



(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 27

JANUARY 4, 1991

NUMBER 1

Shouldering Our Disappointments "A Tick At A Time"



Edsel Burleson

Have you heard the story of the grandfather clock that decided to stop running when it heard someone say that in 90 years it would tick 2,838,240,000 times? It only started again on the suggestion that it would have to tick only one tock at a time.

To experience disappointment is a part of being a human being. However, there are a multitude of ways of reacting to these disappointments. Some try to cope by fleeing reality. They may occupy their minds with various forms of entertainment, devotion to some cause or pursuit of some goal. They may seek relief through drugs, alcohol, even suicide. Others handle disappointment by rewarding themselves to make up for what they have had to endure.

Life is not a dead-end road. The disappointments, trials and problems we encounter are not meant to be roadblocks, they are meant to strengthen us, not defeat us. Paul said, "... all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Life is not a dead-end road. The disappointments, trials and problems we encounter are not meant to be roadblocks, they are meant to strengthen us, not defeat us.

God can turn bitter to sweet as he did the waters in the wilderness. Often out of the bitter sorrow of disappointment he makes gladness to arise as he turns defeat into victory if we trust him. This happened to the Israelites as they journeyed in the wilderness. They marched wearily through the hot, dry desert only to reach waters of bitterness, then soon they found themselves amid groves of palms, where they could rest in the shade and drink pure water that flowed from the rocks. They were allowed to rest there and refresh themselves where they were sheltered from the heat. So it is in our world as God does give us moments of refreshing when we come to him and there we rest and find strength to press on life's journey.

Consider the experiences of the apostle Paul. Talk about disappointments. Events in his life often turned out differently from what he had planned. He experienced execution attempts, serious accidents, attacks by criminals, betrayal and opposition from those he tried to help. He was very familiar with pain and weariness, loss of sleep, lack of food, water, shelter and even clothing (II Corinthians 11:23-27).

One would expect that Paul became a depressed, discouraged, defeated individual. Just the opposite.

He was a thoroughly positive person who came through those difficult times with a triumphant spirit. He said, "... 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).

An unknown poet said it this way:

"Never you worry, never you fret,
Flowers shall bloom everywhere yet;
Blue must the sky be under the grey,
Clouds will blow over some sweet day;
These you remember, can God forget?
The best hasn't happened to anyone yet!
When the day faileth and night
mounts the skies,
Walk in the starlight until the
sunrise.

Those your heart longs for
draw near to you.

Keep yourself ready, keep yourself
true.

Never you worry, never you fret,
God isn't done with your world yet."

--1569 Berry Road, Birmingham, AL 35226.

The Innocence Of Beer??

Dub McClish

Beer consumption is considered by the average citizen to be an innocent pastime for every "good ole boy" and every "good ole girl" in town. Some parents have heaved sighs of relief when their kids were caught guzzling beer instead of drinking whiskey or smoking "pot." After all, it was ONLY beer! It's about time the wraps were taken off this supposed "innocent" beverage! Consider the following facts:

BEER CONTAINS ALCOHOL. The alcohol

content of one 12 ounce can of beer contains a little more than 1 ounce of 100 proof whiskey or a small glass of 40 proof wine.

BEER IS A MAJOR CULPRIT IN ALCOHOLISM. Some mistakenly believe that one cannot become an alcoholic from drinking beer. It has been documented that beer-drinkers compose a large percentage of alcoholics undergoing treatment in our VA hospitals. Alcoholism is a major social problem in Germany and Belgium

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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."

A New Year

John Gipson

Standing at the opening gates of a new year is an awesome thing. No one can really see what will be. As Solomon said, "Every matter has its time and way, although man's trouble lies heavy upon him. For he does not know what is to be, for who can tell him how it will be?" (Ecclesiastes 8:6, 7). Even at the best our acquaintance with the future amounts only to a "perhaps."

Some men greet a new year with only a yawn. There is no expectancy. Life is stale and hope has died. They have faced many sorrows and disappointments and now they are filled with cynicism. Solomon was such a man. He could find nothing new under the sun. He observed that the winds move in circles and never get anywhere. The rivers flow into the sea, but the sea is never full. The sun rises in the east and sets in the west

with monotonous regularity. There is only one good man in a thousand; and there isn't any such thing as a good woman. Everything is vanity. And matters cannot be changed. "The crooked," he said, "can never be made straight."

But wait! Before you join Solomon in the chorus of his song let me remind you of the throne set in heaven and the voice which cries, "Behold, I make all things new" (Revelation 21:5). This King of kings and Lord of lords has made possible:

THE NEW COVENANT. The Old Covenant was a sentence of death upon all of us (Galatians 3:10). But Christ has made a New Covenant and sealed it with his own blood (Matthew 26:28). And he says, "I will be merciful toward their iniquities,

The Innocence Of Beer??

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where beer is the alcoholic drink almost exclusively.

BEER CONTAINS A SECOND POWERFUL NARCOTIC. Besides the narcotic of ethyl alcohol, beer contains the narcotic called lupulin. This drug is the active narcotic agent contained in the hops from which beer is brewed. The chemical formula for lupulin shows it contains the same chemical elements as the narcotic agent in marijuana, only in a **HEAVIER MOLECULAR** structure. Moreover, the hops from which beer is brewed is classified by botanists as belonging to the same plant family as the hemp plant from which marijuana is derived. When one drinks beer he gets a double dose of narcotics (alcohol & lupulin).

THE ALCOHOL IN BEER HAS THE SAME EFFECT AS THE ALCOHOL IN WINE OR WHISKEY. It slows one's reaction time, often just enough to prevent the handling of an emergency on the job or behind the wheel of a vehicle. Many medical schools demonstrate the effect of alcohol by giving two examinations on successive days, with similar questions. The first exam is given as usual. The second one is given after each student has drunk one bottle of beer. The tests are graded by people ignorant of the experiment, thus unbiased. Most of the students judge the second test to be easier and their grades higher, but the grades average about 17% lower. Only **ONE BEER** makes a difference! The fact that alcohol gives one a sensation of being better able to handle a situation when the opposite is true, becomes a major factor in driving a car, practicing medicine, operating a machine, etc.

Like all other alcoholic beverages, beer continues to leave death, destruction, heartache, and crime in its wake. **IT IS NEITHER INNOCENT NOR HARMLESS!**

--908 Imperial Drive, Denton, TX 76201.

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Whatever Happened To Lassie, Anyway?



Don Williams

I agree with the proposition that a dog can be a good (not "best") friend of mankind. Some children are able to grow up with a pet of some sort, and experiences learned from being with animals are valuable. I used to love to watch the television program

brand of "lite" beer.

Another recent beer commercial has also "Gone to the dogs!" Have you seen the one about the fellows watching television, who send their golden retriever to fetch them some beer out of the refrigerator? The implication left is that the dog gets one for himself!

Folks, let us be serious! Drinking alcohol is no party, and one who does such will have headaches, heartbreaks, and a wrecked life! Solomon describes the person who drinks alcohol as having "woes, sorrows, contentions, wounds without cause, redness of eyes" (Proverbs 23:29). He continues by saying that alcohol, although enticing to some, in the end "bites like a serpent and stings like an adder" (Proverbs 23:32).

Lassie, about a beautiful collie who always saved someone in just the nick of time. Some of you probably used to watch the *Adventures of Rin Tin Tin*, about a German shepherd. Later generations have enjoyed watching *Benji*, a shaggy little dog that is so cute and lovable, and rescues people from danger. Dogs like these have long been symbols of goodness, honesty, and outstanding character. Children grow up desiring to own a dog like one of these. In recent years another dog has made the television screen. This dog is so aristocratic that he has two names, not just one: "Spuds McKenzie" -- and his claim to fame (???) "The Original Party Animal." Although I have nothing against the dog (in fact, he is rather cute) . . . it is the beer he helps to sell that offends me! The COMMERCIALS WHICH PEOPLE put him in, have him living in the finest of luxuries, enjoying the best of life, and throwing the biggest of parties, featuring (of course) their

Folks, let us be serious! Drinking alcohol is no party, and one who does such will have headaches, heartbreaks, and a wrecked life!

You know, they say, "you can't teach an old dog new tricks." But I sure wish they could teach "Spuds" to properly show what beer and alcohol really DOES to a person. Maybe "Spuds" needs to learn a lesson from "Smokey The Bear." Only YOU can prevent a life of alcoholism . . . and that is by never taking the first drink!

--Rt. 2, Box 713, Guin, AL 35563.

Beginning A New Year

Charles E. McDonald

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:15-16). Thus writes the beloved apostle Paul to the church at Ephesus. What more appropriate words could be addressed to men today as we begin a new year in the final decade of the twentieth century.

TIME is something which men are very conscious of, especially in our nation and culture. To me, time is life and life is the most precious, important and valuable of all assets. Without life, there is no time. If we would do anything or accomplish anything, now is the TIME. The wise man wrote, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

So, as we make at new beginnings, both as individuals and as a congregation, may we step forth determined to make the most of TIME. How much do we have? I have no answer for that. But, isn't the question to be addressed rather what we will do with whatever time we are granted? I pray we shall each give of our best to the Master during what time remains.

None can go back and change what has gone before. What we can do is make wise choices now and the work which Jesus has put before us to do.

None can go back and change what has gone before. What we can do is make wise choices now and the work which Jesus has put before us to do. When he was on earth he said, "I must work the works of Him that sent me" (John 9:4). Peter said in I Peter 2:21: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an

example, that ye should follow his steps." So Jesus is our example and we are to be about the Master's business while we may.

By inspiration, he has told us in II Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." We are to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly (Colossians 3:16). How can one do this without regularly and faithfully investing time in the study of that word? There is the continuing need for assembling together to worship the Father and to encourage one another (Hebrews 10:25). "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all (men), especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). There is the need to attempt the restoration of the wayward (Galatians 6:1), to visit the widows and orphans (James 1:27), and to add to the Christian graces (II Peter 1:5-11). We are admonished also to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2). Our TIME is swiftly passing! We must do our best to make it count in the way and manner our Lord has instructed. Austin Taylor wrote and put to music, a hymn titled THERE IS A WORK THAT YOU CAN DO. The chorus says: "There's a work that you can do, Let us work, work, work, and serve the Lord, Let us work, work, work in sweet accord; Till our work on earth is done, and the life-crown won, Let us work and labor for the Lord." May 1991 find all of us doing just that!

--Via Childersburg Reminder, 417 Coosa Pines Drive.

A New Year

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and I will remember their sins no more" (Hebrews 8:12). You can receive pardon for the sins of the past.

THE NEW MAN. Life can be made over again. Listen! "Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has passed away, behold, the new has come" (II Corinthians 5:17).

THE NEW WAY. The right of approach into the presence of God has been prepared for us "by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh" (Hebrews 10:19, 20).

THE NEW JERUSALEM. "He who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God; never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name" (Revelation 3:12).

It is a new year. And even though we do not know what is to be, we can live under a new covenant, become a new man, walk a new way and come to the new Jerusalem. So Happy new Year!

--Via Keynoter, Little Rock, Arkansas.

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Pictures Can Be Wrong



Elwood Holt

A business man tells of a preacher who had a downtown office next to his. He had many books about the Bible. The man said he often saw the preacher reading books about the Bible, but never found him reading the Bible itself. This is a predominant fault of most of us; we read books about the Bible but fail to read the good book itself. We see various religious pictures and conclude that they are in harmony with the Bible. Many times they are not. If you should ask the average person how many doors and windows the ark had, he would probably make a wild guess and say that it had many. All the pictures we see of Noah's ark do include at least two or three doors and several windows. Now the average person concludes that such is the truth, but it isn't.

The record says, "A light shalt thou make to the ark, and to a cubit shalt thou finish it upward; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof" (Genesis 6:16). So you see from the record that the ark had one door and one window. Have you ever seen a picture of the ark with the window in the very top of it? No, I don't suppose you have, at least not many times. But the window was in the top and all the light that entered the ark came through it. Now if pictures can be misleading on the ark, do you not concede that they could be misleading on other things?

When we ask the average person how Jesus was baptized he says, "Why, He and John were standing in the water about knee deep and John poured water on his head from a shell of some sort." We ask, "Sir, where did you learn that?" The answer usually is, "I saw it in a picture." It could even be that he saw it in some movie. But, my friend, he did not read in the Bible of any such procedure. Oh no! Jesus set the example in baptism. He and John "went into the water," and when the baptizing was over they "came up out of the water." Paul emulated Jesus in his teachings about baptism. He taught that there is only one baptism (Ephesians 4:5). In Romans 6:4 he says, "We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." In baptism we obey "that form of doctrine" (Romans 6:16,17). The doctrine is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (I Corinthians 15:1-4). Baptism is to picture these facts. Nothing short of a burial can picture them -- that is why New Testament baptism is always a burial.

So you see again that pictures can be wrong, and can mislead the masses. The Hollywood crowd would do well to read the Bible instead of looking at someone's bias of things. They would be able to depict them more accurately on the silver screen

And, we need to read our Bibles, too, lest we be led astray by someone's attempt to parade on the screen happenings as they were in the days of Jesus and the apostles. Now I am not opposed to pictures that teach the truth. I am against all such that teach error. There is no more powerful way to teach than by pictures. But they are most dangerous unless they follow the letter. How many books do we have in our libraries about the Bible? There are many good ones. But good as they are, they are still the products of men. And men are fallible. They err often. They err in their writings. This is proved every day. But the Bible is God's infallible guide for mankind. There is no substitute for it. Study of it should come first. It should come before all else.

Should you ask the average person to describe the physical looks of Jesus, he would begin and give you a vivid description of the many famous

paintings that are in our art museums and on our calendars of him, that is not actually the way Jesus looked. But the prophet Isaiah said he grew up as "a root out of dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him" (Isaiah 53:2). This doesn't sound much like our pictures looks, does it? Our Lord depended wholly upon his message to touch the hearts of men, and it worked. He did not cater to popularity. So, you see again, unless we stay with the Bible we can go far astray and never know it.

My friends, open up that blessed volume and pore over it. Study it. Obey it. Live it. It will guide you, comfort you, sustain you, and deliver you finally into the blessed state beyond this life. There is no substitute for it. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

--P.O. Box 978, Grand Bay, AL 36541.

Is There A Need?



Bobby Duncan

A child with a serious illness lives in South Alabama. His parents are told he must have extended treatment in a Birmingham hospital. One of the major expenses not covered by insurance would be lodging for the parents who must stay with the child while he is in

the hospital. McDonald's House has a long waiting list. What do these parents do?

This is a hypothetical situation, but it is something that occurs quite frequently. A brother at Adamsville has conceived the idea that some place might need to be provided for Christians who find themselves in such circumstances. He would like to know how great a need there is for such.

Your response to this request will help determine whether efforts to provide lodging for family members of hospital patients in Birmingham will be pursued.

If you have ever experienced a need for such lodging in the Birmingham area, or if you know of some other Christian who has had such an experience, this brother would like to hear from you. Write to Kerry Gott, 220 Fifth Street, Pleasant Grove, Alabama 35127. (There is no need to contact brother Gott for such lodging at present.

We presently have no such provisions).

Your response to this request will help determine whether efforts to provide lodging for family members of hospital patients in Birmingham will be pursued. Is there a need for such a project as this? If so, please let brother Gott hear from you.

--4207 Adamsville Parkway, Adamsville, AL 35005.

Recipe For A Good Year

Take twelve fine full-grown months; see that these are thoroughly free from all bitterness, rancor, hate and jealousy. Cleanse them completely from every clinging spite; pick off all specks of pettiness.

Cut these months into 30 or 31 parts. Do not attempt to make up the whole batch at one time, but prepare one day at a time as follows:

Into each day put equal parts of faith, patience, courage, work, hope, fidelity, liberality, kindness, rest, prayer, and meditation. Add about a teaspoon of good spirits, a dash of fun, a pinch of folly, a sprinkling of play, and a heaping cupful of good humor.

Pour love into the whole, and mix with vim. Serve with quietness, unselfishness, and cheerfulness.

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VOLUME 27

JANUARY 11, 1991

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A Heart Like David's



Joe Spivy, Jr.

heart as did David!

David was a hero, a king, a man of great faith (Hebrews 11:32). David was also a liar, adulterer, and murderer, just to name a few of his sins. Those who have read I and II Samuel may sometimes wonder why this man is held up as having such a special heart when he so often acted in a villainous manner.

Perhaps it is the flaws of David which draw so many of us to him. Not that any would want to emulate those, but it speaks of hope for those who have despaired because of the consciousness of their own faults.

A key to understanding David is found in recognizing what made his heart so special. In I Samuel 16:7 we find that it was so special that God sent Samuel to find David. Saul may have looked the part of the king of Israel, but David had a heart that set him apart from others.

What made David's heart so different? Why was his so sensitive to his God? May I suggest at least three attributes that contributed to the development of David's special heart.

The first may seem the most mystifying of all, but I am convinced that David's "loneliness" aided in building that exceptional heart. Times spent alone, harkening to the spirit of Psalms 46:10, "Be still and know that I am God," would appear a great waste to many. Yet in seeing to daily responsibilities and seeing to all that needs to be

cared for, we often have no time to develop a "God-consciousness." Even as Paul suggested, we need to spend time simply in thinking about the things of God (Philippians 4:8).

A key to understanding David is found in recognizing what made his heart so special. In I Samuel 16:7 we find that it was so special that God sent Samuel to find David. Saul may have looked the part of the king of Israel, but David had a heart that set him apart from others.

Involvement Or Commitment?

Tim Spivy

Involved or committed? Many times these words are used interchangeably, almost synonymously. But after a study of the two words it would be difficult to view them as the same. When I was in the ninth grade I went to school every day that it was required of me. I stayed for six hours, ate lunch there and received my homework assignments. I was very much involved in school, but to say I was committed would be a mistake. There was never a question about being in school, but my being one hundred per cent committed to school work was never a question either.

There are many people in the church who are much as I was in school. They are not about to quit attending worship for various reasons (peer pressure, getting recognition for what they do in the local programs), but neither are they truly

"Lowliness," humility of spirit also set David apart. His was the heart of the shepherd, one who was a servant, for there was no place of honor with the sheep. Even after being anointed as the future king of Israel, we see David returning to the fields. Those who seek after honor and glory do not have the heart of David, nor the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5-8).

Finally, I would suggest that David was a man of real integrity. Israel was "fed . . . according to the integrity of his heart" (Psalms 78:72). With a heart fixed on God (Psalms 57:5), David had a compass which always pointed toward that which was right.


David frequently made mistakes; he sinned often. But because of that most beautifully trained heart, he would always come back to God.

committed to the Lord's work within his church.

A certain survey asked high school students within the Lord's church, "Why do you attend this church?" The overwhelming number one answer was "So I can be with my friends." Even though this survey was among high school students it may well reflect the thoughts of others within the church. The commitment was to the Lord's people and not to the Lord. Involvement can be without commitment, but commitment is manifested through our involvement (James 2:14-26). What is it that makes the difference between involvement and commitment?

LOVE makes the difference! Romans 5:8 says

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The Editor's Pen

Joe T. Spivy, Sr. . . Associate Editor

"Dead End"



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

The title read "How to Become a Christian: BORN AGAIN." In the article I read how Jesus told Nicodemus "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Nicodemus responded, "How can a man be born when he is old?" From there the article proceeds to affirm "New birth

name of the Lord will grant salvation. But to go no further than the statements made is like getting on a new strip of highway that does not connect anywhere. It matters not which direction you go on that strip of highway you end up at a dead end. Here in Jasper many go to the old Jasper airport and walk or jog, but they find at each end of the air strip a dead end. It is alright for airplanes, but people cannot fly. We need a connection that leads to somewhere and that spiritual somewhere is heaven.

What must one do to avoid the dead end with reference to calling on the name of the Lord? The gospel must be heard and believed. For it to be heard and believed it must be preached (Romans 10:12-17).

Calling upon the name of the Lord is more than an earnest pleading as is pointed out by Jesus in Matthew 7:21 when he said "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven." Calling upon the name of the Lord involves obeying all of God's will. Having heard the gospel one must believe it to be saved (Hebrews 11:6 and Romans 10:16). Having believed the gospel one must repent (Luke 13:3 and Acts 17:30) 'unto life' (Acts 11:18). One must then make the good confession which is unto salvation (Romans 10:9, 10) and be obedient in the act of baptism which is for remission of sins (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38; 22:16). For one to be born again he must obey the Lord who promised to save those who will call upon his name.

Would it not be frustrating and disgusting to travel down a strip of highway for a long time only to find a dead end? Just imagine how terrible the cry will be when those who are not told how to call on the name of the Lord reach the DEAD END!

begins with the Holy Spirit convicting a person that he or she is a sinner. Because of sin, we are spiritually dead. For this reason, spiritual birth, as Jesus described it, is necessary. God loves us and gives us spiritual birth WHEN WE ASK HIM FOR IT (emphasis mine, JTS). The Bible says all persons are sinners (Romans 3:23). Jesus died on a cross to save sinners. To be born again means that a person repents of sin and trusts Christ as Savior. Then the person is glad to profess faith in Christ. Jesus told Nicodemus that everyone who believes in (places faith in) Christ will not perish (John 3:16). Jesus is the only One who can save us (John 14:6). TO BELIEVE IN JESUS IS TO BE BORN AGAIN. CONFESS YOUR SINS AND ASK JESUS RIGHT NOW TO SAVE YOU. "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21)."

A world renowned evangelist makes the statement that God has provided salvation and that everyone that calls upon the Lord shall be saved.

In neither case has the evangelist informed the readers what "calling upon the name of the Lord" involves. They just affirm that to call upon the

The Permanence Of Marriage

Willard Collins

Our society has moved from an attitude supporting the code of one man and one woman for life in marriage to one stating that divorce and remarriage is an individual matter with no moral significance.

A number of the most prominent people of our day have accepted this new code, and in certain religious circles, little is being said against it.

In reading the Bible I find that Matthew 19:3-9 is the longest single statement in the Scripture about marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Divorce and remarriage really never can be understood until an individual understands the basic principle that marriage - according to God - is permanent by creation.

A scriptural marriage is permanent. According to Romans 7:2 the only way it can be broken that is honorable for both parties is by death.

Marriage is so permanent that the only scriptural reason for divorce and remarriage is in the case of fornication and then only by the innocent party (Matthew 19:9).

Marriage is so permanent that the only scriptural reason for divorce and remarriage is in the case of fornication and then only by the innocent party (Matthew 19:9).

Marriage is so permanent that Paul says if you separate, either remain unmarried or be reconciled (I Corinthians 7:10, 11).

However, legal divorce and remarriage when

Continued On Page 3

"I Don't Love My Wife Anymore!"

Dan R. Owen

A young man walked out on his wife and daughter. The words of our title were his explanation of why he left. Neither the wife nor the daughter understood his behavior. A young woman made virtually the same comment about her husband as she cursed and swung her fists wildly at him in my presence. A housewife with whom I studied the scriptures last week flatly affirmed that she hated her former mate more than any other person on earth. Out of the last five home Bible studies that we have conducted, four have involved people who are divorced and remarried. This is extremely frustrating!

These couples and thousands like them have been

deceived by a gigantic myth. This myth is the false assurance that somewhere in this world is a man or a woman made especially for me. The myth promises that when I meet this one special person magic will overtake us and we will be uncontrollably and eternally in the ecstasy which we call love.

The great love myth is a lie from Satan himself! The young man who said, "I don't love my wife anymore" meant that the ecstasy was no longer present. The young woman in a drunken rage meant that the former emotional feeling of affection was gone. The third young woman had simply replaced one strong emotion with another.

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Involvement Or Commitment?

Continued From Page 1

that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." When we realize that God gave us his most precious gift at a time when we were contrary to him, a deep appreciation and love will come about. When we truly understand the sacrifice that was offered for an unloving and rebellious people (John 3:16) in our minds and in our hearts (the seat of all motives), then we will love the giver.

A young man may date several young ladies, but when he comes to love only one, commitment is inevitable. Most mothers do not thrive on cleaning the house, washing dishes and changing diapers. Neither do most fathers relish their jobs so much that they would continue in them were it not for the financial support that it secures for their families. Why then do they do it? Does it not stem from their love and commitment to their families?

Some unknown author penned these words that well describe the thinking of too many:

Most mothers do not thrive on cleaning the house, washing dishes and changing diapers. Neither do most fathers relish their jobs so much that they would continue in them were it not for the financial support that it secures for their families. Why then do they do it? Does it not stem from their love and commitment to their families?

I love thy church, oh God,
Her walls before thee stand.
But, please excuse my absence Lord
This bed is simple grand.

Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?
No! Others, Lord, should do their part,
But, please don't count on me.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise him all creatures here below.
Loud my hymns of praise I sing,
Because it doesn't cost to sing.

Yes, love makes the difference.

SACRIFICE makes the difference! Commitment causes us to look for ways to give of ourselves. Involvement gives, but only when God asked to give. Commitment asks, "How can I give more?" while involvement asks, "Do I need to give more?"

A small church was having homecoming. One of

the members who had done quite well financially was asked to speak. He told of his childhood and of the first dollar he ever made. It was a bright shiny silver dollar and he had planned to keep it for ever. Some time later a missionary was speaking of the urgent need of funds for the work he was doing. A great battle waged within him that morning -- the battle of right and wrong (selfishness). Right had won and he placed the silver dollar in the collection basket. "I am convinced that God has blessed me so bountifully because the morning I gave all that was mine." The congregation was spellbound as he left the pulpit until an elderly man stood and said, "I dare you to do that again."

It was that same challenge that Jesus issued in Luke, chapter eighteen. The rich young ruler had kept all the commandments as enumerated by Jesus. His involvement surfaced instead of his commitment as Jesus told him to go and sell all

that he had, give it to the poor and follow Him. He left sorrowfully! True satisfaction comes from sacrifice. Sacrifice makes the difference.

SHARING makes the difference. Sharing goes along with caring. Someone said, "The world does not care what you know until it knows that you care!" A young man will talk to everyone about the young lady he loves. Grandparents will talk for hours of the beautiful and talented grandchildren that they love so much. Sadly enough though, it seems that our love for our loved ones is far greater than our love for the Savior. If we care about Jesus we will care about the world (Matthew 25:31-46). If we care for the lost of the world we will share the riches of heaven with them. If we are truly in love with Jesus Christ, how can we keep the greatest treasure of all a secret?

There is a difference between involvement and commitment!

--5101 Maple Street, Wetumpka, AL 36092.

The Permanence Of Marriage

Continued From Page 2

neither is scriptural means adultery. The common situation in our society is for a person to put away the wife and/or husband for a number of reasons other than fornication and to remarry. The divorce becomes legal (acceptable by the state) but not scriptural (accepted by God). The second marriage, therefore, is a legal but not a scriptural marriage. This is adultery, a grievous sin (Galatians 5:19-21).

Repentance means a change of mind and a turning from evil that leads to a change of action. True repentance ensures restitution where possible. A turning from evil means that one turns from adultery. This may be hard, but living in sin is hard, and being lost is very hard. Jesus' law is over all men (Matthew 28:19, 20).

When people who are not Christians get involved in marriage, divorce and remarriage situations where fornication is not involved, some would say that if they would just become Christians, everything would be forgiven and their legal marriage would become scriptural. The Scriptures do not teach that baptism can turn a legal marriage into a scriptural one. Before one can be baptized scripturally, that person must repent (Acts 2:38). The great question here is the meaning of repentance.

Repentance means a change of mind and a turning from evil that leads to a change of action. True repentance ensures restitution where possible. A turning from evil means that one turns from adultery. This may be hard, but living in sin is hard, and being lost is very hard. Jesus' law is over all men (Matthew 28:19, 20).

A congregation with a majority of members in adultery would not be a good influence for Christ. Elders must seek to stem the tide. We do not want our young people brought up by adults living in adultery.

--David Lipscomb University, Nashville, TN 37203.

God's Care For His Children

David P. Brown

The omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, omnijust and omnibenevolent God in His ordination of the scheme of redemption for lost mankind fashioned this material world in which we now reside. It is complete for what God intended it to be -- a place to prepare for eternity with God in heaven. Hence, God has not only ordained a system of salvation for lost man through an obedient faith, but He has also prepared a proper place where such a faith system could be carried out or worked by man (Romans 8:29, 30; Ephesians 3:10, 11; II Timothy 1:8-10; Hebrews 5:10).

Matthew 6:33 teaches the doing of God's will takes precedent over all things; and, if such a course is followed, God will take care of us spiritually and physically. Romans 8:28 declares through God's great power and providence ALL THINGS help Christians to live a Christian life. So Paul declared: "My God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches . . ." (Philippians 4:19). Thus, with Paul we ask, "What shall we then say to these things: if God be for us, who can be against us?"

From the book of Exodus in the Old Testament, we see a clear demonstration of God's providential care of His people.

1. Though Pharaoh decreed the death of all male infants born to Hebrew mothers, God preserved Moses.
2. Moses learned from his hired nurse, who was his own

Continued On Page 4

"I Don't Love My Wife Anymore!"

Continued From Page 2

Not one of these understands the biblical concept of love.

One cannot "fall into" the love that the Bible commands, nor can one "fall out" of it. We fall into and out of emotional states but biblical love is not an emotion. Consider the following observations from the scriptures.

The love which the Bible demands of us originates with God (I John 4:8). We cannot know this kind of love apart from a knowledge of Christ (I John 3:16). In the laying down of his life for sinners, Christ taught mankind the meaning of love (Romans 5:8; I John 3:16). We truly love only when we imitate our Master and "lay down our lives" for others. "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34). Only those who are begotten of God can love in this way (I John 5:1). Love is a fruit which the Spirit of God produces in the life of God's children (Galatians 5:22). This kind of love is not a feeling. It is doing! "My little children, love not in word, neither with the tongue, but in deed and in truth" (I John 3:18). The apostle commands us to "walk in love" (Ephesians 5:2). When we do that which is not in our brother's best interest, we cease to walk in love (Romans 14:15). "Let all that ye do be done in love" (I Corinthians 16:14). In I Corinthians 13:4-7 the apostle is not telling us what love does! In short, love does only that which is for the ultimate good of another.

These couples and thousands like them have been deceived by a gigantic myth. This myth is the false assurance that somewhere in this world is a man or a woman made especially for me. The myth promises that when I meet this one special person magic will overtake us and we will be uncontrollably and eternally in the ecstasy which we call love.

This kind of love happens when we make it happen. We decide to love. This kind of love, unlike the love in Satan's lying myth, is completely within our control. Paul commands "Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her" (Ephesians 5:25). The people to whom Paul wrote these words knew nothing of our modern romantic notions. Parents usually arranged marriages. Brides and grooms had very little if any contact before the marriage. To these people, as to us, God commands "Husbands love your wives." To obey this divine command, one must simply make up his mind that he will do everything in his power to serve the best interest of his mate. He decides to give his life in providing what is best for his mate physically, emotionally,

and spiritually. This kind of love must be worked at every day! "Pursue love" (I Corinthians 14:1). We love our enemies, our neighbors, our God, and our mate with this kind of love (Matthew 5:44; Luke 10:27; Ephesians 5:25). This kind of love has nothing directly to do with sex or sexual attraction.

This kind of love happens when we make it happen. We decide to love. This kind of love, unlike the love in Satan's lying myth, is completely within our control. Paul commands "Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her" (Ephesians 5:25). The people to whom Paul wrote these words knew nothing of our modern romantic notions.

God's Care For His Children

Continued From Page 3

mother, the truth of God.

3. Because he was the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, Moses received the best secular education available for his day (Acts 7:22).

4. As a shepherd in Midian for forty years he learned leadership, and also learned well the area through which he would later lead the children of Israel.

Another great example of God's providential care is Job.

1. Job declared God could do all things and His purposes could not be hindered (Job 42:2).

Matthew 6:33 teaches the doing of God's will takes precedent over all things; and, if such a course is followed, God will take care of us spiritually and physically. Romans 8:28 declares through God's great power and providence ALL THINGS help Christians to live a Christian life. So Paul declared: "My God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches . . ." (Philippians 4:19). Thus, with Paul we ask, "What shall we then say to these things" if God be for us, who can be against us?"

The love that comes from God is based on firm commitment. It is love that is unfeigned and without hypocrisy (II Corinthians 6:6; Romans 12:9). This kind of love ceases only when one decides to stop loving. When one decides to stop loving, he violates the very command of God (Ephesians 5:25). If one persists in this willful sin, he will be forever lost. Our choice is the determining factor.

A frustrated man put his face in his Bible and wept bitterly across the table from me. He was living with a woman who could not be his wife according to the teaching of Jesus Christ. The children they shared were in the next room. "Why didn't anyone ever teach me about this before," he demanded in agony. We have a responsibility to the world and to the church to dispel the myth of Satan and teach people about the love that comes from God. Only this kind of love can insure lasting marriages because people will never "fallout" of this precious love. May God help us to instill the truth in our sons and daughters!

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2. In Job's trials we come to understand the suffering of Job was a part of God's process of working things for good, but such was not a pleasant process. Hence, all suffering is not bad nor the result of evil.

3. God can and does overrule the devil and use him for the accomplishing of His will (Job 10).

4. The only power that Satan has is what God allows him to possess (Job 1:12; 2:6).

5. The book of Revelation as well as that of Job declares that regardless of how things appear, God and His way will be victorious at the end of this present age.

Assuredly these things were written aforetime for our learning (Romans 15:4), and with David we can say: "I have been young and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psalm 37:25).

Our conclusion is that God does provide material and temporal goods along with moral and spiritual blessings as such relate to God's eternal purpose for his saints. Having drawn the aforementioned conclusion it must be understood that the ultimate design and end of God's providence is the eternal salvation of man in heaven. God, therefore, is not primarily concerned with rescuing man's temporal prosperity or simply making him materially happy. God's giving or withholding of physical blessings relates directly to God's will and his omniscient insights into the spiritual needs of every faithful child of God.

God knows all that is knowable and cannot operate contrary to His will. He is the only one who can see all things in the composite, and therefore, how all things come together for the good of the faithful child of God. The Christian's business is to know such and to give his life to learning and doing God's will as it is revealed in the Bible. God will take care of those things that are His business.

From a proper study of God's providence faithful children of God know that God will take care of them. Such a disposition of mind and life motivates us to keep ourselves from sin; assuring us that God has not forsaken His children though we suffer like Job. Our trust in God is strengthened because we know that this life is designed to test our faith, trust, and confidence in God.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, 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).

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Words Of th

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

—Acts 26:25

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We Are At War!



Joe E. Galloway

Probably some will read this title and think of the crisis in Middle East which may erupt at any time into war. But, I am not referring to physical warfare. God and his people are continually engaged in war with Satan and his forces. Paul told the young Christian, Timothy to "war a good warfare"

(I Timothy 1:18), "Fight the good fight of faith" (6:12), and "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (II Timothy 2:3). We cannot honorably stop our part in this war until we depart this life. As Paul discussed his impending death he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness . . ." (II Timothy 4:7, 8).

The idea of Christians fighting a spiritual war seems to be distasteful to some who equate Christianity with spiritual pacifism. Some religious groups have even removed from their hymnals any song that mentions such warfare. The rationale seems to be that peace is always the goal, at all costs including compromising truth and right. Perhaps they have never considered that the peace the Bible enjoins is basically "peace with God" (Romans 5:1), and then with God's people (I Thessalonians 5:13). True, "if it be possible" we are to "live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18), but we must never be at peace with false doctrine and sinful action. Not making this distinction has led some members of the Lord's church to oppose religious debates and "negative preaching." As good soldiers of Jesus Christ we must be "set for the defence of the gospel" (Philippians 1:17) and "earnestly contend for the

faith which was one delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

We need to instill in our minds that in this life, while we still live among the enemies of God in this world, we can never relax and be at peace.

"Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds): casting down imaginations

and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:3-5). Our weapon to fight against sin and error, and to win souls for Jesus Christ, is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17).

We need to instill in our minds that in this life, while we still live among the enemies of God in this world, we can never relax and be at peace. Let's be militant in opposing sin and error, and in rescuing souls who are in captivity to Satan. God's truth can make them free (John 8:32)!

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"My Concept Of God"

Dan Winkler

To the atheist, God is nothing. To the agnostic, God is a question mark. To the skeptic, God is an object of doubt. To the polytheist, God is one of many deities. To the heno- theist, God is the one deity among many deities we should recognize and worship. To the pantheist, God is everything. But - - "Who is God to me, to you?"

"Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him" (Hebrews 11:6).

The above passage provides several observations of encouragement. First, God can be pleased. Second, for God to be pleased with our lives we must have faith in his existence, we must believe "that he is." Third, for God to be pleased with our lives, we must possess a balanced concept of him, believing "that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him."

Therefore, what is our concept of God? Who is God to us? According to our Old Testaments, he is: El Shaddai -- God Almighty (Genesis 17:1).

Adonai -- Master or Lord (Psalm 110:1).

Jehovah -- The One who is because he is, or the One who shall be because he shall be (Exodus 3:13-15).

In the New Testament, God is frequently referred to by the more intimate description of a "Father!"

(1) He is the "Father of Mercies," concerned about our problems (II Corinthians 1:3).

(2) He is the "Father of spirits," who allows suffering to flow into our lives, enabling us to grow in righteousness (Hebrews 12:7-11).

(3) He is the "Father of lights," from whom every good and perfect gift is generated (James 1:17).

Most importantly, God can be our Father! If we step away from the world, becoming and living as Christians, he has promised, "I will receive you, and will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to me sons and daughters" (II Corinthians 6:17, 18).

Isn't that great?

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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

"They Made Light Of It"



David Wade

went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them" (Matthew 22:5,6). Obviously, he was portraying God's people, the Jews, as they rejected Jesus and refused to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus said, "But they made light of it and went their ways," that is, they paid no attention to it, and did not regard the invitation of any value. The Jews had a long standing tradition of weighing God's laws and determining the importance of each commandment. The scribe of Mark 12:18 acknowledged "the first commandment of all" was to "love the Lord your God . . ." They considered this

In the parable of the wedding feast Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven to a King who arranged a marriage feast for his son. His servants went out to urge those invited to "come to the wedding" (Matthew 22:4). The expected response was not evident. "But they

made light of it and

as the heaviest, most important law. They considered the lightest law to be, "If a bird's nest happens to be before you along the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, with the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young; you shall surely let the mother go, and take the young for yourself, that it may be well with you and that you may prolong your days" (Deuteronomy 22:6-7).

Furthermore, Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for making God's laws heavy for others while making them light on themselves. "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do to be seen by men" (Matthew 23:2-5).

If we are not careful, we can fall into the same rut of mishandling God's word as did the scribes and Pharisees. We must recognize that all of God's word is heavy. We must rightly divide it, and we must never disregard it, any of it! What applies to others, equally applies to us. We should be willing and prepared to live by the same admonitions and commandments that apply to everyone else.

Is There Any Advantage?



Bobby Duncan

the unfaithfulness of our children when those children are not faithful Christians at the time of their arrival on campus. We could not agree more.

However, upon reading that article I got the impression its author was trying to convince me the Christian college offers no spiritual advantages at all. In other words, the Christian boy or girl who leaves home to attend a state college or university has just as much help in remaining faithful, just as

A few months ago this journal carried an article which emphasized the need for parents to train their children in the right way while those children are still growing up. The article correctly pointed out that it is not fair to blame the influence of a state university campus for

much opportunity for spiritual growth and development, just as much encouragement to do right as the boy or girl who enrolls in one of our fine Christian colleges or universities. With all due respect to the beloved brother who wrote the article, he is not even close to the truth with reference to that particular matter.

I was reared on the campus of what is now a state university. My father was an employee of that institution. I could have attended college practically free of charge. But my parents had seen enough to know they wanted me to attend Freed-Hardman College. In order to send me, they had to borrow money, and my father took extra jobs to pay it back. I would like to have seen someone convince my parents I would have been just as well off spiritually on the campus of a state college or university.

A Christian widow reared three sons. All of them became faithful and devoted to Christ as they were growing up. One of them attended a Christian

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Ladies Day

February 9

Theme:

**In Christ You
Are Someone**

Special

Speakers:

**Sue Crabtree,
Montgomery, AL
Laurel Sewell,
Henderson, TN**

Registration

Begins At 8:45

Salad Luncheon

At Noon!

Display From

Mars Hill

Book Store

Is There Any Advantage?

Continued From Page 2

college, and is now a faithful preacher of the gospel. Another attended a state university, and became involved in the Crossroads movement. The third attended a state university and quit the church altogether. Would you like to try to convince that mother that, had she done her job well at home, it would have made no difference where her sons went to college?

I know a man who is faithfully proclaiming the gospel today, but who was not even a Christian when he enrolled in college. Some good Christian persuaded this boy just out of high school to attend one of our Christian colleges. He learned the truth, and obeyed it, and decided to spend his life preaching it. Ask that man how much it would take to buy back from him that Christian college experience.

Yes, you could tell of some man or woman who came to a state university and became more active in the church, or who obeyed the gospel while on campus. I believe for every case you could name of one who was made spiritually stronger while attending a state college or university I could name two who lost their faith while so doing. While some who attend our Christian colleges are not what they should be, the percentage of those who come out of college faithful to the Lord is much, much greater in our Christian colleges and universities than in the state colleges and universities.

While some who attend our Christian colleges are not what they should be, the percentage of those who come out of college faithful to the Lord is much, much greater in our Christian colleges and universities than in the state colleges and universities.

The Bible is taught in our Christian colleges and universities. Does the word of God have any power to help people overcome temptation? It helped Jesus overcome temptation (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10). The psalmist thought hiding the word of God in his heart would keep him from sinning against God (Psalm 119:11). Certainly no Christian would take the position that one who studies the Bible on a daily basis has no spiritual advantage over one who does not. Yes, I know one on the campus of a state school could study the Bible on his own, but how many do so in a very serious way? If the gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16), and if the gospel is taught in our Christian schools, then how can one argue there are no spiritual advantages to attending a Christian school?

Not only is there an advantage because of what is

taught, there is also an advantage because of what is not taught in our Christian schools. Two young Christian gentlemen have a Masters Degree with a major in geology. One is a defender of the faith, and an effective author who writes articles showing the Bible to be in harmony with all the known facts of geology. The other denies that the earth was created in six literal days, but contends that the earth is billions of years old. He offers as evidence what he has learned as a geologist. Why the difference? Because of the difference in what these two young men have been taught. Our Christian colleges, with a few shameful exceptions, teach modern science without asserting the atheistic and unscientific doctrine of evolution. No reasonable person living today would deny that the state colleges and universities are infiltrated, and in some cases saturated, with atheism and humanism, and that these are taught to the students. Would you say that a young person just out of high school who is exposed to the teaching of the truth every day for four years has no advantage over a young person just out of high school who is taught error every day for four years? It just doesn't make sense. Jesus said: "The truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

Finally, God's word says: "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (I Corinthians 15:33). How can one seriously say that one will do just as well spiritually on a campus where more than ninety percent of the students and faculty are not Christians as he will do on a

campus where all faculty members and more than ninety percent of the students are Christians? How can one say a student is just as well off living on a campus where drinking, sexual promiscuity, and even homosexuality are encouraged by many of one's peers. Is there no advantage in living among those who are trying to live right, and where one's peers generally frown upon sin?

Please understand that I am not differing with the idea that many of our young people are lost before they reach college age, and that going away to college should not take the blame for what parents have failed to do for their children. But even those college freshmen who are weak spiritually have a much greater chance of growing strong under the circumstances they will find on a Christian college or university campus.

I appreciate the work being done by faithful brethren on the campuses of the state colleges and universities. They have helped many to remain faithful who otherwise would have fallen by the wayside. They have caused many to graduate from college much stronger in the faith than when they first enrolled. Churches need to support the good work they are doing. But we are kidding ourselves when we say the young people who attend our Christian colleges and universities have no greater opportunities for spiritual development than those who are on the campuses of the state schools.

--4207 Adamsville Parkway, Adamsville, AL 35005.

The Blessed Life



T. Pierce Brown

Although David was a man of many troubles, he was a man of great faith, and a man after God's own heart. In Psalm 31 we can catch some glimpses of the life of faith that should characterize every child of God and give him a life that is blessed.

First, there is in verse one the expressing of confident faith. "In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust." When Solomon said in Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths," he was not just giving a good scripture for preachers to quote. He was expressing a fundamental principle prerequisite for a blessed life. It involves confidence in all that the Lord has said, not only for us to do, but for what he will do. We not only have power to become sons of God through faith in him (John 1:11-12), but we have power to become blessed, happy, useful and productive sons of God. Both the basis and results of this

confidence are found in verses 2 & 3. The psalmist says, "Be thou my strong rock, for a house of defense to save me. For thou art my rock and my fortress." That expression may appear strange until you think through its implications. How can he say, "Be thou my rock, for thou art my rock?" A rock and a fortress suggest stability, unchanging nature, and a place of defense against enemies and protection against all elements.

Why should one ask God to be what he already is? That awareness can be of much of comfort and value to us. We need God to be to us personally what he is of himself. That is, he is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Is he your King and Lord? Are you in His kingdom, submitting to his authority in all things? Or are you one who thinks you do not need authority for what you do as long as you can say, "He did not say not to." He is the Saviour of the world. Is he your saviour? He will not be your saviour unless you accept him as Lord. It is significant that Peter in his wonderful sermon in Acts 2 first presented the fact that "God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36) before he told them how to accept Him as Saviour (Acts 2:38). When we sing, "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me" we need to realize that he did not just die for the world, he died for

Continued On Page 4

The Blessed Life

Continued From Page 3

me.

In verse 5, he says, "Into thine hand I commit my spirit." These words Jesus used at his death, but they were his attitude throughout life. We need to realize that as we live, so shall we die. If we live in the atmosphere of the Word, loving, living, breathing, obeying the Word, we shall die that way. If we commit our spirits to God day by day, we will have no trouble committing them on that final day. It may be significant that none of the gospel records describe Jesus as dying, but as "giving up the ghost." He was the one who deliberately committed his spirit to God. We can do this day by day, and it should be total commitment insofar as we can make it so.

This blessed life was not only a life of confidence and commitment, but a life of joy and gladness. Verses 7 & 8 say, "I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities; and hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a large room." We need to be aware of these four things which David discovered: 1. That all God's people have a day of adversity in some areas. "Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into divers testing" (James 1:2). 2. Whatever these may be, there is One who knows what they are, how long we can bear them, and how to make them work for our good. 3. His consideration of our troubles should give us occasion to rejoice in his mercy and praise him. Failure to do this not only demonstrates ingratitude and hardness of heart, it increases it. It causes us to fail to reach others for two reasons. First, we simply do not try, for we do not feel grateful and happy with what we have. Second, they see our ingratitude and lack of joy, and are not pulled toward Christ by what they see. 4. David said, "Thou hast set my feet in a very large room." There are those who think of following Jesus primarily in terms of what we give up and of what restrictions are placed upon us. No doubt the Prodigal Son felt that way before he left home. We get far more than we give up. Jesus said, "If the Son of Man makes you free, then are ye free indeed" (John 8:36). He set our feet in a very large room. Freedom in Christ is one of the most wonderful things we have. It is not freedom from authority, but freedom under authority. We are free to accept and teach any truth, not bound by any creed or manual, written or unwritten. All emotions that are proper to express, we have the right to express. Any activity that is good to do, we have freedom to do.

There are those who seem to think we oppose the use of instrumental music in worship because we think instrumental music is obnoxious to God. This is not so. I do not oppose peanut butter on the Lord's table because I think God does not like peanut butter, but simply because Jesus did not authorize it. I have the right to play an instrument of music or eat peanut butter or do anything else that is good or right to do. But I have no right to substitute it for what God ordained. Surely anyone who wants to can see that I have the right to

sprinkle water on my head, if I think it would help to keep either of my hairs in place, but I have no right to substitute it for baptism. Remember, "he hath set my feet in a very large room," and although I can go anywhere I choose in the room, I need to stay in the room until he authorizes me to be elsewhere. Many who are connected with the church today are teaching a kind of freedom in Christ that would amount to license to practice whatever one chooses.

We need to realize that as we live, so shall we die. If we live in the atmosphere of the Word, loving, living, breathing, obeying the Word, we shall die that way. If we commit our spirits to God day by day, we will have no trouble committing them on that final day.

The blessed life portrayed by the psalmist involves confession. Verses 9-12 starts with "Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in trouble" and ends with "I am like a broken vessel." There are two kinds of confessions each of us needs to make, and at least one that every man will make. First, we need to confess the truth about Jesus. If we confess it joyfully as the Ethiopian did to Philip in Acts 8:37 then he will confess us. Whether we confess in joyous obedience in this life, or in sorrow and shame, we shall all confess. As Paul says in Romans 14:11, "Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess."

However, the confession in Psalm 31 is more like the confession James speaks of when he says, "Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another that ye may be healed" (James 5:16). This is not just a confession that one might make to a "senior prayer partner" (whatever that might be), but is of value between Christian brothers and sisters. There are two great values in such a confession. First, it is much easier to help a person who confesses that he needs help. If I present myself to you as one who lacks faults, I will not only have a hard time overcoming any of them; it will be impossible to enlist your aid in doing so. The second great value of confessing your faults is that it gives us a release from fear and bondage we would have if we tried to hide them. If I am afraid to let you know that I have a fault, not only am I under tension for fear you will find out, I am subject to "blackmail" of various sorts, for if you do find out you may hold over my head the threat of revealing it to others. If I have already revealed it to others, I am no longer in bondage to those things.

Then the blessed life is one of petition (vs. 15-16), adoration (v. 19) and praise (v. 21). When we

realize as the psalmist that "my times are in thine hand" it will create within us a sense of the nearness of God, give us an assurance of the concern of God, give us strength to endure temptation, help us to overcome fears and worries, encourage us to more consecrated and devoted service, gladden us with hope for the future and allow us to make the petition with assurance and faith.

When a man lives this blessed life, the natural consequence is that he will give others the exhortation of verses 23 and 24, "O love the Lord, all ye His saints -- be of good courage." The heart that is full of adoration and praise for the goodness of God will eagerly long for others to love, trust, serve and obey him. Then he "cannot but speak the things he has seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). Are you living this blessed life?

--Route 2, Box 144X, Wartrace, TN 37183.

Practical Christianity

Today Resolve That . . .

I will be so strong that nothing can disturb my peace of mind.

I will think only the best, work only the best, and expect only the best.

I will wear a cheerful countenance and will meet others with a sincere smile of appreciation.

I will be too big for worry and whining over my lot, but will enthusiastically work to improve it.

I will be too noble for anger, and too strong for fear, and too happy to let trouble ruin my personality and sadden my friends.

I will live in the faith that the Lord is on my side as long as I love Him, do His will, and remain true to the best He has put in me.

I will be a Christian, a real one, true to the core and sincere in all I do and say.

I will seek to be nearer to heaven today!!

Ladies Day
February 9
Theme:
In Christ You Are
Someone Special
Speakers: Sue Crabtree,
Montgomery, AL
Laurel Sewell,
Henderson, TN
Registration Begins At 8:45
Salad Luncheon At Noon!
Display From Mars Hill Book Store



(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 27

JANUARY 25, 1991

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NUMBER 4

Keeping Pure

Cecil May, III

(Editor's note: We welcome Cecil May, III to the pages of Words Of Truth. Cecil and family recently completed a very successful missionary stint in Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands).

does not fall for finger-pointing. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). When their sin becomes our sin, their death becomes our death.

Keep yourself pure.

--280 South Jackie Street, Morton, MS 39117.

"Neither be paratakers of other men's sins: Keep thyself pure" (I Timothy 5:22).

Sometimes we sin without help or encouragement from any other person. At the scene of many a sin, the only beings present were the devil and me.

Most sin, however, finds us in the company of others. Their sin becomes our sin. That is why Paul warned Timothy not to share in other men's sins. Timothy was to keep himself pure even when everyone about him was corrupt.

Others can pressure us into sin. Sometimes, the pressure is verbal as in, "Come on. Don't be a stick-in-the-mud." Other times the pressure may be silent. We do not resist being pushed along by the crowd, carried by the current. Their sin becomes our sin.

We can also be seduced into sin. Pressure pushes, but seducing pulls. We are to be sober and vigilant against sin (I Peter 5:8). Yet, we allow others to lull us into laziness. We let down our guard. Almost before we know it, their sin is our sin.

Some people provoke us to sin. Because they hurt us, we lash back to hurt them. We return a curse for a curse. They will not forgive so neither will we. They are obstinate, ill-tempered, unloving, and just plain ugly. It is hard not to give it right back to them. But when we do, their sin has become our sin.

Whether pressured, seduced, or provoked into sin, it is still our sin. There are no excuses. God



Don Williams

said, had less than \$10 in his pocket when his body was discovered. His body had been compacted by a garbage truck and he was found at the Orange County Garbage Dump. Back in September of last year, he had won \$188,000 in the Florida Lottery. Detectives were not able to trace all his winnings but knew that some of the money was spent riding around in limousines and buying rounds of drinks for his friends. Others suggested that he had invested some of his money on land in California and a condominium in Hawaii.

What a tragic way for one's life to end. Here was a man who could have lived fairly comfortably, but instead ended up dead, having suffocated in a garbage dumpster. Roy Clark could have used his money in pursuing worthwhile pursuits -- perhaps go to college, give of his money toward worthy projects in his town, give of his money to further evangelism in foreign countries. But instead, he squandered his ill-gotten money (some try to argue that gambling pays, but it does not). Like the rich farmer of Luke 12, he retired from life and lived for the here and now instead of using what he had

Several months ago, the Associated Press carried a story about a man who struck it rich in a lottery game. His life ended tragically recently when he was found dead in a garbage dumpster in Orlando, Florida.

A pauper's funeral was planned for Roy Clark who, detectives

to better mankind.

Like the rich farmer of Luke 12, he retired from life and lived for the here and now instead of using what he had to better mankind.

Almost everyone who reads this article will never strike it rich. You would never gamble and thus would not have to worry about what to do with hundreds of thousands of dollars. But ALL of us HAVE a LIFE, as Roy Clark did. And all of us have a choice to make about that life -- we can live for only the here and now, the pleasures of this life, "what can the world do for me" way of thinking. OR we can look at life as a blessing -- a debt -- a debt we owe to God because he gives us life -- and we can use our lives, however fragile they may be, to his honor and his glory. God gives us all the ability to choose how we want to manage our lives -- Christ has left us all the ability to choose how we want to manage our lives -- Christ has left us an ideal, a blueprint of the best of life (I Peter 2:21).

Roy Clark went from being a rich man to a poor man in about a year. There are some who waste their lives in a far shorter time than that. Why not heed the wisdom of Solomon, who in his own wasted years wrote "let us hear the conclusion of the WHOLE MATTER -- Fear God and keep his commandments--for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

-- Rt. 2, Box 713, Guin, AL 35563.

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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Guy N. Woods Appreciation Dinner



Guy N. Woods

The Memphis School of Preaching is very honored to be able to sponsor the **Guy N. Woods Appreciation Dinner** on the Monday of its Twenty-Fifth Annual Lectureship, April 1, 1991. The dinner will take place at 4:30 p.m. at the school.

A "giant" among gospel preachers, brother Woods has defended the truth in more public debates, doubtless, than has any other living person. And, his analytical and innate intellectual capacity and many years of diligent study in "the Book" have combined to make him one of the greatest scholars of the century. His writing with the *Gospel Advocate* has covered nearly one-half century; he served as staff writer, editor, and now Query Editor. For many years, he was in charge of the open forum at Freed-Hardeman University. Countless thousands have been blessed by his commentaries, his questions and answers volumes, and his latest book, *Shall We Know One Another in Heaven?* [Most of his books have been published by the *Gospel Advocate*]. For many years, he has preached in nearly as many meetings as there are weeks in the year.

Faithful brethren have always admired Guy N. Woods' conciseness and eloquence of speech, unswerving loyalty to truth, and powerful refutation of error. A number of prominent, true and tried friends of the Lord and of brother Woods will participate in the program. Everyone is invited to be among the hundreds who will be present to express appreciation for Guy N. Woods and for the truth for which he stands.

Curtis A. Cates, Director
Memphis School of Preaching



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

"The Fog Of War"



DAVID WADE

Although this may be a new term to some of us, it has been and continues to be an ever present reality in the spiritual realm.

The Christian life is a continual war with our enemy. We are to "war a good warfare" (I Timothy 1:18). "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou and also called" (I Timothy 6:12).

In this spiritual battle, the source of the fog of war is well known among those who know and love truth. Concerning Satan, Jesus said, "He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a

liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44). The fog of war had its beginning in the Garden with the words, "Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). To this very day we must always be on guard for Satan's distortions. "But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (II Corinthians 11:3).

God's word is the only source of information to remove Satan's deception. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

All false teaching and every false way are but a part of Satan's fog of war. We are equipped to combat these with the whole armor of God. We are to equip ourselves with truth, righteousness, preparation of the gospel, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and "the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:13-17).

Paul reminds us that "the weapons of warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exhalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:4-5).

We should thank God that in our spiritual battle, we need not be blinded by the fog of war.

Personal Priorities

John Gipson

In January of 1984, Senator Paul Tsongas of Massachusetts, made a dramatic decision to retire from the Senate and not stand for re-election.

It was not the thought of defeat in an election which prompted his decision. It was based on the fact that a few weeks before his announcement he had learned that he had a form of lymphatic cancer which could not be cured but could be treated and would probably not affect his physical abilities or his life expectancy. According to Harold Kushner, "The illness did not force Paul Tsongas out of the Senate, but it did force him to confront the fact that he would not be around forever. He would not be able to do everything he might want to, so what were the things that he most wanted to do in the limited time that he had?" Kushner continues, "he decided that what he wanted most in life, what he would not give up if he could have everything, was being with his family and watching his children grow up. He would rather do that than shape the country's laws or get his name in the history books."

After he made his decision known, a friend wrote to congratulate him on having his priorities straight, adding, "Nobody on his deathbed ever said, 'I wish I had spent more time on my business.'"

Why is it that many of us as grandparents make an effort to spend more time with our grandchildren than we did with our children? Do we sense our mortality more now that we are older? Has life taught us to make distinctions and choose priorities more carefully? That's well and good, but I can't help but reflect on how much better it would have been to establish priorities early in life rather than wait until death approaches to determine our course.

There is much wisdom in the advice of Solomon when he says, "Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come . . ." (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Such priorities need to be made early in life. But one thing is certain: you are not going to get any younger, so establish those priorities today.

--Little Rock, Arkansas

The Great Women Of The Bible



Cecil Corkren

ment for a woman than when she becomes a mother of a human life (I Timothy 2:15). We hear the expression "woman has come a long way." In the eyes of the true Christian woman has always been important in God's scheme of things.

Paul mentioned in his presentation of the members of the church who were great women, which were helpers of him in the spread of the gospel of Christ. Timothy's faith in the Lord was nurtured by his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice (I Timothy 1:5). Eudoiias and Syntyche were fellow labourers in the gospel. Phebe was Paul's helper and a servant in the church at Cencrea (Romans 16:1-2). Elisabeth and Mary both were great women of the New Testament. They became mothers of two of the greatest men mentioned in the Bible.

We will consider a few of the great women whose

The Bible is for every human being, in whatever age, in whatever state of life, whatever his or her condition, the Bible is an unfailing guide and source of inspiration. The woman has played a very important role in man's history. There is no greater accomplish-

ment for a woman than when she becomes a mother of a human life (I Timothy 2:15). We hear the expression "woman has come a long way." In the eyes of the true Christian woman has always been important in God's scheme of things.

ment for a woman than when she becomes a mother of a human life (I Timothy 2:15). We hear the expression "woman has come a long way." In the eyes of the true Christian woman has always been important in God's scheme of things.

Each of these women, whether a queen or a prophetess, saint or former sinner, active or contemplative, achieves in very different circumstances her own particular spiritual triumph.

We are encouraged by the lives of these women. We think of Sarah, the wife of Abraham; a very beautiful woman, Rebekah, mother of Jacob and Esau; Rachel, who was the mother of Joseph; Miriam, Moses' older sister who looked after his welfare as a child, and led Israel in singing the song of deliverance after crossing the Red Sea.

Time would fail me to tell of many others who through obedient faith "Received their dead raised to life again." I am sure you, like most, have a favorite woman of the Bible.

We need to imitate the faith of these great women. Deborah, in her life time delivered Israel from Siera. Ruth cannot be overlooked, along with Esther who were giants among women. These are some of the great women who left their mark on the pages of history. Were it not for many great women in the church today where would the church be???

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

Cheap Crosses For Sale

Bobby Dockery

A visitor to the Philippines happened to be in Manila at Easter time. In the area near the Cathedral, he noticed vendor's stalls which were busy selling all kinds of religious merchandise -- incense, candles, veils, rosaries, prayer books and religious jewelry. One booth in particular caught his eye. The proprietor dealt in crucifixes and he hawked his wares under a large hand-lettered sign which read simply: "Cheap crosses for sale!"

It seems that's exactly what a lot of folks are looking for! Our world is permeated with a bargain-counter mentality. People want a religion which is soft and effortless; they want a Christianity which will make no demands on their time, interests or energy. But Jesus said: "Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27). But many are asking, "Isn't there an easier way?" This attitude demonstrates itself in many areas of Christian involvement and responsibility. . .

1) Some are looking for "cheap crosses" in the matter of church attendance. Many will argue: "One service a week is enough . . . I don't see any need to go on Sunday night and Wednesday night . . . If I'm there on Sunday morning, the Lord ought to be satisfied with that." But Hebrews 10:25 does not leave room for cheap crosses! Early Christians were commanded to attend even though it might mean persecution and hardship.

2) Some are looking for "cheap crosses" in the matter of giving. "The Bible does not require a tenth today," many will argue. But the Bible does say that we should calculate our giving in the knowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ "though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich" (II Corinthians 8:9). Too many want to use another standard. They are looking for the minimum allowable. They seek the least they can give and

still scrape by!

3) Some are looking for "cheap crosses" in the matter of service. Jesus said, "I am among you as the one who serves" (Luke 22:27). Service is the essence of Christianity. But many have not the mind of Christ with regard to service! They are content to do as little as possible. They are only marginally involved in the work program of the church because they want their religious commitment to come as easily and as painlessly as possible.

4) Some are looking for "cheap crosses" in the matter of morality. Many want to think of themselves as Christians but they do not want to live by Christian standards. The Christian life is a high and holy calling which demands disciplined, godly living. We must "deny ungodliness and worldly desires" and "live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age" (Titus 2:12). Tragically, many are trying to live by a looser, more worldly, more careless standard! There is hardly any practice in the world which has not also found its way into the church today! Practices once forthrightly condemned -- drinking, gambling, sexual misconduct, immodesty -- are now considered acceptable conduct by the advocates of a cheaper cross!

Cheap crosses are no bargain! In the long run they will cost us more than we can possibly afford. Any cross which comes cheap is not the authentic cross of Calvary. It is only the cross on which the Son of God died which has the power to save! It alone can buy a crown!

Jesus did not pretend that the way of the cross would be always pleasant or painless (Luke 9:23). But He did teach that it is the only way that leads to heaven! Jesus gave all for you . . . what will you give for Him in return. . . ? . . . ?

--Fayetteville, Arkansas



Ladies

Inspirational Day

Sixth Avenue Church of Christ

Jasper, Alabama

February 9, 1991

8:45 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Theme: In Christ, You Are Someone Special

8:45 - 9:15 Registration/Refreshments

9:30 - 10:10 "Woman, God's Creation"

Sue Crabtree

10:35-11:15 "Woman, Her Daily Challenges"

Laurel Sewell

11:25-11:45 Presentation by Young Ladies

11:45 Lunch

1:00 Panel Discussion - "Special Challenges"

Julene Noles, Bettye Pennington,
Vera Gaston, Bobbie Wilson

Display by Mars Hill Bookstore
Salad Luncheon
Interpretation for Deaf
Attended Nursery

Garland Elkins Joins Memphis School Of Preaching Faculty



Garland Elkins

The Memphis School of Preaching is delighted to announce the addition of Garland Elkins to its faculty, effective December 1, 1990. He will be teaching, co-editing the *Yokefellow* (a monthly religious journal and publicity arm of the School), and serving as

Head of Public Relations.

Brother Elkins is eminently qualified, having been trained in Freed-Hardeman University, Middle Tennessee State University, and the University of Tennessee; having preached the gospel for forty years; and having been a close, diligent student of the Bible. He has been the recipient of many honors, including F-HC Alumnus of the Year (1981). His writings include the *Elkins-Ross Debate* (co-author), *The*

Saviour's Way, *Spiritual Sword* Lectureship Volumes (co-director -- co-editor, thirteen years), *Power* (editor, one year), *Power* Lectureship Volumes (co-director -- co-editor, two years). He comes to the School from the Southaven, Mississippi, church of Christ. He also has extensive experience in speaking in gospel meetings, debates, lectureships, and on radio/television (including a 1984 appearance on the Phil Donahue Show to defend the Bible teaching on discipline).

Garland Elkins has been lauded for his work in the kingdom. "Brother Garland Elkins is truly one of the most faithful, devoted and dedicated preachers among us today. His love for the truth, his unswerving allegiance to the Word of God, and his fearlessness in declaring it have endeared him to all who respect His will and way today" (Guy N. Woods). "Brother Elkins is widely known as preacher, writer, lecturer, author whose works have been widely read" (Robert R. Taylor, Jr.). "It is my opinion that [Garland Elkins] is one of the

soundest defenders of the 'faith' that we have among us today. He is very able and willing to proclaim the truth and defend the faith" (Lynwood Mathis). "No finer co-worker than Garland Elkins could be found. He knows and loves the truth -- and he lives it" (Thomas B. Warren). "Garland Elkins . . . has distinguished himself in many ways as a servant of the Lord." He has the type "spirit that has made him a humble and useful servant in the kingdom of God" (G. K. Wallace).

The Memphis School of Preaching welcomes brother Elkins in its twenty-fifth year, its **silver anniversary**. His fulltime work with the School will include his teaching in the areas of New Testament, Denominational Doctrines, and homiletics. His schedule makes him available for mainly weekend meetings during the school year and weekend meetings in the summer.

Curtis A. Cates, Director
Memphis School of Preaching

God's Beautiful City

Joel Wheeler

What is the most beautiful city you have ever seen? Many cities all over the world have been described as being the most beautiful. But God through the pen of John the apostle describes a city in Revelation 21 that is the greatest of all. It is the beautiful city of God which is called heaven. This city is the most beautiful of all for more than one reason.

First, the city is the most beautiful of all because of its description. "And the building of the wall of it was of Jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass" (Revelation 21:18). God used the earth's richest jewels and the most precious metal to describe the richness of his provision for the saved in heaven. "The foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones" (Revelation 21:19). Not only are these jewels highly valuable but display an array of color which include green, yellow, red, purple and blue that is pleasing to the eye. God seeks to impress upon us the splendor and glory which only heaven contains.

The pearl is the only gem that is formed due to suffering. The twelve entrances to God's beautiful city are made of pearl, which perhaps symbolizes that one enters heaven by sufferings.

Second, the city is the most beautiful because of its entrance. "And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl"

(Revelation 21:21). God describes the entrance to the city as a gate that is made of pearl. Pearls are very valuable and some have sold for as much as \$200,000.00. A pearl is made when a tiny grain of sand becomes trapped inside the oyster. The oyster then produces a coating around the foreign object for protection against irritation. The pearl is the only gem that is formed due to suffering. The twelve entrances to God's beautiful city are made of pearl, which perhaps symbolizes that one enters heaven by sufferings. It is the suffering of Jesus Christ which gives us access to the city of God (1 Peter 2:21). Jesus suffered at the hands of the Roman soldiers and if he had not died for our sins there would be no entrance to the city (Hebrews 9:26).

Some individuals suffer persecution because they have put on Christ. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10b). The Christians in the first and second centuries were severely persecuted by the Jews and Romans government. In that sense, our own suffering, gives us access to the city if we are faithful even if we must die for Christ.

Third, the city is the most beautiful of all because of who will be there. "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Revelation 21:23). Heaven is the abode of God the Father. Jesus said on one occasion "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Many passages refer to the "Father which is in heaven." The apostle Peter writes that Jesus Christ "is gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God" (1 Peter 3:22). The language of the apostle John tells us the glory of the Father and the Son

fills heaven and there is no need for the sun or the moon.

The saved also shall be in that beautiful city which is called Heaven (Revelation 21:24). Those that are among the saved are the apostles, faithful disciples and even our own loved ones who have "put on Christ." Heaven will be a reunion for the family of God (Ephesians 3:15).

The beautiful city of God is beyond any human imagination. Only the Almighty God could have designed and built such a magnificent city to be the eternal dwelling place for his people. Do you want to live in that beautiful city?

- 204 S. 10th Thayer, Missouri 65791.

Ladies Day
February 9
Theme:
In Christ You Are
Someone Special
Speakers: Sue Crabtree,
Montgomery, AL
Laurel Sewell,
Henderson, TN
Registration Begins At 8:45
Salad Luncheon At Noon!
Display From Mars Hill Book Store



Words Of th

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

—Acts 26:25

(USPS 691-760)

VOLUME 27

FEBRUARY 1, 1991

NUMBER 5

Armageddon



Joe E. Galloway

During the past several weeks of the Gulf Crisis, followed by the beginning of the war in that area, several religious groups have been saying that these events are surely leading up to "The Battle of Armageddon." By this they mean that the battle of Revelation 16 is about to be fought in the area of Palestine

known as "Megiddo," and that it will bring to an end this present world order.

It comes as no big surprise to those of us who have been around for a few years that this claim is being made. After all, these same religious groups have been making this prediction every few years for the better part of this century. To listen to them, "The Battle of Armageddon" is always just about to occur! The events leading to, and including, the two World Wars were supposedly going to terminate with Armageddon. Prior to 1975 at least two groups taught that that year would usher in the end. These groups which thrive on "prophetic hysteria" will, undoubtedly, continue to capitalize on chaotic world conditions and continue to frighten many for years to come. Probably we will see the year 2,000 used more and more as the focal point of attention as we see this century drawing to a close. What response can we make to this popular claim that events and signs show that the fulfillment of Revelation 16 is at hand?

In Revelation 16:14 reference is made to "the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Verse 16 says, "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." Those who try to force upon the book of Revelation a literal interpretation, and try to make it apply to things yet future, see in these verses a literal battle yet future between the armies of God and the forces of what they refer to as "The Anti-Christ."

In response we suggest that the very first verse of the book of Revelation states that the things contained therein are "signified." This means that Revelation is a book of signs and symbols, and that everything should not be understood as literal. As the book is read such words as beasts, locusts, crowns, chains, bottomless pit, etc. bear this out. Even the most literal interpreter will still explain some of the words of this book figuratively. The large amount of obviously symbolic material in Revelation 16 should suggest extreme caution in making Armageddon a literal battle. For instance: verse 13 shows that "three unclean spirits like frogs came out of the mouth" of a dragon, beast, and false prophet. These gathered the kings to the battle. What modern-day "prophet" will make these literal frogs, etc.? None! By what rationale can these be understood as symbolic, but the battle as a literal, earthly war?

We further point out that the book of Revelation begins and ends with the statement "the time is at hand" and that these things "must shortly come to pass" or, "must shortly be done" (Revelation 1:1, 3; 22:6, 10). Is it not obvious that the events of the book, including those regarding this "battle," must have taken place near the time the book was written? Remember, the time was "at hand" and the events were to "shortly come to pass" when John wrote them!

Christ is coming again (Acts 1:11), but not to

fight an earthly battle. He is coming to raise the dead and judge the world (Matthew 25:36; John 5:28-29). No person can know when this time will be -- no signs have been given to so inform us (Matthew 24:36). The day Christ does come the world will come to an end, so there will be no time for a physical war. We can know this because the Bible clearly states that the resurrection and the judgment will be at the last day (See John 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 12:48). There can be no more time, no more days, after the last day! So, there is neither time for an earthly battle when Jesus returns, nor for a 1,000 year kingdom on earth afterward!

Since we know that Christ is coming again, and we cannot know when that shall be, we need to stay prepared for his coming, constantly. We do this by obeying the gospel and then by daily living, faithfully, the Christian life. After discussing the dissolution of all temporal things the day Christ comes, we are told in II Peter 3:11, 12: "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 hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"

Are you ready for that great day?

--218 Pincrest Drive, Greeneville, TN 37743.

Is The Bible Too Old?

John Gipson


It's old, antiquated, and out-of-date! That's what some are saying about the Bible. They argue that there is a "cultural gap," and that the world of the Bible is too far removed from the 20th century for the scriptures to have anything relevant to say to our situation.

If that is true, it seems passing strange to me that the Bible continues to be the "Best Seller" of any book printed year after year.

My own personal observation is that more people are buying and reading the Bible now than at anytime in my memory. On a recent plane trip to New Mexico, a young lady from the University of Texas sat on my left. She was reading the Bible. On my right was a businessman from Dallas in his sixties. He was reading the Bible. Apparently the Bible is a book for all ages and for all centuries.

This has been brought home to me once again as

Continued On Page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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-Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

"In Times Like These"



David Wade

Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*.

These riveting statements are so characteristic of our present day situation. With the lowering of the Iron Curtain in Europe, there was increased optimism that faithful Christians could really go forward unhampered with the Lord's marching orders to carry the gospel to the whole world. Now our nation and her allies are at war with a small country not half the size of Texas. In addition, there are radical elements and terrorists in the free world that make travel unsafe. In many quarters, the Christian missionary and the Lord he represents are unwanted company.

Perhaps it is appropriate to refresh our memory of Jesus' predictions about the destruction of Jerusalem which took place in 70 A.D.

"And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars:

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair. . ." so opens

see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

All these are the beginning of sorrows.

Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." (Matthew 24:6-13)

We should remember that Jesus gave the Great Commission after these dire predictions. In spite of the wars, he ordered his spiritual army into the "field." Also, we should remember the great missionary thrust made in Germany and other countries after World War II and the great success of these ongoing efforts.

We need to be planning now what we will do to carry the gospel to a war-torn country. The battle for their minds is difficult indeed, as most of them are blinded to truth by the writings of the false prophet Muhammed. In times like these they need a Savior. In times like these they need an anchor.

Is The Bible Too Old?

Continued From Page 1

I have started my daily Bible reading for the new year. I'm in the book of Genesis, and don't tell me that it is not relevant! Just this week I have read in the papers, and in magazines, the arguments that are going on about the beginning of the world. Some prominent men are beginning to question the "Big Bang" theory. Pictures from outer space with all of their "black matter," may turn the apple cart over. And the Bible isn't relevant?

Do you have a son-in-law, or a daughter-in-law, who drives you crazy? That's not a new problem. The wives of Esau "made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah" (Genesis 26:35). Look at Rebekah as in despair she throws up her hands and says, "If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women such as these, one of the women of the land, what good will my life be to me?" Don't tell me this doesn't happen in the 20th century! How up-to-date do you want to get?

The headlines scream of rape and "date rape." In regard to the latter we are being told that one out of six girls in our colleges and universities will experience "date rape" during their years in school. A new problem? Hardly. Read the thirty-fourth chapter of Genesis and see what happened to Dinah. And, upset family members wanting to kill the rapist? It's all there.

Don't say the Bible is out-of-date until you have read it for yourself. You just might be surprised how modern it is.

--Via Keynoter, Little Rock, Arkansas.

The Christian And The World



Bobby Key

The Christian has a relationship with and a responsibility to: (1) The Lord, (2) The church, (3) The community, (4) The business world, (5) The home, and (6) The government. Our primary duty is to the Lord, but we are also a part of society and as such we are good citizens, obeying the law, paying our taxes, etc. The Christian is to provide for his family and show himself honest in business. Romans 13; I Timothy 2; Titus 3 and I Peter 2 point out our relationship to the state.

All owe a debt to the Nation. We enjoy freedom and protection from lawless men. Only settled

We are a "peculiar people" (I Peter 2:9). We live in the world but are not of the world (John 17:14-17). We are citizens of the country in which we live; yet, our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20).

government can provide this. We owe all public services to the state. This places us under obligatory debt because the Christian is a man of honor. As responsible citizens we know to fail in good citizenship is to fail the Lord. The Christian has a duty to Caesar in return for the privileges which the rule of Caesar brings to him.

As responsible citizens we know to fail in good citizenship is to fail the Lord. The Christian has a duty to Caesar in return for the privileges which the rule of Caesar brings to him.

The apostles stressed civil obedience. The Jews were notoriously rebellious. Palestine, and especially Galilee, was constantly seething with

Continued On Page 3

The Christian And The World

Continued From Page 2

insurrection. The Zealots were determined they would pay no tribute to Rome. They tried to make civil government impossible. These extreme ones were sworn to a career of murder and assassination. They not only used terrorism against the Roman government; they also wrecked houses, burned crops, and assassinated the families of their own fellow Jews who paid tribute to the Roman government. This type of behavior is still common in some countries.

There is no way to disassociate ourselves from society. No man is an island to himself. We are to discharge our duty to the state even if a Nero is on the throne. Without the state and its laws, the bad, selfish, and strong would reign supreme. We would be without protection and rights. Life would be ruled by the law of the jungle! There is no way that each individual could provide for himself the wide range of services we all enjoy. What about water, electricity, sewage, and Social Security to name a few? As Christians we dare not take everything and give nothing!

The government is divinely ordained of God. Evil men may serve in high places, but this does not excuse our obedience to the state. We are taught of God to live at peace with all men (Romans 12:14-21). Paul adds two qualifications: (1) he says, if it be possible, (2) then he adds "as much as lieth in you." When the Christian learns that the government is forcing him to do something that violates the will of God, he must resist and have no

part in it (Acts 5:29).

The child of God will never take thought of vengeance or revenge (Romans 12:19). Vengeance does not belong to us; it belongs to God. When we stoop to vengeance, we will be conquered by the carnal mind and all kinds of evil. When hatred is met with more hatred, then hatred is only increased. Booker T. Washington once said: "I will not allow any man to make me lower myself by hating him."

Some Christians have become overly zealous and

joined those who are involved in civil disobedience. This does the cause of Christ harm. It is our duty to disagree when the law of the state is contrary to the law of God. In such cases the Christian is to work to change the law to conform with Divine law. However, this cannot be accomplished by becoming law breakers. Let us respond to hate, vengeance, and injustice with kindness, always exercising the mind of Christ.

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

Worship Or Rock Concert?



Dalton Key

Some Christians have become overly zealous and

The God we serve is an august, spiritual being both deserving and desirous of our deepest respect. Though described in scripture as a friend to man (Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23), he is not some sort of "good buddy" to joke with or about. Our God is still on the throne (Psalm 45:6),

his ways remain higher than our ways (Isaiah 55:9), and his authoritative word still promises to judge us in the Last Day (Revelation 20:12).

No measure of self-appointed, flippant familiarity with the God of heaven can detract from his inherent majesty. Our God is eminently worthy of reverence, thus we must serve him "acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews 12:28). Truly, reverence is "the very first element of religion." (Charles Simmons)

Moreover, our periods of public worship should express this spirit of reverence. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him" (Psalm 89:7). Worship performed "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24) suggests a demeanor of awe and reverence.

We agree that our worship services should be permeated with expressions of joy and thanksgiving -- they should not come to resemble a congregational visit to the dentist; but neither should the reverent worship of our heavenly Father be confused for a carnival or a rock concert. Whether our worship is that offered during a Sunday morning service, that which involves a lectureship assembly, or that which is engaged in by a zealous throng of young people attending a Youth Rally -- regardless where, when, or by whom the worship is performed -- it must be characterized by reverence and decorum. "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40).

The worship assembly is not the proper setting for screaming, whistling, clapping, and stomping the feet in response to a speaker's message or a vocal group's selection. We do not gather to pay

homage to men, but to worship God. We do not come together as to a football game or a stage-band concert; we come to worship God. We do not assemble with the intent of being entertained or sensually excited; we come to worship God. Any assembly of saints with the intent of worshipping and praising the God of heaven should reject that which emphasizes the carnal emotions and minimizes the spiritual man. An outsider should be able to attend one of our Sunday assemblies, or one of our many youth gatherings, and note a marked difference between the worship of God and the Johnny Carson Show.

The worship assembly is not the proper setting for screaming, whistling, clapping, and stomping the feet in response to a speaker's message or a vocal group's selection. We do not gather to pay homage to men, but to worship God.

In the realm of worship, "zeal without knowledge" paves a dangerous road toward pagan, flesh-oriented and riotous assemblies. Most of our denominational neighbors have long since gone this route, with services geared more toward entertaining man than worshipping God. May we learn to temper our joy in Christ with a Christlike reverence for things holy. And may we teach our children so.

--P.O. Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.

Plain And Simple

In presenting the Gospel to others, put it before them:

- Briefly** so they will read it;
- Clearly** so they can grasp it;
- Graphically** so they will remember it;
- Accurately** so they will be guided by its light.



Ladies

Inspirational Day

Sixth Avenue Church of Christ

Jasper, Alabama

February 9, 1991

8:45 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Theme: In Christ, You Are Someone Special

8:45 - 9:15 Registration/Refreshments

9:30 - 10:10 "Woman, God's Creation"

Sue Crabtree

10:35-11:15 "Woman, Her Daily Challenges"

Laurel Sewell

11:25-11:45 Presentation by Young Ladies

11:45 Lunch

1:00 Panel Discussion - "Special Challenges"

Julene Noles, Bettye Pennington,

Vera Gaston, Bobbie Wilson

Display by Mars Hill Bookstore

Salad Luncheon

Interpretation for Deaf

Attended Nursery

"Seek That Ye May Excel"



Edsel Burleson

It is sad that there are those in the church who want to do as little as possible and still be considered "faithful." They seem to have no concept of what it means to be a servant of the Master.

Paul told the Christians at Corinth ". . . seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church (I Corinthians 14:12). Jesus, in the sermon on the mountain, challenged his followers to take inventory of themselves, as servants. He asked, "What do ye more than others?" (Matthew 5:47).

Too many think of service to God in general terms -- they want to be Christians, but only as it applies to some vague principles of conduct.

Too many think of service to God in general terms -- they want to be Christians, but only as it applies to some vague principles of conduct.

An author who was not identified told the following story which appeared in a recent issue of Pulpit Helps. "I was lounging around the living room listening to the radio, when my Dad came in from shoveling the new snow. He looked at me quizzically, and said, "In twenty-four hours, you won't even remember what you are listening to

now. How about doing something for the next twenty minutes that you will remember for the next twenty years? I promise that you will enjoy it every time you think of it." "What is it?" I asked.

"Well, son, there are several inches of snow on old Mrs. Brown's walk," he said. "Why don't you see if you can shovel it off and get back home without her knowing."

I did the walk in about 15 minutes. She never knew who did the job and Dad was right. It has been a lot more than 20 years and I have enjoyed the memory every time I have thought about it.

Each Christian should determine an area of work wherein his service to Christ will be effective and contribute significantly to His cause. It is up to you, but whatever, or however, **serve the Lord!**

--1569 Berry Road, Birmingham, AL 35226.

