the teachers' lounge where his award was being discussed. The conversation turned to how a Nobel Prize winner spends his day. A colleague answered, "He is spending this day like he spends every day. Right now he's in class."

"Oh," came the inquiry, "what's Jim teaching this quarter?"

There are outstanding preachers who have never been to college, but there are none who have not studied and learned.

The reply: "He isn't teaching the class he went to this morning. He's taking it."

Leaders of God's people must study. People gravitate to where they learn and are helped. Preachers who quit studying grow stale, and lose even what they used to know (Matthew 13:12). Continued study makes for continued usefulness. "Give heed to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (I Timothy 4:13).

We must study the Bible carefully and systematically, to thoroughly and accurately know the

word we are to communicate to others. Just as people with serious physical ailments seek help from those knowledgeable in medicine, and people with legal difficulties go to those educated in the law, so people needing spiritual direction are attracted to those they believe know the word of God.

We should read religious books and periodicals. It is foolish to believe we cannot be helped by reading what others think. We must read critically, of course. Human writings, brotherhood or otherhood, are not the word of God and not, therefore, infallible, but they can be helpful. We are not infallible either, but we expect others to listen to us.

We should read some things we disagree with. (I suspect some brethren never do, because, from arguments they make, it is obvious they have no idea what those they are arguing against are really saying). There is no validity to the idea that, because someone does not know a particular thing I know, he cannot possibly teach me anything. As Will Rogers used to say, we are all ignorant, just on different subjects.

We need also to be aware of how people in general society are thinking. The literature, poetry and music of an age has a great deal to do with how that age functions, and to what it will best respond. Like the men of Issachar, we need "an understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (I Chronicles 12:32).

There are outstanding preachers who have never been to college, but there are none who have not studied and learned.

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The Authority Question

Continued From Page 2

with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law; to whom we gave no such commandment" (Acts 15:24). In simple terms this would be equal to saying "Such is not authorized."

How should this issue then be addressed? How should it be seen? Should it be seen as merely a matter of "hermeneutics"? That is the way many things are being addressed today. But, not so with the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. We would do well to see what we can learn how they would address the issue and how such can be resolved.

It Lacked Established Authority

Even though some will come saying, "Gentiles are to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses," it will be seen they do so without authority.

One, their doctrine is without the support of "necessary inference." In fact the "inference" would rest on the side of the opposite. This is exactly the approach Peter and others would take in reasoning about this matter. Listen to Peter as he says, "Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe, and God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving the the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us" (Acts 15:7-8). Isn't Peter saying that God did not treat them differently. God made no distinction between the Gentile and the Jew. They were all treated alike. He would therefore "infer" that since God had made no difference then neither should they. So those who were teaching such would find themselves without support.

But, what should people do who teach that for which they have no support? Should they persist in teaching such without divine support? We all know the answer to this do we not?

Two, their doctrine is without the support of "apostolic example." You will note that Luke will record, "Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them" (Acts 15:12). In this verse we have recounted the journey of Paul and Barnabas as they had gone out to preach to the Jew and the Gentile. When they returned they called the church together, "they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles" (Acts 15:27). Isn't Paul using their work among the Gentiles as an "approved example." Yet, they have not compelled the Gentiles to follow the law of Moses. So those who were teaching such would do so without "apostolic example."

Three, their doctrine would lack the authority of "a direct statement or command." Go back to the case in Jerusalem and you will find James saying, "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the word of the prophets; as it is written" (Acts 15:14-15). James will use a direct statement from the scripture to show that Gentiles are to have the same access as

the Jew. Did James tell the truth? Did he misapply what the scripture had to say? Was that just his "hermeneutic"? No, not at all, for he was speaking the truth.

We would therefore conclude that those who taught to the contrary would lack the authority established by "necessary inference, apostolic example, or direct statement." Lacking this, what they taught would surely be without authority.

It is Not Justified By Silence

When you read that the apostles said, "to whom we gave no such commandment" what do you conclude? Don't you conclude that they are saying, "we were silent." Aren't they saying "you would need our word to justify such." Thus, without their word such would not be justified. To therefore teach, in the name of the apostles, that Gentiles were to keep the law, would not be authorized. If it is not authorized it would be excluded. But, what would it take for such to be authorized? Wouldn't it take the kind of authority that was established by "inference, example and direct command or statement?" If they do not have the words to the apostles to support such then they find themselves without authorization and that just simply means it is excluded. There is no authority for it.

Suppose those same folks had been teaching that Christians are to use mechanical instruments in worship. Would the silence of the apostles authorize such? No, they would be without apostolic authorization. Should they proceed without such authorization? Your answer would be, "absolutely not." Then since the apostles are silent concerning the matter of this sort of music does this not show such to be unauthorized? If not, why not? And again we say, why not?

Surely the "law of silence" would prevail in this case. That is exactly what you will find the apostles using when they say, "we gave no such commandment." In fact, they are saying those men are claiming they said something that they did not say. They would not use language unless such had been the case. These folks have made it appear that the apostles in Jerusalem endorsed what they were saying. Was such conduct right or wrong? You say such is wrong. Wouldn't it be just as wrong for a person to try to make it appear that the Bible endorsed that which it does not endorse? This is precisely what those do who would seek to justify the instrument by the New Testament when it is as "silent as the tomb" concerning the use of the instrument in worship.

The writer of the book of Hebrews surely made an argument based on the "law of silence." Notice, "Of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (Hebrews 7:14). He has just discussed the change concerning the priesthood. That is from the Levitical priesthood for he came from a tribe concerning which Moses was silent. This silence would exclude Jesus from being a priest under the Levitical system. Thus again one is able to see the "law of silence."

It Is Classified as Subversion

Remember what the apostles have had to say

about this matter. They said, "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain men which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls . . ." (Acts 15:24). You will notice that they will use the word "trouble" and also the word "subverting." That word "subvert" means: to unsettle, to turn away violently from a right state. If therefore these people follow the teaching of those who would require the Gentiles to keep the law, they will be carried away from the "right state." That says their state would therefore not be the right one. They would thus find themselves in a state where they practice that which is not authorized. Their practice would be without authority.

Conclusion

One will surely have no difficulty in determining the right or the wrong in this case. If we accept the words and attitude of the apostles such will be easy. Suppose these same men came back to Antioch and began teaching the same thing again. Would the people who knew about the Jerusalem gathering have any problem is showing that what they taught was without authority. If they did arrive in Antioch the second time and began teaching that Gentiles should be circumcised and obey the law of Moses, shouldn't the people there show them they had not authority to teach such? Wouldn't they be right in showing that such was the case?

When one comes among us seeking to foster that for which there is no authority, shouldn't that person be told the same thing? Would a person be "sectarian" or "unloving" to point out this very obvious fact? Were those apostles narrow and sectarian because they would not accept the position of those who troubled the church in Antioch?

Yes, we must have authority for that which we do and we must not condone that which is without authority. This we can easily learn from this chapter in the book of Acts.

--P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

HOME COMING

Sixth Avenue
Church Of Christ
Sunday, Nov. 4, 1990

Guest Speaker:
Glenn Poseu

Bible Study: 9:30 a.m.

Morning Worship:
10:25 a.m.

Evening Worship:
6:00 p.m.

Fellowship Meal After Morning Worship



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am not ~~mad~~ most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth"

26:25

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Human Suffering And A Loving God



Brad T. Bromling

One of the atheist's favorite arguments against belief in God is the existence of evil, pain, and suffering in this world. One atheist has put it in these words: "A house catches on fire and a six-month-old baby is painfully burned to death. Could we possibly describe as 'good' any person who had the power to save

this child and yet refused to do so? God undoubtedly has this power and yet . . . he has refused to help. Can we call God 'good'?" (B. C. Johnson, *The Atheist Debater's Handbook*, 1981).

The Argument

Traditionally, the argument contains four propositions: (1) Christians claim that God is all-knowing; (2) that He is all-powerful; and, (3) that He is all-loving; but, (4) pain and suffering exist. The atheist asserts that it is impossible to affirm all four propositions. He would argue: If God does not know about the existence of pain and suffering, He is not all-knowing; if He does know, but is unable to stop it, He is not all-powerful; if He knows about it, and can stop it but will not, then He is not all-loving. If He is not all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-loving, He is not God. Hence, atheists feel that the existence of suffering argues against God's existence. This charge is fallacious.

An Answer

Although no one would be so brash as to claim that he has all of the answers to this difficult problem, enough information is available to remove this as an obstacle to faith (II Peter 1:3).

The truth is, we may contend that the God of the Bible does exist even though there is evil, pain, and suffering in our world. First, we affirm that God is all-knowing (Psalm 139; I John 3:20), that

He is all-loving (I John 4:8, 16), and that He is all-powerful (Jeremiah 32:17). We further recognize the existence of suffering.

Second, we observe that suffering results, ultimately, from the effects of sin in our world. This is the testimony of history. Before the entrance of sin, man inhabited a paradisaical garden home. After the Fall, things deteriorated. In fact, sin became so widespread that the entire globe had to be purged of its sinful inhabitants via the universal Flood (Genesis 6:5). We will never fully understand all of the geophysical effects of the Flood, but it seems evident that man's environment changed radically (the shortened post-flood life-spans is one good example of this) -- all because of the influence of sin.

God chose to make man as a creature with freedom of choice rather than as a robot who would slavishly do only what the Creator programmed him to do. Really, to say that God should not have made man with the potential to sin is to say that God should not have made man.

Suffering comes to us from various sources. We are all familiar with the fact that we often suffer as the result of personal mistakes and sins. Notice this example cited by Solomon: "Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine" (Proverbs 23:29, 30). Or remember the suffering experienced by the prodigal son (Luke 15). Suffering also comes to us as the result of the sins

of others. Think of the mother who inadvertently infects her baby with AIDS, or of the drunkard's family. Further, suffering often comes as the result of societies which ignore God (e.g., the captivities of Israel and Judah; present-day India). Time and again we are reminded that sin is the ultimate source of suffering.

Third, we see that the nature of man is such that the entrance of evil in the world (with its resultant suffering) was inevitable. Basically, man is made up of two elements: "Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7). Dust is the material God used to form the first man (Genesis 2:7), and spirit is the part of us that was made in God's image (Genesis 1:26, 27; see also John 4:24 and Luke 24:39). Man's spiritual nature separates him from the animal kingdom and is perhaps best seen in man's ability to exercise free moral agency. Man is not a creature driven by instinct; he makes moral choices. This is illustrated by the original arrangement in the garden (Genesis 2:16, 17; 3:1-7). A choice was allowed, and the wrong one was eventually made. From Genesis to Revelation God emphasizes, and appeals to man's ability to exercise his own free will (e. g., Joshua 24:15; Ezekiel 3:17-21). For this reason, the judgment will be a time when "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (II Corinthians 5:10).

Often the complaint is raised: "Why did God make man with the ability to sin and thereby introduce suffering into his world?" In response, it is essential to remember that God only had two choices relative to the creation of man: (1) make man with free moral agency; (2) make man without free moral agency. God chose to make man as a creature with freedom of choice rather than as a robot who would slavishly do only what

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Words Of Truth

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



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Persistence Is Powerful



Edsel Burleson

Bulletin Digest recently included the following article by Calvin Coolidge. "Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The Slogan "press on" has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race."

During Peter's career as a fisherman there was at least one occasion where he and his companions caught nothing after a hard night's work (Luke 5). At that point they must have been tired and very discouraged at their lack of success.

They were admonished by Jesus to "push out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." This they did and were amazed at their catch. What a tremendous lesson on persistence.

Jim Howard once wrote: "Persistence is by anyone's reckoning one of the most powerful realities. Statistics prove that most sales are made after numerous repeat calls. The great runner is he who forces his body to run one more mile after he feels he has reached the end of his endurance. The great scholar continues to study and dig and research long after the pretenders quit. The fable of the rabbit and the turtle reminds us that it is not

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Additional Information



David Wade

The October 5, 1990 edition of Words of Truth was devoted to the history of the Lord's church in Jasper. In my editorial on that date I extended my apologies for not mentioning every name and event that should be mentioned.

In this column I want to mention more about the involvement of John and Lettie Ellis and their children in the early days of the church. The following information was gleaned from two of brother and sister Ellis' daughters, Ruth Gardner of Mobile and Cora Edith Baker of Jasper. Cora Edith is a member of the Sixth Avenue congregation.

Brother and sister Ellis, along with brother and sister Avery Fike left the First Christian Church to help start the church of Christ in Jasper. They were joined by others living in the area, and in all, there were thirteen charter members.

There were occasions when the court house was not available for assembly. Many times the church assembled at the home of brother and sister Ellis in Ellis Town. Ruth and Cora Edith remember helping their mother prepare the grape juice for communion. They raised grapes and sister Lettie took the responsibility providing the grape juice for communion services.

Later, during the depression, when the church was in danger of losing its property at Fifth Avenue, brother Ellis mortgaged their home in order to help save the property.

These are just a few additional brief glimpses of the devotion and sacrifice of the early members of the Lord's church in Jasper. The torch has been passed on to us. We have been given an awesome responsibility along with a tremendous opportunity to help spread the cause of truth, in this area and around the world.

Do R-rated movies appeal to the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh? "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:15-17).

Do R-rated movies, with their nudity and sex scenes, incite lust for the opposite sex? "But I say

"No 'R' Movies For These Kids"



Bobby Liddell

"Goldie Hawn and Mel Gibson, who have made 10 R-rated movies between them (from Goldie's *Shampoo* to Mel's *Tequila Sunrise*) do not let their kids see R-rated movies -- even ones in which they star. 'Although we don't let the kids say any R-rated pictures,' Goldie says, 'it's amazing the amount

of calls they get from friends who say, "Let's go see *Pretty Woman*." You know, I said to Katie (age 11), that's an R-rated picture, isn't it? She said, "Yeah." I said, you just tell your friends you can't see that. So they went to see something else. And my kids are proud of that. You've got to give them some parameters.'" (USA Weekend, May 18-20 1990, Bedtime Stories, by Carol Knopes with Gayle Jo Carter).

In spite of her lifestyle, Goldie still realizes the dangers of her children watching R-rated movies. Sadly, many mothers and fathers who claim to be Christians do not. They either have not the courage or the conviction to say to their children, "You just tell your friends you can't see that." To follow the world; that is, the majority, requires less effort and produces less conflict. After all, "Everybody else gets to see R-rated movies." God's word says, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil"

HOMECOMING

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Church Of Christ
Sunday, Nov. 4, 1990**

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Glenn Poseu

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Fellowship Meal

After Morning Worship

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Persistence Is Powerful

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necessarily the fastest (or richest, or most gifted, or most brilliant) who wins the race but he who plods on."

In an article by Bill Goree, he tells of Newton Baker, Secretary of War in President Wilson's cabinet, who visited the worst casualties in the Federal hospitals after World War I. One of the very worst was a man with both legs and one arm gone, blinded in both eyes and whose face was terribly mutilated. He was wheeled around the grounds of the hospital by a nurse. No one really expected him to live. Yet in spite of all of these problems, he was radiant and full of spirit.

Later, when Mr. Baker met someone from the hospital, he asked, "Did that young man live?" The answer was, "Did he live? I'll say he did! He married his nurse!"

Marveling at the capacity of women to love, Mr. Baker almost forgot the incident until a few years later, as a trustee of John Hopkins University, he received a letter from the president. They wished, said the president, to do an unusual thing -- to hold a mid-semester convocation to bestow the degree of Doctor of Philosophy upon a young man who, though severely handicapped, had done one of the most brilliant pieces of work ever done at the University. His name was the same as that of the crippled veteran. Mr. Baker was quite incredulous that it could be the same man, but the phrase "severely handicapped" caused him to check on the man's identity. Sure enough, it was the man from the veteran's hospital. Both legs gone, one arm gone, both eyes gone, but still, not part of the world's problem but part of the answer!

Paul once wrote, "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). He encouraged the Galatians: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9).

Very few spend much time in the service of Christ without getting discouraged and, for the moment, giving up in despair. But those who overcome the world are they who (if need be) try again and again -- who refuse to surrender to the evil one. If they fail, they go down fighting, soon to rise again.

Very few spend much time in the service of Christ without getting discouraged and, for the moment, giving up in despair. But those who overcome the world are they who (if need be) try again and again -- who refuse to surrender to the evil one. If they fail, they go down fighting, soon to rise again.

Jesus was telling Peter, the night of his unsuccessful fishing trip, "Go a little farther and you'll get the desired results." We must be willing to attempt that which even seems hopeless if we are convinced this is the Lord's will. Act by faith, go farther than we think necessary, but always

leave room for God to help us accomplish the impossible.

--420 Seventh Street S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

Discord And Division



Winfred Clark

Observant people are well aware that division is not an accident. It is not something that "just happens." There are some very definite causes for such. Remove the causes and you defeat division.

1. Such comes from the sowing of discord."

This is one of those things the wise man said "doth the Lord hate" (Proverbs 6:16). He speaks of such being sown among brethren. This is where one stirs up strife. Where one will seek to divide or bring about a state of disharmony.

It is the very opposite of what Abraham would do when seeking to avoid strife between the herdsmen of himself and Lot (Genesis 13). Rather than seeking to sow discord, he would attempt to avoid any disharmony, and sow the seeds to peace.

2. Such comes from "self will."

One has but to look at the case of a man called, Diotrephes. John spoke of such a man and said, "who loves to have the preeminence among them." John states that he would also remember "his deeds which he doeth, prating (ridiculing, maliciously accusing) against us with malicious words" (III John 9-10).

It is clear to John that such a person is a threat to the peace and unity of the church and such would have to be dealt with when he came. He knew that if such a person were allowed to impose his will upon them peace would not be present.

3. Such comes from sinful desires.

Remember that James, a half brother of Jesus, addressed this matter in the fourth chapter. He asked, "From whence come wars and fighting among you?" Then he would proceed to tell us of their source. He said, "come they not of your lusts that war in your members?" (James 4:1-2). Here they will allow their desires to control them and they will do anything to satisfy such. They will kill in order to obtain what they want. Wasn't this true of Ahab? He would go to any end to obtain Naboth's vineyard. Right thinking people will not support such.

--P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

Human Suffering And A Loving God

Continued From Page 1

the Creator programed him to do. Really, to say that God should not have made man with the potential to sin is to say that God should not have made man. Further, who would be willing to give up his free will?

Fourth, we affirm that although evil exists (which is the source for suffering), it is not evil that suffering exists. This is seen in at least three ways: (1) There are often benefits of pain and suffering. Pain tells us it is time to eat; pain indicates that we are being burned; pain lets us know when we need to see a doctor, etc. (2) Pain and suffering often contribute to the spiritual development of man. Sudden calamities remind us of life's brevity. Suffering helps to keep us from becoming too strongly attached to the material realm. Suffering often leads men to turn to God. (3) Given what we know of the Creator and His grand redemptive plan for mankind, it seems that this world is at

least as good as any possible world for the purpose God had in creating it (i.e., it is ideal for preparing us for heaven).

Conclusion

There seems to be some significance in the realization that even though God knew that man would sin, He made him anyway. Man must decide if he will exercise his free will and live in harmony with the Creator's wishes, or live in rebellion. In light of all that God has done on man's behalf to remedy the problem of evil and suffering (especially through the cross), who is man to pompously accuse God on this account?

--Via Reasoning From Revelation, Apologetics Press, Inc., 230 Landmark Drive, Montgomery, AL 36117.

"Looking Unto Jesus"



Dalton Key

We find, in the person of Christ's flesh, a wonderful example of determined steadfastness. The four Spirit-inspired biographers of our Lord - Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John -- portray him as a resolute man; a man of God, who as God simply would not give up.

According to John, Christ "was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." And again, "He came into his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:10, 11). The very world Christ had created rejected him. The very ones he had come to save refused him. He came to earth, as light to a world of darkness, yet "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). His own countrymen "were offended in him" (Matthew 13:57). Even His own earthly brothers, those who should have known Jesus best, refused to believe in Him as the divine Son of God (John 7:5). Such utter rejection would have halted the works of a lesser man. Yet Christ, as the God-man, despite constant rejection, would not quit.

The world's greatest teacher was misunderstood. His words were taken out of context, misapplied, and then used as ammunition against him. Though He spoke from a spiritual perspective, His hearers could not seem to see beyond the physical affairs

of this life. Christ described to Nicodemus the new birth of the Spirit; yet "the man of the Pharisees" could think only in terms of physical birth (John 3:1-8). Christ spoke to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well concerning spiritual, loving water; she could think only in terms of physical, wet H₂O (John 4:10-15). Christ described himself to the Jews as "the bread of Life," saying, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, saying, 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in him' (John 6:35, 53). In response, the Jews asked, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' (John 6:52). Christ spoke spiritually; they understood physically.