Service To 'No-Gods'



Dean Fugett

"When ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods" (Galatians 4:8). The apostle Paul was trying very hard to get the Galatians to see the advantage of their condition in Christ as compared to their condition before they were in Christ. He was concerned that they would consider turning from this to 'weak and beggarly elements.' There is a similarity between the conditions of the Galatians and some Christians today.

There is a similarity between the conditions of the Galatians and some Christians today.

Many of us became aware of our sinful condition through a confrontation with the Word of God. We were brought to faith by the "hearing of the Word" (Romans 10:17). We either heard the gospel or we read and studied the word until we were convicted in our hearts (Acts 2:37), that we were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). Desiring to change that state we sought instruction from the Word to find out "What shall I do?" God's instructions included repentance (Acts 17:30), confession of the Lordship and Sonship of Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9-10), and baptism for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Peter 3:21). From that point, we continued to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18). We continued to add to faith "virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love"

(II Peter 1:5-7) that we might have that abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of Jesus Christ. But, for some, something happened . . .

Once content to follow carefully the instructions of the Lord in order to 'become' Christians, some decided that it was not necessary to "continue in the doctrine of Christ" (II John 9-11) in order to be acceptable. The doctrine, once necessary to be saved, became too restrictive, too confining, too 'legalistic!' The 'knowledge' that brought them to Christ was no longer desired. They, like others before them, "did not like to retain God in their knowledge" (Romans 1:28), and chose to 'enlarge

the borders of their love.' Becoming "ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, (they) have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:3). Having left that which is 'in the knowledge' of God, they now offer service and worship not according to the Word, not according to knowledge. Thus, not authorized by God, it becomes "service to something else -- 'no-gods.'" That not authorized by God is service to "no-gods."

--P.O. Box 75, Cave City, AR 72521.

Priorities



Winfred Clark

When we speak of priorities we speak of those things which ought to take precedence. These are the things that become most urgent. These are the things which take first place.

One could find spiritual priorities in many chapters of the Bible. But, there is one chapter in particular that we will address in this study. This has to do with the priorities of John 17. You can be sure these ought to take precedence. It is here that we have recorded the prayer of our Lord. Surely he knew what was important and what would take first place. We would do well to take a look at these.

I. THAT WHICH GLORIFIES GOD IS A PRIORITY MATTER.

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:" (John 17:1). One does not have to wonder what Jesus had uppermost in his mind. His desire above all else was to see his Father glorified. He would have God glorify him for a good and noble purpose. That purpose would be to glorify the Father. His desire was not a selfish one. He was

not asking that he be glorified for selfish reasons or purposes. He was interested in God being honored in all that he did or said.

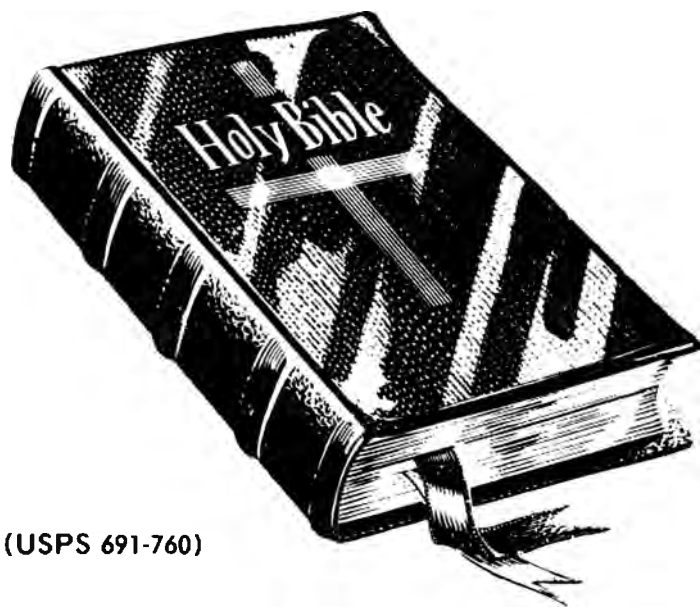
II. THAT WHICH SANCTIFIES DISCIPLES IS A PRIORITY MATTER.

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Jesus knew that these disciples would live in a world where it would not be easy for them to live right. But he is also aware that they must live right. He would have them live in the world but not be of the world. They would come to see the ways of the world as they really are. He knew the world would hate them but they are to still live a life that is separated from the world's way of doing things. This must take precedence over everything else.

III. THAT WHICH UNIFIES BELIEVERS IS A PRIORITY MATTER.

"That they all may be one; as thou Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21). Jesus had just spoken of this unity being brought about by the belief of the word. It would be through the preaching of these apostles that would cause men and women to believe in Christ. That would have unifying effect on their lives. This is the foundation upon which unity could rest. As men relied upon the word of God such would be the result.

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



(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 27

FEBRUARY 8, 1991

NUMBER 6

I'd Rather Be A Doorkeeper



Joe E. Galloway

The Psalmist wrote, "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psalm 84:10). What a wonderful attitude! What needed lessons for present-day Christians!

We do not think of "doorkeeping" as very prestigious work. Certainly the priest who offered the various sacrifices received more attention and applaud. Yet such a simple task as doorkeeper was needed, and this writer was happy to do the lowliest of work for God's service.

People are needed today in the jobs that receive

public attention: gospel preachers, elders, deacons, song leaders, and Bible class teachers. But just as honorable are those who do maintenance and janitor work, those who visit and help the sick and shut-ins, who invite (and perhaps bring) a friend to services, who knock on doors to invite non-members to a gospel meeting, and those who encourage the discouraged. No task in God's service should be considered beneath our dignity.

In listing things which, on the Judgment Day, will commend one to God we are told by Jesus: "I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me" (Matthew 25:34-36). It is noteworthy that the things done which usually get the most public notice and approval are not mentioned at all in this list. These things listed are actions relatively unknown to others.

Many would rather "dwell in the tents of wickedness" than do lowly acts of service to God, especially when such humble service will go unnoticed by their peers. Sinful pursuits win out over going to visit someone who needs attention, over attending a special service for planning or instruction for growth, or maybe over attending the regular services of the church. (How many miss an evening service because of a movie or ball game they'd rather watch on TV?) Maybe the alternative we choose to the lowly acts of service is not itself wicked, but it becomes wrong due to our pursuing it in lieu of fulfilling our responsibilities as Christians. Let's think on these things seriously!

--218 Pinecrest Drive, Greeneville, TN, 37743.

War!



John Gipson

WAR! The word itself sounds harsh, brutal and primeval. Speak it aloud several times and hear it as if for the first time. There's nothing about it which sounds refined, cultured or civilized. It's more of a growl than a word.

Centuries ago Erasmus said, "War is delightful to those who have had no experience of it." Apparently Dwight D. Eisenhower would have agreed for he said, "I hate war as only a soldier who has lived it, only as one who has seen its brutality, its futility, its stupidity."

Thomas Aquinas tried to lay down conditions which would show the difference between a "just"

war and an "unjust" one. He said, "For a war to be just three conditions are necessary -- public authority, just cause, right motive." But even those guidelines present difficulties, don't they!

Once you have passed the first two tests of public authority and just cause, you must still confront "right motive."

Once you have passed the first two tests of public authority and just cause, you must still confront "right motive."


I have heard war described as a racket which pays high dividends to the very few. The cost of operations is always transferred to the people who do not profit. Perhaps that explains why August Bebel once said, "In time of war the loudest patriots are the greatest profiteers." David Lloyd

George said, "Wars are precipitated by motives which the statesmen responsible for them dare not publicly avow. A public discussion would drag these motives in their nudity into the open, where they would die of exposure to the withering contempt of humanity."

James, by inspiration, gives us an insight by saying, "What causes wars, and what causes fightings among you? It is not your passions that are at war in your members? You desire and do not have; so you kill. And you covet and cannot obtain; so you fight and wage war" (James 4:1, 2).

If I am to find any consolation as it regards the conflict in the Persian Gulf, it is in the knowledge that God has often used nations to execute His wrath upon evildoers. Those wars, I am sure, are just!

--Via Keynoter, Little Rock, Arkansas.



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 1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

What Others Are Saying



David Wade

The incredible reality of war has now settled upon us. These are very trying times for the church and our nation. No doubt, this will be a severe test of our fortitude and our resolve to say and do what is right.

Several bulletins cross my desk each week. I look over

each one with interest for what others are saying about the present conflict. The following quotations are from those who are sincerely pouring out their souls on this issue.

"Desert Shield" is now "Desert Storm," and war is raging at this time in the Persian Gulf. Horace Holt pointed out last Wednesday evening that this does not mean that God has not answered our prayers. We cannot always know His purposes. It could be a greater peace will result. Perhaps man will come to know another way to resolve conflicts other than killing each other.

Let us not forget the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (James 5:16). Let us not forget also that sin is what causes wars. Sin is powerful and destructive to men's souls . . . Christians are in danger." (Ray Cox, Editor, Attalla Advocate).

"With the outbreak of war in the Middle East, our world literally sits "On Edge." Faithful Christians must continue beseeching our Father to bring to an end the suffering and death which covers this war-torn area. Keep our families who have loved ones in this conflict in your prayers. Remember those on the battlefields as you pray. Our hearts hang heavy with concern for our weary world. May the Lord's providence intervene and bring to a speedy close this conflict." (Charles Cochran, East Ridge Messenger).

"Over the past few months we have been asking for your prayers for those of our number who are in the service, and especially for those who are so far away in Saudi Arabia. Now our young men and women are at war. It is more than just being so far from home and family. Now more than ever they, along with their families need our prayers, encouragement, cards, and letters. Those who are in Saudi can still receive their mail. And the families here need to know that we are praying for them, and that they have Christian brothers and sisters who care." (Bill Denton, Forest Park Newsletter).

Voices from the past also encourage us to look and pray for a better day when peace will prevail.

"The last great hope for the survival of mankind rests not in implements of war but in a strong and abiding faith in God." (H. S. Jackson)

Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war will speedily pass away. Abraham Lincoln

Our Besetting Sin



Bobby Key

The ABC news showed an interview a reporter had with some men who were out of work and on welfare. The reporter asked one young, strong and healthy looking man, "Then you would say that you cannot find a job anywhere." The man replied, "I didn't say that I couldn't find work, I said that I couldn't find a

job that would pay me what I am worth. I know my worth, you know." This man who had been idle and living off charity many months or years knew his worth! I wonder!

A doctor told his patient; "To be quite candid with you, your trouble is just laziness." The patient said: "Yes, doctor, I know, but what is a scientific name for it . . . I've got to report to my wife!"

I feel that at least one great besetting sin of America today is just plain laziness. You might find a polite name for it, but I prefer to call it what it is - laziness. A doctor told his patient: "To be quite candid with you, your trouble is just laziness." The patient said: "Yes, doctor, I know, but what is a scientific name for it . . . I've got to report to my wife!" When most of our population moved to town with little or nothing for children to do, laziness was bred. Our welfare system for many

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"My Lord And My God"



Cecil Corkren

Thomas was told by the disciples that they had seen the Lord after his resurrection. However, Thomas doubted. When Jesus appeared and identified himself, he asked Thomas to place his fingers in the print of the nails and in his side, "and be not faithless, but believing." Thomas said, "MY LORD AND MY GOD" (John 20:24-28). Christ was not only Thomas' God, but he also was his Lord. God is the creator of all mankind, but he is not the Lord of all men.

Jesus Christ wants to be the Lord of my life as well as the Lord of all men. He wants to be the Great One, the Master, and ruler of my life. He

asks us no less than to forsake all and follow him (Matthew 16:24). He must rule in my heart to be the Lord of my life (Matthew 2:6). Christ must be my first love, and be preeminent in all that I do (Colossians 1:18). For him to be the Lord of my life, I must give more than lip service. Many today are heard to say "Jesus is the Lord of my life." He is Lord of one's life only after we have "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine" (Romans 6:17). Many who are saying Christ has become the Lord of their life believe and teach faith only, and claim the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They base their relationship with Christ on emotionalism and show disregard for His teaching. One must be obedient to Christ for him to be the Lord of his life.

David said, "The Lord (God) said unto my Lord (Christ) sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool" (Acts 2:24; Psalm 110:1).

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"My Lord And My God"

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David said Christ was his Lord. In Acts 13:22, Paul said, "God found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart." Whatever pleased the Lord pleased David. In I Kings 15:5, Jeremiah wrote, "Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite." God truly was the Lord of David's life.

Jesus asked, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). Jesus, then, is the Lord of my life when I DO ALL that he teaches (II Thessalonians 2:10; John 14:15;

Our Besetting Sin

Continued From Page 2

years has actually encouraged it. My friend, I am in favor of less dole and more honest work. Our nation is spending billions of dollars trying to help people who will not help themselves. In Christ's teaching, the dole is for the helpless. Others should help themselves "For ye have the poor with you always" (Mark 14:7).

A blind man, employed in a gainful occupation said, "I consider the greatest handicap to be laziness." The Bible has a great deal to say about the blighting, deadening, damning sin of slothfulness. It says in Proverbs 19:15, "Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger." Again the Bible says in Proverbs 21:25, "The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labor." Webster defines sloth as "a disinclination to action or labor; sluggishness, laziness, idleness and indolence." Slothfulness is the destroyer of opportunity, it kills initiative and damns the soul.

God intended for man to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow (Genesis 3:19); our first parents had a job to do. They were placed in the garden of Eden to "dress it and keep it" (Genesis 2:15). God's way is still best. He had Paul to write, "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (II Thessalonians 3:10). When people are converted to Christ, the capable help themselves, and the needs of the helpless are cheerfully supplied.

Work is honorable. We glorify God in using our talents in work. Laziness is sinful. Christians should be examples to others in industry. The slothful man is like driftwood floating downward with the current -- effortlessly and heedlessly. It takes no effort, no strength, no manhood to be lost. A drifting boat always goes downstream -- never up. A lazy soul is drifting toward an eternity of destruction.

Honest toil is good for the soul, as well as the body. We are not to be "slothful in business, but fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" (Romans 12:11). Let us be busy and teach our children the joy of work. Let's help the helpless and encourage the able-bodied to work.

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

Psalm 119:127; Psalm 40:8). Therefore, doing God's will is letting Christ be the Lord of my life. "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).

When Jesus rules as Lord of my life I will teach in his name, and use expressions that will honor him as Lord. The day of worship I will call the "Lord's Day" (Revelation 1:10). I will say the "Lord's supper" (I Corinthians 11:20), instead of Eucharist, or Sacrament. I will call his church "The Lord's church" or "church of the Lord" (Acts 20:28 ASV). I will refer to congregations as "churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16). Some in the Lord's church today are using the language of Ashdod (Nehemiah 13:24). We hear expressions, "my church, your church, church of Christ preachers," etc., which come from our religious neighbors and

The Three "Let Us Passages Of Hebrews 10

Mark Posey

The book of Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians that were facing extreme persecution because they followed and believed in Christ. The author of Hebrews writes to them in an attempt to encourage and uplift them to a greater faith, hope and love in Christ and one another. His message is that "Christ is better." In chapter 10:19-27, we find three passages in which he exhorts them to "draw near with faith," "hold fast their hope," and "consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." The author of Hebrews prefaces each exhortation statement in this section with "let us." He includes himself and does not elevate himself as a superior law giver. This is evident in his constant glorification and magnification of Christ as superior.

In verse 22 he says, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." Faith is an essential part of being a Christian. In fact, we cannot please God without faith. Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." So we must show our faith by our works. James 2:18 says, "show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." One verse earlier James says, "even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." A Christians faith is expressed in his/her works, not for self glorification, but for the glorification of God.

In verse 23 the Hebrew writer says, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." For someone to hold fast the profession of their faith expresses their hope. We have so much to hope for, but it is sad to think of those who are not members of the true Church for which Christ died. They are like the Gentiles we read about in Ephesians 2:11-13, "having no hope, and without God in the world." Having no hope makes the future dark as a dungeon. If there is no hope for the future, there is no power for today. Christians

not from a sincere study of God's word. For Christ to be the Lord of my life I will believe there is "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5).

God is said to be "the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe" (I Timothy 4:10). He is God to all men, but when I sanctify the Lord God in my heart (I Peter 3:15), and obey from the heart the gospel (Romans 6:17), and continue to "walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). Then, and only then, he is truly the Lord of my life! Jesus invites you to come and follow him, and he will become the Lord of your life. Jesus said, "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33).

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should all have the outlook on the future that Paul expressed in Philippians 3:20. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." We look for the Savior; that's hope!

Having no hope makes the future dark as a dungeon. If there is no hope for the future, there is no power for today.

In verse 24 he says, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." It is easy to do something if you love it. It's easy to be a Christian if you love it. Jesus said in John 14:15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Paul said in Romans 5:8, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

But how were these Christians to stimulate their faith, hope and love? We are told in the very next verse. In verse 25 he says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." The author of Hebrews is saying, don't neglect Christian fellowship and assembling together. Here they could feed on the Word, commune with God, and lift each other up to face another week. This is how they would grow stronger and encourage one another in this time of great persecution.

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"As Long As They Believe In Jesus' Sonship"



Jerri Manasco

Is belief in Jesus' Sonship the ONLY criterion for determining fellowship in the church? Is it the only test to be applied? According to some in the church, that is indeed the only legitimate test that can be applied. The only difficulty with that view is that it tends to relegate "other things" to a secondary or even opinion status. According to the ultimate interpretation of such a view, anything else and everything else must be looked upon as dogmatic impositions to be avoided. There are problems that such a view would necessarily create.

For one thing the scripture objection to the doctrine of "faith only" is ignored! If acknowledgement of Jesus' Sonship is the ONLY VALID CRITERION of establishing fellowship, then what more could we demand of any person? We could not expect of ourselves or anyone else what even the Lord expects! We could make little sense of certain Bible passages if we accept the "Sonship only" test of fellowship.

If acknowledgement of Jesus' Sonship is the ONLY VALID CRITERION of establishing fellowship, then what more could we demand of any person?

One familiar passage is John 12:42, 43: "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him; lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." John specifically, clearly, and unmistakably asserts that these men BELIEVED ON JESUS. If any Christian discovered this fact, then he would have to proclaim these men as being in the church's fellowship. Who can accept a mockery of God's scheme?

Consider another passage: "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30, 31). The chief rulers in John 12:42, 43 met these terms! Will they have life because they believed on Jesus? Let it not be objected that the chief rules were hypocrites and on that ground are unacceptable; those mentioned in John 12:42, 43 are said to have believed on Jesus! The demons would surely be in a position to be saved if all that is required is to believe in and acknowledge Jesus! The devils

believe and tremble (James 2:19). Have they ever confessed Jesus? Most certainly they have (Luke 4:33, 34; Mark 5:7). They went a step further than the chief rulers did! Are demons saved?

A second consideration in this matter is the scripture teaching concerning discipline of erring members of the church. In I Corinthians 5 Paul gives instructions relative to this very significant action. The church is admonished to be separated from that wicked person (verse 13). That individual was delivered to Satan (verse 5). Not only this, but others are specified as subject to withdrawal (verses 9-11). These had not denied Christ's Sonship, yet they were not considered as suitable for fellowship! Similar instruction is provided in II Thessalonians 3:6-15. The disciplined one was to be treated as a brother, but he was still disciplined (verse 15). The issue in these cases was not whether they believed in Jesus or even their acknowledgement of the fact. The issue was their failure to live up to the teaching of Jesus. Similarly, the problem in Romans 16:17, 18 is not faith in Jesus' Sonship, but are they teaching doctrine that is consistent with that faith?

A third problem with the idea that belief in Jesus' Sonship is the only test of fellowship is the Bible emphasis upon the necessary conduct of the Christian. Should moral conduct be relegated to secondary status or to the status of a matter of opinion as long as we accept the Sonship of Jesus? That is exactly what we must do IF FAITH IN JESUS' SONSHIP IS THE ONLY VALID CRITERION FOR FELLOWSHIP! It would be virtually impossible to "impose" on anyone with any moral teaching or any restraints! This would fall into the same category of those who would remove Christians from any law of obedience; it would turn the grace of God into lasciviousness (cf. Romans 6:1-2); it would rob the faith of its moral ingenuity! As long as a person believes in and acknowledges Jesus' Sonship, then what can he or she do with such passages as Ephesians 4:20-24; I Thessalonians 4:1-8; and many others like them? The fact is, these are teachings that are definitely mandatory for the Christian!

A fourth objection to the "Sonship of Jesus Only Test of Fellowship" is the importance of adhering to the word of Christ, i.e., his teaching. "IF ye CONTINUE IN MY WORD, then are ye my disciples indeed" (John 8:30). "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). Has this statement become obsolete? NO, it is still valid!

What about I John 4:1-6 and I John 5:1-6, passages that teach the importance of the confession of Christ, the acknowledgement of Christ, etc.? Do these passages suggest that simple confession of Jesus' deity is the only test of one's being "of God"? Clearly, what John is teaching here is that if a person denies the Father and the Son, he is automatically to be rejected as a false teacher! However, is THAT THE ONLY CRITERION FOR ESTABLISHING FELLOWSHIP? Doesn't this same John teach us to LOVE ONE ANOTHER (I John 3:15)? Isn't this the same

John who shows that faith only is not adequate (John 12:42, 43)? Isn't this the same John who recorded Jesus' words regarding the truth (John 8:32)? Isn't this the same John who puts emphasis on walking in the truth (II John 1, 2, 4)? If a person teaches things contrary to the revealed New Testament doctrine, isn't he in error? What about Mark 16:16? What about I Corinthians 11:18ff? Does it matter whether believers take the Lord's supper or not? Does it matter what their attitude when they take it? What about Ephesians 4:1-6 and I Corinthians 1:10-13? It is not the deity of the Sonship of Jesus under consideration in these passages! It is the life consistent with that faith that is under consideration!

Reader, it is of the utmost importance that we believe in, that we acknowledge, that we confess the Sonship of Jesus! Peter did this very thing when he said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16; John 6:69). "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (I John 4:15). But doesn't this confession imply everything consistent with it? Doesn't it imply one's acknowledgement of the Lord's authority? Doesn't it suggest commitment to Christ's revealed teaching? If not, why not!

--Rt. 7, Box 428, Boaz, AL 35957.

You And Worship

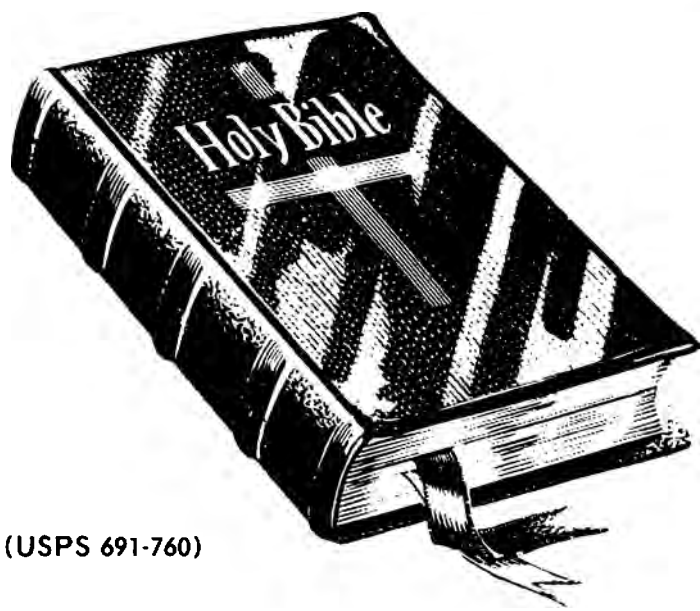
Henry Ward Beecher, the famous pulpit orator, once had to be absent and his brother was invited to speak for him. The church house was crowded, but when it became evident the eloquent Henry Beecher was not going to appear, many started to leave. Beecher's brother was not disturbed. He stood up before the murmuring crowd, called for silence and said, "All who came this morning to worship Henry W. Beecher may now leave. The rest will remain and worship God."

What are we doing in our assemblies? Some, like the Athenians, come only to hear the preacher say "something" (Acts 17:20-21). "Is it relevant?" "Is it positive?" Are mental guidelines used in judging sermons? Some attend to judge the singing, the prayers, or the friendliness of the congregation. These go away with a host of criticisms, perhaps, or even pride . . . but worship has been forgotten.

Why do we gather for worship? Some are here to "get it over with for a week"; to get their tickets validated once more. But those who are here because they need strength in carrying their crosses know the value of true worship.

Worship has nothing to do with the song leader or the talent of the preacher. It has to do with you and your God. Let people do what they will to please themselves. "The rest will remain and worship God."

Norman Easter
via San Angelo, TX



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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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A Nation Went To War

Bill Denton

Wednesday, January 16, 1991. America, joined by a coalition of nations, went to war against Iraq. Weeks of diplomacy, meetings, discussions, rhetoric, and boasts finally came down to the age old solution of war. Analysts dissected each detail. Experts, both political and military, instructed us on each measure of activity, and the news media have again filled our living rooms with up-to-the-minute, blow-by-blow reports. A 75 year old grandmother in America's mid-west knows about the war's progress within minutes of the actual events. CNN's brave crew reported the initial airstrike from Baghdad as it occurred. America sat enthralled before it's television sets as if watching a movie. Surely John Wayne would appear at any minute, wrap the conquest up within the hour, and before the popcorn ran out.

Often, mankind must experience a shattering blow to learn important lessons.

America also wept. Don't believe the angry shouts too quickly. No one really wants to go to war. President Bush doesn't send thousands of young men and women to a possible early death without much internal anguish. Neither does Saddam Hussein relish in a pasting from thousands of aircraft sorties dropping bombs around the clock. Those thoughts are far from the realities of life and the suffering which war brings. America wept in the form of a President forced to decide that the only answer is war. America wept in the form of mothers and fathers whose children gave one last wave and grin, then went perhaps to die. America wept in the form of those who yet plead for the fighting to stop, that war cease, and other means settle the problem. America wept in the form of a divided Congress who battled on the political front, but who, when the smoke cleared, rallied behind the President and American troops. America wept because she does not know for sure

whether the war is for oil, for democracy, for ultimate world peace, for imperialism, for justice or for power.

What then do we make of war? Is it nothing more than legalized killing? Is it a legitimate means of settling disputes when words and patience fail? Will God judge us for this failure too? Or will God use the tragedy for a greater good? James did not oversimplify the problem when he wrote: "Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask" (James 4:1-2).

Often, mankind must experience a shattering blow to learn important lessons. When the news reporters disturbed the evening television with the announcement of American airstrikes against Iraq, we knew serious times were here. Many people will die. Homes will be destroyed. Cities, farms, businesses will explode in the fire and dust of missiles and bombs. Young children will forever live with the horror of war etched in their memories. Old people will spend their last days in fear and misery. Nations of people will now develop a hatred for the people of other nations, whom they have never seen or known. It is a sad and bitter lesson which war brings.

Could we have averted it? Was it really necessary? Who knows but God? The best we can do is guess, and in reality, now that it has begun, it doesn't really matter. Now, we can only deal with its fact. However, there is a larger question. What shall we learn from it? Are our lessons limited to the political realm or the military questions? What is happening on the world stage is nothing more than what happens daily on the smaller stage of individual human lives. Was James speaking only of nation against nation, or was he speaking of person against person? Surely the consequences of war between nations multiplies thousands of times over compared to wars between individuals. Yet, the tragedy is that it sometimes takes the

impact of one nation destroying another to see the complete human drama played out.

Why are we this way? In every generation, man

Sadam Hussein offers no peace to the world. His is a shameful record of murder and hostility, of personal pride and ambition.

has sought ways to find peace between himself and others. That search has gone on for thousands of years with little to show for it. The peace enjoyed for the past few years was a forced peace, a peace through strength. In short, the other guy won't mess with us because we're tougher than he is. That's good thinking from a worldly point of view, but is it real peace? I think not. James had it right. Our desires for pleasure, our lust for the things of the world are often more than we can handle. That doesn't mean every person involved in the current war with Iraq is there because of his lusts. It does mean that the problem of nations is the same as the problem of individuals, just on a larger scale. Is it tragic when hostiles erupt between nations? Why is it not also tragic when the smaller-scale hostilities break out between ourselves?

Look again at the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." I have long believed that we Christians sell ourselves short. We have entrusted to politicians, military leaders and self-appointed officials, the task of making peace on the earth. Man has never found the means to peace, and he never will. Instead, God sent to us the Prince of Peace. He sent us a Savior to redeem us from our miserable failures and our sins against one another. Saddam Hussein offers no peace to the world. His is

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Words Of Truth



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-Acts 26:25

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Proud Of One's Citizenship

John Gipson

"I'm Proud to be an American" became a hit record for Lee Greenwood. Since its release, Lee has been asked to perform it on special occasions throughout the United States and has found a very receptive audience. The words of Daniel Webster, "I was born an American; I live an American; I shall die an American," express the sentiments of many of us. Just as Paul was proud of his Roman citizenship, we're proud to be Americans.

But Paul knew that there was a higher citizenship -- a citizenship which has the eternal God as the ruler of his people -- the citizenship of the kingdom of heaven.

There was a time when we "were separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12).

But that situation has changed radically. Through Christ, and his death upon the cross, we have access to God. We are no longer outsiders looking in, people without a country, strangers and sojourners, but we are "fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19).

We now have a history and a manifest destiny. We stand in the succession of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob with all of the promises God made to them. We have come to citizenship in God's country. We do not stand at the border looking in; we do not have the questionable status of aliens in a foreign land; we are not second-class citizens. The new nation is our rightful home. We are no longer

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Have We Forgotten The Unborn?



David Wade

The following quotation by Kenneth E. Jones appeared in the Louisville Courier Journal, July 28, 1990. "We Americans are peculiar. We kill unborn babies, as they are not human, while we operate on other unborn babies to save their precious lives. We jail a mother for harming her fetus with drugs, but would applaud her if she had it killed. We make it legal to kill unborn babies, but try to make it illegal for a doctor to experiment with an animal."

The enormity of the abortion slaughter staggers the mind. There have been over 27 million legal abortions in the United States in the last eighteen years. In all of our 215 year history as a nation we have had approximately 1.3 million war related deaths. That adds up to 21 times as many abortions

in 18 years compared to all war-related deaths in 215 years!

Remember the anti-war demonstrations during the Vietnam conflict? After 56,555 war deaths, and mounting pressure at home, we were ready to disengage from this conflict at any cost. Now, we are at war in the Middle East. I would venture to predict it will take only a few hundred war dead in a land assault to stir up the "peace at any price" movement to the same level of ferocity evidenced in the Vietnam conflict.

Meanwhile, the greater tragedy continues unabated, and largely unnoticed. I'm reminded of the Lord's proverb concerning the blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel" (Matthew 23:24).

I, in no way, want to minimize the great loss suffered by families in the armed services. Their sacrifice is beyond description. However, our conscience needs to be pricked concerning the plight of the unborn.

"It's The Atheistic Thing To Do!"



Jerri Manasco

People in North Alabama and the Huntsville area in particular, have etched into their minds the desolation created by the tornado that swept into their lives the latter part of 1989. Many lives were lost, countless others were drastically changed. What is most uplifting, though, is the fact that volunteers came from communities for miles around to offer assistance in rebuilding what had been demolished.

A television newsman was interviewing one of the men who had come to assist in this disaster. When asked why he took the time to help people he did not even know and probably would never see again, the man replied quite frankly, "It's the Christian thing to do!" Have you ever heard anyone say in such a case that it's the atheistic thing to do? Perhaps not! The reason is that **atheism, as such is not a people-helping philosophy!**

The intrinsic worth of the human is not part of atheistic philosophy. To the atheist we humans are no more than the most advanced of evolved creatures. According to actual atheism there is really no moral necessity that would compel anyone to do anything for anybody! The denial of

God's existence is naturally accompanied by the denial of any morality God would demand! "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9), is simply not a concern of the atheist!

The denial of God's existence is naturally accompanied by the denial of any morality God would demand! "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9), is simply not a concern of the atheist!

It is certainly not a fear of God that would motivate any benevolent concerns in the atheist because the atheist has no fear of God (Psalm 14:1)! It is not out of regard for moral right that would move an atheist to act on behalf of his or her fellow man (fellow person??). It would not be a sense of unselfishness that would prompt the atheist to act with benevolent feeling toward his or her peers. It certainly would not be an expectation of eternal reward that would motivate the atheist to work for others' benefit, since the atheist has no faith in what is eternal! Surely Paul hit the nail on

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"It's The Atheistic Thing To Do!"

Continued From Page 2

the head and drove it in deeply when he described the state of ungrateful and selfish man without God (Romans 1:18-32).

A Nation Went To War

Continued From Page 1

a shameful record of murder and hostility, of personal pride and ambition. Neither does George Bush offer us peace, regardless of how well-intentioned he may be to protect the defenseless people of Kuwait. Jesus came to take away hostility from our hearts and give us a new heart. Neither missile or bomb or braver army will ever stop man's inhumanity to man. Only the gospel of peace can do that. The question is, will we ever realize the power in the weapon we have.

This is not an anti-war article. This writer spent

Is it too big a dream to hope that leaders of nations will hear and obey the gospel of Jesus?

almost eight years in the U.S. Air Force and served in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam Conflict as a volunteer to that area. I proudly served my country at that time, and I'd do it again, if called upon. However, I think I'm a bit wiser at this point in life. My heart still stirs at flag raising ceremonies and the playing of the National Anthem. I watch the unfolding of the war with Iraq with guarded optimism and am a desperate supporter of our young men and women who fight for what we, as a nation, believe is right. However, none of that compares to what I know Jesus Christ can do for the world. Jesus can change the unloving, uncaring, self-centered world to his own image. In his own disciples he showed that zealots and Roman sympathizers could find common ground. Regardless of the outcome of the war, the peace that comes is tenuous at best. Is it too much to hope that we will realize that the gospel is the answer to war? Is it too big a dream to hope that leaders of nations will hear and obey the gospel of Jesus? Is it too simplistic to think that war will cease when such men display the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. If that ever happens, it will come as a result of us starting with any man, every man, every single man, woman, boy and girl. We will start by teaching them the gospel. This may be why the Prince of Peace said to his disciples "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). How many wars could you prevent by making a few disciples?

--Via Living The Word, P.O. Box 623, Forest Park, GA 30051.

In a system that espouses the survival of the fittest, there is not likely to be any real incentive to help those who have become weakened by circumstances. Remember Hitler's activities? Humanistic downgrading of moral reality was at the root of all that and similar despotic movements today! In this philosophy there is no inclination to offer help to the oppressed and downtrodden.

Atheism (and its active evidence, humanism)

"I'd Serve God If I Had More . . ."



Joe E. Galloway

in the least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10). According to this, a man would serve no more faithfully with more blessings than he is now serving with what he has. Let's consider some examples:

1. "If I had a million dollars I'd give nearly all of it for the Lord's work." Many of us have heard some such statement as this. Yet, these same members are not giving as prospered now. They earn \$200 to \$800 per week and give \$1 to \$20 per week on Lord's days for the work of the church. What makes them think they would be more faithful in giving if they had a million dollars? Suppose they were to suddenly receive \$1,000,000 in some magazine sweepstakes. Is it not likely that these who will not regularly give as they are prospered would find other things to do with their sudden wealth, too, instead of using it for the Lord's work? Remember, Jesus says, "He that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much."

2. "If I had more time I'd take part in various works of the congregation" (or, "I'd attend services more") is another commonly heard statement. Should we believe this when these same people refuse to use any of the time they now have in doing what they know is the Lord's will? I think

simply does not stand as a monument to human dignity! Any good that is accomplished by atheism is the result of influence from the purity and dignity of Christianity! Where God is honored and where the supreme morality of heaven is respected, there is genuine concern for others and there will you find the outstretched hand of mercy!

--Route 7 Box 428, Boaz, AL 35957.

not! All of us have some time that could be used in participation in the work of the Lord. If we do not, it is due to our putting too many things ahead of our duty to God. Serving God is the reason for our being on this earth ("the whole duty of man," Ecclesiastes 12:13). Therefore, God's service should be considered FIRST as we are deciding how to spend our time. True, we may not have as much spare time from our main occupation as others, but that is not the important thing. "Are we using what time we DO have in service to our God?" is the more important consideration. Many of us are not!

3. "If I had the ability of brother so-and-so I'd really serve the Lord." But, "What are you doing with the abilities you do have?" we ask. Many times the truthful answer would have to be "Little," or "Nothing"! A man who will not use the ability he has in God's service would not use other, or increased, abilities if he had them. According to the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30, those who use what talents they have are those who will both gain other talents and be rewarded by the Lord. Those who refuse to use what talents they have will neither gain others, nor please God. They will be lost!

We serve faithfully, using what abilities we possess, when we begin with the right attitude. Without this proper attitude we will not serve acceptably, regardless of the amount of material goods, time, or ability we have. Let's make full use of what we do have in our service to God. God requires no more of us; He will not settle for less. In the last sentence of Luke 12:48 Jesus said, "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

--P.O. Box 582, Blountville, TN 37617.

Proud Of One's Citizenship

Continued From Page 2

refugees, people without a passport.

I have been to naturalization ceremonies. I have seen people of all nationalities become citizens of the United States. It is a solemn occasion as they pledge their allegiance to their new country. It is done with all sincerity and soberness. But the best part is when the judge tells them that they are now citizens of the United States of America. How can

I describe the scene? Tears of joy flow down their cheeks, congratulations and hugs are exchanged. Family and friends gather around. It's an important day, and they are proud to be Americans.

But what can compare with becoming a citizen of the kingdom of heaven? Nothing. Absolutely nothing! I'm proud to be a Christian.

--Via Keynoter, Little Rock, Arkansas

Tell It To The Right Person



Roger Jackson

There is no sin more prevelant or more destructive in the Lord's church than gossip or tale-bearing. It is often characterized as a busybody in other men's matters (II Thessalonians 3:11), tattlers (I Timothy 5:13), men who are accusers (I Timothy 5:19) and a prater who uses malicious words (III John 10). It will not work to try to excuse it on the grounds that it is true, because the fact is that there are some things we know about others that either do not need to be told at all, and when they do, we tell it to the wrong person. Expressions of deeply felt injuries have so often begun with, "You should have come to me first."

The Bible permits us to bear testimony to wrong actions, but does not leave the door open for us to do so in any and every forum we choose. The house of Chloe had informed Paul of the divisions and contentions at Corinth, but it was a public matter (I Corinthians 1:11). When a brother sins against us (personally), the Bible instructs us to rebuke him (Luke 17:3), not tell everyone about it. In Matthew 18:15-17 we are required to face a transgressor privately if the offence is private. This passage alone, if followed carefully, would eliminate far more than half of our local church conflicts. Of course, the circumstances may dictate that we deliver a strong public rebuke as Paul did in Peter's case (Galatians 2:11, 12). In the case of an honest mistake where more damage would be done to rebuke a man publicly than privately, the Scriptures, by example, teach that it is more expedient to take the teacher aside for more instructions (Acts 18:24-26).

In Matthew 18:15-17 we are required to face a transgressor privately if the offence is private. This passage alone, if followed carefully, would eliminate far more than half of our local church conflicts. Of course, the circumstances may dictate that we deliver a strong public rebuke as Paul did in Peter's case (Galatians 2:11, 12).

Telling such matters to the wrong person is a device of Satan he has used masterfully through the years to destroy love and unity among God's people (II Corinthians 2:11). It is hard to understand why so many of us have not learned that lesson.

It is hard to face a person with a big problem. It takes a lot of courage to do it, but experience teaches us that it is far better than carrying the weight around on our shoulders day after day. Those who do so admit afterward that it was not the right thing to do. However, sometimes we get careless. Perhaps we are trying to get some help or advice. In other instances we must admit that long practice has made it a part of our nature, and we speak without even thinking about it. Of course we cannot discount the fact that there are some people among us whose heart is full of malicious intent, who lie, envy and spread evil reports about others in order to enjoy personal vengeance (II Timothy 3:1-4). This sin is as ugly as sin can get, and those who practice it should be deeply grieved and profoundly ashamed.

No one can stuff garbage into a can unless there is a can to begin with. I need to know when I am that wrong person, and know what to do about it. Be careful to be as courteous as charity will allow. Ignore the petty matters. If we spend all of our time chasing down petty rumors we will have no time for anything else. I do not want to know everything people have said about me, good or bad. When the matter is a serious one, courteously admonish the accuser. Ask him if he knows that it is true, and if he will accompany you to face the one accused. If he will not, investigate the matter thoroughly. Consult the Scriptures to determine your responsibility and the manner in which you should deal with the matter (II Timothy 3:16,17). Then before you approach the accused think of

the golden rule (Matthew 7:14). Would you want to be approached with an accusation that you had done a terrible thing, or a question as to whether or not you had done the thing?

Telling faults to the wrong person is not an unforgivable sin, but it is a very humbling one. People who are offended by it very seldom attempt to harm the one who confesses the sin. They respect a person who confesses the fault. It is best to apologize sincerely for your mistake (James 5:16). Where restitution is possible, gladly make it. If public harm has been done, make a confession publicly. Learn from your mistake. You will never reach a state of absolute perfection in the use of your tongue (James 3:1-5), but you can get a lot better at it with practice and care.

Telling it to the right person has a lot to recommend it, not to mention that the Bible requires it (which is sufficient). It will help people get to heaven instead of ruining their faith. It preserves friendships that can be so fragile. It keeps brethren from being offended to such a point that they cannot even speak or worship together. It helps keep the church united in love, and removes the single most prevelant sin among us, in my judgment. It also improves a person's self-esteem. You feel wonderful after getting such a burden off your chest in the way God said, and God knew it would work that way.

--Rt. 3 Box 882, Somerville, AL 35670.

Agreement For A Public Religious Discussion

Mr. Roger Jackson of Somerville, Alabama and Mr. Thomas N. Thrasher of Decatur, Alabama mutually agree to participate in a four-night public debate according to the terms and conditions stated below:

1. The first and second sessions will be conducted on June 3-4, 1991 in the building of the church of Christ on Sparkman Drive in Huntsville, Alabama. The proposition to be discussed is as follows:

"The Bible teaches that a church of the Lord's people may make a contribution, from its treasury, to a home for orphans."

Affirm: Roger Jackson

Deny: Thomas N. Thrasher

2. The third and fourth sessions will be conducted on June 6-7, 1991 in the building of the Union church of Christ in Somerville, Alabama. The proposition to be discussed is as follows:

"The Bible teaches that, in benevolence, a church of the Lord's people is restricted to the relief of needy saints only."

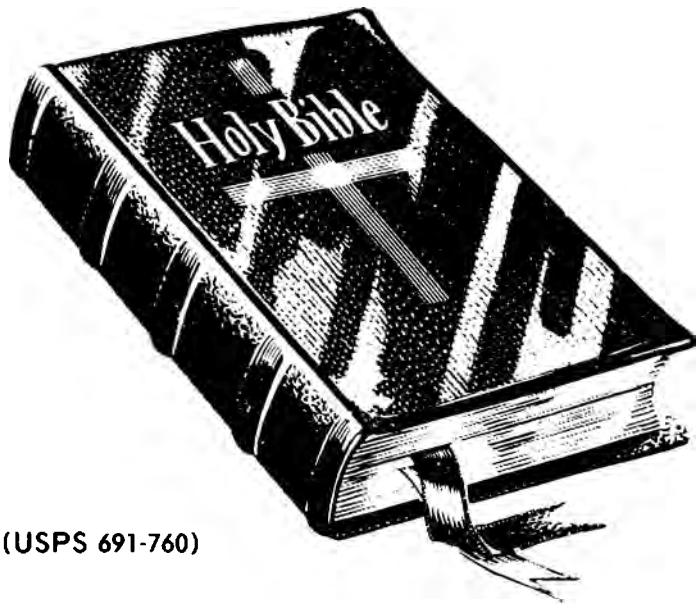
Affirm: Thomas N. Thrasher

Deny: Roger Jackson

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Words Of th

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

—Acts 26:25

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Solomon's Choice



T. Pierce Brown

The inspired and inspiring story of the choice of Solomon as recorded in I Kings 3:1-16 is worthy of our intensive study. He had had a long and solemn time of sacrificing offerings to God, with a great sense of gratitude and an awareness of his weakness and unworthiness. He ex-

emplifies Jesus' statement, "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matthew 5:3). The importance of making the right choices at the right time is beyond comprehension.

Every new opportunity or circumstance that confronts us demands a choice, or usually, many choices. Even on a somewhat insignificant event, many choices are involved. Suppose a friend says, "Let us go out and eat." You have to choose first whether you go. Then you choose the time to go, the place to go, what to eat, and many other things.

Every choice, no matter how little it may be, involves your character. The things you choose, and the basis on which you choose them depends upon and suggests the kind of character you have and will have. Often a seemingly small choice will determine the direction of your whole life. I am told that there is a place in Europe where a person might stand and throw a piece of wood in one of three directions. If it falls in one stream at that point, it will flow north into one sea. If it falls into another stream nearby it will flow south into another sea. If it falls into another stream within reach it will flow west into another sea. Each destination is thousands of miles from the other, but at the beginning they were very close together. Whether or not that is true, it illustrates the reality about our choices. To make it more realistic to you, think of standing on a spot and facing in one direction from which you may start walking. With just a slight turn, you are facing in another

direction. If you start walking in that direction, you will end your journey several thousand miles from where you would be at the first point.

The greatest choices we can make are things that relate to serving humanity wisely under God's direction. The most fundamental choice we can make is the one Joshua suggested in Joshua 24:15, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve -- but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Keep in mind the principle involved here. Make the big choice right and most of the little choices are automatically made without difficulty. My choices of what drinks to serve at meals and what whom I take out to dinner were largely determined by one previous choice.

Every choice, no matter how little it may be, involves your character. The things you choose, and the basis on which you choose them depends upon and suggests the kind of character you have and will have.

When I was a boy I read of Aladdin lamp with the genie that would grant wishes. God had a better offer to Solomon. "Ask what I shall give thee" (v. 5). There are some principles behind making any worthwhile choice. First, we need to cultivate the proper desire. Second, we need to make that choice consciously and deliberately. Third, verbalize that choice. Let us note an important difference between having a desire, and choosing that which will cause us to gain that desire. A person may want to be healthy. Choosing to exercise, eat properly and exercise self control are different matters. A person may wish he had the knowledge or ability to be an artist, pilot, swimmer, golfer or personal evangelist. To do the studying and practice that would give that is

another thing. Brother Gus Nichols told of a woman who said, "I would give 40 years of my life to know the Bible like you do." He replied, "That is what it took." Of course she would not and did not, either before or after the conversation.

Brother Gus Nichols told of a woman who said, "I would give 40 years of my life to know the Bible like you do." He replied, "That is what it took."

I am persuaded the same kind of situation confronts us. God has made promises to us that may surpass that offered to Solomon, but few of us take him at his word, or accept them on his terms. II Peter 1:3, 4 says, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises." Note some of them, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). Even such a promise as the one found in II Corinthians 9:8-11 is not accepted by most of us. Do you have all sufficiency in all things? If not, perhaps the reason is that you have not accepted God's promise on his terms. I am convinced that most of us do not really believe and accept Ephesians 3:20, "Now unto him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Our faith and vision are both too small, or we would be doing far greater things for the Lord.

Solomon made a very wise choice. He said in verse 9, "Give thy servant an understanding heart." Before he made that choice, he looked backward to

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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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Conviction



R. W. Gray

Paul had conscious knowledge of the God in whom he had placed his trust. He was fully convinced that the trust he had committed would be kept by the God he knew (II Timothy 1:12). Such conviction drove this Christ saturated, Christ motivated, man to fight a good fight, to finish his course, and to keep the

faith (II Timothy 4:1-6).

Back sliding, turning back, apostasy, are words and terms often read and heard in religious circles. Vascillation seems to be the "in thing" in these changing times. One writes a well researched volume to warn his brethren that liberalism is a real threat to their faith. He documents well his expose of the attitudes and threats one may expect from those caught up in the trap of liberalistic thinking. He warns that they will seek to win over truth by a facade of piety and/or by intimidation. Within the scope of a few years the one who issued the warnings is heard all over the land parroting the very phrases he warned others to watch for as a sign of apostasy.

When the depth of our profession of faith is shallow we can drown near the shore. And when we permit ourselves to be tossed to and fro with every wind that blows we certain to end up in a cyclone of error. If we are perplexed with these things it provides us some idea of God's patience. From Adam to Moses, and from Moses to the baptizer, man demonstrated his fickle nature. "All the day long," Jehovah reveals, "have I stretched

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Is Honesty The Best Policy?



David Wade

We often hear the statement, "Honesty is the best policy." As noble as this statement may sound, it falls short of giving proper guidance for the Christian in matters of honesty. For the Christian, honesty must be more than policy, it is to be his very nature, his guiding principle, a way of life.

Policies may change with different situations, but divine principles are unchanging and eternal. So it is with the divine principle of honesty. Paul urges us to "Provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Romans 12:17). "Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men" (II Corinthians 8:21). "That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing" (I Thessalonians 4:12).

Covetousness is at the very heart of dishonesty. Covetousness is a form of idolatry (Colossians 3:5). The writer of Hebrews commands, "Let your

conversation (manner of life) be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (13:5).

Recently, W. T. Allison had a short article in the Creekwood bulletin that drives home the point, under the title "Practice What You Preach."

"One Monday morning a minister boarded a city bus and gave the driver a one-dollar bill. As he was finding a seat, he counted the change and noticed that the driver had given him too much money in change. He sat down and contemplated what would have seemed good fortune to some people. Finally, he went to the driver and said, 'Sir, you gave me too much money back when I boarded the bus.' Without even looking at him, the driver said, 'I know, I was at your church last night and heard your sermon against stealing and I just wanted to see if you practiced what you preach.'

In all avenues of life we need to be honest. Be honest with your spouse. Be honest in all your business dealings. Be honest with your friends, your enemies, and with the stranger. In short, be honest, period! Everyone is looking, including God.

Bishop Spong's False Teaching About Paul

Jerry Jenkins

Episcopal Bishop, John Shelby Spong, in his book *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism*, charges that the apostle Paul was a secret homosexual. Basically his arguments are: (1) Paul's self-judging rhetoric, (2) His negative feeling toward his own body, (3) His sense of being controlled by something he had no power to change. Often, religionists assume that which needs proof if it is to be taught with authority, i.e., that Lydia in her household, the jailer and his household, must have had infants, therefore the Biblical authority to sprinkle infants.

John Dart of the Los Angeles Times quotes a telephone conversation with Bishop Spong, "the war going on inside of him [Paul] is a fairly classic description of what I have come to understand in repressed gay males." Bishop Spong's logic would make all Christians who have struggled with sin have homosexual tendencies. Should we conclude that one who is not a homosexual would also be exempt from any temptation? The truth is Paul was simply affirming that regardless of what good he might seek to do, he was still condemned by the law as a transgressor for he did not live above sin.

Often, religionists assume that which needs proof it it is to be taught with authority, i.e., that Lydia in her household, the jailer and his household, must have had infants, therefore the Biblical authority to sprinkle infants.

What did Paul specifically state? When he wrote to the Christians at Corinth he affirmed: "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God" (I Corinthians 6:9-11). Which will we accept, the guess of Bishop Spong or the plain statement of the apostle Paul?

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Conviction

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forth my hand to a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Romans 10:21).

When the depth of our profession of faith is shallow we can drown near the shore. And when we permit ourselves to be tossed to and fro with every wind that blows we are certain to end up in a cyclone of error.

Joshua was reflecting the "impatience" of the Lord when he called upon Israel to take a stand. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve . . ." (Joshua 24:15). "Take a stand!" "Set your course and pursue it!" Throughout the Bible we are encouraged to faithfulness and warned of our

propensity to drift away from our moorings. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12).

We must grieve, not gloat, over the slipping into error's path by any brother or sister. Our love for them must not wane. The "illness" of a loved one will not drive us from them but draw us to their side in their time of need. Yet we must exercise care that while attending to their need we do not carelessly expose ourselves to the sickness (Galatians 6:1).

In any warfare the troops must be convinced of the justice of their cause and believe in the ultimate victory that awaits the right if the fight is to be won. It is wise to evaluate one's position all along the way, testing every proposal before it is embraced; before the soldiers advance. If there are hidden doubts they will surface and let us down when the battle is raging. But once tested and proven sound, the position must be held.

Our spiritual metal is put to the test when the

cause we serve is under siege. The defection of just one fellow soldier can cause us to become faint hearted, cast doubt upon the course we follow, and spread discouragement among the troops. Our Commander is looking for a few good men who will hold the fort when the enemy is at the gate.

In a time when apostasy has become somewhat of a "fad" our convictions are once more placed under the gun. Where we ultimately stand depends upon our knowledge of and love for the God we serve. It was in a context of dismay regarding those who had "turned away" from him and from the Lord that Paul wrote, "Nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Timothy 1:12-18).

"Soldiers of Christ, arise . . . And put your armor on;

Strong in the strength which God supplies
Thro' his beloved Son.

Stand then in his great might, With all his strength endued;

But take to arm ye for the fight, The panoply of God."

--Charles Wesley

--563, McGukin Road, Bremen, GA 30110.

Bishop Spong's False Teaching About Paul

Continued From Page 2

When we determine that we are intelligent enough to attempt a rewrite of the Bible, we will not only err in such areas as these listed, but in others such as: (1) ordaining an openly gay man to the priesthood (this bishop Spong did about a year ago, (2) proposing that the gospel accounts of

Jesus' virgin birth and his physical resurrection -- as well as other miraculous stories -- should not be taken as literally true (Bishop Spong's views cited in the Birmingham News, 2/8/91).

--Via Reminder, 400 Roebuck Parkway, Birmingham, AL 35206.

Solomon's Choice

Continued From Page 1

God's goodness and power, outward to the needs around him, inward to his inability to do his work by his own power, and upward to the source of the power he needed.

It is not enough to have the opportunity of choosing. One must decide what course to pursue, or what goals are worth working for. In Solomon's case it was to discern what was good and bad and be able to do that which was best for all concerned. This should be our attitude. Then there was a statement of his desire. James 4:2 says, "Ye have not because ye ask not." Could that also be a part of the reason for our not receiving more blessings? We do not really have our hearts set on worthwhile goals to the extent that we can specify those goals clearly. Often, we simply say, "Lord bless us." Imagine a son who wants a bicycle, but only says to his father, "Bless me." There are good reasons for God wanting us to specify. One of them is that unless we know what we want enough to define it clearly, probably if we received it we would not use it properly.

His choice pleased God because it indicated an attitude of humility. It was not for his selfish

advantage. James 4:3 says, "Ye ask and receive not because ye ask to consume it on your own lusts." It was both for the honor and good of his people, and for the glory of God. If our goals and aspirations always included those things, there is little doubt that we would receive far more things we want and need.

Because it was such a wise choice, he not only got what he asked for, but far more than he thought (vss. 12-13). When Jesus says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33), and when he said "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7), he was expressing the thoughts I want to emphasize in this article. When he said, "Ask what ye will" we must remember that our will must be to do his will. That is, the promises of God for granting our prayers involve the attitude of loving obedience. These promises are for every faithful child of God.

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Jesus And The Church



Winfred Clark

When you think of some people, there are some other things you think about. When you think of Noah, you think of the ark. When you think of Christ you must also think of the church. There is no doubt that it filled his mind. He spoke of it (Matthew 16:16-17).

Have you stopped to ask yourself what it meant to him? We should be able to see something of his concern for the church. This can be done when we look at passages that show his relationship to the church.

I. LOOK AT THE PRICE HE PAID

We can usually tell what people think of a thing by the price they are willing to pay. If they consider such to be of great value, they will spare no expense. They will go all out to purchase that which they consider to be valuable. They will sacrifice in order to obtain that which means a great deal to them.

This will tell you something about the value our Lord placed on the church. Listen to what Paul would have to say, "husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25). He would later

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Jesus And The Church

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say to the Ephesian elders, ". . . which he purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Surely one does not pay that kind of a price for that which is considered to be worthless or merely an afterthought. Jesus had a mighty large investment in the church. It cost him all that he had.

We can have no doubt about the Lord's sense of worth concerning the church. He saw it as being worth his blood and life. He would make the supreme sacrifice for it. We are thus compelled to see it as something of great worth. It is to be respected as such. We dare not think of it otherwise.

II. LISTEN TO HIS PRAYER FOR IT

If you will take the time to read that great prayer, found in John 17, you will see something of the Lord's feelings for, and concept of the church. Those disciples were uppermost in his thoughts. Take the time to look at all the references to them and you will see.

He would pray for their purity. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15). Jesus knew these were to be the salt of the earth. They were to keep themselves pure and clean. They were to live lives that were separate and sanctified.

He would pray for their unity. Time and again you will find the Lord praying "that they may be one" (John 17:11, 21). He knew the awful tragedy brought on by division. He knew that the cost of division would be an unbelieving world. That is too much to pay for division. It isn't worth it.

Remember also, Jesus would not only pray for the church himself, but he also taught us to do the same (Matthew 6:9-13).

III. LOOK AT PLANS HE HAD FOR IT

There was no doubt that Jesus had plans for the church when he came. It was not an afterthought. It was not something that came into being because the Jews rejected him as the Messiah. Not at all. This can be seen in all the work that he did from the beginning of his public ministry. He let it be known that the kingdom of heaven was at hand (Matthew 4:17). He was not talking about something other than the church at that time. He did not have another institution in mind. "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:29-30). This is, without a doubt, the Lord's supper. None of us would doubt that the Lord's table is in the church (I Corinthians 11:23-26). But Jesus said it would be in the kingdom. This being the case, we speak of the same institution, or body of people. Thus when he spoke of the kingdom, he would be speaking to the church. That is the reason you will find those terms together in such places as (Matthew 16:16-19). When he spoke of building his church and giving to them the keys of the kingdom, these are one and the same. He had plans for building the church.

IV. LOOK AT ITS POPULATION

When you stop to think of those people who

make up the church, you then get an idea of the Lord's concept of the church. Luke described the kind of people who are in the church "and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). The best people on earth are the ones who compose the church, those that have turned from Satan to serve the Living God. They are the ones who have turned from darkness to light.

Let no man think that the church is to be less than pure. He would have it sanctified and cleansed (Ephesians 5:26). He would have it purified (I Peter 1:22-23). It is not to have spot, wrinkle or blemish. Jesus wants it to be clean.

Just any kind of people are not in the church. One has to be a certain kind. One has to be saved. One

has to be willing to follow the demands and dictates of the Lord.

V. LOOK AT THE PLACE PREPARED FOR IT

Didn't Jesus speak of going to prepare a place for those disciples (John 14:1-3)? He would prepare for them a place in heaven. It is that place that Paul had in mind when he was ready to depart and be with the Lord (Philippians 1:21-23). He knew what the Lord had in mind for the church. He would have a home waiting for the redeemed of the ages. Nothing else would satisfy.

Yes, we know what he thought of the church and so should we.

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

Does The Bible Teach Soul Sleeping?



Cecil Corkren

Some religious groups seem to think that it does. "For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten" (Ecclesiastes 9:5). When they read a verse like the above they feel sure of their convictions.

They believe as some members of the body of Christ, that there is no conscious existence after death. Some question a conscious existence between death and the resurrection of the body, but seemingly never think of what this leads to when examined in the light of God's word. This doctrine, with its related tene's, is often referred to as the "soul sleeping doctrine." Those who teach this error deny that man has both an outward and an inward man (II Corinthians 4:16). Such false teachers will boldly affirm that "man does not have a soul, he is a soul." Thus when one dies, he is like the dog Rover -- dead all over! If this were correct, "soul sleep" is a misnomer it should be "soul cessation" or soul stopping, ceasing to exist," and "resurrection" should be changed to "recreation."

In the Old Testament, the term "soul" (from NEPHESH) was often used to designate the composite person, made up of various parts. The New Testament's equivalent (PSUCHE) also is used in the same way in Acts 7:14. However, the Old Testament uses soul to refer to the inner man in contrast with the body (Genesis 35:18). The New Testament develops this usage of soul in much more detail. Matthew 10:28 and Revelation 6:9-10 are key passages which show beyond any doubt that the soul of man lives on after bodily life ceases.

The term SPIRIT also is used to designate this inner being (Luke 23:46; Acts 7:59; Hebrews 12:22-23). This part of man is that which we share in common with our Maker. When God said, "Let us make man in our image" (Genesis 1:26), He had

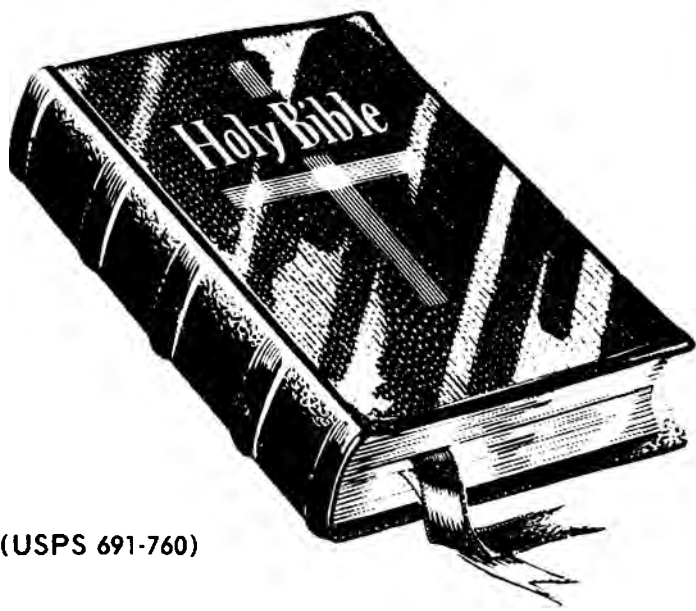
to mean His spiritual image, since He is SPIRIT (John 4:24). Therefore, even though we receive our physical bodies from our parents, our SPIRITS come from God. He is the "Father of spirits" (Hebrews 12:9). God is the one who formed the spirit of man within him (Zechariah 12:1), and thus when we die "the spirit returneth unto God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

We sing, "When my body is lying in the cold, cold clay, I'll live on." Do we believe what we sing?

The Sadducees of old taught the same erroneous doctrine regarding the spirit of man (or lack of it) as the "soul sleepers" teach. Jesus assured them that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were yet alive though their bodies had already decayed (Matthew 22:23-32). The fact that a person can live apart from his body is clearly taught in numerous passages. In II Corinthians 5:6-8, We can see that Paul taught one could be absent from the body and present with the Lord. (Who is the WE, if not the spirit or soul of man?? The corpse of Dorcas was present but SHE was not present (Acts 9:39). For similar passages see Romans 14:8; Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:21-23 and Luke 18:19-31.

The soul will live on after death. Jesus said at the graveside of Lazarus, "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me SHALL NEVER DIE. Believeth thou this" (John 11:26). All men die physically, so Jesus was referring to the conscious existence of man after death. We sing, "When my body is lying in the cold, cold clay, I'll live on." Do we believe what we sing? Luke records that Lazarus, was "comforted" in ABRAHAM'S bosom (Luke 16:19-31). Sounds like Lazarus, had a conscious existence after he died.

--1705 Sandra Lee Drive, Jasper, Alabama 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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Is The End Near?



Bobby Duncan

They are quoting Bible prophecy, and saying: "The end is near!"

Most of us have noticed signs in front of church buildings in recent weeks announcing studies of Bible prophecy which purportedly finds its fulfillment in the war with Iraq. Many preachers are doing what many preachers do every time there is some kind of military activity anywhere in the world.

Many preachers are doing what many preachers do every time there is some kind of military activity anywhere in the world. They are quoting Bible prophecy, and saying: "The end is near!"

Is the end near? I do not know, and neither does any other man living on this earth. Concerning the time when heaven and earth would pass away, Jesus said: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping" (Mark 13:32-36).

This passage, along with a number of others, makes it clear that the next appearing of the Lord will come at a time unannounced, and without any signs to indicate its nearness. Even Jesus himself, while he was on earth, did not know when that time would be. Yet there are scores of preachers in our day who think they have learned from Old Testament prophecy coupled with the teaching of Christ some truth which Christ himself was never able to learn while he was on earth. What scholarship! (?) What arrogance!

Three chapters in the New Testament are especially perverted by those who periodically declare the end is near. These chapters are Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. In the first part of each of these chapters Jesus tells his disciples certain signs they would observe as the time drew near for Jerusalem and the Jewish temple to be destroyed. In each of these three chapters it is recorded that he told them the signs they would see would come to pass on that generation to which he was then speaking (Matthew 24:34; Mark 13:30; Luke 21:32). The destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish temple took place in A.D. 70, after the disciples of the Lord had seen everything happen he had said would happen. False prophets of our day are taking those very prophecies, which have already been

fulfilled, and erroneously applying them to events of our day.

But this is not the first time these prophecies have been misapplied. Some tried to apply them to World War I. Some tried to apply them to World War II, some to the Korean War, some to the Viet Nam War, some to the Six Day's War, and on and on we could go. Now many of these same modern day "prophets" are just sure the Persian Gulf War is the one that lets us know the end is near.

I am not suggesting that the coming of the Lord is yet a great many years away, nor am I suggesting it will be soon. We simply do not know.

I am not suggesting that the coming of the Lord is yet a great many years away, nor am I suggesting it will be soon. We simply do not know. We do know there will be no signs given to us to let us know when the time will be. We should live every day as if we knew it were the last one.

--Via The Visitor, 4207 Adamsville Parkway, Adamsville, AL 35005.

Mutant Christians



John Gipson

Adults tend to see mutants in a different light. There may be a certain amount of curiosity and interest, but it is coupled with a healthy sense of fear and foreboding.

Cancer begins when a single, normal cell goes

Youngsters are fascinated by mutants. Look at the popularity of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles in which the abnormal becomes a source of delight, joy and entertainment.

wild. According to a recent article, when scientists look through a microscope they will see normal cells line up in order, like identical soldiers in orderly formation. Cancer resembles the helter-skelter action of a mob of disorderly soldiers. These cellular soldiers seem to be following the simultaneous but contradictory commands of many commanders. At the microscopic level, they deploy in chaotic array.

A permanently damaged cell -- biologists call it a

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Ananias And Sapphira



Winfred Clark

CHURCH DOES NOT MEAN THE CHURCH IS NOT THE CHURCH.

Yes, one could say that these were in the church. Yes, one could say that they sinned. Yes, one could say that what they did was wrong. Yes, such was condemned by the Lord. Yet, the church was still the church. It's divine origin, ordinances and organization were still intact. This is true in spite of the human element we may find within the church. One did not need to turn to the sects of that day just because of the human element. One did not need to compromise with the denominational world just because these two had gone wrong. There were still some folks that had not done what they did. The church was still there after they were dead and gone (Acts 5:11).

2. THOSE WHO SHOULD BE A BLESSING TO US CAN SOMETIMES BE A CURSE.

Wouldn't you say this was true in this case? Here is a husband and wife that should have been a great help to one another. They should have been a good influence on one another. But this is not the case. We find no indication that either was a

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

"The Truth Shall Make You Free"



David Wade

worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity'" (II Timothy 2:15-18).

Jesus declares that truth makes us free (John 8:32). However, he predicates freedom on our knowing the truth. "Ye shall KNOW the truth, and the truth shall make you free." This principle has application in every realm of life: spiritual, secular, scientific, legal, political, medical, or whatever. Truth in every realm leads to freedom. It is all the more important that we study God's record of spiritual truth, the Bible, in order that we, by it, may be made spiritually free.

The Bible is replete with examples of those who failed in this endeavor. The experiences of Paul in dealing with false teachers and their false ways graphically illustrates the bondage of falsehood. "This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme" (I Timothy 1:18-20).

Although Alexander fades from the scene, the evil work of Hymenaeus continues. Paul further charged Timothy: "Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a

As a servant of Jesus Christ, Paul had no choice but to confront the error expose it. To do anything less than this places "Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne" (James Russell Lowell). Paul further admonishes: "But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will" (II Timothy 2:23-26).

Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (II Timothy 4:2-5).

("The truth shall make you free.")

Things To Pray For In The Current Middle East Crisis

James F. Wyers

1. A SHORT WAR NOW THAT HOSTILITIES HAVE BEGUN. Any terrible event can be made better if it is shortened.

2. THE MILITARY PERSONNEL. These are the ones who pay the immediate price of war. May their training have been such as to give them every chance of survival and may their courage, will and faith see them through.

3. THE FAMILIES AT HOME. The anxiety of waiting is an overbearing burden. Not knowing from moment to moment of the safety of loved

ones can be devastating.

4. THE CIVILIANS & REFUGEES. Some of those who suffer most in war are the innocent ones. Homes are deprived of fathers, husbands, sons & daughters. Physical necessities and medical help is often lacking.

5. OUR LEADERS. Chances of peace always fare better with wise leaders in control. Give us compassionate leaders who fear God.

6. OUR ENEMIES. We are to love and pray for

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Things To Pray For In The Current Middle East Crisis

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our enemies. We can do this by praying for what is the best for them in spite of what they do to us.

7. THE FREEDOM OF OPPRESSED PEOPLE. Sovereign peoples have basic human rights. Also the gospel has greater chance of success where

Mutant Christians

Continued From Page 1

mutant -- functions as an unstoppable cookie cutter, stamping out copies of its defective self. When it has produced around a billion replicas, the mass is large enough to feel. When a tumor spreads, thousands of individual mutant cells or microscopic tumors lie hidden in the body. If the patient is to be saved, each one must be hunted down and killed.

Everything is well in the church when Christians acknowledge Christ as "the head of the body, the church" (Colossians 1:18), and under his leadership will line up in orderly formation and fulfill their responsibilities.

The trouble begins when we encounter a "mutant" Christian, a normal cell gone wild. Besides being abnormal, this mutant wants to stamp out copies of his defective self. Then the entire body life becomes threatened.

The trouble begins when we encounter a "mutant" Christian, a normal cell gone wild. Besides being abnormal, this mutant wants to stamp out copies of his defective self. Then the entire body life becomes threatened.

What should I do when I encounter a "mutant" Christian? Well, what does the Bible say?

Romans 16:17 "I appeal to you brethren, to take note of those who create dissensions and difficulties, in opposition to the doctrine which you have been taught; avoid them."

I Corinthians 5:11 ". . . I wrote to you not to associate with any one who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber -- not even to eat with such a one."

II Thessalonians 3:6 "Now we command you brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is living in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us."

If I hear the apostle correctly, he is saying, "Take note. Avoid them. Don't associate. Keep away!"

--Via Keynoter, P.O. Box 228, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203.

people are free.

8. THE WILL OF OUR PEOPLE TO "STAY THE COURSE" AND SEE IT THROUGH. If we begin a task but do not have the will to finish it the matter is always worse. Courage and faith help.

9. OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE GOSPEL IN MOSLEM COUNTRIES. With all its horror war has opened many doors in the past for the gospel. Christians, real Christians, always leave behind the seeds of a better tomorrow.

10. OUR NATION WILL RESOLVE TO DRAW CLOSER TO THE ONLY SOURCE OF TRUE HELP - GOD. Often one only comes to realize true values in times of difficulty.

"The Preacher And His Preaching"



Dan Winkler

Watching a circus clown release helium-filled balloons in the sky, a little black boy asked, "Mister clown, if you let that black balloon go, would it fly as high as those other colored balloons?" The clown replied, "Oh yes son, it is not the color of the balloon but what is on the inside that deter-

mines how high it flies!"

The same is true with our lives as preachers and our efforts of preaching. What is on the inside, the content of our lessons and the disposition of our hearts, determines how high we fly and how productive we can be for the Lord.

Such being true, let's consider two passages of scripture which address our lives as preachers and our efforts of preaching.

I. II Timothy 4:2 -

The "Content" Of Our Preaching
Preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and teaching.

(1) Our preaching must be Bible-saturated! We are to "preach the word." Placing this phrase back into context (II Timothy 3:15-4:2), we have reference to what Paul meant by "the word."

First, preaching the word will give attention to the Old Testament, the "sacred writings," as Paul described it to Timothy (II Timothy 3:15). Are we not told that the Old Testament has written for our learning (Romans 15:4) and admonition (I Corinthians 10:11)?

Second, preaching the word will also give attention to the New Testament as implied by Paul's reference to "all scripture" (II Timothy 3:16). We must never lose sight of the gospel as God's power unto salvation (Romans 1:16; cf. I Corinthians 15:1).

Said the scientist to a Christian, "Why do you use the Bible? You don't know the men who wrote it and, it's been around so long?" Said the Christian to the scientist, "Why do you still use the multi-

11. THE EMERGENCE OF A WORLD THAT WILL BE BETTER FOR ALL. May it have more respect for law and freedom and the rights of others. That our world may learn how to handle its problems without war.

12. THAT GOD'S WILL BE DONE. God's will always, ultimately, prevails. Daniel said, "The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men" (Daniel 4:17). Let us learn to be submissive to God's will . . . whatever it may be.

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

plication tables? You don't know who came up with them and, they have also been around so long?" The scientist replied, "I use the multiplication tables because they still work." Said the Christian to the scientist, "And that is why I use my Bible -- it still works!"

Even so, our preaching must flow from and pulsate with the word of God (Matthew 4:4; 28:19; I Peter 4:11).

(2) Our preaching must be balanced! It must be

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Ananias And Sapphira

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deterrent to the other in sin. If one of these had been stronger, what a blessing that would have been. Both of these might have been saved from the awful fate that was theirs.

3. PEOPLE MAY WANT HONOR WITHOUT PAYING THE PRICE.

Yes, the thing that motivated them to give may have been what Barnabas gave. That would surely be admired by all who had occasion to know about it. If they are seeking the respect Barnabas enjoyed, then they are going to have to pay the price that Barnabas would pay. He would give all the money obtained from the sale. Yes, they would have kept a part as long as they did not represent it as being all. They wanted what Barnabas had without this.

People will invest a lifetime of honor and virtuous conduct into a life. This will cause them to be respected by those who know them best. This is often wanted by others but who are not willing to live such lives. Such respect can never be enjoyed for they are not willing to live those kinds of lives.

This man and his wife teach us many lessons that could help us to be better and help us appreciate the church more and more each day that we live.

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

"The Preacher And His Preaching"

Continued From Page 3

balanced in at least two ways.

First, the "message" we present must be balanced in that we are to "reprove, rebuke, exhort." Sometimes we will need to convict ["reprove"]; sometimes we will need to warn ["rebuke"]; and sometimes we will need to strengthen ["exhort"] those to whom we minister the word.

Second, the "manner" of our presentation must also bear the thumbprint of balance in that we are to preach with "all longsuffering and teaching/doctrine." If anybody needs to be "patient" it is a gospel preacher. Bear in mind, he steps into an area where people have lived all their lives. Concepts have been formed from preachers past, situations past, and parochial emphases. Such concepts will not change overnight. A balanced minister of the word will keep in mind the words, "By reason of time, ye ought to be" (Hebrews 5:11). At the same time, the faithful gospel preacher will never forsake "precept," and compromise the truth under sphere of patience and compassion.

When the tire of a car is out of balance, it makes for a bumpy road. Even so, when the message of our pulpits are out of balance, or when our efforts of preaching are out of balance, such makes for a bumpy road, not only for ourselves, but for those with whom we work.

When the tire of a car is out of balance, it makes for a bumpy road. Even so, when the message of our pulpits are out of balance, or when our efforts of preaching are out of balance, such makes for a bumpy road, not only for ourselves, but for those with whom we work.

Perhaps the example of Paul with Ephesians will help us develop and maintain this balance. He preached "collectively," in that he declared the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). He preached "protectively," in that he warned the elders of forthcoming false teachers (Acts 20:28-31). Too, he preached "constructively," in that he directed his listeners' attention to the word of grace which was able to build them up (Acts 20:32).

II. II Corinthians 2:4 -

"The Character" Of Our Lives As Preachers

For out of much affliction and anguish of heart

I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be made sorry, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

(1) As preachers of the gospel, we must be men of "conviction!" The background for this passage above, is Paul's first Corinthian epistle, an epistle in which he frequently chastised his brethren for

their carnality.

Though he wrote with "much affliction," he still wrote. He did not overlook their ways, excuse their ungodliness, nor compromise the truth they should have been obeying. Such is especially apparent in his scathing rebuke of the brethren for extending their fellowship to a man living in blatant fornication (I Corinthians 5). This faithful minister of the Lord was a man of deep conviction, bold enough to correct those in need of such.

Archimedes, a third century Greek mathematician, is reported to have said, "Give me a place to stand, and I will move the world." Mark it down, as preachers of the gospel we will either move the world -- or we will be moved by the world! We will either be a people who stand for something -- or we will fall for everything!

Mark it down, as preachers of the gospel we will either move the world -- or we will be moved by the world! We will either be a people who stand for something -- or we will fall for everything!

Let us, therefore, "be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might" (Ephesians 6:10; cf. I Corinthians 16:13; Philippians 1:27; Jude 3).

(2) As preachers of the gospel, we must also be men of "compassion!" In rebuking his brethren of Corinth for their carnality, Paul did so with "anguish of heart" and "with many tears." His was not a calloused quill of malice. He did not hide behind the cloak of "hard preaching" only to scourge his brethren with a poisoned pen!

Interestingly, his efforts successfully turned the Corinthian church around (II Corinthians 7:8-11). Is it not true that he made them "sorry after a godly sort" (II Corinthians 7:9), because he addressed them with a heart of sorrow and compassion? Yea, contrition on the part of the Corinthians was spawned by compassion on the part of Paul!

We need to learn from that little girl's prayer when she said, "Lord, help all the bad people be good, and help all the good people be nice!"

As we attempt to bridge the gap between the word of God and the heart of man, others must see us as individuals "speaking truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15). In working with others, like Paul, we must be "gentle . . . as when a nurse cherishes her own children" and "as a father with his own children, exhorting . . . and encouraging . . . and testifying" (I Thessalonians 2:7, 11).

Conclusion

Two observations can serve to revolutionize our preaching.

(1) First, we must remember that we preach in the sight of God (I Timothy 4:1). Envision God sitting on the front seat of the auditorium where you preach, with Jesus at his right hand. Both sit there with a Bible in their laps and a paper and pen in

their hands, ready to take notes on what you have to say. Such a thought will encourage us to be sure we have something to say and will season what we say with a spirit of gentleness.

(2) Second, we must remember that the future of the church where we preach could be determined largely by our preaching (I Timothy 4:3, 4).

NOTE: If where you are preaching you have found a solid foundation placed there by the great efforts of preachers past, thank God for their work! On the other hand, if where you are preaching you are having to fill in a sinkhole because of the imbalanced or shallow efforts of men in the past, pray to God that you will not be as they!

Remember, it is not the outward trappings but what is on the inside [the "content" of our lessons and the "character" of our hearts] that determines how high we fly!

--2159 Beltline Road, Decatur, AL 35601.

Bulgarian New Testament Translation

(Fort Worth, Texas) World Bible Translation Center has begun a Bulgarian New Testament translation. "Other translation work started in December and we should finish the entire project and have it ready to print in 1991," said Ervin Bishop, Vice President for Translations.

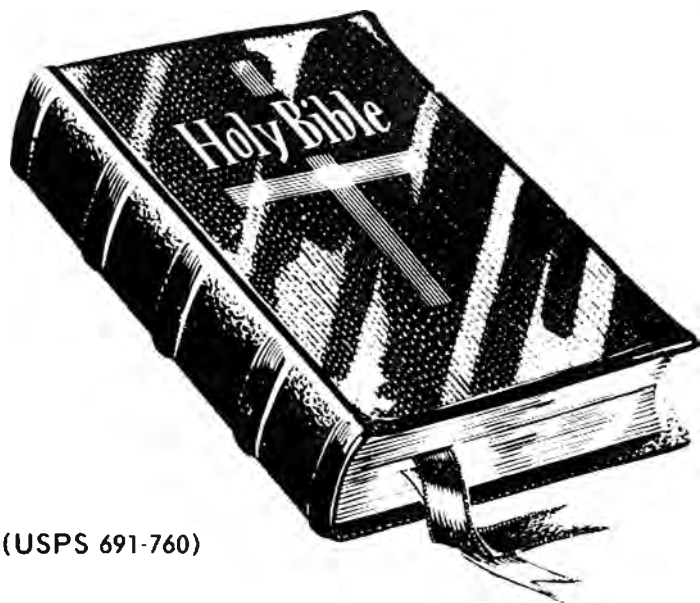
"There's a desperate need for an easily-understood translation in modern Bulgarian," said Bishop. "Bulgaria is a very neglected area in Christian outreach."

Bishop recalled a conversation he had with one very active Christian lady in Bulgaria. Talking about the need for the new translation, she said, "I can hardly wait! It's so frustrating to give an unbeliever a Bible and then have to apologize for the language in it. I tell them to try to look beyond the archaic style and get the message that is still so relevant, but I know many of them don't. They think Christianity is outdated because their Bible is!"

The translation project is currently underway in Sofia, the capital city of Bulgaria. Right now, two native translators are producing the first draft and entering it on a MacIntosh computer. A back-translator and an editor are in place to help ensure the accuracy and readability of the translation.

"We're excited to be able to get further involved in the Eastern bloc countries and take advantage of the tremendous open door God has put before us," said Bishop.

World Bible Translation Center is dedicated to providing accurate, easily-understood Scripture translations in languages throughout the world. The Center has produced the first modern Russian New Testament translation and printed 475,000 copies. More than 250,000 of the Russian New Testaments are enroute to the Soviet Union to be given away to schoolchildren in March. The Center's English translation, The Easy-to-Read Version, serves as the base text for the International Children's Bible and the Everyday Bible.



Words Of T

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

—Acts 26:25

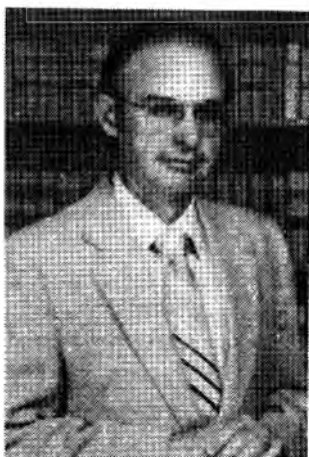
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VOLUME 27

MARCH 8, 1991

NUMBER 10

An Amazing Story From The Saudi Desert!



Martel Pace

ed to be baptized. They approached the chaplain,

A letter from a soldier deployed in Saudi Arabia to the church in Stillwater, OK was reported in a recent AMEN NEWS. He started a church meeting that has grown from 6 to 30. A corpsman from North Carolina became intrigued with the Bible, sought more information and then wanted

waking him at 11:00 p.m. He informed them that would be illegal in Arabia. The soldiers would not take "No" for an answer. They borrowed a truck and set off to find a suitable body of water in the nearby desert city. Guess what they found? A fountain in front of a Moslem mosque lit by brilliant lights! It was there the young man was united with Christ in baptism (Galatians 3:26-27). "the irony of using Muhammad's temple to Christ's glory was reminiscent of Gideon's burning the altar of Baal and the pole of Asherah to make sacrifices to God." Surely Christ reigns in Saudi Arabia as well as in the whole world!

--Via The Ambassador, University Church of Christ, Tuscaloosa, Al 35401.

They borrowed a truck and set off to find a suitable body of water in the nearby desert city. Guess what they found? A fountain in front of a Moslem mosque lit by brilliant lights! It was there the young man was united with Christ in baptism.

Your Life Will Soon Be Gone



Bobby Key

young yet, with many good years ahead of you. Therefore, you protest that I must be talking to some older, inoperable cancer patient. No! I am talking about you. You only have a few months to live. If you should make it to your eightieth birthday, you would only have 960 months! Stop now and think just how fast a month zips by -- we just finish paying our bills at the beginning of the month and they are due again -- another month has gone -- another -- year -- death is ever coming closer and closer to your doorstep.

How long do you expect to live? Regardless of your answer you know that every day brings you closer to eternity. "The living know they shall die." You only have a few months to live. Does this statement seem strange to you? After all, you have good health and strength -- you are

Joy is often turned into mourning in a moment of time. Houses decay, nations are swept away, and the grave claims our friends daily. There is just nothing permanent about life.

My friend, time is the enemy of life. You may escape serious injury and disease; however, there is certainly no guarantee that you will be around to celebrate Labor Day. Each tick of the clock brings you closer to eternity. The truth of the matter is that nothing earthly survives for long. Generations come and go. We may be quite happy and secure one minute and scared to death the next. Joy is often turned into mourning in a moment of time. Houses decay, nations are swept away, and the grave claims our friends daily. There is just nothing permanent about life.

In this little span called life none of us can stand

still. We must move on toward the valley and shadow of death. All history is moving on -- your life is moving on to give place to another. We are moving to that point at which God shall judge the world. We have two appointments death and the judgment. "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after that the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). We will all be there. What a day that will be!

If you have been aimlessly drifting through life, expecting to live forever, don't you think you should be giving serious consideration to death and eternity? Take a good long look at yourself and then get up and get busy serving the Lord.

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

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David Wade Editor

Joe T. Spivy, Sr. Associate Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

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What Makes A Hero

John Smith

In 1860, at a small army post in an insignificant, rural, coastal town named Los Angeles, a party was given to allow the officers who were resigning their commissions a chance to say farewell. The war between the states was eminent and men who were torn in their loyalties were forced to decide on which side they would fight. Many who chose to fight for the Confederacy were close friends and classmates of those who fought for the Union. Such was the case of Captain Lewis Armistead and Captain Winfield Scott Hancock. They had attended the academy together, been roommates, each other's best man and lifelong friends. At the end of the party, Armistead gripped the hand of his friend and then embraced him. As both men wept, he said, "Hancock, you will never know what this is costing me, but goodbye -- goodbye." For three years the fortunes of war separated them, each man made General, but they never corresponded.

In July of 1863, they met again at another insignificant Pennsylvania town called Gettysburg. Hancock was in charge of the Union line on Cemetery Ridge around a now famous landmark called, "the little clump of trees." Pickett's heroic charge up Cemetery Ridge was in progress and at the point of that charge was General Lewis Armistead. He had his felt hat pinioned on the tip of his sword and he waved it so his men could always see where he was.

As Armistead's men reached the Union line, Hancock fell, mortally wounded. A moment later, Armistead reached a battery in the center of Hancock's line. He placed his hand on one of the

Continued On Page 3



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

"The Fog Of Peace"



David Wade

its deep rooted, long standing problems, peace is virtually impossible. Presently, the hostilities are suspended, and yet, two major religious factions are battling for the control of Iraq with much additional bloodshed. I am reminded of Jeremiah's lament, "Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14).

The solution to the problem is the one thing none of the major players are ready to accept. Jesus is the answer, the only answer, for a war-torn world. Jesus said to his followers, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John 14:27). He is, indeed, "The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

Not only do we receive peace with God, and

Now that much of the "fog of war" has evaporated in the Middle East, we are confronted with the "fog of peace." Incredibly, some seem to think that there can be dialogue among Arabs, Israelis, and Palestinians that will result in lasting peace. However, given the history of that area with

inner peace when we become Christians, but we also espouse the principles of Christ that facilitate peace among men (Romans 12:18; 14:19). The writer of Hebrews urges, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

As long as their eyes are closed and ears are shut to the message of Jesus, then there is no hope for peace. Isaiah, well stated the problem in his day, "The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace" (Isaiah 59:8).

Obviously, we need to intensify our efforts to take the gospel of Christ to this part of the world. It is a task that is both difficult and dangerous. Some of the governments consider it a criminal act for Christians to try to convert their people. Therefore, it is not a task for the untested and faint hearted.

Nevertheless, our marching orders remain, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Until this task is accomplished, we shall continue to hear of "wars and rumors of wars" (Matthew 24:6). At present, the only date we can be assured of when the fighting will end in the Middle East, is when Jesus comes.

"Young People In The Wrong Crowd"

Mack Wayne Craig

"I got in with the wrong crowd," may be an effort to explain away our personal responsibility for our sins -- or may express the situation accurately.

What you are is the main factor in determining the kind of friends you have. If the crowd is wrong, it is also true that you must have already been wrong to become involved with such people.

It may be that you began a friendship with a group whom you did not know well. HOW CAN YOU TELL IF A GROUP IS THE WRONG CROWD?

1. **One of the first indications can be found in the things they think are funny.** If their idea of humor is a dirty joke or being discourteous to older people, it is a sure sign that we are in with the "wrong crowd." It is dangerous also when humor is turned to destructive activities. There is nothing really funny about destroying property or reputations.

2. **The "wrong crowd" is marked also by impure speech.** "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth . . ." (Ephesians 4:29). Some of us would not think of violating this command ourselves but will tolerate the worst kind of language from our "friends."

3. **Lack of reverence and respect for worship and Bible class teachers.** This is another characteristic of the "wrong crowd." Do your "friends" encourage you to be reverent, courteous, respectful and faithful in worship and Bible class? Does your crowd speak lightly of going to worship and class regularly?

4. **A sloppy, froopy, dare-devil, reckless spirit** is always found in the "wrong crowd." There is little respect for dignity of behavior, or even for good manners. In the "wrong crowd" every effort is made to impress others with the fact that there are persons that will do as they like, regardless of others, right or wrong.

5. **Your friends are the "wrong crowd" if they make it harder for you to be what God wants you be.** Do you find your interest in spiritual things decreasing when with them? If so, DO something about it NOW! Surround yourself with Christian friends and allow their encouragement to bless you. Don't wait till you get so deeply involved that all you can do is blame the "wrong crowd" for disaster in your life. Decide NOW!

--Via Bulletin, Central Church of Christ, Victoria, TX.

What Makes A Hero

Continued From Page 2

cannons and raised his sword in jubilation at what his men had accomplished. As he waved, he was shot. He lived just long enough to whisper to the officers who rushed to his aid, "give my love to General Hancock." They died within fifty feet of each other, on Cemetery Ridge.

In the midst of all the insanity there is something remarkable, something redeeming about man. If I asked you what was Lewis Armistead's finest moment, how would you respond? Does the picture of his courageous charge up Cemetery Ridge, rallying his men with his hat pinned on his sword, capture your imagination?

It seems to me that what is redemptive in him is his loyalty to his friend, his passionate parting and his perception of that relationship. It is precisely in those areas that we see the divine touch. Any dog can fight. Why should a human be idolized for what is base -- primitive in our nature. What we do by instinct is of little credit to us. We do not hand out awards for chewing and digesting.

Who are your heroes? What in their lives is worth imagination? Is the ability to put a leather ball through an iron ring so outstanding a quality that it should produce emulation of the person's value system? Do our hero's change with the seasons? Are they the faces that appear in the media?

Who are your heroes? What in their lives is worth imitation? Is the ability to put a leather ball through an iron ring so outstanding a quality that it should produce emulation of the person's value system? Do our hero's change with the seasons? Are they the faces that appear in the media?

Is Jesus a hero or a loser? Is "lamb of God" a descriptive phrase you would like used in reference to yourself? Do you want to be like that?

This is meaningful to me. Jesus could have been famous -- I mean in the same way people are today. He could have jumped off the temple -- making Evel Kneivle look like a freshman gold fish swallower. He could have scored a thousand points in a basketball game, stolen the ball every time, jumped in the air, turned a double back flip, three somersaults, balanced on his big toe and then slammed it through the net so hard that it would have crystallized the ring into glass and scorched the net. He could have scored a touchdown every time, won Wimbledon left handed, the U.S. Open right handed and the French Open without a racquet.

But he didn't! Because He chose not to!

He said that kindness was more important than self-actualization and that man could not live by

bread alone. He said that loving your neighbor was more important than loving yourself and that loving your life was the road to nowhere. He said that the cross was the greatest victory of His life and that doing God's will was more significant

"What Will This Babblers Say?"



Glenn A. Posey

(Acts 17:21). What a way of life. The gossip column in the Athens News must have been big. The Athenians had elephant cars and wagon tongues.

It's clear from the text in Acts 17, that this was not a jury sitting in judgment of a prisoner, but a company of citizens of Athens wishing to know what new and strange doctrine Paul was preaching (Acts 17:18-20). So, they were willing to give Paul an audience of curious ears.

When anyone assumes the attitude of these Athenians, he may expect to gain nothing from preaching. "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (I Peter 5:5). The disciple who brings nothing better than an "Athenian spirit"

When the apostle Paul arrived in the city of Athens, he encountered a group of philosophers of the Epicureans and Stoics, who asked this question, "What will this babblers say?" (Acts 17:16-21).

The Athenians spent their "time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing"

than doing his own.

We have a hard time believing it. Who are your heroes?

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

when he comes to sit at the feet of God's preacher will go away empty. If he does not get his ears tickled, his heart will not be receptive to the message, even though it may be the truth (Acts 17:32, 33).

The disciple who brings nothing better than an "Athenian spirit" when he comes to sit at the feet of God's preacher will go away empty.

Jesus said, "Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6). What is the character and attitude of which Jesus speaks? Is it not they who are seeking to be "filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Colossians 1:9). Is it not this attitude that receives a blessing upon hearing the poorest of orators. Why? Because he comes to hear God's truth.

Jesus said, "But what went ye out for to see?" (Matthew 11:7). Do we go to hear the man or the message?

--9th St. and 7th Ave. S.E., Cullman, AL 35055.

Parents, Please Read!

Joe Barnett

There's trouble in the land. No wide-awake person will deny that! These upheavals have caused many parents to express apprehension concerning the future of their children. That's understandable! When our children graduate from high school and leave home, many of them also leave the church. Suddenly, they are exposed to an environment hostile to Christ, and even to the basic principles of morality. If a young person is not equipped to handle this, he is in grave trouble.

Unfortunately, at a time when families should be doing everything in their power to "beef up" their spiritual defenses and intensifying their fight against Satan, many are permitting the safeguard to be torn down. Neglect of Sunday evening services, absence from prayer meeting, and failure to encourage children to become totally involved in church-centered activities are some of the more obvious evidences of this foolish neglect.

Parents need to get their priorities straight. Those of us who preach seldom have the courage to remind weeping parents of the problem. But when dads and moms begin crying over what has happened to their kids, they could be reminded of the days when they chose camping instead of

worship, week-end trips instead of week-end training, and Sunday night recreation instead of Sunday night inspiration.

It only takes one hole in the fence to let the sheep out.

It only takes one hole in the fence to let the sheep out. It's amazing how prolific some people are at inventing new excuses to rationalize their habitual neglect. I would much prefer a person to be honest enough to say, "I just don't want to" than to forever blame job, health, grandma, or baby. What advantage is there in covering up the real facts in the case? That only adds to sin! Parents, give your kids a break! Put first things first! Let nothing interfere with regular church attendance. Be sure they are deeply involved in our youth programs. Then, after they've gone from home with that good training, you can do what you want with your own life. And I have a feeling by that time you'll be thrilled with putting spiritual things first, and will make it a lifetime policy.

--Via Bulletin, Sharpe Church of Christ, Benton, Ky 42025.

Make It The Real Thing

Curt Sparks

I guess I heard it first on the radio. It came then on the national news on TV. Then I saw it in the newspaper. It was everywhere! What was? . . . the news that Milli Vanilli were fakes! The singing duo had just been honored with a Grammy for Best New Artists last year, but now have to give it back. They confessed that they did not really sing the songs, but rather were lip-synchers! They didn't sing a note on their album which sold 7 million copies. And what is even more amazing to me, they lip-synched their way through live performances.

Their fans are mad! When the news was made public, the fans went wild. Television showed a mass of records, tapes and CD's being run over by

The fans felt duped. They felt cheated! And who could really blame them? They loved the music, memorized the lyrics and hummed along with the songs of their heroes, only to find out their heroes were fakes!

a steamroller in protest. The fans felt duped. They felt cheated! And who could really blame them? They loved the music, memorized the lyrics and hummed along with the songs of their heroes, only to find out their heroes were fakes!

We don't like fakes, do we? We want the real thing, the genuine! If we pay for a real gold necklace, we want it to be real gold, not some imitation with gold coloring. If we invest in the lives of others thinking them to be true friends, we feel deceived if their colors turn and they forsake us. Who likes being around the hypocrite who's boasting and pretentiousness are nauseous to the one who really sees through the veneer? I know I don't! I want the person to be genuine, to be real!

Isn't it funny, though, that we don't always make that transfer over to the spiritual realm? You see, lip synching in the religious realm is not only practiced by many, but is an acceptable practice in many circles. You know what I mean: saying spiritual things in spiritual words, looking the part, being around the right spiritual people when the occasion calls for it, being at the right worship services and devotionals when the need arises. But all the while, it's still just lip-synching! Peel the facade off, and there's nothing there. The heart is left untouched and unconverted.

We may be tempted to think we've discovered new and novel ways to lip-synch the religious life, but we haven't. Jesus had to deal with the same kind of people, . . . "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites: as it is written: 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me'" (Mark 7:6). Religious lip-synchers . . . that's what they were. They've been around since the beginning of time.

Who likes being around the hypocrite who's boasting and pretentiousness are nauseous to the one who really sees through the veneer?

I have a holy passion! That passion is to be the genuine thing, to have at the core of my being the deep inner commitment to the Lord that makes Him master over all of my life. No more lip-synching the words. No more playing the "religious games." But rather, authentic conversion of the heart!

How about you?

--Via Attalla Advocate, 503 Hughes Ave., Attalla, AL 35954.

Let Us Ask Not, "What Must We Give?" But, "What Can We Give?"



Edsel Burleson

Many years ago brother Cleon Lyles wrote: "I have never known a person who learned to be liberal and was not happy that he learned this secret of happiness. Many times I have had people who complained when they were first taught about liberality, but returned to express

their thanks for having been taught. The needs of the Lord's work are many but beyond that is the need in the life of the person who gives. He needs to give because his happiness both here and hereafter depends on it. Learn the truth in the Lord's statement, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts 20:35). I challenge you to learn it by **DOING WHAT HE SAID!**"

Just suppose the Lord should take the amount of my giving on a Lord's day, multiply that by ten, and make that my income for the next week? How much would I make? If one gave a dollar, the Lord would give only \$10 for the next week's work. If one gave \$5 then the salary would be \$50. But how many of us would be satisfied? And how many of us could live on our present level if we got from the Lord as we give to Him for His work? Only one week of such poor prospering would convince

anyone that poor giving to the Lord's work must stop -- and quick! We must all give back to the Lord as we have been prospered.

The church which is asked to give often -- and to the limit -- is the church that maintains a fresh spiritual life. "Taking as little as possible" will dry up a church as quickly as it will a cow.

The Selma Avenue Bulletin carried a story of a boy who grew up in a large city. He received a good education and decided to enter the ministry. His work began with a rural congregation where a farmer had pity on his family and brought them a milk cow with feed enough to care for her. Having learned to milk, the new preacher was happy to have milk for his family.

But in a short time he reported to the farmer, "I don't know what is the matter with the cow; she is all dried up. I can't get any milk. I have kept up the feeding as you told me; I have been just as good to her as I know how to be. I have taken only what milk we needed, a pint now, a quart next time." The preacher needed to know that the only way to keep a cow fresh is to milk her often and dry.

The church which is asked to give often -- and to the limit -- is the church that maintains a fresh spiritual life. "Taking as little as possible" will dry up a church as quickly as it will a cow.

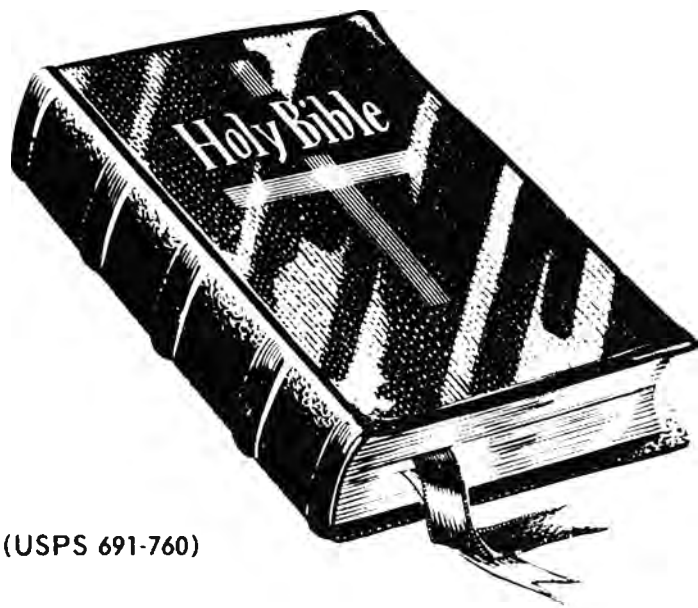
--1569 Berry Road, Birmingham, AL 35226.

The Truth Hurts

A noted psychologist was asked to give reasons why so many people fail to make life successful. He gave these. We will be miserable if we are guilty of:

1. Finding fault with others, but never seeing our own.
2. Doing as little as possible and trying to get as much as possible for doing it.
3. Spending much time in showing up the other fellow's weak points, and too little time correcting our own.
4. Slandering those we do not like.
5. Procrastination . . . putting off until tomorrow what should have been done day before yesterday.
6. Deceit . . . talking friendly to the other fellow's face and stabbing him in the back as he turns.
7. False belief that we are smart enough to reap a harvest of pay before sowing a crop of service.
8. Disloyalty to those who have trusted us.
9. Egotism . . . the belief that we know it all, and no man can tell us anything.

via Northwest Church of Christ
Houston, TX



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Words Of Truth

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—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 27

MARCH 15, 1991

NUMBER 11

Boring?



Betty Burton Choate

Sometimes today people make statements like, "I just can't enjoy reading the Bible. I've read it so much, it's a boring thing." Or, "Christianity is a boring religion." Or, "I get so bored with the worship services. There's nothing interesting and fresh about them."

Probably, in all honesty, these thoughts are not new. Every generation surely must have had its own people who felt bored and for whom boredom closed the doors to spiritual growth. The difference is that in the past when people had those thoughts they were ashamed of them, knowing that there was some fault within their own attitude and understanding or they wouldn't have felt that way. So they usually kept their thinking to themselves, their own guilty secret.

Today, though, the boredom is expressed as a charge, not against self, but against Christianity. If people find the Bible to be boring, the implication is that the Bible is at fault. Christianity is pronounced a boring religion because it fails to meet the needs of today's society. Worship is boring because it is formal and ritualistic.

How sad it is that we have grown subconsciously so secure in our confidence in our own thinking and intellect that we question and find fault with God's work rather than with ourselves when it seems that something somewhere is not measuring up to the needed standard? Is this not the epitome of egoism?

Is God's word boring? Not if we have cultivated (and cultivation is something we do ourselves, by choice) a hunger for it; not if it is His living word in our hearts instead of a dead letter; not if we love the daily guidance we receive from it.

Is Christianity a boring religion? Does it have no relevance in today's world in a western culture?

We need to understand that Christianity doesn't draw from the world around it, and its relevancy doesn't depend on the culture in which it exists. Christianity is a way of life designed by the God of heaven to fill all the needs of all men in all cultures for all time and to lift them above their human cultures. Christianity is as relevant as its adherents will allow it to be in their individual lives.

We need to understand that Christianity doesn't draw from the world around it, and its relevancy doesn't depend on the culture in which it exists. Christianity is a way of life designed by the God of heaven to fill all the needs of all men in all cultures for all time and to lift them above their human cultures.

Is worship boring and ritualistic? Worship is adoration of God, not entertainment of humans. It was planned by God according to His own wisdom so if there is any lacking, it is in us and not in the plan.

God knew that there is strength in fellowship so he asked His family to gather regularly so that we should be continually aware of each other's needs and would be moved by our love to help each other.

But worship is more than just gathering together. And it is a much more involved and profound thing than just conforming to a ritual.

First: Worship is adoration and exaltation of God. The whole group is to be involved, but the act of worshipping is a very individual thing. That is why those who participate fully go home spiritually invigorated by the experience while those who

participated absentmindedly or were primarily spectators find worship "boring." There is no "middle ground": either we put our souls into it as God intended or it will accomplish nothing for us.

Second: Worship is a teaching and strengthening process. The hymns and the studies, the sharing of spiritual thought and growth, are all meant to edify the body. Again, God showed His wisdom in His plan. He knew that men would gain more from reaching out to others to help them grow than from concentrating entirely on their personal needs. So worship should, and must be, a time of giving and receiving, of "teaching and admonishing one another," if it is to be effective.

Third: Worship is a weekly renewal of our commitment to the death of Christ and to the new life we have in Him. How often Christians fail in their awareness of this part of worship! If a sincere searching of the heart and soul is made each week, followed by a fresh avowal of giving of one's entire self to God, how could such a time of consecration ever be labeled "boring"?

Everything about the Christian way of life is as new and vital as the "new" of a new day, because it is a living relationship between a living soul and his living God. To allow it to sink to the level of boredom must surely be one of the deepest hurts we could inflict on our Father and His Son.

--Route 2, Box 156, Winona, MS 38967.

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Spirituality Or Stimulation



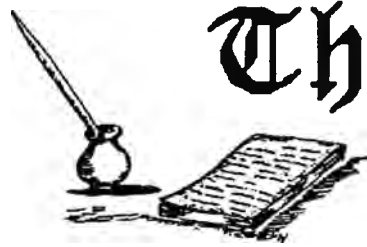
W. T. Hamilton
1921-1986

There is a recurring request from some, especially young people, to change the order of worship on the Lord's Day. That usually is based on a plea that to change the routine would make the services more "spiritual," or less "dry."

Be it clearly understood that I do not believe any particular order of services is exclusively scriptural. And count me in the number who thinks an occasional change is refreshing and enjoyable. And also I want to be in the number who favors any change which improves. But to say that the same routine decreases spirituality, or causes dryness shows some fuzzy thinking.

During childhood we remember some routines which were tiring and often boring. As a little boy, I never did enjoy washing my hands, or having my ears washed. Any change in routine was welcomed. Any delay was more than welcomed! I secretly hoped someone would build a detour around that task! The trouble was not the water -- or the soap. It was with me! There were more exciting things to do! After all, any little boy will tell you it is more fun to catch a toad or to chase

Continued On Page 3



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

"Shall We Dance?"



David Wade

Junior-Senior proms are just around the corner and many young people, including some Christians, are making their plans for the "big event." In a recent newspaper article the local prom is billed as "The Night That's Supposed To Be Perfect." The person interviewed says, "It's like a wedding in that it's a once-in-a-lifetime thing. . . . It's a party, it's a fun time. Next to graduation, it's the culmination of the school year The primary thing about prom is to have a good time, but act sensibly. For some of them, it's their first adult thing, so they should act like adults!!

You might know I'm opposed to the modern dance. And I'm opposed to it, not merely because "that's the way I was brought up," or "I'm an old

fogey." I'm opposed to the dance because it is worldly, sensual, and devilish. The dance is condemned in Galatians 5:19-21 under the term "revelling." The Liddell Scott Greek Lexicon affirms a close connection between revellings "with music and dancing." The American College Dictionary defines the term, "An occasion of merry making or noisy festivity with dancing, etc."

I have never known of anything good upright and spiritually uplifting as the result of the dance. I have never heard of anyone who claimed to "take the Lord" with them to the dance. Quite the opposite is true. Dances have a way of drawing the basest of people. The immoral love the dance and frequent them. How can Christians "abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:22), and embrace dancing? The works of the flesh; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness (lustful desires), even drunkenness are often by-products of the dance (Galatians 5:19-21).

I had rather see our children waddle into heaven than to dance gracefully into hell.

The Ground War



John Gipson

I admit it. I'm impressed with modern technology. Those of us who have been watching the Persian Gulf have marvelled at the effectiveness of AWACS, Patriot missiles, smart bombs, cruise missiles and all of the other little surprises we carry in our suitcase. This has truly been a war unlike any other. Through technology we can fight in the dark and pinpoint targets miles and miles away. We can locate and destroy tanks when they are buried in the sand. We can trace a Scud missile back to where it came from and destroy the launcher which sent it forth. We fire explosive devices which can read a map and turn corners inside a bunker. It's truly a new day in warfare.

But for all of our technical sophistication and bombardment, we eventually have to turn back to the ground war and foot soldiers to accomplish the task before us.

I may be wrong, but I think there is a lesson here for the church. After we have used newspapers, radio, television, computer systems, automatic telephoning devices, videos, talking bulletin boards, large rallies, laser printers, and all of the rest, we are still going to have to bring in the foot soldiers to fight the ground war.

We take notice of some people only when they

are missing. Newspaper boys and girls are nonentities until they are late with deliveries. Moms are taken for granted until dinner is late. Churches are ignored until they go out of business and decadence prevails in a community.

After we have used newspapers, radio, television, computer systems, automatic telephoning devices, videos, talking bulletin boards, large rallies, laser printers, and all of the rest, we are still going to have to bring in the foot soldiers to fight the ground war.

Let's hear it for the foot soldier! Courageous Daniels and Danielles, who wrestle young lions in Bible Classes. Andrews who drive buses and vans to bring folks to Jesus. Pheobes who put out church bulletins and check rolls. Marthas who prepare meals. Barnabases who give generously of what they have. Lukes who minister to the sick.

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The Allied Forces, Like The First Century Christians, Were Adhesive



Cecil Corkren

They stuck together and held fast adhering to the apostles doctrine (Acts 2:42). The examples of adhesiveness accounted for their phenomenal success in preaching the gospel to the whole world in that century (Colossians 1:23). Many times Christians are not sticking together, and that causes infidelity (John 17:20-21). Christianity today reminds me of story I once heard, "Once upon a time there was a man who could not swim who was asked by a sailor to go fishing. He caught an enormous fish and in his excitement to land it, fell overboard. He cried out, "Help save me!" The sailor very calmly reached out, grasped the man's arm, the arm came off! The man continued to kick and splash around, crying out to be rescued. The sailor reached out again. This time he grabbed a leg and gave a tremendous pull . . . and the leg came off because it was a wooden leg. The man in the water went under again and came up yelling for help. The sailor maintained his calm, grabbed the man by the hair of his head and gave a pull. The man was wearing a toupee . . . and it came off. The man in the water continued to call for help but the sailor turned in disgust and said, "How can I help you if you won't stick together!"

The first century Christians were adhesive and stuck together. They took seriously the prayer of Jesus when he said, "That they all may be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21). We read that "All

that believed were TOGETHER, and had all things common" (Acts 2:44). In order to have adhesiveness among Christians today we must follow the examples of how they were united in the early church. They all spoke the same message (I Corinthians 1:10-13). They walked by the same rule (Philippians 3:16). When we follow their examples we will be "Striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27). "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul" (Acts 4:32). "They were all with one accord in Solomon's porch" (Acts 5:12). Paul admonished the church at Corinth to be adhesive when he said, "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you" (II Corinthians 13:11). The apostle Peter joins Paul in almost the same words, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous (tender-hearted, humble-minded)" (I Peter 3:8).

If there is one lesson Christians should learn from the recent Gulf War in the Middle East, that there was a noticeable adhesiveness which we witnessed daily from our TV sets. They cooperated with each other in bringing freedom to Kuwait. When all the allied forces worked together it was clear there was unity of purpose. They had to have one commander-in-chief or there would have been total chaos. We have the British, French, Germans, Arabs, Italians, Canadians and many others to thank for their obvious cooperation in this great crisis!

Christians are soldiers of Christ, and we have our marching orders. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 15:15-16). When Christians stick together and cooperate with each other, we are able to "Contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints"

(Jude 3). True Christians have their Commander-in-Chief the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone has been given "All authority in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). Why not carry the banner of Christ to victory by "Being of one heart and one soul" as were the first century Christians who were adhesive and pulled together in a much greater cause than winning a carnal war which only frees men physically and politically. Paul said, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on ETERNAL LIFE" (I Timothy 6:12).

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

"Jude, The Servant Of Jesus Christ"



Bobby Duncan

The above lines are the first six words of the short book of Jude. These words are rather interesting in view of the fact Jude could have written: "Jude, the brother of Jesus Christ," for he was also a son of Mary (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3). Why did Jude identify himself as the servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James instead of identifying himself as the brother of Jesus Christ? James also, in the opening line of his epistle, identifies himself, not as the brother of Jesus Christ, but as "a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Why did Jude identify himself as the servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James instead of identifying himself as the brother of Jesus Christ?

Some commentators suggest it was a matter of modesty or humility that kept these two half

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The Ground War

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Johns who take care of others besides their own parents. Pauls and Silases who carry the Word to others. Zechariahs and Elizabeths who raise great children. Lydias who gather people for prayer and worship. Gaiuses and Aristarchuses who serve as companions. And Priscillas and Aquilas who minister in any way they can.

God's war is won by such foot soldiers. Be one!

--Little Rock, Arkansas.

Spirituality Or Stimulation

Continued From Page 2

his sister with a snake, than to have his cars washed, regardless of the order of occurrence.

If the services are not "spiritual" or if they are "dull" is it the order of arrangement? Or is it from the inside? Remember . . . externals do not determine spirituality. That comes from within.

But I also remember some daily routines which were exciting! I never regretted hearing the call to dinner. And I didn't worry about whether we would

have to eat dessert first or last. It really did not make much difference to me! My only complaint was when the meal happened to be a few minutes late. I found that tri-daily routine to be refreshing - always. It never became monotonous, never "dry." I NEVER hated to hear that call. And I doubt seriously if anything in the line of custom could have hurt it much. The only improvement I could think of was to have it more often! Chasing toads and playing marbles were never so important as that regular habit of eating.

And I'm wondering. If the services are not "spiritual" or if they are "dull" is it the order of arrangement? Or is it from the inside? Remember . . . externals do not determine spirituality. That comes from within.

--Via The Pillar, Cave City, Arkansas.

The Final Warning

Connie Lee Krute

Anyone who knows me very well realizes that I don't mess around with bad weather. If a tornado watch is issued by the National Weather Service I immediately make preparations for going to the cellar. Then when a tornado warning is issued I calmly gather up my daughter and our emergency supplies and we make our way to safety. In fact, I listen intently to the television and/or radio and try to get to the cellar before the final warning sounds. Believe me, I've been caught off guard once or twice and when it came time to go, I panicked and nearly didn't make it to the shelter in time.

Today it was raining and I was listening to the

"Jude, The Servant Of Jesus Christ"

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brothers of Jesus from referring to themselves as his brethren. Perhaps that is true, but not necessarily so. We need to remember, of course, that what they wrote they wrote by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps the Spirit and the writers saw a need to use this occasion to teach a very valuable lesson, namely, that there is a relationship far more valuable than a fleshly relationship. One's being a fleshly brother of Jesus Christ would not guarantee him a home in heaven, but being a servant of Jesus Christ would.

There is a great deal to indicate that most of the problems we encounter arise because we fail to understand what is really important. How long has it been since you have attended a funeral and heard the preacher say, "This dear departed soul accumulated a great fortune while he lived on this earth, and now that is really important?" Or, "The deceased was a person of great importance in the business world, and now that really makes a difference"? Or, "The one we have come to mourn was one whose name was known far and wide, and that means, of course, that all is well with his soul?" No, that is not what we hear at funerals, and that is not what we want the preacher to say when he preaches our funeral.

It is good to have an abundance of this world's goods to make life comfortable, provided one's having an abundance does not hinder his having the proper relationship to the Lord. It is good to be successful in the business world, provided one's success does not keep him from being faithful in serving God. There is nothing wrong with being popular, and having what we sometimes call "name recognition," if one's popularity in no way comes between him and his duty to God. But none of these things are, in and of themselves, of any permanent importance. None of them really matter when one's body is lying cold in the casket. The one and only thing that really matters when one has lived his life is that he was a servant of the Lord.

May the epitaph on my tombstone read: He was a servant of Jesus Christ.

--Via The Visitor, 4207 Adamsville Parkway, Adamsville, AL 35005.

radio, not too concerned about the weather since it didn't seem too threatening. Suddenly I heard the EBS (Emergency Broadcast System) signal, the one which you usually hear as a test and they announce that had it been an actual emergency you would be told what to do. BUT THIS WAS NO TEST -- THIS WAS THE REAL WARNING! I listened in amazement, after all I had never heard the actual signal in all of my 36 years! It said our county was under a tornado warning and that we should take shelter immediately if we lived in certain towns. I knew the towns were nearby, but that we were not in immediate danger. But the broadcaster did not say which way the tornado was headed!

My daughter (who has been well-trained!) put on her shoes, gathered a pillow, some blankets, and asked if we should head for the basement. Before I could answer, the radio disc jockey said he had conflicting reports . . . "wait, the Weather Service says a tornado watch, not a warning" . . . "I don't understand this, they are issuing mixed bulletins" . . . "no, it isn't a tornado, it is a microburst" . . . "our local spotters have not given any reports of a tornado or even severe weather" . . . Well, if the National Weather Service, the radio station's regional weather service, and the local spotters could not agree, I knew we were in trouble. Thank God, it turned out to be a microburst, which shows

up on radar as an unannounced tornado. It can be as dangerous as a tornado, but this one fizzled out as quickly as it had formed. No harm was done.

God's judgment day will be a lot like our exciting morning. None of us will know when it is coming. Some will tell us the judgment is coming at a certain time, others will say it is not coming at all. The important thing is that we must be ready at all times, not just when we think we should get ready. There will be no false alarms. The Lord has already given the warning to get ready. The next alarm we hear will be the real thing.

There will be no false alarms. The Lord has already given the warning to get ready. The next alarm we hear will be the real thing.

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. . . Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming" (Matthew 24:36, 42).

You've had the final warning. Are you ready for that final day?

--Route 2, Box 156, Winona, MS 38967.

TV Is Dragging Down Public Taste

Robert C. Byrd
Senator, D, WV

(Editor's note: We would do well to heed this warning by Senator Byrd:)

WASHINGTON - Television is indeed a marvel. And because of television's extraordinary nature and potential, I am particularly disturbed by the mediocrity of much of popular television's program content, by the corrupting quality of so much of television's dialogue and story lines, and by the failure of television programming executives at both the major networks and local stations to consider the sensibilities of wide segments of their audiences in judging the content of so many of their programs.

I am referring particularly to the omnipresent profanity of speech, sensationalized violence and semipornographic visualization of so much that is being broadcast over the airways for public consumption.

On most nights, with a flick of a remote-control device, the living rooms of American families can be treated to a melange of foulmouthed brats uttering language for which any stranger entering those same living rooms and uttering that same language would probably be immediately thrown out bodily, and the use of which in any polite company would earn its user a reputation as a boor

or a lout.

My concern in this matter is not the promotion of prudery or the promulgation of ironclad censorship. My concern is for the future tone of public civility and tastefulness in this country.

The crudeness, cursing, profanity, vice and violence we tolerate today on our television screens will be the crudeness, cursing, profanity, vice and violence that we will be forced to endure in our real lives in the years ahead.

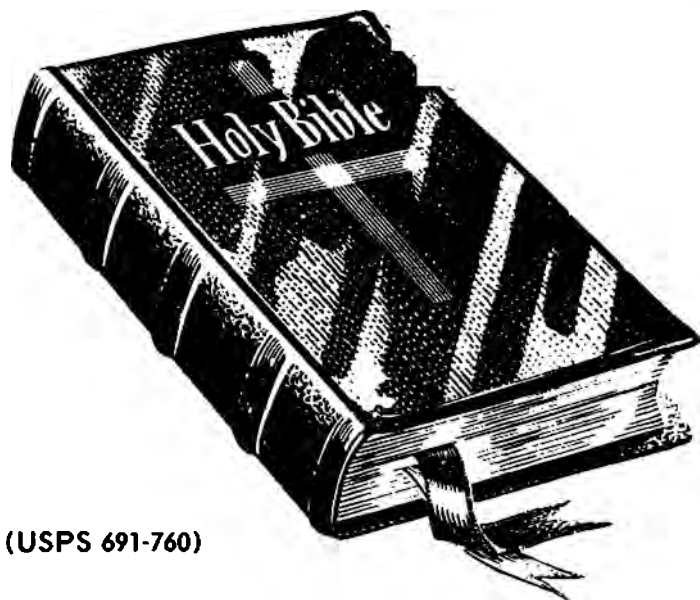
By the current tolerance of this diminution of taste and values on television, we are teaching our children that the basest level of human behavior is the accepted norm.

I appeal, therefore, to the television industry to realize that broadcasting presumes a public trust and that the trash and junk and vileness regularly being spewed out in so much current programming is a violation of the terms of that public trust.

I may be crying my message in the wilderness, but I believe we have a responsibility to call attention to matters in our country that need attention.

I hope someone will heed my outrage before the medium of television itself is beyond self-reform and self-correction.

--USA Today 9-26-90



(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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I Want A Church That Meets My Needs

Author Unknown

The statement made in the title is not only the desire of many in the religious world, but is becoming the philosophy of many Christians, because many of us are seeking a religion that "meets our needs." The phrase itself has virtually become a new religious term. Many persons praise or blame a particular congregation because it is or is not "meeting my needs."

Let me hasten to say that if the phrase means that we need to satisfy spiritual hunger, then it is a good expression. For surely everyone ought to be in a Christian community where his/her deepest spiritual longings are being addressed. The voice of God needs to be heard through spiritual teaching, and we need opportunities to serve, love, and be called to repentance.

Sadly, and probably without realizing it, many congregations have gotten into thinking that "we have to do all these things and plan all the activities to meet people's needs so they won't leave."

But being a part of the church to some means reaching for goals of "self-actualization." So if the church doesn't fulfill certain expectations, wants and preferences, then they must move on to another emotional department store with different merchandise more appealing to their "tastes."

Sadly, and probably without realizing it, many congregations have gotten into thinking that "we have to do all these things and plan all the activities to meet people's needs so they won't leave." Consequently, well-meaning leaders have turned God's church into a merchandising institution. So we promote this program and that program for this group and that group.

But, in my judgment, the system has become turned upside down from the way God intended to

We ought to be a part of a congregation, not so that our needs can be met, but rather, so that we may best meet the needs of God's work.

be. Whatever happened to the attitude in a Christian's heart of "I'd like to be a part of this congregation because of what I can do to meet its needs?" When are we most fulfilled? When our needs are met? Or when we meet the needs of God's church on this earth? We ought to be a part of a congregation, not so that our needs can be met, but rather, so that we may best meet the needs of God's work.

Christians need to recall the truth of the scriptures that personal fulfillment is a great spiritual paradox. We are most filled when we empty ourselves and be filled serving others. Jesus taught us, ". . . whosoever will be great among you, let

Satan's Promise Is A Big Lie!

Author Unknown

A while back, I was listening to the radio on my way home from work. The announcer reading the news chuckled as he read the story of a fellow who robbed a convenience store clerk. What was funny about a criminal act? The robber had a neat plan to give the clerk a \$10 bill, get her to open her cash drawer to make change, and then grab all the money. The plan worked! He got everything in her cash drawer . . . \$4.34 . . . and left the clerk with his \$10. He went in the hole to the tune of \$5.56!

The undeniable truth is that sin never gives what it promises. It always returns less than the sinner invests in self-esteem, integrity and spiritual security. Want proof?

Adam and Eve were promised freedom, wisdom and life by Satan, only to be led to spiritual suicide.

Sensuous Samson fell in love with a woman who

him be your minister (servant) . . . even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister (serve)" (Matthew 20:26-28). Paul said of his own heart, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). And again, "I beseech you therefore by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). "Reasonable service" is not being served (having your needs met), but serving (meeting the needs of others). We need to relearn the axiom, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Let's not demand that God's church be a place where people (leadership or membership) cater to our desires and preferences. Let's turn it right-side up again and be a part of a congregation, not for what it can do for us, but for what we can do for it!

--Via The Pillar, 205 Main Street, Cave City, Arkansas 72521.

did not love God and paid with his eyesight, freedom and life.

Ananias and Sapphira were going to get credit for being generous and wound up being buried for being liars.

In each of these cases, sin promised something it

Sin costs too much. You have to sell your soul for the petty trinkets it offers you for the moment. Then, you have to face the bitter reckoning.

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Springtime, A Reminder



David Wade

Spring officially arrived March 21. 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.

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 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 he 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!

A State Of Crisis



Bobby Key

A number of good brethren who have spent their lives in the Lord's Work are convinced that the church is now in a state of crisis. Dangerous extremes in many directions have been observed. Winds of change are sweeping through the brotherhood. The new hermeneutic has caused some to lose confidence in the Bible. Some no longer preach the doctrine of Christ -- they are more interested in implementing community programs than seeing souls saved from sin. It is true that in some churches sound Bible preaching is simply a relic of the past.

The church has always been in a crisis! There has never been a time that Christianity was not facing opposition and persecution. Problems have faced the church since the day of Pentecost. The very nature of our duty, to preach the Gospel and stand opposed to the evils of the world, creates a crisis every time.

It is not our purpose to sound pessimistic. The church has always been in a crisis! There has never been a time that Christianity was not facing

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Attitudes Toward Error



Bobby Duncan

In recent months two men who have given a major portion of their lives in serving as presidents of two of our better known Christian colleges have publicly stated their fears that there will be a major division in the church in the next few years. We are not alarmed when alarmists make such predictions, but few if any of us would consider Willard Collins or E. Claude Gardner alarmists.

There are three very distinct and different attitudes brethren display when divisive error begins to be taught. These different attitudes have been present in dealing with past errors that have divided the church, and they are apparent in connection with the errors presently threatening to divide us. (Actually we are already divided, but the division has not yet crystallized).

The first of these three attitudes is that of the ones

who welcome error and openly embrace it. Perhaps they do so because of a failure to study the Bible and to know the differences between truth and error, or perhaps they do so because they simply do not approve of God's way. Some there are who prefer the ways of men to the way of God, and who seem to be charmed by anything that would make the Lord's church look more like the denominations of men. As Israel wanted a king so as to be like all the nations around them (I Samuel 8:5, 20), some in the Lord's church abhor its distinctive nature and want to be like all the other churches.

The second attitude is the attitude of some who know the truth, and who will not be deceived into believing and teaching error. But these choose not to become involved in any battle for truth. They are content to live and let live. They often excuse their spineless inaction by boasting about their tolerance; they sometimes accuse those who fight error of doing so out of ignoble motives. Like the nations which will profit most from the war in the Persian Gulf sit back and criticize the United

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A State Of Crisis

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opposition and persecution. Problems have faced the church since the day of Pentecost. The very nature of our duty, to preach the Gospel and stand opposed to the evils of the world, creates a crisis every time. God warned of times like these. Faithful brethren have sounded warnings of such crises. Take time to read a few.

One religious journal has said, "To put the case plainly, the average church in our modern time does not offer the struggling masses anything which they cannot get without attending churches." An older brother wrote, "I have been in the evangelistic field for 33 years, and I have seen the church of our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in her day of unity and power, and I have seen her in division and weakness. Now we have nothing but division, strife, animosity, hatred, immolation, and every evil work. The results are loss of influence, loss of spiritual power, stagnation, and death."

Another preacher wrote, "Upon the whole, the outlook is not pleasant, and it seems to me there is less active, aggressive feeling manifested by God's people than I have ever observed before. The lukewarmness is simply appalling. Christianity is rapidly declining. The world is further away from God today than it was twenty years ago. The only remedy for this current evil is a return to the old paths."

The good old days are not fifty, or one hundred, years ago; the good old days are here and now. May we face the months ahead with renewed optimism and determination.

Certainly we ought to take heed to such warnings. Surprisingly, each of these quotations was taken from the Gospel Advocate during 1899 through 1901 -- almost one hundred years ago!

At the beginning of this century, our brethren were looking back to the good old days of twenty years ago. All of them looked back to the golden age of the church which never really existed. As we grow older, we lose perspective and, like Elijah of old, we declare, "I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of host; and I, even I only, am left."

Were the good old days as good as we remember? In 1900, 34% of our population belonged to some religious organization. This figure grew to 55% by 1950. In the past forty years there has been a decline according to the Christian Herald.

Yes, the church is in crisis today; however, this has ever been so. The pioneers of other generations called us back to the old paths insofar as doctrine was concerned, and progress has been made in returning to a "thus saith the Lord." We still have a long way to go. May God grant us the vision to take advantage of our opportunities today, as some men did fifty years ago in their day. The good old

days are not fifty, or one hundred, years ago; the good old days are here and now. May we face the months ahead with renewed optimism and determination. A crisis is no time to panic, but with

Satan's Promise Is A Big Lie!

Continued From Page 1

could not deliver. The same thing is still happening in the world today . . . Adolescents are led to see God, their parents and their teachers as enemies and wind up in rebellion's deep pit. People date and marry without taking into account that the spiritual element is the critical part of a relationship. Some church members hide behind masks and fool themselves and their friends . . . but not God.

Sin costs too much. You have to sell your soul for the petty trinkets it offers you for the moment. Then, you have to face the bitter reckoning. You have to "pay the piper." Yet, whatever had been promised as a reward has already gone up in a puff

pure hearts and level heads let us rely on God to give the increase after we have done the sowing.

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

of smoke or has slipped through your fingers. And Judgment Day is coming! The basic lure of sin is the promise of quick gain, without regard to long-term consequences.

Truth and holiness work differently. With total honesty about the difficult demands at hand, the God who cannot lie, promises to reward you down the line. Obedience, purity, integrity, repentance, denial . . . these are hard words and demanding deeds. But what lies at the end is invaluable!

Sin never delivers. Christ never fails. So, don't get robbed while trying to pull a fast one on God.

--Via The Friendly Visitor, Auburn.

Attitudes Toward Error

Continued From Page 2

States for conducting that war, these brethren sit back and criticize those who are fighting the battle for them. They do not share the sentiment of the beloved apostle Paul, who said, "I am set for the defense of our gospel" (Philippians 1:17).

Let us never, in our defense of the faith, act in a discourteous or rude fashion. There is never a time when the Christian is justified in having an ugly attitude about anything. We should oppose sin and error vehemently, as did Christ and his apostles, but we should always conduct ourselves as becomes the sons of God.

The third attitude is that of those who, not because of superior wisdom or education, choose to "stand in harm's way," and repel the onslaught of denominational theology with which some would infiltrate the church. This, beloved, is the Scriptural attitude. Paul charged Timothy: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 4:2). John wrote: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (II John 10-11).

What would have happened to the church in the middle of the last century if there had not been some who stood firm in their opposition to instrumental music in worship? What would have happened during the first half of this century if

there had been none to stand against the tidal wave of Premillennialism which threatened the church? What would have happened in the fifties and sixties if no one had stood up to refute the errors with reference to church cooperation and orphan homes?

If error is ignored and allowed to go unchecked, our grandchildren will not know the truth.

A word of caution: Let us never, in our defense of the faith, act in a discourteous or rude fashion. There is never a time when the Christian is justified in having an ugly attitude about anything. We should oppose sin and error vehemently, as did Christ and his apostles, but we should always conduct ourselves as becomes the sons of God (I John 3:1).

--Via Vigil, 4207 Adamsville Parkway, Adamsville, AL 35005.

I'm Awfully Well For The Shape I'm In

There's nothing whatever the matter with me.

I'm just as healthy as I can be.

I have arthritis in both my knees;

And when I talk, I talk with a wheeze.

My pulse is weak, and my blood is thin.

But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.

Arch supports I have for my feet,

Or I wouldn't be able to walk on the street.

Sleep is denied me night after night,

And every morning I look a sight.

My memory is failing; my head's in a spin.

But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.

The moral is, as this tale we unfold,

That for you and me who are growing old,

It is better to say, "I'm fine," with a grin,

Than to let them know the shape we're in.

Trinity -- From Nice To Heaven?



Brad T. Bromling

INTRODUCTION

The most incomprehensible concept man ever contemplates is "God." This stands to reason since, how can a created being understand the nature and essence of the Creator? The thought of God is so far beyond man that he must, with honest humility, simply stand in awe. One of the

most intriguing facets of God's unique nature concerns what has come to be known as the trinity. Some religious groups credit the first general council at Nice (A.D. 325) with the origin of this doctrine. But, is this teaching from Nice, or heaven? If its genesis is to be found among mere men, then it should be dismissed immediately by all sincere followers of God. However, if this doctrine is found upon the pages of Holy Scripture, its dismissal is a fatal error.

The Council at Nice

It is a matter of historical record that the 4th century church experienced a clash over the nature of Jesus Christ. Constantine, emperor of the Roman Empire and leader of the apostate church, summoned a council to the city of Nice. The council formulated a creed which stated, plainly, that Jesus Christ is of the same nature as God. The creed also affirmed belief in the Holy Spirit. To some, this "Nicene Creed" is the source of the trinity doctrine. Their assessment is incorrect and dangerous.

THE BIBLICAL VIEW

Monotheism

The foundational theology of the Bible is monotheism (i.e., there is but one God). Consider these references: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!" (Deuteronomy 6:4); "To you it was shown, that you might know that the Lord Himself is God; there is none other besides Him" (Deuteronomy 4:35; see also Jeremiah 10:10, etc.); "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe -- and tremble!" (James 2:19); "There is . . . one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:6; I Thessalonians 1:9, etc.).

Plurality

This truth does not, however, exhaust the biblical description of God. In fact, it is only the beginning point. The Bible begins revealing, in its opening pages, that this monotheistic concept has an inherent plurality. For example: "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness . . .'" (Genesis 1:26a). God spoke to someone, but to whom? Later, Jehovah affirms that He made the world all by Himself: ". . . I am the Lord, who makes all things, Who stretches out the heavens all alone, Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself" (Isaiah 44:24). So, if God worked alone, to whom was He speaking before creating man? He could not have been speaking to angels or any

other created beings -- created beings do not participate in creating. This question is answered satisfactorily only in light of the plurality conveyed in the trinity doctrine.

. . . if this doctrine is found upon the pages of Holy Scripture, its dismissal is a fatal error.

Trinity in the Bible

The word "trinity" does not occur in the Bible. For some critics, this implies that the doctrine itself is unscriptural. Such arguments are impotent, since the Bible often discusses the triune nature of the godhead.

The word "God" is used in conjunction with three terms -- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. First, the phrase "God our Father" is common in New Testament literature (e.g., Romans 1:7; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:2; etc.). Second, the deity of Jesus Christ is affirmed many times by implication (e.g., John 5:18), as well as by explicit statements of Scripture (Philippians 2:5-8, etc.). One clear example is found in Hebrews 1:8, where the Father directly addresses Jesus as God: "But to the Son He says: 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom.'" Third, when Ananias perpetrated a

deception, Peter said that he had lied, "to the Holy Spirit" (Acts 5:3). He then reminded Ananias that in so doing, he had "not lied unto men, but unto God" (vs. 4). Hence, it is scripturally correct to speak of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This is the Trinity!

When Jesus commissioned His apostles to carry the saving message into all the world, He required that they baptize, "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). Since the phrase "in the name of" indicates "by the authority, and into the possession, of," then Jesus considered the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as having the same nature.

CONCLUSION

Is the trinity doctrine from Nice, or heaven? Clearly, it is from heaven. Bible doctrine is not determined by human councils; the men who assembled in Nice merely agreed upon an existing biblical truth.

Although there is much about the nature of God which man will never know, he may be sure that all the information he needs has been provided (II Peter 1:3). Man's inability to comprehend completely the triune nature of God is not a valid reason to dismiss the doctrine as untrue or impossible. What the Bible teaches is, by definition, both true and possible.

-- Via Reasoning from Revelation, 230 Landmark Drive, Montgomery, AL 36117.

"America, The Land Of The Free And Home Of The Brave"



W. T. Allison

with so few casualties. THANK GOD for His protection and care!

As our soldiers begin to return home, let's all promise God and one another that we will make this a more God-fearing country for all to live and rear their families. Do everything you know how to do to be a good law-abiding citizen and help make America a still better place to live.

The stakes are very high. If we can keep our own people sold on the American way of life and defeat those sinful elements that weaken the very foundation of our society, we can continue our productivity and increase our current standard of living. America has the highest rate of living. Now, let's raise our standard of thinking and morality.

We have found out that America won't stand for

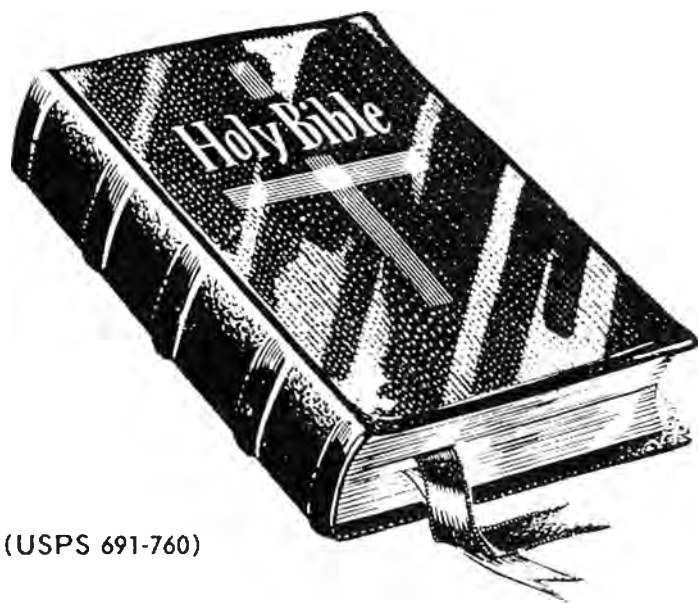
I want to first of all take this opportunity to THANK GOD for helping end the conflict in the Middle East. Our sympathy goes out to those who have lost loved ones in this war. It is hard to imagine the amount of conflict our soldiers have faced yet

aggression against a small country like Kuwait. Let's enter the war against drugs, crime and alcoholism with the same aggressiveness. We have won the conflict in the Middle East but war is not over. There will always be a war to be fought over the conflict between right and wrong, good and evil, and Satan and God.

As our soldiers begin to return home, let's all promise God and one another that we will make this a more God-fearing country for all to live and rear their families.

As one American speaking to other Americans, what is right in America? The fundamental principles are right. The mechanism of our Republic is right. The privately owned economic system is right. The message of God as expressed in the Bible is right. Let us improve the human element, support our God given freedom, and work for a peaceful and prosperous world.

--1901 Schillinger Rd. Mobile, AL 36695.



(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 27

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War



Bobby Key

War has never contributed to spirituality. War is of the flesh; it is carnal. It breeds hatred and bitterness. "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is,

there is confusion and every evil work" (James 3:14-16).

The Christian is a lover of peace. We are not to fight among ourselves; we dare not go to war with our neighbor. "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Galatians 5:14). The Christian must even love his enemies. "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). It is difficult to keep these words in times of peace; it becomes even harder in times of war. We are told "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:18-21). Let us allow the Lord to take care of that part!

The government has no better citizen than the Christian. He gives no trouble to the powers that be, for he is loving, kind and gentle. He tries to live at peace with all men. He is a lover of peace and goes about doing good to all men. People of the world are able to see his meekness, his quietness, and his morality.

There is a vast difference between the kingdoms of men and the kingdom of God. All kingdoms and governments of earth have been founded by force and are perpetuated by force. The kingdom of Christ was founded on love and truth and is perpetuated by the same. The kingdom of Christ is not of this world (John 18:36).

The government has no better citizen than the Christian. He gives no trouble to the powers that be, for he is loving, kind and gentle. He tries to live at peace with all men.

One great power we possess in these trying times is the power of prayer. Pray for our President and

"New Kids" Banned At My House"

Paul Sain

Did you see the *New Kids On The Block* on the AMA Award show? I was embarrassed! It was sickening! Sure they have had several hit songs -- and some were not questionable -- but they seemed to be at least a group that our young ones could listen to -- within certain limits. But their performance (?) Monday night was enough for parents to say **ABSOLUTELY NO MORE!** No more will I allow my children to watch them (via videos)! No more will I support them (via records)! No more will I allow or encourage them by attending their concerts! No more will I encourage them (via fan clubs, etc.). **NO MORE!**

What was so upsetting? The lead singer in the group wore a shirt with filthy suggestive wording glaring in black and white. The words of the song against the war included many vulgar, filthy, unchristian phrases/words. No Christian could possibly have watched it without being disturbed and distressed. No Christian could endorse such action! This is **NOT** just an attack on *New Kids* only, for many other groups or individual singers are just as bad or worse. This just happened to be the latest of which I have witnessed with my own eyes.

Today, in the music, movies, and more and more on television (as time passes) are we seeing worldly immoral influences. Parents, we must

pray for all world leaders. The Christian is bound to pray for all men -- pray earnestly for kings and for all that are in authority. As Americans we are thankful for this freedom of prayer. "The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much." Do not become unduly alarmed; God has not forgotten His people. His power is great. May His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.


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

guide our youth in a Christian direction. They are being bombarded with Satan's devices from servants of Satan in every direction. We must lovingly, yet forcefully, say **NO**. We must be willing to say to them, "*You do NOT need to see that movie!*" or "*That TV show contains cursing, or sexual situations that we should not encourage!*" or "*That music is unacceptable to a Christian!*" It is absolutely true, the clique "*Garbage in - garbage out!*" Let us help our children to have healthy, wholesome, Christian influences.

Today, in the music, movies, and more and more on television (as time passes) are we seeing worldly immoral influences. Parents, we must guide our youth in a Christian direction.

(By the way, I did not see the show at air time. LaDon and I had gone to the hospital in Nashville for a visit -- but by video tape we saw it. Thus, there is no doubt as to what was said).

--P.O. Box 329, Pulaski, TN 38478.



Words Of Truth
(USPS 691-760)

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—Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

"They Made Light Of It"



David Wade

made light of it and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them" (Matthew 22:5, 6). Obviously, he was portraying God's people, the Jews, as they rejected Jesus and refused to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus said, "But they made light of it and went their ways," that is, they paid no attention to it, and did not regard the invitation of any value. The Jews had a long standing tradition of weighing God's laws and determining the importance of each commandment. The scribe of Mark 12:18 acknowledged "the first commandment of all" was to "love the Lord your God. . ." They considered this as the heaviest, most important law. They considered the lightest law to be, "If a bird's nest

In the parable of the wedding feast Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven to a King who arranged a marriage feast for his son. His servants went out to urge those invited to "come to the wedding" (Matthew 22:4). The expected response was not evident. "But they

happens to be before you along the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, with the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young; you shall surely let the mother go, and take the young for yourself, that it may be well with you and that you may prolong your days" (Deuteronomy 22:6-7).

Furthermore, Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for making God's laws heavy for others while making them light on themselves. "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do to be seen by men" (Matthew 23:2-5).

If we are not careful, we can fall into the same rut of mishandling God's word as did the scribes and Pharisees. We must recognize that all of God's words is heavy. We must rightly divide it, and we must never disregard it, any of it! What applies to others, equally applies to us. We should be willing and prepared to live by the same admonitions and commandments that apply to everyone else.

Say What?

Larry Hill

"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter" (Isaiah 5:20).

Excuse me? One moment, please! Point of Order! Did I miss something? Who turned freedom of religion into freedom from religion? And how did freedom of speech become free-for-all filth? Please, please, spare me the shallow reasoning that sees any and all restriction as the ultimate evil. That's the stuff of sophomoric, deck stacking television drama: "We hate to show you this garbage (or interview this jerk) -- especially during sweeps week. But to insure freedom we must tolerate filth." Who are we kidding here? Scripture and history tell another story: To preserve liberty we must observe limits. After all, the only difference between a river and a swamp is borders.

Can someone tell me, really, how democracy has been bettered by the contributions of Robert Mapplethorpe, The Beastly Boys, Andrew Dice Clay, et al.? Give me a break! Twenty-five years ago they all would have been shut down quicker than you could say, "expletive deleted!" But for the life of me, I don't recall a fascist state devoid of the free exchange of ideas. I do remember that virtually any thought could be expressed but common sense and decency dictated the way, the time and the audience. I'm sorry but such select limitation did not lead to broad oppressive censorship (oops, I used the 'C' word). And I am a bit weary of hearing that it inevitably will. (Oh no, I can't believe I just appealed to the good old days, the surest documentation of passage into old fuddy duddyism).

Today, where are all the grand ideas and finer art

Continued On Page 3

New Formulas Aids Financial Planning



W. T. Allison

The Consumer Credit Counseling Services offered these guidelines to follow when making up your personal budget for your home and family. Here are the costs and advised income percentages:

- Housing, mortgage or rent: 25-30%
- Food, groceries, household items, outside meals: 15-20%
- Auto, auto insurance, public transportation: 10-15%
- Household expenses like utilities and repairs: 10%
- Health costs not covered by insurance: 5%
- Personal care and recreation: 5%
- Insurance of personal property, life, health: 5%
- Payment for car, credit cards, loans: 15-20%

Savings: 5-10%

As you can see, the Consumer Credit Counseling Services have left God completely out of their budget planning. We can understand that completely since they are of the world not of the kingdom of God. The thing that bothers me is some in the kingdom have also left God out of their budgets.

I had much rather give 10% and have God's blessings on the 90% that is let than to keep the entire 100% and have God's curse upon it.

The above budget planning is good advice if you will include God in your budget. I had much rather

Continued On Page 3

We Are Allowing Satan's Forces To Win



J. C. Choate

allowing the secular and religious bodies around us to use the tools and means that we should be using. Radio, TV, and the printed page are instruments for spreading their propaganda. "Even with problems," as a brother told me recently, "Satan will not allow them to lose because they are

Say What?

Continued From Page 2

our new 'freedom' was to have spawned? Does anyone really believe that an endless barrage of profanity gives a movie greater depth or a comedian funnier routines? It didn't take long, did it, to see that this is just a cheap and childish substitute for, not a meaningful expression of true genius and creativity. And it's wearing really thin, isn't it? Dare one say that that it's showing more and more the marks of tyranny than liberty? Can't you just see it? Tom Jefferson is at evening tea with Hamilton and Washington. "Al, George," he says, "tomorrow at the convention why don't we propose a free speech amendment so that someday citizens can freely emblazon tunics and buggy placards with unbelievably obscene and mindless phrases? Why, with luck, they may even be able to force taxpayers to endow their art!"

Sorry, but the simple fact is, with the First Amendment quite intact, we have always practiced legal restriction and censorship. Even today we still ban child pornography, for example. Who in their right minds would argue for the legalization of kiddy porn (pedophiles are not in their right minds)? Have you noticed, too, more than a little hypocrisy among some so-called free speech advocates? They say to be broadminded and tolerant of movies that blaspheme Christ but they move to suppress unflattering exposés of their favorite celebrities. Am I just being picky here? And could someone explain by what logic the label of censorship is attached to an exercise of the right to choose which art we fund? It's one thing to say you can't produce it and quite another to say I won't buy it.

I don't know -- call me weird -- but things seem inside out when we protect our children from Christmas Creches with sculptured saintly Madonnas but expose them to 2 Live Crew and scandalous singing Madonnas.

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

God has asked us to evangelize the world. To make this possible, he has given us every tool necessary to do the job. He has also given us the financial means with which to carry out this task. And yet, we are not doing it. Why not?

As we look at the world situation today we can clearly see that we are

promoting his cause."

Through the news media we are fed a leftist line. "All that is good is bad and all that is bad is good." We are therefore being conditioned and prepared for our own destruction. Freedom of speech and freedom of press are being used to destroy all of our freedoms.

Through the news media we are fed a leftist line. "All that is good is bad and all that is bad is good." We are therefore being conditioned and prepared for our own destruction. Freedom of speech and freedom of press are being used to destroy all of our freedoms.

The world tells us that people aren't interested in religion any more, and we believe that. We therefore cut back on the length of our meetings, and city-wide gospel campaigns for the most part are out. We are told that the world will not respond to strong gospel preaching, so we "water down" our radio and TV preaching to deal with human problems. Instead of evangelizing, our emphasis has been placed on social needs. The result is that

the church is not growing numerically and spiritually. We are so weak that members are being swept away by every wind of doctrine and we are ending up in little splinter groups that oppose each other.

We are using our money to build family living centers, to buy vans and pay the transportation bills for those who attend the gospel meetings or for fun outings. We are paying out higher and higher salaries to preachers who do less and less. And we are turning our mission work into short evangelistic trips.

How we need to turn things around. We need members with vision, faith, and initiative. We need to be using the printed page all over the world. We need to be broadcasting the gospel, especially to third world countries, in many languages. We need to be using TV, satellite, and videos to forcefully declare the gospel.

Brethren, what are we waiting for? The world is lost and we are going to be lost unless we do more than we are doing to evangelize. Now is the time to rise up and go out by faith with the gospel.

Although we are in the minority, we have God, the truth, the gospel, and all of those things that make it possible for us to carry out the great commission. Why must we then be negative, negligent, lazy, and disobedient? We have all that is required for victory. May God help us to respond to this great need now.

--Route 2, Box 156, Winona, MS 38967.

My Idea Of A Hero

Harry Gipson

My Christian heroes have changed a bit through the years. Like most Christians, I have admired those who have made significant contributions to our brotherhood and accomplished great things for the cause of Christ. They still encourage me. But I've learned a few things about Christian commitment and dedication along the way. Many of those who "burn out for Jesus" aren't really driven by commitment, but by compulsion. They are workaholics who just can't say "no." Such people are often so busy trying to develop spirituality in the lives of others, that they forget to tend to the needs of their families and of their own

souls.

Now I admire Christians who last, who have staying power, who are actively willing to remain under pressure of any kind, as long as God wills, in order to grow stronger.

I am thinking now, of a lovely Christian woman who is married to an unsympathetic and unfeeling tyrant. Depending upon the husband's desire to dispense favors or penalties to his wife, he tells her whether she can, or cannot, go to church, etc. The thing I admire about this woman is the way she has used these pressure tactics of her husband

Continued On Page 4

New Formulas Aids Financial Planning

Continued From Page 2

give 10% and have God's blessings on the 90% that is left than to keep the entire 100% and have God's curse upon it. Don't you think you can do more with 90% and God's blessings than you can with 100% and God's curse?

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and these things (those listed in the Consumer Credit report) shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

--1901 Schillinger Road, Mobile, AL 36695.

Jesus And Jehovah - An Undeniable Link



Brad T. Bromling

INTRODUCTION

Thanks to some over-pious Jews, the pronunciation of God's name has been lost forever. Out of fear that they might accidentally violate the third commandment (i.e., "You shall not take the name of Jehovah your God in vain . . ." -- Exodus 20:7; Leviticus 24:16), ancient Jews refused to pronounce the word which represented God's name (YHWH). Instead, they would say the word *adonai* (i.e., "my Lord").

Mistaken Piety

This move on the part of the Jews was a mistake for at least two reasons. First, they did not succeed in protecting themselves from violating the third commandment. The commandment is broken whenever one calls on the Lord to witness an oath which he does not keep (Leviticus 19:12; James 5:12). So, it did not matter that the Jews refrained from speaking the **actual name** of God; the fact that they often showed little regard for His **authority**, and swore falsely by Him, was condemning enough. Second, by avoiding the name of God (and providing a substitute for it) they violated -- in essence -- the divine charge: "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take anything from it. . ." (Deuteronomy 4:2).

BIBLICAL USAGE

God is "Jehovah"

Vowels were added to the Hebrew language about A.D. 1000. Since by that time the pronunciation of YHWH was lost, the Jews were unable to add the correct vowels; hence it remained unutterable. To remedy this, the vowels from *adonai* were inserted into YHWH, producing the word *Yahweh*. This has been Anglicized to read Jehovah. Most English versions of the Bible represent YHWH with the word Lord, while a few employ "Jehovah." Throughout the Old Testament, the name is applied to the monotheistic God. When Moses demanded that Pharaoh release the Israelites, he did so in the name of "Jehovah." To this Pharaoh responded "Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto his voice . . .?" (Exodus 5:1-2). A psalmist once wrote:

My Idea Of A Hero

Continued From Page 3

to become, not a bitter person, but a better one.

"Consider it all joy, brethren, when you encounter various trials; knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:2-4).

My idea of a hero is a person who wants to be like Jesus Christ so badly that he refuses to shrink from the process that produces it.

"That they may know that thou alone, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the Most High over all the earth" (Psalm 83:18). The name occurs in this way thousands of times in the Hebrew Scriptures. Clearly, God wanted men to know that His "name is Jehovah" (Jeremiah 16:21).

"Jehovah" Applied to the Father

In the majority of its occurrences, "Jehovah" is applied to the first person of the Godhead (i.e., the "Father" -- Matthew 28:19). For example: "Jehovah said to my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Psalm 110:1). Jesus explained that this verse pictures the Father addressing His Christ (Luke 20:42). In speaking of Jesus, Peter reminded his audience: "For Moses truly said to the fathers, The Lord (Jehovah) your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you" (Acts 3:22). Hence, this passage pictures the Father (Jehovah) foretelling the coming of His Prophet (the Son).

By saying that He is "First and Last" Jesus claimed to possess the nature of Jehovah.

"Jehovah" Applied to the Son

Although these applications of "Jehovah" are common in the Scriptures, they do not exhaust its usage; the name is also occasionally applied to Jesus. First, notice the prophecy concerning the mission of John: "The voice of one that crieth in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of Jehovah; make level in the desert a highway for our God (Isaiah 40:3; see Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4). John was sent to prepare the way of Jesus Christ -- he made that abundantly clear (John 1:29-34). But, Isaiah said that John would prepare the way of Jehovah. Plainly, Jesus and Jehovah are one and the same in these passages.

Second, the book of Hebrews quotes the Father as addressing His Son in this way: "You, Lord [Jehovah -- Psalm 102:25], in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands" (Hebrews 1:10). Not only

does this verse apply the word "Jehovah" to Jesus, but it attributes the quotation to the mouth of God. Again, Jesus and Jehovah are synonymous in these verses.

Third, while describing his vision of Jesus, John exclaimed: "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last" (Revelation 1:17). The phrase "First and Last" is a clear reference to Isaiah 44:6 which says: "Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts; I am the first and I am the last; and besides me there is no God." By saying that He is "First and Last" Jesus claimed to possess the nature of Jehovah. The Lord's statement was either **true** or **blasphemous!** Who among His friends will charge the Christ with blasphemy?

Conclusion

Although the Bible has much more to say on this topic, these three examples clearly identify Jesus with Jehovah. It is only when one recognizes this truth, that he can truly appreciate the Savior's nature and the extreme cost of His sacrifice.

--Via Reasoning From Revelation, 230 Landmark Drive, Montgomery, AL 36117.

I'm Glad This Church Needs Money

If it didn't, it would mean it wasn't supporting missionaries and preaching the gospel in other places. No missionary zeal.

I'm Glad This Church Needs Money

If it didn't, it would mean it wasn't doing anything to support the homeless and needy. No compassion.

I'm Glad This Church Needs Money

If it didn't, it would mean it had "topped out" and wasn't interested in expanding into other areas of needed service. No vision.

I'm Glad This Church Needs Money

If it didn't, it would mean it wasn't interested in providing wholesome activities for our teenagers. No concern.

I'm Glad This Church Needs Money

If it didn't, it would mean it wasn't interested in teaching children in those impressionable, formative years. No future.

Yes Sir, I'm Glad This Church Needs Money

The fact that it does means it has not forfeited its zeal, compassion, expansion, vision, concern, evangelism, future. This church needs my gifts and I'm glad of it. I wouldn't want to be a member of any other kind.

. . . Joe R. Barnett

My idea of a hero is a person who wants to be like Jesus Christ so badly that he refuses to shrink from the process that produces it.

--Via Keynoter, P.O. Box 228, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203.



(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 27

APRIL 5, 1991

NUMBER 14

Compromise



Gus Nichols
1892-1975

As far as the denominational world is concerned, our greatest danger, no doubt, lies in the temptation to compromise and become a sister denomination with the sects around us. People want to be like the crowd. It was this desire that led Israel to demand a king (I Samuel 8). When we

were weak the sects blustered and challenged for debate. They publicly reviewed our sermons and fought us openly and bitterly; but they soon found that their doctrines and practices were no match for the "Thus saith the Lord" which our preachers hurled back at them with withering force and power. They next began to fight us to our backs and secretly organize against us, and tried to create all the prejudice against us they could; but they saw us grow in spite of their campaign of villainy against us. Now that we are waxing popular, they are making love to us. They are now using their most powerful weapon. It is compromise. They want us to exchange pulpits with them, and, of course, be too nice to preach the Truth, or point out any of their errors. They want us to join with them in the Ministerial Alliance, where compromise is the order of the day. They want us to join with them in Union Revivals where sectarians, ignorant of God's plan of salvation, do the preaching. They want us to call on them to lead our prayers, when they are in our services, regardless of whether they have been baptized into Christ or not (Romans 6:3). They want us to recognize them as right in doctrine and practice, as though contradictory doctrines could all be right. They want us to preach on the things which all alike believe and leave off doctrinal preaching, as they call it. Now, if you do not believe there is danger in this appeal of compromise, look around and you may be

surprised to find that some of us have already fallen from this sort of thing.

During the war many boys, scattered to the four winds in the service of their country, married out of the church (I Corinthians 7:39). These in-laws are all the way from Catholics down to nothing in religious beliefs. They present another temptation to compromise. Of course, our children do not want their companions to dislike "our religion" and "our preacher"; therefore, we are requested to tone down the preaching, so as not to contradict anyone's belief nor disturb the conscience of those in error, lest trouble come into the home. Thus a new gospel is demanded, with all the power of the Gospel of Christ extracted from it (Romans 1:16).

In order to hold their jobs, many preachers are tempted to preach so as to bring great crowds, and break all past attendance records. Brethren, they might as well stay at home, as far as salvation is concerned, if they are not going to preach the gospel to them in all its saving power.

Then some brother in society, or standing high in the business world, brings his friends to hear "our preacher." He wants his friends to like "our church." He, too, wants the saving power taken out of the message. If the preacher preaches it straight, as it is in the Book, the love of God and His precious promises, together with the facts of sin and death, hell fire and brimstone, and some are offended and heard to express dissatisfaction with the preacher and the church, some may put on a move to change preachers. Here is a danger facing the church, and it tends to corrupt the Gospel and

please the people, rather than try to save them and please the Lord (Romans 15:3).

All of this has brought about a temptation to lecture, instead of "preach the word" (II Timothy 4:2). In order to hold their jobs, many preachers are tempted to preach so as to bring great crowds, and break all past attendance records. Brethren, they might as well stay at home, as far as salvation is concerned, if they are not going to preach the gospel to them in all its saving power (Romans 1:16; Mark 16:15-16). Crowds mean nothing if you have to compromise the Truth to draw them. Pretty little flowery speeches, copied from some sectarian book of sermons, is not what this crooked generation needs. They need to be shown that every man and woman, boy and girl upon the earth is lost and "in danger of hell fire" and can only be saved by hearing the gospel, believing in Christ and obeying his commands as revealed in the gospel. Now, they may like this, or they may not; but no man can preach the Gospel without preaching this, regardless of where he starts. To give one's own unsupported assertions in the pulpit is not preaching "the word" (II Timothy 4:2). Tell what the Bible says about the matter under study. If you cannot quote the words of the Lord, stop and "read it to the people." Let God get his "say" in before you start giving them human wisdom. Let God be heard, and let us "preach the word." If any preacher does not know the "Word" let him quit having running fits long enough to study about five hours per day for the next ten years and he can then tell his audience what God says, or at least turn and read it at once. If anyone says he does not have time to study, as Paul commands all preachers to do (II Timothy 2:15), it may be because he is spending his time running around making little "pop" calls where there is no one to be taught or converted, or no one sick. Brethren, you can never know the Bible if you are going to be a sectarian "pastor" in a church of Christ. If you can "preach the word" then preach it, but if not, get

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Words Of Truth

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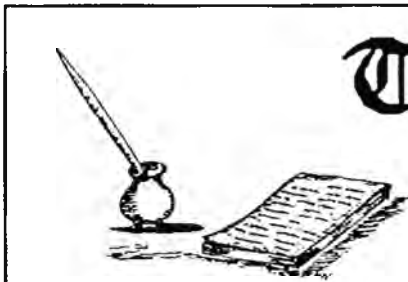
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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Concerning Words Of Truth



David Wade

It is a pleasure to edit Words of Truth. I devote the average of two days each week to this task. In my own feeble way I'm trying to build on the good foundation in God's word laid by those who preceded me. I owe a debt of gratitude to the former editors; brethren Gus Nichols, Bobby Duncan and

consideration. All material for publication should be sent directly to me at the address in the masthead.

All correspondence concerning subscriptions should be sent to our publisher, Northwest Alabamian, in Haleyville, Alabama. Often, individual subscriptions are sent to me. In turn, I have to send them to Haleyville, and this slows down the process. It takes an average of four weeks for a new subscription to be processed once it is received at Haleyville.

There are two subscription plans. Individual subscriptions are \$11.44 a year paid in advance. Congregational, or group rates, cost the same but are billed monthly at the cost of 22¢ per household. You can send Words of Truth into the home each week for seven cents less than you can buy a first class postage stamp!

Why not consider gift subscriptions for friends, relatives, or someone you wish to convert. Why not present this information to the eldership where you are a member, and urge them to enroll the church. I'll be happy to send you a small bundle of free copies (as available) for review.

From This View Point



Glenn A. Posey

For the past months "The War in the Gulf," has been television's main topic, and rightfully so, and most of us have watched the unfolding of these events with mixed emotions. War is awful! War is nonsense! But it happens and God gives the reason in James 4:1-3. One great lesson we can learn from this

whole episode in the Gulf is, "When the wicked are in authority the people mourn" (Proverbs 29:2). There's hope now for an end to this conflict. Surely things of this nature can be examples to us. May we learn our lessons well.

One great lesson we can learn from this whole episode in the Gulf is, "When the wicked are in authority the people mourn" (Proverbs 29:2).

Why did God give the commission to, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"? From things like the Gulf war, we can fully understand. When the church, which is the "pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3:15), does not carry out this charge, situations like the Middle East crisis are but a reminder to us of our failure. The proclamation of the gospel and the souls of men MUST be the number one priority of

Continued On Page 3

Flavil Nichols.

The paper would cease to exist without our writers and readers. Therefore, we owe much thanks to you.

We are always looking for additional good writers. Why not consider Words of Truth as a vehicle for your message? Your message can be in the hands of readers within 14-16 days of its reception. I cannot promise you I will publish anything you send, but I promise to give it full

I Am Afraid -- Truly Afraid



Betty Choate

We humans are making so much progress. We are so smart. We've grown beyond so many of the superstitions and beliefs that enslaved our forefathers. The portrayal of future human civilization on the space series "Star Trek" shows us the utopia we're reaching for, where humanism has relegated "Judeo-Christian" morals

and absolute rights and wrongs to the archaic past, along with the enslaving dependence on religion and on a god who demands service and obedience of us.

The early transitions into that future are already upon us -- not simply out there in the secular world where unbelief was already rampant, but also in the "believing" world, and it is making rapid progress as it sweeps into the Lord's church.

Humanism -- this is the religion which originated with Satan in the Garden of Eden and has been one of his most powerful tools in every age since the beginning. What lies did Satan tell Eve? that the

forbidden fruit: (1) was not harmful; (2) that it would make them wise; and (3) that they would become "like God" or as it says in the Hebrew account, ". . . you will be gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5).

Humanism says there is no God or Satan, but rather, man is the pinnacle of this world. It scoffs at "religion" and declares that humans are growing beyond such a superstitious need.

Humanism says there is no God or Satan, but rather, man is the pinnacle of this world. It scoffs at "religion" and declares that humans are growing beyond such a superstitious need.

The majority of the professors and honored men in the universities around the world believe and actively teach the tenets of humanism. They are

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I Am Afraid -- Truly Afraid

Continued From Page 2

rotting the fabric of society, as they mold minds with their subtle or not-so-subtle attacks on faith.

Educators in the "believing" world have also been affected by the mind-set of "maturing past religious superstitions." Oh, of course they would claim to believe in God and to champion His cause -- but most of them are too "mature" now to accept the Biblical accounts as literal. They claim that literal interpretation limits the message and often renders it ineffectual for today's world. So they liberate our minds -- everything in the scriptures is interpreted as being "spiritual" in meaning, by one "authority" or another.

Recently, I read a child's story of the creation and was impressed by the fact that the wording was ambiguous enough that most of the theories floating around could be fitted in to it. There was no mention of "days" so the question of literal or figurative days was avoided altogether. Of course in omitting that part of the Biblical record, man was using his own wisdom and discretion to rewrite and edit God's account.

These new freedoms with reading and interpreting the inspired record (a record which most religious teachers actually attribute solely to the humans who penned the books, not to God's verbal inspiration) allow professors in seminaries (and their students, some of whom are Christian men whose seminary education position them as professors in our Christian universities, teaching the young people of the Lord's church) to teach from the perspective of liberated hermeneutics.

Of course this view of God's word has been practiced all along by denominational groups, stressing that the "spirit" of the thing is what matters, not the "letter of the law." That attitude has fostered the many varied and conflicting beliefs, and has brought the majority of denominational people to the point of teaching that the only thing God wants is that we "be good and do good" -- and that none of the specific rules or points of teaching in the Bible are so essential that a person would be lost for failing to obey them.

Therefore, "the church is not important." "Faith is what saves." "God wouldn't condemn anyone for not 'going to church' --worshipping." "Surely the person who has never heard of God will be saved." "Hell is only eternal destruction -- annihilation, not eternal punishment." "There's no literal hell." "The new earth will be this world, refined."

The reasoning which allows "religious" professors and leaders to espouse such beliefs, while at the same time claiming to believe the Bible, is their "hermeneutics," their perspective for interpreting what they read. Anything which would require faith to be understood as literal is calmly and smoothly declared to be spiritual instead.

*Thus, the "creation" becomes an evolutionary procedure under God's oversight, spanning eons of time.

*The flood covered Noah's "world," not the entire earth.

*Jonah was not real.

*Job was only a poem.

*The miracles of the Bible were spiritual and symbolic: Lazarus didn't die; he merely committed a terrible sin which separated him from God and his loved ones. When Jesus came, he brought Lazarus to repentance so that he was "restored" to "spiritual life."

*Jesus was not born of a virgin, but of a young woman. He never claimed for himself a special relationship of sonship to God. All of us can be spiritual "sons of God" and all of us have that same spark of the Divine living within us.

This method of reading the scriptures, of changing plain language into symbolic spiritual meanings, is responsible for the denominational divisions among "believers," and for the many divergent and conflicting doctrines. It was a curse on the world, even out there "in the world."