Not only did the masses misunderstand the teachings of Christ, but his own apostles often failed to grasp the import of his most fundamental doctrines as well. Christ came to establish his kingdom. He preached "the gospel of the kingdom of heaven" (Mark 1:14). The entire thirteenth chapter of Matthew is built upon his kingdom parables, stories describing his spiritual kingdom alongside everyday matters of a similar nature. He taught a spiritual kingdom; his apostles understood the kingdom to be temporal. They sought place and power in the kingdom, as in an earthly regime (Matthew 20:20, 21). They sought physical violence as a means of defense against the kingdom's enemies (Matthew 25:52-56). Though Jesus taught, "My kingdom is not of this world," yet his special disciples continued to think of the kingdom as a temporal, physical, earthly thing.

They misunderstood. And yet, despite being misunderstood and having his words misapplied, Christ did not, would not, quit.

The very world Christ had created rejected him. The very ones he had come to save refused him.

And our Savior's problems were not limited to these alone. What of the devil's unrelenting temptation? What of the open attacks of the religious leaders? What of the disappointments which came to him as the result of his most promising disciples failing miserably? What of the sheer mental and physical strain of his ministry?

And what of the cross? The Hebrew writer, encouraging his readers to keep on keeping on, points to the example of Christ at Calvary. "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. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Hebrews 12:2, 3). Christ would not, did not, quit. Can we say the same?

--Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.

"No 'R' Movies For These Kids"

Continued From Page 2

unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). Do they lift one to a higher plane spiritually or encourage and promote wickedness? Do R-rated movies present the true picture of sinful activities or do they glorify pre-marital, extra-marital, and even homosexual relationships? Do they present as common, accepted and "cool" the use of vulgar and profane language frequently taking God's name in vain? Do such movies condemn or condone the use of alcohol and drugs? Do they illustrate loving one's neighbor as oneself and doing good as one has opportunity or a common disregard for the needs of fellow men and the value of human life? Do they, in general, present evil ways of life, which God strongly condemns, as though they were acceptable and desirable?

Our souls are too valuable to put them in danger of eternal condemnation to fulfill the lusts of the flesh and the lusts of the eye. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26). Jesus, in the model prayer, instructed his followers to pray: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13). Can one pray, that prayer while placing himself in the danger of

temptation? "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:13-15).

In spite of her lifestyle, Goldie still realizes the dangers of her children watching R-rated movies. Sadly, many mothers and fathers who claim to be Christians do not.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

I can't speak for you, friend, but as for me and my house, "No 'R' movies for these kids" or for these adults either.

--6474 Greenwell Street, Pensacola, FL 32506.

HOMECOMING
Sixth Avenue
Church Of Christ
Sunday, Nov. 4, 1990
Guest Speaker:
Glenn Posey
Bible Study:
9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship:
10:25 a.m.
Evening Worship:
6:00 p.m.
Fellowship Meal
After
Morning 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

VOLUME 26

NOVEMBER 9, 1990

NUMBER 44

Can We Rightly Divide The Word Of Truth?



Jerri Manasco

Paul's pen produced many memorable statements. Among these are the familiar words that he wrote to Timothy in II Timothy 2:15. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." The

American Standard Version renders this verse, "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth."

It is tragic that some brethren today are contending that Paul's words in this text cannot be taken seriously! No, I do not mean that we have brethren who are verbally suggesting that we rip II Timothy 2:15 out of our Bibles. However, there is a rising attitude among us that would eventually lead to the same results in action if not in fact! The rising attitude is that it is not really possible to rightly divide the word of truth! The fact is, being approved of God IS an objective reality. Handling aright the word of truth is an objective reality. I cannot figure out why Paul would have said we can rightly divide the word of truth if we cannot rightly divide the word of truth. If we cannot determine what the word of truth is, then how in the world could Paul have been so naive as to believe that we CAN so determine!

The word of truth is what God has revealed. It is the objective standard for all religious and spiritual teaching and testing. No other standard can be valid. Elders must stay within the confines of the word of truth. These men must certainly be faithful to the word they have received (Titus 1:9). Preachers must not depart from the objective reality that is the word of truth. All that is

presented publically or privately must be the word of truth.

Paul's emphasis on the "word of truth" means that it is not merely a "tradition" or a "heritage" that is dear to the New Testament Christian. It is a heaviness in my heart when I hear faithful brethren assailed as members of a tradition-bound sect relying on worn out platitudes that are not valid in our modern world. Surely God has not changed his attitude toward his revealed will. Surely "the word of truth" is still "the word of truth." What else could it be? Surely Paul's statement in II Timothy 2:15 is a call to recognize the validity of real, objective, incomparable TRUTH. Why should it be any different now?

It is a heaviness in my heart when I hear faithful brethren assailed as members of a tradition-bound sect relying on worn out platitudes that are not valid in our modern world. Surely God has not changed his attitude toward his revealed will. Surely "the word of truth" is still "the word of truth."

If the true and tried lessons presented by preachers of the past led people to the great salvation (Hebrews 2:1-4), then why should these sermons be rejected today? If these carefully and logically presented expositions of truth were nothing more than statements of a traditional heritage, then why do the modern "scholars" among us think that THEIR propositions should be taken seriously? There is an inconsistency here that any thinking person can detect!

Paul was in quite a dilemma if recent

developments among certain brethren are accurate! Paul even placed Timothy in the same dilemma! Paul actually had the audacity to tell Timothy that he could rightly divide the word of truth! Paul somehow didn't see that he was pushing his tradition or his heritage onto Timothy! Paul had the idea that what he was teaching was the word of truth, and he was encouraging Timothy to make sure he was teaching the same thing!

If a brother or sister in Christ takes simply what the Bible says, there are philosophers among us who will quickly take them to task and hurl sophisticated barbs at them for their simplicity. A false enlightenment among us has led some to reinterpret the scriptures in the light of a desire to be more acceptable to the world. These modern times (they suggest) demand a less stringent interpretation. Do these philosophers not know that there are true and competent SCHOLARS among us who DO NOT SUBSCRIBE TO THESE LIBERAL VIEWS? It is so much easier, though, to reject as negative any approach that calls for a positive acceptance of a "thus saith the Lord."

Can one rightly divide the word of truth? Thayer's lexicon defines the phrase, "to make straight and smooth; to handle aright. . . to teach the truth correctly and directly." W. E. Vine says the phrase has the idea of teaching scripture accurately. That surely is the point Paul is making in II Timothy 2:15.

What about that phrase "approved unto God"? How shall we be approved unto God if we do not or cannot know what it means to be approved unto God? What God approves is what approves us unto God. It is that simple. What God approves is what he has revealed in the word of truth. The only way we can determine what God approves and how we, therefore, can be approved unto God is to rightly divide (handle aright) the word of truth. Otherwise we shall be rejected (Matthew 15:13-14).

--Rt. 7 Box 428, Boaz, AL 35957.



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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Scissors And Paste?



David Wade

"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 ASV). There are those among us who deny that the New Testament is the pattern for our faith and practice. One, in particular, is on record saying,

"We've taken Acts and tried to make it a prison . . . a rigid pattern. Acts was never meant to be a pattern . . . I reject pattern theology. The Scripture is not a book of case law to be cited like a bunch of proof texts. The way to teach people about the Bible is not to quote a series of steps of salvation." The author asserts that we are "proof-texting ourselves to death." He calls it a "silly game of scissors and paste." Furthermore, he says, "I am not looking for a pattern; I am looking for a person. What are we looking for, pattern or principles?"

Personally speaking, this editor is looking for the person who has given both pattern and principles. How can we find the person of Christ when we reject his pattern? Granted, we learn much about Jesus and his will for us in the Four Gospels, but we do not learn all he wants us to know about him or the church. We must also accept and follow all the rest of the New Testament (II Timothy 1:13; 3:16).

As for "scissors and paste," was Jesus doing a scissors and paste job with the scriptures in the Mount of Temptation? After all, in answer to Satan's temptations, he quoted from Deuteronomy 8:3; 6:16; and 6:13 in that order (Matthew 4:3-10). Jesus, Paul, and other new Testament writers quoted, sometimes profusely, from the Old Testament. Were they proof-texting or citing case law? And how dare the writer of Hebrews to quote from Exodus 25:40! "See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed thee in the Mount" (Hebrews 8:5).

Whose pattern are we to follow? Why should we follow the pattern of our brother who rejects the Lord's pattern? I'm not ready to forsake the old paths to follow this self-appointed brotherhood arbiter.

Our Worship



Bobby Key

Jesus told the woman from Samaria, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). "The Father seeketh such to worship him" (verse 23).

Worship is an act of reverence paid to a creature or to the Creator. The believer directs his worship to God. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Deuteronomy 6:13; Matthew 4:10).

Worship involves an act. It is not merely an attitude of the heart. It is true that one must have the proper attitude, but the attitude must express itself in acts which find acceptance in the will of God. It is untrue that everything a Christian does is worship. This idea began with those who sought to justify the use of instrumental music in Christian worship. Some time ago we were told, "Worship does not involve acts but attitude, and if we have the right attitude, we cannot do anything in worship that is not pleasing to the Father." This individual admitted that there was no authority in the New Testament for instrumental music, but saw no need for such authority if the worshipper maintained the proper spirit.

Our worship must not only be in spirit but it must be in truth. Things unauthorized by the truth, (God's Word is truth), are unacceptable in the worship of God. Instrumental music is unauthorized, and, thus, unacceptable.

Worship is not an empty form. Man's whole being is involved in his worship. Man was created in

Identifying False Teachers

Dub McClish

As our Lord drew the Sermon on the Mount to a close, He gave the following warning: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravaging wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:15-16). Do we still need this warning?

It is presently easier to find protectors of wolves among the sheep than to find those who will expose them. In fact, it is the common thing nowadays for the false teacher to be praised, endorsed, supported, and welcomed, while one who would correctly identify him as a wolf is treated as the wolf should be treated. How different from the Lord's is the attitude of many brethren on this matter! We are not left to wonder how the apostolic church dealt with false teachers: They were watched for and, when discovered, they were marked, avoided, silenced, shunned, rejected, refused endorsement, and delivered to Satan (Acts 20:29-31; Romans 16:17-18; I Timothy 19-20; Titus 1:10-11, 14; 3:10; II John 9-11).

Now there may be some "witch-hunters," "alarmists," and those who "play God" among us, but I doubt it. (If there are, the wolves greatly outnumber them!) These and similar appellations are smokescreen words designed to mitigate the exposures of the false teachers without their having to answer for or repent of their errors. Such

terms are designed to intimidate and silence the one who exposes the false teacher. They are employed to create prejudice against those who stand for the TRUTH and they are a favorite ploy of the liberals. (Ironically, false teachers who claim to abhor "name-calling" and "labeling" don't mind doing it themselves when they are being exposed!)

I know of no one who enjoys exposing sin or error in a brother or sister. I certainly do not. I would much rather always be able to commend and praise and never have to criticize or reprove. However, one is not really a Gospel preacher (or a true follower, of Christ, whatever his work in the kingdom) who shrinks in cowardice from this necessary task.

If it makes me a "witch-hunter" or an "alarmist" to warn brethren of a "wolf" among the "flock" (or "flocks"), then I am such with Heaven's blessing. If I am such a one, then what shall we call the Lord and His apostles who commanded and practiced this responsibility? If exposing false teachers is "playing God," I would rather do that than "play the devil" by refusing the Lord's mandate to do so. If one would be great in the Master's eyes, he must be faithful to the charge to identify and expose false teachers, even if they are dear friends or even relatives.

--908 Imperial Drive, Denton, TX 76201.

Continued On Page 3

Let These First Be Proved

Wayne Coats

Almighty God knew exactly what man needed when the inspired word was revealed. A very timely piece in that divine record states, "And let these also first be **PROVED**; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless" (I Timothy 3:10). To prove signifies to try and examine. Thus Paul wrote, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; **PROVE** your own selves . . . (II Corinthians 13:5).

In writing to the church at Rome, Paul said, ". . . for we have before **PROVED** both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin" (Romans 3:9). These brethren were to, ". . . **PROVE** what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2).

It should be obvious that at least some of the brethren in Corinth love the Lord, but nonetheless, Paul instructed them to give liberally, ". . . to **PROVE** the sincerity of your love" (II Corinthians 8:8). Surely they could contend that they loved the Lord and would anyone desire proof? Our Lord required proof. Some of those in Corinth questioned the credentials of Paul. He said, ". . . ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me . . ." (II Corinthians 13:3). Well, of course, Paul gave them plenty of proof: in fact, more than some of them wanted.

Proof Needed Today

There has been no time in the history of the Lord's people when proof and proving people are needed more. The libertines can wail all they please, but there are some of us who continue to read and respect the word of my God. Indeed we desire proof.

We live in lascivious, loose and wanderlust times. Some elders, preachers, and congregations are almost frenetic in the efforts to pad the church rolls. Anything that looks like a human being will

be "taken in," excused and used. Church members can commit every sin from adultery to murder -- and half-baked, ungodly brethren and sisters will extend to them the right hand of fellowship and the left of hand of license. Someone says, "When a brother repents and make a confession, we must forgive him." That is absolutely correct -- and for 45 years I have labored hard in teaching what the Bible says along that line. Indeed we must forgive the erring -- but does that mean that an erring brother is to be placed immediately before the church in a place of public leadership? Must this be done in order for me to be forgiving?

Examples Of Some Needing To Be Proved

An elder left his wife and family to be with an immoral member of the church. Eventually he came back and confessed his sin. He said he had repented. Question! Should he start serving as an elder the next Lord's Day? Can we truly forgive him, yet refuse to accede to his wishes to be a shepherd? I would refuse to submit to this tomfoolery.

A Sodomite had been teaching a class of young boys in Sunday school, and it became known that he had molested two of the students. He was indicted, tried and sentenced to prison, but he came back to services before he began the prison term. He made a confession before the church and behold, the preacher and some others got him to go in and teach the boys' class. Everyone needed to be quiet because the Sodomite confessed his sins, and if we were loving we would not rock the boat.

A gospel preacher ran away with the wife of a deacon. They lived together for some time, but the woman eventually kicked the old boy out and he came back whimpering and whining to the brethren. Oh, he was so penitent. Rivers of waters rolled from his cheeks as he confessed. Someone

asserted in somber tones, "Brother Amnon has confessed, so now forgive him and call him up to the pulpit to preach." I hereby declare to the whole world that if was in that church building, there would immediately be one empty seat. You say, "but you are judging." Certainly, I'm judging -- and I hereby challenge one and all to get the Book and prove that judging is sinful and wrong. Please read John 7:24 and then let's get busy and do what the text says -- "**Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment.**"

Some elders, preachers, and congregations are almost frenetic in the efforts to pad the church rolls. Anything that looks like a human being will be "taken in," excused and used. Church members can commit every sin from adultery to murder -- and half-baked, ungodly brethren and sisters will extend to them the right hand of fellowship and the left of hand of license.

One of the most damnable, despicable, destructive, soul-destroying and costly practices known to any age, is the trafficking and use of narcotics. As a former Emergency Medical Technician I witnessed first-hand the horrors connected with drugs. Young lives were blasted, brains were destroyed, death stalked and subdued. Homes were shattered, hearts were broken, tears were shed, lonely vigils were spent beside hospital beds by parents, brothers, sisters and others with the final trek being made to a newly-made grave. Yes, I've seen this and more. Have you? Maybe you have never worked on an emergency ambulance as an E.M.T. You perchance have not spent a training period in Nashville General Hospital, and it's unlikely that you have served as a funeral director when some young person has died due to drugs. Well, I have! And my God spare you the trauma and heartache which I have seen.

Some dope-pushing brother becomes involved in drugs and God alone knows the hurt, harm and hell-bound souls which have resulted. The dope handler gets caught, indicted and sentenced. He repents and confesses. (Did not Judas Iscariot do the same -- Matthew 24:3 [sic, Matthew 27:3-4]? Someone declares, "We need to let brother Psalms lead the singing of our hymns." I say we need to let brother Psalms *prove* that he has genuinely repented. But you say, "How do you know that brother Psalms has not repented?" Aha! How do you really and truly know that he has? You want

Our Worship

Continued From Page 2

God's image, and God requires man's reverence, attention, and worship.

Worship involves an act. It is not merely an attitude of the heart. It is true that one must have the proper attitude, but the attitude must express itself in acts which find acceptance in the will of God.

It is true that worship is not limited to an assembled group of people. God is free of any limitations of time, space, or place. A Christian may pray in his home, automobile, field, etc. Individuals are at liberty to worship God at any time and in any place. However, Christians are taught to assemble together (Hebrews 10:25). In partaking of the Lord's Supper, we come together

in one place (I Corinthians 11:20). The early church "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42; 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1, 2). These are specified acts of worship rendered by New Testament Christians. These early Christians were told to "teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16). "In the midst of the church will I sing praises unto thee" (Hebrews 2:12).

It is safe to follow the examples in the New Testament. Our worship must be in harmony with God's will. It is spiritual and therefore involves the highest nature of the worshipper. Every faculty of man should be involved in elevating the mind and spirit of the worshipper into the presence of the Creator. Worship should never be haphazard; it is a privilege, a special time, a spiritual time.

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

Continued On Page 4

Let These First Be Proved

Continued From Page 3

me to take the word of a fellow who has been lower than a viper? I prefer to see some real evidence, some fruit.

John Demanded Fruit

When John the Baptist was approached by those who wanted to join his crowd, he plainly said, "**Bring forth therefore fruits meet (answerable to amendment of life) for repentance**" (Matthew 3:8; Luke 3:8). John demanded fruits which would absolutely show an amended life. Brethren, is this wrong? Can we not forgive erring brothers, and yet at the same time demand, yes, even require, that they show by their fruits that their lives have changed? I believe I know what the Spirit of Christ is, and I trust that I may truly imbibe this Spirit (Romans 8:9). This does not mean nor imply that I must be completely blind to sin, or does it?

When we study the text given at the beginning of this lesson, we note that men would have to be proven before they could later serve as deacons. How are men proven? The elders are to, ". . . have a good report of them which are without. . . LIKEWISE (caps mine, w. c.) must the deacons be . . . and let these first also be PROVED . . . being found blameless." Does God require elders and deacons to be demonstrate a blameless life before they begin their public service? The Book so declares! I contend that the rest of us also must be proven before we try to occupy the chief seats in the synagogue.

There is not a farmer in Tennessee with so little sense as to buy a yoke of oxen without first going to "**prove them**" (Luke 14:19). I do not plow oxen, but if I did I would want the animals to know "gee" from "haw." I'm convinced that a large segment of by brethren haven't learned this. The point is that they are apt to take off in any direction, oblivious to what the word of God teaches.

Our blessed Lord taught a lesson about the son who would not work, but later he repented and went out to the vineyard (Matthew 21:29). Would it not seem that after he repented, his life demonstrated a change of mind and conduct? Did he not truly prove himself? At least, he didn't run in any try to be the foreman!

When Paul wrote to the brethren in Corinth, he had to deal with a serious problem. His first letter really disturbed the church, but it did much good. The members repented, and in the second letter Paul commended the brethren by saying, ". . . what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves . . . In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter" (II Corinthians 7:11). Could anyone ask more -- or LESS? We believe this is the desire of sound and godly brothers and sisters in the family of God today.

There is no question at all that good men were needed to preach and teach in carrying out the great commission. After his conversion, Saul of Tarsus became a great missionary. Oftentimes there were faithful brethren who would accompany Paul on his journeys. John Mark helped in the work at Seleucia, Cyprus, Salamis and Paphos, but

when Paul and Barnabas arrived in Perga, John left them and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:5; 13:13). John escaped the persecution which later came to Paul and Barnabas in Antioch of Pisidia. He did not have to flee from Iconium, neither was he stoned with Paul at Lystra. He apparently was spared "much tribulation" (Acts 14:22). When time came to go on another preaching journey, Paul refused to take John Mark, ". . . who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work (Acts 15:38). Barnabas and Mark left together. What happened to them? Barnabas had succumbed to false teachers and had previously compromised (Galatians 2:13). No doubt he and John Mark were suitable to each other.

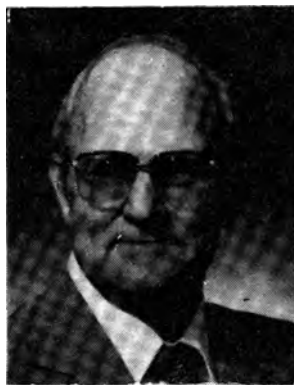
Paul and Silas continued the great work, but be it remembered that Paul refused to let John Mark go along. Were there songs to lead? I do not know, but I do know that if there were, Paul would not let Mark lead them. Was there communion to pass to the audience? I do not know, but I do know that Paul would not permit Mark to pass it. Were there sermons to preach? Yea, verily, but I know for a fact that Paul would absolutely refuse to introduce John Mark as the preacher. Did Paul do right? Did he judge Mark? Do you think that we are in good

company when we stand beside Paul? Time passes on and we are certain that John Mark made many improvements in his life. The same inspired apostle who earlier refused to accept Mark, later wrote to Timothy and said, "**Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry**" (II Timothy 4:11). Had Paul changed his convictions? No, but rather Mark had *proved* himself with the passing of time. This is exactly what my brethren have every right to expect of me if I act a fool. I would hope that God would spare me so that I could change my wicked ways and prove my sincerity by love and loyalty to him.

None of us are immune from temptation and sin. We must be forgiving till seventy times seven (Matthew 18:22). When a brother becomes guilty of a flagrant and grievous sin he must repent and confess the sin. He should do all within his power to remedy the situation. This would undoubtedly take time in many instances. When a brother proves himself by a change of mind and life, I stand ready to help, assist, forgive, and lift up whomever -- **but let them first be proved!**

--Via The Harvesters, 1807 South Florida Ave., Lakeland, FL 33803.

Weightier Matters



Dean Fugett

"Which hand shall I hold it with?" asked the young worker. "Whichever one you can do without!" answered the man swinging the hammer. The young helper stood upright, placed both hands into his pockets, and slowly walked away. I don't blame him.

I sometimes think about "whichever one you can do without" whenever I hear brethren beginning to argue over their perceived conflict between "law" and "grace" or "faith" and "baptism." These brethren seem to have no problem setting one scripture against another. They have forgotten that "there is one lawgiver" (James 4:12). Whatever we find in the scripture is there at the authority of God. If they have no problem in serving a God of conflict and contradiction, I do! Therefore, I know that any conflict or contradiction (?) of scriptures

I remember reading about a conversation between an old man whose job it was to swing the hammer to drive railroad spikes and a young man who had just hired on to be his helper. The helper asked, "What shall I do?" "Just hold the spike while I drive it" replied the old hammer-swinger.

is the fault of man, not my God.

Men who prefer "faith" as opposed to "obedience" or "grace" as opposed to "law" have created for themselves a credibility problem in their religion in the view of anyone who is just slightly acquainted with the Bible. Passages that teach us that we are under the "law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2; I Corinthians 9:21) and also saved by grace (Ephesians 2:5-9); that teach we are saved by faith (Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:8-9) and also saved by baptism (I Peter 3:21) hold no threat to the person who realizes that we can't "do without" any of those things prescribed by God as necessary elements in our salvation.

How foolish for men to pick and choose that which fits into their particular lifestyle as that which is required by God for justification, then proceed to attempt to prove that other things are not necessary. Who will set himself up as God's judge to determine as unnecessary any element that God has placed in the process by which man is able to be justified before Him? Who would dare be so foolish?

It seems that some have not stopped to think how serious is their behavior, how dangerous their doctrine. Brethren, let us be sure that we "speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11). And let us be very careful in what we "loose" and/or "bind" to see that it has truly first been loosed or bound by Heaven.

--P.O. Box 205, Cave City, AR 72521.



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Words Of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 26

NOVEMBER 16, 1990

NUMBER 46

Thanksgiving Proclamation

By Abraham Lincoln, 1863



It is the duty of nations as well as of men to owe their dependence upon the overruling power of God; to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations are blessed whose God is the Lord.

We know that by His divine law, nations, like individuals, are subject to punishments and chastisements in this world. May we not justify fear that the awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins; to the needful

end of our national reformation as a whole people?

We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace,

too proud to pray to the God that made us.

It has seemed to me fit and proper that God should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November as a day of Thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens.

--Pulpit Helps, November, 1989.

The Giving Of Thanks Is Not An Option

Harvey Porter

"When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you" (Deuteronomy 8:10).

"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name" (Psalm 100:4).

"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful" (Colossians 3:15).

"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

We are glad that our country has set aside a day for the giving of thanks to God for the blessings and bounty He has showered upon us. We as Christians, however, must not think that thanksgiving is a seasonal thing. It is a constant part of our Christian living.


Moses commanded the Israelites to remember that it was the Lord who had brought them into

that good land and enabled them to eat and enjoy its produce. The same is true for us in this wonderful country. Never have so many had so much. We do eat and are satisfied, but we must remember to "praise the Lord our God for the good land He has given us."

David wrote that great one hundredth Psalm in which he said that we should not come into the presence of our Heavenly Father without praise and thanksgiving. We must continually "count our

Continued On Page 3

All of us can conceive of circumstances that we might be in that would seem so difficult and hard that we would not feel like expressing thanks. What if we have lost our job, but still have our health, our family and our Lord? What if we have lost all our money, but still have our children, grandchildren? What if we have lost our health, but still have our faith? Surely we can all see that there are no circumstances here upon earth in which we cannot find something for which to be thankful. God expects us to see that.



Words Of Truth

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

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Thanksgiving: Tradition, Or A Way Of Life?



David Wade

Our Thanksgiving holiday is an American tradition. It should remind us of our need to give continual thanks unto God every day for all the wonderful blessings we receive from his benevolent hands. Robert Lintner said, "Thanksgiving was never meant to be shut up in a single day."

It is a fact that when people forget to give thanks, they forget the source of their blessings. The chief butler forgot the goodness of Joseph (Genesis 40:23). Later, a new Pharaoh forgot the salvation of his nation through Joseph (Exodus 1:8). Thanklessness was one of the condemning sins of the ancient world (Romans 1:21). Paul predicted perilous times for future generations, "For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemous, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, head strong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God (II Timothy 3:2-4).

To overcome the problem of thanklessness God

commands us to give thanks to everything. "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (II Thessalonians 5:18). "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6).

In addition to giving thanks in everything, we are urged to continually give thanks. "Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:20). "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Hebrews 13:15).

Giving thanks to God involves much more than the "words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart." It involves acceptable service to Him. The Psalmist asked, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" (Psalm 116:12). His answer was, "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all his people" (vss. 13-14). Paul urges us to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12).

Burton Hillis, in Better Homes And Gardens, said it well, "I don't think the Lord wants any pompous proclamation of thanks on one Thursday in November as much as he wants a little humble service from us every day in the year."

Thanksgiving

Psalm 100

*Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.
Serve the Lord with gladness:
Come before his presence with singing.
Know ye that the Lord he is God:
It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves;
We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,
And into his courts with praise:
Be thankful unto him, and bless his name.
For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting;
And his truth endureth to all generations.*



THANKSGIVING IS MORE THAN A DAY. IT IS MORE THAN THE SIMPLE UTTERANCE OF WORDS.

THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S FAMILY IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF --

A MIND THROUGH WHICH CHRIST THINKS,
A HEART THROUGH WHICH CHRIST LOVES,
A VOICE THROUGH WHICH CHRIST SPEAKS,
A HAND THROUGH WHICH CHRIST HELPS.

LET US TRULY DEMONSTRATE OUR THANKS FOR THE NUMEROUS BLESSINGS OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN HAS BESTOWED UPON HIS CHILDREN

How Do We Handle Opportunities?



Edsel Burleson

other necessities, so the boy was employed to walk the two miles into town once or twice a week to carry groceries and other necessities back to the aged man. At the end of the year the neighbor paid the boy thirteen eggs and a sitting hen for his many

Many years ago Batsell Barrett Baxter related an interesting story by Harry Gipson about a ten-year-old boy who accepted a job offer from a neighbor. The neighbor lived on a small farm two miles outside a small town. Because of advanced age the neighbor was unable to go into town

trips to and from town.

Brother Baxter observed that one's first reaction would be: "What a cheap old skinflint to demand so much for so little." But this judgment is too quick. One needs to know the rest of the story. When the boy placed his eggs under the sitting hen, twelve hatched out. Immediately, he became a chicken raiser and soon had several hundred chickens. At the age of twenty-two he had graduated from college, had paid all his expenses, and had a thriving business besides.

The neighbor did not give the boy a college education. He gave him the opportunity of securing a college education. The boy could have fried the eggs, boiled the eggs, scrambled the eggs, or he could have used them in a cake. Had he done any of these things they would have been long forgotten and his year's work would have gone for practically nothing. However, the story is very

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The Giving Of Thanks Is Not An Option

Continued From Page 1

many blessings, name them one by one," as the song says. It is spiritually beneficial to us to think upon the good things our Father has given us. It is pleasing to God to know that we are grateful and do indeed praise His name for His goodness to us.

It was Paul who wrote, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts . . . And be thankful" (Colossians 3:15). He was describing the peace that comes from knowing that you are in Christ -- a sacred spiritual relationship. We give thanks that our country is not at war. Thanks that our cities are not being destroyed and the lives of our women and children are not being taken as they are in other parts of our world. While we are thankful for

our physical peace, we ought to be thankful for our spiritual peace. That is what Paul was speaking of. Because of Christ we have peace with God and with all who have been reconciled to God. We also have peace with ourselves, knowing that we have responded to heaven's invitation. This spiritual peace is of greater value than any here upon earth.

Again, from the pen of Paul, we learn that we should "give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (I Thessalonians 5:18). All of us can conceive of circumstances that we might be in that would seem so difficult and hard that we would not feel like expressing thanks. What if we have lost our job,

but still have our health, our family and our Lord? What if we have lost all our money, but still have our children, grandchildren? What if we have lost all our money, but still have our faith? Surely we can all see that there are no circumstances here upon earth in which we cannot find something for which to be thankful. God expects us to see that. We must believe that "through Christ Jesus we are more than conquerors" in every area of life.

Giving thanks to God the Father is as natural for the child of God as living, as breathing. It goes with the calling. It suits every situation. God has a right to expect it and we have the great joy of expressing it. It is no chore. Let us give thanks always!

How Do We Handle Opportunities?

Continued From Page 2

different because the wise old neighbor gave the boy not only the necessary materials for a successful start in life, but also an idea that was full of challenge, inspiration and direction.

We are now facing unlimited opportunities. How will we handle them? God has placed them in our hands. He abundantly supplies the materials which we need for his work. He supplies in his holy word, the inspired scriptures, the challenge, the inspiration and the guidance that we need to succeed. Paul said, "But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries" (I Corinthians 16:8, 9).

Many opportunities are neglected because we are fearful. We hesitate to commit ourselves to anything we are afraid we cannot accomplish by ourselves. We leave God out of consideration.

Many opportunities are neglected because we are fearful. We hesitate to commit ourselves to anything we are afraid we cannot accomplish by ourselves. We leave God out of consideration.

Moses was afraid to undertake the job of leading the children of Israel out of bondage. It was a task beyond himself. But with God's help, he succeeded beautifully! The apostles were afraid that they wouldn't know what to say when they went out to preach, but with God's help they said exactly what needed to be said.

Paul's words to the Corinthians put the whole matter in proper perspective. He wrote simply, "We are God's fellow-workers" (I Corinthians 3:9). God provides the materials, the challenge and the guidance needed, and we work with him, if we are wise, to make successes of our lives.

There is no limit to what the church can do for the Lord if we just make up our minds, and not be

afraid! We have the ability and resources. We must not run from difficulties, and we must remember to keep our self-respect.

God has always expected the best from his people. Let us determine not to miss a single opportunity to give him our best!

An anonymous poet summed up the Christian's life in these lines entitled "OPPORTUNITY."

God gives the milk -- But not the pail

God gives the wood -- But not the rail
God gives the seed -- But not the spade
God gives the wheat -- But not the blade
God gives the fish -- But not the hook
God gives the food -- But not the cook
God gives the horse -- But not the cart
God gives the head, and hands and heart
And the rest is up to you!

--420 Seventh St. S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

Commendations Of Jesus



T. Pierce Brown

To be commended by Jesus surely is the ultimate desire of every Christian. Thus, it would behoove us to examine those whom he commended in the New Testament and strive to develop those qualities in our own lives.

Nathaniel is the first one that comes to mind. In John 1:47 we read, "Jesus saw Nathaniel coming unto him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Guile is deceitfulness or hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is the pretense to be one thing when we are another. The word often is misused. Many persons in private Bible studies have said, "I would obey, but I do not want to be a hypocrite." If you probe carefully to discover their meaning, you will find they do not know what they mean. When I ask, "Do you mean that you would pretend to be ashamed of your sin when you really are not?" The answer is, "No." When I ask, "Do you mean you are just pretending to believe Jesus is the Son of God?" The answer is "No, I believe him to be the Son of God." When I ask, "Do you mean that you if you came and were baptized and were added to the church that you think you would be pretending to be good, when you know you are not?"

Sometimes the answer is "Yes, that is what I mean."

Of course we then point out to them that no one truly can obey the gospel unless he recognizes and confesses that he is a sinner, in need of help. He is not pretending he is good. He does not have to pretend anything.

A person who pretends that he comes Sunday morning because he loves the Lord but that love disappears until the next Sunday morning is probably a hypocrite. The person who pretends that the Great Commission is important, and obedience to the Lord is important, but never lifts a finger or walks a step to win a soul to Christ is probably a hypocrite. A person who pretends he is too poor to increase his contribution to help in some program like ONE NATION UNDER GOD, but can buy a new car, take a vacation, or spend more on dog food and cigarettes than he does on Christianity is probably a hypocrite. A person who pretends that he would like to obey the Lord, if there were not so many hypocrites in the church, but still goes fishing, attends ball games or works with hypocrites is probably a hypocrite.

Nathaniel was not a hypocrite. He could be trusted to mean what he said; say what he meant and act the way he really was. Jesus commended him. How would he speak of you?

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Commendations Of Jesus

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In Matthew 8:5-10 there is a story of a centurion who came to Jesus to get his servant healed. He asked Jesus to speak the word and heal his servant. Verse 10 says, "And when Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Jesus always commends the faith of a person who is satisfied with the word and authority of God. There are apparently an increasing number of persons connected with the Lord's church who think they are authorized to do whatever God does not forbid. They ridicule the notion that when God specifies a particular thing, his silence on other things in that category makes them unauthorized and therefore unacceptable.

Nathaniel was not a hypocrite. He could be trusted to mean what he said; say what he meant and act the way he really was. Jesus commended him. How would he speak of you?

They reason like this: God is silent about electric lights, song books, and church buildings. God is also silent about instrumental music. If you argue that God's silence on a matter, such as instrumental music, is to be respected, then you must do without all things about which God is silent to be consistent. When they are asked, "Why do you not use peanut butter and jelly at the Lord's table? Why do you not sprinkle babies? If you may introduce that on which the Lord is silent, why not do those things?" They reply, "The Lord is not silent about the Lord's Supper or baptism." Notice carefully the sophistry and evasion of the issue. Certainly the Lord is not silent about the Lord's Supper or baptism. Neither is he silent about music. He specified the KIND of music. The proper argument is: He specified the kind. His silence about any other kind leaves the use of any other kind unauthorized. So it is with baptism. He specified the KIND of action. Any other kind is unauthorized.

Notice something very important. He did NOT specify the KIND of water (hot or cold, running or still, river, creek or baptistry). A person may say, "God is silent regarding the use of a baptistry. Therefore it is unauthorized." That would be improper reasoning. The proper reasoning is: God specified the kind of action (burial). He is silent about any other kind. Therefore it is unauthorized. God did not specify the kind of water. Any effort to bind upon us the necessity to use running water or cold water is going beyond God's authority.

The claim is made that those of us who teach that we should respect the silence of God on a subject means that everything that God has been silent about in the New Testament writings must be treated as if he has forbidden those things. This

claim is false. There is a much difference in teaching that we must have divine authority for what we do and teaching that God must state specifically what we do. For example, I have the authority to stand when I pray. I also have authority to kneel while I pray. I have authority to pray lying in bed. Nowhere did God state specifically that I have the right to pray in bed. He is silent on that subject. Why may I do this thing about which God is silent, and not do another about which he is silent, such as using instrumental music in worship to him? Simply because when he specified the kind of music pleasing to him, that left out or excluded any other kind. IF he had specified a particular position in prayer that he wanted, such as kneeling, then silence about any other position would have excluded using any other position.

It seems amazing that a person who claims to be a Bible scholar cannot see the difference in the fact that we DO have authority for using electric lights (or any other kind) to do what God said do, but would NOT have authority for them if God has specified that we worship him by candle light. We DO have authority to baptize in a baptistry with warm water, though God is silent about that, but we would NOT have authority to do it if God had specified the river Jordan. Naaman is a perfect illustration of that which no serious Bible student should overlook. For the same reason, we DO have authority to sing in worship using an amplifier, about which God is silent, but we do NOT have authority to PLAY in worship, about which God is silent. The amplifier is merely a means to do what God commanded. The organ is a means to do what God did not command. The reason is that singing is a kind of music which God specified. Playing is a kind of music which God did not authorize.

The centurion was commended for his great faith because he was willing to depend on the word of Jesus instead of merely guessing what he should do and then assuming that it was satisfactory. Are you willing to do that?

The centurion was commended for his great faith because he was willing to depend on the word of Jesus instead of merely guessing what he should do and then assuming that it was satisfactory. Are you willing to do that?

In Matthew 16:18, when Peter had confessed that Jesus was the Christ, Jesus said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah." We have probably done a disservice to this great truth by not emphasizing what is involved in it. Probably many connected with the church think of "Jesus Christ" as the name of a great person who is our Saviour. The expression "Jesus Christ, the King" would be

similar to the expression, "George Bush, the President." If we understood what the term "Messiah" meant to the Jew, it might help us to appreciate more deeply what confessing Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God involves. The Messiah was to be one like Moses, Aaron, David and Melchisedec, but greater. He is Lord of all, and God in the flesh.

No one can have that insight without having it revealed unto him by the Father. He revealed it to Peter (Matthew 16:17) and reveals it to us through Peter. If all persons who confess it with their lips really grasped its meaning in their hearts and showed that they mean it by their lives, the church of the Lord would multiply greatly.

There is a story of a poor widow in Mark 12:41-44 whom Jesus commended. Probably more preachers tell this story and fondly hold it up as an example for us and then fail to follow that example than any other in the Bible. I know a preacher who started out giving 40% of his income to the work of the Lord and has not given less than 50% for many years. Yet he did not do what this poor widow did. Although he might receive commendations from you if you knew him, he need not expect the kind of commendation she got. She gave all she had.

Would you like the commendations of Jesus? If so, then study these and other characters he commended and try to pattern your life after them. Merely to pattern the outward acts after them might look good to us, but that would not get the commendation of Jesus. Confessing with the mouth is not good enough. That confession with the mouth must lead to profession with the life. Liberal giving measured by human standards is not good enough. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profits me nothing" (I Corinthians 13:3). Christianity is not merely an outward show but every act must come from a heart of love which results in outward acts that glorify God.

--Rt. 2, Box 144X, Wartrace, TN 37183.
(615)454-9042.

Rule Of Three

Three things to love:
courage, gentleness
thoughtfulness

Three things to hate:
cruelty, hypocrisy,
pride

Three things to fight for:
principle,
home, country

Three things to control:
temper, tongue
appetite



(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 26

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How Much Was Morris Siegel Worth?



Don Williams

On December fourteenth, 1989, Morris Siegel, a Los Angeles "street person," died. When he was found in a back alley, only three dollars were found in his possession. That amount of money is what makes this story so unique.

Ten years earlier, Siegel's father had died, leaving to his son a great inheritance of money -- over two hundred thousand dollars. The son Morris refused, however to come forward and claim the money that was rightfully his. The Government Division of Unclaimed Property finally located him, and his family forced him to accept the money. He used very little of it, buying only an old car to sleep in during periods of bad weather. His family rented him a nice apartment, but he refused to live there, choosing rather to live on the streets with his friends. Thus, on the day that he died, he died being thought of as a pauper, when actually he had three bank accounts totalling \$207,421!

How sad a story! Here was a man that could have put his money to good use, placing it in money-making saving accounts, and the end result was that he could have lived a fairly comfortable life. Instead, he chose to live as a street person, living from "hand-to-mouth" day by day. Now, I have nothing against those less fortunate who must live on the streets because they have nowhere else to call home. But I cannot understand why someone that had the financial means to live in a nice apartment would CHOOSE to live on the streets instead. I dare say that many street people would have liked to have had the money that he did, putting it to good use, instead of ignoring it as he did.