But through two opposing ends of one spectrum, these problems are sweeping the Lord's family as well.

On the one hand, we have learned too much -- too much of human knowledge, of human

confidence in human logistics, and God is being squeezed into a pathetic role of superstition-monger.

Have we forgotten God's words through Paul: "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? . . . Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men . . . But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty . . ." (I Corinthians 1:20, 25).

If we are to save the American church from the "liberal" doctrines all around us, we must determine to return to God's book and to ingest it into our souls.

Christians have become "too oriented" to the world, too caught up in a language born from the mouth of Satan.

On the other hand, we have a tremendous vacuum in the church: For years, we were known as "People of the Book," but that statement is no longer true. An appalling ignorance of God's word causes our children and young people, as well as many older Christians, to fall prey to whatever "new hermeneutics" is taught them. It is true of us today, as it was true of the whole nation of Israel: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. . ." (Hosea 4:6).

If we are to save the American church from the "liberal" doctrines all around us, we must determine to return to God's book and to ingest it into our souls. May God help us to discern between His knowledge and the "wisdom" of the world. We must be guardians of the truth.

--Rt. 2 Box 156, Winona MS 38967.

From This View Point

Continued From Page 2

the church (Matthew 16:24-26). Preach and teach the gospel until people believe it (Romans 1:16). God has placed His saving power in the gospel (Romans 6:17-18).

Soul winners are wise (Proverbs 11:30; Daniel 12:1-3). The church must be a "soul centered church," or it cannot be a "Christ centered church." Jesus died for every person (Hebrews 2:9), therefore, he wants every soul saved (II Peter 3:9). May the church go after souls.

--1001 6th Ave., S.E. Cullman, AL 35050.

Compromise

Continued From Page 1

Let God be heard, and let us "preach the word." If any preacher does not know the "Word" let him quit having running fits long enough to study about five hours per day for the next ten years and he can then tell his audience what God says.

down and out and let some old brother get up and read the Scriptures to the dear people who have come to hear the Word. I don't mind flowers on the table, but when I am hungry I want first of all plenty of good substantial food. I can't live on flowers. If you can "preach the word" and make a pretty speech out of it, well and good, but otherwise, just "preach the word." Don't compromise the Truth for anyone, nor under any circumstances. Of course, let wisdom and prudence direct you as to the best way to preach the Truth.

--Via Lipscomb Lectures, 1947.

Egypt Holds Three Million Hostage



Bobby Key

Some 1500 years before the birth of our Lord, Egypt, a mighty nation with an cruel, ambitious, and self-centered king, held the entire Hebrew nation captive. The Egyptians had grown wealthy from the slave-labor of others. The entire affair had started out innocently enough, with

Joseph, as governor of Egypt, bringing his family to dwell in the land to escape famine in Canaan. The little family, consisting of less than fourscore souls, had multiplied. When a new king arose who knew not Joseph, kindness turned to cruelty, and Joseph's entire family became slaves.

The Lord looked upon the affliction of his people when they bowed their heads and worshipped. Moses and Aaron were sent to Pharaoh saying, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go." Pharaoh responded, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go" (Exodus 5:1, 2).

When we become a Christian, let us leave nothing behind. Those who enter God's service must do so with their whole heart. The world must be left behind, and we must go all the way taking our entire family, as well as our earthly possessions, and consecrating all to the Lord's service.

God sent four plagues against the Egyptians, and Pharaoh was ready to talk. In his first proposal he said, "Sacrifice to your God in the land." This compromise would never do. Moses said, "It is not meet to do so; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God . . . they will stone us" (Exodus 8:25, 26). They could not sacrifice in the land without incurring displeasure both of God and their taskmasters. Nothing short of complete separation would please God (II Corinthians 6:14-17).

Pharaoh offered a second compromise. "I will let you go that you may sacrifice to your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away" (Exodus 8:28). The king undoubtedly had heard of their design to return to Canaan. He knew that if they left Egypt, they would not return. He was not willing that they should get out of his sight; they must stay near enough to remain under his control. If one who becomes a Christian remains too close to the world, he will likely fall away.

God sent three more plagues against the Egyptians before Pharaoh sent for Moses with a third offer. "Go now ye that are men, and serve the Lord; for that ye did desire" (Exodus 10:11). Pharaoh knew that as long as he could keep the children in Egypt, just that long Israel would remain in bondage to him. How long would parents remain in the wilderness while their children were in Egypt? Jehovah could have no part with Pharaoh; He desires all or nothing (Matthew 6:33). Children must be taken into consideration in any decision made by parents. Children cannot be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord if they are left at home, or allowed to attend social functions, while parents worship God.

Two additional plagues are sent upon the Egyptians. "And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and herds be stayed: let your little ones also go

with you" (Exodus 10:24). Moses response is classic. "Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not a hoof be left behind" (Exodus 10:26). The king said, "Leave your business in Egypt." Some are willing to be devoutly religious if they can confine their religion to the church building, but a religion that does not permeate and purify, uplift and sanctify business and business relations is not the religion of Christ (II Corinthians 10:5).

Egypt was not the place for God's redeemed. When we become a Christian, let us leave nothing behind. Those who enter God's service must do so with their whole heart. The world must be left behind, and we must go all the way taking our entire family, as well as our earthly possessions, and consecrating all to the Lord's service.

This story is relevant to our age, revealing the necessity for complete obedience to God and complete separation from the world.

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

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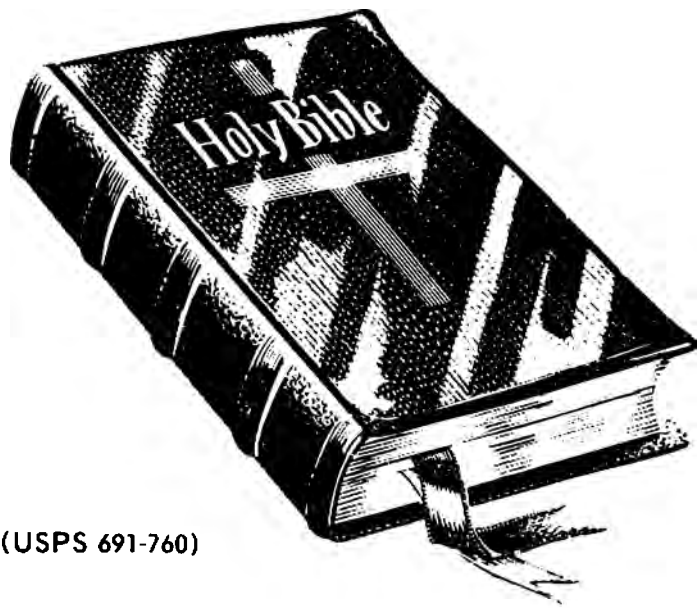
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Words Of Truth

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—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 27

APRIL 12, 1991

NUMBER 15

Are We Pillars Or Caterpillars?



Edsel Burleson

about 10% are willing to do the work and 90% are willing to let them do it.

Many people reach for the stool when there is a piano to be moved. God doesn't expect more of anyone than he can do, but He does expect us to do our best. Most will never be able to do big things for God, but all of us could do little things in a bigger way. The man who moved the mountain began by carrying away a few small stones. Often, one who says it can't be done is interrupted by someone doing it. The most disappointed people are those who get what's coming to them. If one sows wild oats he need not pray for a crop failure. Life is a one way street, and none of us are coming back.

We would see far more results if we weren't so interested in who gets the credit. Thomas Jefferson said, "He does most in God's great world who does his best in his own little world." If one can't do great things, he can do small things in a great way. Zacchaeus had short legs, but he outran the crowd when Jesus passed through town.

The problem with most is failure to recognize opportunity because it comes clothed as work. We need an alarm clock that will ring when it is time to rise to the occasion. "Footprints in the sands of

Someone has said, "Church members are either pillars or caterpillars. And pillars hold up the church; the caterpillars just crawl in and out." In every church this reality is very evident. There are few, comparatively, who are actively involved in getting the Lord's work done. Usually

time were not made sitting down." The fellow who "does it now" has time to do something else while the other fellow is "still thinking about it."

Most will never be able to do big things for God, but all of us could do little things in a bigger way.

Someone has said, "Nobody don't never get nothing for nothing nowhere, no time, nohow." If

what you did yesterday still looks big to you, you haven't done much today. Jesus challenges us to action by setting the example himself. He said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).

What hope can one have who has depended upon another to do his work? The Lord cannot say "Well done" if one hasn't done well, or, "servant" if one hasn't served, or, "Thou hast been faithful" if one has been unfaithful.

--1569 Berry Rd., Birmingham, AL 35226.

Keep The Door Of My Lips



Glenn A. Posey

3:6). It's an instrument that beckons at the command of the heart, "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34). It could be said that the tongue is only an extension of the heart. It's the heart's "loud-speaker."

Jesus warned us about our words. "For by thy words, thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 13:37). We

"Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips (Psalm 141:3). Because of the power of the tongue the Psalmist petitions God to help him to watch his speech.

It's difficult to guard the tongue. The tongue can become "a world of iniquity" (James

communicate by words. The easiest way to ruin a person's influence is by a foul mouth. The power of words is taught in James 3.

The "unbridled tongue" is like a high spirited horse that has been scared out of his wits. He goes ripping and tearing at will. To such a spirit, Paul says, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Colossians 4:6).

Unguarded and hasty speech, prompted by uncontrolled thoughts, pour out a multitude of words that become a revelation of man's real character (Matthew 15:16-20). How desperately man needs a sentinel or guard at the door of his mouth to keep watch by day and night.

James gives the magna charta for our lips, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (1:19). Oh, the beauty of self-control. It far exceeds any other attribute that man may possess.

As did David, I pray daily, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."

1001 6th Ave. S.E., Cullman, AL 35055.



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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Christian Youth Camps



David Wade

godly parents, find the added encouragement to obey the gospel while at a Christian camp. Numerous children not reared in the church have found their real purpose in life while attending a Christian camp. Many adults, who otherwise may have been only nominal Christians, are filled with

Christian Youth Camps are a great means of helping our youth to grow in wisdom, stature and in favor with God and man (cf. Luke 2:52). The good that has been accomplished through Christian camps cannot be measured. Many of our youth, brought up in the church by

zeal for the Lord's cause because of their work and association with Christian camps.

Parents, do your children a favor and enroll them in a good summer Christian camp. Parents, do yourself a favor and volunteer to work a week at summer camp. It will be one of the most rewarding and inexpensive vacations you could ever take. You will be investing in eternity.

Right now is the time many camps are conducting walk-a-thons, skate-a-thons, yard sales, and the like. Camper's fees do not cover all the costs, so therefore, fund raisers are a necessity. Sponsor the children in their fund raising activities. Pitch in and help in these activities. Sometimes people who are not members of the church put us to shame by their support of these good works.

Christian camping is no fad. It is here to stay. Get Involved.

Who Is A False Teacher?

There are many people in the world today who claim to be teaching God's word. Most of these are false teachers. They are able to deceive the average person simply because he doesn't take the time to investigate. He is impressed with their education, sincerity, and evangelistic zeal.



J. C. Choate

Therefore the blind lead the blind and in the end both will be lost. How sad!

There are many people in the world today who claim to be teaching God's word. Most of these are false teachers. They are able to deceive the average person simply because he doesn't take the time to investigate.

Most people want to think that all religious teachers are of God, but this is not the case. In this

Continued On Page 3

Pow Wow!

Walkathon

20 - Year Reunion

Indian Creek Youth Camp

May 11, 1991 8:30 - 4:00

Walkathon 8:30

Fish Fry - 11:30 - 2:00

All You Can Eat

Adults \$7.00

Ages 4-12 \$4.00

0-3 Free

Yard Sale - Bake Sale

Arts & Crafts

Special Ceremony 2:00

Who Is A False Teacher?

Continued From Page 2

brief study we are going to note some of the warnings in the Bible and list some of the marks of a false teacher. Please take heed to this information.

Christ warned, "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:23, 24). Paul talked about those who preached another Jesus, another spirit, another gospel, posing as apostles, workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. He continues by saying, "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (II Corinthians 11:14, 15).

Now, let's notice some marks of a false teacher, and there are many. In the long ago, Moses wrote the words of the Lord, "But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath spoken? 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, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deuteronomy 18:20-22). The same principle would apply today. There are many who freely predict the day of the Lord's return, or claim that they can miraculously heal the sick, and do many other things. If that which they claim doesn't come to pass, and it never does, then such people should be labeled as false teachers.

Paul said to the Galatians, "But there be some that trouble you, an would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:7-9). We have the gospel of Christ clearly revealed in the scripture. Paul informs us that it is based on the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Corinthians 15:1-4). Then the commands of the gospel are faith in Christ, repentance of all sin, confession of Christ as being the Son of God, and baptism for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Romans 10:10; Acts 2:38). Now, if anyone preaches something contrary to that then he should be marked as a false teacher.

Paul wrote the Roman Christians, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceived the hearts of the simple"

(Romans 16:17, 18).

Furthermore, it can be established that those who are members of churches and wear names that you cannot read about in the Bible, are false teachers. The Bible teaches that Christ established his church (Matthew 16:18), that he has but one (Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 1:18), and it wears his name (Romans 16:16; Acts 11:26). Others who may be marked as false teachers include those who claim to have received special revelations, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, can speak in tongues, perform miracles, and so on. We now have the word of God and it completely furnishes us unto every good work (II Timothy 3:16-17). That means then that the miraculous age ceased with the coming of the Lord's word (I Corinthians 13:9-10; James 1:25). Faith is not produced now by seeing miracles but by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). Since those who make these claims are in

man-made organizations, and oppose each other, they demonstrate that they do not have God's power working in them.

John wrote, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). He goes on to say that if one comes without the doctrine of Christ, then "receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (II John 9-11).

My friends, be not deceived. Please go back to God's word to be sure that you have the truth. Read and study the scripture and do what it says and only then can you be sure that you are doing God's will.

--Publisher, World Evangelism, P.O. Box 72, Winona, MS 38967.

Conditioning Ourselves To Sin



Bobby Duncan

hearts and lives of those who are not vigilant. Many years ago I heard the late beloved N. B. Hardeman preach a sermon on sin. He quoted the first verse of Psalm 1: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." He then made the observation that this passage points up the progressive nature of sin: "walketh . . . standeth . . . sitteth." He illustrated it by saying a young man may have heard of the gambling dens of the large city. He finds himself in the city, and his curiosity leads him to walk back and forth in front of one of those places to see what it looks like. He is soon emboldened to stop and stand in front of the door so as to be able to get a better look. Having stood there for a while, he finds the courage to go inside and sit down so he might participate.

As a rule, we do not jump off into sin all at once; sin is too repulsive for us to be able to do so. But we drift into sin little by little, so that none of our departures from the straight and narrow are so great as to be noticeable. If we are not extremely careful, we will in time come to embrace that which we once despised as an ugly monster.

Alexander Pope (1688-1744) wrote:

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,

As to be hated needs but to be seen;

Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,

We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

It is a fact that sin often gains gradual acceptance in the

This is the very thing that has happened in our society. There was a time not too far distant when divorce was a shameful thing, when abortion was illegal, when fornication and adultery were not even spoken of in polite company, and when homosexuality was practically unheard of and certainly not advertised. Now all of these things are considered to be perfectly acceptable by a large segment of our society. It did not get that way all at once. In the language of Pope, we familiarized ourselves with these things we had properly hated, we decided to endure them, we pitied them, then embraced them.

As a rule, we do not jump off into sin all at once; sin is too repulsive for us to be able to do so. But we drift into sin little by little, so that none of our departures from the straight and narrow are so great as to be noticeable.

Is this not also the very thing that has happened in the church with such moral issues as social drinking, dancing, and wearing immodest apparel? There was a time when everyone, both in and out of the church, understood clearly that Christian people did not engage in these things. The change did not take place all at once, but gradually. The fact these departures from right living took place little by little, so that they were hardly noticeable, does not mean they are any less sin. Remember! God's word is the standard by which we will be judged.

--2805 Madison St., Adamsville, AL 35005.

"Some Shall Depart From The Faith"



R. W. Gray

The ominous warning of a coming apostasy in Paul's first letter to Timothy provides helpful insight as to what is involved when men depart from the faith (I Timothy 4:1-16). Those departing from the faith would teach demoniac doctrines, forbid marriage, and command that certain meats be refused. In order to avoid the pitfall to which others would succumb Paul admonished the preacher, "Take heed to thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in THEM . . ." (I Timothy 4:16). In the same context is found reference to the undergirding doctrine of the Divinity of Christ and correct demeanor in the house of God (I Timothy 3:15, 16).

We must appeal to our beloved brethren who are going off after strange doctrines that they return to their first love; that they see the folly of rejecting the pattern the Lord has provided by his Holy Spirit (Ephesians 3:1-11). We cannot simply stand by and allow them to be swallowed up by the Adversary without letting them know how much we love them and how eager we are for their return.

Paul opens another door of faith from which one may depart when he states that the man failing to provide financial support for his house had "denied the faith" (I Timothy 5:8). To be sound in faith is to be sound in doctrine and speech (Titus 2:1, 2, 8). While it is true that a repudiation of the Lord's Divinity constitutes wholesale apostasy, it is equally clear that a rejection of the things taught by the Divine Son carries the same implication. This is why Jesus said, "He that rejecteth ME, and receiveth not MY WORDS, hath one that judgeth him: . . ." (John 12:48). Not the one who simply acknowledges Christ's Lordship with his mouth, but the doer of the things taught by the Lord is approved of God (Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46). Those who do the Father's will may go to heaven. And Jesus explains what he has in view: "Therefore whosoever heareth THESE SAYINGS OF MINE and DOETH THEM. . ." (Matthew 7:21, 24).

Some among the Galatians churches had pervert-

ed the gospel and had thus invited the wrath of God upon themselves when they sought to bind circumcision upon the church (Galatians 1:6-9; 5:1-4).

It is correct to say that when one departs from the teachings of Christ as found in his last will and testament he has departed from the faith. His law must be written on our hearts and performed in our lives (Hebrews 2:1-4; 12:25; 8:10). If we would know the truth that will make us free we must continue "in his word" (John 8:31, 32).

Having seen that the will of Christ must be heard and obeyed (Hebrews 5:9; II Thessalonians 1:7-9) in order to abide in the faith (II John 9-11), we are glued to the idea of what some scoffingly call "pattern theology." Certainly so. If the kingdom of God is without a constitution, is wholly without direction or law of any kind, it cannot stand. Inasmuch as we are not lawless people but under law to Christ (I Corinthians 9:21), we have him as our "pattern" in teaching and in conduct. We have right to the tree of life at last only when we have kept his commandments (Revelation 22:14). We are freed from sin because we elect to follow the Lord in obedience rather than die in sin (Romans

6:16-17).

Yes, to forbid marriage, command to abstain from meats, to bind circumcision as a Christian duty, refusal to provide for our families, and/or any repudiation of anything taught by Christ in his blood sealed testament, is to depart from the faith. The Bible is so abundantly clear at this point that one must close both eyes, ears, and heart to miss it. We must appeal to our beloved brethren who are going off after strange doctrines that they return to their first love; that they see the folly of rejecting the pattern the Lord has provided by his Holy Spirit (Ephesians 3:1-11). We cannot simply stand by and allow them to be swallowed up by the Adversary without letting them know how much we love them and how eager we are for their return. "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). "And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully . . . Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things" (II Timothy 2:5, 7).

--563 McGukin Road, Bremen, GA 30110.

Jesus And The Scriptures



John Gipson

We live in an age when there has been much discussion about the Scriptures. We hear talk about inspiration, inerrancy, myth, and "Is the Bible really the word of God?" Jesus Christ had something to say about the authority of the Scriptures. There was a time when the Jews were pressing Jesus to tell them if he was the Christ. Jesus said, "I told you, and you do not believe." He then went on to say, "I and the Father are one." That was too much for his audience and they took up stones to stone him. In defense Jesus appealed to the Scriptures, and of these he said, "and scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). For the present let us forget tracing the argument he makes in defense of himself, and focus on what he says about the Scriptures.

Christ appealed to the Jews by saying, "Is it not written in your law?" At first thought we might suppose that he is referring to some passage from the first five books of the Old Testament. But such is not the case. He is quoting from Psalm 82:6. It seems that his purpose is to attribute to the Scriptures a legal or authoritative character. They become the final court of appeal. But he goes even farther by stating that "Scripture cannot be broken."

As one has well said, "The concept of breaking a law is one that is clearly comprehended. If a man

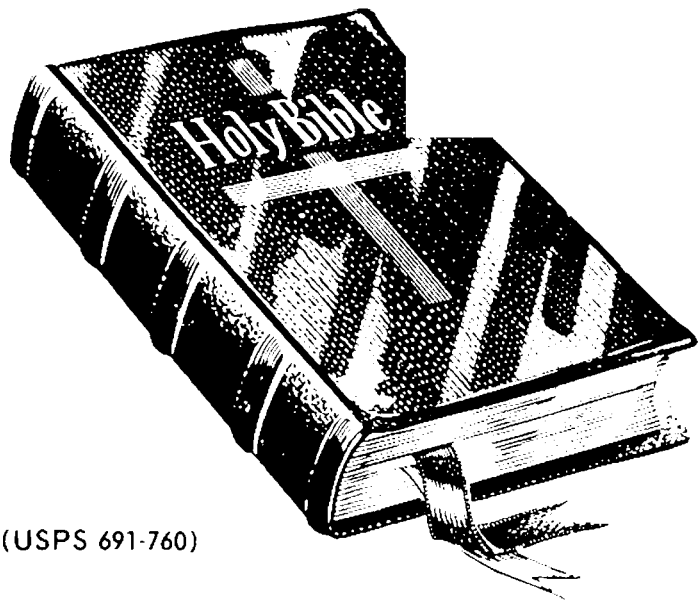
breaks a law, he is guilty and so liable to punishment. When he breaks the law, the lawbreaker treats the law as nonexistent, and in effect annuls it. The Scriptures, however, possess an authority so great that they cannot be broken. What they say will stand and cannot be annulled or set aside. If the Scripture speaks, the issue is settled once and for all; it cannot be broken. Since the Scriptures cannot lie broken, so our Lord's argument runs, these particular words, which form a part of the Scriptures, likewise cannot be broken."

Amidst all of the words being written and spoken about the Bible by learned men citing different ideas and theories, I hear above the din the voice of the Son of God clearly saying, "Scripture cannot be broken."

When Jesus appealed to Psalm 82 he might have said, "this Scripture is true," or "this particular Scripture cannot be broken." But he didn't. He made a general statement about every part of Scripture. He said, "Scripture cannot be broken."

Amidst all of the words being written and spoken about the Bible by learned men citing different ideas and theories, I hear above the din the voice of the Son of God clearly saying, "Scripture cannot be broken."

--Little Rock, Arkansas.



(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 27

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Who Gets The Credit?



John Gipson

"The Lord has blessed us with our finest year ever." (Translation: Your work would grow too if you worked 60 hours a week as I do, or if you had my ability in the pulpit. I just don't know what's wrong with the rest of you.)

"God has really touched the hearts of our people to give." (Translation: We have been working like

In a place far, far, far from here a preacher friend of mine attended a preacher's luncheon. One unnamed preacher stood up to testify about the wonderful work God was doing at the Railway Crossing Church where he preaches.

dogs to get the money in so we could build a bigger building. We've used four committees, two professional consultants, 44 volunteers and a media expert to put the screws on them. So far we haven't resorted to whips and chains, but . . .)

"God has given the increase." (Translation: Our gymnasium and olympic-size swimming pool are the talk of the neighborhood. And our aerobics class has the prettiest instructor in town.)

"I'm sorry that this will be my last meeting with you, but God has opened up a wonderful door of opportunity for me at the Fifth Avenue Church where the famous Dr. Smooth has been preaching for the past twenty years." (Translation: I never thought I would land that church. I've been letting

everyone in the whole brotherhood know that that is where I wanted to go. I hate to think about all of the postage I've used, or the phone calls I have made. But finally my well-placed contacts paid off.)

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works (a fine idea!) and give glory to your Father who is in heaven (Wouldn't you know!)."

—P.O. Box 228, Little Rock, AR 72203.

Success Or Faithfulness?



Bobby Key

lost souls to Christ while others have worked just as hard and long with far less success.

During the past few years, the successful preacher, as the world measures success, has been labeled as "great." Now I like to see responses as well as the next person, and I have had the privilege of seeing 60 or 70 people come forward during my meetings with 10 or 15 baptisms in one service. When this happens, my heart is thrilled. On the other hand, I have worked just as hard, expending all my strength in preaching the Word, without one response.

If we are not careful, we will begin to use the

Having been reared in the shadow of Abilene Christian College, my Alma Mater, I have had at least a nodding acquaintance with many of our Bible professors and best known preachers. I consider this a blessing. Many of these men have been very successful in leading

world's standard of measurement, judging preachers by number of responses, size of congregation, and salary received. Just because a man's name is constantly before the public and he is heralded before the world as great doesn't necessarily mean he has made first string on the Lord's team. Even as we have rubbed shoulders with some of the better known preachers, we cherish the memory of our association with those noble souls laboring in out of the way places in almost total obscurity. Only a handful outside of their communities know of their labor and sacrifice for the Lord. Perhaps in God's sight, these faithful but unknown workers are the "great preachers" of our day.


God nowhere requires us to be successful, but it is mandatory that we be faithful -- he doesn't demand that we be popular and a promoter, but does demand that we be faithful. "Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (I Corinthians 4:2). Ezekiel was called to preach to a rebellious people. God said, "they will not hearken unto thee: for they will not hearken unto me." The prophet was to go anyway so that the people could know of God's warning and stand in judgment without excuse. "And they, whether they

will hear, or whether they will forbear, yet shall they know that there hath been a prophet among them" (Ezekiel 2:5). He was called to faithfulness to the task, not success as the world conceives it. Faithfulness is the primary requisite of service, not apparent accomplishment. By the world's standards, Christ and most of his disciples were complete failures.

God nowhere requires us to be successful, but it is mandatory that we be faithful -- he doesn't demand that we be popular and a promoter, but does demand that we be faithful.

We believe the writer was wrong when he penned these words some time back, "When all is said and done, a sermon is a success or failure depending on the results it produces." This is just not so! Study the message and results of the prophets,

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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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Growth

Gary W. Kirkendall

Dr. Flavil Yeakley, of the Harding Center for Church Growth Studies, has reported both in The World Evangelist and The Christian Chronicle that the Churches of Christ are indeed growing once again. In 1965 our growth rate was five percent overall. However, between 1965 and 1980 that rate declined an average of 0.33 percent per year. It seems the turning point was 1985 when no real growth could be detected, but the decline was halted. In 1986 Churches of Christ grew by 0.5 percent. 1987 saw a one percent growth. Dr. Yeakley feels that the church will experience a three percent growth by the close of this decade.

These figures are encouraging even if they are not staggering. They represent an opportunity to create a springboard effect as we enter the next century. These figures may reflect a brotherhood more concerned with the unchurched, or a tired generation looking for stability and definitive answers. Regardless, we should pray and work for growth. Our task is to plant, water and harvest while looking to God always for the blessing to increase.

The danger that may await us is the demon of self-satisfaction. Our "growth rate" deceived us once before. During the sixties, our boast was that "the Churches of Christ is the fastest growing religion in America!" We impressed no one but ourselves.

Continued On Page 3



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Is It Scriptural To Publish Articles By Christian Women In Religious Papers?



David Wade

Recently a Christian sister called me complaining that I "ruined Words of Truth by publishing articles written by Christian women." The argument runs that, "If it is wrong for women to preach or teach in a church assembly in the presence of men, then it is just as wrong to publish their written sermons."

A few observations are in order. The scriptures under consideration are I Corinthians 14:34 and I Timothy 2:11-12. "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak . . . Let the women learn in silence (quietness ASV) with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

Most definitely, these passages prohibit the woman from preaching or teaching over the man in a public forum or worship assembly. However, the printed page is an entirely different forum that public worship assemblies. The late brother Gus Nichols alluded to that distinction in the February 7, 1964 issue of WORDS OF TRUTH. "We rejoice that you are taking WORDS OF TRUTH and furnishing us this medium of visiting with you in the sacred precincts of your home and studying with you and your family." It should be obvious that the above passages do not govern the "sacred precincts of your home."

Can a woman teach a man in a private setting? "And he (Apollos) began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla (wife) had heard,

The Preciousness Of A Wife



Tom Childers

also.

She was a Christian but he was not, yet they still loved each other. He went to church services with her before they were married, but he had already made up his mind that once they were married he would quit going to church and he would see to it that she quit

The first Sunday they were married, as she was getting ready to go to services, he tried to get her to stay home with him, but she went to services alone. This went on for several years. Then came their first child. She missed two Sundays when the baby was born but the next Sunday she and the baby went to church services while her husband stayed at home alone. One

THEY took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:26). If a woman is forbidden to teach a man in private, then Priscilla sinned when she assisted Aquila with Apollos. Such is not the case. Neither is it a sin for a woman to write a religious article that may be read by a man.

If we take the position that such is unscriptural, we also have a problem with other Bible examples. What are men to do with the Song of Elisabeth and the Magnificat of Mary? (Luke 1:41-55). These words extol the salvation of the Lord. Truly, they were spoken in the Old Testament dispensation, but they were recorded by Luke in the New Testament age, years after the church was established. Is it a sin for a man to READ the words of Elisabeth and Mary? I have preached from these verses. Was I wrong in doing this? Certainly not!

Those who make it a law that a man cannot read a religious article written by a woman must go one step further. They, of necessity, must also omit the use of any spiritual songs WRITTEN by women. Our song books are filled with songs written by women, many of whom are not members of the Lord's church. By what logic do you disallow the one and allow the other? "Oh consistency, Thou art a jewel."

This issue has come to the forefront because of the debate over women's role in the work of the church. We are very concerned that some churches are installing women elders, deacons and preachers. We must ever be on guard and resist these departures from the faith. But at the same time, we must be careful not to make laws for God in those areas where he has extended liberty.

Brother Nichols published articles by faithful Christian women. I do too, not because he did, rather, because I believe, like him, that such practice is scriptural.

Sunday while she was dressing, he went outside and disconnected the coil wire on the car.

He disconnected the coil wire on the car to keep her from going to church.

When she and the baby got in the car, it would not start. She wrapped up her baby and started walking to the building which was about two miles away. Feeling like a heel, the husband called her back, told her what he had done, asked her to forgive him, and took her to services. That night he went with her. Two weeks later, he was baptized into Christ.

Sometime later, this man started preaching the gospel and since has baptized over 3,000 people into Christ.

Continued On Page 3

You Should Receive Financial Reports From All Works Which You Help Support!

It is a matter of being a good steward. There are many requests for help! We have knowledge of instances where no reports are made as regards funds received and spent. Unless you receive a detailed accounting, then you cannot know either

the amount or the propriety of expenditures.

We do not believe elders are acting as good stewards when they fail to request complete financial accounting from all works, benevolent and evangelistic, supported by the church. Paul instructs that we are to provide things honest in the

sight of all men. If this means those who receive funds should give account, does it not also follow that those who provide support should expect, even DEMAND such reporting? So too, individuals have similar responsibilities in the matter of those causes we choose to support.

Growth

Continued From Page 2

The danger that may await us is the demon of self-satisfaction. Our "growth rate" deceived us once before. During the sixties, our boast was that "the Churches of Christ is the fastest growing religion in America!" We impressed no one but ourselves.

In the years since, the character of the church has changed. Our rural roots have been forced to deal with urban migration. Our gospel meetings are giving way to face-to-face evangelism and our identity is being challenged by the necessity of change.

I am encouraged and hopeful about the opportunities that await those who are prepared to apply the timeless message and seize new opportunities. We must not become so tradition-bound that we miss this opportunity for growth. God save us from growing fat and satisfied with the status-quo. I pray He will challenge us with opportunities and that we may greet as friends rather than strangers those who "threaten" our heritage.

"Surely, the preachers' greatest sin is to put people to sleep with the greatest story ever told." -- Bruce W. Thielemann

--Via The Friendly Visitor, P.O. Box 62, Auburn, AL 36831.

Success Or Faithfulness?

Continued From Page 1

apostles and preachers of the Bible.

God told us to teach His Word. When we have done this task to the best of our ability, whether anyone believes it and obeys it or not, God is pleased with the faithfulness of the messenger. The Lord's highest commendation in the day of judgment will be for faithfulness in fulfilling His will (Matthew 25:21, 23). Let us stop equating faithfulness with success. After all, many faithful souls will sing God's praise in the celestial city of God who were not too successful in getting large numbers of people to believe and obey Heaven's message. It might be good to talk with Noah sometimes about the difference between success and faithfulness.

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

GOSPEL MEETING

**Sixth Avenue Church Of Christ
1501 Sixth Avenue
Jasper, Alabama 35501**

Sunday, May 12 - Thursday, May 16, 1991

Topics

Sunday, 10:25 a.m.

Sin And The Crucifixion Of Jesus

Sunday, 7:00 p.m.

Have You Seen The Kingdom?

Monday, 7:00 p.m.

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.

Identifying Christian "Criminals"

Wednesday, 7:00 p.m.

**What Is Necessary For A Church
To Be The Church of Christ?**

Thursday, 7:00 p.m.

The Sure Way To Heaven

Evangelist



Tom Holland
Brentwood, Tennessee

The Preciousness Of A Wife

Continued From Page 2

Question: What would have happened if the wife had given in the first Sunday and stayed home with her unbelieving husband instead of going to church?

"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear" (1 Peter 3:1-2).

--4102 Macon Rd., Columbus, GA 31907.

You Preach First



W. T. Allison

The first sermon preached each Sunday is not by the minister, but by you. You preach a message of good cheer when you say "Good morning!" to those you meet when you park your car and when you are in the hallway and classroom.

You preach a message of "Welcome!" we have room for you!" when you slide over in the pew instead of forcing others to squeeze in front of you. You preach a message of hope and joy when you sing enthusiastically during the song service.

You preach a message about the power of prayer

when you fervently enter into our time of prayer together. You preach a message about respect when you listen attentively while the preacher is speaking.

Many messages are preached before the minister stands up to bring his message. If your message is positive and consistent, then the message given from the pulpit will be much better received.

You preach a message of love when you smile, say hello, and introduce yourself to visitors. You preach a message about faith when you give your offering. You preach a message about the importance of the Scriptures when you bring your Bible.

Many messages are preached before the minister stands up to bring his message. If your message is positive and consistent, then the message given from the pulpit will be much better received.

Come each service prepared to preach your sermon.

--1901 Schillinger Rd., Mobile, AL 36695.

Volunteers

Charles Hodge

When will we ever learn? Down at church when a need arises we ask for volunteers. Few volunteer. Fewer still persevere. Not much is done. If it is to move chairs, etc. this is wise, practical, efficient. But a permanent need arises like teachers? We ask people to volunteer to teach! Guys volunteer to become preachers! Beloved, this is NOT how God does it!

Use your noggin! One simple illustration will prove this point. Ask men to volunteer to be elders! Is that the way to select great holy elders? Too many now are running for the office. Make sure they don't get elected! Volunteers would be catastrophic in the eldership. The same logic applies with teachers, preachers, other responsible ministries.

Now read your Bible! Jesus was extremely hard on volunteers. He usually ran volunteers off! You

see, Jesus called men! He commissioned men. Men in responsible church positions need the motivation of a calling! God called prophets . . . not volunteers.

Paradoxically, many of God's "called" were very reluctant. Remember Moses? Gideon? Jeremiah? They not only did not volunteer -- they argued with God over the job! Beware of men who volunteer to take over the church.

I never cease to be amazed with guys who think they should be preachers. One had a business card printed with incorrect spelling, "Churchs of Christ Preacher." He wanted me to get him a big Texas church. How could one know? He could counsel with others. In the Bible Timothy had "elders' hands" given him. Plus the hands of Paul.

Preaching, profound church work, are all too vital to be left to volunteers. Let God call them.

Think this over.

Be A Fugitive

nothing wrong with fornication. Paul said flee from it. Don't get near it by the sin of pornography. Don't get near it by the sin of foreplay on dates. Flee fornication. Become a fugitive to it. Wait for marriage and there enjoy sexual activity as God planned it.

Paul told the Corinthians a little later, "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry" (I Corinthians 10:14). The people of Paul's day were tempted literally to worship false gods. Today we are tempted more subtly by the devil to let someone or something take the place of God and be lord of our life. One commentator rendered Paul's warning here: "Keep on running from idolatry." This is the proper expression for being a fugitive from idolatry.

In II Timothy 2:22, Paul told Timothy, "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Timothy would have to flee from lust in order to follow the good Paul outlined for him. And so with us. Young people, if anything interferes with your righteousness, you must become a fugitive to that thing.

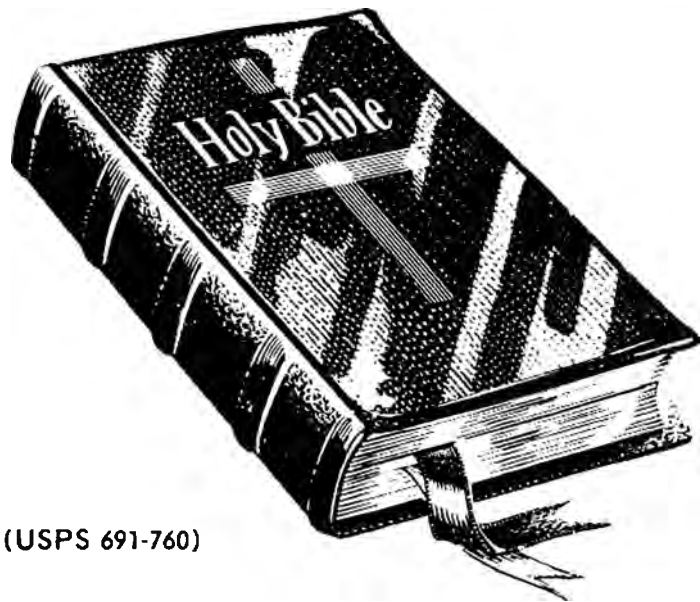
Ask men to volunteer to be elders! Is that the way to select great holy elders? Too many now are running for the office. Make sure they don't get elected! Volunteers would be catastrophic in the eldership. The same logic applies with teachers, preachers, other responsible ministries.

Young people, if anything interferes with your righteousness, you must become a fugitive to that thing.

When we look at the Bible and see the cases in which we are told to flee, it makes us think. After all, there are two classes of people as touching the above passages: fugitives, and prisoners. Which are we?

--4207 Adamsville Parkway, Adamsville, AL 35005.

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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 27

APRIL 26, 1991

NUMBER 17

Sing Or Hum?



R. W. Gray

talk, to speak, to call." Singing is from "ado," and is used in Revelation 5:9, "And they sang a new song, SAYING, thou art worthy."

The Holy Spirit instructs us to "teach and admonish" as we sing (Colossians 3:16). "The difference between admonish and teach," observes W. E. Vine, "seems to be that, whereas the former has mainly in view the things that are wrong and call for warning, the latter has to do chiefly with the impartation of positive truth." In Greek, as in English, admonish and teach involve audible, intelligent communication.

Paul wrote, "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the UNDERSTANDING also" (I Corinthians 14:15b). As is true of preaching and praying, says Paul in this chapter, singing is also a vehicle for communicating intelligent thought. It is within a context wherein he discusses the trumpet giving an "uncertain sound" that we find Paul's admonition in regard to singing (I Corinthians 14:8). There was to be no "uncertain sound" in sermon, song, or prayer. Speaking in an unknown tongue, for example, was forbidden (I Corinthians 14:27, 28).

Acceptable praise in song, when done as worship to God, involves intelligent communication from the lips of the worshipper. Any music or so-called singing that is not a vehicle for thus communicating falls short of, or is an addition to, the music sanctioned by the Lord. For those who respect the silence of scripture, and who believe

specific commands should be followed, the issue is clear. Any would-be music that fails to teach and admonish by the impartation of intelligent thought from the lips is displeasing to God. Since the Holy Spirit has specified what must be offered any alteration, substitution, or addition is forbidden.

The practice of "humming," along with, or in addition to, "singing" is gaining momentum within our ranks. But we find neither the word nor its equivalent in the New Testament. The closest reference to it may well be the confusion of sound Paul forbids in I Corinthians 14:7-21.

"Hum" is defined: (1) "To make a low droning sound, as a bee on the wing." (2) "To sing with closed lips, NOT ARTICULATING THE WORDS." (3) "To give forth a confused, indistinct sound." (4) "A nasal, murmuring sound made to express mental concentration, deliberation, hesitation, etc." (5) "To mumble or murmur indistinctly, as from confusion or embarrassment."

No recognized definition of the word allows that humming is the music heaven requires. When humming is involved at all, it is when one is "not articulating the words." It is not possible to hum and articulate words at the same time. But the singing required involves articulating words, as has been demonstrated.

Consistency demands that we forbid humming on the same basis we omit the mechanical instrument. Both are unauthorized and represent an "addition" to, or "substitute" for, the kind of praise worship commanded of the Lord. Confused and indistinct sounds are not allowed in the teaching done in worship (I Corinthians 14:7-21). Humming, as per definition, is a confused and indistinct sound. Prohibition against speaking inaudibly would apply with equal force to the matter of humming. If our purpose in singing is to teach and admonish we should neither hum nor emit any other uncertain sound. Our words should be easily understood by all who hear (I Corinthians 14:15). If our purpose is to offer the sacrifice of praise through our High Priest, "a low droning sound, as a bee on the wing," will not suffice. We must offer,

as he requires, "the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name" (Hebrews 13:15).

Instrumental music is refused by all who respect the silence and authority of the Bible. Humming should be refused by the same believers, and for the same reason.


The practice of "humming" is very prevalent among young groups, college choruses and the like. It is often employed at performances and "entertainment" gatherings for Christian young folk. The right or the wrong of such a practice -- the advisability thereof -- should be resolved as we resolve the matter of a mechanical instrument. If one is "wrong" and/or "out of place," so is the other.

The notion is sometime advanced that humming is "acceptable" because the early church chanted whereas we use a different kind of music today. Would the proponents of this idea make the same argument in defence of instruments of music? If not, why not? There is no similarity between a chant and a hum. Chant is defined: (1) "A song: melody; singing." (2) "A short, simple song in which several syllables or words are sung in one tune." (3) "A singsong way of talking." (4) "The act of singing or reciting in a monotone, for example as in a church service."

Whether we use the Gregorian Chant or sing the four part harmony written by V. E. Howard, we are articulating words, conveying intelligent thought. The only similarity existing at all between humming and chanting is that "usually" they are both done without mechanical accompaniment.

Others feel that since humming is a "vocal sound" (strained definition) it is permissible. But a vocal sound alone does not meet the divine requirement. As has been seen, those vocal sounds made must communicate an intelligent message to the hearer. One may sing without accompaniment and still fall short of the admonition to "speak to yourselves in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" (Ephesians 5:19). We are not required simply to "sing," but to

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Words Of Truth
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The Editor's Pen
David Wade

More On "Articles By Christian Women"



David Wade

I continue to receive responses on this issue, and believe it or not, most of them are from Christian women. I appreciate the ones who have called to discuss this issue with me. All of them sincerely want to do what the Lord commands, and that is most commendable.

religious article, he now "sins" unknowingly because the woman's article had her husband's name as author. He is "condemned" while thinking he is doing right!

Take this scenario to its ultimate absurdity. If a man picks up a religious article that says "author unknown," or gives no author, he must not so much as let his eyes fall upon it. After all, there is a 50/50 chance it may have been written by a woman!

Let's consider further the matter of songbooks that was introduced in the first editorial. Our songs are to TEACH and admonish (Colossians 3:16). In one sense, our songs are WRITTEN sermons set to music. Our songbooks are filled with songs WRITTEN and COMPOSED by women, many of whom are not members of the Lord's body. Those who contend a MAN cannot read a woman's religious article in the "sacred precincts of your home" have been using, even leading, songs WRITTEN by women in PUBLIC WORSHIP! To be consistent, they must repent of their "sin" and use them no more! Furthermore, they are obligated to rip out these songs written by women. After all, some man may let his eyes fall upon one of them and be tempted to READ the words and thus "sin" while engaged in public worship! If it is wrong to use them, or read them, it is wrong to place that temptation before a man.

Surely, truth and common sense will prevail in these matters. "Wherefore be ye not unwise; but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17).

Questions & Answers

"In a recent issue of the GOSPEL ADVOCATE were to fine pieces by women. I have trouble seeing the difference in a woman teaching mixed groups in a paper and in a Bible class or preaching."



Guy N. Woods

First Timothy 2:11, 12 forbids a woman to teach "over a man." That there is a difference in teaching

a man and teaching over a man is very clear from the fact that Priscilla, wife of Aquila, did indeed, and with the obvious approval of the Holy Spirit participate in the teaching of Apollos (Acts 18:24-28). Moreover, it would have been equally acceptable for Aquila and Priscilla to have written the instructions to the young evangelist which they gave orally. In teaching over a man there is the exercise of authority which I Timothy 2:11, 12 forbids; this is certainly involved in preaching (see Titus 2:15), and to some extent also in the teaching of Bible classes, since the teacher both directs and controls in some measure those participating. In reading materials sent out, the reader exercises his own will and pleasure in the perusal and is in no sense subject to, nor under the domination of, the author.

In reading material sent out, the reader exercises his own will and pleasure in the perusal and is in no sense subject to, nor under the domination of, the author.

I Timothy 2:11-14 is very clear and specific. The woman is not to teach over, or usurp authority over, the man. If this editor learns of a woman author who believes women should take the position of authority over man in spiritual matters, I would not publish her articles, no matter how good and true her other beliefs might be. The Christian women, whose articles I have published, believe as you do that women cannot teach over, or usurp authority over, the man. And they certainly are not doing this when they write articles that may be read by men. Guy Woods states the case well, "In reading material sent out, the reader exercises his own will and pleasure in the perusal and is in no sense subject to, nor under the domination of, the author."

One sister offered the "solution" that the woman could place her husband's name to her material as the author. This is no solution at all, but is a lie and deception. If a man "sins" by reading a woman's

Dirt For Sale!

Bobby Dockery

The sign on a large pile of topsoil read simply: "Dirt For Sale." I couldn't help thinking how appropriately those words summed up the modern situation. The slogan for the age might almost be, "Dirt For Sale!" Our society is bombarded with the cries of the hucksters of filth. Pornography has been taken out from under the counter and is peddled at the corner supermarket right next to the Pepsi! It is even piped directly into our homes. As Vance Havner has wryly observed, "Not since Manhattan Island was sold for \$24 has there been so much dirt available as cheap as now!"

It is high time for God's people to say, "We're not buying!" The Scriptures warn: "No immoral or impure person . . . has an inheritance in the Kingdom of God and Christ . . . Therefore do not

be partakers with them . . . and do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them" (Ephesians 5:5, 7, 11).

Consider some contemporary sources of dirt:

1. The Tabloid Press.

It is impossible to check out of the supermarket or the discount store without being exposed to the journalistic scandal sheets: The National Enquirer, The Star, The Midnight Globe and their imitators. Their lurid headlines seek to titillate with news of the latest sex scandal or with sordid insights into the superficial lives of international jetsetters and Hollywood stars. How appropriate are the words of the Psalmist's prayer: "Turn away my eyes from

Of Fig Leaves And Animal Skins

Jim Mettenbrink

I pondered at length before setting pen to paper, but since this is of a serious nature I am proceeding. I'm tired of the continuous exposure to situations which continually jeopardize my spiritual welfare. When I attend assemblies for the worship of our Lord, pure and wholesome worship is almost impossible because of the attire of some of our women, young and mature. Paul wrote "In like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety . . ." (I Timothy 2:9). Some time ago, I decided to try to diligently restrain illicit thoughts in their seed form. At that time I began to take note of what spurred these thoughts. Here are some conclusions.

There was a time when women had self respect to the point they knew for certain they were modest before appearing in public. Today, women evidently have readily conformed to the ways of this world. They adorn themselves with blouses with "Grand Canyon" slits in front, continually daring the male to "peck"! Why the slit? Obviously to attract the sexual interests of men. There is no other reason for it, as buttons and zippers are plentiful. How disheartening when Christian women remain so blind to this instrument of the world.

Most women wear slacks today, but have you noticed that the contour of the body is frequently emphasized? Why would any self-respecting Christian woman want to emphasize her body before others? [Her body belongs only to her husband -- I Corinthians 7:4]. Surely it is being conformed to the ways of this world (Romans 12:2). Perhaps a slow, but sure, hardening of the heart is the cause.

Why do women persist in wearing short dresses? There is only one purpose for short dresses -- to bare an abundance of leg. Mary Quandt, London designer who is known as the "mother of the mini-skirt," stated: "Short dresses are for those girls who want to seduce a man" (*Newsweek*, Nov. 13, 1967). Why would any self-respecting Christian woman persist in this immodest attire? Some have the audacity to say there is such a thing as a modest bathing suit, compatible for mixed swimming.

Where are the husbands and fathers in this matter? Where is their love for their wives and

Sing Or Hum?

Continued From Page 1

sing the kind of songs that teach one another, admonish in spiritual matters, and that gives praise to Jehovah. Nor are we simply required to make some kind of "vocal sound."

What has been observed regarding the matter of humming would apply obviously to the practice of making sound with the nose or mouth that resembles a mechanical sound. Neither is authorized for Christian worship. Think on these things.

--563 McGukin Rd., Bremen, GA 30110.

daughters (Ephesians 5:28)? The man is to be head of the house (Ephesians 5:23). They too will be accountable for allowing such to go on within their domain.

Some may say, "Jim is oversexed, or a dirty old man." But why is it, when I am in the presence of ladies who are most certainly dressed modestly, my thoughts remain pure and are never distracted? Why do women who profess Christianity show a reluctance to abide by I Timothy 2:9? Please, if only for the sake of the souls of men, young or old, married or unmarried, adorn yourself in clothing that is without a doubt modest. "Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God" (I Corinthians 10:32).

I would certainly withhold the pen, if the women who dress in short dresses, tight-fitting (body-emphasizing) slacks & blouses, bathing suits in mixed swimming, halters, shorts, blouses with "peck-a-boo" fronts, and bare-back dresses, would

Dirt For Sale!

Continued From Page 2

looking at vanity" (Psalm 119:37).

2. Records and Radio.

Much modern music is frankly sensuous, suggestive, vulgar, and depraved. It is shameful even to speak of the things which are openly advocated and celebrated in song. No individual style of music -- whether it be rock, country/western, or rhythm and blues -- is above criticism. They all have their squalid and seamy side. It is appalling, and a little bit frightening, to note how many of the top-rated songs on any of the charts have lyrics which popularize un-Christian and anti-Christian themes! The Bible says: "It is better to listen to the rebuke of a wise man than for one to listen to the song of fools" (Ecclesiastes 7:5).

3. Television and Movies.

Nowhere is the dirt more attractively packaged than on the screen. The emphasis on sex and violence has become an obsession. Cable television has funneled a whole new brand of dirt into our homes. Home video recorders have transformed many living rooms into porno peep shows. The visual impact of movies and television is pervasive and powerful. Many people have

Please, if only for the sake of the souls of men, young or old, married or unmarried, adorn yourself in clothing that is without a doubt modest. "Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God" (I Corinthians 10:32).

produce a passage of Scripture proving such risqué conduct is acceptable in the sight of God. But until then, I will continue to speak out against this most tolerated and subtle sin in the church.

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changed their minds about the sinfulness of extra-marital affairs of or unmarried couples living together because they have grown accustomed to seeing it on TV. Gradually, the values of a nation have been stolen and most of us have been willing accomplices to the crime! The words of the prophet Isaiah seem particularly fitting: "He who stops his ears from hearing about bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from looking upon evil . . . will dwell in the heights. . ." (Isaiah 33:15-16).

The time has come to take a stand! We all have a responsibility to resist the sale of dirt! After all, we all have to live in the world which is being trashed!

--Fayetteville, AR.

The time has come to take a stand! We all have a responsibility to resist the sale of dirt! After all, we all have to live in the world which is being trashed!

What I Owe My Home Congregation

Frank L. Cox

Unto the church of my Lord in every locality, I am under solemn obligation to the extent of my ability; but unto my home congregation I am under special obligation.

1. **I want my home congregation to radiate a wholesome influence** in the community. Therefore, I owe it the example of a good life. For it I must "live soberly, righteously and godly" (Matthew 5:13-16).

2. **I want the strangers** who enter the door of the meeting house to feel at home, to learn to love us, to return from time to time. They are our guests; I must entertain them. I owe it to them, and to the church to show myself friendly. I must not stand

back and wait for others to greet them; this I must do (Hebrews 13:2).

3. **No congregation can make progress without faithful and efficient leaders.** To a certain extent, the members of the church make or break their leaders. To the end that our leaders may be stronger and more efficient, **I must give them my support.** I must pray for them. As long as they are true men, I must not embarrass them in their work (I Timothy 5:19).

4. **My home congregation has financial obligations** which are due at regular intervals. Whether I give or do not give, these obligations must be paid. If it is right for my congregation to

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The Music God Specifies For Acceptable Worship



Dan Winkler

Introduction

Basically, there are four kinds of music. First, there is vocal music with words placed to a tune -- singing. Second, there is vocal music without words -- such as humming or making noise with the lips and vocal chords. Third, there is instrumental music -- music made with

mechanical instruments. Fourth, there is music made by a combination of any of the preceding.

But of the four kinds of music, which does God specify for acceptable New Testament worship? Does it matter?

In response to these questions, let's consider three observations.

I. Our Worship Must Flow From God's Specifics

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

(1) From the passage above, note the proper "AIM" or object God specifies for our worship. We are to worship "God" (Revelation 22:9). We are not to worship men. Cornelius (Acts 10:24-26) and the citizens of Lystra (Acts 14:8-16), tried to but were corrected. Too, we are not to worship angels. The apostle John tried (Revelation 19:10; 22:8, 9), but was corrected. Rather, Jesus said, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10).

(2) From the above passage, note the proper "ATTITUDE" God specifies for our worship. We are to worship "in spirit," with the heart. Our quest should be to echo and manifest the sentiment of Paul, "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also" (I Corinthians 14:15).

(3) From the above passage, note the proper "AUTHORITY" God specifies to govern our worship. We are to worship God from our hearts "in truth." On another occasion, Jesus said, "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Indeed, the Bible is God's "word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). Therefore, the truth or word of God is the authority which governs acceptable worship.

II. If We Fail To Worship According To God's Specifics, Our Worship Is Unacceptable

Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (I Peter 2:5).

Worship is to be "acceptable to God." It is something designed for God! We are not to assemble together and do as we please only to leave feeling good about ourselves and the pseudo-relationship we might have with God. We are to assemble and pay homage to God and we are to do so in keeping with what he specifies. After all, it is designed for him!

Let's consider a few examples from the New Testament and ask ourselves why they failed to please God in their worship.

(1) Consider the Pharisees. Jesus said, "These people honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men" (Matthew 15:8, 9). Their worship was vain for two reasons. First, their heart was not involved in their worship. Second, their worship proceeded from the standard of man's teachings. Both conflicted with God's "specifics" mentioned earlier. They failed to worship "exactly" as God said.

(2) Consider the Athenians. Paul said to these individuals, "I perceive that ye are very religious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you" (Acts 17:22, 23 ASV). Like the Pharisees, their worship was unacceptable to God because they did not worship in keeping with God's "specifics," they worshipped the wrong deity. They failed to do "exactly" what God said.

(3) Consider those of Colossae. Certain individuals there adhered to what has been called the "Colossian heresy." In so doing, they were extremely religious, a people of worship. But their worship was governed by the philosophy and deceptive teachings of man (Colossians 2:8). As a result, they worshipped angels (2:18), and engaged in their own style of worship called "will-worship" (2:23). Consequently, their worship was "not of any value" (2:23). It did not please God because it did not coincide with his "specifics!" They did not do "exactly" what God said.

III. "Exactly" What Does God Say About The Music Of New Testament Worship?

"And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the spirit; speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and God, even the Father, subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ" (Ephesians 5:18-21).

Instead of being filled with the "spirits" of intoxicating beverages, Christians are to be filled with the "Spirit" of God. Such will reflect itself in five ways according to five participial phrases in the passage above. First, those filled with the Spirit will speak to one another. Second, those filled with the Spirit will sing to one another. Third, those filled with the Spirit will make melody in their hearts as they speak and sing to one another. Fourth, those filled with the Spirit will give thanks to God through Jesus. Fifth, those filled with the Spirit will subject themselves to one another.

(1) From the passage above, note the kind of music God specifies for worship. It is music that involves words in that "speaking" is to take place. It is therefore vocal music of words put to tones; that is, singing. Yea, psalms [Old Testament psalms put to music], hymns [songs of praise], and spiritual songs [songs in general with a spiritual emphasis] are to be employed for the speaking to

each other in our singing. Still further, as we speak to each other with our singing, we are to do so by plucking the strings of a specified instrument, our hearts. NOTE: The instrument to be employed is the "heart," not a "harp!"

(2) Other New Testament precepts, specify the same kind of music. In his letter to the Colossians, Paul informed Christians to teach and admonish one another with hearts full of grace. They were to do so, again, by singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. The inspired penman of Hebrews teaches us that we are to "offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name" (Hebrews 13:15). NOTE: We are to praise God with the fruit of our lips. But this vocal music is to make confession to the name of Jesus. Therefore, it is vocal music that involves words placed to tones, singing.

(3) New Testament examples are examples of this same kind of music (Matthew 26:30; Acts 16:25; Romans 15:9; I Corinthians 14:15; Hebrews 2:12).

CONCLUSION

Fewer blessings on earth measure up to the joy of Christians paying homage to God in New Testament worship. We have an influence on heaven and heaven has an influence on us when we blend our hearts and express our love to God in worship.

As we "worship God" (Revelation 22:9), let's make certain that we do "exactly" what he says. After all, it is designed for him.

--2159 Beltline Road, SW, Decatur, AL 35601.

What I Owe My Home Congregation

Continued From Page 3

pay its obligations each week, it is right for me to give each week. Though circumstances may force me to be absent at times, my contributions should find their way to the treasury of the church (I Corinthians 16:1, 2).

5. I know that the very existence of my congregation depends upon the attendance of its members. In fact, the attendance is the life of the church. For this reason, I must attend the services - all services I can. For all that I have, I would not have it said that my congregation perished because I would not attend the meetings (Hebrews 10:25).

6. I want my home congregation to grow, to multiply in members. Therefore, I must set myself to the noble work of winning souls for Christ. This I can do by preaching and persuading; this I can do by persistent effort; this I can do by bringing them to our meetings.

7. My home congregation cannot thrive in a frigid atmosphere. I must not by my carelessness allow the church to become a place where hearts are chilled. I must make it a place where hearts are warmed. Therefore, I owe it my heart, the warmth of my life. I must forgive and forget.

Wishing to be honest, I must meet my obligations to the best of my ability. I must with the help that God gives, play my part in the incomparable work of building up the body of Christ.

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



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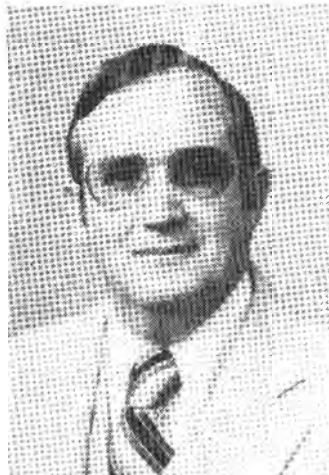
—Acts 26:25

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We Never Guess, We Look It Up!



Curtis Cates

This writer became a member of the "We Never Guess; We Look It Up" Club while a student in Foley, Alabama, Elementary School (Dad preached in Foley from 1945 till 1948). A gentleman visited my class and gave an eloquent speech on the urgency and importance of verifying what one

hears, believes and teaches. That principle had a significant influence upon me; it has its very foundation in the Bible and has eternal implications. Christ stated: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

Through the centuries, most people have chosen to be guided religiously by guesswork, human reason, and speculation -- human philosophy and "theology." Eve found out the hard way that God's will is absolute and objective, not subjective and contradictory, when she ate the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:1-8). Cain found out that one must offer sacrifices by faith, based upon testimony, the command of God (Hebrews 11:4; Romans 10:17). Nadab and Abihu were destroyed by fire, because they offered worship which was unauthorized by God, ". . . which he had not commanded them" (Leviticus 10:1). Naaman almost had to persist in his leprosy, because (when told by the prophet go "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times") he said, "Behold I thought . . ." (II Kings 5:11). Saul was rejected as king over Israel because he ". . . did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah," though he claimed, "I have performed the commandment of Jehovah." He had obeyed some but not all of God's commandment. He was asked, "Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of Jehovah?" (I Samuel 15:10-23).

The northern kingdom (Israel) "didst trust in

[their own] way" (Hosea 8:13); they counted God's law of ten thousand things "as a strange thing" (Hosea 8:12); they were "destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). The southern kingdom (Judah) did likewise, following "their own spirit" and fools, the false teachers who cried "Peace; and there is no peace" (Ezekiel 13:1-16). God's own people were destroyed because they guessed instead of demanding evidence, a "thus saith the Lord."

What about you, dear reader? Do you demand spiritual authority for what you hear, read, and do? Are you content to hear spiritual guesswork in the pulpit and Bible classes, or do you "look it up?"

Look It Up!

The Lord urged that we hear His words and do them (Matthew 7:24-27). Why? For they shall judge us in the last day (John 12:48). He warned of sectarians, teachers of manmade doctrines: ". . . if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matthew 15:14). The early church obeyed

and continued in the "apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42). Cornelius demanded, ". . . to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord" (Acts 10:33). Guesswork (subjective, divisive, and damning) would not do! What has God said? The Bereans demanded that Paul teach the truth of God, not speculations of men; ". . . they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11); "the word of God was proclaimed of Paul at Berea" (Acts 17:13). He was not ashamed to be a "thus saith the Lord" preacher, warning against "philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men . . . and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

What about you, dear reader? Do you demand spiritual authority for what you hear, read, and do? Are you content to hear spiritual guesswork in the pulpit and Bible classes, or do you "look it up?" Neither the preacher, the elders, the teachers, you, nor I will be judged by opinion or speculation but by the Word of God (Romans 14:11, 12; II Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:12; II John 9-11). Never guess; look it up!

--4400 Knight Arnold Road, Memphis, TN 38118.

Is Your House In Order?




W. T. Allison

Isaiah, the prophet of God, said to Hezekiah, King of Israel, to "set thy house in order; for thou shalt die and not live" (II Kings 20:1). It would do us all well to think seriously about this statement. Is my house in order?

I was talking to a friend of mine this past week about a certain wealthy man. This man lives in the largest house in town

He has a thriving business that nets more than 300 million dollars annually. My friend works for this wealthy man. He said, "This man is a perfect example of a man who has his business life in perfect order but all the rest of his life is out of order." A few years ago there was a meeting of the "millionaire's club." This is a club of young men who became millionaires before the age of thirty-five. As they began to talk, each of them said, "I

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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--Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

"Honor . . . Thy Mother"

Baptism And The Bible



Jerry Jenkins

Baptism is viewed by many as a meritorious work by which man earns his redemption. IF this were a Biblical teaching then baptism would have little to do with man's salvation. It is true that baptism is an action performed by man, but then so also is faith, repentance, confession, etc. Biblical baptism is a test of faith, an act of godly submission, an accepting of God's grace, a prerequisite to salvation.

Does the Bible Mention Baptism?

Perhaps the first question which should be investigated is: "Does the Bible ever mention baptism?" The Bible does mention baptism, in fact, the word baptism occurs in 22 verses, baptisms 1 verse, baptize in 7 verses, baptized in 51 verses, baptizeth in 2 verses, baptizest in 1 verse, and baptizing in 4 verses. The word "baptizo" occurs (in all forms) more than 100 times. It is mentioned by 6 different writers in 11 books. **Baptism is a Bible subject.** There are eight different baptisms mentioned in the Bible, i.e., (1) baptism of Moses (I Corinthians 10:2), (2) baptism of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:11), (3) baptism of suffering (Matthew 20:22), (4) baptism of fire (Matthew 3:11), (5) baptism of the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:5), (6) baptism of Jesus' disciples (John 4:1), (7) baptism for the dead (I Corinthians 15:29), and (8) baptism commanded by Jesus which has to do with



David Wade

children, is a lost art. Christian mothers have a very important role to fulfill in perpetuating God's plan for the home.

First, your role as Christian wife and mother is your greatest calling in life. Uniquely, God has given you the power to produce another human being. At Cain's birth Eve said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord" (Genesis 4:1). Using the illustration of the mother's sorrow in labor and joy after birth, Jesus stresses the joy his resurrection would bring, "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you" (John 16:21-22).

When a woman conceives, God places the very spirit of the child in the mother's womb. By giving birth to her child, the mother cooperates with God in one of his marvelous wonders.

When contemplating how he came to be, David exclaimed, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Psalm 139:14).

Each year thousands of sightseers visit the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. In the center section, which is open in front, sits a gigantic statue of Lincoln by Daniel Chester French. Who is greater of the two, the sculptor who carved the stone, or the mother who made the man? Lincoln said, "All that I am or can be, I owe to my angel mother . . . No man is poor who has had a godly mother."

While women may excel in many commendable

In this time of rampant divorce and family disintegration, it is very appropriate for us to reflect on the biblical teachings regarding the calling, responsibility, and honor of Christian motherhood. It seems in our day that God's beautiful picture of the loving husband and wife, as devoted parents, with obedient

endeavors outside the home, yet there is no greater calling than that of Christian wife and mother. She fulfills her unique role in God's plan which cannot be fulfilled by any other. As Emerson has said, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world."

Second, the role of Christian wife and mother is a woman's heaviest responsibility. There is a sense in which her duty toward her husband is greater than her duty toward her children. The leaving of father and mother and cleaving to one's mate (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6) is the foundation on which a home is to be built. The house is not greater than its foundation (Matthew 7:24-27; I Corinthians 3:11). Children are properly loved and feel secure only when the marriage relationship is filled with love and is secure.

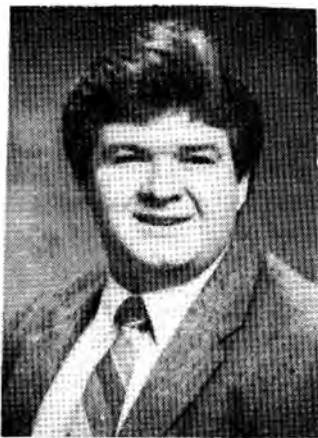
As Christian wife and mother, the home is first and foremost her domain. Wives and mothers are commanded to be "workers at home" (Titus 2:5 ASV), and to "guide the house" (I Timothy 5:14). The virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 is commended, not only for her industry outside the home, but also because, "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and catcheth not the bread of idleness" (verse 27).

Furthermore, a mother bears a heavy responsibility as her child's first teacher. As a child, Timothy learned the holy scriptures from his mother and grandmother (II Timothy 1:5; 3:15). The Godly mother ". . . openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness" (Proverbs 31:26). It has been said that, "The mother in her office holds the key of the soul; and she it is who stamps the coin of character and makes the being, who would be a savage, but for her gentle cares, a Christian man! Then crown her the queen of the world" (Old Play).

Finally, every child should strive to bring honor to his mother. Children are commanded to "honor thy father and mother . . ." (Ephesians 6:2 ASV). Honor is evidenced by obedience to godly parents (Ephesians 6:1). I ran across this poetic line which seems appropriate, "For God, who lives above the skies, Would look with vengeance in his eyes, If I should ever dare despise -- My mother." Every husband and child should strive to honor his godly wife and mother as proclaimed by Solomon, "Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her" (Proverbs 31:28).

"Honor . . . Thy Mother"

Sowing The Seed; The Word Of God



Mark Nichols Posey John Chapman was born in Massachusetts in 1774. The pioneers loved him and right-fully so. For forty years he gathered apple seeds from cider mills in Pennsylvania and planted them all over Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana. He gave deerskin bags of seeds to families moving westward. He set up nurseries in various places and went from one to the other tending them.

Pioneer children in the middle west had apples to eat because of John's labors. Adults and children loved him and always welcomed his visits. Indians, who were often hostile to other white men, were very protective of John because they thought his mind was different from other white men. The settlers along the way fed him, gave him shelter, and told him many stories about his good deeds.

Here was a man with only one mission -- to carry the apple seeds of the East to the newly cleared West, so the pioneers might have the juicy fruit to eat. He lived to see thousands of acres of orchards that came from the seeds and plants in his nursery. John died at Ft. Wayne, Indiana in 1845. We know John Chapman as Johnny Applesseed.

Is Your House In Order?

Continued From Page 1

would give it all up if I could have my family back with me." What is the price we are willing to pay for success? Is it your wife? Children? Home? Family?

It is virtually impossible to regain a home once it has been destroyed. Take out some HOME INSURANCE for your family. Have them in worship Sunday!

Is your house in order? If I had to lose one to save the other, I would choose saving my home. As we paraphrase Matthew 16:26, "WHAT IS A MAN PROFITED, IF HE SHALL GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD, AND LOSE HIS FAMILY? OR WHAT SHALL A MAN GIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS FAMILY?" It is virtually impossible to regain a home once it has been destroyed. Take out some HOME INSURANCE for your family. Have them in worship Sunday!

--1901 Schillinger Road, Mobile, AL 36695.

We need more men and women like Johnny Applesseed today. We need men and women who want to sow the seed to the world, not apple seeds, but the seed of the Word of God. Jesus says in Luke 8:11 that the seed is the word of God. Are you sowing that seed?

Jesus commands, not asks, begs, nor pleads, but commands in Matthew 28:19-20 to sow the seed to the entire world. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

The message is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, His death, burial, and resurrection as we see in I Corinthians 15:1-4. I do not know of anything other than the gospel of Jesus Christ that can convert the soul of man. Note what James says, "receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21). Paul tells us that the scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation (II Timothy 3:15). The message of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). With no message, there is no power.

Probably the best way to motivate an individual to evangelize is to show them an evangelistic spirit in yourself. The desire to save souls is better caught than taught. The message and method are useless without motivation.

The method is to simply "Go . . . preach/teach . . . baptize." We can go by plane, car, bus, foot, or some other convenient method. The command is to go, not how to go. Such is the same with the tools we use. Some may choose to use filmstrips, VHS video series, correspondence courses, home Bible studies, preaching, or some other effective method. There are so many good tools available to use in sowing the seed. But a tool is only as good as the craftsman. When we mold and shape a life with the gospel of Jesus Christ, that method is the best method of all.

The motivation seems to be the biggest problem. Most have no problem with the message. The method is just a matter of choice. But the motivation is the dividing line between going and staying. Getting Christians to take the Gospel in hand, heart, and mind to a lost and dying world is growing harder each day.

If a person is not self motivated what can be done? I believe in the power of example. If someone is a lazy soul winner, give them a motivating example to follow. Jesus left humanity an example to follow. Christians follow that good example to the best of their ability. Probably the best way to motivate an individual to evangelize is to show them an evangelistic spirit in yourself. The desire to save souls is better caught than taught. The message and method are useless without motivation.

Are you a Johnny applesseed for Christ? If not, start sowing the seed today. Jesus said, "behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:34). You will be rewarded for your labors.

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

Baptism And The Bible

Continued From Page 2

our salvation in the 20th Century (Mark 16:16).

Does the Bible Mention the Mode of Baptism?

The Bible states that baptism is a burial. Paul stated in Colossians 2:12, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with [him] through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." To the Christians at Rome he stated: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Both the Hebrew and Greek languages have a work which means, "to sprinkle." The Hebrew word is "zawrak." When Job's friends came to visit him in his affliction the text states: "And when they lifted up their eyes at a distance, and did not recognize him [Job], they raised their voices and wept. And each of them tore his robe, and they sprinkled dust over their heads toward the sky" (Job 2:12).

The New Testament word for "sprinkle" is "rhantizo." It occurs three times in the book of Hebrews (9:19, 20; 10:22). The word sprinkle or pour is never used in the Bible for that act of faith commanded by Jesus and His followers for redemption. The word employed is "baptizo" which means to bury.

Does the Bible Command Infant Baptism?

The following always characterized Bible baptism: (1) Only the taught were proper subjects for baptism (Matthew 28:18-20), (2) Only those old enough to believe in Jesus were proper subjects for Bible baptism (Mark 16:16), (3) All subjects baptized in the Bible first repented of their sins (Acts 2:38). An infant does not have the ability to meet any of the above Bible characteristics.

--400 Roebuck Parkway, Birmingham, AL 35206.

The Forty-Nine Thousand Dollar Expectoration



Don Williams

Expectoration. I did not know what the word meant until Don Wooldridge told me last Saturday. Its meaning is not very pleasant -- Webster's Dictionary defines it as "to eject from the throat or lungs by coughing or hawking or spitting." In other words, it means to spit.

Recently, Charles Barkley of the Philadelphia 76ers did this during the fourth quarter of their game with New Jersey. He tried to spit upon a heckling fan near the sidelines, but instead accidentally spit upon an eight year old girl who was sitting next to the heckling fan. The result -- a \$10,000 fine plus a one game suspension without pay. That cost him another \$39,000, equalling the amount of his terrible deed to \$49,000.

We think to ourselves, how low can you get? To think that a civilized person would act in such a way, especially when he is seen as a superstar, well, it just boggles the mind. Strange though it

may seem, spittle has not always been seen in such a distasteful manner. Jesus used spittle in healing a man who could not hear and rightly speak (Mark 7:32-37). To another man who was blind, Jesus used spittle to restore his sight (Mark 8:22-25). To yet another man, he used spit to make mud and place the mud upon the eyes of a blind man. After he had washed in the pool of Siloam, he was able to see (John 9:6, 7).

Those who dislike others vehemently will often show their hatred toward them by spitting upon them.

It is sad but true that spittle is normally thought of in a contemptible and dirty way. I recall reading that female nurses who recently served in the American Coalition forces in Saudi Arabia were often spat upon by Muslim men, who felt that the women were "out of place" in ministering to the needs of soldiers as a "female" nurse. Those who dislike others vehemently will often show their hatred toward them by spitting upon them.

The greatest offense that has even happened was the time that our Lord was spat upon. After the Sanhedrin Council had found him guilty of death, the text reveals that they "spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands" (Matthew 26:67). Later the Roman soldiers, toying and torturing our Lord in the common hall, placed a crown of thorns upon his head and a robe about his body. They then took a rolled up reed of weeds and smote him on the head with it, and spat upon him (Matthew 27:30). As if it was not enough for him to have to die the death of the cross, and go through the pain of scourging, he also had to face such ridicule and scorn by the hands of the soldiers before he died.

Does that not conjure up our inward emotions when we read what they did to our Lord? Tell me, is there really any difference between this and those Christians today who by their unholy conduct "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Hebrews 6:6). Think about it.

--P.O. Box 506, Guin, AL 35563.

Relevant Christian Ethics



Cecil Corkren

Some things may not be unlawful, but unethical for a Christian to have a part in that which will bring our character in question. God's Word is relevant to our times; therefore, we must practice Christian ethics. The reason some give for disregarding God's standard of right and

wrong is that "His Word is not relevant to our times." In our modern age of machines, and computers, many have come to believe that God is dead, and that His standard set forth in the scriptures are not applicable in our generation. We sometimes hear a younger person make the remark "I am doing my thing." What they are saying, is "I am doing as I please." Right or wrong, they want to satisfy their likes and dislikes.

Christian ethics are found in God's Word. Man changes. God has never changed (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8). "My Words shall not pass away," said Jesus in Matthew 24:35. God's Word revealed in the New Testament is to last to the end of time. Since Christians are married to Christ (Romans 7:4), our Lord must direct our lives in all that we do. Each Christian has certain responsibilities toward God and toward his fellowman.

Christians are the best citizens of a country for they respect and obey God's laws, as well as the civil laws. A Christian pays his taxes. Peter was

instructed by Christ, to pay tribute to the kings (Matthew 17:22-27). Jesus was questioned by His enemies about the superscription of Caesar on the penny, He said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:15-22). Examples in Acts 4:16-21; 5:27-32 teach us "That we must obey God rather than man."

"One can be morally good without being a Christian, but one cannot be a Christian without being morally good."

There are many passages which teach Christian ethics regarding a Christian's relationship to civil authorities; Romans 13:1-7; Acts 23:5; I Timothy 2:1-3; Titus 3:1-3; I Peter 2:13-17. All of these

teach that we are to obey our laws; which do not conflict with God's laws. Our morality alone will not save our souls. Once I saw a sign in a barber shop which said, "One can be morally good without being a Christian, but one cannot be a Christian without being morally good." The standard of right and wrong found in the Bible teaches, we are to think on good things (Philippians 4:8). We are to practice the fruit of the Spirit. Paul said, "Against such there is no LAW" (Galatians 5:23). God spells out the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-20; and adds "They that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." When we practice Christian ethics we obey the Golden Rule." Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

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

Practicx Sxlf Apprxciation

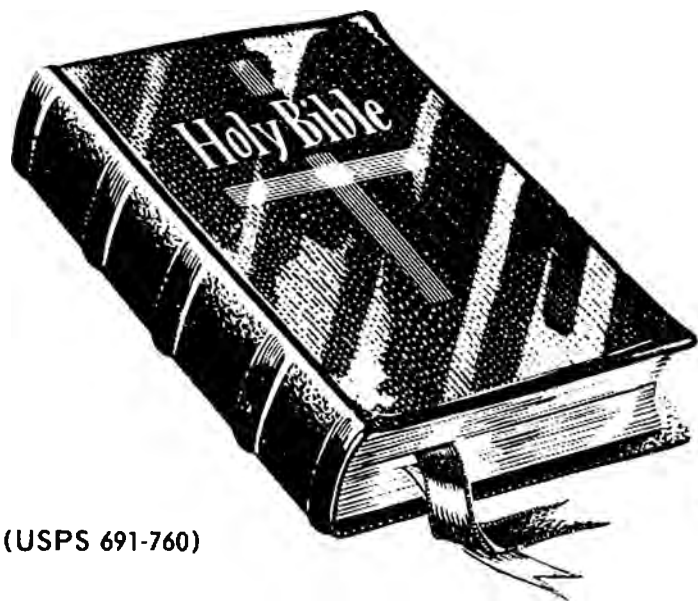
A txam may bx likxnd to my typxwritx. It is an old modxl, but it works quitx wxll xxcpt for onx of thx kxys. Many timxs, I havx wishxd that it workxd pxfxctly. It is trux that thxrx arx forty-four kxys that function wxll xnough, but just onx kxy not working maksx thx diffxrxncx.

Somxtimx it sxxms to mx that txams arx somxwhat likx my typxwritx. . . not all thx kxy pxoplx arx working togthx.

You may say to yoursxlf, "Wxll, I am only a

mxmbr -- onx pxrson. I won't makx or brxak thx group." But, it doxs makx a diffxrxncx bxcaxs a group, to bx xffxctivx, nxxds thx activx participation of vxry pxrson.

So, thx nxxt timx you think you arx only onx pxrson -- a mxmbr -- and that your xfforts arx not nxxdx, rxmxmbr my typxwritx and say to yourself, "I am a kxy pxrson in thx group, and for rit to function xffxctivxly, I am nxxdx vxry much."



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

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

—Acts 26

VOLUME 27

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"Two Praying Men"



Ted D. Burleson

[Editor's note: I'm happy to introduce to our readers brother Ted D. Burleson. Ted is minister of the West Seventh Street Church of Christ in Columbia, Tennessee. He is a cousin of Edsel Burleson whose articles often appear in Words of

Truth].

In Luke 18, Jesus taught a parable about two men who went to the temple to pray. Imagine the entrance the Pharisee made into the temple. The people in the temple probably moved out of his way as he walked to the closest limelight area.

Pharisees usually prayed with their chins pointed upward and prayed at the temple at least three times each day. Impressing crowds usually appealed to Pharisees.

Pharisees were members of the predominant religious group of that day. They were sticklers for the letter of the law and traditions of their fathers. For example, they followed a procedure for washing their hands that became a religious rite for them.

Where would this man fit into our assemblies? He would have been a pillar of the community. He was the epitome of what others wanted to be. He prayed often. His morals were unquestionable.

Jesus spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves and considered themselves righteous. They had compared themselves to others and had concluded that they were better.

The Pharisee's first sentence reveals some things about his attitude. "God, I thank you that I am not like other men." We know of no vice he had other than pride and an ugly spirit. Regardless of all his good traits, he had an attitude problem. He felt he was better than extortioners, swindlers, the unjust

and adulterers.

In the crowded temple the Pharisee said, "I am thankful that I am not as this publican. I fast twice a week."

Deuteronomy and Leviticus, the law he recognized, required fasting on the Day of Atonement, once each year. To fast twice each week was to be commended if for the right purpose with the right motive.

He said, "I give tithes of all that I possess."

Again, he is going beyond the requirements. He give, according to Levitical law, ten percent of his farm income.

Let's look at the other man who went up to the temple to pray. This was a tax collector. To the Jews, this man had sold out to the Romans. He would take tax, perhaps even exploit the people, and send it to the Romans. He probably didn't come to the temple often. He wouldn't dare look up to heaven to pray. He bowed his head and beat his breast.

Let us be very careful about comparing ourselves to others. It is depressing to compare ourselves with those who have accomplished things we probably will never accomplish. To avoid this, some compare themselves only to those who probably can never accomplish what they have accomplished.

"God, be merciful to me, a sinner," were the seven words the publican spoken.

In some Greek manuscripts, sinner has a definite article before it meaning, "God, be merciful to me, the sinner." Was he saying that he was what Paul

would later claim to be, the chief sinner? It had he done to consider himself the worst sinner? He might have been everything the Pharisee said he was not. Whatever he had done, it had caused him to feel very separated from God. He knew on whom he depended.

Of the publican, Jesus said, "I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be abased and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Remember the audience who heard Jesus relate this parable. They were Pharisees (trace the conversation back to Luke 17:20). They probably would have been very proud of the Pharisee in the parable. Imagine the experience they had when Jesus declared that the hated publican left the temple justified rather than the respected Pharisee.


The Pharisee trusted in himself and his own self-righteousness. The publican knew that only God could help him with his unrighteousness.

Let us be very careful about comparing ourselves to others. It is depressing to compare ourselves with those who have accomplished things we probably will never accomplish. To avoid this, some compare themselves only to those who probably can never accomplish what they have accomplished.

We don't know what the publican did after this. He may have responded as Zacchaeus did and repaid every wrong. He might have preached the gospel from this point on as another tax collector, Matthew, did. What we do know is that on that day, at that moment, his heart was right. Jesus said he went away justified.

Is your heart right with God? Make sure you are serving from a pure heart with the right motives. Be a child of God by obeying, in trusting faith, the gospel. The change of heart and forgiveness of sins is possible by the sacrifice of Jesus. If you conclude that you are like the Pharisee, repent and confess your faults before God.

--405 West Seventh Street, Columbia, TN 38401.