However, is it worse when today people everywhere have the riches of Christ available unto them, but they choose not to follow him? Is it

not a GREATER poverty when men choose to remain in their sins when the precious invitation of Christ is extended to them? Far too many people, like that of the rich young ruler are going away sad because they refuse to follow Jesus (Mark 10:17-22). We grieve when a person dies, and rightly so. But how much greater ought our grief to be, when one marches to the grave, having never known the spiritual blessings that could have been his (Ephesians 1:3), and the joy of forgiveness of

Is it not a GREATER poverty when men choose to remain in their sins when the precious invitation of Christ is extended to them?

sins (Ephesians 1:7), and the hope of eternal life (II Corinthians 5:21)?

How much was Morris Sigel worth? Far more than \$207,421. He was worth more than the entire world. Jesus said "for what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26). His soul was worth so much that God sent his only Son to die on the cross for the sins of Morris Siegel (John 3:16). He also died for your sins.

There are many other "Morris Siegels" living today. They may not have as much money as he did. They may live in finer places than he lived, but they have the same value upon their souls as Morris Siegel did. Let us find them and bring them to Jesus before it be too late.

Wasting Life

Douglas F. Parsons

There was something different about Morris Siegel. On the surface he seemed like your average Los Angeles street person -- roaming about in dark alleys, sleeping out-of-doors, carrying everything he owned in an old shopping cart. And he died the way one expects a street person to die -- found in an alley, dead of natural causes, heart trouble perhaps. But there was something about him that was different.

Maybe it was his three bank accounts containing a total of \$207,421.00.

Ten years ago, Morris' father died and left the money to him. When Morris did not claim it, the Division of Unclaimed property tracked him down, and his family forced him to accept it. He did not show up at the ceremony when the cash was handed over. He took enough of the money to buy an older car, where he slept in bad weather. Relatives rented him an apartment; he never went there. He died December 14, 1989, with three

dollars in his pocket and an untouched fortune in the bank.

Morris lived a wasted life and died a futile death, but I can't be too quick to point the finger at him. He was only dealing with the temporary, and many of us play the same losing game with the eternal.

Sound crazy? Well, figure this one out.

A couple thousand years ago, our Heavenly Father ratified His will, and left all of His children eternal wealth -- life, peace, victory. To this day, many have not claimed the windfall and some

Continued On Page 3

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Can You Gain The "Whole World?"



David Wade

and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:24-26).

Most students of the Bible do not have any problem understanding that the first two verses of the above text apply to each of us personally. However it is easy for us to miss the meaning of the next verse, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world?" "Poor little me." We say. "That could never apply to me. I'll never be able to own the whole world!" True, you cannot own the whole world, and no one ever has. Alexander the Great thought he could, but he could not. Adolf Hitler had great dreams of controlling the world, but he could not. The greatest, wealthiest, and most powerful have soon faded into insignificance. The dust and ashes of their tyranny lies buried in the rubble of human history.

However, we should not assume for a moment that the statement of Jesus has no application for anyone. The problem with our misunderstanding is with our incorrect interpretation. We are

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world,

attempting to make the statement literal, when, of necessity, it must be figurative.

The "whole world" of Matthew 16:26 should be viewed as "hyperbole," that is, exaggeration for effect, not meant to be taken literally. With this in mind, then, your "whole world" is whatever part of this world that comes between you and God. It may be great riches, or even a small sum. I may be something else not directly related to riches, your pet sin or some vice. Ultimately, all sin relates to the love of money, for, as Paul said, "the love of money is the root of all evil" (I Timothy 6:10).

You don't have to be rich to come under condemnation. Paul said, "But they that will [are minded to ASV] be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, which drown men in destruction and perdition" (I Timothy 6:9). The poorest man on the earth comes under this condemnation if he desires to be rich to the point he will do anything to get it. His "whole world" may be only a small pittance.

Jesus came to deliver us from the tyranny of things. Jesus speaks of self denial, cross bearing, and losing one's life for his sake. Our greatest need is salvation. In the words of an unknown author;

If our greatest need had been information,
God would have sent us an educator.
If our greatest need had been technology,
God would have sent us a scientist.
If our greatest need had been money,
God would have sent us an economist.
If our greatest need had been pleasure,
God would have sent us an entertainer.
But our greatest need was forgiveness,
so God sent us a Saviour!

What Makes You Angry?



Edsel Burleson

One winter morning a husband heard his wife trying unsuccessfully to start her car. He went outside and asked, "Did you try choking it?"

Gritting her teeth, she replied, "No, but I felt like it."

Sooner or later everyone experiences that more rapid heart beat.

The veins in the temples and the neck become enlarged as one feels the surging of the emotions through them. The face feels flushed. The thinking becomes a little clouded. What has happened? You have become angry!

James A. Jones once wrote, "Anger is an emotion which every person experiences beginning with his first day of life. He may neither be aware of it or call it that, but for certain each person gets angry. He may not get angry everyday, stay angry all day, or blow up when he gets angry, but each Christian gets angry. He may deny it and disguise it so effectively that even others may not detect it, but he experiences anger. He may pout, slam doors, accuse and blame, not realizing these are methods of expressing his anger. He may be 'slurpy sweet' and 'super nice' when in the presence of another, and knife him in the back the first chance he gets. This is anger. Yes, each Christian gets angry and through the years, Christians have sinned with their anger."

What upsets you? What makes you angry? The waitress failing to take your order soon after being

My Sins Of Omission

John Gipson

As a boy growing up I heard many prayers which requested, "Forgive us our sins of omission as well as commission." Perhaps I haven't been paying close enough attention, but it seems to me that it's been a long time since I heard anyone mention sins of omission. Do you suppose we think we are doing everything we ought to be doing? Maybe nothing is being omitted anymore. If that is the case, we surely have come a long way in the last few years.

The scripture still says, "Whoever knows what is right to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin" (James 4:17). Just as surely as we can do wrong by doing wrong, we can do wrong by failing to do right.

Manford George Gutzke writes, "Thus it is sin if we do not worship God. We all know perfect well that we live our life around the clock, and around the week. We live from Sunday to Sunday through all the days of the week. Somewhere on Sunday people gather to worship God. Should we go? Yes! Do we go? No! What's that? Sin! We cannot say, 'But I didn't do anything.' The fact that we did nothing, was sin. Take the matter of reading the Bible. Should we read the Bible? Yes! If we do not

read the Bible -- it's sin. Take the matter of prayer. Should we pray? Yes! When we do not pray we sin."

When we see an opportunity to help others and do not help, that's sin. When we see people who should be respected and honored, and we do not respect them, that's sin. When we do not give as we have been prospered, that's sin. We cannot say, "We didn't do anything," as though that were an excuse. When we didn't do anything that was sin.

John Wesley in speaking of these failures says, "How many *sins of omission* are they chargeable with? We know the words of the apostle, 'To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.' But do they not know a thousand instances wherein they might have done good, to enemies, to strangers, to their brethren, either with regard to their bodies or their souls, and they did it not? How many omissions have they been guilty of, in their duty toward God? How many opportunities of communicating, of hearing His word, of public or private prayer, have they neglected!"

Enough! Lord, forgive me my sins of omission!
--Via *Keynoter*, LittleRock, Arkansas.

"Be Ye Angry And Sin Not"



Cecil Corkren

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Anger and all its cousins - malice, hatred, bitterness, resentment and vengeance all have a profound effect on our physical and spiritual well being.

Consider the destructive power of anger: wars, bloodshed alienation of friends and family etc. Blind hatred and anger have robbed many people of good health and spiritual progress. Anger takes a great toll upon your body. Anger can sap your strength, wreck your health and lead to a premature death. In fifteen minutes of anger one can use up as much energy as an entire day of zestful work. Anger can disorder nerves and deposit poison in the blood. Dr. Alexis Carrel states, "Envy, fear and hate, when the sentiments are habitual, are capable of starting organic changes and genuine diseases." Dr. Paul Meier said, "pent-up anger is probably the leading cause of death."

Anger can destroy relationships. Your best friend can be turned-off by a fit of anger. A moment of an unleashed anger can drive an immovable wedge between you and someone you love. This is why

Wasting Life

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have refused to spend any of it. Lost people shuffle down blind alleys of an empty existence, facing hell for eternity, and ignore the salvation promised in Christ. Many Christians, who have heaven for their final destination, content themselves with a grubby, isolated, unproductive life on this earth.

Morris lived a wasted life and died a futile death, but I can't be too quick to point the finger at him. He was only dealing with the temporary, and many of us play the same losing game with the eternal.

--Via East Cullman Bulletin.

"In your anger do not sin.." Who is the monster that rages within? Anger is one of man's greatest problems. Dr. Low an eminent American psychiatrist said, "Anger is the greatest single problem in life." In Proverbs 14:29 "He that is slow to anger is of

Paul said, "Be ye angry and sin not." Being human we become angry at times. The Lord was angry at the money-changers at the temple in Matthew 21 but he did not sin. So, the key is learning how to control its manifestations. The story is told of an aged man who went to a doctor for a checkup. The doctor said, "You are the most robust for your age that I ever saw. What is your secret?" The man replied, "When my wife and I married we agreed when I lost my temper she was to keep quiet and when she lost her temper I was to go out of doors. My wife lost her temper so often I've spent most of my time in the fresh air. That is the reason for my good health."

Anger can destroy relationships. Your best friend can be turn-off by a fit of anger. A moment of unleashed anger can drive an immovable wedge between you and someone you love.

Anger can also destroy your spiritual life. Do you feel like praying when you are angry? When you are upset do you feel like eating the Lord's Supper?

Just A Matter Of Time



Bobby Duncan

Someone told the story of three demons sitting in a coal bin in hell discussing ways to undermine the faith of a man about to make a decision to obey the gospel of Christ. The first demon suggested telling the man there is no God, but the other two rejected the idea, saying there is too much evidence to the contrary. The second suggested trying to convince the man there is no heaven or hell. The other two said that wouldn't work, for the evidence for the authenticity of the Bible is just too great, and the Bible doctrine of heaven and of hell is just too clearly taught. The third demon said: "I know what will work. Let's assure him there is a God, and that Jesus is his Son. Let's let him know there is a heaven and a hell, and let's let him know he must obey the Lord to miss hell and go to heaven. Then we will tell him there's no hurry."

I wonder how many people will miss heaven because they believed that old lie of the devil: "There's no hurry." Governor Felix of Caesarea is

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This is why we all need to be careful not to become upset and tempers flare when brethren meet to discuss the Lord's work. Anger and malice will hinder our spiritual progress. Anger is a feeling one has toward something or someone who hurts, opposes or offends. Anger is deadly when we let it lead us to sin.

--1705 Sandra Lee Drive, Jasper, AL 35501.

What Makes You Angry?

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seated; finding long lines at all registers when you are ready to check out; being caught for an hour in snarled traffic because someone failed to yield the right-of-way; the 'honk' of the driver behind you at the same instant that the light changes -- these are things over which we can really build up steam.

A few years ago Virgil R. Trout wrote: "When anger is on the throne, reason is in the chains of slavery. Anger is short madness. Men are like steel -- when they lose their tempers, they are worthless.

"Anger causes the innocent to be punished. So many times the husband, angry because of a difficult day, takes out his feelings on his family. Anger creates a feeling of instability that can aggravate the repetition of a mistake rather than the prevention of the mistake recurring.

"Anger hurts the individual physically and mentally. To be angry is to revenge the faults of others upon yourself. So often the fire that you kindle for your enemy burns you more than him.

To be angry is to revenge the faults of others upon yourself. So often the fire that you kindle for your enemy burns you more than him.

"To combat anger, you will find that prayer can be an effective tool. Sometimes talking to a friend in confidence can make the difference. Perhaps just 'taking a short walk' will calm your feelings. 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city' (Proverbs 16:32)."

An unknown author gave some excellent advice in these lines:

It doesn't do to do much talking
When you're mad enough to choke
For the word that hits the hardest
Is the one that's never "spoke."

Let the other fellow do the talking
Till the storm has rolled away,
Then he'll do a heap of thinking
'Bout the things you didn't say.

--420 7th Street S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

Jesus - Conqueror Of Demons And Critics



Brad T. Bromling

Jesus' miracles confirm that He was all He claimed to be. For this reason, He occasionally cited them as a witness to His identity (John 10:37, 38).

Demon Possession

Of all the various types of miracles which Jesus performed, those involving members of the demonic realm strike modern man as being the most strange. These records have engendered thoughts on two extremes. For the skeptic, the mention of demons is a sure sign that the Gospel records are mythical. For others, the fact that Jesus met demon-possessed people is an indication that demon possession is a current reality. Both extremes are problematic. The first fails to take the Scriptures seriously, and the second is at odds with the gist of biblical teaching.

Sadly, few have taken time to search what the scriptures have to say regarding demon possession. While there is much we do not know, four things are evident. First, this was not an Old Testament phenomenon (there is no record of such, nor is there any legislation regarding the exorcising of demons). Second, demon possession ceased at the close of the miraculous age. In other words, when the apostles and those upon whom they had conferred the power to exercise demons had all died, the ability to cast out demons vanished (see Acts 8:18; Mark 16:17; I Corinthians 13:8-10). It is inconceivable that demon possession would have continued beyond the age in which God's people could exercise power over them. Third, demon possession was a reality during the time of Jesus' earthly sojourn and the few years which followed. Fourth, modern-day "demon possession" bears no resemblance to that described in the Bible. If we are to accept the continuation of this phenomenon, it is only reasonable to expect modern reports to agree with New Testament accounts. They do not.

The Defeat Of Legion

Three of the Gospel writers record an incident in which the Lord encountered demon-possessed men in an area near the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; and, Luke 8:26-39). Demon possession caused these men to be wild and dangerous to others (Matthew 8:28), a danger to themselves (Mark 5:5), and a public shame (Luke 8:27). Tragically, they were tormented and out of their right minds (Mark 5:5, 15). If anyone needed Jesus, they did. With obvious compassion, the Lord restored the men to good health by expelling the demons.

Additionally, the supernatural character of Jesus is spotlighted. The demonics cowered before the Lord in worship (Mark 5:6) -- this is in contrast to the way they treated other men (Matthew 8:28). The demons (called collectively "Legion") expressed absolute submission to Jesus (Mark 5:6-13). Not once did Legion make a demand of the Lord; instead, he pleaded with Him. He begged

the Lord not to torment him (Mark 5:7); and he begged Jesus to send him into a herd of swine rather than out of the country and back into the abyss (cf. Mark 5:10-12; Luke 6:31). When commanded to exchange his human habitation for the herd of swine, Legion did so without further discussion (Mark 5:32). Unquestionably, Jesus had the power of deity at His command. He was the Son of God.

Two Criticisms Countered

Critics compare the three accounts of this event and argue that they contain two insurmountable contradictions. If this is true, belief in the inspiration of the New Testament must be abandoned. The first of these criticisms relates to the number of men healed on this occasion. The critic asserts that, whereas Matthew recorded that there were two demon-possessed men who met Jesus (Matthew 8:28), Mark and Luke wrote that there was only one man possessed by Legion.

How many demoniacs were there? It is obvious from the combined accounts that there were at least two men possessed by the demons. But what of Mark's and Luke's accounts? Did they specifically say: "There was one, and only one demon-possessed man who approached Jesus"? Did they explicitly say, "There were not ten, not five, not three, not even two demoniacs, but only one who approached Jesus"? No, they did not! And that is precisely the point. Mark and Luke did not rule out the possibility that there was more than one; they simply discussed one of at least two men. Why did they do this? Were they trying to be dishonest? Were they trying to cast doubt upon their records? Such suggestions are silly. If these men had been propagating a falsehood and, therefore, had the intention of deceiving their readers, why would they have changed such unimportant details? Rather than being a case against the reliability of these writers, these factors show that they were not in collusion. If there were two men (as Matthew indicates) then was there not one man? Why Mark and Luke chose to focus upon one man, instead of both, may be a matter of curiosity, at best. But to claim that this difference is a contradiction is unfair.

The second criticism concerns the request made by Legion. In Mark, the demons entreated Jesus to not send them out of the country, (vs 10) but in Luke, the demons entreated Jesus to not send them into the abyss (vs 31). These records, the critic asserts, are contradictory.

Well, of what were the demons afraid? Did they fear being sent out of the country, or of being sent into the abyss? Were this not an actual criticism, one might think it a straw man! In fact, it is very easy to conceive of how this difference might have arisen among the Gospel records. Legion may have said, "Please don't send us out of this country and command us to depart into the abyss; there is a herd of swine nearby, let us enter them." If so (and this certainly makes sense), then the three records of that event would be correct, even though they say different things.

Conclusion

The accounts of Jesus' defeat of Legion underscore the Lord's authority over the spirit

world. Its inhabitants are impotent to oppose Him. Also, attacks on these records show how weak the skeptic's case against inspiration commonly is. Their alleged contradictions have no basis in fact, but arise out of an ignorant confusion over what constitutes a contradiction. Plainly, a mere difference does not a contradiction make!

--Via Reasoning From Revelation, 230 Landmark Drive, Montgomery, AL 36117.

Just A Matter Of Time

Continued From Page 3

best known to Bible students for the fact he spoke those infamous words: "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25). That convenient season never came for Felix; it never comes for anyone. Where did we ever get the idea that there would be a time when obedience to God would be convenient? Service to the Father has always demanded that people do things that are not convenient. It is a fact that the longer one delays his obedience to the gospel of Christ the more inconvenient it becomes.

James chided those who say: "Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain." To them he said: "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:13, 14). Many of the funerals conducted yesterday were for people who already had plans for next week and next year. And some of those buried yesterday would have said they had plans to obey the gospel of Christ at a very indefinite time in the future referred to as "some day."

Many of the funerals conducted yesterday were for people who already had plans for next week and next year. And some of those buried yesterday would have said they had plans to obey the gospel of Christ at a very indefinite time in the future referred to as "some day."

Friend, if you plan to be a Christian "some day," let me challenge you to name the day. Most people whose plans to serve God are so indefinite will not even name the decade. If you fall into the category of those who plan to be a Christian "some day," but you will not name the date, then you are waiting for a convenient season, and it will never come. If you ever do obey the Lord, it will be with greater inconvenience than it would be now.

You may say, "Oh, it's just a matter of time." That's right! And time is swiftly passing. If you continue to delay your obedience to Christ, it's just a matter of time until you die lost.

--2809 Madison St., Adamsville, AL 35005.



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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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Are You A Chameleon?



Cecil Corkren

who changes with his surroundings and is wavering or inconsistent. He takes on the characteristics of those he is with at the time.

God expects His people to be different, to be "holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27). Christians are to be a "holy nation" (I Peter 2:9), "a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). God's children are to be unlike the world. Concerning the sinful world, we are commanded to "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (II Corinthians 6:17). While we live in a sinful environment we must not be "of the world" (John 17:16).

When a Christian is asked to state his position on an issue in the church, his answer should be very clear. Many times the liberal is so nebulous we are not sure what he means. Worldly minded members of the church live a double life, one way on Sunday while in the company of the brethren and still another way when associating with the world. He leads two lives. He is like a chameleon, changing his colors according to his surroundings.

Jesus condemned "chameleon-ism" in Matthew 6:24 when He said, "No man can serve two masters." Also, Jesus taught, "He that is not with me is against me" (Matthew 12:30). Some people like to be on both sides at the same time by changing according to the circumstances. A

Yes, you could be like the group of lizards found in Africa and other parts of the world, which have the ability to change colors to match its surroundings. The lizard's feelings control these changes. James mentions a chameleon and calls him "double minded" (James 1:8).

A chameleon is one

preacher was heard to say, "I can preach it either way, for or against, depending on what the brethren want."

The time has come in the church of our Lord to take a stand against the "isms": denominationalism, humanism, evolution, hedonism and many other "isms" who make pleasure their god. Paul said, "Whose God is their belly" (Philippians 3:19). These pleasure-minded brethren are eroding our spirituality and making us a humanistic society. We need to stand up and be counted when the liberal minded brethren seem more concerned about the here and now than they are the here-after! Why not let your true colors shine brightly against the world's standards regarding Crossroadism, marriage, divorce, remarriage and any other "isms" that are threatening the spiritual life Christ's church.

The church is dying in many places due to the popularity of the larger mega-mart congregations who encourage members of the smaller congregations to leave and attend "where the crowd is" as a popular concept of greater spirituality.

Some preachers and elders say nothing to call members back to God's standards and some even seek to defend the ways of the world in the face of Christ's teaching (Matthew 19:4-9). "Why sit we here until we die?" (II Kings 7:3). The church is dying in many places due to the popularity of the larger mega-mart congregations who encourage members of the smaller congregations to leave and attend "where the crowd is" as a popular concept

of greater spirituality. We need men and women that will stand up against the unstable conditions in the church when the social gospel is heard from the pulpits. We need to speak out against these insidious ways before we die! In the words of Elijah; "How long halt ye between two opinions?" (I Kings 18:21).

--1705 Sandra Lee Drive, Jasper, Alabama 35501.

Me? A Bad Attitude?



Edsel Burleson

The Christian life requires the proper attitude in all areas, especially toward our brethren.

Many people need attitude adjustments. If attitudes were fine tuned, the work of the Lord would be increased, and the joy of Christian living would come to the forefront.

All too often, attitudes rock back and forth between negative and rotten. Such attitudes mean that there is very little in life that brings happiness.

Numerous New Testament passages show the importance of brotherly love. Paul said, "But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write

Attitude is a vital factor which controls how we serve the Master. Frequently we have heard someone say, "That person has a miserable attitude" or "He has a pleasant attitude." Our attitudes not only will determine our character, but also where we will spend eternity.

Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

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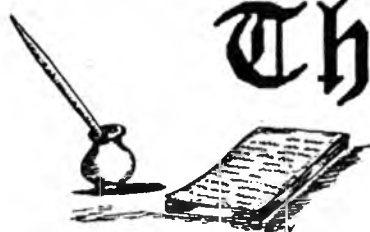
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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

"Come Before Winter"



David Wade

pleaded, "Do thy diligence to come before winter" (II Timothy 4:23).

It was a long and dangerous voyage from Ephesus to Rome. Paul had personal experience with shipwreck, having survived at least four (II Corinthians 11:25; Acts 27:41). The wreck in Acts 27 was the direct result of sailing too late in the season. The captain of the ship had simply let the summer of opportunity slip from him.

We do not know if Timothy made the trip in time to be with Paul before his death. We can speculate that if Timothy expected to see Paul he would have to seize his "summer of opportunity" and go to Rome before winter.

Our opportunities are like the seasons of the year. There is the spring, or birth, of opportunity. Then there is the summer, or full growth, of opportunity. If opportunity is not seized, the fall, or fading, of opportunity soon approaches. Finally, there is the winter, or death, of opportunity.

Opportunities unused are soon lost. When opportunities are lost, they are usually lost forever. What are some of the "summers of opportunity" that may be yours today?

This may be your summer of opportunity to be busy in the Lord's work. "Oh, I'm going to get busy in the church some day." When? The pews are full of Christians who consider the church a spectator sport! Jesus said, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few" (Matthew 9:37). Furthermore, Jesus sounded the urgency, "Say not yet, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35).

I can't think of any greater regret than that of letting a loved one slip into eternity, having never mentioned Jesus and the church to him. Opportunities unused were soon lost.

This may be your summer of opportunity to rear

your children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Time can really slip up on us in this duty! Psychologists and others tell us that the direction a child will go in life is fairly well established by age six.

We cannot abdicate our responsibility to the church. At best, the church can only facilitate what we are trying to accomplish at home. We cannot leave this task to the baby sitter, day care center, T.V., the policeman, school teacher, or anyone else! Far too many Christian parents are now living their lives in regret and would give anything in life to have one more opportunity with their children.

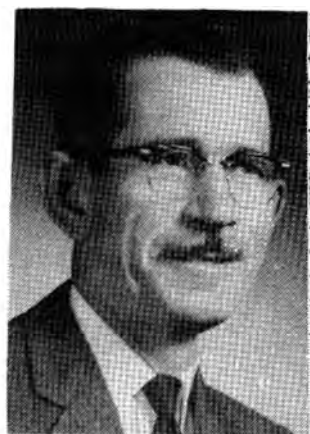
It is a fact that, in spite of our best efforts, some children go astray after they leave home. This, too, causes much sorrow, but it is not the sorrow or guilt felt by parents who squandered their opportunity.

This may be your summer of opportunity to show love and appreciation to those nearest to you. After your parents are gone, rivers of tears and flower bedecked graves cannot bring back the opportunity to show honor and care for them (Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:2-3). Furthermore, this may be your summer of opportunity to show love and care for your mate (Ephesians 5:25; Titus 2:4), your neighbor (Galatians 6:10; Romans 13:10), a stranger (Matthew 25:35), or an enemy (Matthew 5:44). Opportunities unused are soon lost.

If you are not a Christian, this may be your summer of opportunity to obey the gospel. God's vengeance awaits those who "obey not the gospel" (Romans 10:16; II Thessalonians 1:7-10, I Peter 4:17-18). Obeying the gospel requires faith in Christ, repentance from sin, confession of Christ, and baptism into Christ (John 6:29; Acts 2:38; 8:37-39; Galatians 3:26-27). When you are baptized into Christ, you are added to his body, the church (Acts 2:47; I Corinthians 12:13). As a member of the church one should serve and be faithful unto death in order to receive the crown of life (Philippians 2:12; Revelation 2:10). Heaven awaits the faithful who "die in the Lord" (Revelation 14:13).

Paul said, "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me . . . Do thy diligence to come before winter." Sadly, Jeremiah said of his people, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended and we are not saved" (Jeremiah 8:20). There are some things in life we must do now, or they will never be done!

Minimizing Spiritual Things



Elwood Holt

for one tenth of that!"

He was standing there before the paintings of a master, thinking of whitewashing fences on the farm! How often do we stand in the presence of the symbol of the shed blood of Christ, and think of trivial things? When we speak of the money spent each year in mission work do we think at the same time of all the things the money could be spent for otherwise? When we give as the Lord has prospered us on the Lord's day, as we drop our offerings into the plate, do we think of what we could have bought for ourselves with it? So many miss the real blessing the Lord has in store for them by not being spiritually able to discern spiritual values.

Too many people think only in terms of earthly values. How much is a thing worth in dollars and cents? Friends, when the work of the Lord is done we do not compare the results with what it costs.

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Me? A Bad Attitude?

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unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another" (I Thessalonians 4:9).

Many people need attitude adjustments. If attitudes were fine tuned, the work of the Lord would be increased, and the joy of Christian living would come to the forefront.

The early church was not without problems and difficulties. However, they overcame these burdens because Christians loved each other. This is a vital lesson for the church now. Today's Christians need to become more concerned about their love for each other. Joe D. Schubert once wrote, "Many congregations have survived setbacks which would have wrecked ordinary congregations because the brethren loved one another." All our attitudes would be more Christ-like if we would "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than

themselves" (Philippians 2:3).

Charles R. Woodson said, "The important and decisive factor in life is not what happens to us, but the attitude we take toward what happens. The surest revelation of one's character is the way one bears suffering. Circumstances and situations may color life, but by the grace of God, we have been given the power to choose what color that shall be. The effect that misfortune, handicap, sickness and sorrow have upon life is determined by the way in which we meet them." It was Michel de Montaigne who said, "There are some defeats more triumphant than victories."

What is your attitude toward the work of the Lord? Do you have the confidence in the Lord's promises and the possibilities present for advancing the Lord's cause? Are you an optimist or pessimist as your attitude relates to the work of the church?

Someone summed it up this way. "The church that I attend is composed of people like me. We make it what it is. It will be friendly -- if I am. Its pews will be filled -- if I help fill them. It will do a great work -- if I work. It will make generous gifts to many causes -- if I am a generous giver. It will

bring other people into its worship and fellowship -- if I bring them. It will be a church of loyalty and love, of fearlessness, faith, and a church with noble spirit if I, who make it what it is, am filled with these. Therefore with the help of God, I shall dedicate myself to the task of being all the things that I want the church that I attend to be."

Do you grumble that roses have thorns? Or, are you thankful that thorns have roses? If we handle the rose of life with gloves of patience and understanding, and search for the real meaning for our lives, we will be able to face the thorns victoriously.

There is almost always a shiny silver lining as seen in the following story. A woman was preparing to celebrate what she thought would be her 80th birthday. She checked her birth certificate and discovered that she was actually going to be only 79.

She said, "I couldn't have had a nicer birthday gift! My doctor told me that I would have to stop riding my bicycle when I got to be 80."

--420 7th Street S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

Minimizing Spiritual Things

Continued From Page 2

Things of this life are so insignificant when compared to things that weigh with eternal value. So many can't enjoy the Christian life for thinking about what it cost them. Many can't go out and eat a good, square meal and enjoy it for thinking about the check that will soon be presented. It is so easy to judge everybody and everything by our own standards, and, so often our standards are wrong.

When the farmer saw the work of a truly great artist he could not appreciate it. He thought it was a waste of money. He couldn't see the hours and hours that had gone into it. He didn't even think of the many nights through which the painter toiled without sleep. He didn't look back and think of the man's disappointments, deprivations, and hardships. No, all he could think about was how many times he could whitewash his fences with what the painting cost!

Why do so many of us condemn things as so much waste if they do not directly benefit us? Why is mankind basically selfish at heart? We need to be able to evaluate the great material things of this life. But much more, we need to be able to properly evaluate the spiritual blessings vouchsafed unto us. What is the kingdom of God worth to us? Is it worth more than anything else in life? Jesus says that it is and that it must be put first (Matthew 6:33). What is the word of God worth to us? The word itself declares that the words of God are more precious than all earthly treasures, and that we are to seek the truth as men seek gold and silver. What is public assembly with the SAINTS of God worth? Can we say with the Psalmist, "I was glad when they said unto me, let

us go into the house of the Lord?" (Psalm 122:1). Can we say "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness?" (Psalm 84:10). Unless we can we are not properly evaluating spiritual things.

Let us never be guilty of underselling the value of things that have been touched by the finger of the Lord.

Do we yearn for the fellowship with the saints of the Lord, or would we rather go selfishly on our own way? Spiritual things are of such intrinsic value -- let us not reflect upon them by minimizing them. Let us forget about whitewashing our fences when we stand in the presence of Almighty God. Let us never be guilty of underselling the value of things that have been touched by the finger of the Lord.

Beware friends, the finger of God wrote upon the plaster of the wall of Belshazzar's palace. That night was the king of the Chaldeans slain (Daniel 6). Where do we stand in regard to the commandments of Almighty God?

Issue Oriented Preaching



Cecil May, Jr.

Should preaching be issue oriented? It depends. What issues? To what degree?

"The issues" can be too narrowly defined. Once "the issues" meant instrumental music and missionary societies. Later it meant orphans' homes and church cooperation. Today, in some places, it means trans-

lations, Boston, certain views on divorce and remarriage, instrumental music (again) and fellowship. Granted the importance of some of

these, there are other issues equally pressing: rampant sexual promiscuity, racial prejudice, alcohol and drug abuse, family disintegration, dishonesty in financial dealings, and how to evangelize both here and abroad.

There is sometimes such an absorption with a narrow range of issues that every sermon has to warn against the error of some named brother somewhere, if the preacher is to be deemed sound. Granted the validity of timely warnings against errors that may one day come their way, sound and courageous preaching does not consist in the exposure of errors of a brother our hearers already fear and despise, nor in refutation of errors no one hearing has contemplated accepting.

Some such preaching is reminiscent of a story I

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Issue Oriented Preaching

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heard.

A badly bruised knight was returning after a hard battle. His armor was dented, his helmet askew, his face bloody. His horse was limping and the knight was listing to one side in the saddle.

The King saw him and went out to meet him, asking, "What hath befallen thee, Sir Knight?"

Straightening himself up as best he could, the knight replied, "Sire, I have been laboring dutifully in thy service, pillaging all your enemies in the west."

Preaching that never addresses the issues of life and death, righteousness and sin, godliness and profane living, truth and error, is not "issue oriented" enough.

"You've been what?" cried the startled King. "But I haven't any enemies to the west."

"Oh," said the knight. And then, after a pause, "Well, you do now."

When I was in college in the fifties, many of my classes dealt with premillennialism. A story, probably apocryphal, circulated at the time about a student preacher, thoroughly indoctrinated against premillennialism, who decided to preach on it one Sunday. The small country church had never even heard the word, but he explained it and gave a lengthy tirade against it. One brother said, "Well, I never heard of this premillennialist stuff, but it sounds interesting; I think I'll look into being one."

Some who object to "issue oriented preaching" are rightly objecting to too many sermons on too narrow a range of subjects that are too little related to what they need to know and be in order to serve the Lord more faithfully in their daily lives.

On the other hand, some objectors to "issue

oriented preaching" think preachers should always just make their audiences feel good, with never a warning against error or sin, and rarely any promulgation of the doctrine of Christ (whether "from" or "about"). Preaching that never addresses the issues of life and death, righteousness and sin, godliness and profane living, truth and error, is not "issue oriented" enough.

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. He was crucified for our sins and raised the third day. There is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved. We must be sure our preaching is thoroughly "oriented" to those "issues."

--Magnolia Bible College, P.O. Box 1101, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

"Nine Out Of Ten Will Die . . . When Nothing Is Done"



Don Williams

I recently attended a class to be re-certified in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). I had originally taken the course several years ago, but had forgotten some of the techniques used.

The instructor of the course was Ricky Flippo, Supervisor of the Winfield Ambulance Service and a American Heart

Association "Heartsaver" Instructor. He mentioned that in Winfield there is an average of one heart attack victim a week. When they receive a call for an ambulance, time is of the essence in getting there to save the patient's life. If someone is doing CPR on the victim when they arrive, the patient has a much greater chance of living. If CPR is begun WITHIN four minutes after a person has stopped breathing, the patient's chance of leaving the hospital alive is FOUR times greater than if CPR is begun at a time LATER than four minutes. He then said, "unfortunately, only ONE out of TEN heart attack victims usually LIVE, because when we get to the scene, there may be a big crowd around him, but no one knows how to do CPR, and so they are doing nothing."

I thought about this fact -- how terrible it would be, to be around someone who had a heart attack, and there was nothing that you could do. In Alabama, there are "Good Samaritan" laws that require you to come to the aid of others in

desperate circumstances and give them any aid that you can. How terrible it would be to know CPR and yet refuse to help someone that you could help.

Brethren, we have the medicine that this sin-sick world needs. But if we do not offer it to them, if we just stand "in a crowd" and do nothing, then they will die, "having no hope, and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). Some of our best friends, some of our own relatives, might die -- and we did nothing.

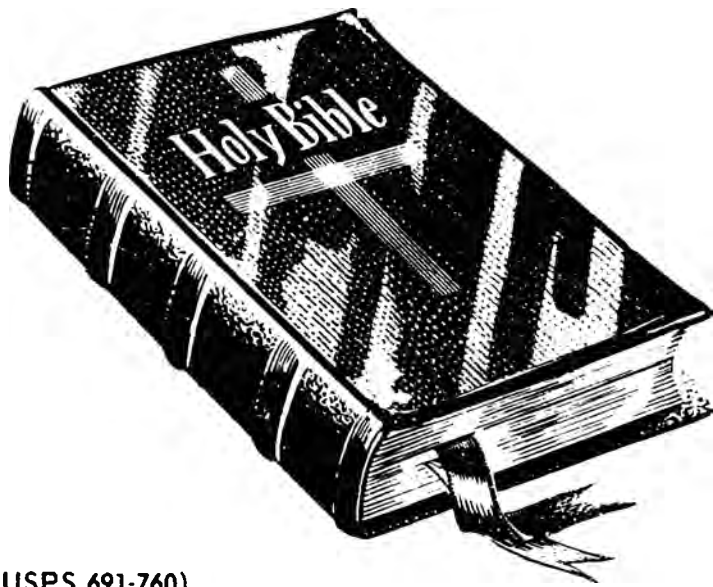
Friends, all about us there are people who we know that are dying spiritually without the gospel (Romans 6:23). We have a message that we can give them -- a message of salvation, a message of hope and deliverance from sin (I Thessalonians 5:8). Brethren, we have the medicine that this sin-sick world needs. But if we do not offer it to them, if we just stand "in a crowd" and do nothing, then they will die, "having no hope, and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). Some of our best friends, some of our own relatives, might die -- and we did nothing.

One final thought. When one has a heart attack and quits breathing, and does not have a pulse, their brain will die in as short a time as TEN minutes unless CPR is started. Every 21 seconds it is estimated that one dies without the saving knowledge of the gospel. Let us get to them before it is too late.

--P.O. Box 592, Guin, AL 35563.

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Words Of Truth

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

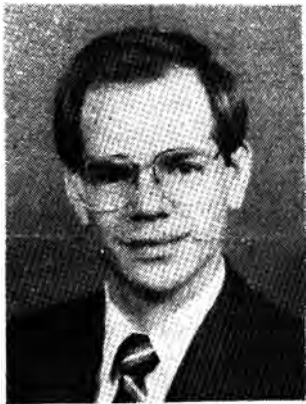
—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 26

DECEMBER 7, 1990

NUMBER 49

Using The Bible To Prove The Bible?



Brad T. Bromling

his whole case rests solely upon the Bible's own claims, he is selling the Bible short. Besides this, there are other issues which must be addressed before one may logically examine those claims, namely: (1) Does God exist?; (2) Has He communicated to mankind?

If man will but open his eyes, and use his God-given ability to reason, he will conclude with the writer of Hebrews: "every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God."

The evidence supporting God's existence surrounds us. Romans 1:19, 20 tell us: "... what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." When each man stands before the Throne of Judgment, he will not be able to plead: "but, I just did not know!" That excuse has been removed. For even the "heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament (expanse) shows His

handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). If man will but open his eyes, and use his God-given ability to reason, he will conclude with the writer of Hebrews: "every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God" (3:4). Truly, it is only "the fool [who] has said in his heart, there is no God" (Psalm 14:1)!

Understanding that God does exist, we ask the question: "Could He communicate to mankind?" Reason answers for us. Of course the God who created the vast universe, and us as intelligent creatures capable of communication, has the power to reveal Himself. Would God communicate to mankind? The answer to this question may depend upon many factors. However, if God is benevolent and has information that mankind needs, it is reasonable to conclude that He would reveal Himself. If He is malevolent, we wonder that He would create at all, and especially create man with all of his capacities to enjoy pleasure and beauty. Man's capacity for moral judgment implies that God has a moral standard to reveal. Man is nothing if not an inquisitive creature. As he looks to the heavens and accepts their testimony of God's existence, man is driven to know of His character. Further, questions of origins, purpose, direction, and responsibility to both fellow man and Creator are apparently universals. The Creator has that information. If He is benevolent, and has the answers which man seeks, then logically, He would reveal that information.

How would He do so? The answer may not seem readily apparent, but one is available. God could convey His message to men either individually or collectively. That is, He could speak to each man as an individual or He could address all of mankind through a single means. Has God spoken to each individual? It is apparent that He has not. If He did, why do men grope for answers? Why, if God has communicated to man individually, does not each man share the same understanding of basic issues (such as "from where did I come?,"

"why am I here?," "to where am I going?") If God's message has been revealed to man through a single vehicle, then it stands to reason that all who accept the message in the same way will have the same answers, while everyone else would be confused. If the message is universal (i.e., it is for all men, indefinitely), then we could expect it to be issued in a permanent form, which could be approached objectively. The testimony of history is that the most likely mode which meets that criterion is none other than written communication. Writing has been with man from almost the creation. Written documents may be copied and translated perpetually; when carefully preserved, their messages remain timeless.

At this point, it is proper to examine the Bible to see if it qualifies as communication from God to man. This is just as appropriate as asking a man to explain himself, or give testimony as to his own identity. We may reasonably expect a book of divine origin to meet obvious criteria. While there are many things that we might expect of a divine volume, for the sake of illustration we will mention only two of them.

First, we would expect a divine volume to claim to be inspired. The Bible is filled with such claims. In the Old Testament alone there are over 3,800 claims that the Scriptures are ultimately from God (e.g., "Thus saith the Lord"). Jesus attributed to God what was written in Exodus (Matthew 22:31). Peter called Paul's writings "scripture" -- a word reserved for inspired writings (II Peter 3:16). Finally, one cannot even mention the Greek word rendered "inspiration" (*theopneustos* -- literally, "God breathed") without mentioning God (II Timothy 3:16). Not all books that claim inspiration are from God; but it stands to reason that any book from God would make such a claim.

Second, we would expect a book from God to be absolutely harmonious, and free of errors. The Bible has written through the course of 1,600 years

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Words Of Truth



(USPS 691-760)

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-Acts 26:25

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David Wade . . . Editor

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World Bible School Seminar

Friday, December 14, 1990
6:30-8:30 p.m.

at

Sixth Avenue Church Of Christ

Imagine -- 1,500 requests a day from people around the world desiring to study God's Word!

Imagine -- 60,000 - 70,000 conversions to Christ each year!