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Another Look At Grace



Winfred Clark

Recently I had the good fortune to hear Bro. David Pharr, of Knoxville, Tenn. He presented an outstanding lesson on the book of Titus. In that study he set forth some very interesting thoughts on the subject of "Grace." This article is the result of that lesson and I

want to give him due credit for it.

The thoughts come from Titus 2:11-14. From these verses we can learn a number of very valuable and vital lessons about God's wonderful grace.

1. What Grace Brings.

Paul said, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men" (Titus 2:11). According to this passage, the old song which says, "salvation has been brought down" is surely true. That is exactly what this passage is saying. We are told of a salvation which comes to us by grace. This would carry an obvious implication. That implication is this, that without grace there would be no salvation.

You will notice that time and again that salvation will be ascribed to the grace of God. Notice what Peter would say about it in Jerusalem. "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they" (Acts 15:11). Peter had no doubt that grace and salvation go together. He did not see man's salvation as a matter of merit but of grace. He knew a man was not in the position to save himself. This would



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Medical Journal Article Suggests Christ Faked Death, Resurrection



David Wade

Lloyd Davies, a retired physician and former chief medical adviser to Britain's Department of Employment, and his theologian wife Margaret.

The article says those who do not accept the biblical account must consider the possibility that Jesus faked his death in a premeditated bid to survive crucifixion. The author suggests that Jesus may have undergone syncope -- loss of consciousness caused by a temporary deficiency of blood supply to the brain -- and is more likely to have been resuscitated than resurrected.

The article conjectures "whether the whole episode was planned by Jesus and his followers, possibly at Gethsemane, that death would be feigned so that early removal from the cross might be secured." Davies suggests that the flogging Jesus received before crucifixion led to his early collapse on the cross and that appearing dead, he was taken down much sooner than usual. "Oxygen supply to the brain remained minimal, but above a critical level, until the circulation was restored when he was taken down from the cross and laid on the ground. As Jesus showed signs of life, he was not placed in a tomb, but taken away and tended."

The article added: "Jesus' later appearances, whether real or supposed, are not compelling evidence for or against resurrection or resuscitation."

Let me assure you that the crass ignorance and unbelief of the above named "physician" and his "theologian" wife is certainly not typical of all knowledgeable people in the field of medicine or

theology. Their "theory" is so far flung and preposterous it hardly merits attention.

The allegation is based entirely upon assumption, fabrication, and ignoring fact. It is certain this couple do not believe the resurrection account and will use any means (no matter how preposterous) to make their point.

It is an incredible charge that Jesus could "fake death" as a result of crucifixion. "Crucifixion was one of the most cruel and barbarous forms of death known to man. It was practiced, especially in times of war, by the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Egyptians, and later by the Romans. So dreaded was it that even in the pre-Christian era, the cares and troubles of life were often compared to a cross" (Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, 1963, p. 189).

If Jesus was in a state of "syncope -- loss of consciousness caused by a temporary deficiency of blood supply to the brain," then the spear thrust into his side would have provided the coup de grace. The spear was thrust into his side AFTER the soldiers confirmed Jesus was already dead (John 19:32-34). In ancient times, a stab wound in the abdomen almost always meant certain death from loss of blood. The article makes no mention of the spear incident. Doubters and disputers have a tendency to ignore what they cannot answer.

The article alleges that Jesus "was not placed in a tomb, but taken away and tended." This charge ignores the fact that the enemies of Jesus were convinced of his death. They were some 2000 years closer to the event, yea there at the cross! They secured a day and night guard of soldiers at the tomb to make sure he didn't arise from the grave as he said he would (Matthew 27:64). After Jesus' resurrection, his enemies could put forth no argument, or present any evidence to discredit the event.

Finally, Davies claims, "Jesus' later appearances, whether real or supposed, are not compelling evidence for or against resurrection or resuscitation." In actuality, Davies' claims are the best "arguments" an unbeliever can make against the resurrection. However, we observe that Davies provides NO compelling argument or evidence to support his theory of resuscitation.

Another Look At Grace

Continued From Page 2

mean that his salvation would depend on God's grace.

Didn't Peter indicate that God's grace could be seen in what it provided? Paul said, "he (Jesus) by the grace of God tasted death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). So we can have no doubt about what grace has brought to us and for our benefit. It has brought salvation and there is no place for one to be puffed up. Such ought to provoke great gratitude in the hearts of all of us.

2. What Grace Teaches

Notice what Paul will have to say, "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world;" (Titus 2:12). Such teaching is found in the gospel.

We are taught to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. But what does that mean? What does it mean to deny a thing? In simple terms it would mean "saying no." You often see this sign of admonition concerning drugs. There is the appeal "Just Say No." This is what Paul has in mind for those children of God at Crete. Grace would teach us to make a total break once and for all with ungodliness and worldly desires.

Grace will also teach us how to live. It will show us what we are to "say yes" to. Grace knows that life is not lived in a vacuum. We are thus taught to live soberly, righteously, and godly. If we live soberly, we will live sensibly and with balance in the life. There will be the exercise of self control. Such a life will also be given to righteous conduct. That will insure one's acting and reacting properly toward those around him. He will also live a godly life which would surely mean that God is always kept in mind. There is no word spoken or deed done without the thought of God.

Grace will teach us to live in the right way in spite of the world in which we live. Remember that Paul said, "in this present world" (Titus 2:12). That means the world such as the one in Crete. As you know there were some things that would make it difficult indeed to live right. However, Paul would still have them live right even in Crete. We are not the exception today. Even in this present world which is evil, we must still do what grace has taught us to do.

3. What Grace Expects

Notice what Paul will say, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). Here is the hope that comes because of grace. This hope is stated earlier in this epistle when Paul would say, "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2). But this hope of eternal life is surely based on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is tied to the return of the Lord Jesus. Without his return there is no hope. But his return gives great expectation to the life of the child of God. He has something to look forward to. He knows that his life is not wasted. He knows that in spite of all the pitfalls of life there is something better ahead. Yes,

it might be hard to live righteously and godly in Crete, but he knows it will be worth it when all is over on the earth.

Grace expects the Lord's return and this enables the child of God to expect it to be according to the promise. He expects it to be a glorious return, one that will be the greatest of all events in the existence to the child of God.

Grace can also look forward to a reward at the return of the Lord. We sing of the fact that "the Lord shall return to reward his servants." That is surely a scriptural sentiment. This is a part of that which Paul has in mind when he says, "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels," (II Thessalonians 1:6-7).

Grace will enable the child of God to look forward to rest when the Lord returns. This is also affirmed in the passage cited above. So grace can expect the return of the Lord and the rewards that he will provide.

All of this grows out of the fact that grace has made us a redeemed, purified and special people to God. We are the property of God here upon a sinful earth. This is what he had in mind in (Titus 2:14).

When we come to see grace in this way we will surely be a motivated people to be zealous unto every good work. This was surely true of the apostle Paul (I Corinthians 15:9-10). This surely ought to be true of all of us, and it will be when we come to see grace as it ought to be seen.

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The Grace Of God



J. C. Choate

Man is a sinner. He is such, not because he was born with the guilt of sin, but because he himself has transgressed the law of God. He has broken God's law, and that is what sin is according to I John 3:4. As a responsible being, one who has reached

the age of accountability, or knowing right from wrong, then he has thought, said, and done those things that are bad and wrong in the sight of God and man.

Since God is holy, and without sin, and cannot sin, and sin cannot enter into his presence, then he demands that sin be punished, and that justice be done. The Bible therefore says that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap (Galatians 6:7, 8), that the soul that sinneth it shall die (Ezekiel 18:20), and the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).

But God being the creator of man (Genesis 2:7), and the lover of souls (John 15:13), and not willing that any should perish (II Peter 3:9), decided that he would make an atonement for the sins of the world by offering a sacrifice (Romans 5:11). To do that he would have to make a sinless offering. There was but one who could do this and that was his only Son, Jesus Christ. So we read, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16, 17).

Therefore, the Bible tells us that Jesus Christ came to this world and died on the cross for the sins of man. We read, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps:

Who did not sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: 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 2:21-24). Again he said, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (I Peter 3:18). The Apostle Paul wrote, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8). And on we could go with many similar scripture references.

Now what do we have? We have man a sinner, unable to help himself or to save himself. He is lost and doomed. That means that with sin man must die because sin must be punished. But then God steps into the picture. He loves man so much that he is willing to even give his only Son to die on the cross as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. Now that's grace, unmerited favor. When man could not save himself then Christ gave himself that man might be saved. It is a gift that is unparalleled. Man could never re-pay God for all of this. He could never do enough good works; he could never obey enough commands; he could never give enough, sacrifice enough, worship enough, or do anything else enough, so that he could say that he has now earned his salvation. The Apostle Paul informs us, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

Although we are saved by grace, that does not

Continued On Page 4

Don't Die With Blood On Your Hands



Bobby Key

God said to Israel through Ezekiel more than twenty-five hundred years ago, "I appoint you as a watchman to the house of Israel; and whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall warn them from me. If I say to the wicked, O wicked man, you shall surely die, and you say nothing to warn the wicked man from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand."

The gospel preacher has a heavy responsibility. Few, if any, of God's preachers have been popular. They have the task of telling people what they need to hear instead of what they want to hear; and that doesn't make for popularity.

Oh, how the world today needs another Elijah! If some of our "Great Preachers," and Great Papers will take a stand like Elijah the threat of apostasy can be put down overnight. So-called Christendom today faces the awful responsibility of choosing between a return to faith in the Bible as being the

Word of God, and as containing the revelation of His will to man, or simply abandoning any serious convictions regarding it and depending entirely upon the wisdom, desires, and impulses of man. There is no middle ground. The tendency to apostasy is omnipresent. It doesn't go away when we ignore it. We need men today like Elijah who will cry out against all innovations of man and call for a return to a "thus saith the Lord" for all we teach and practice. Elijah rose like a tower of strength in a weary land. There was never anything indefinite about him. No dictionary was needed when he preached. When he went to heaven in a blaze of glory there was no blood on his hands.

Few, if any, of God's preachers have been popular. They have the task of telling people what they need to hear instead of what they want to hear; and that doesn't make for popularity.

We live in a day when civilization is crumbling, the night of apostasy is deepening, lawlessness runs wild and sin abounds. Yet the church of God, for the most part, is at ease in Zion. We who claim a name above every name twiddle our thumbs while the world sweeps over the brink of disaster. Instead of crying out against sin and the world many of us have joined up with it. Some who should know better are crying, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." Others trying to fight the good fight of faith have been set on, not by the enemy, but by their own brethren! Unless we wake up and start doing our job we will die with a lot of blood on our hands. Let us love God, one another, and the world enough to tell it like it is. We do not help our religious neighbor or erring brother by pretending that he is all right when he is all wrong.

Let us love God, one another, and the world enough to tell it like it is. We do not help our religious neighbor or erring brother by pretending that he is all right when he is all wrong.

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The Grace Of God

Continued From Page 3

mean that there are no conditions, no commands to obey, and no responsibilities on man's part. The inspired writer said that we are saved by grace through faith. God has extended his grace to man in making it possible for man to be saved. Now man must reach up by faith to accept that grace. Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). Without faith it is impossible to please God, but by faith we must obey the Lord's commands. To make it possible that man have faith then he commanded that the gospel be taken into all the world and then he said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). So when one learns the truth of God and believes it then he will obey the Lord. If he refuses to believe

then he will be lost since Christ cannot save those who do not believe. And one who believes, but will not obey, does not have a faith that is strong enough to save him.

But to believe and obey the Lord does not nullify the grace of God. Even in one's obedience it will still take the grace of God to save a person. It was God's grace that made it all possible, made even obedience possible. But grace cannot apply to those who reject God's grace by refusing to obey him.

It is by grace that we are saved in this world, with all the many blessings that God has in store for his people, and it will be by the grace of God that the faithful are saved in heaven forevermore. So we

conclude with the words of the Apostle Paul, as he speaks to Christians, those who have been saved by the grace of God: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world: Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:11-14).

To believe and obey the Lord does not nullify the grace of God. Even in one's obedience it will still take the grace of God to save a person. It was God's grace that made it all possible, made even obedience possible. But grace cannot apply to those who reject God's grace by refusing to obey him.

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I asked God for strength that I might achieve,

I was made weak, that I might learn to obey.

I asked for health, that I might do greater things,

I was given infirmity that I might do better things.

I asked for riches, that I might be happy,

I was given poverty that I might be wise.

I asked for power, that I might have the praise of men,

I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God.

I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life.

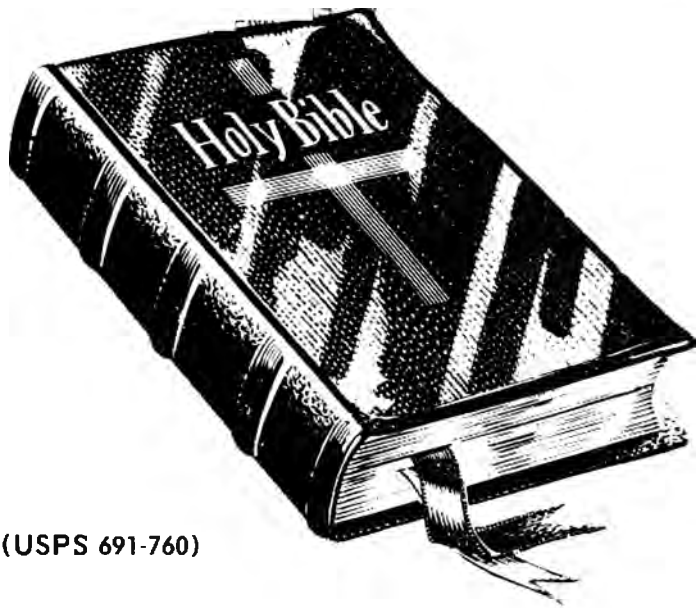
I was given life, that I might enjoy all things.

I got nothing that I asked for--

but everything that I had hoped for.

Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered.

I am among men, most richly blessed.



(USPS 691-760)

Words of Truth

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

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25

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Just Preach Christ



David W. Hester

Recently, certain preachers have been critical of what they call "the old paths mentality." They have rejected the notion that the New Testament sets forth a pattern to follow, and say that if we claim to have restored the New Testament church, we are "extremely arrogant." These same

individuals call for the church to center its attention upon Christ and the Gospels, and away from Acts and the Epistles.

There can be no doubt that Christ should be the center of life for the church, as well as the individual Christian (Colossians 1:18). We often sing songs which declare the beautiful story of Jesus, such as, "Tell Me the Old, Old, Story," and "The Old Rugged Cross." If one is not moved with emotion when the story of Christ's death is taught, his priorities must be examined again.

However, contrary to the claims of some, the great preachers of the past did not spend all of their time in Acts and the Epistles to the exclusion of the Gospels! I am quite young, but can remember sermons preached in gospel meetings by many of the "heavyweights" in the brotherhood. The majority of the sermons which they preached were about Jesus and how he died for sinful man. They movingly persuaded people to obey Christ and become Christians only. They, above anyone, preached Christ!

The fact of the matter is that preaching Christ necessarily involves preaching about baptism, the church, and the pattern which he set forth in the New Testament for Christians to follow. Any attempt to change the message in order for it to "fit our culture" will result in apostasy in some way from the truth.

Preaching Christ involves preaching baptism for the remission of sins. Jesus told Nicodemus,

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). In Matthew 28:19, Christ commanded his disciples to baptize those whom they taught. In Mark 16:16, Jesus settled the matter for those who would question baptism's connection with salvation. He said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

There is an example in the New Testament of an individual who preached Christ. In Acts 8:35, the record states that when Philip taught the Ethiopian eunuch, he "began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." The next verse says, "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" In verses 38-39, Philip baptized him.

Friends, the impact of this scripture is enormous. To the denominationalists and some brethren who cry for the church to "just preach Christ" and leave out baptism and other doctrinal points, it hits like a nuclear missile. Philip "preached Jesus;" however, it involved preaching baptism! Thus, to claim to preach Christ without preaching baptism is equal to not preaching him at all.

Second, preaching Christ involves preaching about the church. Jesus said, ". . . upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). The church is his; there is only one. An important point to consider is that Jesus described the church in the next verse as the kingdom. He said, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

This plain statement by Christ flies in the face of statements such as, "The church is not the kingdom of God;" and, we should still pray, "your kingdom come." Men who make such claims are grossly wrong. The truth is, Jesus said that his kingdom would come in the lifetime of the apostles! Christ said, "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death,

till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1). Certainly, there is no one alive today who is over 1950 years old!


The kingdom came in Acts 2, when over 3,000 souls obeyed the gospel. Acts 2:47 says, ". . . the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." John was a member of that kingdom; he writes, "I John, who also me your brother, and companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1:9). The Hebrew writer was, as well; "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved. . . ." (Hebrews 12:28). Matthew states that Jesus preached, ". . . the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). It did come; we should still preach about it today.

Third, preaching Christ involves preaching about the pattern which he established in the New Testament. Contrary to the claims of some, Jesus did establish a pattern to follow. In John 4:24, Christ told Nicodemus, "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." This verse gives us the pattern to follow in worshipping God. God is the object of our devotion; "in spirit" refers to the attitude we should have, and "in truth" refers to God's Word. Jesus said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Thus, God's people must worship according to the pattern Jesus has set forth.

Also, Jesus gave us a pattern on how to live every day. In Matthew 5-7, Jesus preached the greatest sermon ever delivered. The Sermon on the Mount gave Christians the pattern for their every day activities. Christ even gave us a "model" prayer in Matthew 6:9-13!

Some final points must be made. First, there is a disturbing trend among some brethren to belittle the importance of Acts and the Epistles in the New Testament. It has already been mentioned that Christ gave his apostles the authority to bind and loose while on earth. Paul, through inspiration, said, "If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet,

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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

Memorials



David Wade

Memorials

As we approach Memorial Day it is fitting that we be reminded of the origin and purpose of memorials. Throughout the history of mankind memorials have had their place. Memorials not only perpetuate memory, but give understanding and meaning to

the past, balance and perspective to the present, and direction and purpose for the future.

Our annual Memorial Day, or Decoration Day, had its origin during the days of the Civil War to honor the war dead. This patriotic holiday has been broadened and extended to honor all members of America's armed forces who have given their lives for their country, whether in peace-time or war.

God has also established some very meaningful and important memorials through the centuries to help guide and direct his people. We shall reflect on a few of them and draw some lessons for our time.

Passover Memorial

In Exodus 12 God revealed "the Lord's passover" to his people, the Israelites, who were ready to be delivered from Egyptian bondage. God gave them specific instructions for the passover observance, revealed what blessings would come from the feast, and also gave its meaning and purpose for future generations. "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations" (Exodus 12:12-14).

God urged his people to observe the feast and remain faithful to him. Anyone refusing to follow his instructions would be "cut off from Israel" (Exodus 12:15). As time transpired, and other feasts were instituted, God's people were known to observe the feasts while guilty of all manner of sins. As a result God hated and despised their feast days and solemn assemblies (Amos 5:21), and caused them to cease (Hosea 2:11). Not until Josiah's reform was idolatry eradicated and the

passover restored (II Kings 23:21).

This passover was a "shadow of good things to come" (Hebrews 10:1). Paul states, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (I Corinthians 5:7). In Christ Jesus we have "all spiritual blessings" (Ephesians 1:3). God passes over or cleanses our sins, "if we walk in the light" (I John 1:7).

The church at Corinth could not enjoy the spiritual blessings in Christ because they were tolerating sin. They were "puffed up" and "glorying" over a known fornicator who was in fellowship with them (I Corinthians 5:2, 6). Paul urged them "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened . . . Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (vs. 7-8). We are not fooling anyone but ourselves if we think we can tolerate such sins in the church and remain faithful to the Lord. To tolerate sins in ourselves or other church members is a clear indication that we have forgotten "Christ our passover."

Memorial Stones

When Joshua was ready to lead the Israelites across the Jordan to the Promised Land, God commanded that twelve men gather each a stone in the midst of the parted waters of Jordan (Joshua 4:5). The stones were set up in Gilgal (v. 20). The stones were to serve as a "sign among you." In later generations their children would ask, "What mean ye by these stones?" (v. 6). They were to answer, "That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever" (v. 7). Later in the chapter Joshua again rehearsed the meaning of the memorial, saying, "Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God forever" (vs. 22-24).

There have been many vain attempts to "explain away" the miraculous events of the Bible, even the crossings of the Red Sea and the Jordan. These signs are recorded, not to cause disbelief, but, as Joshua said, that we "might know the hand of the Lord . . . is mighty," and we should "fear the Lord." Later, Joshua admonished them, "Now

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"Find A Need And Fill It"



Edsel Burleson

It is amazing how people view the same situation and draw conflicting conclusions! One will see unlimited opportunities while another sees a need for a "hands off" policy.

Two Christian wives sat mending their husbands' pants. One said, "My poor John is so discouraged in his church work. He just

feels like quitting. Nothing goes right for him." The other replied, "Why my husband was saying just the opposite. He is so enthused. It seems like he is closer to the Lord than ever." A hushed silence fell as they continued to mend the trousers, one patching the knees and the other the seat.

An eminent psychiatrist was asked what could be done to prevent a nervous breakdown. His answer: "Go straight to your front door, turn the knob, cross the tracks, and find somebody who needs you." Service is a great healer, helping us to lose ourselves in the lives of others.

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Memorials

Continued From Page 2

therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth" (Joshua 24:14).

Memorial Anointing

The account of the woman anointing the feet of Jesus in preparation for his burial is recorded in Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:1-9; and John 12:1-9. John identifies the woman as Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, and Judas Iscariot as the principal complainer about the "waste." Jesus rebuked his disciples for their misdirected concern. Then Jesus commended Mary for having "done what she could," saying, "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her" (Mark 14:8-9).

Mary gave her gift, estimated at 300 pence in value and the equivalent of a year's wages. We, too, must give sacrificially as God has prospered us (I Corinthians 16:2; II Corinthians 9:6-11). Also, we must not neglect the "cup of cold water" (Matthew 10:42) knowing that, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love" (Hebrews 10:6).

Memorial Prayer And Alms

God commended Cornelius, the first Gentile covert, with the words, "Thy prayers and thy alms are come up for a memorial before God" (Acts 10:4). Cornelius' fear of the Lord, coupled with his "much alms" and continual prayer ascended as a reminder to God, although God had not forgotten, that through the promise made to Abraham

(Genesis 12:1-3; 22:18; Galatians 3:8-18) people from all nations could enjoy all spiritual blessings in Christ. Cornelius and his household received these blessings when they obeyed the command to be baptized (Acts 10:48). Later, when the church at Jerusalem heard of their conversion, they "glorified God" because the Gentiles had been granted "repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18).

Memorial Supper

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 for the sins of the world. The Lord's supper is not like the memorial stones long since scattered and ground into powder, or the container of expensive perfume long since evaporated into the air. Jesus chose a fitting memorial of the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine to represent his body and blood sacrificed for atonement. The emblems are also noted for their universality, availability, and portability. The supper is to be observed on "the first day of the week" (Acts 20:7), "till he come" (I Corinthians 11:26).

The Lord's supper looks three directions. It is a memorial to the suffering at Calvary. Paul states that the supper is a communion, that is, fellowship, of the "body" and "blood" of Christ (I Corinthians 10:16-17). Furthermore, Paul states the future hope as we "proclaim the Lord's death til he come" (11:26). We should ever count it an exalted

privilege to be faithful to our calling and partake of the supper in a worthy manner (11:27).

Memorials are important to us. Memorials perpetuate memory, give understanding and meaning to the past, balance and perspective to the present, and direction and purpose to the future.

"Find A Need And Fill It"

Continued From Page 2

Frequently, a negative attitude reveals a desire to be served rather than serve, to receive rather than give. One of the outstanding traits of the Master was his service. "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

An eminent psychiatrist was asked what could be done to prevent a nervous breakdown. His answer: "Go straight to your front door, turn the knob, cross the tracks, and find somebody who needs you." Service is a great healer, helping us to lose ourselves in the lives of others.

Bud Wilkinson was once asked, "What is the contribution of football to America's health?" "Absolutely none," he said. "Football is a game where 22 men are on a field badly in need of rest and 70,000 are in the stands badly in need of exercise."

Sadly, this evaluation portrays many congregations. The few are involved in the Lord's work while many are "observing" with frequent criticisms of something that should have been done differently.

The Kaiser Corporation had a motto which has proven its worth: "Find a Need and Fill It!" You can never get much of anything done unless you go ahead and do it before you are ready. "The fellow who does things that count usually doesn't stop to count them."

--1569 Berry Rd., Birmingham, AL 35226.

Helping Others Helps You

"A survey of well-known altruists showed that they are unusually healthy and emotionally secure. *Theory*: The resulting feeling of well-being relieves headaches and heightens self-esteem . . . and the amount of endorphins (the body's pain-reducing chemicals) is thought to rise."

Chris Keifer, PhD, associate professor of anthropology, University of California, 1990 a.d., quoted in *Bottom Line Personal*, 1/15/91, p. 1.

"Whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

Jesus, Matthew 16:25, c. 30 a.d.

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

Just Preach Christ

Continued From Page 1

or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord" (I Corinthians 14:37). He also declared that "all Scripture is inspired of God" (II Timothy 3:16-17). The words of the apostles and prophets must be taken as seriously as the words of the Lord himself, because the Holy Spirit who inspired the writers simply spoke what he heard Christ tell him to say (John 16:13).

Second, the preachers who make such disturbing claims as has been mentioned often accuse faithful brethren of the very things which they themselves are guilty. While chastising us for being "extremely arrogant," and being like the Pharisees of old, they are very caustic in both language and demeanor.

Third, we must ever guard against going to the opposite extreme. It is tempting to brand anyone who disagrees with our views as a "heretic" and a "liberal;" however, we must allow liberty on matters of opinion. Some individuals have forever damaged their reputations by publicizing internal church disputes and personality squabbles as "threats to the faith." Jude 3 says, "Earnestly contend for the faith," not, "Earnestly be contentious about the faith."

Finally, elders must ever be aware of the men they hire to preach. Truly, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Those who espouse radical views, whether to the right or the left, must

be avoided, along with those individuals who delight in stirring up trouble. The purity and unity of the Lord's church must always be foremost when elders select a man to preach.

Those who espouse radical views, whether to the right or the left, must be avoided, along with those individuals who delight in stirring up trouble. The purity and unity of the Lord's church must always be foremost when elders select a man to preach.

Let us all be mindful of the fact that Jesus requires us to be faithful to all of his words, whether they be direct quotes from him or through his inspired writers. May we always preach Christ faithfully, that the Great Commission might be carried out by us. Our task is to reach the world with the Gospel. May God help us all to that end.

--South Haleyville Church of Christ, Route 2, Box 100, Haleyville, AL 35565.

The Danger Of Drifting



W. A. Holley

Many years ago, J. D. Tant, one of our pioneer preachers, used to close his articles with this warning: "Brethren, we are drifting."

It is appropriate now for God's people to sound the same warning today. All lovers of truth should read Hebrews 2:14 in the American Standard Translation.

It is possible for children of God to drift away from or to allow truth to slip away from them. The text warns, "Lest haply we drift away from them." Haply means carelessly, unconsciously, we are carried along by the pressures of evil forces. It is easy to drift downstream, but effort is required for one to move upstream. "Brethren, we are drifting."

The home, a college, or a nation can drift into its own destruction. The American home is being destroyed by drugs, alcohol, and illicit sex. According to modern standards there is nothing right and nothing wrong!! "In those days there was no king (no authority) in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25, cf. Proverbs 16:2; 21:2). Nations and universities often drift away from their original objectives. France drifted into infidelity, ending in a reign of terror. The colleges where Alexander Campbell and J. W. McGarvy taught the word of God drifted away from truth into infidelity.

Apostolic writers warned the church of Christ of the danger of departing from the faith (I Timothy 4:1-4; II Timothy 4:1-5; II Thessalonians 2:3-12; Acts 20:29-30). Thus departures from the faith began early in the history of the church of our Lord. Hence, one departure after another followed until by the seventh century there was the emergence of an apostate church -- Roman Catholicism.

Any good encyclopedia will reveal that Protestant denominationalism arose early in the sixteenth century. Hence, the Bible never addresses per se, Catholicism or denominationalism, because they came into being after divine revelation had been closed (Revelation 22:18-19). Thus, the religious world drifted away from the apostolic order of things as taught in the Bible.

What is the greatest task of the church of Christ today? It is to urge those who have drifted away from the New Testament order of things to return to the original pattern: in name, in origin, in practice, in doctrine. Religious division is a sin before God (John 17:20-23; I Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 1:27).

We shall note some things from which the early church drifted. (1) It gradually drifted from the Bible as the only rule of faith (Romans 10:17; II Timothy 3:15-17). The acceptance of human creeds, manuals, and disciplines have replaced the Bible in the minds of countless thousands. (2) Drifting away from the plurality of elders or bishops in the local church finally developed into the pope and his entourage (Acts 11:30; 14:23; Philippians 1:1-2). (3) Many have drifted away from sound speech as taught in the Holy Bible (I Peter 4:11; Acts 17:11; Nehemiah 13:23-26). (4) It has drifted away from "the unity of the Spirit" into denominational division (Ephesians 4:3-6; John 17:20-23; I Corinthians 1:10). (5) Thousands of preachers and denominational leaders have drifted away from God's plan of salvation -- namely, faith, repentance, confession of Jesus' name, and baptism

for, or unto, remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Luke 13:3; Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 2:36-38; Romans 6:3-4; Acts 22:16). In the place of what God has commanded, they have prayer, the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, salvation by faith only, the limited atonement, plus other human plans that the Bible knows nothing about. Dear readers, go back to your Bible, believe it and obey it, and you will become a New Testament Christian (Hebrews 5:8-9; Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Peter 4:16). (6) Many have departed from spiritual, New Testament worship, into rank, sensual, entertainment (Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47; John 4:23-24; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). (7) Many church members have drifted away from godly living into worldliness and sinful practices (Titus 2:11-12; Romans 12:1-2). Thousands of church members are living in adulterous relationships suffering no pain of conscience (I Timothy 4:1-5).

What is the greatest task of the church of Christ today? It is to urge those who have drifted away from the New Testament order of things to return to the original pattern: in name, in origin, in practice, in doctrine. Religious division is a sin before God.

Is there a remedy? Yes, indeed! What is it? It is strong pulpit preaching, backed up by a strong eldership, which demands that the gospel be preached without any compromise, what ever (II Timothy 4:1-5). Our membership needs to be indoctrinated! Are we permitting a new generation of members to grow up never having been taught the Old Jerusalem Gospel? Take a look at history. The Christian Church drifted into their present condition. What has happened to them can happen to us unless we begin now to preach the plain simple, unadulterated word of God in all the churches of Christ, with all boldness and courage and tenacity.

What are the signs of one's drifting away from God's divine commands? (1) When one no longer wishes to hear what God has said (Matthew 13:15; II Timothy 4:1-5). (2) When one refuses to remember God's will and way (Luke 8:12; James 1:21-25). (3) When one has made shipwreck of his faith (I Timothy 1:19-20; 5:12; Hebrews 3:12-13). (4) One drifts away from the truth when one no longer loves it supremely (Proverbs 23:23; II Thessalonians 2:10-12; Revelation 2:3-5). (5) Those who no longer support the truth through their practice have drifted away from it (Matthew 7:21-26; Revelation 22:16; I John 2:3-4). (6) Those who have abandoned the hope of the gospel and the joy of eternal truth have already drifted far, far, too far (Colossians 1:23; Hebrews 6:18-19; Psalms 51:12).

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation . . . ? (Hebrews 2:1-4).

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

Is The Ice Chest Your Fishing Hole?



W. T. Allison

What would you think if you saw someone sitting in his fishing boat, out on a beautiful lake, with fish jumping all around, but the fisherman was sitting there with his ice chest open fishing for those fish that had already been caught? Or,

casting his lure into the open live well? Or, casting his hook at the stringer of fish hanging from the side of the boat? When you go fishing, you fish for those fish that have not already been caught. At least that is the way it is done when fishing for fish.

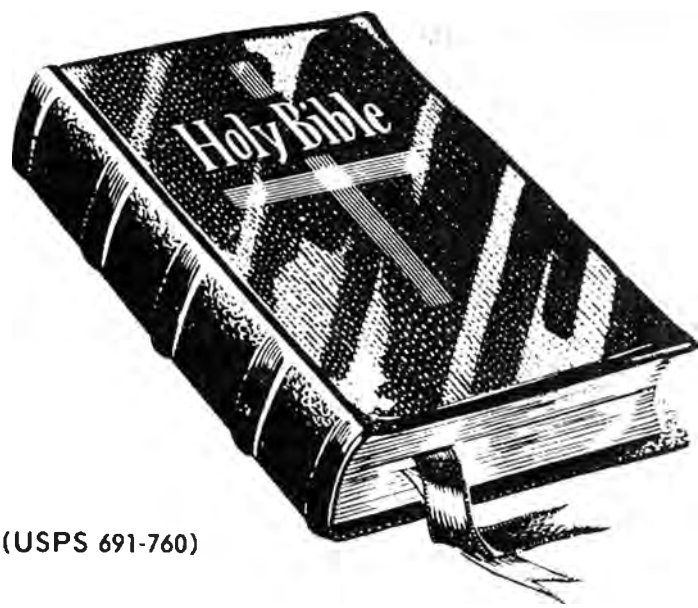
As we make a spiritual application to this story, where is our fishing hole in the church? For many people, the prime fishing hole is another congregation of faithful Christians. Many are emptying one ice chest in order to fill another ice chest. We must realize that we are all part of a family. The family of God will not grow as long as we are using each other as fishing holes. This only produces a "stink" that smells good only to Satan.

As I read the Word of God, I find that the "field" of labor is to be in the world (Matthew 13:38). The bait that we are to use is the Word of God, not

If my strategy is to lure people by praise, popularity, pomp, or even guilt, then I am using the wrong bait. If I am doing this to win some faithful brother from another congregation, then I am using the wrong bait and fishing in the wrong place.

something to lure men but to snatch men out of the fire (Jude 23). If my strategy is to lure people by praise, popularity, pomp, or even guilt, then I am using the wrong bait. If I am doing this to win some faithful brother from another congregation, then I am using the wrong bait and fishing in the wrong place. The fish that we ought to be trying to catch are those who are lost in the depths of sin or those who are floundering in the net of worldliness. If we spend all our time casting our lure into some other congregations live well, then we have forgotten the real mission of the church. Where is your prime fishing hole? Is it the world or an ice chest?

--1901 Schillinger Rd., Mobile, AL 36695.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Truth

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

VOLUME 27

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NUMBER 21

The "Heart" Of The Matter



R. W. Gray

The woman at Sychar manifested an interest in what men ought to do in Divine worship. Her concern and her question did not reflect what one might do in private meditation, but dealt specifically with the corporate worship in which folk engage when "assembled"

for that purpose (John 4:20). Jesus' response had to do with the same concept, "How and where should men worship God?"

Holy shrines, sacred places, holy days, new moons, etc., would have no place in the life of the "true worshipper" (John 4:21; cf Colossians 2:16, 17). God is a Spirit. He is not of the flesh. He must be worshipped "in spirit," i.e., by and through the human spirit and/or intellect. Paul affirmed that he served God "in his spirit" (Romans 1:9). In becoming a child of God we obey "from the heart" the form of teaching into which we were delivered (Romans 6:16, 17).

The greatest problem in reference to "vain worship" offered by the Jews of Jesus' time was their failure to engage the whole heart. Drawing nigh with the mouth and honoring God with the lips was not sufficient when "their heart is far from me" (Matthew 15:8). A failure to retain God in their hearts contributed to their introduction of the doctrine of men within that worship and servitude (Matthew 15:8, 9). Loving God with all the heart, soul, and strength is the greatest deterrent to such innovations. The object of worship must be in clear focus as the participant presents himself or herself in the august presence of the Maker of heaven and earth (Psalm 95:6, 7; Hebrews 10:19, 23). He must be sanctified by all who draw near unto him, and his name must be glorified. The thunderbolts of his wrath are kindled against the would be worshippers who come before him in a

lippant or indifferent manner (Leviticus 10:1-6).

In contrasting New Testament worship with that of the Old, the writer of Hebrews referred to the latter as "carnal ordinances," while referring to the former as a "new and living way" opened to us by Jesus through the veil i.e. his flesh (Hebrews 9:10; 10:19, 20). A perusal of the book of Leviticus impresses the reader with God's concern for the correctness of that Old Testament worship. Every minute detail was to be carefully followed without alteration, addition, or subtraction (Proverbs 30:6; Leviticus 10:1, 2).

It is preposterous beyond all reason to assume that God is not concerned for the actions of worshippers within the framework of the New Covenant sealed by the precious blood of his Son. Indeed, one cannot worship "in truth" while ignoring the directions of him who is head over all things to the church (Colossians 3:17; 1:18; Ephesians 1:19, 23). It is impossible to please God if we come before him with faithless hearts (Hebrews 11:6). But the faith that is acceptable to him is that which comes from the hearing of his word (Romans 10:17). To worship in truth is to worship sincerely, according to his will (Ephesians 6:24; II Corinthians 8:8; 2:17; Philippians 1:10; Hebrews 12:25, 29).

In every avenue of worship opened to his people the Lord has underscored the need to engage the whole heart, to connect our spirit with him who is "Spirit." Failure to eat the bread and drink the cup "in memory" of him who died for them, a failure to "discern the Lord's body," was the occasion of a serious and soul damning perversion of the Lord's Supper at Corinth (I Corinthians 11:24, 30). It must be remembered, says Paul, that when we partake of the Supper it is a "communion" of the body and blood of the Lord (I Corinthians 10:16, 17).

One is to "pray with the spirit, and pray with the understanding." All must be engaged in the prayers uttered in Christian worship. All must give their "A-men!" to that which is said in prayer to God. We are honored to come "boldly" before the throne of grace, and we must not abuse this awe inspiring

privilege (I Corinthians 14:15, 16; Hebrews 4:16).


Even our giving must be as we have "purposed in our hearts" (II Corinthians 9:7). The spirit must be "cheerful" in the giving of that gift.

The hearing of his word is a time when the heart must remain in tune with him who is conveying his will by means of his inspired word (II Timothy 4:1-6). When Ezra opened the Book in the presence of the people they "stood up." ". . . But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isaiah 66:2b; Nehemiah 8:4, 5).

In no aspect of worship is the heart string, the inward man, the "spirit" and "soul" more engaged than when we come before him with singing (Psalm 100). "Let the word of Christ dwell in you with all wisdom; . . . singing with grace in your HEARTS to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16). We are to sing with the spirit and with understanding (I Corinthians 14:15b). We are to sing and make melody "in our hearts" to the Lord, giving thanks for all things unto God our Father in the name of his Son (Ephesians 5:19, 20). In the midst of the church we join our hearts to Christ and in union with him sing praises unto God (Hebrews 2:12). By Christ, our High Priest, we are to offer the sacrifice of praise continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name (Hebrews 13:15).

In our boldness to approach the throne of God in worship and prayer we must not lose sight of the fact that our God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29). Our action, even the day of our corporate worship, is very important (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1, 2). But we must remember that everything may be "in place," insofar as the proper emblems and elements are concerned, while our heart is far from him. Our sincerity in worship is seriously in doubt when we correctly withdraw from those who introduce unauthorized elements into the worship but refuse to engage heartily in the avenues he has opened up for us (Hebrews 10:19, 26). Think on these things.

--563 McGukin Road, 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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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Dear Seniors



David Wade

It seems like only yesterday we remember the excitement, fears and doubts you had as you began grade school. You were so young and eager to learn that you didn't seem to be discouraged at the prospect of the next twelve years of school. Days turned into weeks and weeks into months and years. You grew and progressed as time seemed to pass so slowly. Looking back it seems as only a brief moment . . .

Now you have entered the threshold of young adulthood and are approaching one of the great milestones of your life -- your graduation from high school. The routine and regimen of the past few years are suddenly broken. No longer do you automatically know what you will be doing next year. It seems to bring back some of your childhood excitement, fears and doubts. Things are radically different now. Daddy and Mother are not making your decisions anymore. You must decide whether you will stay 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

Now That's Obedience



Glenn A. Posey

"Thus did Noah: according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Genesis 6:22). "Thus did Moses: according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did he" (Exodus 40:16). Now that's obedience.

The example of Noah and Moses has shown mankind down through the ages what it takes to be pleasing to God.

God's requirements for man today are just as clear and specific to us as they were to Noah and Moses. Noah built the ark, Moses the tabernacle, just like God wanted, and that's obedience.

When man lives his life in accordance to the instructions in the New Testament, he is on his way to heaven and will build the church in the process. Obedience is not meritorious salvation. Could Noah and Moses have been saved if they had refused to obey God? Certainly not.

Man is saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8, 9). But what is faith? Faith is trust that manifests itself in obedience (James 2:14-26). God provided the remedy for man's salvation when Jesus died on the cross (Hebrews 2:9). However, man must appropriate the blessings of the cross by obeying the gospel (I Corinthians 15:1-2). If man ever refuses to obey he forfeits his right to the blessings of the cross (I Corinthians 1:18-24).

Why are people baptized? Why do Christians attend, give, visit, share, etc. They are simply doing what Noah and Moses did, just following God's instructions, and that's obedience. Paul said,

Continued On Page 3

Seniors . . . Go Forth To Life

Gary Colley

With a voice of congratulation, a word of praise, a tear of joy for you, and a shining star of hope, we extend the thoughts of this article.

Years of work and accomplishment have come and gone, at times with hardly a notice! But here it is! The time parents and young people have looked toward with anticipation. We wanted the goal for you, but with a tinge of sadness it has come and we are proud of your perseverance. The finality of this part of your preparation has made the difficulties that were encountered along the road all worthwhile!

The church of Christ has been an intrinsic part of your lives. By God's inspired Word, it has taught you to realize you will not be tempted above what you are able to bear (I Corinthians 10:13). That the Lord's teaching, believed and received unto our hearts, sustains you in times of indecision and helps you in the solution of your problems (I Peter 5:7). It has taught you honesty and integrity that the world so needs today: telling the truth is better than lies; keeping your word will be approved wherever you may go; paying your debts will

make you right in the sight of God and man; not taking that which belongs to others, even their good name, is the way to live; and being fair in our dealing with others will give us many happy days. Purity and maturity are continual goals of those who would live godly in Christ Jesus (II Timothy 3:12).

To be upright in the sight of man is important . . . but to be right before God is a million times more important!

But the Lord's church should be the center of our lives! That which Christ built and gave His blood to purchase is of more value than any possession of earth or accomplishment in life. To be upright in the sight of man is important . . . but to be right before God is a million times more important! Jesus said, "For what is a man profited, if he shall

Continued On Page 3



Flavil Nichols Charles Coit Earl West Linda Schott Pepp Gilmore B. Stough Ben Jones Dowell Flatt Sandra Humphrey Cecil May Jr.

**WORDS OF TRUTH LECTURESHIP
AUGUST 11-14, 1991
SIXTH AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST
1501 Sixth Avenue • Jasper, Alabama 35501
Telephone (205) 384-6446 or 387-1670
THEME: "IN TIMES LIKE THESE"**

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11, 1991

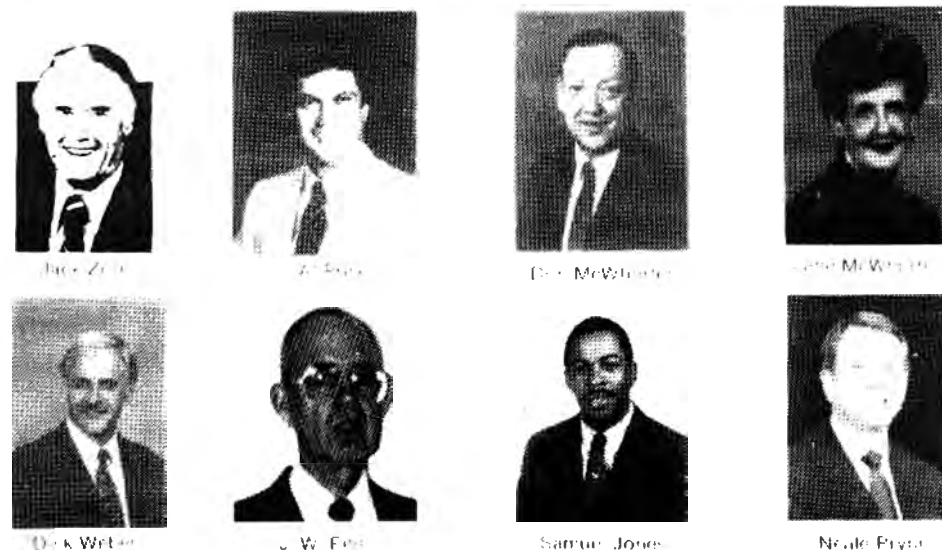
10:25-11:30 a.m. The Times Of This Ignorance God Winked At Flavil Nichols
6:30- 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00- 8:00 p.m. It Is High Time To Awake Out Of Sleep Charles Coit

MONDAY, AUGUST 12, 1991

9:30-10:15 a.m. The Restoration Movement Earl West
9:30-10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Spiritual Fitness Through The Disciplined Life Linda Schott
10:30-11:15 a.m. The New Hermeneutic Ralph Gilmore
11:15- 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00- 2:45 p.m. The Caribbean Mission Field Bill Stough
3:00- 3:45 p.m. World Bible School - Eastern European Mission Ben Jones
3:45- 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30- 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00- 8:00 p.m. The Time Will Come When They Will Not Endure Sound Doctrine Dowell Flatt

TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 1991

9:30-10:15 a.m. The Restoration Movement Earl West
9:30-10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Human Relationships Sandra Humphrey
10:30-11:15 a.m. Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage Cecil May Jr.
11:15- 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00- 2:45 p.m. Lads To Leaders/Leaderettes Jack Zorr
3:00- 3:45 p.m. Ministry To The Aging Al Price
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) Remember Now Thy Creator Dick Weber



Jack Zorr Al Price Don McWhorter Jane McWhorter Dick Weber J.W. Ellis Samuel Jones Neale Pryor

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 1991

9:30-10:15 a.m. The Restoration Movement Earl West
9:30-10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) The Fruit Of The Spirit Jane McWhorter
10:30-11:15 a.m. The Role Of The Woman In The Work Of The Church Don McWhorter
11:15- 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00- 2:45 p.m. Jail And Prison Ministry J.W. Ellis
3:00- 3:45 p.m. Christian Family In Crisis Suggestions For A Better Tomorrow Samuel Jones
3:45- 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30- 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00- 8:00 p.m. Thou Art Come To The Kingdom For Such A Time As This Neale Pryor

FOR RESERVATIONS CALL:

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200 Mall Way
Jasper, AL 35501

Now That's Obedience

Continued From Page 2

Christ is the "author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:8-9). If man ever refuses to obey God's commandments, he has refused God's salvation, and will be eternally lost (II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

The gospel is God's power unto salvation

Seniors . . . Go Forth To Life

Continued From Page 2

gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matthew 16:26). While living the Christian life, decisions come much easier: What job shall I take? Who shall be my associates? Who shall I marry? And, on and on we could go. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

We are proud of you! We want the best for you! All that now stands between you and the top of the ladder, is the ladder! Place your foot on each step with care and "GO FORTH TO LIFE."

--Via East Main Informer, Tupelo, MS 38802 - 1761.

(Romans 1:16). In other words, God has limited his power to the gospel. Thus when a person learns, believes and obeys the gospel, God saves his soul. Those who refuse to obey will be lost, and those who obey will be saved.

One of the most important questions to ask yourself is, have I obeyed the gospel? If you have, that's obedience.

--9th St. & 7th Ave. S.E., Cullman, AL 35055.

Is The Bible Obsolete?

The Bible claims to be alive. "For the word of God is living and powerful" (Hebrews 4:12). The New Testament is an everlasting covenant (Hebrews 13:20). God, in His mercy, has given to us "all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to glory and virtue." (II Peter

authority, or it is an old, out-dated, obsolete book of human origin.

The Bible is either absolute or it is obsolete. The word of God is either our absolute standard of authority, or it is an old, out-dated, obsolete book of human origin.

The humanist declares that God and the Bible are the result of religious evolutionary process. We are told that man invented God in his own mind, and the Bible was written to satisfy religious needs. According to the thinking of some, God is the



Bobby Key

1:3).

The Bible is either absolute or it is obsolete. The word of God is either our absolute standard of

"Does Anybody Have Some Goats For Sale?"



Edsel Burlison

Civic clubs use various methods to insure attendance by their members. Sometimes a fine is levied each time one is absent. Sometimes special assignments are given for the absentee.

The most ingenious plan to come to my attention involved a big, old stink-

ing goat. For the member who failed to put in his appearance at the weekly noon meeting, Mr. Goat would be tethered right in the middle of his front lawn where he was to spend the next seven days. Besides the nuisance of having a noisy evil-smelling goat tied in the yard, there was a banner which said, "This guy can't be depended on to be present, but instead is a hurt to our effort."

Besides the nuisance of having a noisy evil-smelling goat tied in the yard, there was a banner which said, "This guy can't be depended on to be present, but instead is a hurt to our effort."

It was reported that soon after the program was begun, the average attendance soared close to the 100% mark.

For the church member who will not be moved by the love, grace and mercy of God and commands of Jesus Christ to attend the services of the church, it just might be that an old goat would help. "Do you know of any old goats for sale?"

As long as one regards worship occasions a drudgery to be avoided when possible, just that long he has no concept of what Christianity is all about. The Master wants us to be servants who enjoy and long for those occasions to praise and

honor the Father. He wants us to say with David, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psalm 122:1).

The surrender which characterized the Apostle Paul should ever be the goal of every Christian. He said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

This is the kind of devotion that would prevent parents the heartache of these anonymous lines:

My daddy thinks it's nice of me to go
to Sunday School-

To hear the helpful lesson and to learn

the Golden Rule.

So I dress up very neatly and travel off alone,
While dad hunts up his paper and decides he
will stay home.

And if some Sunday morning something else
I'd like to do

My dad looks very stern and says, "Son,
I'm surprised at you."

Now, I've wondered and wondered Yes, time
and time again,

Why Sunday School is good for boys and not
for grown up men?

--1569 Berry Road, Birmingham, AL 35226.

To Every Responsible Man There Comes An Opportunity



Cecil Corkren

the dogs came and licked his sores."

The text we are considering is the Lord's reply to the Pharisees for their criticism of his teaching in the parable of the unrighteous steward (Luke 16:1-9). The Pharisees were lovers of money, that is, they wanted it for themselves, rather than to use it in the service of God, both for the extension of his work and relieve the needs of the poor. And so, when they scoffed at him, Jesus said unto them, "Ye are they which justify yourselves in the sight of men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in

In Luke 16:19-21 we read of such a man. "Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day; and a certain beggar named Lazarus was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; yea, even

the sight of God." Jesus states clearly the purpose for which the parable of the unrighteous steward was given (see again verse 9); and it will be easy for us to see that the rich man now before us, who possessed the mammon of unrighteousness, in abundance failed utterly to use it so as to make friends who could receive him into the eternal home of the soul.

"Ability plus opportunity equals responsibility."

In verse 10 we read "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much: and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much." And now the rich man before us contains an example of a man who was unrighteous and who, as a result of his attitude and conduct, was denied the eternal enjoyment which comes to the faithful. Verses 11 and 12 say, "If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?" The rich man was not faithful in that which belongs to God, and consequently was denied that which could have been his eternally. Verse thirteen lays down the broad principle which covers the attitude and conduct which is obvious in this account of the rich man. We must understand that no one can grasp the meaning of the rich man and Lazarus, unless he is familiar with and understands the parable of the unrighteous steward.

What was true then is true now; we cannot serve God and the material possessions of this life. Unless we see this principle we have missed the lesson for us today in the story of the rich man and Lazarus. "We cannot serve two masters. The rich man had a responsibility as well as an opportunity to feed the poor man. Someone has said, "Ability plus opportunity equals responsibility."

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

Is The Bible Obsolete?

Continued From Page 3

product and creation of man, instead of man being the creation of God.

Jesus taught that men would prefer darkness because their deeds were evil (John 3:19). Men are so blinded and hardened by the love of sin that they wish there were no God -- no one to judge their conduct.

God and His word are rejected by others who feel no need for direction or guidance from a higher source. They believe themselves to be superior physically, intellectually, and morally to their superstitious ancestors who needed God and the Bible as a crutch.

If uninspired and ignorant men wrote the Bible,

why hasn't intelligent modern man come up with a better book? This is something to think about. If the Bible was written by God, then it is absolute and contains everything that is necessary for our well being, both in this world and in the world to come.

"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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (II Timothy 3:16, 17).

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



(USPS 691-760)

Words of Truth

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

the
:25

VOLUME 27

MAY 31, 1991

NUMBER 22

Beware Of Terrorists



Jerry Jenkins

Though the threat of terrorists has diminished some since Desert Storm, there is still evidence of a tightening of security. The airlines report that fewer people are traveling and when one does travel, there is more security in the airport. Restrictions are at an all-time high on pack-

ages that are sent through the mail.

The casual reader of the newspapers and news listeners will indicate the fear that the average American has for terrorists. This year when President Bush spoke to Congress, four blocks were sealed off by the Secret Service. Some of you may remember several years ago when President Nixon visited Birmingham the helicopters which flew around the downtown buildings and the unusual number of law enforcement officials and government officials who were brought in for the purpose of security.

Terrorists are not new. In Judges we read of a period of 18 years of enslavement that Israel experienced at the hands of King Eglon, king of Moab. In terrorist-like fashion, the Bible reveals that Ehud crept into his bedroom and killed him (Judges 3:21). In I Samuel 30 we are informed of the Philistine's raiding party which swept into Ziklag and took two of David's wives.

We need to be aware of terrorists who destroy faith. It is possible for our faith to be sabotaged (I Timothy 1:19). The Bible shows at least three glaring terrorists who seek to destroy our faith. First, there is the destroying of one's conscience. Though the conscience is not an infallible guide, it is a God-given quality that guards against the destruction of faith (Romans 14). Second, it is possible for the terrorist of worldly love to wreck our faith. The first two times we read of Demas in the Bible, he is a faithful, loving Christian; but the

final mention is when he left Paul and went to Thessalonica and Paul states the reason was his love for "this present world" (II Timothy 4:10). Jesus Himself mentions a third group of terrorists in His parable of the sower (Luke 8:14). They are: the cares, riches and pleasures of this life.

It is true there is a sense in which the church can never be destroyed (Daniel 2:44), but great damage is done by such things as freely accepting division in the name of love (John 17:20-21) and a failure to preach against sin and its consequences.

Even good things may be harmful. We need to beware of terrorists who destroy our home. There is the failure to take time to build our marriage. I read once of an accident that occurred in Mt. Mitchell, N.C. Late one afternoon the man for

whom the mountain is named tried to take a shortcut down the mountain and fell to his death. Our attempts to shortcut our marriage relationship often causes death to marriage. A second terrorist that destroys our home is a failure to manage anger. Not all anger is sin. Anger which is the emotion that develops below the level of the conscience; anger which is below the surface is harmful (Ephesians 4:26). A third terrorist of the home is the attitude that leaves God out of marriage. Even those who may come to the services may come yelling, screaming and cursing. The real issue is not simply how often do I attend, but does my family pray together and have a personal relationship with God.

There are terrorists that destroy the church. It is true there is a sense in which the church can never be destroyed (Daniel 2:44), but great damage is done by such things as freely accepting division in the name of love (John 17:20-21) and a failure to preach against sin and its consequences.

In conclusion, let us all be reminded that our opposition to terrorism, which can be hurtful physically, is good, but the opposition to terrorism which destroys our faith, home and the church is even better.

--400 Roubuck Parkway, Birmingham, AL 35206.


Sin Tracks

Tim Rice

A friend recently told me an interesting story. Years ago, people kept their yards free of grass. Their yards consisted of sand, usually under lovely shade trees in the front yard. They kept the front yard swept free of debris, removing the leaves that fell or the grass that sprouted. Sometimes, when the family would be gone for a day, they would return to find they had had visitors. How would they know? They would see tracks in the sand -- footprints, horse tracks, or wagon tracks. It was of course beyond question visitors had come because their tracks proved it.

When the devil visits a person, he also leaves tracks. Sin will leave an imprint on the life it touches. A scar may remain for years because of one single sin. David made the statement in Psalm 51:3: "My sin is ever before me." One is inclined to believe that David never outlived the memory of his sin with Bathsheba against his Lord. Sin left its track. A follower of God who looks back on his past life can clearly identify periods where sin entered and left a mark. Even a newborn Christian can identify sin tracks in his life.

In Revelation 3, John wrote a rebuke from 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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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

"It's Vacation Time Again!"



David Wade

Summertime is here and it's vacation time again! 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 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 the saints (Hebrews 10:25-26). Each congregation would do well to purchase for the church library a church directory entitled Churches of Christ in the United States published by the Gospel Advocate Company. 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 on earth. 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 employer 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."

Advice To Graduates

Jim Howard

Congratulations to our 1991 high school graduates! This occasion is a significant milestone in your life. Let me share with you a few bits of advice:

1. **Consider attending a Christian college.** The association and friendship with other Christians will last a lifetime and may positively influence your eternal destiny. The insights into God's word will enrich your whole life. You will come away with greater vision and preparation for your leadership role in the church. If attending a Christian school is not a possibility, involve yourself actively in a Christian student center or Bible chair.

2. **Develop your total person.** We are told that "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). You should grow the same way.

3. **Treasure your heritage.** You are a product of the sum total of all the influences and experiences of your life up to this point. Express your gratitude to all who have taken an interest in you: parents, friends, relatives, elders, Bible school teachers, teachers at school, coaches, band instructors, scout leaders, camp counselors and anyone else who has shown a personal concern for you. Saying "thank you" and feeling gratitude is almost a lost art in today's world.

4. **Re-examine time-honored virtues that have made for greatness:** conscientiousness, responsibility, thrift, patience, stick-to-itiveness, neatness, honesty, tact, punctuality, politeness, humility, and respect for age.

5. **Begin now praying and looking for a Christian mate.** Aside from your decision to become a Christian, this will be the most important

"I'm A State Trooper"



John Gipson "I'm a State Trooper," said the man on the other end of the phone, "and I was wondering if you might have time to talk to me?" He continued, "Everything in my life is fouled up. My wife and I are getting a divorce. My insides are killing me. I've already been to a doctor and a counselor, and nothing seems to help. Do you have any idea what's wrong with me, or how I might get some relief?"

My first question was, "Are you living the way God wants you to live?" "No," was the immediate

reply. He had been honest with me, and I knew what could cure him. But before I could reply he said, "Everybody tells me that the secret is 'time.' It's just going to take time. That's what the doctor said. That's what the counselor said. I'm going to be better in time. They may be right, but that doesn't help my stomach now. It's killing me. Do I have to live with it until time passes?"

He paused for a moment and I said, "I hate to disagree with your doctor, and your counselor, but I don't really think time is going to help you." "Why not?" "Because, regardless of how much

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"What Doth The Lord Require Of Thee?"



W. A. Holley

Micah, who lived approximately 760 years before the Christian era, wrote: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8). When we read the context of the foregoing passage we

learn that ten thousand rivers of oil, or thousands of rams, or the sacrifice of our sons, cannot purchase God's approbation or forgiveness of our

Sin Tracks

Continued From Page 1

Lord to Sardis. A statement in Revelation 3:4 casts light on our discussion. Jesus said, "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white." The word defiled means "to pollute, befoul, stain." If one's garment has been befouled, it is smelly. If it is stained, it looks ugly. This is a graphic description of the lingering effects of sin in people's lives.

When the devil visits a person, he also leaves tracks. Sin will leave an imprint on the life it touches. A scar may remain for years because of one single sin.

In the twentieth century setting, we have all seen sin tracks in the lives of those around us. I was shocked to hear lately of an old friend and former member of the church who died of AIDS contacted by his practicing homosexuality. Although I realize some innocent people contract AIDS, in this case sin left its track. All young people need to realize the danger in violating God's restrictions on sexual activity. When a virgin and a male virgin marry, they cannot give each other sexually transmitted diseases. Sinning by drinking alcohol leaves a track. There is not a recovering alcoholic alive who does not with sorrow think on his past alcoholism, with its tracks of ruin, and tell others the wisdom in never taking their first drink. The sins of pornography, dancing, and revealing clothing, are both wrong in themselves and sometimes lead to other sins such as fornication or rape. Beware of these, lest Satan leave his tracks in your life by them.

If you find the tracks of sin in your life, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19).

--4207 Adamsville Parkway, Adamsville, AL 35005.

sins. Many are ready to do anything except what God has commanded of them.

Another passage in the same vein reads, "These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord" (Zechariah 8:16-17).

Hence, we must always speak truth with our friends rather than lies, for God hates "a lying tongue. . . a false witness . . . and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:16-19). King Saul became a sinner when he obeyed the voice of the people rather than the voice of God. Although Saul claimed to have obeyed the commandments of God, he had not! Countless thousands today are following in his footsteps. "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (I Samuel 15:22-23).

The concept of obedience taught in the Old Testament is also taught in the New Testament. For example, Jesus "became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews

5:9). "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (I Peter 4:17). The inspired answer to this question is found in II Thessalonians 1:7-9. ". . . The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power."

It is not enough to merely say "Lord, Lord," we must also do His will (Matthew 7:21-23). Jesus' parting words to His apostles, just before He ascended into heaven, were: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Did Jesus know what he was talking about? We are certain that he surely did! We suggest other references which should be considered (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; I Peter 3:20-21).

There is a four-fold love for God mentioned in the Scriptures (Matthew 22:34-40). We must love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (I

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"I'm A State Trooper"

Continued From Page 2

time passes the problem is still there." "And you think my problem is that I'm not living right?" "That's what I think." "Well, I'm not living right, that's for sure." "Then let me give you a passage of scripture, and then you tell me what you think of it." "O.K." "But the wicked are like the tossing sea; for it cannot rest, and its waters toss up mire and

dirt. There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked" (Isaiah 57:20, 21). "That sounds like me." "I thought you would say that," I replied. "So you believe that as long as I don't live right I'm going to have these problems?" "That's exactly what I believe. But you can get rid of the basic problem." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:7, 8).

Advice To Graduates

Continued From Page 2

decision you will ever make.

6. **Hold to the unchanging.** If you are like most young adults your thinking will change drastically over the next ten years. You may go to college a conservative Republican and come out a liberal Democrat or vice versa. You may completely change your vocational plans. Even your thinking in regard to religion may change. Remember that in this world of change there is one unchanging reality to whom you can anchor your life -- "Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

Again, congratulations. May the Lord bless your life richly.

--Via East Cullman Bulletin, 9th Street and 7th Avenue S.E., Cullman, AL 35055.

"I hate to disagree with your doctor, and your counselor, but I don't really think time is going to help you." "Why not?" "Because, regardless of how much time passes the problem is still there."

"I hope I can do that," he said. "Me too," I replied.

--P.O. Box 228, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203.

"What Doth The Lord Require Of Thee?"

Continued From Page 3

John 5:3; John 14:15, 21, 3). Those who truly love God will keep his commandments.

"What doth the Lord require of thee?" We shall be more specific.

(1) He requires us to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16; 8:21-24).

(2) He requires us to repent of all our sins (Luke 13:3-5; Acts 2:38; II Peter 3:9).

(3) We are required to confess Jesus' name before

men (Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Romans 10:9-10).

(4) He requires us to be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Matthew 26:28; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-28; I Peter 3:21).

(5) He requires us to fulfill our duties and responsibilities and obligations as Christians to God, to the church, and to men (Revelation 2:10; Hebrews 10:23-26; Matthew 7:12; Titus 2:11-12).

"He has shown you, O man,

What is good;

And what does the Lord

require of you

But to do justly,

To love mercy,

And to walk humbly with

your God?" (Micah 6:8, NKJV).

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

Jimmie N. Doss

[Editor's Note: Sister Doss and her family are members of the Alder Springs Church of Christ in Albertville, Alabama].

The Apostle Paul stated in Philippians 4:11 "Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content." How many of us today can actually say that we are content with our lives as they are? We continually want more and more material things in our lives but we seem to put our spiritual lives on hold. "You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures" (James 4:2-3 NKJV).

I continually pray to be a better Christian and a good example for others. Paul is an inspiration to me. His attitude throughout the scriptures is amazing to me. He suffers hardships and still praises the Lord and keeps on going.

When we are feeling down and get discouraged about things being bad for us, let us remember what Christ and the Apostles went through. Philippians 4:13 says "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." If we will turn to God and the scriptures we will receive comfort and help for our troubles. I Peter 5:7 tells us to "cast all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you." We read that if we will pray and ask God for the things that we need, we will receive. "Now this is the confidence that 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). Sometimes we ask for foolish things and get upset and don't understand why we haven't received what we ask for. If we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness we will receive what we need to sustain our lives (Matthew 6:33). We are taught not to worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things (Matthew 6:34).

Contentment is a state of mind I am seeking. "Let your conduct be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said 'I will never leave you nor forsake you' (Hebrews 13:5). I get troubled with problems and feel sorry for myself and then I'll hear of someone that really has hardships and realize how thankful I should be. My children are healthy. We have a place to live and food to eat, whereas some people don't. I thank God everyday

"To Be Content"

for my family and friends and I pray that I will be a good Christian example for them to follow.

Sometimes we ask for foolish things and get upset and don't understand why we haven't received what we ask for. If we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness we will receive what we need to sustain our lives.

We all need to read and study the Bible more and apply it to our lives everyday. We can find the comfort and help we need for many things if we will look to the Bible. If we remain faithful and try to live a good Christian life when we have hardships, the Lord will bless us. Matthew 11:28-30 is

one of my favorite scriptures. "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Timothy 6:6-10).

Let us strive to be more like Christ and the Apostles and live for our reward in heaven.

--257B Hill Ave., Guntersville, AL 35976.

Disobedience Brings Destruction



Glenn A. Posey

The apostle Paul stated that the Lord will come, "in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (II Thessalonians 1:8, 9).

Recently, I heard a T.V. evangelist say, "This is the age of rebellion." Rebellion, or disobedience, has been characteristic of man ever since Eden (Genesis 3). This age, no more than any other age, has disobeyed God. The prophet Isaiah said of Israel, "That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord: which say to the seers, see not; and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits" (Isaiah 30:9, 10). Jeremiah prophesied one hundred years after Isaiah, and he said, "But this people hath a revolting and rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone" (Jeremiah 5:23).

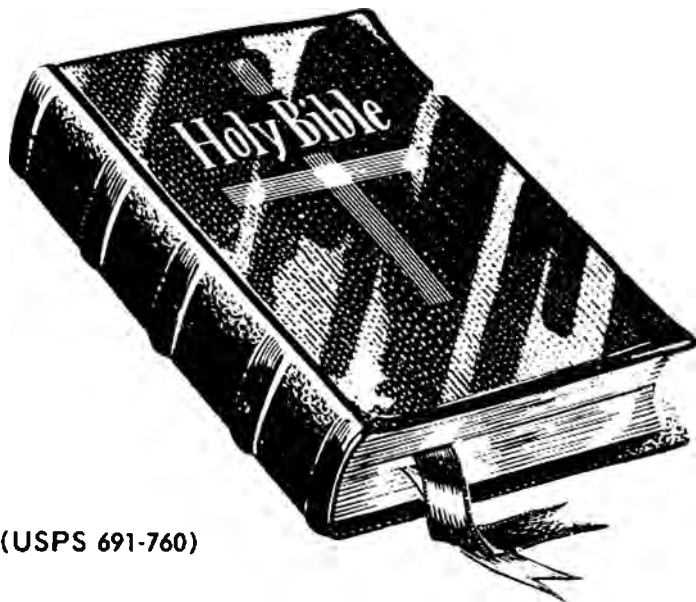
Man must realize that disobedience brings

destruction. Why? Because God says so! Reread our text in II Thessalonians 1:8, 9. It's simple, you obey God (the gospel) and God will bring you to heaven. But you disobey God (the gospel) and God will send you to hell. The gospel is God's "power unto salvation" (Romans 1:16).

Recently, I heard a T.V. evangelist say, "This is the age of rebellion." Rebellion, or disobedience, has been characteristic of man ever since Eden.

God made provisions for man's salvation on the cross (Hebrews 2:9; John 3:16). But man must do what God says in the New Testament in order to appropriate those provisions for his soul. In other words, when man sins and repents God washes his sins away in Christ's blood (Revelation 1:5). But if man disobeys the gospel, he remains in his sins and, therefore, will lose his soul. Every sin that's repented of God will forgive (Acts 3:19). But every sin not repented of God will judge (Ecclesiastes 11:9).

--Ninth Street and Seventh Avenue, S.E., Cullman, AL 35055.



(USPS 691-760)

Words of Truth

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

1 the
26:25

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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).

Division is a work of the flesh demonstrating a carnal mind.

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, resentment, 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 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.

Take A Second Look



W. T. Allison

One Spring, sometime before the Civil War, a boy in search of work came to Worthy Taylor's prosperous Ohio farm. The farmer knew nothing much about the boy except that his name was Jim, but he gave him a job. Jim spent the summer cutting stovewood, bringing in the cows and making himself generally useful. He ate in the kitchen and slept in the haymow.

Before the summer was over, Jim had fallen in love with Taylor's daughter. When the farmer refused to let him marry her -- telling him bluntly that he had no money, no name, and very poor

prospects -- Jim put his belongings in his old carpet bag, and disappeared.

Thirty-five years passed before Taylor one day pulled down his barn to make way for a new one. On one of the rafters above the haymow, he discovered that Jim had carved his full name -- JAMES A. GARFIELD. He was then President of the United States.

All of us have made mistaken judgments about another person. We think this person can't amount to anything, he will never make a contribution or he will never be productive. But the years pass, the person matures, he is trained and applying his skills, he becomes a success.

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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About Our Speakers



David Wade

Time is drawing near for the 1991 Words of Truth Lectureship and we are anticipating high interest and good attendance. Our eighteen 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.

Flavil Nichols began his preaching career at Dovertown, Alabama in 1934. Prior to his retirement, he served as pulpit minister of the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ and editor of Words of Truth. The Nichols live in Jasper and continue to be a vital part of the Sixth Avenue congregation. Brother Nichols keeps busy schedule with gospel meetings and also numerous lectureship appearances.

Charles Coil began preaching in Bristow, Oklahoma in 1950. After several years of local work, brother Coil entered full-time gospel meeting work. During his distinguished career he has preached in over 500 gospel meetings, both stateside and abroad. From 1971 until 1990 he served a president of International Bible College. He now serves as the first chancellor of the college.

Earl West, professor of Church History, has taught at Freed-Hardeman, Harding College and Harding University Graduate School of Religion. Brother West's four volumes, The Search for the Ancient Order, are an unparalleled contribution to the history of the Restoration Movement.

Linda Schott lives in Nashville, Tennessee and her husband, Ken, is a professor at David Lipscomb University. Sister Schott teaches fifth grade in public school. She is the author of three books: Spiritual Aerobics, How to Triumph Over Trivia, and Going Through the Motions. She speaks frequently at seminars for ladies around the country.

Ralph Gilmore works with the Campbell Street Church of Christ in Jackson, Tennessee and also serves as chairman of the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies at Freed-Hardeman University. Brother Gilmore was one of the featured speakers at the 1990 Freed-Hardeman University Preachers' and Church Workers' Forum addressing the role of the woman in the work of the church.

Bill Slough is a graduate of Auburn University and has worked in engineering and general

management assignments in industry until 1990. He has served as an elder at East Tennessee since 1973 and has been aggressively involved in foreign mission work since 1978. This year he began full-time work as administrator of the Caribbean Mission Program sponsored by the East Tallassee Church of Christ.

Since 1976 Ben Jones has worked closely with the Eastern European Mission, now sponsored by the Bammel Road Church of Christ of Houston, Texas. Today after 72 years the physical and philosophical barriers of Atheistic Communism are falling. Now EEM is openly distributing materials in most areas of Eastern Europe. Brother Jones will be discussing the challenge and opportunity of evangelizing these countries.

Dowell Flatt is professor of Greek and New Testament at Freed-Hardeman University. He is the youngest member of the Flatt brothers (Leman, Bill, Don, Dowell) Evangelistic team. Having begun preaching at age 15, Dowell has preached in full-time local work in Michigan, Missouri, Tennessee, and Louisiana. His travels have taken him to forty-nine states, twenty-two countries, and five continents.

Sandra Humphrey is editor of Christian Woman Magazine, and author of the popular ladies' class book, What Do You Communicate? She has also written numerous children's books and widely used teenage class study, Don't Kiss Toads! Sandra and her family live in Nashville, Tennessee and travels widely speaking at Ladies' Day gatherings.

Cecil May, Jr. is President of Magnolia Bible College at Kosciusko, Mississippi. Prior to this work, he served as academic dean of International Bible College, 1977-1980. Under his leadership MBC has received accreditation with the American Association of Bible Colleges and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Jack Zorn appears in frequent meetings and seminars across the country. The winner of numerous awards, he has been recognized for his leadership qualities by mayors and governors across the nation. Brother Zorn is the founder and National Director of Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes and has authored the manuals on leadership training now used by groups throughout the United States.

Al Price is Associate Professor of Sociology and Gerontology at Freed-Hardeman University. Brother Price has been on the faculty at Freed-Hardeman since 1974. It was my pleasure to attend Freed-Hardeman with Al and also to work as an associate minister with him at the Capitol Street Church of Christ in Jackson, Mississippi, 1965-

The Missing Oil And The Missing Lamps



Cecil Corkren

The parable of the ten virgins representing church members in Matthew 25:1-13 mentions missing oil. Five were wise and five were foolish. Why the equal number we are not sure. The problem of the five foolish virgins was not their lamps. They ran out of oil!

Recently I read in an article entitled "THE MISSING LAMPS," "In a certain mountain village in Europe several centuries ago, a nobleman wondered what legacy he should leave to his townspeople. At last he decided to build them a church building.

No one saw the complete plans for the church until it was finished. When the people gathered, they marveled at its beauty and completeness. Then someone asked, 'But where are the lamps? How will it be lighted?'

The nobleman pointed to some brackets in the walls. Then he gave to each family a lamp which they were to bring with them each time they came to worship.

'Each time you are here the area where you are seated will be lighted,' the nobleman said. 'Each time you are not here, that area will be dark. This is to remind you that whenever you fail to come to church, some part of God's house will be dark.'

The ten virgins all had lamps. They all trimmed their lamps. The difference is obvious. The wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. The vessels indicate the wise had an additional supply

Continued On Page 4

Continued On Page 3



Flavil Nichols



Charles Coil



Earl West



Linda Schott



Ralph Gilmore



Bill Stough



Ben Jones



Dowell Flatt



Sandra Humphrey



Cecil May, Jr.

**WORDS OF TRUTH LECTURESHIP
AUGUST 11-14, 1991**

**SIXTH AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST
1501 Sixth Avenue
Jasper, Alabama 35501
Telephone (205) 384-6446 or 387-1670**

THEME: "IN TIMES LIKE THESE"



Jack Zorn



Al Price



Don McWhorter



Jane McWhorter



Dick Weber



J. W. Ellis



Samuel Jones



Neale Pryor

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11, 1991

10:25-11:30 a.m. The Times Of This Ignorance God Winked At Flavil Nichols
6:30- 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00- 8:00 p.m. It Is High Time To Awake Out Of Sleep Charles Coil

MONDAY, AUGUST 12, 1991

9:30-10:15 a.m. The Restoration Movement Earl West
9:30-10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Spiritual Fitness Through The Disciplined Life Linda Schott
10:30-11:15 a.m. The New Hermeneutic Ralph Gilmore
11:15- 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00- 2:45 p.m. The Caribbean Mission Field Bill Stough
3:00- 3:45 p.m. World Bible School-Eastern European Mission Ben Jones
3:45- 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30- 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00- 8:00 p.m. The Time Will Come When They Will Not Endure Sound Doctrine Dowell Flatt

TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 1991

9:30-10:15 a.m. The Restoration Movement Earl West
9:30-10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Human Relationships Sandra Humphrey
10:30-11:15 a.m. Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage Cecil May, Jr.
11:15- 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00- 2:45 p.m. Lads To Leaders/Leaderettes Jack Zorn
3:00- 3:45 p.m. Ministry To The Aging Al Price
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) Remember Now Thy Creator Dick Weber

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 1991

9:30-10:15 a.m. The Restoration Movement Earl West
9:30-10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) The Fruit Of The Spirit Jane McWhorter
10:30-11:15 a.m. The Role Of The Woman In The Work Of The Church Don McWhorter
11:15- 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00- 2:45 p.m. Jail And Prison Ministry J. W. Ellis
3:00- 3:45 p.m. Christian Family In Crisis: Suggestions For A Better Tomorrow Samuel Jones
3:45- 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30- 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00- 8:00 p.m. Thou Art Come To The Kingdom For Such A Time As This Neale Pryor

FOR RESERVATIONS CALL:

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Jasper, AL 35501

Sleepy Hollow R.V. Camping (205) 483-7947
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200 Mall Way
Jasper, AL 35501

About Our Speakers

Continued From Page 2

1967.

Don and Jane McWhorter of Fayette, Alabama will appear on the lectureship. Don is the minister of the Fayette Church of Christ. Jane teaches in the local elementary school system. Don has spoken in more than 1300 gospel meetings and campaigns in this country and around the world. Jane has

authored several ladies' books and appears at many Ladies Day meetings.

J. W. Ellis was born and reared at Jasper, Alabama and was a member at the Fifth Avenue Church of Christ. J. W. serves as an elder in the Wetumpka Church of Christ and conducts services at the Draper Correctional Facility each Sunday.

He is the editor of the Alabama Jail/Prison Reporter which has been published quarterly since January 1988.

Dick Weber has been with the Atlanta Police Department for 26 years. He holds the rank of Captain and is head of training at the Police Academy. He and his family attend at the Forest Park Church of Christ where he teaches three classes each week. Dick travels extensively over the country speaking to rallies, workshops and lectureships.

Samuel Jones, a native Mississippian, has worked with Magnolia Bible College the past seven years. As of June 1, he is presently serving as assistant professor and Chairman of the Home Economics and Family Studies Department at Freed-Hardeman University. Brother Jones has been selected as one of the national speakers on the "One Nation Under God" campaign.

Neale Pryor has served as professor of Bible at Harding University since 1962. Presently, he also serves as Vice President of Academic Affairs. Brother Pryor conducts approximately 15 gospel meetings a year plus numerous appearances at youth rallies, workshops and lectureships. He is author of You Can Trust Your Bible. Quality Publications, 1980.

Take A Second Look

Continued From Page 1

All of us have made mistaken judgments about another person. We think this person can't amount to anything, he will never make a contribution or he will never be productive. But the years pass, the person matures, he is trained and applying his skills, he becomes a success.

Paul said it this way: "So from now on we regard

no one from a worldly point of view, though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! (II Corinthians 5:16, 17).

Who could have foreseen that Peter could become the bold proclaimer of Christ after his denial? Who would have thought that Paul would be so devoted after a life spent in persecuting Christians? Who could have predicted that John could become a writer majoring in love after being nicknamed a "Son of Thunder"?

Take a second look. Follow the advice of Josh Billings, who said, "I have lived in this world just long enough to look carefully the second time into things I am the most certain of the first time."

--1901 Schillinger Road, Mobile, AL 36695.

The Missing Oil And The Missing Lamps

Continued From Page 2

of oil. The foolish at first had their lamps burning, but they said to the wise "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone (going) out."

One does not have to be a Solomon to see the problem among many members of the church whose lamps are going out because the lack of oil. We see some church buildings dark on Sunday nights as well as Wednesday nights because their lamps are going out. We know what happens when an automobile runs out of oil, it burns up. The engine at least is burned up which is the source of power.

Some commentators believe the oil in the parable to be the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the Christians. Just as the windmill is animated by the wind, so is the Christian animated by the Spirit of God, not in a direct way, but in an indirect way through the word of God. Paul said, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Romans 8:9). The foolish church members are those who grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30), those who "Quench" the Spirit (I Thessalonians 5:19). They are not letting the word of

Christ well in them richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in their hearts to the Lord (Colossians 3:16).

One does not have to be a Solomon to see the problem among many members of the church whose lamps are going out because the lack of oil. We see some church buildings dark on Sunday nights as well as Wednesday nights because their lamps are going out.

When we see the numbers in attendance in most congregations become smaller and smaller, we wonder where are those who once were faithful in attendance and good works in the kingdom? Their

lamps are burned out, and "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (II Corinthians 4:4).

When one carefully reads chapters 24 and 25 of Matthew which depicts the coming judgement both world and church members will be judged. When we read the parable of the virgins we should be moved to repent of all our sins, and fill up our vessels with our lamps with the Spirit of Christ (Hebrews 5:8-9). Sad, but true if unfaithful churches and church members continue to be forgetful and fail to live a faithful Christian life will join the foolish virgins in the last day saying, "LORD, LORD, OPEN TO US." The Lord will be heard to say, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour." So, don't let your light burn low. Be no longer "Slothful in business; but fervent in spirit serving the Lord" (Romans 12:11).

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

When God Can't Save!



Jerri Manasco

The God we serve is the God of salvation. He is "the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe" (I Timothy 4:10). It is God "who will have all men to be saved" (I Timothy 2:4). The Father sent the Son that through Jesus the world might be saved (John 3:17). How we glorify God for the matchless salvation he

offers! How we praise him for that remarkable plan by which he redeems us from sin! Yet in view of all that we have said to this point, THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE WHOM GOD CANNOT SAVE! THERE IS A TIME WHEN GOD CANNOT SAVE!

God cannot maintain his integrity and turn against his own will! God cannot maintain our trust in him if he proves to be an arbitrary God who acts without a set pattern! The very fact that God cannot lie is the very reason we can trust him to do as he says he will do (Hebrews 6:13ff). He who cannot lie has promised eternal life (Titus 1:2). He has also let us in on the fact that he cannot grant eternal life to certain people! No, I am not teaching Calvinism. I am not saying that God WOULD NOT save these people if they would change their ways. The fact remains, however, that God cannot save anyone on that person's own terms.

God cannot save the unbeliever. "He that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3:18). "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life" (John 8:36). "He that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:6b). That is plain enough for anyone to see. People just simply cannot be saved in the Bible way by finding God in their own way.

God cannot save the disobedient. I can find in the Bible that God says he will save those who

obey. Where can you find in the Bible that God will save those who will not obey? Has God promised to save those who will not respond in a positive to his word? Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to those who obey him (Hebrews 5:9). Those who are disobedient are in the camp of the unrighteous and are not promised salvation; in fact, the disobedient are plainly promised destruction (Romans 2:5-11).

God cannot save the worldly. Those who are worldly are sure to perish (I John 2:15-17). The works of the flesh are so clearly spelled out and the consequences thereof are so clearly manifested that it is a marvel that people (even church members) seem unable to get the point that God cannot save people in sin (Galatians 5:19-21). Certainly these folks can repent and become Christians (I Corinthians 6:9-11), but, yes, THEY MUST REPENT AND BECOME CHRISTIANS!!! They have to give up their sins! God cannot save a worldly person as a worldly person. Why is that so hard for people to understand?

We need to get back to the Bible on the question of who will and who will not be saved! God has told us already what we must do to be saved. He has warned us of what will hinder and prevent that salvation. It is not my place to judge, but it is right to study and learn what is expected of all of us.

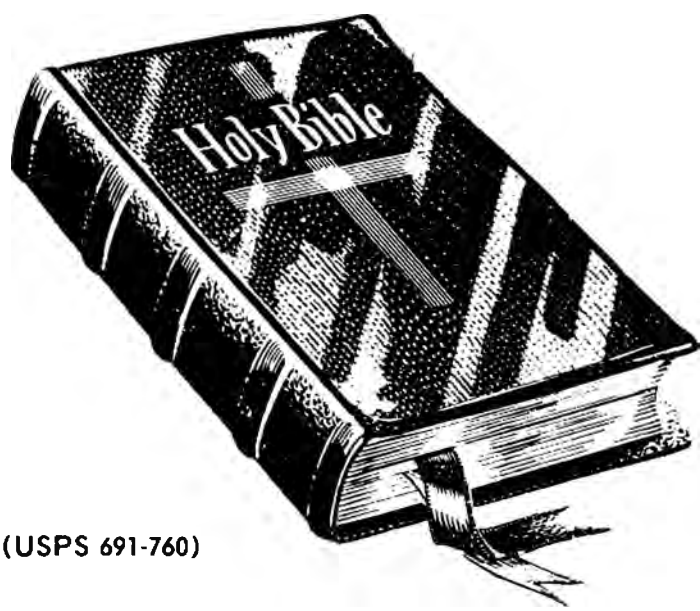
God cannot save the morally indifferent. If the morally indifferent can be saved in their moral indifference, then it is difficult to understand any advantage in being morally and spiritually upright! Paul describes those morally indifferent (Ephesians 4:18-19). He hardly pictures them as

redeemed souls! In the first chapter of the Roman epistle Paul forcefully shows the hopelessness of moral indifference. These people (Paul said) had been given up to their sins and as a consequence would face "death" (Romans 1:24-32). Are we being self righteous and judgmental when we cite what the inspired penmen have said about this? The morally indifferent have no promise of salvation!!

God cannot save the stubborn. Stephen preached to such a crowd of people. He pointed out their stubbornness and they didn't appreciate it! He said, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51). Could they be saved? If they repented of their stubbornness and submitted to the truth of the gospel, they certainly could be. But in their continued rebellion they could not be! Paul preached to some who had put away from themselves eternal life (Acts 13:46). These had refused the message and had tried to persuade others to quit listening to it. The fact is, God saves through his word and these people had not been attentive to that word. Paul later wrote concerning some who had so stubbornly persecuted the way of truth that wrath was coming upon them to the uttermost (I Thessalonians 2:16).

What has been written in this article is not intended to be the mandate of the preacher! These observations will hopefully not be looked upon as self-righteous ravings but as the simple truth revealed in the Bible. We need to get back to the Bible on the question of who will and who will not be saved! God has told us already what we must do to be saved. He has warned us of what will hinder and prevent that salvation. It is not my place to judge, but it is right to study and learn what is expected of all of us. My appeal to all who read these things is that you will not try to excuse sin or find hope where there is no hope, but that we might help one another avoid the blockades to salvation!

--Rt. 7 Box 428, Boaz, Alabama 35957.



(USPS 691-760)

Word Of Truth

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

forth the

Acts 26:25

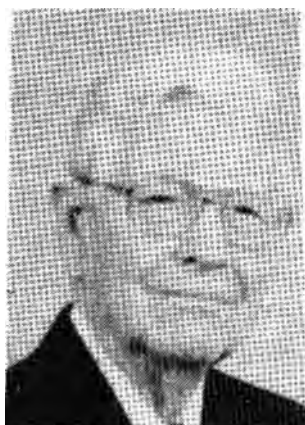
VOLUME 27

JUNE 14, 1991

NUMBER 24

Lessons From Life

by Franklin Camp (1915-1991)



**Franklin Camp
(1915-1991)**

Moody, AL 35004. He penned the following "Lessons From Life" at the end of 1951, a year in which his young daughter, Vivian, died from burns. It is reprinted from his book Old Truth In New Robes, Vol. II, pp. 4-5 and is still timely for us).

... Perhaps the most important lesson I have learned this year is the uncertainty of life. How could I fail to learn it? How shall I ever forget it? If one so young and full of life as Vivian was could suddenly go, how can I be certain of what a day might bring forth? I know now how brittle is the thread of life. I know that no one knows whether tomorrow shall find him among his friends on earth or in the presence of his God. Now that I know this lesson, I shall try to live every day as if it were the last. It may be. God being my helper, I shall be ready if it is.

I have learned to love the Bible more. Why should I not? I have searched its sacred pages more to find the light I needed when the hours were so dark. I have turned to it again and again to hear it say, "O grave, where is thy victory?" When my face was wet with tears, I read with joy, "He shall wipe all tears away." When care would flood my soul, I found comfort in the words, "Casting all your cares upon Him for He careth for you." Blessed Book -- for me there is no other.

I have learned to love the church more. It is the only place I can find refuge for my soul. It has

stood behind me through the year as I have tried to point the lost to the lamb of God. It shared with me my sorrow. I am humbled to think that such as I should have the privilege of being a member of such a noble institution. May I never bring shame or reproach upon it. Let me so live as to cause others to see its beauty and glory.

I have learned that faith is more precious than gold. It is the eye of the soul. By faith I can look beyond the veil. By faith I can see every grave made empty. By faith I can see the City of God filled with the redeemed and among them an angel that was once a blonde-haired, blue-eyed girl. When I see this, gold becomes cankered. I only

want enough to pay my fare through this world. But faith, give me more. "O Lord, help thou my unbelief."

I have learned to think less of earth and more of heaven. "The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not soon are eternal." What is the world with all its pomp and power? Just a bubble that will burst and be gone. But heaven -- decay cannot affect it. It is incorruptible, undefiled and fadeth not away. Why should I not think more of heaven than earth? It is my home. I am just a wayfarer and a pilgrim in this world traveling home.

--Via The Friendly Visitor, P.O. Box 62, Auburn, AL 36831.

"Uncle Franklin"



Winfred Clark

The milk of human kindness has flowed like a refreshing river. It has been so very helpful and greatly appreciated.

All of my life this man was known to me as "Uncle Franklin." That is the way I described him. I heard his first sermon in the mid-thirties. It has been my privilege to spend countless hours in conversation with him. Most of the time, if not always, the topic would be the Bible. That is what possessed him. There was an insatiable desire to


Since Tuesday, May 21st, many people have spoken or written of Franklin Camp. That day was the date of his death and, as Bro. Willard Collins said, the date of his graduation. His wife and sons have been the recipients of a multitude of concern from a loving and caring brotherhood.

know more of the blessed book and to know it better. You did not spend such hours without being impressed. You learn something from times like those. The lessons you learn will last a lifetime. Some of these I'll try to tell you about now.

He emphasized the need for sincerity. He would say, "there is no substitute for sincerity and simplicity." If you heard him preach or spent time with him you knew this was the case with him. Sincerity was a hallmark of his preaching. There was nothing "pretended," nor was there any "put on." There was no professional air. Yes he would do a professional job in preaching but there was no facade. What he preached consumed his soul. The cross and the Saviour would control his thinking. God and his being would overwhelm every fiber of his being and this came through in the plaintive plea of his voice. You did not listen to him preach without being touched with the sincerity that came from deep within the recesses of his heart.

He would often emphasize the need for sim-

Continued On Page 3



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--Acts 26:25

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David Wade Editor

Joe T. Spivy, Sr. Associate Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Your Summer Of Opportunity



David Wade

Summer will be officially here Friday, June 21. Enjoy it, for summer will fade into fall and fall into winter before you realize it. The changing of the seasons should remind us that time is fleeting away.

Paul was acutely aware of his situation and realized his time

was short. From prison he urged Timothy, "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me" (II Timothy 4:9). Paul's request was not to be taken lightly. At the close of his letter he 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 are 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 upon 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! Don't miss your "summer of opportunity!"

James Franklin Camp

1915-1991



Bobby Duncan

On Tuesday morning, May 21, 1991 our beloved brother Franklin Camp slipped quietly from the walks of men and went on to be with the Lord. The funeral was held in the spacious meetinghouse of the church at Munford, Alabama, within a few miles of the spot where he

preached his first sermon, and within a few yards of the place where he preached his second sermon. Mike McElroy and this writer conducted the funeral. Willard Collins, a long-time personal friend of brother Camp, led in prayer. The body was laid to rest in the Munford Cemetery. It is conservatively estimated that more than one hundred preachers were in attendance, including about sixty who have sat in brother Camp's classes.

Brother Camp is survived by his devoted wife, Hazel, three sons, Frank, Paul, and David, several grandchildren, two sisters, and one brother.

Many years ago, as a young preacher, brother camp heard brother Gus Nichols say he studied the Bible about six hours a day. Brother Camp said he decided then that if brother Nichols needed to study the Bible six hours a day, he himself needed to study at least eight hours a day. This he continued to do in the years that were to come. This qualified him for the great work he did in teaching the word so effectively. Few men in modern times have had as clear understanding of the scheme of redemption as Franklin Camp.

Brother Camp's knowledge of the Bible, his ability to teach it, and his gentle and

"Uncle Franklin"

Continued From Page 1

plicity. You can review some of the articles he wrote through the years. You will find them to be mature and profound but in a simple sort of way. Both the educated and uneducated could profit by his writing and speaking. The illustrations he used most often came from the Bible. Such would impress both the farmer of the soil and the lawyer at the bar. Those of us who remember the "tent meeting" days will remember the countless people who learned the truth by his simple lessons.

Sincerity was a hallmark of his preaching. There was nothing "pretended," nor was there any "put on." There was no professional air. Yes he would do a professional job in preaching but there was no facade. What he preached consumed his soul.

We have seen him face the stress of conflict. There was a time when a man like O. G. Lodge would challenge for a religious discussion in Anniston, Ala. He was there to defend the truth and expose error. All who know the hours of preparation and study demanded will know what he did. This was done without the effort to win a personal victory but that the church of the Lord might be supported. When there was need for someone to discuss the matter of instrumental music with a preacher of the Christian church, he was there. From that effort and a radio program came a church that exists today.

There was a time when he stood in an open air meeting and preached in the rain. The crowd remained as long as he would preach. He often worked to help provide for his physical needs and preached. He never considered this to be a matter of merit. It was not seen as some great sacrifice. Rather, such was seen as an opportunity to serve.

He was not a stranger to sorrow and suffering. He saw it in his own life and in his family. His little daughter went to an untimely death while they lived in Gadsden, Ala. His faith never wavered nor did his commitment to the Almighty One. Later in his life he would undergo serious surgery on two occasions before the last one. Hundreds of people know the passages that sustained him these valleys of his life. "When I am afraid, I will trust in thee" (Psalm 56:3). It was truly in God that his trust was firmly placed.

His undying thirst for a better knowledge of the Bible was refreshing. Though he had passed the threescore and ten year mark, he was still making plans to learn more and grow more in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour (II Peter 3:18). From the middle of the thirties until his death, hour

after multiplied hour was spent pouring over the sacred text. Some have said he spent 5 or 6 hours a day in study and those who know him best know that this could well be an understatement. His time for study began early in the day, often in the quiet hours of the morning. The evidence of those hours manifested itself in the tremendous insights he came to have. His concept of God and his grace shaped all that he taught. When you listened to him preach you would know that he had determined to "know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

All of us who knew him would know that there was a measure of steel in his soul that was unbending where truth was involved. He would not compromise and that was proven time and again. His pen wielded a great influence in support of the truth. But there was also in the heart of this man a compassion for others. His love for the truth would never allow him to run in roughshod fashion over others. He was concerned not only with the presentation of truth, he was also concerned about the matter of this presentation. Yes, he was true to principles but he also had a deep sympathy for people. There was never an occasion when he would not go the second mile to try to help some struggling soul. It might mean riding all night in an automobile to some distant place, but ride he would. There was never a man who made a mistake and tried to do right but that he was there with a willing and ready hand to help and offer encouragement. He would not condone the sin but he was extremely happy when the sinner came home.

We had to be impressed with the fact that he was not overwhelmed with material things. Though he was reared in a home where God had given richly of many things to enjoy, material things were never the dominating things of his life. Yes, he was blessed by the provisions made for him by those churches with which he worked. But there is something else one should know. What they would provide was not the final factor in his working with them. He was a kind of pioneer spirit that would carry him where the need was no matter what the pay. It was, where can I best serve? That was the deciding factor that determined where he would work and what he would do. He was motivated by the spirit of service. He walked by faith and not by sight.

One of the great loves of his heart was the class that he conducted for preachers and others who would care to attend. It began in Gadsden, Alabama in the forties. Later it was conducted at Shades Mountain in Birmingham. Later at Woodlawn, then at Adamsville, then again at Gadsden and finally at Lecds, Alabama. There is no way to number the men who attended those classes at one time or other. Some drove more than a hundred miles in order to attend. The lessons they learned there were carried to pulpits all over the south and beyond. He gave countless hours of study to the material that was used in these classes

and it will prove to be priceless as the years roll on.

His classes taught at Adamsville were recorded and will aid those who study the Bible for years to come. We are so thankful that so much of what he said is now preserved on tape. Though he is dead "he yet speaks" through the marvels of recordings. What a blessing this will prove to be. Many of us have hundreds of tapes that will aid us in the days ahead.

Uncle Franklin was a proponent of the Restoration Movement. That plea was seen as sound and scriptural and will stand, as it has, the test of time.

Yes, for fifty plus years I have had the opportunity to hear him preach. I have had the opportunity to talk to him about the Bible and listen to his insights. I have seen his concerns for the church of our day and the days ahead. I have heard his predictions of things that will develop because of trends that are apparent. I have heard him cry when preaching. I have heard him laugh when he was happy. I know of his love and appreciation for his wife and children. I know how he wanted to come to the end for I have heard him pray, "May we hear him say, well done good and faithful servant." I don't think any of us have any doubts about that prayer being answered. "Uncle Franklin" has gone home but we are better because we had the opportunity to live when he lived.

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

Church Offers No-Excuse Sunday

This "NO-EXCUSE SUNDAY" article was reprinted by Ann Landers in one of her columns. There is humor and a lot of truth in it.

In order to make it possible for everyone to attend church next week we are planning a special no-excuse Sunday.

1. Cots will be placed in the vestibule for those who say, "Sunday is my only day for sleeping in."
2. Eyedrops will be available for those whose eyes are tired from watching TV too late on Saturday night.
3. We will have steel helmets for those who believe the roof will cave in if they show up for church services.
4. Blankets will be furnished for those who complain that the church is too cold. Fans will be on hand for those who say the church is too hot.
5. We will have hearing aids for the members who say, "The preacher doesn't talk loud enough." There will be cotton for those who say, "The preacher talks too loud."
6. Score cards will be available for those who wish to count the hypocrites.
7. We guarantee that some relatives will be

Continued On Page 4

Preaching The Love Of God



Cecil May Jr.

We preach the love of God when we preach God's commandments. God does not forbid us any thing that would be good for us. He gave us his Son. What would he withhold that we should want? He commands us to do nothing except what is best for us to do. He forbids

nothing except what would harm us. His law is a law of love. His revelation of it to us is a manifestation of his love.

We preach the love of God when we preach the cross. God so loved that he gave the only gift that could really cost him anything. In the outstretched arms of Jesus we see the breadth of God's love. In

the Son's nail-pierced hands and feet we see the pain the Father willingly suffered for us. The cross proclaims the horror of sin, the depth of God's wrath against iniquity, and the depravity to which man can sink. But above all else it trumpets the love of God. God demonstrated his love toward us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.

We preach the love of God when we preach his mercy and forbearance. His gift of love was given so we could be saved from our sins. He does not deal with us according to our sins or reward us according to our iniquities. He is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. Unrepentant sinners need to hear of the wrath of God, lest they suppose that God can be mocked and they can reap some crop other than the corruption they have sown. But terrified sinners, despairing sinners, men and women who have reached the end of their rope, need to hear of

the mercy of God, lest they continue in sin because they have no hope of redemption or of the possibility of change. God is not willing that any should perish. That is the good news that makes the gospel gospel.

We preach the love of God when we preach God's nature and attributes. "God made the world and everything." "God is great, God is good." The smallest child learns these things, and also early learns, "God is love." If we do not believe in God's love, it is not God in whom we believe. If our understanding of God does not make us love, it is not God we understand. If we say we know God, whom we have not seen, yet have no love for people, whom we have seen, we live. It is not God we know.

We preach the love of God when we do good to those in need. God chose our hands to be his hands to minister his love to others, just as he chose our mouths to be his mouth to tell his love to others. We are the light of the world, and the light the world is to see in us is God's light as we reflect it, as the moon reflects the sun. We are to be holy as God is holy to show his holiness to the world. When our holiness is sullied by open sin, the name of God is blasphemed among the pagans because of us. We are to be merciful as God is merciful. If the world does not see his mercy in us, in whom may they see it? We are to love as God loves. When we do, people see our good works and glorify God. When they cry to God for help, and we help them because of God, they learn that God is love.

Let us not neglect any means of preaching the love of God.

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

James Franklin Camp

1915-1991

Continued From Page 2

compassionate spirit caused him to be in great demand for gospel meetings and lectureships. For years he was a regular speaker on the programs at David Lipscomb and Freed-Hardeman. He received and accepted many invitations to speak at the schools of preaching; he knew the great need young preachers have for sound instruction.

Many years ago, as a young preacher, brother Camp heard brother Gus Nichols say he studied the Bible about six hours a day. Brother Camp said he decided then that if brother Nichols needed to study the Bible six hours a day, he himself needed to study at least eight hours a day. This he continued to do in the years that were to come. This qualified him for the great work he did in teaching the word so effectively. Few men in modern times have had as clear understanding of the scheme of redemption as Franklin Camp.

Volumes from the pen of brother Camp remain to bless the Lord's people. These include two books of sermons, a book on leadership, a book on the work of the Holy Spirit, a workbook on worldliness, and thousands of articles and outlines written for church bulletins and brotherhood publications. For ten years during the 'seventies and 'eighties brother Camp edited a monthly paper called *The Word of Life*. Many articles from that publication have recently been put in book form. For about four years during the late 'seventies and early 'eighties he edited *VIGIL*.

About thirteen years ago brother Camp began teaching through the Bible on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights at Adamsville. He began in Genesis and went all the way through the Old Testament in about four hundred sixty class periods. He then began a similar study of the New Testament, and had covered down to First Timothy in about four hundred seventy lessons. These lessons were tape recorded and will bless generations yet unborn.

In his last sermon, on May 5, he expressed the hope he might be able to finish the study of the whole Bible. It was not to be. But we should not be surprised or disappointed to know that a man such as Franklin Camp was still planning further work for the Lord at the time of his death.

--Via Vigil, 4207 Adamsville Parkway, Adamsville, AL 35005.

Church Offers No-Excuse Sunday

Continued From Page 3

present for those who like to go visiting on Sunday.

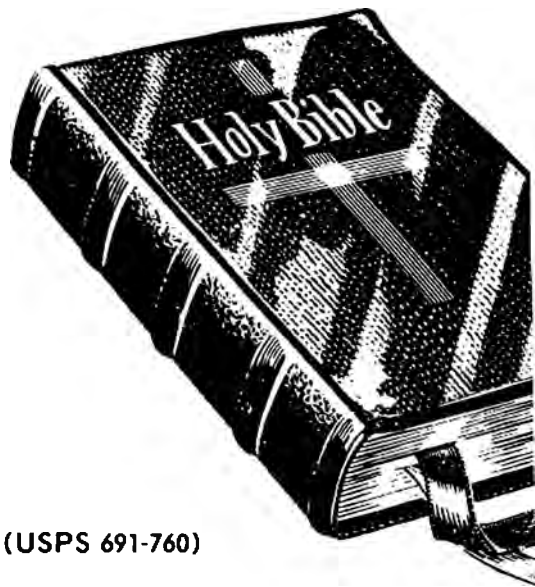
8. There will be TV dinners available for those who claim they can't go to church and cook dinner, too.

9. One section of the church will have some trees and grass for those who see God in nature, especially on the golf course.

10. The auditorium will be decorated with both Christmas poinsettias and Easter lilies to create a familiar environment for those who have never seen the church without them.

See you in church.

--Via East Cullman Bulletin, 9th St. and 7th Ave. S.E., Cullman, AL 35005.



(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 27

JUNE 21, 1991

NUMBER 25

How To Win By Losing



W.A. Holley

"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, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:24-26).

The foregoing quotation is a paradoxical statement. What is a paradox? According to the dictionary, it is "a statement that is seemingly contradictory or opposed to common sense and yet is perhaps true." One famous preacher defined a paradox as "truth standing on its head to attract attention." What Jesus taught in our text may not be apparent to all, but when understood it presents a great and fundamental lesson.

To illustrate our lesson: Two men were given an equal number of grains of corn. They were ordered to save their corn. One man took his grains of corn and wrapped them in cellophane and stored them in a drawer; the other took his grains of corn and planted them in the ground. How long will it be before the grain locked in a drawer sprouts and brings forth fruit?? The answer is obvious . . . N E V E R!! The second man saved his grains of corn by planting them in the ground that they might reproduce themselves. He lost the grain but gained a harvest!! Here is the lesson Jesus wants men to learn.

The application? One man lives selfishly, thinks only of himself and his selfish needs. Such a person saves his life by living only for his material possessions. Such an one focuses attention on himself, working for his own satisfaction, being little concerned about the welfare of others about him (Galatians 6:10; II Corinthians 9:12-13). This

sort of a person shuts God out of his life and, as a result, God turns his face against him (Matthew 19:16-22; I Peter 3:8-12). The Rich Farmer of whom Jesus spake was a very successful man in one sense but a total failure in another (Luke 12:13-21). The Rich Farmer reveals his true character when, in his speech, he uses the pronoun "I" six times but says nothing about others. His use of the word "MY" (five times) reveals his covetous love of material possessions. What this man tried to save he lost, for "God said unto him, Thou fool, this night (not after many years) thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

He who "sits in the stool of do-nothing, and whittles on the stick of do-less," is a total failure. Cease to be fearful, resist the feeling of helplessness, resolve to offer excuses no more, grab yourself by the nap of your neck, get off the seat of your pants, and go to work for the Lord God Almighty. You will be surprised at what you can accomplish.

Another man lives an entirely different life. Unselfishness characterizes his journey through this world. One can lose his life in helping others but gain immortal glory for himself and for others. The Apostle Paul is a fine example as shown in Philippians 3:1-11. In this passage Paul gives up every thing that he might gain Christ. It is interesting to read II Corinthians 11:22-28 which graphically describes the toils, suffering, and hardships that Paul endured for Christ Jesus.

Dear Christian friend, forget about yourself and spend your time in helping others. Open the door of service to humanity. Open the door of mercy; leave the walls of seclusion and go about doing good (Acts 10:38; Galatians 6:10; John 9:4; James 1:27).


What is the result of following such a course through life? In so doing one makes friends with God and man (John 15:13-15). Such people become more useful, more contented and happy, and more fruitful (John 15:1-8; II Peter 1:5-11). He who "sits in the stool of do-nothing, and whittles on the stick of do-less," is a total failure. Cease to be fearful, resist the feeling of helplessness, resolve to offer excuses no more, grab yourself by the nap of your neck, get off the seat of your pants, and go to work for the Lord God Almighty. You will be surprised at what you can accomplish. Brother C. A. Wheeler learned to read the Bible after he was married and had a family, but, because of his determination and zeal for the Lord, he was instrumental in leading more than 6,000 souls to obey their Lord.

Hell is filled with people who tried selfishly to save their own lives, for example, those who are uncharitable toward the less fortunate (Matthew 25:31-46). And, then, what about those religious people who slavishly followed the doctrines and commandments of men? (Matthew 7:21-23; 15:9). Those who rebel against God, even though they are honest and sincere, lose their souls (I Samuel 15:22-23; Hebrews 5:8-9). Even some preachers who have gained everything here will find they have lost everyone in the Great Judgment (Philippians 1:15-18; Acts 1:24-25).

Good moral people, lukewarm church members, and backsliders may think they have saved themselves through their own endeavors will learn, too late, they have lost all that really matters.

Writing to Timothy, the preacher, Paul said, "But godliness with contentment is great gain: for we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we

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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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Down With The Tree!

Connie Lee Krute

The yard surrounding my workplace is filled with majestic pine trees. Towering proudly above the house, these trees are beautiful to behold. They sway gently in a soft breeze and emit a somewhat eery sound when stronger winds pass through their green needles.

You would think with an abundance of trees around that one would not be favored over another, or that one would not be missed should it be removed. But for the last two years, out of my office window, I could see one particularly tall pine which seemed to stand out from the others. You could tell it had been there for many years and the pine looked healthy and strong. Upon closer examination, the tree was actually leaning to the South and it appeared to be fatigued and ready to retire. There have been many days that I watched it toss to and fro during a wind storm, as though it were trying to release itself from the soil which has held it captive for so many years. Even though it is a beautiful tree, I've known for some time that it would need to be destroyed to protect the house and power lines nearby from an accidental fall.

Of all people, I should not worry about the fate of any pine tree. In the first place, I am allergic to the yellow pollen emitted from these trees. Plus, their needles fall into everything -- the rain gutters the car vents, lawn, everywhere! Then there are the "zillions" of pine cones which must be collected or mowed over. Realistically, the "cons" outweigh the "pros" over this situation, in spite of the beauty of the tree. It should be simple to dismiss the thought of grieving over one old pine tree.

To me, that particular tree represents my former

Continued On Page 3



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Freedom



David Wade

their souls." Thomas Jefferson penned these words in the Declaration of Independence; "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

We should ever be thankful for our liberties, especially our religious freedom, and strive to pass them on to generations yet unborn. We are constantly in danger of losing this freedom even as ancient Israel lost theirs.

All of Joseph's family were ultimately in slavery in Egypt. The path to bondage started when Joseph's brothers sinned against him and sold him as a slave (Genesis 50:17).

Later, Israel was taken into captivity because of her sins. "In the ninth year of Hoshea the King of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away into Assyria . . . For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God . . . And walked in the statutes of the heathen whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel . . . Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there were none left but the tribe of Judah only. Also, Judah kept not the commandments of the Lord their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. And the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel which they made. And the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hands of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight" (II Kings 17:6-8, 18-20).

Jeremiah foretold of Judah's doom. "And the Lord hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear . . . Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, said the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual

desolations . . . And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment: And these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years" (Jeremiah 25:4, 9, 11).

It seems that many of the Jews of Jesus' day forgot this important lesson from history. Pointing the way to spiritual freedom, Jesus taught them, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Their quick reply was, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" (John 8:33). What about Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and Rome?

The examples in the Bible are written for our learning (Romans 15:4). Because of sin, our nation can also go into bondage, or be destroyed. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all nations that forget God" (Psalm 9:17). "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). Remember, ten righteous people in Sodom could have saved that city from destruction (Genesis 18:32).

The Lord wants his people to be the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world" (Matthew 5:13-14). As salt, we are to exert a saving influence in our world. As light, we must teach God's word and dispel spiritual darkness. The future of the church and our nation depends upon it.

We were made free from sin when we "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:17-18). This has reference to our baptism into Christ (Romans 6:3-4). Having been freed from sin, we must no longer live in sin (Romans 6:2, 7).

The Christian who lives in willful sin and disobedience to God is lost and without the hope of heaven in his present condition. In addition, he contributes to the erosion of the church and fall of our nation.

On the other hand, as faithful Christians, we enjoy the best of both worlds, with spiritual and political freedom. Let us so live that we may always enjoy these blessings.

When you state a goal and set out to achieve it, remember to hold to the image of your success clearly before yourself at all times. Then push beyond your preceived limitations and keep failure out of your mind.



Flavil Nichols



Charles Coil



Earl West



Linda Schott



Ralph Gilmore



Bill Stough



Ben Jones



Dowell Flatt



Sandra Humphrey



Cecil May, Jr.

WORDS OF TRUTH LECTURESHIP AUGUST 11-14, 1991

SIXTH AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST
1501 Sixth Avenue
Jasper, Alabama 35501
Telephone (205) 384-6446 or 387-1670

THEME: "IN TIMES LIKE THESE"

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11, 1991

10:25-11:30 a.m. The Times Of This Ignorance God Winked At Flavil Nichols
6:30- 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00- 8:00 p.m. It Is High Time To Awake Out Of Sleep Charles Coil

MONDAY, AUGUST 12, 1991

9:30-10:15 a.m. The Restoration Movement Earl West
9:30-10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Spiritual Fitness Through The Disciplined Life Linda Schott
10:30-11:15 a.m. The New Hermeneutic Ralph Gilmore
11:15- 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00- 2:45 p.m. The Caribbean Mission Field Bill Stough
3:00- 3:45 p.m. World Bible School-Eastern European Mission Ben Jones
3:45- 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30- 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00- 8:00 p.m. The Time Will Come When They Will Not Endure Sound Doctrine Dowell Flatt

TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 1991

9:30-10:15 a.m. The Restoration Movement Earl West
9:30-10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Human Relationships Sandra Humphrey
10:30-11:15 a.m. Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage Cecil May, Jr.
11:15- 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00- 2:45 p.m. Lads To Leaders/Leaderettes Jack Zorn
3:00- 3:45 p.m. Ministry To The Aging Al Price
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) Remember Now Thy Creator Dick Weber



Jack Zorn



Al Price



Don McWhorter



Jane McWhorter



Dick Weber



J. W. Ellis



Samuel Jones



Neale Pryor

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 1991

9:30-10:15 a.m. The Restoration Movement Earl West
9:30-10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) The Fruit Of The Spirit Jane McWhorter
10:30-11:15 a.m. The Role Of The Woman In The Work Of The Church Don McWhorter
11:15- 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00- 2:45 p.m. Jail And Prison Ministry J. W. Ellis
3:00- 3:45 p.m. Christian Family In Crisis: Suggestions For A Better Tomorrow Samuel Jones
3:45- 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30- 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00- 8:00 p.m. Thou Art Come To The Kingdom For Such A Time As This Neale Pryor

FOR RESERVATIONS CALL:

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Jasper, AL 35501

Sleepy Hollow R.V. Camping (205) 483-7947
5 mi. E. of Jasper on Hwy. 78

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200 Mall Way
Jasper, AL 35501

Down With The Tree!

Continued From Page 2

life. There were many positive -- even admirable -- aspects to it, ones which were applauded by the world and Christians alike. Yet, I knew there were drawbacks which threatened my soul's salvation. Even though I was well-liked and encouraged by those around me, I struggled daily to escape from the clutches of the world. Eliminating my "tree" was difficult to do. Just like the big pine, I couldn't do it on my own. I was literally tired and worn out from the world's worries and cares which are

How To Win By Losing

Continued From Page 1

carry anything out; by having food and covering we shall be therewith content" (I Timothy 6:6-8, ASV).

"He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him my Father honor" (John 12:25-26).

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

brought on from a life of lukewarmness and too much involvement in the world's disease of materialism. However, once I committed to follow Jesus instead of the world, I found it easier than I once thought. With God's help, anything can be accomplished, even a complete change in one's life.

The life I left behind appeared to be lucrative and acceptable, but it was literally jeopardizing my eternal soul. Friends and associates, who could help me prosper in the business realm, were also abandoned because they had dragged me into their sinful world of materialistic judgment and priorities, little by little.

Sometimes as we go through the process of repentance and turning to follow God's way of life we must also leave behind some of the good aspects, perhaps even moving away from family and friends. After all, God can sow His seeds in new places when they are willing to go! But it seems that the Lord provides a way to reunite us with our loved ones in unexpected ways. Plus He brings more and more blessings our way than ever anticipated!

The old pine tree is now gone, blown over during a Spring storm. Somehow, as it fell, the tree did not damage the house or power lines. It did not even crack the driveway where it landed. One could almost see the hand of God "guiding" this

gigantic tree to a safe resting place. Now that the old pine has been cut up and cleared away, the view from my window has opened up to show a young pine tree nearby, just beginning a fresh, new life.

As you let your "tree" be felled and begin to seek the Truth, you will witness Jesus guiding you carefully in His way. He will free you from the clutches of Satan and a new life will spring forth, ready to grow and mature in the way of the Lord. And your reward for getting rid of your old "tree" is a home in heaven! The Bible states:

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:32, 36).

For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2).

But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life (Romans 6:22).

Is your life like the old pine tree? Are you struggling daily to let go of the world, knowing you must put away your old life in order to gain eternal salvation? Won't you trust in Jesus' promises and let Him tear down your old "tree"?

--World Evangelism, P.O. Box 72, Winona, MS 38967.

The Sun Is Almost Down



Edsel Burlison

"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). The size of a man is measured by the size of the thing that makes him angry. Someone has said, "Raised voices lower esteem. Hot

temperatures cool friendships. Loose tongues stretch truth. Swelled heads shrink influence. Sharp words dull respect."

The reason anger is a dangerous thing is that it has a tendency to make the mouth work faster than the mind, or to run along ahead of the mind and stab people with hot pitch-fork words, and to make the blood of grief drip from a wounded heart for hours to come. Speak when you are angry and you will make the best speech you will ever regret. Anger is a state that starts with madness and ends with regret.

The size of a man is measured by the size of the thing that makes him angry. Someone has said, "Raised voices lower esteem. Hot temperatures cool friendships. Loose tongues stretch truth. Swelled heads shrink influence. Sharp words dull respect."

"Be ye angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath; neither give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:26,27). Two good men had a very heated discussion. Late in the afternoon, one of them remembered the exhortation of Paul and went to the home of the other. As he knocked on the door, he was anxious but worried about the reception he might receive. His offended friend opened the door, and seeing who was there, withdrew in astonishment and surprise. The other, at the same moment cried out, "The sun is almost

down." The unexpected statement softened the heart of the offended so that he opened wide the door and said, "Come in brother, come."

An unknown author said it this way:
When I have lost my temper,
I have lost my reason, too;
I am never proud of anything
Which angrily I do.

When I have talked in anger,
And my cheeks are flaming red,
I've always uttered something
Which I wish I hadn't said.

In anger I have never done
A kindly deed or wise,
But many things for which
I feel I should apologize.

In looking back across my life
And all I've lost or made,
I cannot recall a single time
When fury ever paid.

--1569 Berry Road, Birmingham, AL 35226.

Morale Is Important



Bobby Key

Paul told the Thessalonians "Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul once and again; but Satan hindered us," (I Thessalonians 2:18). I am persuaded that Satan is still hindering us, and one way he is doing this is by destroying our morale.

Military leaders recognize the significant role morale plays in their troops during encounters with the enemy. Salesmen will tell you that if you don't feel like selling when you start out in the morning, you may as well stay home. Preaching the gospel is no bed of roses. We should expect a real struggle with the devil. Knowing the obstacles ahead the Lord wants to prepare us beforehand. A high morale is a must. Without it, gospel preachers might as well "throw in the towel"; they are licked before they start.

There are too many to hinder our work on every side. It has been said that "some men are born great, others achieve greatness, and still others have greatness thrust upon them." May I mention a fourth class which acquires a certain type of notoriety, not from anything noteworthy that they have done, but merely because they are always getting in the way of those who have. Such characters destroy morale. They never make a worthwhile contribution to the Lord's work, but are like mosquitoes and flies that annoy and make miserable the lives of real workers. Their sole right to fame is the noise they make as they yelp and snarl at the wheels of progress!

Oftentimes gospel preachers will find that the local program of work has "bogged down." That which started with a "bang" has "fizzled" out. Complacency can set in like rigor mortis until even our best efforts are stifled. The devil uses a thousand ways to destroy morale among workers in the kingdom of heaven. Lack of cooperation, insubordination to the elders, schism in the body, critics and fault finders bring us all low at times. Nothing can lower a preacher's morale faster than unjust criticism.

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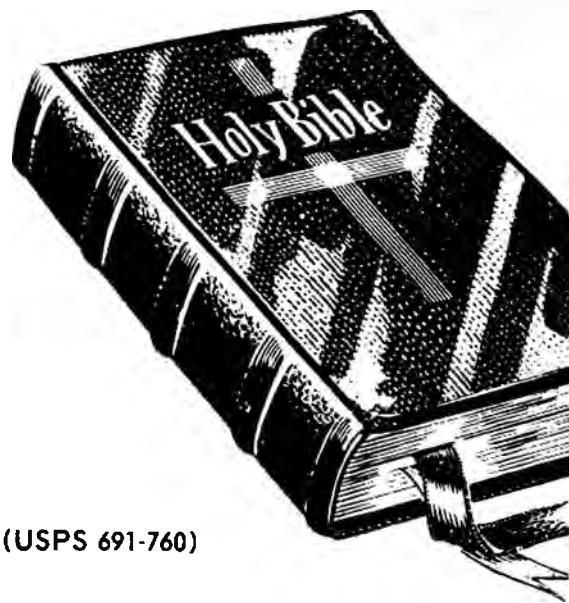
The Christian is at war with the devil (I Timothy 6:12). Satan, like some men we have known, reveals his meanness only when he is opposed. Live at peace with him, acknowledge his sovereignty, and conform to his will, and he will never reveal his true devilish nature. Why should he? He is aroused to activity only when he recognizes that his territory is being invaded and his subjects are renouncing him. When you do

battle with the devil you expect some underhanded tricks. When he can bring your high morale down to zero, he has you right where he wants you.

With God's help we can maintain a high morale. Don't expect results too quickly. We bring fourth fruit with patience (Luke 8:15).

With God's help we can maintain a high morale. Don't expect results too quickly. We bring fourth fruit with patience (Luke 8:15). Compare notes and exchange ideas with other preaching brethren. Talk with good elders, this is a good morale booster. If you are a young Timothy, you may find it helpful to seek the counsel, encouragement, and inspiration of an older Paul. Those who have weathered the storms can put new spring into your step and new vision and foresight into your planning. I will be forever grateful to the old soldiers of the cross like G. C. Brewer, C. R. Nichol, Rue Porter and others who helped me over some mighty rough places. Pray for courage, insight, zeal and stickability. Don't underestimate the power of prayer. Keep your chin up with a stiff upper lip. Never quit or give up.

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



(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 27

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"A Friend Is A Present You Give Yourself"



Cecil Corkren

Robert Lewis Stevenson gave us this famous line. What is a friend -- in one word? "Honesty." No greater compliment has ever been paid man than when Jesus said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I have commanded you" (John 15:14). Someone has said, "If you have at least ten close

friends you are the exception to the rule." To have a true friend is to have one of the sweetest gifts that life can bring. A friend is a person who knows you and likes you. Shakespeare said, "A friend bears his friends' infirmities." Friends favor and support each other in all areas of life. Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). When Jesus spoke at the graveside of Lazarus in John 11:11 he said, "Our friend sleepeth." Lazarus was not only a friend of Jesus, but of many others.

What is a friend? Honesty is the present you give yourself. In an article in Old Paths under the title "Friend," a young school girl was asked what is a friend? One wide eyed, innocent third grade girl defined the word 'Friend' as "someone who says nasty things to your face instead of behind your back." We may well question the first part of her novel definition, but the last part is both apt and accurate. A friend does not gossip!

Drink from the waters of heaven's wisdom: "He that repeateth a matter separateth very (or chief) friends," (Proverbs 17:9). "A talebearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter" (Proverbs 11:13). "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out; so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth. As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife. The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts

of the belly" (Proverbs 26:20-22). "A friend loveth at all times" (Proverbs 17:17), and thus follow the golden rule of love which teaches, "All things whatsoever ye would that man should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12). He does not spread or fuel ugly rumors about others, for he would not want others doing such behind his back about him. A loving friend does not keep an account of evil or gloat over the wickedness of other people. On the contrary, (he) is glad with all good men when truth prevails" (I Corinthians 13:5-6, Phillips translation). No, a friend does not gossip. Are you a friend or a foe?

When Abraham believed God and obeyed his voice, "the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham BELIEVED GOD" (James 2:22-23). We sometimes hear the expression, "fair weather friend." "A friend loveth at all times," not just in fair weather. A friend is always there when we need a friend. A real true friend is shown in Jonathan. "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (I Samuel 18:1). For friendship to be permanent, it must be spiritual. To be a permanent friendship, "there must be fellowship in the deepest things of the soul, community in the highest thoughts, sympathy with the best endeavors," Hugh Black. A.C. Benson said, "The friend is the person whom one is in need of and by

whom one is needed."

We sing "What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear" and "There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus, No friend so high and holy, There's not an hour that he is not near us, Did ever saint find this friend forsake him? NO, NOT ONE!"

"Take the world, but give me Jesus." Jesus is a gift from God. Jesus will not force himself upon anyone. Why not give your friend the best gift of all -- Jesus.

"Take the world, but give me Jesus." Jesus is a gift from God. Jesus will not force himself upon anyone. Why not give your friend the best gift of all -- Jesus. A young lady upon graduation from high school and had entered college wrote this note to her parents. "Dad, you and mom have given me something every child needs, that is, through your teaching you've given me a Saviour (Christ)." So in all your giving, give yourself the greatest gift of all, A FRIEND AND A SAVIOUR -- THE LORD JESUS CHRIST!

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

The New Way Is Best



John Gipson


opened in a couple of weeks. Do you think for a moment that I will continue to take the old road

Some people long for the old days and the old ways. Not me. I'm convinced that it's a mistake to always say, "the old is better." For example, a new bridge has been built spanning the Arkansas River, and a new four lane highway will be

with its hills and curves, traffic lights and snarled intersections? Not on your life. Why should I take that road when the new one will save me at least thirty minutes in crossing the river? The new way is best.

But some folks, who are supposed to have perfectly good sense, are continuing to travel an old, old road even though a new one is open. What about you? "Will you keep to the old way which

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

That "Jonah Complex"



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

portrays Jonah as running FROM God. His flight was a flight from duty. The motto of one rather famous civic club is "service before self."

Jonah knew well what his duty was. God had spoken to him and graphically told him exactly what he was expected to do. The reason that Jonah fled was not a want of understanding what God expected, but a dislike for the work he was expected to do. We might rationalize that the journey was long, or that the Assyrians were foreigners who hated Jews and were hated by Jews, or possibly he really felt unable to complete the task (as did Moses). If we look for the real reason for his rebellion at the task, we find that his heart was not right. He had no love for the Ninevehites, no concern and no willingness for sacrifice for their welfare.

Jonah chose to go toward Tarshish. Because it was in the opposite direction of where God instructed him to go, we might well imagine that it represents a place of ease, a place where he could have his own way and do his own thing. Circumstances were conducive to his flight as he found a boat ready to sail and he had money for his fare. Jonah found that when we run from duty Satan makes it too easy!

We must remember that the Christian life is a life of duty and service. We find the word "duty" only two times in the KJV of the Bible, and that in Luke 17:10 and Romans 15:27, BUT WE FIND OUR DUTIES on virtually every page of the word of God. We find such words as "owe," "ought," "must," "necessity" and "I command you" over and over. Can we not see "DUTY" in such?

Our duty is outlined so often in the New Testament or New Covenant of the Lord Jesus Christ that we dare not forget or "run away." Let us notice some of that which it is our duty and remember the words of Christ in Luke 17:10 "when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was OUR DUTY to do." As Jonah's duty was crystal clear to

him, so ours is, IF WE WISH TO DO THE WILL OF GOD!

Circumstances were conducive to his flight as he found a boat ready to sail and he had money for his fare. Jonah found that when we run from duty Satan makes it too easy! We must remember that the Christian life is a life of duty and service.

It is our duty to LOVE ONE ANOTHER. John said in I John 4:11 "beloved, if God so loved us, we OUGHT to love one another." One cannot read Paul's letter to the Corinthians, especially I Corinthians 13, without realizing that love for one another is enjoined upon God's people. In John 13:34 Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye LOVE ONE ANOTHER; as I have loved you, that ye also LOVE ONE ANOTHER." A flight to Tarshish is no substitute for love.

Again, we are commanded to worship Jehovah. In John 4:24 Jesus declared, "God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." We cannot take our flight from the reality of the commandments of God which point out our duty to worship. Notice Hebrews 10:25, Acts 20:7 and I Corinthians 16:1, 2 and our duty is evidently made clear. We must worship God, not just if we wish to.

Other areas could be discussed; such as personal evangelism, personal Christian growth and development, benevolence, etc., but these are sufficient to point up the idea that Christians have a DUTY! It is spelled out on every page of the New Covenant and may we never forget that God expects us to respond to DUTY. Like Jonah we might find it easy to RUN AWAY from duty, but it is very difficult to contend with God. God is omnipotent and we are very impotent in contrast. Let us run TO God, run WITH God, and run FOR God. Let Jonah be an example of one running in the wrong direction.

The Lord's Day



Joe Spivy, Jr.

Christians realize that Sunday is now the Lord's Day (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:2). We do not observe the same prohibitions as were placed upon Israel concerning their day of worship, the sabbath day. We would do well to remember that the ideas of enhancing relationships, caring for others, and worship are still valid (Exodus 20:8-11).

Sunday should be a day dedicated to God and his service. At times it may be necessary to work, perform chores, or simply rest (the Jews did). But they should never cause a neglect of assembling, of encouraging others, and even of our own families. If that's happening, then we need ask, "Why?" Lest we forget, remember Matthew 6:33.

Sunday should be a day dedicated to God and his service. At times it may be necessary to work,

Changes And Challenges Of Life

Jeanette Jackson

Many of us "accept ourselves as we are" to such a great extent that we close our minds to new challenges or changes of any kind. This is very true as we begin to grow older. We become content and satisfied and we refuse to grow or change in any way. Many times it is because we think we cannot, but as Christians we need to remember Paul's words in Philippians 4:13 which say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."

Many of us need to pray thusly, "O, God, if thou seest me in danger of nesting, push me out of my nest so I will not get comfortable." This is a very dangerous thing for a Christian. We cannot become "at ease in Zion" (Amos 6:1). God gave us both brains and muscles, but he expects us to have the initiative to go out and use them. We know that if we do not use them, we will soon lose them!

We cannot sit back and wait on God to do our work. Many great works for the cause of Christ go undone, simply because no one is willing to accept the challenge; because there are no workers (Luke 10:2).

When Constantinople fell to the Turks, it was not because there were no able-bodied citizens who could have helped in defending it, but rather it was because they were depending upon the Lord to

deliver them without giving Him any help whatsoever. Does this not sound like many of us today? We who are in the church, the body of Christ, need to possess a "mind to work" (Nehemiah 4:6) and that regardless of the change the work may bring about in our lives. The historians tell us that when the great city fell there were plenty of strong men with calloused knees from hours of praying when they should have been on the walls helping defend the city.

God does not mean for us to take life easy or retire from working in his church. We must not be afraid of the changes that life brings, but we must be growing in grace and knowledge, and we must "continue to bear fruit" (John 15:2).

God's people are to be a praying people. "Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17), but they

are to be a working people too! God does not mean for us to take life easy or retire from working in his church. We must not be afraid of the changes that life brings, but we must be growing in grace and knowledge, and we must "continue to bear fruit" (John 15:2).

All of us with help from God (Psalm 121:2) can continue to meet life's challenges and remain faithful to him.

--5222 Edgewood Road, Adamsville, AL 35005.

Truth And Freedom



Cecil May, Jr.

"You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). This is itself a widely recognized truth, with application to freedom in many areas of life.

It is true politically. It is almost impossible to enslave a well-informed people. That is why a government controlled press and strict censorship of all other informational media is one of the earliest objectives of any dictatorial power.

It is true economically. Societies with a vested interest in an existing pool of cheap labor often discourage and sometimes forbid the education of that work force. Knowledge brings liberation from bondage to low-paying jobs in unskilled occupations.

It is true spiritually. This, of course, is the application with which Jesus was concerned when he spoke these words. His hearers objected that they were no man's slave. Jesus reminded them

Continued On Page 4

The Lord's Day

Continued From Page 2

perform chores, or simply rest (the Jews did). But they should never cause a neglect of assembling, of encouraging others, and even of our own families. If that's happening, then we need ask, "Why?" Lest we forget; remember Matthew 6:33.

Do we find time through the week to eat out, enjoy entertainment, be involved in community activities, work extra hours to enhance our "standard of living," etc.? There's nothing wrong with any of those activities . . . EXCEPT when they push us to the point that the Lord's Day becomes "catch-up" day.

If that happens, we might need to have a priority check. If there's no time for God, then something is definitely wrong! Let's give the Lord His day back and live for Him every day.

--Fairmont, W. Va.

The New Way Is Best

Continued From Page 1

wicked men have trod?"

The old way is a way of rebellion against God. From Eden till this present day, men have shouted "I shall" to God's "shall nots." They have answered, "I will not" to His plain commands.

The old way has been one of selfishness. Why did Eve partake of the forbidden fruit except that she thought it would delight her appetite and make her wise? There is nothing new in man seeking his own pleasures, interests and goals.

Pride has marked the old way. Eve would become as God. Those at Babel would ascend to heaven. Nebuchadnezzar would acknowledge none greater than himself. Pride abounded.

The old way is one of unbelief. Ancient sinners refused to believe the voice of Noah when he called them to an ark of safety. John the Baptist came in the way of righteousness and yet was not believed. "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Hebrews 4:1, 2).

Before you decide that you will continue to walk in the old paths, look at those who have gone before you. "They were snatched away before their time; their foundation was washed away" (Job 22:16). Is that what you want?

The old way is one of unbelief. Ancient sinners refused to believe the voice of Noah when he called them to an ark of safety. John the Baptist came in the way of righteousness and yet was not believed. "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Hebrews 4:1, 2).

There is a new way. It begins with a new birth, follows a straight course, and leads to eternal life. It's not as popular, but it is new . . . and best.

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

FOUNDER—CHRIST

Matthew 16:18

WHERE—JERUSALEM

Isalah 2:3; Acts 2:5, 47

WHEN—AD 33

Acts 2:1-47

HEAD—CHRIST

Ephesians 1:22

ORGANIZATION

Phillipians 1:1

ELDERS — Titus 1:5; I Peter 5:1-3; Acts 20:28; I Timothy 3:1-7
DEACONS — Acts 6:1-6; I Timothy 3:8-13
MEMBERS — Acts 2:41-47; Colosslans 1:13; I Corinthians 12:18, 27

NAME (OF CHURCH)

Ephesians 3:15

CHURCH OF GOD — I Corlnthians 1:2; Acts 20:28
THE BODY OF CHRIST — Colosslans 1:18; Ephesians 1:23
CHURCHES OF CHRIST — Matthew 16:18; Romans 16:16
BRIDE OF CHRIST — Romans 7:4; Revelatlon 21:9

NAME (OF MEMBERS)

Ephesians 3:15

DISCIPLES — John 15:8; Acts 11:26
SAINTS — Romans 1:7; I Corinthians 1:2; Phillipians 1:1
BRETHREN — Luke 8:21; Galatlans 6:1
CHILDREN — Galatlans 3:26; I John 2:1
CHRISTIANS — Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Peter 4:16

CREED

Acts 4:12

JESUS CHRIST — Matthew 16:16-18; 10:32-33; Acts 8:37

WORSHIP

John 4:24

SING — Colosslans 3:16; Ephesians 5:19
PRAY — I Thessalonians 5:17; I Timothy 2:1-8
TEACH — Acts 2:42; 20:7
COMMUNION — Acts 20:7; Matthew 26:26-30; I Corinthians 11:23-26
GIVE — I Corlnthians 16:1-2; II Corlnthians 8—9:13

WORK

EVANGELIZE — Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16
EDIFY — Ephesians 4:12
HELP NEEDY — Galatlans 6:10; James 1:27

Over nineteen hundred years ago Jesus Christ came to the earth to seek and save the lost, to give his life a ransom for man, to leave us a perfect example for life, and promised to build his church. Jesus fulfilled his promise and built his church in Jerusalem in A.D. 33 (Acts 2). Jesus wants us to be members of his church and turn people to righteousness. So many people today do not attend church and do not see the need for the Lord's church in their lives. But we will never be happy and will always be restless without Christ and his church. Everyone has problems and dark days in their life but faith in Christ and work in his church will bring calm and hope to our lives. Please read your Bible and see its many statements about the church of Christ. It will cause us to understand the purpose of the church and how much we need to be a member of the church. We are all moving toward the judgment. May God help each of us to prepare for that day before the great white throne.

Truth And Freedom

Continued From Page 3

that whoever commits sin, whoever has sinned and is not forgiven or whoever makes a practice of sin, is the slave of sin. It is from this enslavement that the Son came to make us free indeed (John 8:34-36).

All of the above applications are true and relevant to man's condition, but none has caught the real point of this memorable saying of Jesus. All of the above discussions of the passage ignore a vital part of the context. They start in the middle of the sentence.

As usually read, the passage is a conditional promise with one condition and one result: Condition: Know the truth; Result: Be made free. The fact that the promise perceived that way is so true and so universally applicable obscures an important fact: that is not what the passage says.

Rather, the passage is a conditional promise with one condition, and three results. What Jesus said

was, "If you abide in my word, then you are my disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). Condition: Abide in Jesus' word; Results: 1) Be his disciples, 2) Know the truth, 3) Be made free.

He is not first and foremost reminding us of an advantage of knowing the truth. He is telling us how to know the truth, where the truth is to be found.

In a prayer to the Father for his disciples Jesus said, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth" (John 17:17). The gospel is "the word of truth (Ephesians 1:13). We purify our souls by "obeying the truth" (I Peter 1:22).

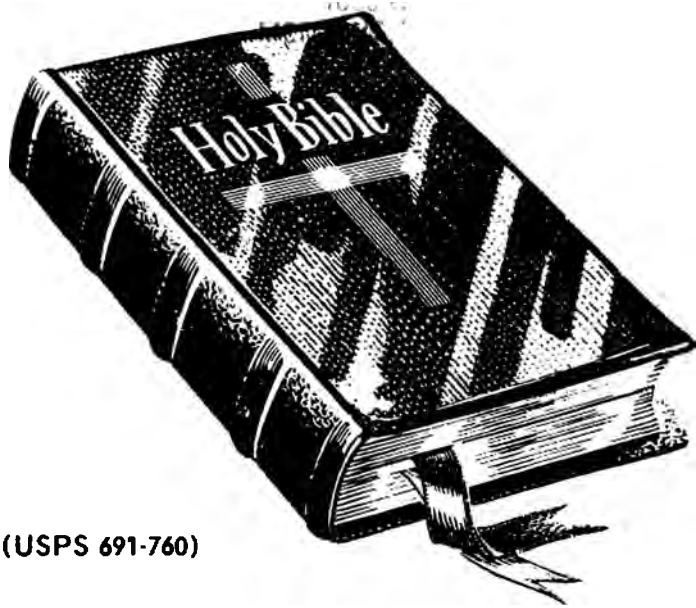
Abide in his word, and you will be his disciple, you will know the truth, and you will be made free.

--Magnolia Bible College.

A Religion To Die By

A father on his death bed called his sons. They gathered around him and to one he said, "Goodnight, son;" and to the other he said, "Good-bye, son." The second boy noticed the difference and asked his father, "Father, why did you say goodnight to John, and good-bye to me?" The dear old man who loved both of them said, "Son, John is a Christian; I will meet him in the morning of eternity, so it is just "good-night" to him. But you son, are not a Christian. I will never meet you again unless you change. It is good-bye, son, throughout all eternity."

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Words of Truth

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

Speak forth the

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 27

JULY 5, 1991

NUMBER 27

Distinctive And Restrictive



Winfred Clark

When a company spends a vast sum to produce a product; they want to be sure people are able to identify that product. They will not hesitate to point out the distinctive qualities related to such. They do not operate from the thesis that one thing is just as good as another. They will spend great sums of money trying to educate men to see the differences. This they will not hesitate to do.

Sometimes we will find that such distinctions are not that popular in the religious affairs of men. People want to be appreciated by those with whom they work. They like to be like the people around them. This is often seen in the matters of dress. We know this kind of desire raised its head in the days of long ago. There was a time when God's people came to one of his prophets and made a request. It was, "Make us a king to judge us like all the nations" (1 Samuel 8:5). What was at the root of this request? Why would those people make such a request? Take a look at what they later said. They said, "we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations;" (1 Samuel 8:19-20). Now you have it. They wanted to be like those around them. Do you think any of them might be able to say, "We are just another one of the nations anyway"? Do you think some might even apologize to the other nations saying, "we have been sectarian to remain separate"? Would they decry the distinctive things that made them a distinctive nation?

Should one apologize today for the restrictive things he may be called upon to teach and practice? Should one feel that he is sectarian in

There is always the need to try and keep things in their proper focus. In this manner things can be clearly seen and easily identified. When differences exist, then those differences should and must be taken into account. In the business world you will find this practice.

spirit because his practice is distinctive? I do not believe for a moment that such is the case, and neither do thousands of others who are attempting to follow the will of the Lord. They know there are some restrictions that will make them a distinctive body of people. But this is not something drawn from their imagination. This is clearly set forth in the word of the Lord. There are some restrictive and distinctive propositions found in God's word. Take a look at some of these.

I. THERE IS A "NONE OTHER."

Peter would use this kind of language in a very dangerous place and before people who would kill. Listen to what he would have to say to some of the very same people who put Jesus to death. He would declare, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Here is very clearly defined a "none other" proposition. That is very restrictive. That term will rule out any other name by which we are saved. It limits the matter. We cannot be saved in any other. Would the use of such language make Peter sectarian? Does it breathe a sectarian spirit? Would the failure of Judas or Ananias and Sappharia mute such a declaration? Absolutely not. Peter still had a responsibility to teach the truth of God in the right and proper fashion if every person in the church failed. It was still a "none other" proposition.

II. THE "NO OTHER"

You will find this phrase in Paul's language to Timothy when he said, "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (1 Timothy 1:3). That will restrict what is to be taught and will also make it very distinctive. There is to be nothing taught in the name of the Lord that would differ from the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42). Any other kind of teaching is surely excluded in the term "no other." That just means no other than the gospel. Now we need to stop and ask ourselves if Paul was being mean or sectarian to give such a charge? Would such make Timothy unloving and unkind? What


should be the view of Timothy and others who would teach something that differed from the apostles doctrine? Should there be an effort to find a "hermeneutic" that would allow them to teach something contrary, yet still be considered as God's children? Such an idea would have been considered blasphemous in that day and should be seen in that way today. Timothy and Paul knew the apostles' doctrine was restrictive and such would make them distinctive.

Should one apologize today for the restrictive things he may be called upon to teach and practice? Should one feel that he is sectarian in spirit because his practice is distinctive? I do not believe for a moment that such is the case, and neither do thousands of others who are attempting to follow the will of the Lord.

III. THE "NOT ANOTHER"

In spite of the fact that there is a "none other," and a "no other" proposition, you will still have men who will act as if the church ought to be considered as just another religious group among others like it. Paul would never countenance any such idea. Such would be foreign to all that he taught and practiced. He never saw the gospel as just another message. Listen carefully to what he would have to say about the situation in Galatia. "Which is not another, but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ" (Galatians 1:7). Yes, there might be some

Continued On Page 3



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

God Wants No Less Than All Your Heart



David Wade

Let us be impressed with the great truths found in some of these passages.

The heart of man 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.

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

The Spirit Of Indifference



Bobby Key

The worst difficulty there is to encounter is the general state of indifference. The Gallio feeling abounds, the general state of I-Don't-Care. It is hard to deal with the person who cares for nothing - who is wholly indifferent - who scarcely has vitality enough to sit up in his pew, unless he can sleep

sitting. Every expression of his countenance says, "I do not care what you say; I could not care less if your doctrine is true or false."

It is hard to deal with the person who cares for nothing - who is wholly indifferent - who scarcely has vitality enough to sit up in his pew, unless he can sleep sitting.

What can be done for men who do not care? What can be done for people who have lost all love for truth? What can arouse them from their stupor? I am persuaded the thunders of Sinai could not move some. I know the melting strains of gospel love will not do it. Some of our boys and girls will spend eternity in hell because of parents who are indifferent to the church. Heaven means nothing to this type of person.

It is sad but true: Many, in this generation, will never be awakened from this deep and awful slumber, and the thick darkness that surrounds them, til the trumpet of God shall summon them to the judgment of the great day.

--324 17th S.W., Miami, OK 74354.

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 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

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 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 your heart.

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THEME: "IN TIMES LIKE THESE"



Jack Zorn Al Price Don McWhorter Jane McWhorter



Dick Weber J. W. Ellis Samuel Jones Neale Pryor

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11, 1991

10:25-11:30 a.m. The Times Of This Ignorance God Winked At Flavil Nichols
6:30- 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00- 8:00 p.m. It Is High Time To Awake Out Of Sleep Charles Coil

MONDAY, AUGUST 12, 1991

9:30-10:15 a.m. The Restoration Movement Earl West
9:30-10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Spiritual Fitness Through The Disciplined Life Linda Schott
10:30-11:15 a.m. The New Hermeneutic Ralph Gilmore
11:15- 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00- 2:45 p.m. The Caribbean Mission Field Bill Stough
3:00- 3:45 p.m. World Bible School-Eastern European Mission Ben Jones
3:45- 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30- 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00- 8:00 p.m. The Time Will Come When They Will Not Endure Sound Doctrine Dowell Flatt

TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 1991

9:30-10:15 a.m. The Restoration Movement Earl West
9:30-10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) Human Relationships Sandra Humphrey
10:30-11:15 a.m. Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage Cecil May, Jr.
11:15- 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00- 2:45 p.m. Lads To Leaders/Leaderettes Jack Zorn
3:00- 3:45 p.m. Ministry To The Aging Al Price
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) Remember Now Thy Creator Dick Weber

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 1991

9:30-10:15 a.m. The Restoration Movement Earl West
9:30-10:15 a.m. (Ladies Class) The Fruit Of The Spirit Jane McWhorter
10:30-11:15 a.m. The Role Of The Woman In The Work Of The Church Don McWhorter
11:15- 2:00 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH
2:00- 2:45 p.m. Jail And Prison Ministry J. W. Ellis
3:00- 3:45 p.m. Christian Family In Crisis: Suggestions For A Better Tomorrow Samuel Jones
3:45- 6:30 p.m. BREAK FOR DINNER
6:30- 6:55 p.m. Congregational Singing
7:00- 8:00 p.m. Thou Art Come To The Kingdom For Such A Time As This Neale Pryor

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Great Dangers Confronting The Church



W. A. Holley

One may say that we are alarmist, but it is time to be alarmed. The words danger and dangerous are used seven times in the New Testament (Matthew 5:21-22; Mark 3:29; Acts 19:27; 40; 27:9). Peril, jeopardy and risk are other words that express warning.

Jesus warned the Jews of the forthcoming destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:1-35). But the Jewish nation paid no attention to what he said.

Paul warned the elders of the Ephesian church of the departures shortly to befall it (Acts 20:17; 28-31). This departure took place from within the eldership itself. Elders are necessarily guardians of the flock. The elders need to be watched too. Sometimes elders and preachers need to be reprimanded for refusing to do their job (I Timothy 5:17-20; Galatians 2:11-14).

False teachers have ever been present among the churches of Christ. "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in

damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious (shameless conduct) ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not" (II Peter 2:1-3).

False teachers never admit to being false teachers; they always claim to be teachers of truth. Satan quoted scripture in his encounter with Jesus (Matthew 4:1-11). False teachers, because of their craving for power, money, and influence never fail to fit their message to the ears of their listeners (II Timothy 4:1-5). But false teachers shall not escape damnation (II Corinthians 5:10-11). Moreover, the time shall come when it is too late (Ezekiel 3:27; Revelation 22:11). Ponder the meaning of these two verses.

What are some of the dangers confronting the Lord's church? We shall note---

(1) We have some so-called, sick, unbelieving and rebellious brethren who support and endorse a "homosexual church." These institutions exist in Houston, Texas and in San Francisco, California, and in many locations in between. We humbly

suggest that you read Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Deuteronomy 23:17; Genesis 19:4-26; I

Continued On Page 4

Distinctive And Restrictive

Continued From Page 1

who would call a perverted gospel, the gospel. This Paul would not do. Paul knew the gospel would produce the church. That which was a perverted gospel would surely not produce the church of the Lord. You would not want to classify that which is produced by a perverted gospel with the church that is produced by the gospel. The idea of the church being just another with the denominations would surely be alien to all that Paul had to say.

One does not need to be fearful when he respects that which is restrictive and the which makes him distinctive. As long as he does that which pleases God, that is all that matters.

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

Great Dangers Confronting The Church

Continued From Page 3

Corinthians 6:9-11; Philippians 3:2; Revelation 22:15; and Romans 1:26-27. This problem is not a cultural one. One can repent of this sin and become a Christian anytime one wants to. That is exactly what some of the Corinthian homosexuals did when Paul was there. Read again I Corinthians 6:9-11.

(2) Another great danger to the church is the New Hermeneutic. What is this all about? Well, since these false teachers cannot find support for their views by the tried and true method of interpretation of the Holy Bible, they have invented a new way to explain away any scripture that seems to stand in their way. This is exactly what they do with I Corinthians 14:34 and I Timothy 2:9-11. These modernizers are determined to install women as preachers and elders in the Lord's Church! Never mind the cost! Factions, divisions, *et al.* They have borrowed their method from denominationalism. There is nothing new about it. When denominational preachers come to baptism, they use the New Hermeneutic; they simply explain it away. Those preachers who wish to modernize the church, and bring it into the 21st century, are following denominational strategy, not the Bible. Enough said!!

(3) Other false teachers in the church want organs, pianos, and band instruments used in church worship. Singing as commanded by the Lord God Almighty is not good enough for them (James 5:13; Hebrews 2:12; Romans 15:9; I Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). Where does the Bible say, "Thou shalt use mechanical instruments in the worship of God?" It never says that. But what we need is a passage that says, "Thou shalt use organs and pianos in worship to God." Some say that God authorized mechanical instruments of music in the Old Testament, but he did not! If you read the Old Testament, you will find that David is the man responsible for the introduction of these instruments (I Chronicles 23:5; II Chronicles 7:6; Nehemiah 12:27, 36; II Chronicles 29:25). A comment on this last reference, by Adam Clark, reads: "It was by the command or commandment of the Lord and his prophets that the Levites should praise the Lord; for so the Hebrew text may be understood; and it was by the order of David that so many instruments of music should be introduced into the Divine service" (Commentary on II Chronicles, page 690). In Divine worship, what God has not commanded, he will not accept (Leviticus 10:1-2).

(4) Worldliness is another great danger to the church. More adultery and fornication is tolerated in our membership. Such transgressions must be purged. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (I Corinthians 5:1-13). In some instances the consumption of wine, beer and liquor have blighted the church's reputation. Marriage and divorce and remarriage for any cause has become too frequent (Matthew 5:27-28; 19:3-9; Galatians 5:19-21). Even preachers, elders, and other prominent members have been caught in this entanglement. Where has discipline gone? Sanctification should be the goal of each member (II Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14). Do not elders

watch for the souls of the flock? (Hebrews 13:17; Acts 20:28).

(5) Others desire the services of the church to be more entertaining. Normal services seem too dry and flat for them. What do they want? Specially trained choirs, choruses, and concerts. Singing is congregational activity. From a corporate point of view we all assemble together, but we sing individually and so, with Bible study, giving, prayer, eating the Lord's supper. Others cannot perform acts of worship for us. Worship is not entertainment; rather it is an effort from our souls to commune with God (John 4:24; Acts 2:41-42; Hebrews 10:25-26). One cannot pay another a million dollars to worship for him!

(6) Another great danger to the Lord's church are educated(?) preachers. We are not opposed to preachers being educated if their education does not lead them away from "the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ" (II Corinthians 11:3). The wisdom of the world is one thing, but the wisdom of God is quite another (I Corinthians



R. W. Gray

5:17). Though once far from God we are made nigh in Christ (Ephesians 2:13). In Christ, and in his body, we are reconciled to God (Ephesians 2:16).

To the Galatians Paul was emphasizing sonship. By faith we have become "children" of our Father in his Son (Galatians 3:26). And "if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ" (Romans 8:17). "Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (I John 3:1). Again, because we are sons he has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba, Father!" (Galatians 4:6).

We are, "in his Son," clothed with righteousness; not our own, but the righteousness of God by faith (Philippians 3:8, 9). For all who were baptized into Christ "put him on" (Galatians 3:27). Thus we are made the "righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21).

There is no division "in Christ" along racial, social, or sexual lines. In Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond or free, there is neither male or female . . ." (Galatians 3:27-28). Perfect unity was produced by the Spirit when we were baptized into our Lord. "For ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28b; 3:27; Ephesians 4:1-6; I Corinthians 12:13, 14).

There is no spiritual blessing afforded out of Christ, as all spiritual blessings "in heavenly places" have been provided by grace "in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 1:3). Faith gave us access to this

1:18-26). Intellectualism has no place in the pulpit. The dog should wag his tail, but when the tail begins to wag the dog, something is wrong! Exposure to modernism is difficult to resist. The Bible's message is inspired of God and is inerrant, infallible (II Timothy 3:15-17; II Peter 1:20-21). Paul met and defeated the philosophers of his day (Acts 17:16-31). His preaching was different. It is possible to know the truth (John 8:30-32; 17:17; I John 4:6).

Preachers who can preach for a week, or a year, and never mention the Lord's plan of salvation is too much for me. Preachers who never offend some of his listeners do not meet the Lord's mold (Matthew 15:13-14; Super education and popularity are not what the Lord requires of his preachers (II Timothy 3:15-17; 4:1-5). The gospel is the only power that God has that can change the world (Romans 1:16). If the gospel of Christ is not preached to all the world, we fail.

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

Elect In The Son

"For ye are all the children (sons) of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26). In Christ we have redemption found (Ephesians 1:7). In him we have hope and eternal life (I Corinthians 15:19; I John 5:11). Those in Christ have been accepted in the beloved (Ephesians 1:6). Here, in Christ, we are made new creatures (II Corinthians

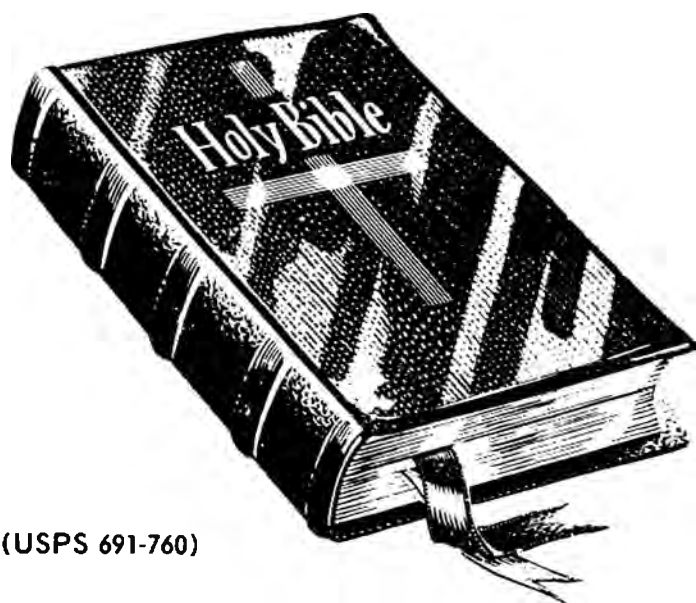
grace wherein we stand, and wherein we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God (Romans 5:1-2).

It was those in Christ that the Spirit identified as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God . . ." (I Peter 1:2). God provides spiritual blessings in Christ according to the choice he made of us "before the foundation of the world, ordaining that we should, in Christ, be holy and without blame before him in love" (Ephesians 1:4). Our inheritance in him was predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things after the counsel of his own will (Ephesians 1:11).

Paul was chosen to make known the "hidden mystery" that was in God's eternal purpose (Ephesians 3:3, 8, 11). The children, the chosen, the elect of God, would include Gentiles, as well as Jews, in the body of Christ (Ephesians 2:16). In other ages it was not known, writes Paul, "that Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the SAME body, and partakers of God's promise in Christ . . ." (Ephesians 3:5, 6). This great mystery was hid in God from the beginning of the world (Ephesians 3:9).

Inasmuch as both Jews and Gentiles had been dead in trespasses and sins, but had been raised to life to sit in heavenly places in Christ, having been saved by grace through faith, the institution called the church in which they were reconciled, exists to the praise of the glory of his grace (Ephesians 2:1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 3:11). In it God will be glorified by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end (Ephesians 3:21). "For who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." "What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:33, 31). The elect in the Son, the Jews and Gentiles who make up his body, were foreknown, predestinated, called, justified, and glorified (Romans 8:29, 30). What more can he say than to you he has said; to you who to Jesus for refuge have fled? He can, and does, give us the grand assurance that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

--563 McGukin Rd., Bremen, GA 30110.



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Word: Of Tru

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

forth the
Acts 26:25

VOLUME 27

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Love Of The Brethren



W.A. Holley

"Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (I John 3:13-15).

The foregoing quotation was addressed to those who were already children of God. One is not a Christian just because God loves him. According to John 3:16, God loves the whole world. His love must be reciprocated. He loves us, but we must also love him in return. Only those who have been born again, born of water and the Spirit are the children of God (John 3:3-5). What does "born of water and the Spirit," mean? It means salvation from sin. Whatever it takes to be saved is what it takes to be "born of water and the Spirit." The new birth equals Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 22:16; I Peter 3:20-21; Romans 6:3-4. An axiom of many years standing states: "Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other."

Christians, do not be surprised when the world hates you. Jesus said, "Think not that I am to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34-36). Hence, becoming a Christian does not free him/her from pain, sorrow, suffering and death. In each century since the New Testament era the servants of God have suffered persecution (II Timothy 3:12; Matthew 16:24; John 17:14). All of the apostles, except one, died a martyr's death. Persecution in our day comes clothed in many shapes, forms, and colors.

To love our brethren means that we should be able to live with them in peace and tranquility (II

Corinthians 13:11; James 3:18; II Peter 3:14). Jesus taught that his followers should be peacemakers -- not peacebreakers (Matthew 5:9; Hebrews 12:14). It is a shame and a disgrace for brethren to continually live in a fuss and a fight, ever quarreling among themselves (Colossians 3:13; Mark 6:19). Those who cause divisions among brethren are to be marked (Romans 16:17-18). To embrace the so-called New Hermeneutics is to attempt to modernize the Holy Scriptures and, thus, bring the Bible and the church into the 21st century. But the faith of the 1st century needs no addition, no subtractions, no substitutions (Revelation 22:18-19). "The faith" of Jude 3 is that permanent deposit of truth which should never be superceded, ammended, or modified (II Timothy 3:15-17).

SUGGESTIONS TO KEEP THE PEACE

(1) Apply a heavy dose of the golden rule (Matthew 7:12). "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."

(2) Remember that you are not perfect. "Brethren, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, for each one should carry his own load" (Galatians 6:1-5, NIV).

(3) Learn to be a good listener. Permit others to express themselves fully and frankly. Other folk have egos too. How can any problems ever be settled unless they are heard? Jesus Christ even permitted Satan to speak (Matthew 4:1-11). Ananias and Sapphira were permitted to state their case (Acts 5:1-11). Jesus and Peter carried on a rather long discussion regarding his (Peter's) denial of Him (Matthew 26:31-35).

(4) Do not add fuel to the fire by making false accusations. One of the finest and most colorful

descriptions of a person, whether man or woman, who constantly interfere in matters which do not concern him can be read in Proverbs 26:17-28. Remember, things are bad enough at their best; don't make things worse through meddling in other's affairs (I Peter 4:15; I Timothy 5:13; II Thessalonians 3:11).

(5) Love the brethren in spite of their shortcomings. Some brethren are so straight-laced until they can "strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel" (Matthew 23:24). Readers, you love your husband/wife and children even though they are far from perfection. Can't you love your brethren in the same way? (John 13:34-35). Since Christians are to judge the world and angels surely they can settle whatever minor disagreements that may arise (I Corinthians 6:1-8). In some instances it is better to take wrong than to do wrong! One of the greatest virtues is that of knowing when to shut up (Job 40:1-5). Behold, how many problems could be solved if only those involved could simply shut up!!

Learn to be a good listener. Permit others to express themselves fully and frankly. Other folk have egos too. How can any problems ever be settled unless they are heard?

(6) Set aside an hour each day to do mental housecleaning (Romans 12:1-2; I Peter 1:13). ALL improvement begins in your mind, which can be renewed day by day. "And be renewed in the spirit (attitude) of your mind" (Ephesians 4:23-24). We need to remove all garbage from our minds. all dirty words, pictures, insults, hurt feelings, and any

Continued On Page 3



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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—Acts 26:25

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David Wade Editor

Joe T. Spivy, Sr. Associate Editor
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Alabama Christian School Of Religion Jasper Extension

Alabama Christian School of Religion
Jasper Extension
Sixth Avenue
Church of Christ
1501 6th Avenue
Jasper, Alabama 35501

Phone (205) 384-6446; 387-1670

1. Course Format Two Courses Per Quarter
Thursdays 5:30-7:50 p.m.; 8:00-10:20 p.m.
or
Thursdays 2:00-4:20 p.m.; 6:00-8:20 p.m.
2. Curriculum Upper 2 Years 96 Quarter Hours
48 Textual
48 Historical/Theological/Practical
3. Residence Requirement
 - A. Registration/1st Class Meeting in Montgomery
 - B. Certain courses to be taken on Montgomery campus, ie. Intro. to Library
4. Costs and Financial Aid
 - A. Costs \$98.00 per quarter hour
\$95.00 registration fees per quarter
Total per quarter - 3 hours (1 course) = \$389
6 hours (2 courses) = \$683
 - B. Audit Fee \$147.00 per 3 hour course - no registration fee charged
 - C. Financial Aid
Pell Grant = Up to \$1200 yearly
Loan - Federally Insured Loans
Church Support
Ft. Deposit short term last resort loans
5. Faculty:
 - Paul Tarence
 - Winston Temple
 - Demar Elam
 - Gaddys Roy
 - Rex Turner, Sr.



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

ACSR Jasper Extension



David Wade

Alabama Christian School of Religion will offer extension classes in Jasper at the Sixth Avenue facilities with the fall quarter beginning Thursday, September 12, 1991. All classes will meet one time each week on Thursday nights and may be audited or taken for credit.

ACSR is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The calendar of courses represents only the upper level (third and fourth year) courses from which one would choose 96 quarter hours toward a Bachelor of Science degree in Bible. One may take the core curriculum courses (English, science,

math, etc.) at another accredited institution and transfer the work to ACSR to complete graduation requirements.

The Bachelor of Arts degree in Bible requires biblical language and will be offered also if there is sufficient interest.

The extension will provide ministers with continuing education opportunities. Beginning ministerial students, who are unable to attend full-time at the Montgomery campus will also be benefited. In addition, this extension should aid elders, deacons, Bible school teachers, and in general, all members of the church who want to better prepare themselves to do the Lord's work.

If you are interested in learning more about the ACSR Jasper extension, please contact us immediately. Address all correspondence to the church office, 1501 - 6th Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501 or call (205) 384-6446 or 387-1670.

Calendar 1991-1992

Quarter	Week Number	Date	Agenda	
Fall 1991	1	Sept. 12-13	First day of class and orientation to Student Services	
	2	Sept. 16-20		
	3	Sept. 23-27		
	4	Sept. 30-Oct. 4		
		5	Oct. 7-11	Friday, September 27: Last day to register or add a class. Friday, October 4: Last day to drop a class and receive a refund. Graduation Applications due.
		6	Oct. 14-18	
		7	Oct. 21-25	
		8	Oct. 28-Nov. 1	
		9	Nov. 4-8	
		10	Nov. 11-15	
		11	Nov. 18-22	
		12	Nov. 25-29	
		13	Dec. 2-6	
Winter 1992	1	Jan. 9-10	First day of class and orientation to Student Services. Friday, January 24: Last day to register or add a class. Friday, January 31: Last day to drop a class and receive a refund. Graduation Applications due.	
	2	Jan. 13-17		
	3	Jan. 20-24		
	4	Jan. 27-31		
		5		Feb. 3-7
		6		Feb. 10-14
		7		Feb. 17-21
		8		Feb. 24-28
		9		Mar. 2-6
		10		Mar. 9-13
		11		Mar. 16-20
		12		Mar. 23-27

ACSR
(Tentative)
Jasper, AL Six Year Schedule

	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER
1991-1992	A NT 3303 Survey of the New Testament 3	A NT 3306 Synoptic Gospels 3	A NT 3309 Acts 3	Seminars, Internships, Independent Studies
	B THS3301 Survey of Church History 3	B PM 3303 Public Speaking 3	B PM 3301 Minister and his Work 3	
1992-1993	A OT 3303 Survey of the Old Testament 3	A OT 3305 Pentateuch I 3	A OT 3306 Pentateuch II 3	Seminars, Internships, Independent Studies
	B PM 3306 Marriage and Family 3	B EXF3301 Hermeneutics 3	B RES3301 Theological Library 3	
1993-1994	A NT 4311 Romans 3	A NT 4312 Galatians 3	A NT 4318 I Corinthians 3	Seminars, Internships, Independent Studies
	B STH3301 Survey of Christian Doctrine 3	B THS3309 Christian Evidences 3	B NT 4323 The Intertestamental Period 3	
1994-1995	A OT 3307 Joshua, Judges, and Ruth 3	A OT3308 I, II Samuel 3	A OT 4310 Kings & Chronicles 3	Seminars, Internships, Independent Studies
	B NT 4316 Prison Epistles 3	B NT4319 Hebrews 3	B NT 4323 Revelation 3	
1995-1996	A OT 4312 Isaiah & Micah 3	A OT4319 Nahum, Habakkuk, and others 3	A OT 4321 Daniel 3	Seminars, Internships, Independent Studies
	B PM 4301 Homiletics 3	B THS4308 Restoration Movement I 3	B THS 4309 Restoration Movement II 3	
1996-1997	A OT 4322 Ezekiel 3	A OT4324 Psalms 3	OT 4326 Job 3	Seminars, Internships, Independent Studies
	B STH4307 Holy Spirit 3	B STH4309 Christian Ethics 3	B STH 4310 Current Religious Thought 3	

Calendar 1991-1992

Continued From Page 2

Spring 1992

- 1 Apr. 2-3 First day of class and orientation to Student Services.
- 2 Apr. 6-10
- 3 Apr. 13-17 Friday, April 17: Last day to register or add a class.
- 4 Apr. 20-24 Friday, April 24: Last day to drop a class and receive a refund
Graduation Applications due.
- 5 Apr. 27-May 1
- 6 May 4-8 Friday: Comprehensive Examination.
- 7 May 11-15
- 8 May 18-22
- 9 May 25-29
- 10 June 1-5 Pre-register for Summer 1992.
- 11 June 8-11 Thursday: Last day of Spring quarter and Graduation.

Love Of The Brethren

Continued From Page 1

humiliating discourtesies that might prevent us from establishing proper grounds for reconciliation (Matthew 18:15-17).