Imagine -- One elderly Christian lady converting 521 souls to Christ in less than 5 years!

World Bible School had made each of these statements a reality. However, it is also a reality that there are currently over 25,000 individuals who want to study but not enough Christians to teach them.

World Bible School is part of a combined effort with foreign missionaries and native Christians to take the Word of God to the world. After a student completes the correspondence course, follow-up contact is made by a Christian in his own country. However, due to the overwhelming requests to be taught we need many more teachers.

Please come and hear Steve Worley, a missionary to Nigeria, as he explains this wonderful program and how simple it is for you to personally teach God's Word to lost souls.

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The Editor's Pen



David Wade

World Bible School



David Wade

are now effectively using World Bible School materials in reaching the lost for Jesus.

At Sixth Avenue, we began our involvement with World Bible School correspondence about four months ago. Our program is under the capable direction of David Beaird and Hap Johnson. We have about 30 adults involved who are presently corresponding with approximately 2,500 students in Nigeria and the West Indies. Already, several students have requested New Testament baptism.

World Bible School correspondence is having a tremendous impact around the world. This is especially true in Nigeria, West Africa. There are now over 1,500 congregations of the Lord's church in the land. Approximately 100,000 Christians

We have contacted the missionaries near them for followup.

Perhaps a few words are in order about how our involvement is financed. All materials and postage are paid out of the church treasury. In this manner our workers are not over burdened and the whole church has a financial involvement in the program.

If you are interested in more information, or a starter packet which includes names, addresses and appropriate materials, contact World Bible School, 4326 Hillsdale Lane, Garland, Texas 75042. Phone: 1(214)276-7524. Gospel Teachers Publications, Inc. has the needed supplies for the correspondence courses. Their address is P.O. Box 210888, Dallas, Texas 75211.

There is an urgency in this work. Many of the names we received had requested the correspondence course up to 1 to 1-1/2 years ago. This ought not to be! We need more teachers involved in this good work. If you can, come to our seminar.

Steve Worley may be reached at WBS Follow-Up, Nigerian Newsletter, 2201 Rainbow Drive, Gadsden, AL 35901.

"Do Not Lose Heart"



Cecil May, Jr.

Both Jesus and Paul, when encouraging us to keep on, use an expression that is variously translated, "faint not," "do not grow weary," "do not lose heart" (Luke 18:1; II Corinthians 4:1, 16; Galatians 6:9; Ephesians 3:13; II Thessalonians 3:13).

Do not quit praying. Jesus told a parable designed to teach us "to pray and not to lose heart" (Luke 18:1). It illustrates the power of persistence in petition, even when the person petitioned has no regard either for the petitioner or for justice. It is easy to grow discouraged in prayer. We often pray and feel unheard. But whether God hears our prayers is determined not by our feelings but by his promises. We are not promised that we will get exactly what we ask for; we are promised a hearing and a blessing when we ask. Keep praying, and do not lose heart.

Do not quit preaching. Paul was speaking of his preaching when he said, "we do not lose heart" (II Corinthians 4:16). Because his preaching brings to others the same mercy he has received, he does

"not lose heart" (II Corinthians 4:1). Preaching is often a discouraging task. The preacher preaches, but problems remain. He answers questions, but those who asked them seem not to hear. Often he sees little result. But God's word is still powerful. It brings life from death. It can draw the sinner to God, open his heart, and save his soul. "Preach the word; be instant in season and out of season" (II Timothy 4:2). God's word will accomplish its purpose. Keep preaching, and do not lose heart.

Do not quit good works. "Do not lose heart in doing good" (Galatians 6:8; II Thessalonians 3:13). We are saved to do good works which God has ordained. But it is hard work. It is easier to sit at home and watch television. It is easier to pass by on the other side, than to get messy and dirty helping the unfortunate, bleeding stranger. It is easier to say, "The government ought to do something about that," than to give the hungry our food or the cold stranger the coat off our back. Besides, one's good is often evil spoken of. The good we do is as often misused as appreciated. But God remembers, and God's reward is sure. Every cup of cold water given in his name redounds to the glory of God and the credit of the giver. Our labor is not in vain in the Lord, if we do not quit. Do good, and do not lose heart.

--Magnolia Bible College, P.O. Box 1101, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

Using The Bible To Prove The Bible?

Continued From Page 1

of human history, by more than 40 men from differing cultural, geographical, and educational backgrounds. These men worked independently, and many of them never met another biblical writer. They did not even all use the same language! Some wrote in Hebrew, others in Greek, and still others in Aramaic. Their books were, for the most part, sixty-six independent compositions. Amazingly, when these books were collected into one volume, a perfect harmony of theme and teaching emerged. In the unfolding of that theme, the Bible makes no mistakes. Try as they might, critics have been unable to find even one example

of a factual error in the Bible! All of the factors listed above which would normally work against the unity and accuracy of a merely human production had no ill effect upon the Bible. This perfect harmony and flawlessness is an effect requiring a supernatural Cause!

Try as they might, critics have been unable to find even one example of a factual error in the Bible!

The Bible goes beyond just fulfilling our expectations, it actually contains information which required supernatural guidance to be recorded. This information comes in the form of scientific foreknowledge and fulfilled prophecy.

When all of these data are examined, belief in the Bible's inspiration is shown to be not only reasonable, but capable of defense. Hence, when approached logically, the Bible may be employed as a witness to its own inspiration.

--Via Reasoning From Revelation, Apologetics Press, 230 Landmark Dr., Montgomery, AL 36117.

We Approach The Future With Great Optimism!



Edsel Burleson

[Editor's note: West End and Central congregations in Birmingham merged Sunday December 2, 1990 to form the Palisades Church of Christ. They are presently meeting at the Shades Valley High School while new facilities are under construction.]

We pray the Lord will bless their labors.]

The first issue of the West End News was dated January 11, 1948, and was edited by C. A. Norred. This final issue is Volume 42, Number 48. The next bulletin you receive will come from the Palisades Church of Christ.

In the late 1800's a small group of Christians through the efforts of Justus McDuffie Barnes, began meeting from place to place in Birmingham. In 1987 they began meeting in Fox's Hall, located at the corner of 4th Avenue and 19th Street, with 22 members.

John T. Lewis began work with the group in 1907 and in two years the membership had grown to near 100. The congregation moved to a new frame building at the corner of 7th Street SW and Lomb Boulevard, the location where the church has met to this time.

During these years, other preachers working with West End have been C. M. Pullias, I. B. Bradley, H. F. Pendergrass, J. W. Shepherd, Cecil Douthitt, Jack Meyer, Sr., David Bobo, C.A. Norred, Ernest Clevenger, Jr., and the last 14-1/2 years, Edsel Burleson. Associates have been Tim Lewis, Leslie Parks, Greg Hines, John Hackett, Tim Rice and Ron Clayton.

The present auditorium was erected in 1927, with the north annex added in 1972.

The membership reached a high of over 400 in 1936. On June 1, 1941, the Central church was begun with some 100 West End members. In various efforts, West End has furnished some of its members to help begin other congregations such as Woodlawn (Roebuck Parkway), Shades Mountain and Homewood.

We believe that the late 1990's will see the development of a powerful segment of the Lord's kingdom on the southern edge of Birmingham.

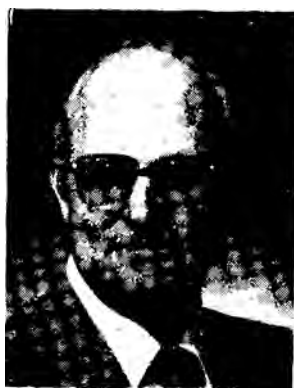
The same faith, courage and determination that enabled that small group, in the late 1800's, to undertake the planting of the Lord's church in Birmingham, is evidencing itself again as West End and Central reunite to form the Palisades Church of Christ.

We believe that the late 1900's will see the development of a powerful segment of the Lord's kingdom on the southern edge of Birmingham.

We give thanks to God for the great things which have been done in His name. We face a challenging and promising future and we invoke His blessings upon us as we reach out to the lost here and abroad.

--1569 Berry Rd., Birmingham, AL 35226.

Satan's Provocation To Sin



Dean Fugett

Satan knows well that he cannot directly and personally oppose God and win. Therefore, he uses his best tool for offending God -- MAN. In the above account David's sin of numbering Israel to have the confidence of his security in himself rather than God was a point of deviation from the will of God. The consequences of this sin were devastating and tragic, destroying seventy thousand men of Israel (Numbers 21:14). What appeared to David as a necessary action to assess

"And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel . . . Why doth my lord require this thing? Why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel? . . . And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel" (Numbers 21:1-7).

his strength proved to be more devastating to his army of men than had the wars he had been successful in waging.

I wonder when men of God will stop allowing themselves to be a tool of Satan to provoke God. When will we ever be able to keep pride and vanity in control -- if ever! Whenever we begin to be the catalyst for unauthorized change, rather than allowing God to be the full force behind the "increase," we are setting up God's people for sad defeat. Paul was careful to remind the Corinthians that Paul planted, Apollos watered, BUT IT WAS GOD THAT GAVE THE INCREASE. We, all of us, want to see growth, numerically as well as spiritually, but we must learn to DO JUST WHAT GOD HAS AUTHORIZED, and leave the growth to him. Doing what God has authorized may not always produce growth, but doing what God has not authorized to produce growth is to incur God's vengeance for rebellion!

Ignorance of the God we serve due to ignorance

Continued On Page 4

Keys To Greatness As A Preacher

Jackie M. Stearsman

There is within each of us a self which longs for success or the recognition by others of our worth. We want to be on a winning team; we want compensation for our labor and toil; we desire our talents be appreciated. This is especially true of preachers. It is a factor which all of us must keep in proper perspective lest we betray our trust and expose to all our failures.

Guarded Ambitions

It is vital that we keep in check our longing aspirations. Desiring to preach is commendable, spending too much energy on the pursuit of greatness may lead to failure. The Apostles James and John, with their mother desired greatness and were cautioned by the Master lest this ambition become a defect in their character (Mark 10:35ff; Matthew 20:20ff). This defect in character is evident in the Pharisees who permitted the plaudits of men to sway their actions rather than genuine character and service (Matthew 23:1-12; 6:1-18; 5:20). Let us consider the Apostle Paul and reflect upon those Biblical characteristics which he possessed that enables us to consider him as a great and successful preacher. The following expressions set the mind upon an attitude which was deep seated in the Apostle: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). "And I count all things but loss . . . that I may win Christ . . ." (Philippians 3:8). "For to me to live is Christ . . ." (Philippians 1:21).

Maturity

"But when I became a man, I put away childish things" (I Corinthians 13:11). Paul recognized the necessity of growth and development. He could not have used the above illustration if that were not the case. Few things are more distasteful than an immature preacher -- a baby in the pulpit. The baby must have its way. The baby has not appreciation for the needs of the family -- only selfishness motivates and drives its ambition. When decisions are made with the "baby" in mind the congregations will be undeveloped and lack spiritual strength. Some preachers need to grow up before their greatness can be genuine.

Mortality

"I conferred not with flesh and blood . . ." (Galatians 1:16). The duties and responsibilities of preaching at times become burdensome. Undue attention to the burden may cause one to become weary in well doing. Preachers who are forever wearing a martyr's brow because of their labor of love will not be the proper motivator for sacrificial living demanded in Christ. Paul only discussed his trials and tribulations when he was forced to do so, and placed it on the level of foolishness lest any misunderstand his motives (II Corinthians 11:1ff). If you want me to be motivated to serve, show

me the scars of battle but do not depress me with how poorly the brethren or the world have treated you. Great preaching places the cause beyond a given battle or the scars one may receive in the conflict (Galatians 6:17).

Contentment

"I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound . . ." (Philippians 4:12). The key to living a life of contentment while preaching is given in the next verse. Paul received his sufficiency from Christ who provided for him. Becoming detached from the role of teaching the truth due to circumstances has caused some to fail to be great preachers. The preacher who understands and lives with Christ as his Master need not fear abundance, and neither will he fret when being abased. Some preachers will never be great by God's standard because they have sold out to the world. Abundance has blinded the eyes of some and some have sold out because of hardship. Let us never forget that God intends to try this building and this includes preachers (I Corinthians 3:12ff). Preachers, can it be said of you, you can not turn my feet from His way by hunger, and neither can you quench my zeal for Him by hardship? Surely we see that this is a key to greatness in the life of Paul.

"I Am . . ."

Informed students of the life of Paul will recognize this expression and immediately attach it with those three great concepts -- "I am a debtor," "I am ready," "I am not ashamed." (Romans 1:14-16). Paul understood fully the obligation the deposit of truth placed upon him. It was not for his race or nation alone but for all men everywhere. He had no excuse for not meeting his debt -- he stood ready to discharge his every obligation. The courage essential to greatness is reflected in his not being ashamed of that gospel truth. No preacher will be great by Paul's measurement until he has fully mastered self. Is not "I" the greatest hindrance to excellence?

If you want me to be motivated to serve, show me the scars of battle but do not depress me with how poorly the brethren or the world have treated you.

Sacrifice

"For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the

flesh . . ." (Romans 9:3). Such expressions as this causes no little problem to those who seek to explain what Paul had in mind. It is disturbing to the indifferent. This is upsetting to anyone who feels that sacrifice is not required in carrying the truth to those who have no love for the truth. Perhaps no passage conveys how much Christ's will had become the driving force in Paul's life than this verse. Greatness demands expenditure. Paul's life was that of a living sacrifice. We cannot expect the rewards of his greatness unless we are willing to pay the price.

Courage

"I withstood him to the face . . ." (Galatians 2:11). The religious world is in the confused state it is in today because those who have the truth will not confront the opposition. This is a major problem in the church. Paul confronted Peter because Peter was lost, and because Peter and those with him were leading others into sin. On the lips of "would-be-great-preachers" of today there is no greater sin than to face the opposition and point out the wrong. The Creed of many is that if a person has been baptized then it is evil to point out any sin in his life, unless it be the "sin" of calling attention to sin.

Unrecognized

It must be understood that greatness is rarely recognized immediately. Paul had to defend his right as an Apostle of the Lord to those of his day. The greatness of the Christ was not recognized by his own age. The greatness of the prophets was recognized after their death (Matthew 23:29-32). Some think they are great, but they are not (Revelation 3:1-6; 3:14-22).

No preacher will be great by Paul's measurement until he has fully mastered self. Is not "I" the greatest hindrance to excellence?"

Conclusion

Greatness is within the reach of all who desire it. If we preach the truth in love to those within our sphere of influence we are great preachers in God's sight. More than any other single factor preachers need to focus on service. It is the key to greatness. Was this not a contributing factor to Paul's worth? His great service was made possible because of his maturity, his own mortality disciplined, his contentment, his willingness to meet his every duty, being unashamed of the gospel truth, his sacrifice for the cause to which he was committed, and his willingness to confront even a fellow apostle if the apostle was not walking uprightly according to the truth of the gospel.

When we are prone to desire greatness as a preacher may we ever recall the cost. Let it be remembered that the evaluation of our position before the Great I Am will not be by man's estimate (II Corinthians 10:12, 18). Let it also be known that true greatness may never be recognized in this life. We may rest assured that it will not go unnoticed, for the works of the faithful will follow them into the eternal state (Revelation 14:13). There, once and for all, the issue of greatness will be determined (II Timothy 4:6-8).

--Via The Harvesters -- Florida School of Preaching.
1807 S. Florida Ave., Lakeland, FL 33803.

Satan's Provocation To Sin

Continued From Page 3

of the nature of God as presented in the Old Testament revelation of himself to man, continues to be the source of man's failure to submit to the righteousness of God. We all know of the Jew's rejection of the Christ in his personal ministry and under the Gospel. Paul speaks of this in Romans 10:1-3, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." When we refuse to abide within God's guidelines for government, work, plan of salvation, worship, etc., we are NOT SUBMITTING OURSELVES TO THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

We continue to plead with people in the pulpit and in the pew, elders in the leadership, men and women who are experimenting with innovations

Satan knows well that he cannot directly and personally oppose God and win. Therefore, he uses his best tool for offending God -- MAN.

without authority to reconsider the path in which they are setting their feet and the terrible consequences it can mean to the eternal welfare of our children and grandchildren, and the masses of the future. READ YOUR BIBLE; STUDY IT CAREFULLY! OBEY IT!

--P.O. Box 75, Cave City, AR 72521.

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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 26

DECEMBER 14, 1990

NUMBER 50

Three Words For A New Year



R. W. Gray

The Bible is replete with words of promise and hope. Expectation of better things to come abound for those who seek them. "Blessed is the man . . ." (Psalm 1:1-2). "Happy is that people whose God is Jehovah" (Psalms

144:15; 33:12). We are encouraged to love life and to see good days (I Peter 3:10).

Written into the foundation laws of our society is the affirmation of the right of all to seek the ultimate good, "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

God's chosen have received many new things. We came to him by means of the new birth (John 3:3-5). When we were baptized into Christ we became "new creatures" (II Corinthians 5:17). God then gave us a new name, a new song, a new hope, a new assignment, a new position, a new purpose for living, and promise of a new home (Revelation 21:5).

At this time in our relationship in him we are given another New Year. Challenges and hopes of the past year did not find full fruition. And into the life of some great tragedy came. But we now have another year with all the hopes and dreams such a time provides.

If we would renew our strength, revive our hopes, and secure the happiness sought in the New Year there are three words, all beginning with the same letter, that will provide greater assurance that God will be with us to fulfill his promises to his loved and own (II Peter 1:4).

In a sober and reflective manner we should look at our first word; a word that reminds us that this could be the last year of our lives on earth. The word is "REMEMBER!" There are certain things God admonishes us to keep in view. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and FORGET NOT all his benefits" (Psalm 103:2). And we just must

remember that in the hand of God is every living soul, including our own (Job 12:10).

Entering a New Year we must remember that God rewards his faithful children and that he punishes those who turn from him. Whatever our productivity may have been in the past the Lord has granted another opportunity to bring forth fruit to his glory (Matthew 5:16).

Jesus said, "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 the vineyard, 'Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and found 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'" (Luke 13:6-9).

May we not forget that God has given us the beginning of another year wherein we may bear fruit for his name, another year wherein we may use our talents for his glory. We must remember that the tree that bears no fruit he will cut down, cast into the fire, and it will be burned (John 15:1-4).

The next word that will bring us into closer relationship with God in 1991 is the word, "REPENT!" This was required of us in our initial obedience and must be a part of our very lives (Acts 2:38). The command to repent is often found in the context wherein God admonishes his own people (Acts 8:22).

Reviewing the past, whether the overt acts of disobedience, or those of simple neglect, we find many regrets. The best of his followers, among them the apostle Peter, make their mistakes and must come to a point of regret and repentance. In that repentance be rid of any residue of wrong dispositions and attitudes that held us back in the years past and gone.

Having repented of past wrongs let us, like Paul, forget those things that are behind (Philippians 3:13-14). When God sees a penitent heart and observes the fruits thereof he puts that sin away forever, and so should we (Acts 3:19; Psalm

103:12).

Another word essential to genuine happiness and success is the word "RESOLVE!" This brings us to those annual resolutions we find much easier to break than are old habits. Having repented of past mistakes we must fill our lives with worthwhile aims and purposes. No one is happy who does not seek the pleasure of God and who does not resolve in his or her heart to follow it.

David resolved, "I will keep thy statutes." "I will meditate it thy precepts and have respect unto thy ways." "I will not forget thy word." "I will keep thy law, yea, I will observe it with my whole heart" (Psalm 119). Much energy was spent in the year past seeking creature comforts. Far too little was reserved for the study of God's word and in seeking the lost. Now that we repent of this lack may we resolve that we seek those souls this year we had on our list for 1990. The Lord said, "Go!" We have said, "Come!" Jesus came to "seek" and to "save." We need not ask the Lord to lead us to some soul today unless we are ready to seek the lost.

We are warned, "When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord, thou shalt not be slack to pay it: for the Lord will surely require it of thee" (Deuteronomy 23:21). And again, "Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay" (Ecclesiastes 5:5). While we must look to the future and not dwell upon the past to our hurt and discouragement, we must be careful to take those resolves as seriously as does the God before whom they are made. Resolve that God will be in every decision for this year. "Go to now, ye that say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain.' Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow . . . For that ye ought to say, 'If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that'" (James 4:13-15).

May we find that happiness that is found only in the Lord and in his service.