(7) Read and memorize certain verses from the Bible such as Psalms 1:1-6; 8:1-9; 15:1-5; 23:1-6; Ephesians 4:25-32; II Peter 1:5-11; and Revelation 2:10. Repeat them when you get up in the morning, when you walk along the street, and at odd moments during the day. Put yourself in the

hands of God and think of Him as your unseen partner. Pray for those who seem to be your enemies. Be willing to take what God gives you. Remember you live in the real world, not the ideal world. These words are written for those who genuinely wish to improve their lives before God and man.

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

Are You Happy?



John Gipson

I'm convinced that the person who says, "I'm not concerned about happiness" is either insincere or insane. Happiness is the goal of everyone. But it's not something you can buy. It's not something that comes with success. It's available, but not in the way many

suppose. The New Testament writer understood this fully when he said, "We count them happy which endure" (James 5:11). Happiness is the fruit of a world within a man himself. It does not come to us because of the absence of unfriendly circumstance, nor, strangely enough, does happiness come to us because of the presence of friendly circumstance.

One man explained his happiness to me by saying, "I have a good forgetter." He had learned to manage his memory. We shall never be happy if we remember so much of what we ought to forget. How carefully we nurture our resentments. An ugly word from yesterday; an injurious deed we will not forget. We brood. We fume. We stew. We fuss. And we can't figure out why we are unhappy.

If you wish to be happy, don't try to get even. Life hurts us; we must strike back. Men injure us; we must repay in kind. An unkind word deserves an

Continued On Page 4

"This Rumor Of Him Went Forth"



Winfred Clark

The caption you see at the head of this article will be found in this verse, "And this rumor of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about" (Luke 7:17). In this case the term "rumor" is used of our Lord. In this case it is used in a good sense.

This a case where a report goes forth that was true for they were saying of Christ, "That a great prophet is risen up among us; and that God hath visited his people" (Luke 7:16). This report has some foundation. That is the thing that is called a "rumor" in the King James Version.

Most of the time, when we hear the word rumor, we think of it in a different way. We think of something that is bantered about as truth but is not authenticated, something that has no foundation but is told as if it was known to be the truth. All of us have known how popular this sort of thing can become. In fact, it becomes the favorite pastime for those who would like to think of themselves as "in the know." Unfounded rumors become the currency of those who like to gossip.

There are some incidents in the Bible where rumors played a major role. We would do well to pause long enough to look at some of these and see how they came into being.

There Is The Rumor That Grew Out Of A Misunderstanding

If you will read carefully the twenty-second chapter of the book of Joshua, you will find this to be the case. After the conquest of Canaan you will find the tribes of Gad, Rueben and the half tribe of Mannasseh returning to the eastern side of the Jordan. When they came to the border they built there are "great altar to see to" (Joshua 22:10). This was seen by those on the western side of the river as a departure from God (Joshua 22:16). The rumor was, "that ye might rebel against the Lord." This is the thing that was said to them later about their conduct.

Here is a case where a "rumor" was about to start a civil war within the ranks of Israel. However, it did not take long for the people to see that this was a "rumor" that was being fed because of a misunderstanding. Those who were involved in the building of the altar were willing and ready to explain the reason for their action. They said of it's purpose, "not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice: But that it may be a witness between us, and you," (Joshua 22:26-27). They denied that they planned to build an altar in competition with the altar that was before the tabernacle (Joshua 22:29). When all the information was laid out before those that were brethren, the matter was settled and the rumor was found to have come from a misunderstanding.

It is also wonderful to note that when the rumor was found to be false that nobody tried to keep it alive. They did not deny what the brethren had said. They took their word for it and the thing pleased the children of Israel. They would not be

found among those who would be given to rumors.

There Is The Rumor That Grew Out Of Misinterpretation

There is an incident that occurred after the Lord's resurrection where such is found. A conversation took place between Jesus and Peter and Peter said of John, "Lord what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me" (John 21:21-22). Now notice the next verse. "Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee" (John 21:23).

Here is the case where a rumor begins because somebody misinterpreted what the Lord had to say. They read into the statement of Jesus something that Jesus did not say. They put words in the mouth of the Lord. They have Jesus saying something that Jesus never said.

Is this not the case with many rumors? Do they not grow out of a misinterpretation of something said? It may be that someone would want to read something into a statement made by a person and make them say something they never had in mind. This will often become the case where someone is seeking to discredit another. He or she is apt to read into what the person said something that was not said nor was it intended.

You will notice that John would seek to clear this matter in the minds of all his readers. He wants them to know that this was only a rumor that was based on a misinterpretation of what Jesus had said.

There Is The Rumor That Grew Out Misrepresentation

You will remember the occasion when Paul was defending himself in Jerusalem. There were Jews from Asia who saw Paul in the temple and stirred up the people and laid hands on Paul (Acts 21:27). Here is the rumor they would spread about Paul. They said, "Men of Israel, help: This is the man that teacheth all men every where against the people and the law, and this place: and further

brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place" (Acts 21:28). So here is the rumor. You have them saying Paul was an enemy of the people, the law and the temple. But on what basis do they make the charge? What is their source? They assumed that since Paul was in town with a man by the name of Trophimus, an Ephesian, that he brought him into the temple. But that is a clear case of misrepresentation. Paul did no such thing. But if you allow the rumor mill to run it's course, this will be the report.

They would thus use this to stir up the people against Paul.

But this is a rumor that is based on a clear case of misrepresentation.

But look at those folks who would spread the rumor. If you talked to them, what do you think they would plead? Wouldn't they say we love the law, the people and the temple? Wouldn't they say the reason they are saying this is because of their love for such? We all know that such would be the case. But what these folks are really interested in would be to destroy the apostle Paul. These people were given to violence as will be seen later in this same chapter.

Luke, like John, would seek to show that this rumor had no foundation. He points out the reason why they said he polluted the temple. He said, "(For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus and Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple)" (Acts 21:29). Those who read Luke's account would know such to be an unfounded rumor. They would see that such would grow out of misrepresentation.

From these three incidents we can see the great harm that can be caused by rumors. If we seek to be sure we understand we will not be subject to such. If we will not read into situations and statements, things that are not found we will not be subject to such. If we will fairly and correctly represent the facts we will not be subject to such. These cases can help us to deal with "rumors."

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

Are You Happy?

Continued From Page 3

unkind word. A blow invites a blow. Rudeness must be countered with rudeness. Pride tells us we cannot take things "lying down." So we start a war without end. We get even and miserable. Jesus said, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matthew 6:39). That's the end of battle, and you are the victor. You are not even, but you are happy.

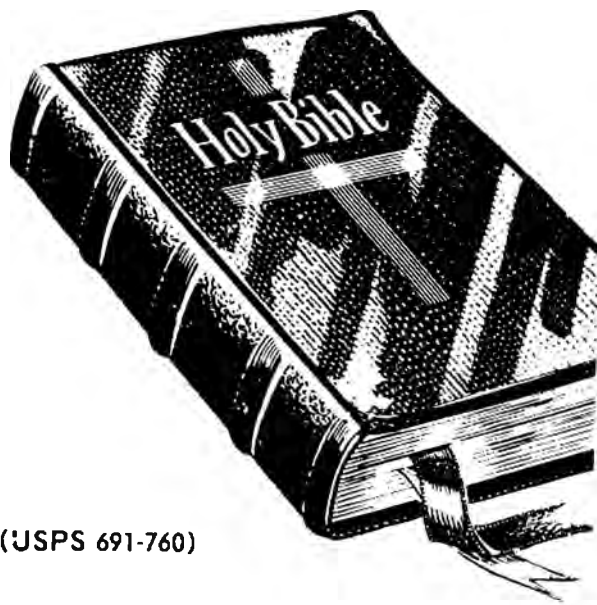
How carefully we nurture our resentments. An ugly word from yesterday; an injurious deed we will not forget. We brood. We fume. We stew. We fuss. And we can't figure out why we are unhappy.

If you wish to be happy, consider yourself a constant debtor to all mankind. Those who feel the world "owes" them something will always be unhappy. A feeling of responsibility to others will provide a road to happiness.

If you wish to be happy, do not push for the most important seats at the banquet. Someone will always be telling you to move down. He who seeks honors will be consumed by an insatiable and corrosive appetite. In the end you will get false pride and arrogance, and be filled with jealousy.

Let's stand in the light of Jesus' wisdom: "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 10:39). That's not just a pious phrase; it's a slice of life.

--P.O. Box 228, Little Rock, Arkansas, 72203.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

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

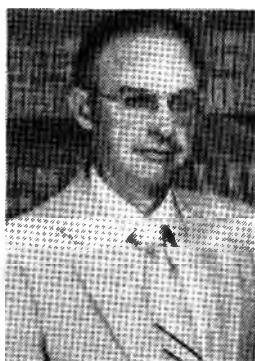
—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 27

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NUMBER 29

Six Apostles And Six Apostlettes



Martel Pace

A religious paper which someone sent to me free has had some articles promoting a change in the practice of the church in the roles it permits women. This may soon be a raging controversy in the church as it has become in several denominations.

An author says that women should have the same authority as men in the church and restrictions practiced in churches of Christ go back to the views of Aristotle and not the Bible (Norman L. Parks, *Ensign*, 1-90, p. 3). He argued that the word "head" (as in man being the "head of the woman") meant only "source" as in "headwaters of a river."

We urge you to just compare standard translations when you read something like this. In Ephesians 1:22 the NIV has "head over everything for the church"; Today's English Bible has "supreme Lord over all things" and the New English Bible has "supreme head to the church." The husband as head is compared to Christ as head in Ephesians 5:22-25.

Another perverted passage is Galatians 3:28. It speaks of male and female being one in Christ. Today, some use this idea to declare there are no distinctive roles in the church for male and female. If Christ intended that to be his teaching I wonder why he did not appoint six apostles and six apostlettes to be fair? Galatians 3:28 refers to the spiritual equality and elimination of any sexual distinction eternally, but such is not the case for the church in this world.

Paul never referred to an elder as anything but male, being the "husband of one wife" being able to "rule his own house" (I Timothy 3:4-5).

The author quoted above thinks it foolish that women are not allowed to speak at the Lord's Supper or even serve the congregation. I noticed the other day how difficult it was for me to worship as my grandchildren peered back over the

pew in front of me! I wonder if it would not be difficult for the average for the average man to keep his mind on the Lord with lovely ladies walking back and forth in the aisles serving? Why would they even want that menial task? Of course, if they can give a talk at the podium for the Supper

If one says, "That was merely the culture of the times and we are not bound by such teaching and practice," then there will be no end to the altering of Scripture's teaching.

they can preach a few minutes later. That would violate the whole tenor of both Old and New Testaments.

I hear little from women in the church pushing for these roles. It is only a few radical brethren promoting change who have scant respect for the authority of God in Scripture. If one says, "That was merely the culture of the times and we are not bound by such teaching and practice," then there will be no end to the altering of Scripture's teaching. The debate rages over the role of women in the military today when no one thought of arguing such in previous centuries. The church is affected by the world, but we must not allow its silliness to influence our Bible-based practices in the church.

--Via Good News from Vaughn Park Church, Montgomery, AL.

Inferiority



Bobby Key

I believe it was Abraham Lincoln who said, "God must have loved the common people, because he made so many of them." It is true that many of us have little in the way of natural endowments. We are not intellectually brilliant. What we know we learned the hard way.


The type of personality described above is conscious of defeats and failures. Such a one is likely to feel embarrassed in the presence of more gifted people, and since he feels unable to express his thoughts fluently, he often becomes quiet and reserved. Some refer to this trait as an inferiority complex.

Understanding our relationship to God enables us to have a more positive attitude about ourselves. If you are inclined to think of yourself as of no importance, stop for a moment and reflect on how

God feels about you. He knows you better than anyone else. He places a very high value on you. You are of more value than many sparrows (Matthew 10:31). Even the very hairs of your head are numbered (Matthew 10:30). Jesus promised to never leave or forsake you. He loved you enough to die in your place.

If you are inclined to think of yourself as of no importance, stop for a moment and reflect on how God feels about you. He knows you better than anyone else. He places a very high value on you. You are of more value than many sparrows (Matthew 10:31).

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Food And Fellowship



David Wade

Eating and drinking were significant acts in the biblical world. Besides meeting the physical needs, they were symbolic of both friendship and joint participation. Covenants were ratified, marriages were celebrated, birthdays, coronations, and even national deliverances

were celebrated in fellowship meals, it is just as quick to warn us of some negative detriments of fellowship meals.

The church at Corinth was not properly observing the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:17-34). That which was to bind them to each other and to the Lord was being used in such a way as to perpetrate class distinctions, and thus led to alienation. For that reason, Paul urged them to eat their meals at home and wait for each other to enter into the Lord's Supper (11:17-22, 33-34).

Please note, Paul was not condemning eating in the "church house." Church houses, as such were unknown to the early church. Most likely, they were assembled at a member's house (cf. I Corinthians 16:19; Romans 16:5). Eating together was not the problem. The unholy way they conducted themselves was the problem.

Jude spoke of those who were "spots in your love feasts" (Jude 12). The context reveals that they were immoral and hated those in authority (vss. 8, 13, 16, 19). Paul warned that faithful Christians are to have no company with and not even to eat with wicked Christians (I Corinthians 5:9-13). John sounded similar warnings (II John 9-11).

Eating food meets basic needs of all living creatures. But eating food also meets other needs. In the Christian community eating is also an occasion for friendship and fellowship with the Lord and one another. There are positive benefits to be derived and there are negative detriments to be avoided.

Glorify God In Your Body



W. A. Holley

"For I know that this shall turn out to my salvation, through your supplication and supply of the Spirit of Christ Jesus, according to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing shall I be put to shame, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by

life, or by death. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:19-21, ASV).

The Philippiian epistle was written by Paul while he was a prisoner in a Roman jail. According to Paul, even bad experiences can sometimes turn out for good. Paul was living in a bad situation but he still possessed hope. With great boldness, he was determined to magnify or glorify Christ and the church is his body.

The apostle Paul used these unfortunate circumstances to help promote the cause of Christ. Thus, these things had not hindered but rather had helped to further the gospel (Philippians 1:12-14).

How can we glorify God in our bodies? We shall note --

Some things are not necessary. For example, popularity is not necessary. Paul was hated, persecuted, and vilified, but he succeeded in spite of such (II Corinthians 11:22-30). The best of circumstances need not prevail. In prison, Paul was busy for the Lord. Great wealth need not be a hinderance. Jesus, Paul, and the early disciples had

were celebrated in fellowship meals.

The feast days of the Old Testament were of this order. Ritually, the worshipper ate portions of some of the animals offered in sacrifice (Exodus 12:1-20). Participation in ritual meals was limited to true believers. It was the mark of acceptance of, and acceptance by, the true God of heaven. God said of the passover meal, "There shall no stranger eat thereof" (Exodus 12:43).

Later, David gave a commentary on the generation who rejected the Lord, "They joined themselves also to Baal of Peor, and ate sacrifices made to the dead. Thus, they provoked Him to anger with their deeds" (Psalm 106:28-29). To participate in a ritual meal was to yoke oneself either to idols or the true God; that is, to whomever the meal was dedicated (cf. I Corinthians 8:4-13; 10:18-33).

The positive spiritual benefits of communal meals are quite evident in the New Testament. The frequent meals shared by members of the church were indications of the deep fellowship that developed among the participants. They were also symbolic of their commitment to one another and to the Lord. "Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common. . . So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart" (Acts 2:44, 46).

Likewise, the Lord's supper is a symbolic affirmation of our commitment to Jesus. It represents communion; that is, fellowship or joint participation, with Jesus and with each other. Jesus said he would "drink it new" with us in the Father's kingdom (Matthew 26:29). Paul states, "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? For we, being many, are one bread and one body, for we all partake of that one bread" (I Corinthians 10:16-17).

While the New Testament extols the positive

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WORDS OF TRUTH LECTURESHIP AUGUST 11-14, 1991

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"Woman Believe Me"



Winfred Clark

You will find this compelling statement in a conversation of our Lord. He was in an area of Samaria. His disciples had gone into the village to buy food (John 4:8). While he was seated at Jacob's well a woman of Samaria came out to draw water. It is at that point that Jesus would engage her in conversation. After much had been said you will find her speaking of

worship. Jesus had something to say on the subject. It is at that point that Jesus would say to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father" (John 4:21). He would then go on to tell her about the matter of true worship.

Our concern is not just the matter of worship. We are interested at this point with the statement "Woman believe me." That is an arresting and interesting demand. What can we learn from this? How can we be helped to better respect and love our Lord? So we will do well to look closely at what our Lord had to say.

I. HE HAD A RIGHT TO SAY "WOMAN, BELIEVE ME"

Just think of the one who makes this statement. He is none other than the Son of God. Surely this would give him the right to demand faith in what he had to say. Here is the one by whom "all things were made, and without him was not anything made that was made"

(John 1:3). This is the one of whom it is said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). This is the one who changed water into wine (John 2:1-11). This is the one who "needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man" (John 2:25). Here is one who had been sent by the Father into the world (John 3:17).

From all the evidence we can find, we know he has every right to say, "Woman, believe me." We know what he had to say would be the truth. Does he not say, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14:6)? He is the personification of truth and what he says cannot be anything other than the truth. You will remember also what he has to say about his word. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). Surely such a one has the right to say, "Woman believe me."

Since Jesus has the right to compel belief and trust in his word from that lady, doesn't he also have that same right to say to us, "Believe me"? We would all answer in the affirmative. We would all agree that he does indeed have that right.

II. HE HAD A RESPONSIBILITY TO SAY "WOMAN BELIEVE ME"

As you read the record of this conversation, you are aware that this lady had some very deep spiritual problems. Her domestic life was in shambles. She had been a loser in the matter of marriage. Her desires were focused on the material things such as water and the like. She was pretty well entrenched in the worship like the Samaritans. That means she did not go to Jerusalem. She as ignorant concerning the facts and form of true worship. Now, this being the case, what would the Lord

do? Would he not have a responsibility to try to help? Here is one who it lost. But Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). He would therefore feel a keen responsibility to this one who is lost.

None of us would be at all surprised to hear what the

Continued On Page 4

Inferiority

Continued From Page 1

The Lord has a place for you that no one else can fill. God never looks with contempt on any person. If some about you treat you with scorn, just realize that that person does not know you as well as God does. He does not understand nor appreciate you as well as the Father. Don't scorn yourself. God loves you and has not meant your life to be a failure.

God wants us to be humble He condemns pride and arrogance. He admonishes us to not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. All of this is to keep us from boasting of our own achievements and strength. At the same time God doesn't want us to think of ourselves as worthless, unable to accomplish anything. We are to be strong, not in ourselves, but in the Lord.

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

Glorify God In Your Body

Continued From Page 2

little money, but they spread the gospel throughout the Roman Empire (Colossians 1:6, 23). Even a one talent man can glorify God if he will but put his talent to work for the Lord (Matthew 25:14-30).

There are some necessary things if one wants to glorify God in his/her body.

(1) One must become a Christian. How does one become a child of God? Please read the record of the Lord's Great Commission: (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). Now turn to the Book of Acts to learn how this commission was carried out under the direction of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-42, 47). "But if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name" (I Peter 4:16, cf. Acts 11:26; 26:28). The Bible knows nothing concerning denominational names (I Peter 4:11).

No one can glorify God by allowing sin to control his body. He who permits alcohol, or cocaine, or tobacco, or marijuana, to contaminate and pollute his body cannot thus glorify God (Galatians 5:19-21). Those who violate God's law of marriage, and instead establish homosexual relationships and lesbian relationships bring shame and reproach upon themselves and the church of the Lord (Romans 1:26-27; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Deuteronomy 23:17; Genesis 19:5 ff).

A lesson desperately needed is found in Titus 2:11-12, which reads as follows: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." These verses teach the Christian where to go, the kind of clothes to wear, the deeds to do, and the words we should speak. Soberly means to treat oneself right, righteously means to treat others right, and godly means to treat God right.

(2) To glorify God in your body, you must offer Him your body as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2). Jewish readers knew of animal sacrifices, but Christian readers must learn to offer themselves as living, holy, acceptable sacrifices to God. These are spiritual sacrifices (I Peter 2:5; Hebrews 13:15; Hoshea 14:2). Your talent, time, and money must be offered unselfishly to God (Matthew 25:31-46).

You cannot glorify God in your body while committing rape, murder, theft, or any of the other works of the flesh (I Corinthians 6:9-11; Romans 13:8-10). Murder is no less murder when innocent and helpless babies are aborted regardless of what may be said about it.

(3) In order to glorify God in your body you must put forth your greatest effort to do exactly what God has commanded in His holy word. Jesus taught that we live by every word of God (Matthew 4:4). Jesus Christ must be obeyed (Hebrews 5:8-9; Luke 6:46). This is the whole duty of man (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). Do not hold back, seeking to see how little you can do to just get by (Luke 17:10). Jesus taught that half-hearted efforts are not enough (Matthew 23:23-24).

(4) If you would glorify God in your body you

must make a total commitment to your Creator. "Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Corinthians 7:1, ASV). Be it understood that you can glorify God in your body or you can bring great shame and reproach upon the great Cause of Christ.

(5) What is needed is resolve, if you would glorify God in your body. Resolve implies an expressed or clear decision or determination to do or refrain from doing something. A double minded man can never accomplish anything for the Lord (James 1:8; 4:8). "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be

a castaway" (I Corinthians 9:27).

It will not be amiss to quote one other passage: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter; because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we have also forewarned you and testified" (I Thessalonians 4:3-5). These words are written for those who sincerely wish to know the truth.

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

"Woman Believe Me"

Continued From Page 3

Son of God would have to say to her. He would speak to her of her spiritual needs. He had asked her for a drink and she had responded derisively (John 4:9). Nevertheless, Jesus would answer her. He said, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that said to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him and he would have given thee living water" (John 4:10). He would engage in a lengthy conversation to try and reach her heart.

Jesus knew that he had as much responsibility to this lost person as he did to any other. You can see that he is no respecter of persons. Though some Jews might not speak to such a person; this would not stop our Lord. He had come that "the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17). That means all the world, not just a part of it. That means every man and not just some men. He had a responsibility to all men. The Hebrew writer would later say, "he by the grace of God tasted death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). Since he would die for the sin of the whole world he would therefore have a responsibility to try to save the whole world. That is why he would have the responsibility to say, "Woman believe me."

III. HE HAD A REASON FOR SAYING "WOMAN BELIEVE ME"

We have seen that Jesus had a perfect right to say "Woman believe me" and we have seen that he had a responsibility to say the same thing. We should not doubt of the fact that he surely had good reason to say, "Woman, believe me." This was not a needless and useless statement. Jesus did not make an unreasonable demand.

One of the reasons for such a statement grew out of the misconception she had of worship. Notice what she had to say about it. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship" (John 4:20). You can see by this that she was confused about the subject of worship. She thought she was justified on the basis of what "our fathers" did. She would find comfort in the fact that her ancestors had worshipped in that place. By this mountain, she would mean, Mount Gerzim. But how did men come to worship in such a place as that? In short it grew out of the will of man and not of the will of God. Jerusalem was the place of the temple and this is where God's people were to worship. But the Samaritans had changed the place of worship and other things concerning it. This being the case, this lady needed to listen to someone who would know the facts of true worship. She would need to listen to the truth about worship rather than the traditions of the fathers. She would need to believe what Jesus would have to say about worship. She would need to believe the truth about worship. That is one of the reasons the Lord would say, "Woman, believe me." She would need to

have that confusion cleared away. She would need to have a clear concept of worship.

Another reason for this statement would be; when you hear what he says on any subject, you have the final word. Just think of this fact. When this lady had the opportunity to listen to what Jesus had to say about worship, she did not have to have the word of anybody else. He is the final authority on the subject. She could believe what he had to say about worship and there would be no possibility of that ever being wrong.

When Jesus tells us what to believe on any subject, we must be as concerned about that matter as we would expect that lady to have been.

He describes the kind of worshippers God would want. They are said to be "true worshippers" (John 4:23). These are those who would worship "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23). Those people could and would worship in the right way.

Jesus could make this statement and be respected for doing so. He is not overstepping his bounds when he says, "Woman, believe me." He has the right to say this. He has the responsibility to say this. He has sufficient reason to say this. This is true, not only in the case of this lady, but in our lives also. When Jesus tells us what to believe on any subject, we must be as concerned about that matter as we would expect that lady to have been.

If you had been there and heard what the Lord said to her, what would you have said? When he said, "believe me" and he is talking about worship, should she believe what he said not matter what the fathers had done? Your answer would be, absolutely so. Suppose he had some things to say on the subject of baptism and he had said, "believe me," would the same sort of necessity still be in place. We all know that it would.

Yes, when Jesus says, "Woman believe me," we would say she should do so, and so should we.

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Words of Truth

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

forth the
-Acts 26:25

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Give Me The Old One

John Smith

I used to preach for a church. It was in the Northeast, but most of the members were from the South. They had been displaced by economics. Simply stated, they were starving as small farmers; so they came to the industrial centers.

They brought their religion with them. Since they could find no churches which were like their churches back home, they started churches -- in houses, in school buildings, in Masonic lodges. They met and sang the old songs, prayed, studied the scriptures and interpreted them just as they had in the South. They prospered, and more people came and joined them; so they built buildings like the ones they had "back home." To outsiders, they were radically conservative, hard-headed, legalistic, red-necked bigots, but it didn't bother them.

I found myself constantly embroiled in some dispute -- often as an arbitrator, sometimes as a participant. There was much that I came to disagree with, even in principle, and ultimately I left in frustration and hopelessness.

After all these years, thirty or more, I have this perspective. They were committed people. The church was their life. Every aspect of their existence was tied directly to the church. All sporting activities, whether baseball, basketball, hunting, fishing or golf, was a church activity. All entertainment -- eating, board games, card games, singing, conversation, visiting or travel -- was a church activity, done with church people, centering on religious topics or with spiritual overtones.

When the church doors were open they were there -- all of them. When there was a singing, a



"In Season, Out Of Season"



David Wade

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 4:2). Paul's command by the Holy Spirit lays a great responsibility upon every faithful gospel preacher to make the best of his opportunities to "preach the word." The expression "be instant" means be urgent, or be at hand. The same word is translated "at hand" in verse six; "For I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand." The words for "in season" (eukairos) and "out of season" (akairos) mean that one should be ready to preach the word whether the conditions are convenient or inconvenient, opportune or inopportune, favorable or unfavorable. David Lipscomb said in his commentary on this verse, "Do not await favorable moments, but create them, to teach the word even under unfavorable circumstances."

The faithful preacher is commanded to "reprove," that is, convince, or bring the fault home to the offender. He is to "rebuke," that is, censure or warn. He is to exhort, that is to comfort or encourage. This is to be accomplished with all longsuffering, or patience, and with doctrine, that is, the scriptures.

While we must be urgent "in season and out of season," it should be apparent to us that some times are more in season for certain topics than other times. Solomon makes the point well, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven: A time to be born, a time to die, a time to plant, a time to pluck up that which is planted" (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2; cf. vss. 4-8).

Perhaps we can illustrate the point with reference to the time of our preaching. It seems to me we would accomplish more good by giving special emphasis to modest apparel when the weather begins to moderate, and members are tempted to wear scanty clothes, rather than in the dead of winter when most everyone is appropriately clad. It seems to me that faithful attendance and the sin of absentecism should be stressed at the Sunday morning services rather than waiting until Sunday night or Wednesday night classes when the folks who need to hear it won't be present, and the opportunity to reach them is lost.

The preacher should plan his preaching to make the best of his in-season opportunities. There are a number of approaches the preacher can use in his

planning.

1) Biblical principle. Preach through a book of the Bible during the year. This could involve expository preaching or selected passages for sermon treatment.

2) Congregational needs. It is good to periodically survey the congregation and determine those areas where they need further development and growth.

3) Congregational suggestions. You must use caution with this one because people usually wish to hear their favorite texts expounded. This could result in the same suggestions being offered year after year.

4) Trends of the times. By reading newspapers and magazines and watching the news, you can know what people are thinking about. However, this approach does not lead to a systematic development of Bible knowledge. Sermons should come from the Bible and not from the newspaper.

5) Subjective principle. This involves the preacher speaking on things that interest him. The problem with this approach is the preacher is tempted to develop hobbies to the neglect of other important parts of the whole counsel of God.

6) Calendar principle. This involves looking at the year as a whole, taking note of important dates and delivering sermons that relate to that theme. The preacher is under no obligation of God to studiously avoid the topics of Easter, Thanksgiving, or Christmas. These dates provide an excellent opportunity to distinguish between revealed truth and human tradition.

7) Season principle. This one is very similar to the calendar principle. The seasonal principle makes the sermons complement the seasons of the year. Andrew W. Blackwood in his book, Planning A Year's Pulpit Work, suggests to keynote undergirding in the Fall, recruiting in the Winter, instruction in the Spring, and heartening during the Summer.

These suggestions are offered to help us see the need of making the best of our opportunities to preach God's word. By seizing our opportunities, and planning our work we are better prepared to "be instant in season, out of season."

Why You Should Be A Member Of The Church



W.A. Holley

Never become a member of the church for the wrong reasons. What are some of these wrong reasons? Well, (1) you should never go through the farce of becoming a member of the church in order to get your husband/wife. (2) One should never become a member of the church for entertainment

purposes. (3) One should never become a member of the church to show off one's dancing talent. One young woman was heard to say that God gave her the talent for dancing and she wanted to dance for the Lord. One may have a talent(?) for cursing, or drinking, or flirting with the opposite sex, but one cannot serve the Lord in such fashion. (4) Never become a member of the church because it is very popular. In all probability there are more popular places in town like the honky-tonks and the beer guzzling places. The church one can read about in the Bible never won any popularity contests. (5) Never become a member of the church because the preacher is so eloquent and so entertaining. Preachers are not your Savior but Jesus Christ is. One preacher told a woman that if she would hang to his coat tail he would see that she got to heaven. Such assurance is ridiculous because the preacher might just run right out of his coat and leave the woman holding his coat tail. Well trained choirs, concerts, and splendid buildings can never determine truth and righteousness in God's sight.

There are scriptural reasons why responsible men and women, boys and girls, should become members of the church of Christ. We shall see . . .

(1) Jesus established his church on the First Pentecost after His resurrection (Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-47). The church of Christ antedates denominationalism by hundreds and sometimes thousands of years. Any church that had its beginning on other dates, times, and places cannot be the New Testament church. Any church established by men cannot be the church that Christ had in mind (Matthew 16:18-19).

(2) You, dear reader, should be a member of that church to which Jesus adds the saved (Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47). Many preachers of our time cry long and loud urging their hearers to join the church of their choice. Just where can that scripture be found? Book, chapter, and verse, please!

(3) Again, we should be a member of the that Jesus will save. "For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the saviour of the body" (Ephesians 5:23, ASV). What is the body? The body is the church ". . . and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22-23, ASV). Hence, Jesus does not save people apart from the church

of Christ (Romans 16:16). To be saved eternally one must be in that divine institution which Jesus saves.

(4) Moreover, it is necessary for one to be in that church one can read about in the Holy Bible. We need to learn to call Bible things by Bible names and to do Bible things in Bible ways. We are commanded to "Hold fast the form (pattern) of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 1:13; cf. Titus 1:9, 13; 2:1, 8). If your church wears a denominational name you should beware. Many religious people assert that there is nothing in a name. Then, why did God change the names of some? What does Acts 4:12, mean? Would it be alright to call you Fido? If there is nothing in a name, why does the Coca Cola Company spend millions each year to keep their name before the general public??

(5) And more, you should be a member of the church which teaches the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth (John 8:30-32; 17:17). Faithful churches of Christ never permit the teaching of human creeds, confessions of faith, manuals, or the catechisms of whatever shape or form. Among churches of Christ the Bible is the standard of authority -- our text book is the Bible. We urge our entire membership to become just as well informed as preachers and elders. The Bible knows nothing concerning the clergy and laity.

(6) Those who desire to worship God as it is written should be members of the New Testament church. Just any kind of worship does not please God (John 4:24). The Lord God has prescribed the items of worship: They are, Bible study, giving as prospered, prayer, the Lord's supper, and singing (Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:19). It is a sin to go beyond what has been written (I Corinthians 4:6). God almighty has ruled out all religious spectacles and all religious pageantry which are done for mere show, however rich and colorful such may be.

(7) We are dedicated to the proposition which promotes the improvement of life, physically and spiritually, for all mankind. Nothing can solve man's problems like the power and influence of the gospel (Romans 1:16-17). "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12). We try to make life better for each individual. The human family does not need more divorces, more guns, more murders, more abandoned children, more alcohol, more drugs, more sinners, et al. To the extent that the gospel of Christ is believed and obeyed, to that extent the world will be made better (Galatians 5:19-21; I Corinthians 6:9-11). A million tons of soap is worthless if it is never used! Become a new creature, put off the old man and put on the new man, reach for the joys of heaven in order to

become what God wants you to be (II Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 3:5-17).

(8) Should you want to be part of something that is larger than yourself, become a member of the church of Christ. Its mission is world-wide, extending to every creature under heaven (Matthew 25:14-30). We sincerely invite all who seek the pure, unadulterated truth of God to become members of that church which you can read in the Bible.

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

Give Me The Old One

Continued From Page 2

meeting, a study, a VBS, a work day, they were there. Other activities were suspended. With them the Lord's Day was "the Lord's day," not their day to shop, recreate, etc.. Giving ten percent was a minimum which no one disputed.

Over the intervening years I have criticized them for their legalism, their "fear and guilt motivation," and some of it was justified. But it wasn't all fear. They loved the church, they loved their God, and they loved each other. They proved it time and time again. Yes, they were quarrelsome, but when the chips were down, they were there; though they were often unyielding, they were generous and forgiving.

I do not now excuse or justify their idiosyncrasies. They were what they were, often petty, jealous, argumentative. I just find myself wearied by the smugness of many, who like myself have made a whole new theology out of criticizing the past. We smile condescendingly as we contemplate the Neanderthal orthodoxy of our predecessors. Because we are overwhelmed with materialism, selfishness and complacency, we find it necessary to explain their dedication in some negative way so we can feel better about ourselves.

Our churches are wracked with divorce, pre-marital and extra-marital sex. Our children are biblically illiterate and have almost no understanding of their heritage because their parents are either ashamed of it or ignorant. Is this the result of a deeper understanding of grace?

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About What Do You Think?



T. Pierce Brown

Occasionally when I am worshipping in a congregation and the Lord's Supper is served, I see persons tearing checks out of books, flipping through song books, or doing other numerous things indicating that their thoughts are not on the memorial feast. The thought occurred to me that a simple suggestion of what you might do to increase the value of what should be communion with Christ would be helpful for many.

Since the feast is to be a memorial of what Christ

has done (I Corinthians 11:24), as well as a time of self-examination (I Corinthians 11:28), you might want to try this scriptural and practical method of making this a meaningful exercise, and not merely a ritualistic one. (I am fearful that many of our "exercises" from baptism on up have become increasingly ritualistic and devoid of real meaning for many participants).

Deliberately choose to think something like this: "Lord, because you chose to suffer thus for me, I will choose to examine my life and do the following (then specify an action of love, service or sacrifice) for you this day (or this week)." Remember that there are various aspects of the Lord's Supper that need emphasis. It is to be in remembrance of him (I Corinthians 11:24). Anything that you remember about him that would

help you to be more like him is worthwhile. It is to show the Lord's death, so as you think on the sacrifice he made for you, determine to do an act of love for him.

Whether there is a filthy habit you need to give up, or a good habit you need to develop, I can conceive of no way you can better gain strength and resolve in doing it than this way. When you specify a particular goal with reference to what Christ did for you, you bring two powerful principles into action, and cannot but be a better person as a result of it. After all, why do you think Christ wanted us to partake of this feast once each week? If this helps you to be a better person, why not commend it to others?

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Give Me The Old One

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We say they understood neither grace nor the Holy Spirit. I believe that to be largely true, especially with the latter. I challenge the more modern understanding which allows us to live without sacrifice, without an idea of who we are or what we are, or why we are.

Our churches are wracked with divorce, pre-marital and extra-marital sex. Our children are biblically illiterate and have almost no understanding of their heritage because their parents are either ashamed of it or ignorant. Is this the result of a deeper understanding of grace? God save me from it. We don't preach Jesus to our neighbors because we don't know the saved from the lost. Is this the result of a closer communion with the Holy Spirit? God save us from it. Our culture dictates far more of our moral and ethical principles than does the Word of God, and we are far more concerned with social problems, like women's rights, than we are with the problem of mankind -- sin and separation from God.

Grace is now understood as the indulgence I shower upon myself as I feel the need. It means I don't have to give ten percent; so I don't. I don't have to attend Sunday or Wednesday; so I don't. It has become the panacea which covers complacency, materialism and selfishness. The Lord's Day is a misnomer. It is my day, and if I choose to give a part of it to God, He ought to be grateful. If there is a baptism, we crassly exit the building because they take much too long and we've seen them before. Our services are geared more and more to an entertainment mode designed to please as many as possible and offend no one.

If the new understanding of grace and the indwelling Spirit are related to the results I witness, please, give me the old one.

--Via The Highlander Announcer, Montgomery, AL.

Not A Denomination



Bobby Key

The Church of Christ is not a Denomination. Some time back one wrote: "I cannot bring myself to ever believe that the denominational churches are not as entitled to salvation as is the church of Christ. I prefer membership in one of the other denominations. They are more liberal in

spirit and better suited to my religious taste."

This letter expresses the general feeling of our day. Let us remember that no denomination existed in New Testament Times. Christ never shed his blood to purchase a denomination. Denominations were built by uninspired men and are not as good as the Divine Institution built by the Lord. Every person who accepts Denominational church membership as equal to membership in the church of Christ, thereby accepts man as equal to Christ.

My friend, when the line between the church that wears the name of Christ and the churches wearing the names of men grows indistinct, we lose our purpose for existing.

How can we expect to convert others if men are never able to see the contrast existing between the Lord's church and denominations? Why should men want to change from one denomination to another? When the church ceases to be completely distinct from all denominations, it ceases to be the church of Christ. My friend, when the line between the church that wears the name of Christ and the churches wearing the names of men grows indistinct, we lose our purpose for existing.

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

When you state a goal and set out to achieve it, remember to hold to the image of your success clearly before yourself at all times. Then push beyond your preceived limitations and keep failure out of your mind.

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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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"Give Me Thine Heart . . . Observe My Ways"



Jerri Manasco

From Solomon's pen flowed many challenges for practical living. Many of these challenges were family-oriented; that is, they concerned family relationships and attitudes. One such challenge was put in these words: "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe

my ways" (Proverbs 23:26). While this is clearly an admonition for the son to pay attention to the father's teaching, it is at the same time a sobering statement that compels parents to face squarely their awesome responsibility!

Parents are not merely "raising kids." Parents hold in their hands the future of our homes, of the nation, the church, the school, the business establishment. We are sculpting the soft clay of the child's heart into the form that it will take as time hardens the material. That fine little son or that charming little daughter is the raw material from which the finished structure will some day rise. It is awesome to know that we are in the process of training a life in the direction it will most likely take (Proverbs 22:6). It is awesome to know that we are fashioning the person who will some day be taking his or her rightful place in society and that this person will be representing what we have done with that pliable heart and life!

"Give me thine heart." This brief admonition focuses on the gravity of the challenge that parents face. It is the HEART that we have at our disposal! It is the seat of all emotion and the seedbed of all conduct (Matthew 15:18-20). It is the seat from which all response to the Lord will spring (Romans 6:17-18). It is the place wherein all priorities will be sorted out and all the goals and aspirations for the future will be nurtured. "Give me thine heart" means that we are influencing spiritual and moral values, and that we are contributing to attitude construction. We are

sinning a great sin against our own offspring and the generations yet to come when we fail to grasp the weight of child rearing!

"Let thine eyes observe my ways." This cuts deeply into the conscientious parent's heart! This tells us that children are learning from what they see! It is not only what they hear that impresses them. Rare is the parent who has not been in the position of inconsistent home discipline at some point in his or her parenting career! Have you not at some time or other been in the process of disciplining your child for some indiscretion only to have the child look you in the eye and cut you to the heart with the words, "But YOU did it, too?" Truly, "observe my ways" means that parents are setting down the pavement upon which their children must walk. What do our children see when they "observe our ways?"

Have you not at some time or other been in the process of disciplining you child for some indiscretion only to have the child look you in the eye and cut you to the heart with the words, "But YOU did it, too?"

What do they see when they observe our moral and spiritual values? Do they see in us a firm stand for purity? Do they observe a compromising spirit? Do they see in some of us a character like Reuben who was "unstable as water" (Genesis 49:4)? Do they see that we have a Sunday standard and a different standard for week days? Do they hear us talk piously about moral purity on Sunday, but then observe us enjoying the latest sex-oriented move on television? Admittedly, it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep moral filth at a distance, but if we intentionally allow the free flow of smut into our living rooms, can we expect our children to really be serious about spiritual

thinking (Philippians 4:8)?

What do our children see when they observe our priorities? Where are our affections? "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1-2). When all we talk about is money, when all we plan for is material comfort, when all we long for is recreation and personal comfort, then guess what our children will more likely pursue as the chief purpose in their lives!

What do our children see when they observe our attitude demonstration? We say, "give me thine heart," but do we then fill that heart with a negative, murmuring, complaining, grumbling, hateful, vengeful attitude? Christians should be a rejoicing people (Philippians 4:4). Christians should be a forgiving people (Colossians 3:12-13). Christians should be motivated by love and forbearance (I Corinthians 13:4-7; Ephesians 4:1-3). Just what attitudes are we impressing upon our offspring?

What do our children see when they observe our worship habits (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 20:7)? What do they see when they observe our respect for the law? What do they see when they simply observe the way we live?

No one can give more than his life. Our children can give us no more than their lives! And their lives are in our hands. **WHAT ARE WE DOING WITH THEM?**

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One By One



Peggy T. Crump

"The greatest thought that ever engaged the attention of my mind was that of my individual responsibility to God." Daniel Webster

Our duty is to hear God. At the transfiguration (Matthew 17:5), God spoke from heaven saying, "This is

my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him." Our faith comes then by hearing God (Romans 10:17). Then our duty is to believe. Jesus said in Mark 16:16, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel, he that believes and is baptized shall be saved." Thus hearing, believing and obeying God, we are saved. Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all that obey (Hebrews 5:8-9).

In Matthew 25:31-32 we read, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from his goats." In this scripture we find Jesus on the throne. Angels aground this throne and all nations to be presented to him, presented to Jesus -- to be judged but not as nations but as individuals. There will not be one who has ever lived on this earth but who will be present on that day. "For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Corinthians 5:10).

This will be a glorious day for God's people but a day of terror for those who are not (Romans 14:11-

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

When Death Comes



David Wade

Andrew Jackson, in his letter to "My Dear E.," wrote, "When death comes, he respects neither age nor merit. He sweeps from this earthly existence the sick and the strong, the rich and the poor, and should teach us to live to be prepared for death."

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. 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" (I 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 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, 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 6:6). They will hear the fateful words, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

Death is coming for every person. How and what you think of death has much to say about your preparation or lack of preparation for your inevitable appointment.

Rifle Or Shotgun?

By Jim Chamblee

Just imagine two deer hunters coming upon a herd of twenty deer! One with a shotgun suggests he should fire because he could hit almost every one of them! The other man with a rifle suggests he should fire! The man with the shotgun will hit most of them but will kill none. The man with the rifle will let most of them get away, but he will kill one.

We face the same dilemma! We have so many friends we want to reach for Christ -- we try to reach them all. The result: Lots of "wounded," but no one converted. What to do? Use a rifle -- pick out one and begin to encourage, invite, visit, and pray for them. Then patiently teach ONE the Gospel of Christ. Lots of friends may get away . . . but this is the only way you will have any real results!

One By One

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12).

Two great dangers face us as individuals. One of these is the neglect of the great salvation, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him" (Hebrews 2:3).

How shall we escape? There is no escape!!

Then, there is the danger of losing our souls. The devil would have us believe we are in no danger. Such is a lie (Matthew 16:25-26).

There are two destinations before us as individuals, one is heaven the other is hell. Each person, Jew or Gentile, must "hear and learn of the Father" (John 6:45), and make his own decision regarding the calling and election (II Peter 2:10). The law is not between his nation and God, his family and God, but is between himself and God. It matters not what a nation does or what attitude a family may take for they are to be taught "one by one."

The law is not between his nation and God, his family and God, but is between himself and God. It matters not what a nation does or what attitude a family may take for they are to be taught "one by one."

When Peter preached the first sermon on Pentecost (Acts 2), he made it clear that acceptance of Christ was an individual responsibility. "Every one of you," one by one should be converted to the gospel.

Philippians 2:12, ". . . work out your own salvation" Here again, is an individual responsibility each soul must fulfill. Romans 13:11 also tells us, "And now, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." "If any man will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him . . ." (Revelation 3:20). One is not saved upon the basic of another's faith or acceptance.

One by one we need to realize we are sinners (Romans 3:23; Isaiah 53:6). One by one we must realize we cannot save ourselves (Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:9). One by one we must realize Jesus Christ alone can save us (Acts 4:12). One by one we need to hear all evidence before reaching a decision (Matthew 13:14-16). One by one we must manifest a willingness to learn (Matthew 18:3-4). We must love the truth (II Thessalonians 2:10-12) and this truth must never be pushed aside.

We must then prove all things (II Thessalonians 5:21). We must be honest. Jesus taught an "honest and good heart" is necessary to the proper acceptance of truth (Luke 8:15). One by one we, as baptized believers, must reach the masses of sinners who have not learned the word of God. We must tell the story as often and as fully and

effectively as necessary for all to hear (Romans 10:13-15; John 6:45). No man can be sure he will have tomorrow for the acceptance of this gospel (II Corinthians 6:2).

In Revelation 20:11-15, John's vision of the judgement is most impressive. John saw all the people who had ever lived upon this earth standing before the throne (John 5:28-29). When all these people who had ever lived had taken their place before the judgement throne, then came the event for which the assembly had been called. He judges every man according to his works. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS" (Revelation 20:12).

Because man is a free moral agent, he must be held responsible for what he does (Hebrews 9:27).

God has a record of each one of us (Psalm 69:28; Daniel 12:1; II Timothy 2:19; Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5; 21:27). He has a record of every word, thought and deed not forgiven of every soul that has ever lived (Hebrews 8:12; 4:12-13; Matthew 12:36-37; II Corinthians 5:10).

Christ said, "Every man therefore who hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me." It is our responsibility to teach so that everyone has heard for WE will be judged according to OUR works. It is then a two-fold purpose, to save ourselves and save others. One by one we must reach them.

When I read again of John's vision of the judgement, I can identify with Daniel Webster, "The greatest thought that ever engaged the attention of my mind is that of my individual responsibility to God."

--P.O. Box 176, Hackleburg, AL 35564.

No Double Standard



Charles N. Crump

Right is right for all people, men as well as women. Moral standards in the scriptures are the same. The great problem arises when the efforts are aimed to show no distinction in the privileges among men and women. I am not naive enough to believe that all works of this life are open to both sexes. There are jobs and positions that can only be done by women and the same with man.

God created both male and female to fit certain purposes in life. When these differences are overlooked, there will always be unrest and disturbances as is now prevalent. God knew man could not walk by his own sight (Jeremiah 10:23), therefore he gave us his word as a guide (Psalm 119:105). For instance, the conduct of woman in relationship to her husband can mean much in the salvation of his soul (I Peter 3:1). Here, Peter emphasizes the exact conduct that should characterize a Christian woman in winning her husband to Christ. This points to high morals and great influence in her choices in life. Men, as well, can do the same. A woman cannot do certain things that a man can do without immediately bringing herself in question and this is dangerous in her standing in the minds of her companions. Men, on the other hand, should be just as thoughtful in regard to the gentler sex, even more so.

The double standard (so called) will vanish when we, as God's creation, give heed to our prespective roles as men and women, as designated of God. We must remember when worldliness spills over into the church, men and women get this idea of a double standard.

There are certain things that some can do without hurt to God while others doing the same things brings condemnation. Paul had this in mind when he wrote to the Corinthians concerning eating meats offered to

idols. He recognized the fact that one could eat meat, that which had been offered to idols without condemning himself, while another, doing the same thing would bring himself into condemnation. This so-called double standard is conduct based upon the background of the individual. Both could have come from heathenism. One had become more enlightened than the other, thus, he knew meats offered to idols was nothing but food to him and God was all and in all. The weaker brother had not this understanding and saw it differently as worshipping idols. Therefore he would sin for doing the same thing violating his conscience (I Corinthians 8:7-13). Double standards arise only when we are ignorant of God's way righteousness. Man devises false standards, not God (I Corinthians 14:33).

But again, when we think of there being a double standard between Christian men and women we have not understood the fullness of God's law. There are those among us today that would have women taking the lead in service to God only designated for the man. The inspired apostle Paul gave command, ". . . as in all the churches of the saints, let the woman keep silent in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law" (I Corinthians 14:33-35).

God did not make women inferior to man. It is the way of the world that says this, not God who created her. God set things in order as it pleased him.

Again Paul said, "but I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness, For Adam was first formed then Eve and Adam as not beguiled, but the woman was beguiled and hath fallen into transgression" (I Timothy 2:12-14). To some this subordination seems to be unfair, but when we think of subjection, all are to be under subjection in some

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No Double Standard

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manner and not only the women. The apostle Peter said, "Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder. Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility to serve one another; for God resisteth the proud but giveth grace to the humble" (I Peter 5:5). Those older and learned in the faith have an obligation to fulfill to the younger or the unlearned. If the unlearned does not submit and the learned does not submit to their responsibilities, there will be confusion. Qualified men called elders, bishops (I Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17) are under submission to God as well as to the church (Acts 2:28; Hebrews 13:17; I Timothy 5:19; I Peter 5:3-4). Thus we all come under subjection as the elders lead us and watch for our souls.

God did not make women inferior to man. It is the way of the world that says this, not God who created her. God set things in order as it pleased him. "But I would

have you know, that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of every woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God" (I Corinthians 11:3). Therefore, woman is not inferior to man because she is in subjection to him, just as Christ is not inferior to the Father, but had his different role of subordination to his Father as did the Holy Spirit.

One must realize God does not do things without purpose. He gives his reason for the woman being in subjection to the man. The first reason is found in I Timothy 2:13, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." Remember that God has his order of things, he has not left that up to us. Secondly, he says, "and Adam was deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (v 14). God's reasons are clear in these two verses. It was woman who came from man

(Genesis 2:21-23; I Corinthians 11:8-9). It was woman who was created for the man.

When Christ came to this earth he liberated woman from all kinds of traditions. He treated them with respect. He did not cart away the Samaritan woman as others did. He was their saviour, he did not come to condemn them (John 4; 3:17), but to free them as all mankind. So woman must not usurp authority over man but be in subjection to him. It is man that leads prayer everywhere, not woman (I Timothy 2:8). Paul says again, "... there is neither male or female for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). The difference is only in each of our accepted roles and responsibilities. The double standard generates from man, not God, thus no double standard.

P.O. Box 176, Hackleburg, AL 35564.

"Marching Orders" (Matthew 28:16-20)



Ted D. Burleson
ground war began.

George Bush gave the order to attack Iranian forces with an awesome air attack. About 5:30 p.m., January 16, 1991, the attack began. Weeks followed. Everyone in the world wondered and waited for the marching order to march into Iran and liberate Kuwait. The orders were given and the

kingdom of God." He told them that they would be His witnesses "in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (see Acts 1:1-11).

The Authority The Marching Orders Are Based On.

Prior to giving the Great Commission Jesus told the apostles, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18).

How did the apostles know that God had given Jesus this authority? God had proved Jesus' claims through fulfilled prophecies from the Old Testament before the apostles' eyes.

God introduced Jesus as His Son at His baptism (Matthew 3:16-17). The Father had also declared Christ's superiority over Moses' Law and the prophets like Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:5).

The apostles had been present during the time God confirmed Christ's ministry with miracles, signs, and wonders (Acts 2:22). They themselves had marveled at Him. For example, they had wondered what kind of man He was when He stilled the tempest. Certainly, the most convincing proof the apostles had was that God had raised Him from the dead (Acts 2:36).

The Commandment Within The Marching Orders.

Go. Go where? Into all the world (Mark 16:15). Unto all nations (Matthew 28:19). It is a universal reach (Acts 1:8). The early Christians did just that (Acts 8:4). Even today, just as they of like precious faith did 2000 years ago, the church has a mission assigned by God!

Teach. The destiny of mankind depends on our teaching (Mark 16:16). We are to make disciples (learning, following, believing).

Baptize. We have beautiful examples of this in Acts 8:36-39). Who is to be baptized? Those who have had their hearts changed and their personality influenced by faith, the humbled believer. What are these people after they are baptized? Wet? They are "in Christ" (Romans 8:1). They are "in Christ's body," the church (Ephesians 1:22, 23). They are Christians (Acts 11:26).

Train them. Train them to worship (John 4:24; Acts 2:42). Train them to love what is right (Matthew 5:6). Train them to produce the results of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-25). Train them to grow stronger (II Peter 1:5-7). Train them to have peace among themselves (Hebrews 12:14-17).

The Commitment Accompanying The Marching Orders.

"... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

God is distinguishing a people for His name (Acts 15:14-18). These are being called out of sin as Lot was summoned out of Sodom and Gomorrah (II Peter 2:1-10).

We have a double mission: (1) to exhibit the truth to the world (I Timothy 3:15); and (2) to rescue souls (James 5:19-20).

Maybe it's time we repeat the words the angel said to men almost 2000 years ago, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people" (Luke 2:10). After all is said and done, isn't this the substance of the marching orders all Christians have been given by Christ?

--West 7th Street Church of Christ, Columbia, TN 38401.

The Christians' Commander and Chief, Christ Jesus, has given marching orders. Let us be as deliberate in carrying out these orders as the U.S. and allied forces were in the Gulf War.

The Christians' Commander and Chief, Christ Jesus, has given marching orders. Let us be as deliberate in carrying out these orders as the U.S. and allied forces were in the Gulf War.

Note the elements of the Christian's "marching orders."

The Circumstances Surrounding The Marching Orders.

The "marching order," or Great Commission, was given by a risen Christ in the presence of the apostles (Matthew 28:16).

It was given by the authority and power of the Holy Spirit on the day Christ ascended. Among the things Luke wrote to Theophilus was that Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, had given commandments to the apostles and was seen of them during forty days speaking of the things "pertaining to the

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Words Of Truth

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

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26:25

VOLUME 27

AUGUST 9, 1991

NUMBER 32

"Refurbished By Satan"

James W. Watkins

The Devil has refurbished and is using one of the oldest tools of his trade on the church today. If one is a pure minded Christian, Satan seeks to intimidate him with the idea that he is 'narrow-minded.' If, as a faithful follower of Christ, one is prayerfully and carefully following the Lord's instructions, Satan tries to convince him that he is a 'legalist.' If one, out of his love for our Lord and respect for his fellowman, is morally upright, Satan tries to convince him that he is a 'crank,' a social misfit, a 'goodie two shoes,' or a wimp.

Since we are not worshipping men, or seeking to please man (Galatians 1:10), and since the Lord commanded Christians to sing (specific command), and since the apostles were very familiar with the law which allowed the use of mechanical instruments in the worship of God, yet did not by inspiration authorize its use in the Christian Age I, for one, will continue to worship God IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH (John 4:24).

This tool of Satan, properly, and simply defined, is intimidation, peer-pressure or social pressure. The true mark of Christian courage, however, is one's ability to maintain a pleasant, loving disposition and exhibit the spirit of Christ while he rises above these mundane accusations. After all, there is a 'narrow gate' through which we must pass (Matthew 7:13, 14). There is indeed a 'law of

faith' that one must follow (Romans 3:27; I Corinthians 9:2f). There is also a high plane of morality set out in God's Word by which, ultimately, all men must be judged (Galatians 5:19-24; John 12:48).

One of the more prominent areas of this Satanic intimidation today deals with the assembled church and its worship of the God of Heaven. Satan's heralds (a few of them within the church) are telling us that unless we incorporate instrumental music into the worship we will become less and less popular. However, since we are not worshipping men, or seeking to please man (Galatians 1:10), and since the Lord commanded Christians to sing (specific command), and since the apostles were very familiar with the law which

allowed the use of mechanical instruments in the worship of God, yet did not by inspiration authorize its use in the Christian Age, I, for one, will continue to worship God IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH (John 4:24).

It is sad and appalling to see so many people, seemingly desirous of worshipping God, who apparently have no idea of what God wants. Their idea seems to be, "We are going to worship him as we please and he will accept it." Not so! The worship of God is specifically defined in the scripture (John 4:24). All other worship, no matter how sincerely offered, is vain (Matthew 15:5-9; 7:21-27). Shalom

305 W. Church Street, Lewisburg, TN 37091.

Purpose In Life



Johnny Ramsey

this: "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord" (Genesis 18:19). To "seek first the kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33) will provide for us the blessings of the Creator in regard to all that we need. When we glorify Him properly, we receive in abundance over beyond "what we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20, 21). Such blessings overflowing in our earthly sphere develop within earnest hearts the deep desire to save souls for the Redeemer.

Paul makes clear his purpose in life, "So now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death" (Philippians 1:20). As parents we need to instill this point into the sojourn of our children, or both we and they shall live in vain! God knew that Abraham realized

We naturally ask, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits to me?" (Psalm 116:12). Timothy was told that he could save others if he gave attention to purity of conduct and teaching that was truthful (I Timothy 4:16). In the last verse of the practical book of James, we read, "Let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins" (James 5:20). The unsurpassed joy of helping to redeem lost humanity ought to be all the motivation we need to live godly in Christ Jesus.

"While the souls of men are dying
And the Master calls for you,
Let no one hear you idly saying,
"There is nothing I can do'."

The torments and woes of eternal hell surely motivate Christians to more dedicated holiness day by day. Since there is always "but a step between me and death" (I Samuel 20:3), and no one knows when the Lord shall come (Matthew 25:1-3), we strive diligently "to be found in him" (Philippians 3:4-11), lest we die outside of Christ and be forever lost (John 8:21). This is not the only

Continued On Page 3

Words Of Truth



(USPS 691-760)

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

-Acts 26:25

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What Is Spiritual Maturity?

Helen M. Young

SPIRITUAL MATURITY is to know God and to know about Him, but also to have a growing relationship with Him as King, Lord and Father.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY is to know the Holy Spirit, His power through the Word, and His power at work within me to motivate and strengthen me to serve.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY is to be growing into the image of Christ, to bear the fruit of the Spirit -- love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, meekness, gentleness and self-control.

It is to look at life -- myself, my family, the church, the world -- through the eyes of Christ, the eyes of unconditional love.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY is to be growing more and more selfless and to be less concerned with what others think and more concerned with doing the perfect will of God.

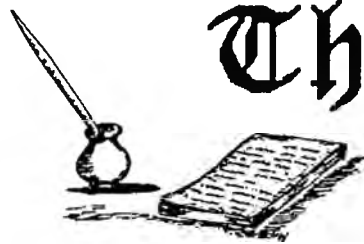
It is to grow in my ability to deny myself daily and take up my cross and follow Him.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY is to accept disappointments without bitterness, delays without fretting, rebuffs without resentment, and threats without anger, remembering that He was reviled, and He reviled not again; He was threatened and threatened not.

It is to make no excuses for my mistakes not to blame others for my errors, but to admit them, to

Continued On Page 3

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The Editor's Pen

Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

Maturity



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

Saviour Jesus Christ . . . we are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith GROWETH exceedingly. . . " (I Peter 2:2; Ephesians 4:15; II Peter 3:18; II Thessalonians 1:3).

Can anyone deny that the aim of God for us is GROWTH? Growth is a process that takes time -- it does not happen over night. As one grows spiritually, he has to deal with many different emotions that all too often give him a great struggle. One of the many emotions which we must face is that of ANGER! While in a fit of rage one may do things through anger that they would not otherwise do, but let us remember that not all anger is sinful. In that Paul said, "Be ye angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:26, 27) we know that anger is not necessarily sinful. Had all anger been sinful, why would we have been instructed to not sin in our anger, rather he would have directed us to never become angry.

There are times when one may well be angry and yet not sin in his anger. A close study of the Bible shows that both God and Christ are capable of it, and in fact, it is noted that anger is attributed to each of them. Read such passages as Mark 3:5; John 3:36; Romans 1:18; 9:22; I Thessalonians 2:16 and Hebrews 3:11; 4:3 to verify this concept. THEREFORE, anger in and of itself is not sinful!

To be more specific, there are times when anger is a most appropriate emotion, especially from one who loves righteousness and hates sin. But if we would be truthful, we must admit that most of our anger is inappropriate and sinful. Let us consider some of those sources:

(1) Anger when one's selfish demands are not met is sinful. Often we get angry simply because someone did not do what I desired, or possibly they did not treat me the way I wanted to be treated. What of the older brother who complained when the father made a feast for the prodigal?

Often we find that the more selfish we are, the greater the frequency of our getting angry as well as the greater the intensity of that anger.

(2) Anger that comes about because one's perfectionist demands are not met is sinful. That person that we label as a "perfectionist," is one who expects so much from himself, from others, and yes, even from God all too often. What results is a frequent angry emotion that goes unchecked until it becomes sin. In all too many instances we find that the anger is self-directed and such things as self-hate, self-criticism and self-punishment are the results of not being able to meet one's own standards of perfection.

(3) Anger that comes from suspicious minded people is sinful. If a suspicious person is not noticed, he assumes that others are trying to avoid him, and because of that he may get very angry. Anger of this type can occur if someone is teasing in a friendly manner, and yet we respond as if they were attempting to cut us down. It may well be that we have some repressed anger and we project it onto others thinking that is what they feel toward us.

Anger is something that we must admit we have, or we will never be able to deal with it. Just as in Alcoholics Anonymous, the angry person must admit that he or she is so disposed, and then work to correct it. When we experience anger, let us closely examine it to determine its source. Then, we can begin to deal with it in a way and manner that is consistent with the teaching of Jesus. We must remember that God loves us and accepts us where we are in order to take us where he wants us to be. A saying on my wall says it well: "I ain't what I ought to be; I ain't what I'm going to be; but by the grace of God I ain't what I used to be." Anger, as other emotions, can be dealt with and controlled, for as Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."

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What Is Spiritual Maturity?

Continued From Page 2

repent and to pray for strength not to repeat them.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY is to learn to pray without ceasing -- to have a running conversation with God, to seek His will in every aspect, whether large or small, of my life.

It is to seek not so much to be loved as to love, not so much to be understood as to understand.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY is to recognize that I was saved to save and that I have a responsibility to share Christ's love and grace with those I can reach.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY is to accept disappointments without bitterness, delays without fretting, rebuffs without resentment, and threats without anger, remembering that He was reviled, and He reviled not again; He was threatened and threatened not. It is to make no excuses for my mistakes not to blame others for my errors, but to admit them, to repent and to pray for strength not to repeat them.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY is to know joy, everyday joy, and to express it in a happy disposition and an enthusiasm for life.

It is to report for duty every morning with Paul's words, "Lord, what would you have me to do?" It is to say with Samuel, "Here am I, Lord."

SPIRITUAL MATURITY is to grow in compassion. It is to have my heart broken with the things that break the heart of God. It is to translate that desire to help into humble service in feeding the hungry and confronting those who are led away into evil practices, but always with humility and gentleness.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY is to accept suffering without self-pity, with simple trust, not resignation, and a positive faith that God will work in all things to our good.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY is to leave it to the Lord to order our lives, to provide for our needs, and to know that in every change He will be faithful.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY is a triumphant faith that knows the victory through Him who loved us, that does not fear death, but faces the future with the happy assurance of our eternal home, where we will praise our blessed Lord for an eternity of no tears or parting, only eternal joy.

What Does Your Check Book Say?



Edsel Burlseon

Banning said, "If all the gold in the world were melted down into a solid cube, it would be about the size of an eight room house. If a man got possession of all that gold -- billions of dollars worth, he could not buy a friend, character, peace of mind, a clear conscience, or a sense

of eternity.

It is easy for our possessions to become the most important things in our lives. Unless we are careful our material goods will become greedy masters demanding loyalty to "perishables" above loyalty

to God (Matthew 6:24).

Sometime ago I read about a man who has written many biographies. He noted that it was easy to find out what a man said and what he had done, but when it came to finding out what kind of man he really was, the biographer was up a stump. Then he discovered that the surest way to get the truth was to look at the stubs of old check books. What a man uses his money for -- that tells the tale.

Sometime ago I read about a man who has written many biographies. He noted that it was easy to find out what a man said and what he had done, but when it came to finding out what kind of man he really was, the biographer was up a stump. Then he discovered that the surest way to get the truth was to look at the stubs of old check books. What a man uses his money for -- that tells the tale.

One who is selfish with the Lord, but spends much on his own pleasures, realizes little about his ingratitude.

The check book of the miser speaks of the love he had for money -- and how much he left behind at his death. The check book of a spendthrift tells of his foolishness in exercising no wisdom in that which he bought.

The check book of the Christians tells of his love for Christ and the church and her work. It tells of the appreciation the Christian holds for all the blessings God has bestowed.

What will our check books say about us?

Purpose In Life

Continued From Page 1

incentive nor the dearest motivation, but it is proper to fear hell (Matthew 10:28). I want to serve the Saviour loyally, and I do not wish to spend eternity with the immoral, the fearful, the filthy and the unbelieving (Revelation 21:8). Conversely, the desire for heaven is one of the compelling arguments for Christianity. To live for Jesus now, and to live with Him then, is almost too marvelous to contemplate. But I Peter 1:9-13 tells us to "hope to the end for the grace that shall be revealed unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Tillit S. Teddlie captured that lovely sentiment in the words of the hymn:

"Why should I long for the world and its sorrow

When in that home o'er the sea,
Millions are singing that wonderful story,
Heaven holds all to me!"

In New Testament times it is evident that the most potent incentive for spiritual emphasis was the anticipated coming of the Lord. Paul's letters to the Thessalonians echo this hope over and over. Revelation closes with the vibrant cry, "Even so, Come Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20). The promise of the glorious appearing of the Redeemer

caused the first century saints to "live soberly, rightcously and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:12). Should such hope cause us to do any less today? Christ is coming! If we overcome Satan, self and sin, we can come over to live with Him.

I want to serve the Saviour loyally, and I do not wish to spend eternity with the immoral, the fearful, the filthy and the unbelieving (Revelation 21:8). Conversely, the desire for heaven is one of the compelling arguments for Christianity. To live for Jesus now, and to live with Him then, is almost too marvelous to contemplate.

"I Am With You Always"

Clifford E. Rumley

When Jesus sent the twelve on the Limited Commission (Matthew 10; Mark 6; Luke 9), he warned: "But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues: and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles" (Matthew 10:17, 18). Now notice the glorious promise connected with the warning: "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak" (Matthew 10:19). Their material necessities were to be provided by those to whom they preached (Matthew 10:9-13). As they faithfully fulfilled their mission they did not lack anything (Luke 22:35). Jesus was with them during the "Limited Commission."

In giving the "World Wide Commission" Jesus said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations" (Mark 28:18, 19). Mark records, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). A great task indeed to go to every nation in the earth; but an even greater task was given. They were commissioned to go to every creature in every nation giving all the opportunity of hearing the message of salvation (Romans 1:16). Human wisdom would say impossible. Could they do it? Would Jesus be with them? Most assuredly! "... and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:20).

Before Jesus ascended to heaven He promised the Apostles another comforter, the Holy Ghost (Spirit), to reveal and confirm the message they were to proclaim (John 14:15-18, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:7-15; Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:1-4). Just previous to the ascension Jesus spoken unto the Apostles the things contained in the following verses (Matthew 28:16; Mark 16:14, 19; Luke 24:50, 51; Acts 1:11-13). Notice the pronouns referring to the Apostles. They were promised Holy Spirit baptism to: clothe them with authority (Acts 1:8); make ambassadors of them, (II Corinthians 5:18-20); make them witnesses (John 15:27; Acts 1:8); guide them into all the truth (John 16:13); show them things to come (John 16:13); teach them all things (John 14:26); cause them to remember, (John 14:26); and to confirm the word (Hebrews 2:1-4). They were empowered to perform miracles, speak in tongues (languages without previous study) etc. Truly, Jesus was with them!

What about today? Is Jesus with those who faithfully proclaim His word now? Definitely yes, but not miraculously as He was with the Apostles and other miraculously endowed men. Nine spiritual gifts were conferred, by apostolic hands, on certain ones in the infant church in absence of the written word (I Corinthians 12:4-11). I Corinthians 14 regulated the use of these gifts while they lasted. I Corinthians 13 shows their duration. When the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25) was revealed and confirmed, that which was in part, miraculous helps, was done away. No man today, in or out of the church, has any of these miraculous gifts that were exercised in the early church. We just need the faith to accept the following exhortation. "Let your conversation (manner of life) be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I WILL NEVER LEAVE THEE, NOR FORSAKE THEE. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:5, 6). We all should

strive to cultivate a faith like this.

What about today? Is Jesus with those who faithfully proclaim His word now? Definitely yes, but not miraculously as He was with the Apostles and other miraculously endowed men.

Today God works in our behalf through providence. We may not always be able to identify the providential working of God, but we can know that it works for us. Providence is not dependent on a miracle. The Lord's providence worked in such way as to bring Joseph into Egypt at the right time under the right circumstances to suit the purpose of God (Genesis 37-50). Joseph understood that his brothers meant to do him bodily harm; but he later realized that God overruled it for good (Genesis 50:20). Joseph's trials worked out for his own welfare and that of a whole nation. When Jesus was born, Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem, not Nazareth (Luke 2:1-7). They were not transported miraculously to Bethlehem. God used the decree of a king to see that they were in Bethlehem, the right place at the right time, not Nazareth (Micah 5:2). These examples show that God works through

providence without miraculous intervention.

We must believe that Jesus is with us or we will fail as preachers of the word. The preacher may worry about almost everything if he does not believe that God will take care of him and his family as he faithfully proclaims the gospel. The trials that come our way, as a result of faithful service rendered, will work out for our own good just as in the example of Joseph.

Today God works in our behalf through providence. We may not always be able to identify the providential working of God, but we can know that it works for us. Providence is not dependent on a miracle.

Since the Lord promised never to leave nor forsake us we truly should not fear what man is able to do unto us (Matthew 10:28). Everything that may happen to us, as we faithfully serve him, will be turned into a blessing (James 1:2-4, 12).

Let us boldly preach the pure, original gospel, believing the Lord's promise, that He will NEVER leave us nor FORSAKE us. What a glorious promise as we fulfill the glorious mission of preaching the glorious gospel to the lost. Let us busy ourselves in fulfilling the greatest task in the earth!

Franklin Camp Preachers' Scholarship Fund



Bobby Duncan

Our late beloved brother Franklin Camp was a man of many good works. He was best known throughout our brotherhood for his brilliant mind, his vast knowledge and tremendous understanding of the Bible, and his sagacity in the application of Biblical truth. Those of us who knew him quite well knew him as a warm and gentle person whose soul glowed with love for God, for the church, and for all mankind. One of the things closest to his heart was training and encouraging young men to preach the gospel. For the past three decades he has regularly conducted a preachers' class on a weekly basis, with preachers driving from miles in every direction to attend.

A preacher's scholarship fund has been established in his memory and under his name to help deserving men prepare themselves to preach the gospel of Christ. This fund will not be tied to any one Christian college or preacher training school, but may be used to help support preacher students in different schools.

The fine elders of the church in Adamsville, Alabama, men who sustained a very close relationship to brother Camp during the latter one-third of his life, and whose lives have been greatly influenced by him, have chosen to set up this fund as one of many works the Adamsville church is

doing. The Adamsville church has already committed itself to a contribution of \$10,000. Since it will be a work of the church, the elders will oversee it and determine how it will be used. This arrangement will also make it possible for churches which wish to contribute to the fund to do so.

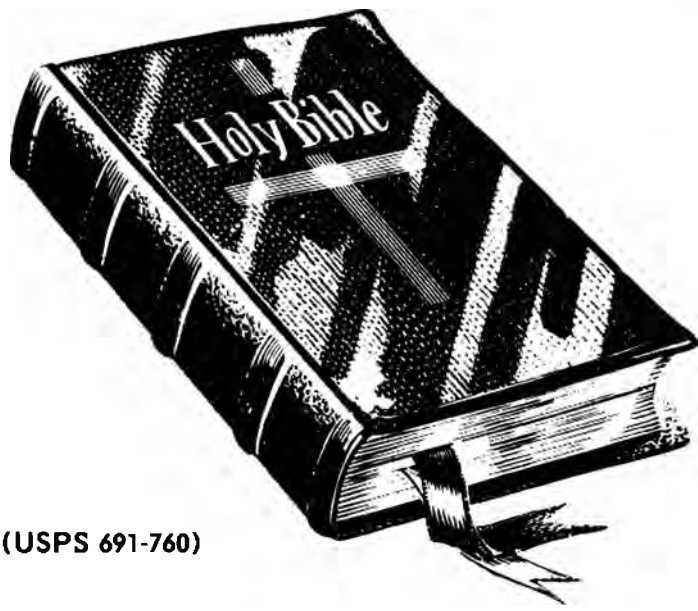
All contributions to the Franklin Camp Scholarship Fund, either by churches or individuals, will be acknowledged, and the names of all contributors will be sent to sister Camp.

What better way could there be to honor the memory of a man like Franklin Camp than to contribute to a fund to help train preachers?

The last sermon brother Camp preached was at Adamsville on Sunday morning, May 5. He spoke on some things the Bible teaches which had been reinforced by his own experiences. It was a classic! This sermon, and his last Bible class, which he taught that same morning, were recorded both on audio and video. When you mail your contribution to the scholarship fund, you may wish to request a copy of this audio tape.

Checks should be made to Adamsville Church of Christ and earmarked for the Franklin Camp Scholarship Fund. They should be mailed to Adamsville Church of Christ, 4207 Adamsville Parkway, Adamsville, Alabama 35005.

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

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26:25

VOLUME 27

AUGUST 16, 1991

NUMBER 33

Looking At The Thorns



Winfred Clark

Many of us who came from the country could tell you about the thorns and briars we have encountered. They seem to be situated in the very places where they cause the most inconvenience. They are not that easy to remove nor to work around.

If you will take the time to look at a good concordance you will find a number of references to thorns in the Bible. They are both real and symbolic. In many cases they represent those difficult things that one may face in this life.

If you will take the time to look at a good concordance you will find a number of references to thorns in the Bible. They are both real and symbolic. In many cases they represent those difficult things that one may face in this life.

THORNS OF CREATION

The first reference will be found in the Lord's conversation with Adam and Eve after the fall in the garden. Here he says, "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee;" (Genesis 3:17-18). This gives us the reason for the thorns. They are there in the physical world because of man's failure to abide by the word of the Lord. They represent the

consequence of man's disobedience. They are there to remind us that the "way of the transgressor is hard."

This can remind us of the fact that sin never makes it easier for man to live. It might deceive us into thinking that such is the case but the thorns we face will cause us to stop and think otherwise. This we can learn from the thorns that have been present in the world since man sinned. They are a part of that which came with the curse of sin.

THE THORNS OF CANAAN

When the people of God came to the land of Canaan, they were to drive out the inhabitants of the land. They were to destroy all their pictures, their molten images, and all their high places (Numbers 33:52). If they did not do so, God had something to say about the situation. He said, "those 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). You will find that Joshua gave the same counsel to God's people (Joshua 23:13). But we all know that his people did not follow this advice. Time and again you will find that they did not drive out the inhabitants of the land. Notice, "Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of Bethshean and her towns" (Judges 1:27). That refrain is repeated time and again in the first chapter of Judges (Judges 1:29, 30, 31, 33). Now do you wonder what the consequence of such action was? Take a look. "And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them," (Judges 2:12). But who forsook the Lord? Go back to see for yourself. The writer says, "And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done in Israel" (Judges 2:10). Would you call these the "baby boomers" of that day? Could be. But what happens to them? "They forsook the Lord, and served Baal

and Ashtaroth" (Judges 2:13). They are living among idolaters and are being influenced by them. They became thorns in their sides. They have now become entangled in the briars and thorns of Canaanite worship.

How long will it take us to learn this lesson? Can't we see the danger of compromise with the errors of religion and with the world? Don't we know the awful price to be paid? We can become entangled with the religious jargon around us to the point that you cannot tell the difference between us and the denominational world around us. This is becoming more and more evident with some of our own people.


THE THORNS OF CARE

Jesus used this figure in the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-23). He spoke of some seed falling among thorns: and the thorns spring up and choke it (Matthew 13:7). When he would interpret this for his disciples they would learn that "he also that received seed among thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful" (Matthew 13:22). How often have we seen these thorns? How many good works have we seen retarded or discarded because they have been choked by the cares of the world? How many people have you known who are more concerned about this life than the one to come? Think of the concerns you have at the moment. Are they more about this life or the life beyond? An honest answer will go a long way in helping us to see whether or not the thorns of care are choking out the word.

THE THORNS OF A CHRISTIAN

You will remember that the great apostle to the Gentiles would speak of such a thorn. He said, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure" (II Corinthians 12:7). You can see that he will refer to a thorn as something that

Continued On Page 3



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(USPS 691-760)

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—Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

ACSR Jasper Extension



W. C. Temple



David Wade

Professor of Undergraduate Programs at ACSR. Brother Temple is highly qualified for his work and is known as an effective teacher.

As an incentive to better prepare for Christian service, the elders are awarding to any member of the Sixth Avenue congregation a one-half scholarship for all courses taken through the ACSR extension at Jasper whether for credit or audit.

We hope this example will be an encouragement to other congregations or individuals to help aspiring students of the Bible with their schooling costs.

If you are interested in learning more about the ACSR Jasper extension, contact us immediately. Address all correspondence to the church office, 1501, 6th Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501 or call (205) 384-6446, or 387-1670.

Make plans now to attend the initial meeting, September 19, 7:00 p.m. at Sixth Avenue.

The Great Physician



W. A. Holley

The words, "physician," "physicians," are used 11 times in the Bible. These are not physicians in the modern sense, but healers according to their ability. The word, "physician" is also used as healers of the mind, comforters, and of embalmers who prepared the human body for burial.

The words disease, diseased, diseases are used 33 times in the Bible. Jeremiah wrote: "Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" (Jeremiah 8:22, ASV).

Only the sick need a physician. Jesus, your Saviour and mine, said, "They that are in health have no need of a physician; but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:31-32, ASV).

Sin is a great malady; it is the curse of humanity! We ask our readers to compare Matthew 13:15 with Mark 4:12. They will see that "heal" in the first reference becomes "sins forgiven" in the last reference. Hence Jesus is imminently qualified to forgive sin since He "tasted death for every man"

Continued On Page 3

Marvelous Are Thy Works



Dalton Key

"The brain is an electrically powered and electricity-generating organ. It is composed of an estimated 100 billion neurons - more neurons than there are stars in the universe - each as complex as a small computer, each producing and transmitting electrical impulses."

(Joseph Light, quoted in Megabrain, a book written by Michael Hutchison).

Of course, as students of the Bible, we see the human brain, with all its wonder and potential, as the work of God.

George Gallup, well-known pollster and statistician, has affirmed, "I could prove God statistically. Take the human body alone. The chance that all the functions of the individual would just happen is a statistical montrosity."

And this view is only reasonable. Scientists and neuroscience specialists have long considered the

Continued From Page 3

In the July 12 Words of Truth we announced that the Alabama Christian School of Religion will offer classes in an extension here at Sixth Avenue beginning in September 1991. It is needful to bring you up to date on the dates, times, classes to be offered, etc.

The initial meeting for enrollment will be held Thursday, September 19, 7:00 p.m. at the Sixth Avenue facilities. Anyone wanting to enroll, or needing more first-hand information should be present at this meeting. Classes are scheduled to begin the following week, Thursday September 26 and the quarter will end December 12. There will be one week out for Thanksgiving.

Two classes will be offered, 3 quarter hours credit each, at the following times: 1) 5:30-7:50 p.m., and 2) 8:00-10:20 p.m. The offerings for the fall quarter are: 1) NT 3303 Survey of the New Testament, and 2) THS 3301 Survey of Church History.

By transferring the basic courses, English, Math, Science, etc., to ACSR, one may complete all other requirements for a Bachelor of Science degree in Bible through the Jasper extension.

All courses may be taken for credit or audit. The costs are as follows: \$98.00 per quarter hour plus \$95.00 registration fees per quarter. Total per quarter - 3 hours (1 course) = \$389.00. Six hours (2 courses) = \$683.00. The audit fee is one-half the credit cost with no registration fee - \$147.00 per course.

This extension will provide ministers with continuing education opportunities. Beginning ministerial students who are unable to attend full-time at the Montgomery campus will also be benefitted. In addition, this extension should aid elders, deacons, Bible school teachers, and in general, all members of the church who want to better prepare themselves to do the Lord's work.

Brother Winston C. Temple of Montgomery, Alabama will be the instructor for the fall courses. Brother Temple is a graduate of Pensacola Junior College and holds the B.A., M.A., M.T.S. and M.Th. Degrees from ACSR. He is Director/

Looking At The Thorns

Continued From Page 1

harmed him. It was also something that you would think of as being a hinderance. If you have ever had the occasion to have a thorn in your foot this lesson has already been brought home to you. Those things have a way of hurting, harming and hindering a person. Paul found himself being buffeted by such.

We do not know what that thorn was. We may guess about it but we know that Paul knew. And we also know how he faced it. He didn't deny that such really did exist. He saw it as something to talk to the Lord about. In fact you will find him doing so on more than one occasion (II Corinthians 12:8). You will find him still with the thorn but also with God's help. He did not allow it to cause him to turn his back upon the Lord. He became stronger with his infirmity because he could depend on the Lord to help him as he had promised when he said, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (II Corinthians 12:9). Paul would not be a candidate for the idea of being a Christian and

such a one not having to suffer. He knew better than such foolishness as that and so should we. This so-called gospel of prosperity would have a hollow ring to this grand man who struggled with the thorn.

THE THORNS OF CHRIST

You will find that man is not the only one that has had to face the curse of the thorns. Jesus had to do so also. You will remember that "the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head," (John 19:2). Later John would say, "Then came Jesus forth, wearing a crown of thorns" (John 19:5). What a terrible sight. Here is the sinless, spotless Saviour of the world with the thorns that came into being because of man's disobedience. Here he stands hurting because man sinned in the long ago.

But those thorns were a part of the curse upon man because of sin and now Jesus stands wearing the curse. He is bearing the sins of man as he will go to the cross. He is bearing a part of the consequences of sin's foul deeds. He is hurting

because of man's sin in the long ago. These thorns are there because of sin. This becomes evident in the very act of placing the thorns on his head. Only sin would do a thing like that.