--563 McGukin Rd. Bremen, GA 30110.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

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David Wade . . . Editor
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1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

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Wholesome Words



T. Pierce Brown

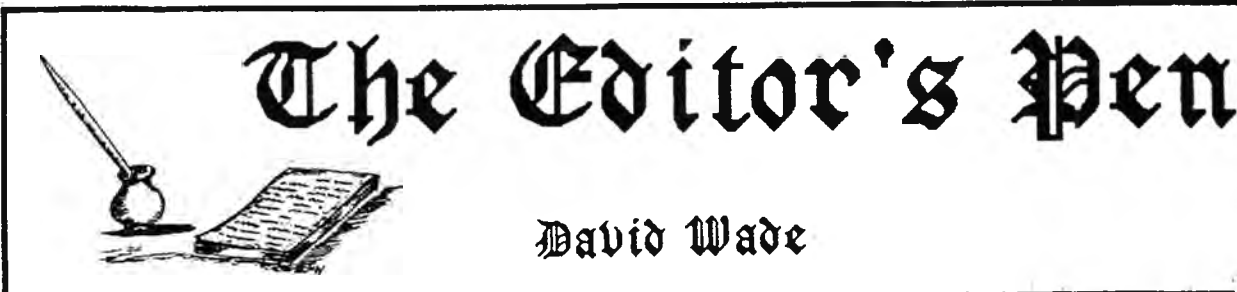
There are three classes of individuals that may find a needed message from Psalm 4. First, there are words of encouragement to the believers. This Psalm should be an inspiration to every child of God. What God did for the Psalmist, he can still do

for us. Note in verse 1, "Thou hast set me at large when I was in distress." Through fear and distress, he had been as one in prison, but gained liberty through the Lord. So are we made free in Christ.

Freedom in Christ is a wonderful and precious thing. We must not allow those who pervert that freedom into practical lawlessness to cause us to deny it or fail to use it properly. The greatest freedoms we have are freedom from the guilt, the burden, the bondage and punishment for sin. Each of those deserves one or more sermons or articles. Surely this is the primary thing Jesus had in mind when he said, "If the Son of Man makes you free, then are you free indeed" (John 8:36).

The awareness that this freedom is given to us freely by the grace of God is humbling and thrilling. Again, we must not allow those who would pervert this grace into some modern Calvinistic foolishness cause us to preach as if our justification is merely based on how well we have kept the law. We are justified although we have not kept the law, but we must still accept that grace on his terms. Because this is scoffed at by some connected with the church as "legalism" does not

Continued On Page 4



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

A Visit From Childhaven



David Wade

to enjoy their visit.

After the morning service, approximately 200 stayed for a good pot-luck fellowship meal

Sunday, December 9, forty-nine children and eleven adult sponsors from Childhaven Children's Home in Cullman, Alabama, visited our Sunday morning services. It was a very spiritually rewarding service for all of us. The children were of excellent behavior and appeared

prepared by the ladies in the congregation. Afterward, all the children received some very nice gifts made possible by individual donations. Brother Danny Latham had requested and received a "want list" from the children prior to their visit.

Why not consider having Childhaven or a Christian Children's home near you to visit the church services? Consider placing them in the church budget, or increasing the budget. Helping these good works is a part of practicing pure and undefiled religion (James 1:27). Also, individual contributions are needed and are tax deductible.

Childhaven Children's Home is under the capable direction of brother Art Baker. He may be contacted at P.O. Box 160, Cullman, AL 35056. Telephone (205) 734-6270.

Anti-Christian Bias Of The Media #1



Russell C. Artist

Almost everyone has some idea of what is meant by the "media" but I would like to share one another's statement concerning how it may be defined. Bro. Dave Miller writes in the book called **Embattled Christianity**, published by the Shenandoah church of Christ in San Antonio, Texas, Terry M. Hightower being the editor of the third Annual Shenandoah lectures. He says:

By "Media" we mean (1) our television sets and movie theatres, (2) the music transmitted to us through radio records/tapes, and live concerts, and (3) the print media (books, newspapers, magazines).

That just about gets them all for all practical purposes. I would like in this part to deal with a certain station, Channel 8 in Nashville.

To document the charge which is the title of this article "The anti-Christian bias of the media," I quote again from brother Dave Miller so you won't

This article will attempt to accomplish three things: to define what is meant by the "media," to document the charge of bias or prejudice against the Christian religion and to show one rather striking example of this by a TV station right here in Nashville,

think I am the only one of this opinion! Hear him when he writes, this time of America's reading:

"Likewise the nation's newspapers and major news magazines, (e.g. Newsweek, U.S. News and World Report, Time) which we casually peruse sitting in the doctor's office are generally written from the perspective of the social liberal who stands opposed to political, moral and religious conservatism." This is what is meant by bias of the media.

But now I would like to concentrate on the television networks in this matter of bias. Skipping over the talk shows, the game shows and other forms of the media let me zero in on one TV station. The one that I want to expose as being biased is a national PBS or public broadcasting station, WDCN or channel 8 here in Nashville, TN. We can usually expect no regard for Christian principles on the majority of the commercially-sponsored TV shows, such as "Knots Landing," "Days of our Lives," "General Hospital," and others of that kind. But the public broadcasting networks have usually avoided the popular expression of immorality in its shows. However, in its science programs such as Jacques Cousteau, the National Geographic and in its Smithsonian programs, they advance the usual evolutionary, godless portrayal of life and history. In what follows I would like to show just one example of this prejudice toward the creation point of view.

Now the prestigious Smithsonian Institution in

Continued On Page 3

Anti-Christian Bias Of The Media #1

Continued From Page 2

Washington, D.C. is supported by public funds -- our tax money, and so, since it is completely evolution oriented we are not being represented in any way at all. Here in the letter which follows you will see why I have objected to their portrayal of a science program, aired on March 25, 1990.

The letter is addressed to the vice-president of WDCN, Channel 8 here in Nashville. His name is Robert L. Shepherd and you may judge for yourself whether I have been ugly or mean in my communication to him. The letter is given just as it was written shortly after the program aired and is given in its entirety -- nothing is left out!

1507 Blue Springs Road
Franklin, TN 37064
Tel. 373-0963
April, 4, 1990

Mr. Robert L. Shepherd
Vice President
Channel 8, WDCN
101 Rains Avenue
Nashville, TN 37212

Dear Mr. Shepherd:

I have written to you before and am constrained to write again at this time. First, let me say that I like many of your programs that you schedule. On a regular basis I appreciate so much the Lawrence Welk Show, the TN Outdoorsman that precedes it, all the practical shows like the Woodright shop, the Victory Garden and the Joy of Painting.

Your recent barrage for funds showed some real wonderful shows, like the Julie Andrews concert and other prime shows, but we have seen nothing like it since your campaign for funds closed! Instead, we get a lot of these black and white WWI films which fill up your broadcast time, and those dull English films like Masterpiece theater. However, I am still going to include my check that I promised to give though I did have second thoughts after I saw what I am going to write about now!

The "Smithsonian World" that was shown on Wednesday night, March 25, is a mockery of what true science should be. It was so prejudiced and bigoted toward the evolution myth that it was a shame to see a national organization, paid for by taxpayers money, to foster just one biased view -- that of evolution! Let me cite some of the foolish ideas they present!

It began with a nursery rhyme theme -- "Once upon a time"! Indeed it must be pretty terrible for scientists of their caliber to have to begin with such a myth as that. Where is the precision that science claims for itself?

It began with a nursery rhyme theme -- "Once upon a time"! Indeed it must be pretty terrible for scientists of their caliber to have to begin with such a myth as that. Where is the precision that science claims for itself? The origin of life beginning with one cell -- then two cells, is a commonly held stance for evolutionists, but they fail to state just how that first cell could have arisen. They must fall back on the defunct idea of spontaneous generation to get that one cell!

In the realm of paleoanthropology, they push forward Stephen J. Gould of Harvard as being spokesman for this gradual upward development of man from ape-like ancestors. Did you know that recently Gould himself has abandoned completely the whole idea of gradualism and now holds to a "punctuated equilibrium" stance which means that somehow some hopeful monster may arise -- the same strange notion begun by Goldschmidt many years ago! And this is supposed to be observable science! The silly gyrations performed by a number of young men seemed to clinch the idea that we are so closely related to the apes. Did you know that L.S.B. Leakey, before he died wrote: "man has always been man and apes have always been apes."

I challenge you to be broad-minded enough to allow a creationist to have equal time to rebut all this Smithsonian jargon. Dr. Thomas B. Warren has debated the famous atheist, Anthony Flew from England and sent him home muttering that he would never debate a creationist again! Warren has challenged Gould and Carl Sagan for a debate but they have refused flatly to meet him. Surely you would be upholding a fairness for honest inquiry by having such a man as this to give his view of the matter of human origin. Also Dr. Duane Gish and Dr. Henry Morris, of the Institute for Creation Research, based in California, would

be happy to meet the false claims of the Smithsonian evolutionists!

Dr. Thomas B. Warren has debated the famous atheist, Anthony Flew from England and sent him home muttering that he would never debate a creationist again!

Surely it is time that we could be open enough to admit to another explanation!

Sincerely,
Dr. Russell C. Artist
Professor Emeritus of Biology

Now you may well inquire, did he reply with an apology or an attempted explanation. No, he did not dignify my request with a personal reply. Instead he had a woman secretary to answer my letter in which she said that she would forward my criticism on to the Smithsonian, and of course I will never hear from them! This is the kind of run-around one gets when you write to the TV station, even to one high up in the company. The bias amounts to a complete censorship of allowing the creation viewpoint a chance to have its say. I do not look for WDCN to invite either of the men I mentioned and certainly not myself to give the creation position. I thought you would like to see such an attempt at some kind of "equal-time" request. It has not been granted and likely never will be at WDCN! The Smithsonian does not allow even the slightest mention of "God that made the world and all things therein." (Acts 17:24).

Bible Studies In Moscow

(Fort Worth, Texas) World Bible Translation Center conducted its first series of Bible study seminars in the Cultural Center "Kuntsevo" in Moscow, Nov. 13-15, 1990.

World Bible Translation Center now has a Bible study and distribution center located in the Cultural Center.

"For three nights people packed themselves into the Cultural Center's auditoriums to learn about Jesus. Attendance for the three nights was 190, 260, and more than 300 on the last night," said Dale Randolph, Translation Center President. "It's hard to describe the emotions I felt to see 300 people in Moscow studying God's Word together as they read from our newly-translated Russian New Testament."

Mladen Jovanovic, a native Yugoslavian evangelist, taught the Bible studies to an attentive, enthusiastic Russian audience. Glover Shipp, editor of the Christian Chronicle, spoke on Christian evidences. "Both did an excellent job," said Randolph.

"I feel like we're very close to having a congregation meeting at the Cultural Center. The comments from the people certainly tell us there's

a tremendous spiritual thirst in that country," said Randolph. In fact, Jurij P. Smirnov, assistant to the head of the Council for Religious Affairs in the Soviet Union, asked, "When are you going to start a Church of Christ here?" We said "We'd love to start one right away," said Randolph.

A Russian man named Alexander said, "Tonight I feel like an African bushman. I can't believe that I have never been able to hear this great truth about God. I have a Ph.D. degree and yet I learn only tonight that God really does exist and that he knows my name."

Another man named Archady said, "I've been very sad recently. After hearing the presentations last night and tonight, I now know that all along there has been a God who loves me . . ."

"We're very excited about having a physical presence in Moscow through our Bible study and distribution center. God has given us a tremendous opportunity there. We're looking forward to additional Bible studies, ongoing Bible distribution, and, Lord willing, a congregation meeting there," said Randolph.

--P.O. Box 820648, Ft. Worth, TX 76182.

Wholesome Words

Continued From Page 2

change the reality that God does not make his gracious offer of freedom without conditions.

Not only had God made him free, He had made him glad (v. 7). God puts gladness in our hearts by the manifestation of his grace and power on our behalf. If we were half as grateful as we should be for the multitude of blessings freely given us through his undeserved loving grace, there would be many changes in the spiritual and numerical growth of the church.

Besides making him free and glad, verse 8 says, "Thou Lord makest me dwell in safety." It reminds us of Deuteronomy 33:12, "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him." It is a shame that in our efforts to defeat the false doctrine of the "Security of the Believer" as taught by Calvinists, we have sometimes almost made it sound as if the child of God is walking on a tight rope in a high wind over the chasm of hell, always about to fall in.

We need to understand more of what is and is not involved with the Bible doctrine of the security of the believer. It does not mean the absence of sickness, suffering, sorrow, trouble, heartache or death. Nor does it mean that one cannot choose to be lost. It does involve at least three precious and wonderful promises. I Corinthians 10:13 says, "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape; that ye may be able to bear it." He makes the way of escape, but will not force us to take it. Also, I John 1:7 says, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin." We must deliberately choose to walk in the light, but when we do, no accidental sin can cause us to be lost, for we are constantly repentant and relying on the blood of Christ to keep us cleansed.

Then the passage that has been so perverted by Calvinists is still powerful and precious. John 10:27-28 says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand." To know that when you hear and follow Jesus there is no power on earth or in hell that can cause you to be lost should be of great comfort to those believers who are made free and glad by the grace of God.

Then there are words of rebuke to the unbelieving. For those who are practicing dishonorable things, those who love vanity, and those who are seeking after falsehood (v. 2) the Psalmist shows their wickedness. Those who love vanity are simply those who have their heart set on the things of this world. They love that which is worthless to satisfy the deepest longings of the human heart. They have an undue concern for that which is transient, uncertain and passing. When Solomon said "All is vanity" this is the sort of thing to which he referred.

Not only are there words of encouragement to

believers, words of rebuke to the unbelieving, but words of entreaty to the anxious. Note verse 4, "Stand in awe and sin not." We should stand in awe at the thought of the greatness and majesty of God revealed in the natural wonders about us. We should stand more in awe at the extent and manifestation of the love of God seen on the cross. If we stand in awe, we are not as likely to think as lightly of sin as we otherwise might. There are those who think of sin primarily as a slight moral mistake or bad judgment. There are those who think of it as a result of an inherited tendency. There are those who see it as an almost legitimate outcropping of a depraved nature. One hears the expression, "I just naturally do" this or that. Sometimes it is considered merely a violation of the conventions of society. If we follow the Psalmist's injunction and stand in awe, we will see it is rebellion against a wonderful, majestic and sovereign God.

Freedom in Christ is a wonderful and precious thing. We must not allow those who pervert that freedom into practical lawlessness to cause us to deny it or fail to use it properly.

This will cause us to stand in awe at the thought of disobeying God's Word (Psalm 119:161). We will stand in awe at the thought of the wages of sin (Romans 6:23). We will stand in awe at the thought of opportunities lost, the uncertainty and brevity of life, the certainty and solemnity of judgment. We will stand in awe at the awareness of how God's Spirit strives with our spirit through the word to lift, draw, impel us to do right, yet leaving us with free will to make our own choices.

To the anxious, troubled soul, he has more advice. "Commune with your heart upon your bed and be still." Since the heart is the seat of the intellect, desires, emotion and conscience, the thing with which we think, believe, love and will, we need to examine ourselves in all those areas. There are two reasons for this self examination. First, to see our faults, failures, sins and shortcomings and repent and make whatever corrections are appropriate. Second, to see our strengths, abilities and talents that we can use for the good of man and the glory of God. When we have done that, then be still. That is, do not dwell on either failures or successes, shortcomings or virtues longer than necessary to take the appropriate action, then forget them. If we dwell on them, we will become self-centered instead of Christ centered.

There are two other parts of the wholesome advice that we shall briefly mention. First, "Offer the sacrifice of righteousness" (v. 5). Because of the self examination, we will have a revelation of the things to be given up at whatever sacrifice is

involved. Pride, unbelief, dishonesty, hypocrisy or any other sin is included. The Hebrew writer says, "Lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us" (Hebrews 12:1). Then Paul says in Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Psalm 4 has words of encouragement to the believer, words of rebuke to the unbeliever, and words of comfort and entreaty to the anxious. The chances are that you fall into one or more of these categories.

He concludes these wholesome words with "Trust in the Lord." We need to know that the faith of which the Bible speaks that relates to salvation is trust. This means complete, whole hearted trust of yourself into his keeping, trust in his promises and complete reliance on him. It is not merely the kind of intellectual assent that the devils have and shudder. That kind of trust always involves obedient faith.

Psalm 4 has words of encouragement to the believer, words of rebuke to the unbeliever, and words of comfort and entreaty to the anxious. The chances are that you fall into one or more of these categories. In any case, these are wholesome words that we all should know and heed.

--Rt. 2, Box 144X, Wartrace, TN 37183.

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—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 26

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"Until Shiloh Come"



Bobby Key

declared that he was 130 years of age (Genesis 47:9). Now, at the age of 147, he was dying. It was urgent that he see his sons one last time. They were called to his side, and he gave blessings and admonitions to each of his twelve boys.

To Judah, the fourth son, he announced the following prophetic benediction: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering (obedience) of the people be" (Genesis 49:10).

The Jews have always understood Genesis 49:10, "until Shiloh come," to be a prophecy of the Messiah. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia says, "Thus, in Genesis 49:10 there is no doubt in the mind of the Targumist that Shiloh' refers to the Messiah" (pg. 2914). This has also been the understanding of scholars through the ages. Judah was to continue as a distinct tribe until the Messiah should come.

In connection with this promise to Judah, the old patriarch Jacob promised that Judah's descendants should be a strong tribe, exercising sway over other descendants of Jacob. He said the brethren of Judah should praise him, "thy father's sons shall bow down before thee." Also, Judah should be as a lion, strong and terrible when aroused. The prophecy was fulfilled in the days of David and Solomon, who were descendants of Judah, when the throne of David was established and the kingdom reached its greatest power and glory.

The power of the kingdom should not depart from Judah's lineage until Shiloh came. The term

Jacob, Abraham's grandson, was an old man, and his life was fast coming to a close. He had come into the land of Egypt, with his large family, seventeen years before. At that time he had an interview with Pharaoh, during which he

"Shiloh" is "rest, condition of peace." Therefore, until there should come one whose dominion would be one of peace, the rulership would not depart from the tribe of Judah. None, except the Messiah, could fulfill this prophecy. Christ, the Prince of Peace, came to establish a kingdom of peace. The promise to Judah was that from his seed should come the Prince of Peace who would be the great ruler of God's kingdom.

In later years, Judah became the leading and ruling tribe. Through him came David and Solomon and all succeeding kings of Judah, until finally Jesus, "the root and offspring of David," was born.

Christ is Shiloh. He is the center and core of, not only the New Testament, but the Old Testament as well. He is the heart of Scripture. He, alone, is the pivotal point in the scheme of God's redemption. Adam's descendants were to produce the "seed of the woman" who would bruise the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15). Judah's descendants were to produce "Shiloh," the Prince of Peace.

Christ is today ruling in His kingdom, on David's spiritual throne, and reconciling the world unto Himself. He came that peace might prevail

Christ is Shiloh. He is the center and core of, not only the New Testament, but the Old Testament as well. He is the heart of Scripture. He, alone, is the pivotal point in the scheme of God's redemption.

between man and God. "For he is our peace . . . that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and them that were nigh. For through him we both (Jew and Gentile) have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Ephesians 2:14-18).

It is thrilling to see the fulfillment of the old patriarch's prophecy in the person of Jesus Christ.

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

"Is This All?"

Hugh Forehand

When I was a child, one Christmas, my father gave to each of his sons a very special gift. He must have spent hours in his workshop, fashioning with his hands the three wooden trucks. He was a skilled carpenter and somewhat of a perfectionist, so I know those trucks represented fine workmanship. They were freshly painted, finely sanded, and the only part of them not handmade with tender loving care, were the shiny store-bought tires that adorned them.

Christmas was never a time for getting lots of gifts around my house, but we children spent literally hours looking over the Sears and Wards catalogues, dreaming and picking out the 'toys' we

wanted. We never got much, but we always wanted everything. There were the Red Rider rifles, the electric trains, the Have Gun Will Travel black hats and vest, and parlor games. So you can imagine how when we rushed to the tree on Christmas morning to find the three wooden trucks, our eyes and voices filled with disappointment. "Is this all?" I finally said.

Later that day an aunt arrived with a store-bought toy that my brothers and I had to share. We showed more excitement over and even fought over possession of that store-bought toy. I think I can safely say that our disappointment over the trucks was nothing compared to the disappoint-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



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David Wade Editor

Joe T. Spivy, Sr. Associate Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

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Praise His Name

Mike Stroud

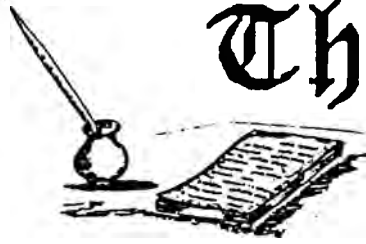
Have you ever seen the poster that lists all the names, titles, and descriptions by which Jesus is referred to in the Bible? I always like to see this because it inspires a mood of worship, praise, thankfulness, and peace.

And thou shalt call his name:

- Jesus (Matthew 1:21),
- Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6),
- Wonderful Counselor (Isaiah 9:6),
- Holy One of God (Mark 1:24),
- Lamb of God (John 1:29),
- Prince of Life (Acts 3:15),
- Lord God Almighty (Rev. 15:3),
- Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5),
- Root of David (Rev. 22:16),
- Word of Life (1 John 1:1),
- Author and Finisher of Our Faith (Heb. 12:2),
- Advocate (1 John 2:1),
- The Way (John 14:6),
- Rising Sun (Luke 1:78),
- Lord of All (Acts 10:36),
- I AM (John 8:58),
- Son of God (John 1:41),
- The Truth (John 14:6),
- Savior (2 Peter 2:20),
- Chief Cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20),
- King of Kings (Rev. 19:6),
- Righteous Judge (2 Timothy 4:8),
- Light of the World (John 8:12),
- Head of the Church (Eph. 1:22),
- Morning Star (Rev. 22:16),
- Sun of Righteousness (Malachi 4:2),
- Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 15:11),
- Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4),
- Resurrection and Life (John 11:25),
- Horn of Salvation (Luke 1:69),
- Ruler (Matthew 2:6),
- The Alpha and Omega (Rev. 1:8).

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! (Psalm 8:1.)

--Via Old Paths, P.O. Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

"Put Christ In Christmas?"



David Wade

Verse one of an 18th century English carol declares, "God rest ye merry gentlemen, Let nothing you dismay, Remember Christ our Savior, Was born on Christmas Day." This is an unfounded assumption long accepted by millions of Christ-believing people. The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, pages

162, 163, states, "CHRISTMAS, the anniversary of the birth of Christ, and its observance; celebrated by most Protestants and by Roman Catholics on December 25; by Eastern Orthodox churches on January 6; and by the Armenian church of January 19. The first mention of its observance on December 25 is in the time of Constantine, about A.D. 325. The date of the birth of Christ is not known. The word Christmas is formed of Christ + Mass, meaning a religious service in commemoration of the birth of Christ. Whether the early Christians thought of or observed Christmas is not clear. Once introduced, the observance spread throughout Christendom. Some Christian bodies disapprove of the festival."

R. C. Foster, in *Studies in the life of Christ*, page 240, says, "The New Testament gives no definite data on this point. The earliest reference to this subject in extant Christian literature is from Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 180). He states that some thought the date of Christ's birth was April 21 and others April 22 and others May 20. He seems to condemn their speculative attempts as profane curiosity. The Eastern Church argued that Christ must have been born on January 6 because

He was the second Adam and should have been born on the sixth day of the year as the first Adam was born on the sixth day of creation. They celebrated January 6 as the day for many centuries. The Armenian Church still celebrates this day. The celebration of December 25 as the day can be traced back as far as the fourth century. It seems to have arisen in the West. The predominance of Rome led to its well-nigh universal acceptance. The study of the Gospel narrative shows that December 25 fits into the known facts of the life of Christ. Counting back from the death of Herod, December 25 allows time for the various events described. The uncertainty as to the date of Jesus' birth should not disturb us. If it had been an essential feature of Christian faith the New Testament would have given more specific information."

There is great danger when people are lulled into thinking that they are right with God if they can somehow "put Christ into Christmas." Perhaps it is for this reason that God left in obscurity the date of the Savior's birth.

Furthermore, some Christians are tempted to participate in unchristian activities during the holidays under the guise that "Everyone is doing it," and "It is expected of me." Christians must be careful about engaging in any form of immorality at any time. Holidays and family gatherings are no exceptions.

Paul's warning to Galatian Christians is very appropriate, "You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain" (Galatians 4:10-11).

We can enjoy the holiday in an appropriate Christian manner without making December 25 a holy day or an unholy day. Put Christ in Christmas in the same manner you are to put him in every day of your life.

Mary



Winfred Clark

If you were to read the first chapter of the book of Luke you would find the name of Mary appearing eight times. You would recognize her as the woman who would become the mother of our Lord. That is a fact that would affect the lives of all of us. She becomes a central

figure in God's effort to save the souls of men. She becomes the woman of Genesis 3:15. She is the

virgin of Isaiah 7:14. She is the woman of which Paul would later speak (Galatians 4:4).

1. Look At The Facts That Were Revealed To Her. "And the angel said unto her, Fear not Mary, for thou hast found favor with God, Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus" (Luke 1:30-31). What a privilege this must have been for her to realize the tremendous thing that was about to occur. She is going to have a part in man's redemption. The name Jesus was given because he would save his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). She will thus first learn of his name and that

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What It Means To Follow Jesus!



Edsel Burleson

The sacrificial element of Christianity is clearly taught in the scriptures. Jesus taught that in order to please God man would often be expected to deny himself of the things that he values the highest. Sacrificing and denying oneself in order to serve God, do good unto others, and bring others to salvation is the very essence of Christianity. "If any man

will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

Paul once gave a list of things he had suffered for following Jesus. Note his account as recorded in the version by Phillips: "I have worked harder than any of them. I have served more prison sentences! I have been beaten times without number. I have faced death again and again. I have been beaten by the regulation thirty-nine stripes by the Jews five times. I have been beaten with rods three times. I have been stoned once. I have been twenty-four hours in the open sea. In my travels I have been in constant danger from rivers and floods, from bandits, from my own countrymen, and from pagans. I have faced danger in city streets, danger in the desert, danger on the high seas, danger among false Christians. I have known exhaustion,

pain, long vigils, hunger and thirst, doing without meals, cold and lack of clothing" (II Corinthians 11:23-27).

In John Fox's "Book of Martyrs," there is a vivid account of faithfulness "unto death." "Agatha, a Sicilian lady, (who) was not more remarkable for her personal and acquired endowments, than her piety: her beauty was such, that Quintian, governor of Sicily, became enamored of her, and made many attempts upon her chastity without success. On her confessing that she was a Christian, he determined to gratify his revenge, as he could not his passion. Pursuant to his orders, she was scourged, burnt with red-hot irons, and torn with sharp hooks. Having borne these torments with admirable fortitude, she was next laid naked upon live coals, intermingled with glass, and then being carried back to prison, she there expired on February 5, 251."

Ours is a world filled with crime and corruption but we have no immediate reason to fear the kind of persecution suffered by Agatha, and a host of other martyrs in the early centuries. However, far, far lesser challenges frequently find us unwilling to pay the price of faithful service. Consider the following examples:

It is Sunday morning. The neighborhood is quiet. The world is asleep. You are tempted to get another two hours of pleasant slumber. But you arise and prepare yourself and your family to assemble with Christians to worship God. That's what it means to follow Jesus!

"Is This All?"

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ment my father must have felt as he watched our unappreciative reactions to his gifts of love. How it must have hurt him to see us fight over a toy that cost only a few dollars while his precious gifts remained untouched. How I wish I knew where those wooden trucks were today! Their value to me has increased a thousand fold.

One wonders how God must feel when he sees us fighting over the garbage of worldly things and remain unappreciative of his wonderful gifts.

One wonders how God must feel when he sees us fighting over the garbage of worldly things and remain unappreciative of his wonderful gifts. How must he feel when he gives us freedom, grace, salvation, and hope and we look at him and say, "Is that all?" How disappointed and hurt he must be when we leave the gifts of love that his skillful hands have wrought, to seek the gaudy, tinsel products of a Sears and Wards world.

--Via Homewood Bulletin, 265 West Oxmoor Road, Birmingham, AL 35209.

You stand for the truth in a situation where you will become very unpopular for so doing. Yet you know someone is about to be led into error. That's what it means to follow Jesus!

You leave dishes in the sink, ironing undone and beds unmade to go comfort one who has lost a loved one, or, to go sit with someone in the hospital, or to run an errand for an aged Christian. That's what it means to follow Jesus!

You say "No" to an invitation to a social outing scheduled for the Lord's Day, or to a company party planned for a Wednesday night. Or, you refuse to participate in a fund raising project which involves gambling being planned by the PTA or a civic organization. That's what it means to follow Jesus!

You stand for the truth in a situation where you will become very unpopular for so doing. Yet you know someone is about to be led into error. That's what it means to follow Jesus!

Is a life of self-denial and service to God really worth while? Peter once asked Jesus this same question. "Then answered Peter and said unto him, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee; what then shall we have?" (Matthew 19:27). Jesus' answer

removes all doubt as to the worth of such a life. "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for my sake, and for the gospel's sake, but he shall receive a hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life" (Mark 10:29-30).

Isaac Watts said it beautifully in lines entitled, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross." See from His head, His hands, His feet, Sorrow and love flow mingled down: Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small:
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

--1569 Berry Road, Birmingham, AL 35226.

Mary

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name will be above every name (Philippians 2:5-8).

2. Look At The Question Raised By Her. When she is told that she would bear a child, her thinking would be that such would be a birth as usual, that is with a man and woman. This would be the natural thing for such a person to think. This question, within itself, would show that the birth of Jesus was not an ordinary birth. If so, then how does one account for the questions asked by this dear lady. You will hear her saying, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke 1:34). She knew at the time that she had not conceived. She knew she was not with child.

Her question was treated as a legitimate question and an answer is given. This answer comes from an angel when he says, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

3. Look At The Response She Gives. Be it to her everlasting credit, she is not a skeptic. Listen to the language of Mary, "Behold the handmaiden of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38). Here is surely a case of total commitment. She will say, "I am the Lord's handmaiden." That is equal to saying, "I will serve him first and last, and always." Listen to her as she will say, "be it unto me according to thy word." That means the word of the Lord is her guide in all that she will do. That will become her chart and compass in life and for it there will be no substitute. That is total submission to the will of God. What more could be asked?

--P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

Why Christians Give



Cecil May, Jr.

I have been asked occasionally why I do not preach tithing. On one occasion I responded by saying, "I cannot afford to preach tithing. It would cut the contribution too much." Many of our best givers where I then preached gave far more than ten percent.

Usually, of course, I point out that the New Testament does not bind ten percent as the stand-

ard of giving. One could make a better case for one hundred percent. As Mac Layton says: "The Lord has set us free from the law of the tithe so we can learn to be liberal."

Of course, not all Christians give as they should, but the faithful and mature Christians I know are often amazingly generous and sacrificial. Why?

Why do they give so liberally?

They know God blesses the generous giver. They have his promise. "Give and it shall be given unto you" (Luke 6:38). "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). "The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Proverbs 11:25). "God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Corinthians 9:7).

They want to participate in doing good. Giving is no substitute for doing what we should do personally, but giving is a way of doing many things we could not otherwise do. When we give to a work, we become a partaker, a participant in that work (II John 11). When we support faithful teachers we "do well" and become "fellow-helpers to the truth" (III John 6-8).

They know they have been blessed by the giving of others. Someone supported the means by which they were taught the gospel. Someone gave to build the building in which they worship. God blesses all of us so bountifully that we cannot give what is ours; we can only give back what he

has given us (James 1:17). What do we have we did not receive? (John 19:11).

They want to be like God. God so loved that he gave (John 3:16). Paul's appeal to the Corinthians to give is based on the Lord's gifts to them: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (II Corinthians 8:9). God is a lover and a giver, and we become more like him when we give because we love.

Christians have good reasons to be generous, don't we?

God is a lover and a giver, and we become more like him when we give because we love.

--Magnolia Bible College, P.O. Box 1101, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

Conducting The Lord's Supper

Tim Rice

The late lamented T. B. Larimore once said, "So far as my limited observation shows, men make more mistakes at the Lord's table, where they frequently talk and pray, instead of simply giving thanks, as the Bible authorizes, than anywhere else in the service of the Lord."

This statement by a saintly and devoted preacher of the New Testament plan makes us sit up and take notice. There are several mistakes I have seen and heard myself with reference to the Lord's supper. We realize that presiding at the Lord's table is a pressure situation for many who are not accustomed to public presentations. Also, we appreciate the fact that every time one makes a mistake it is usually unintentional. We do not know how God views mistakes at the Lord's table. However, we do know it is worship, and Jesus said they that worship God must do so in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). It is for this reason we offer these thoughts on the conducting of the Lord's supper.

One rule of properly conducting the Lord's supper is to keep it simple. When we note Jesus' establishment of the supper in Matthew 26:26-29 and Paul's review of it in I Corinthians 11:23-25, we see the simplicity with which the Lord offered the emblems. He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples. He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to the disciples. These basic simple elements are all one has to remember when presiding at the Lord's table.

Now, let us review some mistakes made at the Lord's table. It is a mistake not to offer the bread first. It is a mistake to offer only one prayer, since Jesus offered two. It is a mistake to fail to thank the Lord for each item. In our prayer we should actually say, "We thank Thee for this bread . . ." or, "We thank Thee for this fruit of the vine . . ."

It is not necessary, but not wrong, to include in the prayer the meaning of the Lord's supper. But remember, it is necessary to give thanks for the emblems.

Brother Guy N. Woods notes it is best to omit the phrase "the broken body of our Lord" in our prayer at the Lord's table. While it seems the Bible teaches Jesus' body was broken in I Corinthians 11:24 in the King James Version, the best manuscripts do not contain the word broken in the original. Hence the American Standard Version says in I Corinthians 11:24, "This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me." When we compare this passage with Psalm 34:20 and John 19:31-36, which give the prophecy and fulfillment that a bone of Jesus would not be broken, we see the wisdom in omitting reference to the broken body of our Lord.

Further, it might be advisable not to use the word

spill with reference to the blood of Jesus. While one definition of spill in the dictionary is "to shed as in killing or wounding," the primary definition is "to cause or allow to run or fall from a container, especially accidentally or wastefully," which of course is not an accurate description of what happened in Jesus' offering his blood as God had planned (cf. Matthew 26:27-28). Also, it is not correct to pray that in the Lord's supper we celebrate the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The Bible nowhere teaches such, but rather that in the Lord's supper we remember Jesus and proclaim his death till he comes (I Corinthians 11:24-26).

Perhaps one might think of other corrections that need to be made at the Lord's table. These are offered in hope that we will be helped in conducting the sacred feast.

--108 Greenleaf Drive, Birmingham, AL 35214.

What If God Sent Bills?

Paul Sain

When those monthly bills come due, take courage and be grateful that the Lord of creation does not send a bill to us. If He did, look at the great debt we would owe:

The Ears: A piano has 88 keys, but each of your ears has a keyboard with 1500 keys. They are so finely tuned that you can hear the blood running through your vessels. The outside of your ear can catch up to 73,700 vibrations a second.

The Eyes: They are both microscopes and telescopes. They can gaze into the heavens and see a star millions of miles away, or inspect the smallest insect.

The Feet: Did you know that each foot has 26 bones, none of which is wider than your thumb? But your foot is so "manufactured" (arched) with its ligaments, tendons, muscles and joints that a 300 pound man can put all his weight on these tiny

bones.

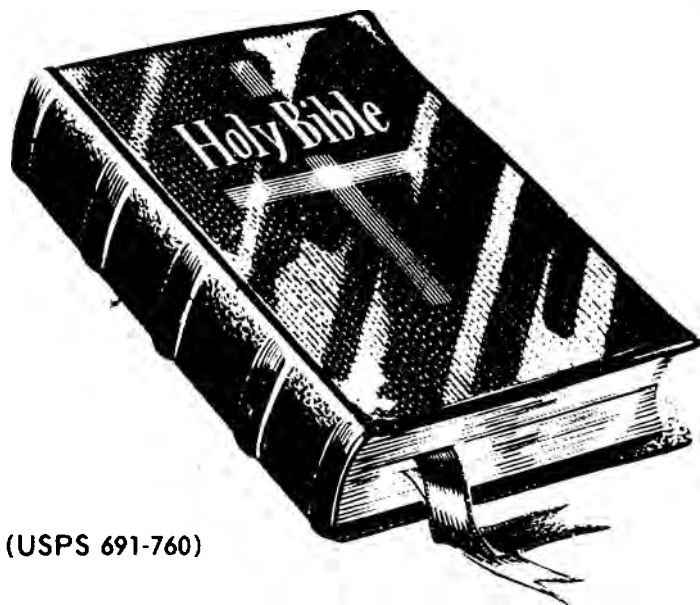
The Heart: Its size is about like your fist, but pumps (beats) 4320 times an hour. In a year that would mean 40,000,000 beats. A drop of blood can make a round trip in your circulatory system in only 22 seconds.

What if God sent you a bill for His marvelous body we live in? Staggering, isn't it? But God doesn't send bills. He just loves us and cares for us.

Can we do any less than to return His love? We show our love for Him by obedience (John 14:15; Matthew 7:21) to His Word and by faithful stewardship of that which He has entrusted us (Matthew 6:33).

God does not send bills for these rich blessings, but indeed we do owe our heavenly Father so very much. Let us prove our love for Him.

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Words Of Truth

"I am not mad" - most noble. Feels but speak forth the Words of Truth

25

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The End

Harvey Porter

We are very familiar with these words. They appear at the close of our books, movies, and television specials. We close a life-story with these words of finality. And all of us recognize that our earthly life will finally end. We do not want an end to good things, just the bad things. We welcome an end to depression, pain and suffering, conflict and war.

We come now to the end of the year. It will never be again. Its events will never recur exactly the same. It, like all the preceding years, brought happiness and sadness, want and plenty, war and peace, and endless combinations of good and evil. Solomon wrote an interesting statement that fits our thought just here. He said, "The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride" (Ecclesiastes 7:8 NIV). The Revised Standard Version translated this passage, "Better is the end of a thing than its beginning; and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit."

We wonder about the wisdom of the "wise man's" statement. All of us can remember a life that was ended at its prime, an end to our job just when we needed it most, an end to a loving relationship of family or friends because of a move or change of circumstances. We are fully aware that not all things end as they should.

Good endings to all things was not really what Solomon was saying. The Hebrew word we have translated "the end of a matter" could be understood to mean "the outcome" of a matter, or "the end-product." It is here that as Christians we could apply Paul's great statement from Romans, chapter 8: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him . . ."

We now seek an end to wars and desolations, to hunger and poverty, to adultery, to rape, to lying and stealing, to murder and hate. We are often the victims of all kinds of injustice. And it is understandable when we ask why God doesn't do something about it. The sad truth is that all things do not end well. We are often hurt and dis-

appointed waiting for God to step in and establish justice and make right triumph. It is precisely here that the Scripture says, "and patience is better than pride."

Every year ought to end with all of us being faithful to the Lord, "walking in the light as He is in the light." We must live every year in faithful submission to the Lord and then "the end of a matter is better than its beginning."

What does patience have to do with justice and what is right or wrong? If God is in control, He should set things right. As Christians we believe that evil ought always to be defeated, that injustice should always lose, and the end of any matter ought to be good. The promise of God is that the final outcome will be good. Sometimes God works

that way in our individual situations, but not always. And when what is right is not always done, He simply asks us to be patient. It will be made right! This whole creation is geared to that. God is still in control, but WHEN He acts it is His decision and not ours. His children must be patient.

This last year was not all good. Some died that we desperately needed. Some did not treat you right. Some lied and were not caught. Some embezzled and got away with it. Some mocked God and it appeared that they got away with it. But we must realize that the end of the matter has not yet been heard. The Judge of all mankind has not yet handed down His sentence. You can count on it, for God has said, "But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24 RSV).

Every year ought to end with all of us being faithful to the Lord, "walking in the light as He is in the light." We must live every year in faithful submission to the Lord and then "the end of a matter is better than its beginning."

--1701 Montgomery Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109.

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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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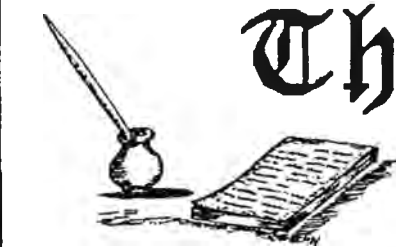
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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

1990 Is History



David Wade

because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:15-17).

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. 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 armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:11-14).

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is

Time marches on and another year has come and gone. We must use time wisely while we have it. The Bible shares many admonitions about the wise use of time. Consider the following:

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time,

unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:12-14).

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned into fables. But which thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry (II Timothy 4:2-5).

"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? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (I Peter 4:17-18).

For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2).

On her deathbed, Queen Elizabeth I was heard to say, "All my possessions for a moment of time." Use the present wisely. It is the only time you have. Let us look forward to 1991, as the Lord may give it to us. Let us use the new year more wisely than we have the past.

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