Yes, the Bible talks about thorns, both the real and the symbolic. In every case they are seen as obstacles in the path of man. They are seen as those things that make life more difficult. They are seen as those things which hurt. We face the thorns of creation, and the thorns of Christians but we have one that can sympathize with us because he wore the crown of thorns.

Looking at the thorns will help me to see the far reaching effects of a deed, the danger of compromise, the need for a pure heart that is uncluttered, that for some thorns there is help from God, and that we have a Saviour who has faced the same kinds of things we have had to face.

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

Marvelous Are Thy Works

Continued From Page 2

human brain to be far superior in function and independent thought to any of our super, mainframe computers. Yet who would promote the theory that a computer, with all its intricate and complex workings, came into being by mere accident - that it somehow evolved naturally over an undetermined span of time from lower, less sophisticated machinery? But just as the computer proves the existence of a maker, a designer, just so, yea much more so, does the human brain prove the

existence and power of the Maker and Designer of all things. *"For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God"* (Hebrews 3:4).

George Gallup, well-known pollster and statistician, has affirmed, "I could prove God statistically. Take the human body alone. The chance that all the functions of the individual would just happen is a statistical monstrosity." And

the brain serves as a source to the body's most complex functions. The nerve cells in your brain comprise a communications network far more advanced and intricate than the entire communications system of the United States.

David was right when he wrote, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Psalm 139:14).

--Box 563, Liberal, KS 76901.

The Great Physician

Continued From Page 2

(Hebrews 2:9-10; I John 2:1-2).

Consider the following facts about sin.

(I) The seat of sin-sickness is in the heart of man. Your Bible reads as follows: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: There are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man" (Matthew 15:19-20). A man is what he thinks (Proverbs 23:7). "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of the heart are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). Simon a sorcerer, through obedience to the gospel became a Christian, but, later became a backslider because ". . . thy heart is not right before God" (Acts 8:18-24). Is your heart right with God??

(II) Sin is universal in scope. "There is none righteous, no not one . . ." (Romans 3:10). All responsible people have sinned (Romans 3:23). The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the

righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (I John 2:1-2, ASV). Those here now addressed by John were already children of God. Question: How did they become children of God? This answer is simple: They believed what God taught (Mark 16:15-16), they repented of their sins (Luke 13:3), they confessed Jesus' name before men (Matthew 10:32-33), and they were baptized in Jesus' name for remission of sins (Acts 2:36-38; 41-42, 47). Here is the right way to solve the heart problem.

(III) We should remember that sin is contagious. Peer pressure is powerful indeed (Proverbs 1:10-19). "Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals" (I Corinthians 15:33). "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? (I Corinthians 5:6). The words of false teachers will "eat as doth gangrene . . . and overthrow the faith of some" (II Timothy 2:16-17). Sin grows and grows until it is fullgrown thus taking possession of its victims (James 1:13-15).

(IV) Sin is deceitful. It never gives what it

promises. It promises good but always brings bad things (Galatians 6:7-8). One always reaps what he sows. Here is one of God's universal laws which no scientist can reverse. Moses understood that "the pleasures of sin" are but for a season (Hebrews 11:24-26). Dear Reader, turn to Hebrews 3:12-13, and learn about "the deceitfulness of sin."

SIN Is Deceitful. It never gives what it promises. It promises good but always brings bad things.

(V) The consequence of sin is sure and certain. It is death whether we like it or not! Man does not suffer the guilt of Adam's sin but man does suffer the consequence of it. The Bible says nothing

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The Great Physician

Continued From Page 3

about the God-dishonoring doctrine of hereditary total depravity. The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12).

But the sinner does not have to die in sin. Jesus is our remedy for sin. All who wish to escape the power and bondage of sin can hear and obey the commands of the Lord (Revelation 22:14; Matthew 7:21-26). In this manner the sinner leaves the world of sin and enters into Christ (Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 6:3-5, 16-18). One can die in Christ (Revelation 14:13). But, one cannot "die in the Lord" unless one is in the Lord. How does one enter the Lord? Please read Galatians 3:26-27;

Romans 6:3-4).

(VI) Jesus Christ is qualified to forgive sin according to His last will and testament (Hebrews 9:16-17). Jesus ended the Old Law through His death upon the cross (Colossians 2:14-17). His last will and testament went into force on the First Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection (Acts 2:1-4; 36-38, 41-42, 47).

Jesus received his Father's endorsement (Matthew 17:5; 3:17). He knew man's problems and how to solve them (John 2:24-25). Isaiah the prophet wrote of Him: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for

our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:4-5).

Jesus was a sinless man dying for sinners (Hebrews 4:14-16; I Peter 2:22). His blood was shed for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28; I Peter 1:18-19). But the cleansing power of Jesus' blood must be appropriated to the sinners heart. How can this be done? This act is accomplished when one is born again, born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:3, 5).

An example of the new birth can be found in Acts 2:36-38. Remission of sins equals the new birth. To have remission of sins is to be born again. Will you follow Jesus today?

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

Salvation In The Church



Guy N. Woods

Our lesson is a simple, but extremely important one. The relation of salvation to the church is made crystal clear, and it is also plainly shown that one must be in the body of Christ -- the church -- in order to be saved.

"This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:11-12). Peter charged his accusers with being in the absurd position of laying the foundation of a house, and then rejecting the stone which was cut out for the corner, and without which the building could never be completed. Christ is that "chief corner stone." He is the stone which the Jewish builders rejected in their spiritual structure.

Salvation is in the name of Jesus only. That is, salvation is obtainable only through him, and by his authority. It follows, therefore, that salvation may be had only in the way our Lord authorized it -- in compliance with the terms which he set out (Mark 16:15-16). He has commanded sinners to believe (John 8:24), repent (Luke 13:3), and on confession of faith in him be baptized (Matthew 28:18-20). Only those who comply with these conditions can be saved "in the name of Jesus." Those whom he saves, he adds to the church (Acts 2:47). There is no salvation outside the church of the Lord.

Jewish teachers, still wedded to the old order and desirous of destroying Paul's influence, accused the apostle of actually advocating sinful conduct on the part of his converts! His reply begins with an emphatic denial: "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid" (Romans 6:1-11). In order to further demonstrate the falsity of the charge which had been levelled against him, that his preaching encouraged sin, Paul points to the fact that in baptism, we are united with Christ and with the benefits of his death -- being baptized into Christ and unto his death. Further, he declares that

this baptism is done by being "buried" with Christ. Not only the design, but the "mode" of baptism is clearly indicated here. Further, it is also clearly shown, by the apostle, that "newness of life," the life of the Christian, begins only when one comes from the waters of baptism. Thus, the passage clearly teaches that (1) we are baptized into Christ (where all spiritual blessings are); (2) we are baptized into his death where the blood which cleanses was shed; (3) baptism is performed by a burial in water; and (4) the new life of the Christian begins only after baptism.

"This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:11-12). Peter charged his accusers with being in the absurd position of laying the foundation of a house, and then rejecting the stone which was cut out for the corner, and without which the building could never be completed. Christ is that "chief corner stone." He is the stone which the Jewish builders rejected in their spiritual structure.

"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Romans 6:5). The reference here to the "likeness" of our Lord's death and resurrection and to our being united with him in this is highly significant. In Romans 6:16-17, the apostle wrote, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." In becoming Christians we must obey a form of teaching based on the facts of the gospel, the death, the burial, and the resurrection of our Lord (I Corinthians 15:1-3). As Christ died, we must die to sin; as he was buried, so we must be buried in the waters of baptism; as he was raised, so are we raised from the watery grave to "walk in newness of life." We die to sin when we believe and repent (Hebrews 11:6; Luke 13:3). We are "buried" in baptism from which we are "raised" to new life (Romans 6:3). Thus, in obeying the gospel we obey a form (a pattern or mold) of the teaching. Those who have done this have separated themselves from an active life of sin, and are thus "justified" from such a life by the gospel.

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Words of Truth and soberness."

forth the
Acts 26:25

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AUGUST 23, 1991

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Our Task



Joe E. Galloway

"The whole world lieth in wickedness" (I John 5:19). Each individual can be saved, for Christ "is the propitiation . . . for the sins of the whole world" (I John 2:2). Yet, none will be saved without the gospel, "for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans

1:16). This is the reason "the preaching of the cross" is said to be "the power of God" (I Corinthians 1:18).

This brings us to *our task*. The gospel that saves must be taught. Jesus instructed his apostles to teach every person in every nation (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19). They could not personally, by themselves, accomplish this task even in the first century. Since they died during that century and had no successors it is evident that others were also to be responsible for teaching the world the saving gospel. These "others" were to be **all who were saved**. In Matthew's account of the great commission Jesus said the apostles were to teach those they baptized "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20). Since he had commanded them to teach the gospel to all, those baptized were to be given this same responsibility. This conclusion is borne out by Paul's instruction to Timothy: "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).

If you have been taught the gospel, and have been saved by obeying it, you have the responsibility to teach others. This is not a task for just a few Christians such as full-time evangelists, Bible class teachers, and elders. It is a responsibility of all who have been saved! We all can together carry out this work by a combination of direct teaching, exemplary living, and by financially supporting the preaching of the gospel. Our obligation to so teach the gospel is never completed until we have ended our life on earth. Of course the degree of our responsibility, as in any Christian obligation, is

determined by ability and opportunity.

Direct Teaching

All cannot preach the gospel from the pulpit, but everyone can still teach. A mother can teach her children; a wife might teach her husband. We can teach our close friends, our relatives, our next door neighbors, and those with whom we work. This teaching can range all the way from just a few brief, well-chosen words as we have opportunity during conversations to planned lessons arranged by appointment. We can have a part in direct teaching by making arrangements for another capable Christian to teach our contact at some time convenient for both. We may invite and bring some lost friend to services where they may be taught, or invite them to listen to gospel sermons on a radio or TV program. A good tract or enrolling one in a Bible correspondence course can help teach. In all these ways we are having a direct part in seeing that others are hearing the gospel that can save them.

If you have been taught the gospel, and have been saved by obeying it, you have the responsibility to teach others. This is not a task for just a few Christians such as full-time evangelists, Bible class teachers, and elders. It is a responsibility of all who have been saved!

Exemplary Living

Although our manner of life (apart from any direct teaching) will not convert a person, it can accomplish much in attracting people to the gospel. Paul said that servants were to obey their masters in all things "that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things" (Titus 2:10). Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and

glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). In the midst of wickedness, Christians are to "shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15).

Many, many times through the years those with hearts hardened to the gospel have become receptive by the influence of some Christian. Christians of all ages, different economic and educational backgrounds, and ranging all the way from being extremely shy to being very outgoing have this common ability of living the gospel before the world, humbly and courageously. We may never know how many lives are touched by such Christian living. Some may open their hearts to gospel teaching due to what they have seen in you and me! Although we may not have directly taught them, without such an exemplary life they might never have opened their hearts to the gospel taught by other faithful Christians.

Financially Supporting The Gospel

When the apostle Paul went from Macedonia to Thessalonica, and then to Corinth, the church at Philippi sent wages to him (Philippians 4:15-16; II Corinthians 11:8-9). When he mentioned this to the Philippians, he said: "Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to **your account**" (4:17). This indicates that those who gave the money were also credited with the teaching and conversions Paul accomplished!

When you lovingly and liberally give into the treasury of the local church you are having a part in all the work that is being financed by that congregation. Often in various congregations this would also mean that those giving are having a part in teaching the gospel in other fields of our nation and abroad. So, in this manner all are able to have a part in preaching the gospel worldwide. With this in mind we should encourage more assistance in such mission works, and help back up such by our sacrificial giving!

Let's use every right means available to teach the gospel to every person in the world!

--218 Pinecrest Drive, Greeneville, TN 37743.



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-Acts 26:25

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David Wade Editor

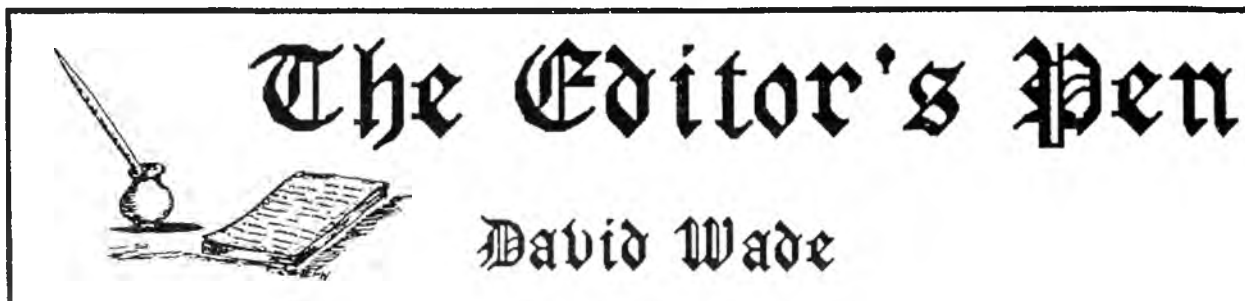
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"No Man Cared For My Soul"



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 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" (1 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" (1 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.

Love



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

John is termed the 'apostle of love' for good reason. When one considers that John penned some sixty chapters of the New Testament and used some form of the word LOVE one hundred and eleven times it quickly becomes clear as to the designation given him.

John 4:7-21 is replete with the theme of love. In these fifteen verses John uses some form of LOVE a total of twenty-seven times. He declared that we should love one another because love is of God, stating in verse eight that if one does not love he does not know God, for God is love.

How often have we noticed a diamond under some light and watched as the many facets of the diamond surface would reflect the light making it a magical display of brightness shooting off in all directions? The golden rays are reflected upward,

Continued On Page 4

"Go, And Sin No More"



W. A. Holley

We suggest that John 8:1-11 be read with great thoughtfulness and care. Note that this woman was taken in the very act of adultery, but where was the man? Was he not as guilty as she?? A careful reading will disclose that the scribes and Pharisees were not really interested in the sin thus committed; rather, they

were looking for a way entrap Jesus. In fact, these Jewish leaders were trying to embarrass Jesus rather than seeking to aid the woman.

Jesus knew the hearts of all those present. He urged those without sin to cast the first stone (See Deuteronomy 22:23-24). Conscience forced the man present to walk away, but it is possible for one's conscience to become seared (1 Timothy 4:2; Ephesians 4:18-21).

It is necessary to understand that this event occurred under the Law of Moses. In fact, Jesus was born, lived, and died under the law (Galatians 4:4; Ephesians 2:11-22; Colossians 2:14-17). The New Testament did not go into effect until after Jesus' death (Hebrews 9:16-17). The First Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection marked the beginning of the New Testament (Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-47). These facts explain why Jesus did not require the woman to obey the gospel of Christ. She lived under the Law of Moses; not under the law of Christ.

To the woman, Jesus said, "Go, and sin no more."

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"Go, And Sin No More"

Continued From Page 2

Jesus has reference, not to adultery, only, but to sin in general. People can be very dishonest regarding sin. Some who strongly condemn sin in others often tolerate sin in their own lives. Actually, the practice of sin has become a way of life for countless millions of people (Romans 3:23; 1:18-32). One can get out of the sinning business any time he wants to do so.

"Go, And Sin No More," said Jesus. What are some of the sins which we should refuse to commit? We shall note ---

(1) There must be no deviation from the right way of the Lord (Hosea 14:9; Acts 13:10). One can repent of any sin (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30-31; II Peter 3:9). When David sinned, he confessed his sin, saying, "I have sinned against the Lord" (II Samuel 12:13, cf. 24:10; Psalms 51:4; Proverbs 28:13). Also, one can sin against the brethren, against himself, and against the Lord (Genesis 39:9; Psalms 119:11; 51:1-3).

(2) One of the greatest sins to avoid is that of

absenteeism. This sin is so easy to commit. We need do nothing (Hebrews 2:1-4). The Lord demands an assembly for his people (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 10:24-26). One can offer all kinds of excuses (Luke 14:15-24). Ignorance may mitigate sin, but it can never excuse it! One may plead other activities, but the kingdom of God always comes first (Matthew 6:33-34). Set your priorities right, and miss not a single Lord's day assembly (Revelation 1:10).

(3) Let us all resist the sins of the tongue (James 3:1 ff). We strongly advise our readers to read Psalm 64:1-10). Truly, words can be used as weapons to destroy the innocent. Wisperers, slanderers, busybodies, talebearers, et al, can do great harm to the people of God and to society in general (Romans 1:29; I Timothy 3:11; II Thessalonians 3:11; Leviticus 19:16). Control your tongue!

(4) "Go, and sin no more," with regard to the use of illegal drugs, such as cocaine and alcohol,

cigarettes, and marijuana. Aids, and many social diseases follow such use -- even cold, stark, chilling death (Romans 6:23). No one has ever beaten Satan's magical temptation apart from the wonderful power of God's word (Romans 1:16-17; James 1:12-25). Even the worst men and women can be redeemed when they yield to the transforming power of the gospel (John 3:3, 5; II Corinthians 5:17; 3:18).

People can be very dishonest regarding sin. Some who strongly condemn sin in others often tolerate sin in their own lives.

(5) Sex has become a sort of a game with many people, young and old. Many boast of their sexual conquests. We can hear and see it on popular radio and television talk shows. Nothing is too rank and filthy and dirty for them. All the revolting details must be recited. Shacking up is common. Marriage between the same sex -- men marrying men -- women marrying women, is an abomination to God Almighty. God has established his own marriage law: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24) God tolerated divorce (Deuteronomy 24:1-4), but it was never His original law (Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:10-12). One may joke about God's marriage law, but, just remember, it will stand in the Great Judgment (Hebrews 13:4; Revelation 22:15). Please, just here, turn to Romans 1:26-27; Leviticus 18:22; Deuteronomy 23:17-18; Genesis 19:5ff, and read.

(6) "Go, And Sin No More," if you have withheld money that belonged to God. It is time to repent of this sin and begin to give according to your ability, as you have been prospered, and as you purpose in your heart (Acts 11:29; I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:6-9). These three words underlined are God's guidelines for acceptable Christian giving. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) learned too late the terrible price exacted for lying about the amount they gave to God Almighty. The truth is, we give of what the Lord has already given to us (I Chronicles 29:14). God has not prescribed any specific amount to be given by faithful Christians today, but He has inaugurated an honor system by which He will judge our giving. Are we honest in our giving. . . are we telling the truth when we give? (Romans 12:17; II Corinthians 8:21; I Peter 2:12). Are we dishonest in our giving to God??

(7) Are you a Christian? Do you know how to become a Christian? There are four steps you must take if you would become a child of God. (1) Believe that Jesus is the Son of God (Mark 16:16), (2) repent of your sins (Luke 13:3), (3) confess Jesus' name before men (Acts 8:37), (4) submit to the Lord's command of baptism (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:36-38). Why not obey the Lord's word today?

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Love

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downward and outward and change with every movement of the hand which holds the diamond.

Wherein John said that man loves because first God loved him, it causes us to realize that as God's love reaches and warms the heart of man, we in turn will reflect that love toward God and our fellow man. Using the illustration, let us make three observations about light, but more specifically about LOVE.

FIRST, love comes down from above from God and is descending. We must realize that ultimately God is the source of everything that is good, as Jesus said, "There is none good but one, that is, God" (Matthew 9:17). James said, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17). I John 1:5 says He is the source of light, and he is also the source of love (I John 4:7). John commends that "manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God" (I John 3:1).

God loves us, not because we are lovable, desirable or deserving, but because that is just the way God is! God loves us because of our inadequacies, because of our great need and because of his pity for us. His great love is demonstrated in the marvelous gift of his Son Jesus Christ. John 3:16 is quoted by millions, but possibly not fathomed by many because it is a marvelous descending love.

God loves us, not because we are lovable, desirable or deserving, but because that is just the way God is! God loves us because of our inadequacies, because of our great need and because of his pity for us. His great love is demonstrated in the marvelous gift of his Son Jesus Christ.

SECOND, we notice an ascending love. This appears when we learn of the love of God for lost man. As noted, his love descends and ours must ascend, and in this manner we are actually reflecting his marvelous love. Our love ascends in a sense of awe and admiration that the Creator would FIRST love us SO VERY MUCH. Also, we love God because of our sense of gratitude when we realize where we might be and what we might be, had it not been for his love. A sign reads, "I ain't what I ought to be, I ain't what I'm going to be, but by the grace of God, I ain't what I used to be."

There is a flip-flop of John 14:15 and 15:14 which says, "If you love me, keep my commandments . . . ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." John said, "this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3).

It may sound strange to think that God the Creator could have such a high esteem of the love of man (ascending love) that he made that his number one law. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the FIRST AND GREAT COMMANDMENT" (Matthew 22:37, 38).

THIRD, we see an outgoing love. In Matthew 22:39 Jesus said, "the second is like unto it (stated in preceding paragraph), Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This outgoing love results when we realize that God has loved us so deeply and commands that we pass it on by loving those about us. A love that is outgoing is manifested in many ways. John spoke of those as liars who said they loved God and hated their brothers, saying they could not really love God when they had not seen Him and hate those men they had seen.

When God gave the second commandment, loving our neighbors as ourselves, he knew that mankind does not hate himself, but "nourisheth and cherisheth it" for it is his own body (Ephesians 5:28, 29). Most people are interested in themselves and they are concerned about their own souls. Should we not be concerned about those of others IF WE LOVE THEM AS WE LOVE OURSELVES??? Loving my neighbor demands that I be concerned for his welfare, both physically and spiritually! Am I???

The next time you notice the light reflecting from the surfaces of a diamond, remember the THREE WAYS OF LOVE. It is because of the DESCENDING love of God that we have a love that is both ASCENDING AND OUTGOING. May it ever be so with all God's children.

--1400 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501.

The World's Largest Room



Bobby J. Norris

There is always room for improvement. Paul warned, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12). Christians should always be striving for excellence. Living the Christian life can be like riding a motorcycle -- about the time you begin to think you

have it all mastered is when you will wreck.

In 1875, the director of the United States Patent Office sent in his resignation and advised that his department be closed. He said there was nothing left for man to invent (2201 Fascinating Facts, p. 78). He never dreamed of course that man would invent anything like the telephone, the automobile, the airplane, the computer, or even velcro. There is no end to what we can achieve if we can just keep back the thought that "I am as good as I can possibly be."

If a person cannot honestly evaluate himself, he is in for all manner of self-deception. If we do not know where we are, there is no way to get to where we need to be.

First, we must be able to honestly evaluate ourselves. In Matthew 7:3-5, Jesus condemned those who wanted to pick a speck out of their brother's eye, but could not see the big pole in their own eye. If a person cannot honestly evaluate himself, he is in for all manner of self-deception. If we do not know where we are, there is no way to get to where we need to be.

Second, we must be humble. Pride hinders progress. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6). If we are too proud to go above and beyond the call of duty, we will never achieve excellence (Luke 17:7-10). This was the problem with the Pharisees. The teacher asked a little boy who were the Pharisees. He said, "The Pharisees fasted during the day, and in secret they devoured widows' houses." The Pharisees were proud and thought they could do no wrong. When they committed something grossly wrong they were too proud to admit it.

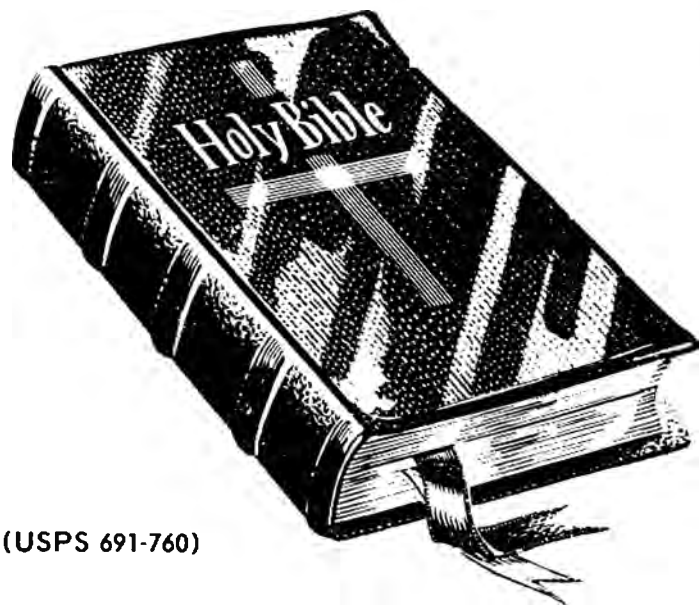
Finally, we must have patience. We must be able to endure unto the end. Many do everything right, but give up and quit short of victory. Many good works are started, but then allowed to fizzle out and die. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58).

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Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble
Words of Truth and soberness:

Speak forth the

—Acts 26:25

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An Ounce Of Prevention



Bill Dorriety

weather forecasters advised precautionary steps, even to evacuation from more vulnerable locations. Many wisely chose to make ready for possible damage by following their good advice. People boarded up windows, bought extra food, stored fresh water, and checked their flashlights and batteries to be ready for any emergency. On the other hand, some decided to simply "weather the storm" without making extra preparation at all. Most folks will agree that taking every precaution is a necessary and worthwhile effort, even if the hurricane changes direction.

Perhaps it seems strange to illustrate marriage preparation with a fierce and potentially destructive hurricane but, considering the storms that continually plague the American institution of marriage, it isn't really too far-fetched after all.

Perhaps it seems strange to illustrate marriage preparation with a fierce and potentially destructive hurricane but, considering the storms that continually plague the American institution of marriage, it isn't really too far-fetched after all.

[We welcome Bill Dorriety to the pages of Words Of Truth. Bill is minister of the Ninth Avenue Church of Christ in Haleyville, Alabama.]

"Hurricane Bob," with his potentially destructive forces, headed for the East coast of the United States. The

Planning and preparation are essential ingredients to the success of any worthwhile venture. Marriage has been compared to a voyage across an uncharted sea. Just as storms pose a very real danger to ocean voyagers, many "storms" threaten the peace and harmony of every marriage. Wise shipbuilders meticulously construct their vessels to be seaworthy and, the same careful diligence must be exercised to ready boys and girls to embark on their marriage journey.

In reality, marriages do not fail, people fail. Marriage was created by God (Genesis 2:24, 25; Matthew 19:3-9; Ephesians 5:31). His instruction book, the Bible, completely supplies all that is needed to begin and maintain a harmonious and happy home (Hebrews 8:5; II Timothy 3:16, 17). When individuals in the marriage relationship fail to follow God's plan, they cease to function as mature and responsible human beings and marital dysfunction and even dissolution occurs.

Many fine young people come to the romantic decision to be married with little or no knowledge of the institution of marriage: what is required of them to thrive and do well; how many adjustments the relationship involves, or; how their decisions will affect their marital future. Often couples discover, to their dismay, after the wedding there follows a lifetime of misery or, at best, minimal happiness. Almost everyone agrees that most couples are not adequately prepared for marriage, but very little time and effort is exerted toward readiness.

Preventive measures are always wiser than remedial ones. Marriage, without adequate preparation, may be compared to standing on the edge of a high and precarious cliff without a fence for protection. We may console ourselves with the knowledge that there's an ambulance waiting in the valley below but, in the final analysis, it is far better to prevent the pain of the fall in the first place than try to pick up the pieces after the fall. We need to build more fences!

Most couples planning marriage spend a great deal of time, energy and money on a wedding

ceremony that will last only a few hours. However, they often invest little time in building skills to help them have a more satisfying marriage that, as God would have it, is intended to last a lifetime.

The most crucial factor of spiritual preparation is greatly neglected or almost non-existent in most marriage plans. Perry Tankersley has well written:

Marriage Takes Three
I once thought marriage took
Just two to make it go,
But now I am convinced,
It takes the Lord also.

And not one marriage fails
Where Christ is asked to enter,
As lovers come together,
With Jesus as the center.

But marriage seldom thrives,
And homes are incomplete
Til He is welcome there,
To help avoid the defeat.

In homes where Christ is first,
It is obvious to see,
Those unions really work,
For marriage still takes three.

The most vital preparation for marriage is to develop spiritual values as its sure foundation. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" (Psalm 127:1).

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-Acts 26:25

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10 Commandments For Parents



W. A. Holley

(1) Husbands and wives shall love each other without mental reservation (Ephesians 5:22-33; Hebrews 13:4).

(2) Thou shalt love thy child with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, but wisely (Matthew 22:34-40).

(3) Thou shalt think of thy child, not as an object which belongs to

you, but as a gift from God (Psalm 127:3-5).

(4) Thou shalt regard your child's respect and love, not as something to be demanded, but as something worth earning (Ephesians 6:1-4).

(5) Thou shalt not set such a bad example before your child till he becomes bitter, rebellious, and discouraged (Colossians 3:18-25).

(6) Thou shalt remember that it is a child's privilege to make a hero of his parents, and thou shalt take heed to make thyself a good one (I Timothy 4:12-16).


(7) Thou shalt not talk of divorce in the presence of your child because marriage is holy, sacred, and the marriage bond is never to be severed except by the cold hand of death (Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:11-12; Romans 7:1-4).

(8) Parents, thou shalt teach your child the difference between earthly prosperity and spiritual prosperity. Verily, all the wealth in the world cannot solve your child's emotional and spiritual problems (Matthew 6:24; 10:28; 16:26).

(9) Thou shalt encourage your child to see beauty, kindness, friendship, and truth in his world, and to become a Christian (II Peter 1:5-11; I Peter 4:15-16; Acts 2:36-38).

(10) Thou shalt remember how blessed it is for two believers to be joined together in a Christian marriage -- to have one hope, one desire, one course of life, one service of God in common with the other (Proverbs 31:10-31).

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



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

It's Open Season On Russian Souls



David Wade

the Soviet Union.

Thankfully, the Lord's church is beginning to wake up to the vast opportunities for evangelism in the USSR since the society has opened up to outsiders. Various groups in the church from across our nation are now making mission trips into Russia. Of particular note is the work headed up by the Hunter Station Church of Christ in conjunction with Alabama Christian School of Religion, both based in Montgomery.

Several schools and universities in the USSR have signed agreements to permit American Christians to teach their English speaking classes using the English Bible as their text book. While the primary aim of the students may be to practice their English with native Americans, this gives the American workers the opportunity to share the truth with them. As a result, many converts have been made and several congregations of the Lord's

This eye-catching headline appeared above a short article on Soviet Evangelism in Newsweek: July 22, 1991, page 49. The article tells of Billy Graham's fifth mission to Moscow and of other Evangelicals who are now working vigorously to make converts in

church have been established through these efforts.

There is a great need for additional workers to meet the challenge. There is a need for mission-minded congregations to send workers and help finance the materials needed for this work.

Lord willing, I will be going into Russia to participate in these efforts sometime in October or November. The elders of the Sixth Avenue congregation want first-hand information about the evangelism opportunities now open to the church.

The Hunter Station congregation publishes a monthly newsletter entitled "Russian Good News." Clifford Yeldell, one of their elders, says that the work is vast and the opportunities are unlimited. Therefore, they are mailing the September issue of "Russian Good News" to every congregation of the Lord's church in the United States. They are seeking financial help and involvement of other congregations in the work. If you want on their mailing list for "Russian Good News" contact them at (205) 277-2211 or write to this address: Hunter Station Church of Christ, Rt. 6 Box 66-B, Montgomery, AL 36108. "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 harvest" (John 4:35). "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:37-38).

Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage



Cecil May, Jr.

us. This is true of God's word on divorce and remarriage, as well as on all other aspects of life.

Statistics relating to the breakup of marriages are horrendous. In 1988 there were 2.38 million marriages and 1.18 divorces in the United States; approximately one divorce for every two marriages. Unfortunately, our knowledge moves beyond statistics as we suffer with friends, children, parents and fellow members of our own

[Editor's note: The following is the first installment of four articles on this important theme].

God gave his word to help us, not to hinder us. He does not arbitrarily prohibit anything that is good for us, but he lovingly prohibits whatever would be destructive to

congregations, who are involved as innocent victims, violators of their marriage vows, or some combination of both.

Every church leader, certainly all who are attempting to evangelize the world's people, is faced an astounding variety of marital situations, any of which are difficult to untangle. Some would tax the wisdom of Solomon. Our hearts go out to people in such situations, whether they are our own family members or others we have come to care for, and we want to find some way to make their situations acceptable.

In such a milieu it is not surprising that there has been much "restudy" of the Biblical passages relating to divorce and remarriage and that some new viewpoints, and new advocates for older viewpoints, have come on the scene.

Jesus says God, in the beginning, said a word related to marriage and divorce: "A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his

Continued On Page 3

Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage

Continued From Page 2

wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24; see Matthew 19:3-6). Jesus and his apostles also speak to the subject, often elaborating on and explaining that original word from God.

"And I say unto you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery" (Matthew 19:9).

"Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife" (I Corinthians 7:10-11).

These words of God are true and right, as is every word of God (Psalms 119:142). Virtually all acknowledge they represent God's ideal, for marriage. They are, however, often in conflict with our flesh, as are many words of God (Romans 8:7).

Do these words declare subsequent marriages

following a divorce that was not for sexual immorality to be invalid? Do they apply to everyone, or just to Christians? These are live questions in today's world, and in the Lord's church. What does scripture teach about divorce and remarriage, and how should we apply its teaching today? These are the questions we will here explore.

The passages which deal with divorce and remarriage include Genesis 2:23-24, the record of the first marriage; three separate sayings of Jesus, Mark 10:2-12 and its parallel in Matthew 19:3-12, Matthew 5:31-32 in the sermon on the mount, and Luke 16:18; an almost passing reference in Romans 7:2-3; and I Corinthians 7, a chapter answering questions the Corinthians had raised about marriage.

The more comprehensive passages are Matthew 19 and I Corinthians 7. Our method will be to deal extensively with these, introducing what is

distinctive in the other passage as it is relevant to the discussion of these.

Matthew 19:3-12

A. A look at the passage.

The Pharisees also came to him, testing him, and saying to him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?"

This is not a case where the Pharisees came to Jesus for help on a difficult question that perplexed them. They were *testing* him. Their usual method was to frame a question in such a way that, whatever answer he gave, it got him in trouble with someone. That fits the situation here.

There were two schools of thought about divorce among the rabbis, one liberal and one conservative. (Sound familiar?) The law of Moses had spoken of a man divorcing his wife "because he found some uncleanness in her" (Deuteronomy 24:1).

The school of Hillel, the liberals, defined "some uncleanness" as most anything the husband did not like ("just any cause"), from "burning his bread" (which may be a euphemism for an unsatisfactory sexual experience) to speaking disrespectfully of her in-laws in her husband's presence, to failing to produce a boy-child."

The school of Shammai, the conservatives, defined "some uncleanness" as sexual immorality, and maintained that was the only permissible reason for divorce (and may have meant sexual immorality before marriage: if the husband learned after the wedding that he had not married a virgin).

Declining to embroil himself in their rabbinical squabbles, Jesus even passed over the law of Moses and went all the way back to God's intent for marriage "at the beginning."

And he answered and said to them "Have you not read that he who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man put asunder."

God's intention for marriage "at the beginning" was one man for one woman for life.

Note that "he who made them at the beginning . . . and said" is God. The word Jesus quotes is explicitly God's word.

The quote is from Genesis 2:24, and it is not the word of God in the sense of being something God said verbally, like "It is not good that man should be alone (Genesis 2:18) "is the word of God. It follows immediately Genesis 2:23, which is Adam speaking: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother . . ." If it is a word of God, and it is because Jesus says it is, then Scripture itself is God's word. That is our Lord's affirmation in this passage.

God said a man is to "cleave," "be joined," or "be glued" to his wife, forming a new permanent family unit. The two are no longer two, but "one

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Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage

Continued From Page 3

flesh." This verse is also quoted in reference to a man becoming "one flesh" with a harlot in the act of fornication (I Corinthians 6:16), showing certainly that "become one flesh" refers to the sexual union. God intended and approved sexual union within marriage, and this was said, notice, prior to the time that sin entered the world.

It is God who joins, who makes of the two, one flesh, as they enter into their marital union. It is on that basis that Jesus declares man should not separate what God has thus put together.

They said to him, "Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?"

Their reference is to Deuteronomy 24:1-4:

"When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house, when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man's wife, if the latter husband detests her and writes her a certificate of divorce, and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her to be his wife, then her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the Lord."

In this, the only reference to divorce in the Pentateuch, it is not Moses' point to institute divorce, or to say on what basis one could be obtained. He assumed the possibility of divorce and legislated one point: a divorced wife could not, after being married to another, return to a prior husband.

Jesus said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so."

It is more precise to say "Moses permitted" divorce (as here and in Mark 10:4) than to say "Moses commanded" it (as the Pharisees said in Matthew 19:7).

Perhaps polygamy, concubinage and other such deviations from the ideal of "one man for one woman for life," as well as divorce, were "because of the hardness of their hearts, permitted" prior to and during the time of the Mosaic covenant.

Jesus, however, keeps harking back to "the beginning." Such deviations from the ideal were not intended, were never God's plan as he sought what was best for man's highest happiness.

"And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery: and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

In the sayings of Jesus similar to this, only Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9 contain the "except for sexual immorality" clause.

Mark 10:11-12 prohibits a wife divorcing her husband, in addition to the standard statement against the husband divorcing his wife. Matthew probably omits the saying because he was writing to Jews among whom women did not divorce their husbands; there was no provision for it. Mark, however, writing for the Romans, whose women

could and did initiate divorces, includes it.

Matthew 5:32 says "causes her to commit adultery," instead of "commits adultery" (Matthew 19:9; Luke 16:18), "commits adultery against her" (Mark 10:11).

The plain sense of these combined sayings seems to be this: When anyone divorces a mate for any cause other than their mate being guilty of sexual unfaithfulness, if they then marry someone else, the resulting marriage is actually adultery.

Adultery is, by definition, sexual immorality in which at least one of the parties involved is married to someone else. Thus one "commits adultery against" a mate. Since remarriage following divorce is called adultery, that implies the unlawfully divorced and remarried person is still "rightfully," "in God's sight," or at least in some sense, married to the original spouse to whom God joined him or her.

One frequently hears this view characterized today as "rigid" or "hard-line." It is perhaps significant to note that the apostles had the same reaction when they first heard this word from Jesus.

His disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry."

He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it is given; for there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it."

Some suggest that Jesus is here nullifying, in effect, his previous teaching, or at least the implications of it, by saying that only a few are so made as to be able to live by it, and the rest are all right if they just ignore it. That seems an unlikely response from Jesus to an objection to the difficulty of such a solemn pronouncement.

"He who is able to accept it, let him accept it," is not substantially different from Jesus' often repeated declaration in Revelation, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Everyone needs to hear. Those who refuse to hear do so at their own peril. But it is acknowledged that all will not hear.

Contrary to the thinking of some, marriage is not a necessary state, nor is it even the best state for everyone (I Corinthians 7:32-33). Some imply one is advocating unspeakable cruelty and inhuman punishment to suggest that any past action may require a penitent believer to live a celibate life. There are, however, many conditions, in addition to unscriptural divorces, that call for such a lifestyle. A young man separated from his wife for several years for wartime service or a person whose spouse through accident or illness became unable to function sexually would certainly be expected to exercise self-control and abstain from fornication. It is not necessary to deny that it would be difficult in order to say that, through trust in God, it can be done (Philippians 4:13). It can be done in contentment and peace (Philippians 4:6-12). If it has to be done, it can be done (I

Corinthians 10:13).

(To be continued)

--P.O. Box 1101, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

Small Victories



John Gipson

Seward Park High School is an overcrowded, underfunded, dilapidated public school in the slums of New York's Lower East Side. The kids who attend are a cross section of Seward Park as a whole -- Hispanics, Asians, and a few blacks, from families that are working class at best

and case studies of social dysfunction at worst. Here one is looking at the specters of ghetto life -- poverty, violence, and drugs.

The school building is fifty-eight years old. It is squeezed among stores, a parking lot, and a housing project. It is one block square and six stories tall, unadorned except by wire-mesh window guards. Even at that there are two hundred broken windowpanes staring out at you from their empty sockets. There is a huge hole in the roof. It is here that one boy ran for student government on the slogan, "Are you ashamed to go to Seward?"

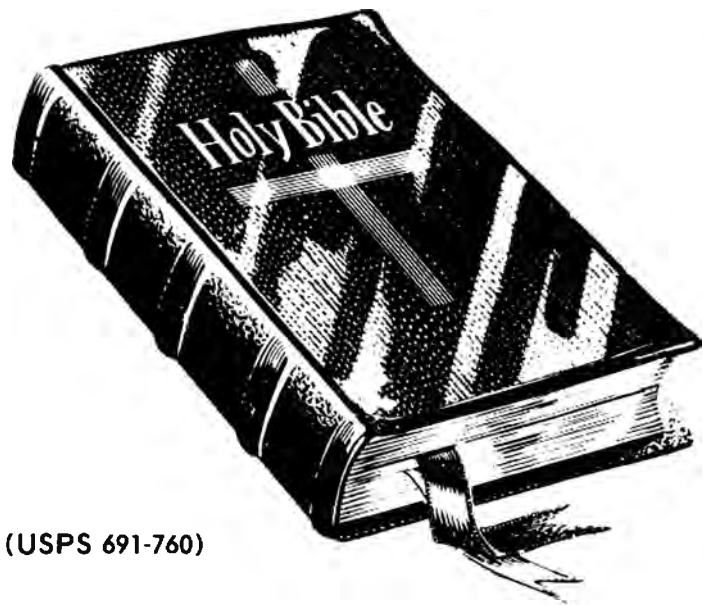
This is the picture Samuel G. Freedman presents in his book *Small Victories*. It is through the eyes of a dedicated English teacher, Jessica Siegel, that we get a glimpse of what goes on inside this school. But before one steps through the door he sees Jessica, age 38, unmarried and childless, as she arrives at the building on her bicycle which she will take to the basement storage room for safe-keeping. Periodically a young drug dealer, someone Seward Park has lost to the streets, will circle the school in a BMW or a Mercedes. "The dealer will drive slowly, less to conduct trade than to impress and recruit." But it is inside where you will find the victories -- victories born of caring, determination, drive and commitment. It is here that you will discover the power of teaching. From this slum school more than ninety percent of its graduates go on to college, trade school, or the military.

Teaching is so powerful that it can overcome almost insurmountable odds. It's stronger than poverty, mightier than drugs, more powerful than peer pressure. And it can work in the most adverse situations.

It's no wonder to me that when Jesus set out on his program of world conquest he told his disciples, "Go teach!"

Teaching works. But there is a price to be paid. Listen to Jessica Siegel: "I understand I'm doing really good work," she says, wiping her eyes, "But I'm sacrificing my life." Of course, Jesus knew that too!

--P.O. Box 228, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

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

Speak forth the

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 27

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NUMBER 36

Weekend Depression Syndrome



Bill Dorriety

Syndrome suffer from "insomnia, binge drinking, overeating and the blues." Some sufferers of WDS have become so seriously affected that they are undergoing regular psychiatric treatment. All because they do not know how to handle a few days off the job.

While the Japanese suffer from WDS, many Americans seem to have a somewhat related malady called Weekend Obsession Syndrome. The slang expression "TGIF" is often the constant theme of anxious workers longing to be free from duties and responsibilities of their work week. It often becomes such a consuming preoccupation that personal productivity is impaired. Then when Friday afternoon finally arrives, they make a mad rush to recreation spots often creating traffic problems and perils to anyone or anything in the way. Quite often this American obsession also results in neglecting one's duty to God, family and/or fellow men.

Both weekend infections serve to frustrate the individual and wield enormous consequences on the lives of others. God's word certainly does not prohibit the exercise of wholesome recreational activities. The Scriptures are firm in admonishing Christians to work. "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Ephesians 4:28). It is necessary to work and provide for one's family. "But if any provide not for his own . . . he hath

A serious infectious plague is spreading like wildfire in Japan, according to Newsweek Magazine (6-24-91). They report that many Japanese workaholics are falling into "deep funks" (depressions) during their days off. Bored with the long two day weekends, victims of Weekend Depression

denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Timothy 5:8). Yet, extremes in occupational and pastime activities often robs a family of precious hours of family togetherness.

The Bible is also quite clear on man's obligation and privilege to worship. "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23, 24). Forsaking the worship assembly is sinful (Hebrews 10:25). The great quest for recreation and work often leaves noticeable empty spaces in the worship assembly.

Those suffering symptoms of either of these weekend infections should ponder the wise words of Solomon, "To everything there is a

season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Every individual has exactly the same amount of time: 24 hours a day, 168 hours a week, 8,736 hours in a year, no more and no less. Balance in the use of that allotted time is a vital contributing factor to the individual's mental, emotional and spiritual health. Proper use of time also enhances the individual's ability to achieve the greatest potential from his endeavors.

When work or recreation hinders one in the worship of God or in providing for his family, it's time to follow the wisdom of God's word. "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:15-17).

--P.O. Box 716, Haleyville, AL 35565.

God's Prescription Of Anxiety



W. A. Holley

What is anxiety? It is "a painful or apprehensive uneasiness of mind usually over an impending or anticipated ill . . . an abnormal and overwhelming sense of apprehension and fear often marked by physiological signs . . ."

We are all human, and as a result, we often become unduly alarmed

because of the various problems which confront us. Are we going to permit these emotional problems to destroy our lives?

The first thing for you to do is to become a Christian. How can one become a Christian? Well, Hebrews 11:6, Luke 13:3-5, Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 6:3-4, reveals God's requirements. Will you read these verses and obey them? The solution to all human problems of an emotional nature starts with one's becoming a child of God.

The solution to all human problems of an emotional nature starts with one's becoming a child of God.


Consider God's prescription for anxiety:

Please, before reading the entire article, give some time to a perusal of the following Scripture references: Matthew 6:24-34; Luke 12:22-34; Romans 8:26-39, and the entire book of Philippians. Now we shall proceed:

"God is my refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof" (Psalm 46:1-3).

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose

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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

"God Said It. I Believe It. That Settles It."



David Wade

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 to have in it.

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 dark place, until the day dawn" (II Peter 2:19).

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.

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 teacheth" (I Corinthians 2:13, 16). "For the prophecy came

God's Prescription Of Anxiety

Continued From Page 1

mind stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3).

"When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him" (Proverbs 16:7).

"Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not away thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of salvation; and uphold me with a willing spirit" (Psalm 51:8-12).

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:28-30).

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man will hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20).

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27; cf. 14:1-6).

"Behold God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: For the Lord Jehovah is my strength and

my song; he also is become my salvation" (Isaiah 12:2).

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow shall be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:33-34).

"In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus . . . I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me . . . But my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ" (Philippians 4:6-9).

"And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

"They that are in health have no need of a physician; but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:31-32).

"Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest

"To Each Man His Work"

[The following quote was written in 1902, author unknown. Please read its powerful message.]

"The Lord has given to every man his work. It is his business to do it and the devil's business to hinder him if he can. So sure as God has given you a work to do, Satan will try to hinder you. He may present other things more promising. He may allure you by worldly prospects. He may assault you with slander, torment you with false accusations, set you to work defending your character. He may employ pious persons to lie about you, editors to assail you, and excellent men to slander you. You may have Pilate and Herod, Ananias and Caiphas all combine against you, and Judas standing by, ready to sell you for thirty pieces of silver. And you may wonder why all these things come upon you. Can you not see that the whole thing is brought about through the effort of the devil to draw you off from your work and hinder your obedience to God?"

Keep about your work. Do not flinch because the lion roars! Do not stop to stone the devil's dogs. Do not fool away your time chasing the devil's rabbits. Do your work; let liars lie, let sectarians quarrel, let editors publish, let the devil do his worst! But see to it that nothing hinders you from fulfilling the work that God has given you . . . He has never bidden you to defend your character, nor has he bidden you to contradict falsehoods about yourself which Satan and his servants may start to peddle. If you do these things, you will do nothing else! You will be at work for yourself and not for the Lord.

Keep about your work. Let your aim be steady as a star. Let the world brawl and bubble. You may be assaulted, wrangled, insulted, slandered, wounded

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Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage

(Part II)



Cecil May, Jr.

B. For All Men, Or Just For Christians?

One current question being asked about this passage is, "Does Matthew 19:9 refer to all men, aliens as well as Christians, or is it applicable only to Christians, to those in the new covenant?"

The content of Matthew 19 itself points toward a universal

application, as the following consideration show:

1. The "whosoever . . ." language of the passage suggests universality, just as it does in "whosoever believes . . ." (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 as a new covenant principle only, but as an original principle that he asserts this word.

3. Jesus states his Matthew 19:9 principle, not just as an original principle, but as an interpretation and application of God's own first marriage word in Genesis 2:24.

4. Jesus is not settling a question of Mosaic law. He contrasts his "I say" with Moses' permission for divorce, rooting his stated will in God's original intent for marriage, prior to Mosaic law.

5. Those who deny the universality of Matthew 19:9 are left with no satisfactory answer to the question: "What is God's law of marriage for those in the world?" God does have a law of marriage for the world, for he charges some in the world with adultery, which is, by definition, a breach of marriage law. If there were no marriage law for the world, there would be serious questions as to how fornication, adultery, homosexuality or any sexual act could be sin.

C. What Is Adultery?

A more recent view is that Matthew 19:9 is the definition of adultery. Adultery is not a sexual act, but to put away one's spouse for reasons other than sexual unfaithfulness and to marry another is adultery. Matthew 5:32 and many passages using *adultery* to describe both Israel's and the church's unfaithfulness to God's covenant is used to show that adultery is covenant breaking, not illicit sexual activity with someone else's spouse.

The practical application of this view is that those who have divorced and remarried unscripturally do not commit adultery by continuing to live with their new mates. They committed adultery when they divorced and remarried. They would commit adultery again if they put away the mates they now have; so they not only may but should continue to live with them. There is, therefore, no such things as unscriptural marriage; anyone, however many times divorced and remarried, and for whatever reason, may continue to live without sin with their present spouse.

The problem with the view is that it simply denies what is and always has been the recognized meaning of *adultery*.

Matthew 5:32 says one who divorces his wife "makes her commit adultery." While such action makes her a covenant breaker, it is argued, it does not make her engage in sexual activity; therefore adultery is covenant breaking, not sex with someone else's spouse. However, commentators and lexicographers are virtually unanimous in maintaining that "causes her to commit adultery" assumes remarriage on her part. That has to be the case, because adultery means adultery.

The word is used figuratively in some contexts. See such Old Testament passages as Jeremiah 3 and Ezekiel 16.

The figurative usage in such contexts as these depends upon the literal meaning being under-

stood. God considered himself married to Israel. That is the stated basis of Jeremiah and Ezekiel 16. Such language as "on every high mountain and under every green tree . . . (she has) played the harlot" (Jeremiah 3:6), carries on the same figure, though "harlot" is *fornicator* rather than *adulterer*. Information gleaned from the Ugaritic texts concerning the Canaanite fertility cults suggest that there may be literalness as well as figure in such statements. Pillars and trees on mountains were symbols of the fertility gods and goddesses, and sexual activity with the priests and priestesses of the cult ("cult prostitutes") was part of the religious ritual.

In the New Testament, Christ is the bridegroom and the Church is his bride. To turn to other gods, or to give ultimate allegiance to Mammon or the world, is, therefore, "adultery." "Adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?" (James 4:4).

It is a serious error to make the figurative meaning normative for literal usage. It flies in the face of millenniums of linguistic study and scholarship to deny that the primary meaning of *adultery* is illicit sexual activity with someone other than one's lawful, God-joined mate.

The scribes and Pharisees accused a woman they brought to Jesus saying, "This woman was caught in adultery, in the very act," were they saying they had caught her in the very act of signing divorce papers?

D. "Living In Adultery?"

I find myself unimpressed with either side of the argument that centers on whether or not the expression "living in adultery" or an approximate equivalent can be found in Scripture. People "live" or "walk" in any particular sin when they continually commit it, whether or not either expression can be found linked verbally in Scripture to that word.

Matthew 19:9 tells me that, if I divorce my wife for any reason other than sexual unfaithfulness on her part, and marry someone else, the union I form with that other person is adultery. As long as I maintain that union, I commit adultery.

"But Jesus calls it 'marriage,' someone says. 'He said, and 'marry' another."

Yes, but Jesus also calls it "adultery," and that was his last word on the subject.

I Corinthians 7

Some believe that I Corinthians 7 applies Matthew 19:9 to Christians only, and thus leaves divorced non-Christians free to remarry, or to remain married to second or subsequent mates, even if their former mates were not put away for sexual immorality.

A. How I Corinthians 7 Is Believed To Affect The Application Of Matthew 19

The argument goes something like this:

I Corinthians 7 deals with several different classes of people: "To the unmarried and to the widows" (verse 8); "to the married" (verse 10); "to

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"To Each Man His Work"

Continued From Page 2

and rejected; you may be abused by foes, forsaken by friends, despised and rejected of men -- but see to it with steadfast determination, with unfaltering zeal, that you pursue the great purpose of your life and the object of your being, until at last you can say, 'I have finished the work which You gave me to do.'"

--Via Bulletin, Betta View Hills Church of Christ, P.O. Box 3323, Oxford, AL 36203.

God's Prescription Of Anxiety

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prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (III John 2).

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

"Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17, cf. John 3:3-5; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; Romans 6:3-4; I Peter 3:20-21).

"Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation" (I Peter 2:1-2).

"Casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you" (I Peter 5:7).

Dear Readers, these words can aid you in finding your way through this rough and tough world.

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

Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage

(Part II)

Continued From Page 3

the rest" (verse 12). "Unmarried" and "married" would seem to include everyone, would they not? So who are "the rest"?

The verses following verse 12 show clearly that "the rest" are those in mixed marriages, where one mate is a believer but 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, ye not I, but the Lord, . . ." Then, "to the rest," he says, "I, not the Lord, say." This distinction, between what "the Lord" says, and what "I, not the Lord," say, is the key to the argument.

What "the Lord says" must be a reference to what Christ had said on this subject in his personal ministry, and that is Matthew 19:9. Paul, therefore, is paraphrasing Matthew 19:9 in I Corinthians 7:10. I Corinthians 7:10 has been shown to refer only to Christians married to each other (those in mixed marriages being, "the rest," to whom the instructions of I Corinthians 12-16 apply). Therefore, since I Corinthians 7:10 equals Matthew 19:9, Matthew 19:9 refers only to Christians.

One cannot have a universal law (I Corinthians 7:10, Matthew 19:9) and have "the rest" to whom the "universal" does not apply. That would be logically contradictory. Therefore the marriage law of Matthew 19:9 is not universal, but is 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 for the position.)

It has already been noted that this position presents us with difficulties when harmonizing it with Matthew, since Matthew 19 points to a universal application for verse 9. I believe it can also be shown, from the text of I Corinthians 7, that "I command, yet not I, but the Lord," is not a reference to what Jesus said in Matthew 19:9, nor to anything he said in his personal ministry.

B. "I command, yet not I, but the Lord."

When Paul says, "I command, yet not I but the Lord," he is referring to the Lord's authority as it lies behind his apostolic authority. This meaning for such a statement is found in the context of this very letter: "If any man thinks himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord" (I Corinthians 14:37). 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, which is the authority of the Lord.

B. "I, not the Lord, say."

Paul says "I say" or "I speak" (in contrast to "the Lord says") a number of times in I Corinthians 7.

But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment (verse 6).

But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It

is good for them to remain unmarried, even as I am (verse 8).

But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her . . . (verse 12).

Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment as one whom the Lord in his mercy has made trustworthy. I suppose, therefore, that this is good for the present distress -- that it is good for a man to remain as he is . . . Such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you. But this I say, brethren, the time is short . . . But I want you to be without care . . . (verses 25-34).

And this I say for your own profit, not that I would put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction (verse 35).

But she is happier if she remains as she is, according to my judgment -- and I think I also have the spirit of God (verse 40).

Through the centuries some have suggested that Paul was disavowing inspiration in those passages.

There are a number of reasons why that is not a satisfactory explanation. 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, "I say" points to "permission," or "judgment," or "advice," in contrast to "command."

Verse 6 says, "I say this as a concession (permission, KJV), not as a 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 wording of the verse itself that it fits the category I am suggesting.

Verse 8 says, "But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am," that is, unmarried. But note, "it is good, not, it is commanded, or required, or necessary. He goes on to specify it is not, in fact, a command, for he says, "But if they cannot exercise self control, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn with passion."

Verse 25 says, "Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord; yet I give judgment as one whom the Lord in his mercy has made trustworthy." He does not just mean by "I have no commandment from the Lord," "The Lord has not spoken on this during his personal ministry." He is declaring that, as an inspired apostle, he has no commandment to bind upon the virgins. He makes that clear by saying further, "And if a virgin marries, she has not sinned" (verse 28).

The contrast is also not between which part of what he is writing is inspired and which part is not. It is rather between what is command, and

therefore bound, and what is judgment or advice, and therefore not bound. It is Paul's inspired judgment that, because of 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 time of distress. Under other circumstances, he declares, "Forbidding to marry" is a "doctrine of demons" (I Timothy 4:1-3).

(To be continued).

--P.O. Box 1101, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

"Christ, The Head"



Bobby Key

Some years back millions mourned the death of Pope Pius XII. Press dispatches told of many special masses conducted throughout the world. Millions were in sorrow because their leader had died. Pope John XXIII was appointed to take his place. He too died. Others popes were

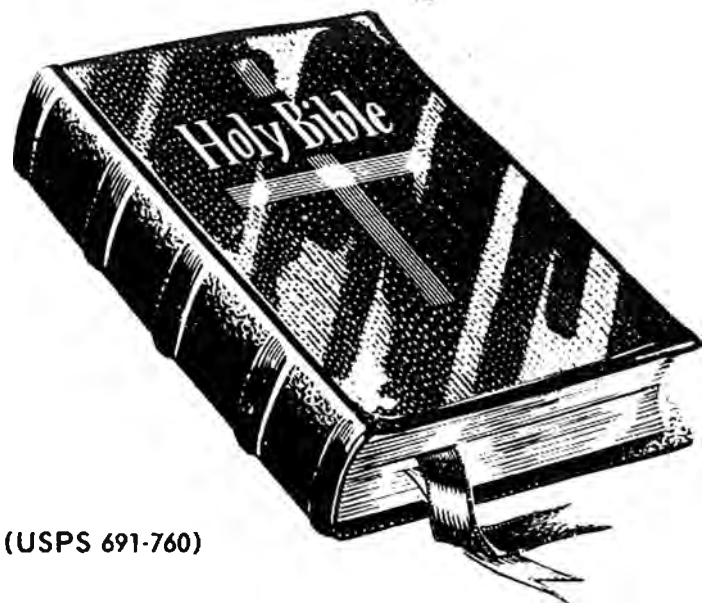
appointed, they were also taken by death. The current pope, John Paul II will die. The Roman Catholic Church has had over 260 different heads. Their head changes every few years! How sad to belong to a church whose head is subject to death.

Has it occurred to you that you can belong to a church that has only one head? The head of Christ's church is Christ Himself (Ephesians 1:22). Christ said of himself, "I am he that liveth and was dead: and behold, I am alive forever. Amen: and have the keys of hell and of death." (Revelation 1:18). Yes, Christ is the head of His church. He is not subject to death. The Bible is as silent as the tomb regarding Christ having selected someone to represent His church on earth. Jesus Christ has no vicar or personal representative to direct His church. Christ, as head of the church, has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18-20). He has never given any of this authority to a pope!

The church of Christ has no earthly headquarters, but has a very simple congregational government composed of elders and deacons (Acts 14:23; Philippians 1:1). since Christ has all authority, no man or set of men has any right to make laws to govern the body of Christ. As members of His body, we are taught to speak the same thing. This can be done only when we "speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11).

You need be neither Catholic nor Protestant. It is enough to be Christian (Acts 26:28). Why not obey the gospel of Christ and be added to the church with one head who is alive forevermore?

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



(USPS 691-760)

Word of Truth

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

Speak forth the

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 27

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Steps In The Right Direction



W. A. Holley

"My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; for they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a wayward mouth,

and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look straight before thee. Make level the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil" (Proverbs 4:20-27, ASV).

Solomon was very interested in the general welfare of his son. Insofar as we know Solomon had but one son, Rehoboam, who seemed to have lacked the gift of common sense (I Kings 14:21, ff; II Chronicles 10:1-11).

Solomon talked a good religion but he did not practice it (Nehemiah 13:23-26; I Kings 11:1-13). It is well for parents to offer sound advice, but is far better for them to put their advice in action. Listen to Paul, who writes, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity" (I Timothy 4:12, ASV). Fathers and mothers, one good example is worth a thousand arguments.

The power of a good example can be demonstrated: One man who lived six miles from the house of worship, complained to the preacher of the distance he had to go to attend worship. "Never mind," said the preacher, "remember every Lord's day you have the privilege of preaching a sermon six miles long -- you preach the gospel to all the people you pass."

Moreover, one can be wrong even when he is right. How could such be? A bad attitude or a mean spirit makes one wrong, even if he should be speaking the truth. Truth spoken in anger does not excuse, does not forgive the sins of anger

(Ephesians 4:15, 25-32).

It is right to pray, but when one prays to be heard of men it becomes sinful; it is right to give alms, but when one gives to be seen of men, such alms giving becomes a great sin before God (Matthew 6:1-8).

One man who lived six miles from the house of worship, complained to the preacher of the distance he had to go to attend worship. "Never mind," said the preacher, "remember every Lord's day you have the privilege of preaching a sermon six miles long -- you preach the gospel to all the people you pass."

Just as there are wrong ways of doing things, there are also right ways. We shall notice some right steps in the right direction:

(1) A step in the right direction is the abandonment of human creeds, the doctrines and commandments of men, the human manuals and confessions of faiths (Mark 7:6-13; Matthew 15:1-9). To what book shall we turn? Let all honest and sincere souls embrace the Holy Bible unreservedly. The Bible is God's rule or standard of judgment (Galatians 6:16; Philippians 3:15-16). "The scripture cannot be broken," (John 10:35), it will stand when the world is on fire (Matthew 24:35), and by it we shall be judged at the last day (John 12:48). Believe it, obey its commands, live faithfully the Christian life, and heaven will be your eternal home (Hebrews 11:6; Luke 13:3, 5; Matthew 10:32-33; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; Revelation 2:10). No man has ever made a mistake by following the Bible!!

(2) Another step in the right direction is seeking to share the gospel of Christ with others (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). If you want the world changed, the only power that can change it is the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16-17). We can fight all the "Persian Gulf Wars" we want to, but as long as people remain sinners we have not really accomplished anything. You see, man needs to become a new man (John 3:3-5). He needs to "put off the old man and put on the new man" (Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:9). The sinner can become "a new creature" in Christ when he hears the word of God (II Timothy 4:1-3), repents of his sins (II Peter 3:9), confesses Jesus' worthy name before men (Acts 8:37), and is baptized in water for the remission of sins (Acts 10:47-48; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; I Peter 3:20-21; II Corinthians 5:17).

(3) Another step in the right direction is that of accepting duty and responsibility. Christians have talents for which they are responsible for their proper use (Matthew 25:14-30). Buried talents can result in being cast into hell-fire. The man who buried his talent was called a "wicked and slothful servant," even though he was not an adulterer or a murderer, or the like. Dear Reader, do you not feel your responsibility to labor for the Lord? Hear Jesus, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he shall give it you" (John 15:16).

What is responsibility? Ability plus opportunity equals responsibility. What about your responsibility for the success of your own life? for the family? for the church? for good moral examples? Aids, drunkenness, divorce, divisions, drug abuse, child and adult abuse are all the result of a breakdown in personal responsibility (Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:11-12; Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:8). Just think how much our world could be improved if each person accepted his own responsibility!! According to Jesus Christ we are

Continued On Page 2

Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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-Acts 26:25

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Steps In The Right Direction

Continued From Page 1

not due any special praise for doing the right things, for "We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10). Let us solve the ethical problems of our lives, if we wish to travel in the right direction (II Corinthians 8:21; I Peter 4:15-16).

(4) Steps in the right direction involve the Lord's day assembly (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 10:24-26; Revelation 1:10). Here in Walker County there are many so-called Christians who never attend the Lord's services. One person when asked if he were a member of the church, said, "Yes, but I'm not working at it very much." Think of the backsliders known to you. It is a great sin to forsake the Lord's day assembly!! You will be doing your family, your friends and neighbors, and yourself a great service, if you will but attend the Lord's day services.

These words are written for those honest and sincere souls who truly want to improve their lives.
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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

The Power Of Diligence



David Wade

What is diligence? What does the Bible say about diligence, and how may I acquire it?

Diligence is defined as "steady attention and effort, as to one's occupation, application, industry" - Roget's Thesaurus.

The story of the Hare and the Tortoise is a familiar illustration of diligence. While the hare raced ahead, then slept before the finish, the tortoise slowly, but steadily persevered to the goal. His response was, "Plodding wins the race."

The moral is, victory does not always come to the fastest and most talented, but rather to the most diligent. "The slothful man does not roast what he took in hunting, but diligence is a man's precious possession" (Proverbs 12:27 NKJV).

The Bible speaks of business diligence. "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean (unknown, NKJV) men" (Proverbs 22:29). "Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and

look well to thy herds" (Proverbs 27:23). "Not slothful in business (not lagging in diligence, NKJV)" (Romans 12:11).

The Bible speaks of domestic diligence. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?" (Proverbs 6:6-9). "She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household . . . She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness" (Proverbs 31:15, 27). "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than our infidel" (I Timothy 5:8).

Also, the Bible speaks of spiritual diligence. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (II Peter 1:10). "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 3:14).

The Bible urges all to practice diligence. In plain terms that means to "bite off more than you can chew, and chew it, plan to do more than you can do, and do it." When you become a diligent person, you will accomplish more than you ever dreamed possible.

Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage

Part III



Cecil May, Jr.

different question.

Matthew 19:9 is a response to a question about divorce: what "cause" makes it lawful? In Jesus' response, he states the conditions under which remarriage with another may take place following

C. First Corinthians 7:10-11 Not Same Instruction As Matthew 19:9.

The words of I Corinthians 7:10-11, which are said to be Paul's restatement of Matthew 19:9, are not the same as Matthew 19:9. It is not just a different wording of the same idea. It is an answer to an altogether

a divorce.

I Corinthians 7:10-11 emphasizes that husband and wife should not separate: "A wife is not to depart from her husband . . . And a husband is not to divorce his wife."

The question in Matthew 19 is, "Is it lawful to divorce for just any reason?" The answer is, "Only one who puts away his wife for sexual immorality may remarry" (verse 3, 9). The question in I Corinthians 7 is, "Is it not true that, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman," or, in effect, "If one is married, is it all right to stay 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 the command, "Don't depart; don't put

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Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage

Part III

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away."

It is worthy of note that the word "put away" here is not the word used for "divorce" in Matthew 19:9. Remarriage after divorce is not the question under discussion here. Do not separate. Stay together. This is the command of the passage.

D. Summary.

There are three reasons, then, why Matthew 19:9 is not the word spoken in I Corinthians 7:10-11 to "the married" (Christians).

(1) "I command, yet not I but the Lord," on comparison with I Corinthians 14:37 is seen to more likely refer to a command given by Paul as an inspired apostle than to a quotation from Jesus' personal ministry.

(2) "I, not the Lord, say," and similar expressions throughout the chapter, are seen by their usage to be advice or judgment in contrast to command, rather than Paul's words in contrast to Jesus' words in the flesh.

(3) I Corinthians 7:10-11 is not the same command as Matthew 19:9.

The 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.

"Not Under Bondage"

"But if the unbeliever depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases" (I Corinthians 7:15).

Another point under current discussion, suggesting a limitation or amending of Matthew 19:9 by I Corinthians 7, is whether this verse (7:15) 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 "I, not the Lord, say" and similar expressions mean Paul is giving inspired advice or judgment, as contrasted with command, how does that apply to the verses that follow verse 12; what implications does this have for their application?

A: The argument.

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, "whoever believes" 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."

B. The Response.

Note two things in response to this: (1) The language of Matthew 19:9 strongly mitigates against it. (2) To say it 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, "Whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits 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 you repent, you will 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 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 these verses are responding to is, "Shouldn't everyone be celibate?" That is the force of the expression, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman." This statement comes from "the things of which you wrote to me" (I Corinthians 7:1). It seems obvious, from what Paul says in the rest of the chapter, that the expression is the Corinthians' statement; not Paul. Paul responds to the statement throughout the rest of the chapter, with a kind of, "Yes, but . . ."

The same kind of dialogue with the Corinthians can be seen in I Corinthians 6 where, in response to the Corinthians' statement, "All things are lawful for me," Paul responds with two "Yes, but" answers: "But all things are not helpful," and, "But I will not be brought under the power of any" (I Corinthians 6:12).

The thrust of the first part of the chapter is an affirmation of sex, for those already married, as approved and blessed of God, and a commandment for those already married not to divorce. These strong affirmations make it highly unlikely that the beginning expression, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman," is Paul's statement. Later in the chapter he acknowledges that because of "a present distress" he "supposed" it was good for the unmarried to remain so, and noted some advantages of doing so, but even then he affirms that marriage is approved of God: "But even if you do marry, you have not sinned" (I Corinthians 7:28).

So, Paul has commanded married Christians, "Do not separate." He has bound this on them as a "command" of "the Lord." Then, in verse 12, he says, "To the rest (which is clearly, from the instructions given them, mixed marriages) I, not the Lord, say." If our previous observations regarding this expression are correct, we would expect to find following it, a "concession," a relaxing, perhaps in some different 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 concession) if your unbelieving mate refuses to stay, you are not bound to stay together, as the Lord has bound on the married." "Let him depart." The brother or sister is "not under bondage" to stay with the unbelieving mate if he or she is determined to leave.

That this is the correct understanding 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" which is often used to describe the marriage bond. "The woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he lives" (Romans 7:2); "Art you bound to a wife?" (I Corinthians 7:27); "The wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives" (I Corinthians 7:39). The word translated "bondage" in I Corinthians 7:15 is not the word for "bound" or "bondage" in those passages; not is the word for "bondage" 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 live together, the bondage he has just placed on "the married."

C. Summary

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, is binding on all: Upon the unmarried and the widows, regarding whom they may marry; upon the married, if they do divorce and remarry; and upon the rest, if they are deserted.

I Corinthians 7 is responding to questions regarding the Corinthians' 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.

(To be continued).

--P.O. Box 1101, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

Affair; A Fling; Affliction

Gary Hundley

In the past three months our lives have been rocked. The marriages of four of our best friends have disintegrated. In three of the four cases there was another woman involved. All four couples were faithful and devoted to the Lord and to their families for many years. They had come from solid Christian backgrounds where their parents had been leaders in the church. As a matter of fact, all of these families were involved in church leadership in some capacity. So . . . what happened?

Unfortunately, this story is all too often repeated in today's world. As the stigma of divorce has diminished the media has glamorized the image of unfaithfulness. We have been led to believe that everyone is involved in it and that only a few uninformed religious fanatics see anything wrong with it. We have even developed new terminology to describe it. We call it a "fling" or an "affair." The Bible calls it "adultery" and labels it "sin." Sexual unfaithfulness is an unspeakable act of betrayal. It disparages the love and trust one's partner has invested in his or her mate and it is a violation of the covenant that we made on our wedding day.

As the stigma of divorce has diminished the media has glamorized the image of unfaithfulness. We have been led to believe that everyone is involved in it and that only a few uninformed religious fanatics see anything wrong with it.

How does it happen? It usually begins with discontent with one's mate. Perhaps you feel your husband or wife isn't meeting your emotional or physical needs. Someone enters your life at work or in your social circle who is willing to listen and be sympathetic. You grow tired of fighting the battles at home and long for escape. You're seeking affirmation, and if you're over forty, you want to prove that you haven't lost your youth. I'm amazed at how many men in the Bible failed in the second half of life. Then comes rationalization and compromise. "In time of war," writes Boake Carter, "the first casualty is truth." That's when a person becomes vulnerable to temptation and failure.

Randy Alcorn recently wrote an article for Leadership Magazine entitled "Strategies to Keep from Falling." In it he gives some practical questions we can ask ourselves to determine if we are about to compromise. (1.) Do I look forward in a special way to my appointments with this person? (2.) Do I seek to meet with her away from the office in a more casual environment? (3.) Do I prefer that my co-workers not know I'm meeting with her again?

If you find yourself today in a position of moral vulnerability the biblical modus operandi is to RUN! Paul says, "Flee from sexual immorality" (I Corinthians 6:18).

The lure of adultery is that another person will be able to meet my needs and gratify my desires. The lie is that no one will be hurt. The truth is that lives and families are being shattered every day because we compromise our moral character and

commitment. If you find yourself today in a position of moral vulnerability the biblical modus operandi is to RUN! Paul says "Flee from sexual immorality" (I Corinthians 6:18). If you are now involved with someone, break that relationship today and seek the help of someone you trust. You will probably need the help of a third party who will love and support you and give spiritual encouragement. Most of all, you need to repent and seek God's help. You can recover! We need to make a vow like Job's "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl" (Job 31:1).

--Via Newsletter, P.O. Box 371, Amory0, MS 38821.

I Knew You'd Be Coming!



W. T. Allison

leaving two bewildered, emotionally scarred children in its wake. The father gained custody and the mother went on her own way, doing her own thing.

The children loved their mother. Strange thing about love -- it's so often blind to the faults of those we love. Months went by and the mother longed to see her children. She mustered up the courage to visit. Leaving her car at the curb, she walked to the front door only to find no one at home. But, posted on the door was a note from the youngest of her two boys, the seven-year-old. It

This is a true story. I know personally the parties involved. Love dwindled, unhappiness and dissatisfaction grew, daily fussing and fighting characterized the relationship of the husband and wife, and, ultimately, a divorce wrecked the home,

read, "Mother, I'm at the park. Please come to the park." She hurriedly made her way to the park, and there, sure enough, was the little fellow. After the preliminary hugs and kisses, the mother, still amazed by the note, said, "Honey, how did you know I was coming to see you today?"

"Oh, I didn't," he answered.

"But, what made you put the note on the door if you didn't know I was coming?"

In response, the loved-starved little one said, "I put a note on the door every day, every time I leave 'cause I knew you'd be coming to see me."

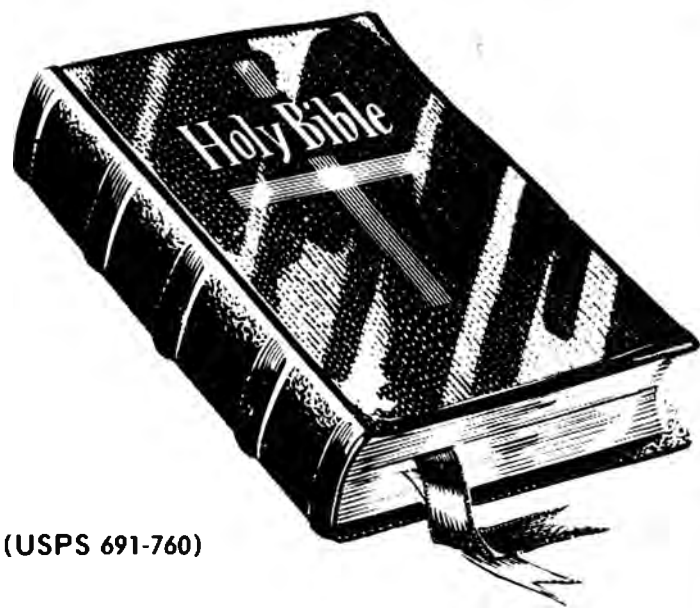
"I knew you'd be coming to see me!" I wonder if there are not those OUT THERE, life's rejects, those hurt by cruel circumstance, those whose life seems to be hopelessly going nowhere, those groping for some spiritual meaning in their lives, who are daily placing a note on their door which reads, "I'm not at home just now, but please -- PLEASE -- come find me!"

--1901 Schillinger Road, Mobile, AL 36695.

10 Reasons I Never Wash

1. My parents always made me wash as a child.
2. People who wash are hypocrites; they think they are cleaner than other people.
3. There are so many different kinds of soap, I could never decide which one was right.
4. I used to wash, but it got so boring I stopped.
5. I still wash on special occasions; like Christmas and Easter.
6. None of my friends wash.
7. I'm still young -- when I get older and need it more I might decide to wash.
8. People who make soap are only interested in your money.
9. I'm so busy I just can't find the time to wash.

Sounds ridiculous doesn't it? Think how ridiculous these same excuses sound to Jesus when one uses them to show why one cannot attend services!



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

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

forth the
Acts 26:25

VOLUME 27

SEPTEMBER 20, 1991

NUMBER 38

America: Is It A Christian Or Idolatrous Nation?



Cecil Corkren

Our beloved homeland is regarded as a Christian nation. In order to ascertain if we are Christian or idolatrous we need to know where our greatest interest lies. In one word, are we covetous? We have become the most materialistic nation in the history of man. We covet more and more. Solomon said, "He coveteth greedily all the day long" (Proverbs 21:26). Paul declares, "Covetousness . . . is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5). Strangely, we as a professed Christian nation ignore some of the plainest teaching of Jesus, such as: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth" . . . "Seek ye first the kingdom of God" . . . "Man shall not live by bread alone." In fact, seventeen of His thirty six parables deal with such things as property, stewardship and covetousness. Yet, we can clearly see that most Americans are the most covetous of all people. Most of us are more concerned with his or her material wealth than the true religion of Jesus Christ.

In a recent poll it showed that Americans overwhelmingly said they believed in God. Many may not have a very clear image of Him, but they believe He is there, and that He is involved in the events of this world. How can a person be covetous and believe in God? The fact is that material possessions is his or her religion. They put comforts above Christ, and gain above God. How can we fail to comprehend the teaching of God's word concerning the sin of covetousness? So-called Christian people look with horror upon such sins as fornication, murder and drunkenness, and yet the same New Testament passages which

condemn these sins almost invariably list covetousness also (Romans 1:29-31; I Corinthians 5:9-10; Galatians 5:19-22; Ephesians 5:5).

So-called Christian people look with horror upon such sins as fornication, murder and drunkenness, and yet the same New Testament passages which condemn these sins almost invariably list covetousness also.

"He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase" (Ecclesiastes 5:10). The tragedy is we think riches are an indication of being approved by God. Instead of possessing our possessions, our possessions seem to possess us. The popular and false concept in the minds of many Americans is that of a financial utopia where all are well-to-do. Solomon said, "The eyes of man are never

satisfied" (Proverbs 27:20). So selfishness could very well be one of the greatest ills of our society. We will miss our goal heaven; if we are idolatrous; "For this ye know that no . . . covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Ephesians 5:5). To be an idolater we covet what belongs to another. The tenth of the Ten Commandments says, "Thou shall not covet" (Exodus 20:17; Deuteronomy 5:21). Christians are not to even fellowship or, "to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no not to eat" (I Corinthians 5:11).

Usually the first thing that comes to mind when we think of idolatry, we think of idol worship. The American Dream may very well be "to have two cars in the garage, and two chickens in the pot." "Let your life be without covetousness' and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:5-6).

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

What Does The Bible Say?

Hilton Royster

The word "God" is from the Hebrew word "Elohim," which is the plural of the word "El." Most scholars believe the word comes from a term meaning lasting, powerful, and enduring; and that it is a reference to the limitless, all-powerful and eternal Creator of the universe. The word occurs fifty-seven times in the singular, and about three thousand times in the plural in the Old Testament.

Our English word "God" means "deity," and is

the translation of the Greek "theos." It is used, through the New Testament, to denote the divine nature or essence possessed by the Godhead -- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In numerous instances, it is used in a figure or speech where a part is put for the whole, or the whole for a part. In such instances one of the members of the Godhead is called "God." In the scripture, the three persons

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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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What Does The Bible Say?

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of the Godhead are thus designated in the following instances: (1) The Father: "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:18). When someone is the "son," that of which he is the son is naturally the father. (2) The Son: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Later that Word became flesh and dwelt among us. That which became flesh is the Christ, the Son of God. (3) The Holy Spirit: "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? . . . Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:3-4). Notice, Peter told Ananias he had lied to the Holy Spirit, one divine nature or essence; but, there are three distinct persons or personalities possessing this nature. There is but one God yet three persons in the godhead. It is, hence, entirely correct to refer to the personalities of the godhead as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

The appearance of the plural form of God in Genesis 1:1, "Elohim", and the use of the plural pronouns in reference to God (Genesis 1:1, 26), has long been regarded by scholars of the scriptures as an indirect allusion to the three persons comprising the Godhead. Notice Genesis 1:26, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:" The scripture says, "let US." "Us" is a plural pronoun meaning, more than one. "After our likeness." "Our" is another plural pronoun meaning more than one. The scriptures are not saying that there are three different Deities. There is but one divine nature, essence or Deity; but there are three distinct persons or personalities possessing this nature; and, therefore, three persons in the Godhead. - church of Christ, 7th and College, Mayfield, KY 42066.



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Smoking Kills



David Wade

The headline reads, "Survey: Even researchers receiving tobacco money readily admit smoking kills" [Washington (AP) Daily Mountain Eagle, Thursday, June 27, 1991, B5]. The article states that a survey of scientists who get research money from the tobacco industry shows that most of those responding believe cigarette smoking causes serious and often fatal diseases.

The report appeared in the American Journal of Public Health, and the information was gathered from 77 of the 166 researchers who responded to the survey. According to the report, 94 percent agreed that even second hand smoke is harmful to non-smokers. Also, 91 percent agreed that most lung cancer deaths are caused by smoking.

Brethren, most of us have known for a long time that tobacco products are very harmful to one's health. And in view of this research, the disputers of fact should be silenced. And yet, some in the Lord's church still maintain by their actions that it is perfectly permissible for Christians to smoke. To some, it is such a controversial subject that they refuse to speak out against it. K. Michael Cummings, a senior research scientist at Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, New York, says, "The industry says that there is controversy about smoking and disease, and it's our position that saying there's controversy is the same as saying there's controversy over the shape of the earth." Cummings, who led the study with others at his cancer institute and Ronald Davis of the federal government's Office on Smoking and Health, said the survey shows the tobacco industry "does not accept the opinions even of scientists whose research it funds."

While the church in many quarters has been negligent to discourage smoking among its members, much of society, apart from the church has moved to ban smoking in public places. Many places of business now prohibit smoking of their customers and employees who are on the job. More and more hospitals are banning smoking. Some airlines and public transportation systems now ban smoking. These

restrictions are certainly welcomed by those who do not want to breathe second hand smoke and to have their hair and clothing inundated with the foul odor.

Smoking is one of the most antisocial habits of our society. The smoker thinks he has the right to cause everyone around him to smell like he does. The smoker thinks he has the right to pass on to others a measure of the health risk he is taking.

In addition, smoking is one of the most time-wasting habits in our society. First, there is time wasted when one must "take a break" and smoke. Second, the time of employment needed to pay for the habit is wasted. Third, the time smoking literally takes from one's life span is a waste of tragic proportions. Some have conjectured the average loss of one minute of lifespan per cigarette, others, one hour loss of life-span per pack. Even conservative estimates can add up to a big minus of years in one's lifespan! What a waste! Time is the stuff life is made of! And what about eternity? Will God justify such harm and waste? "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:19-20). "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:7-8).

Christian Olympics



W. A. Holley

"Know ye not that they that run in a race (race course) run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run; that ye may attain. And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, as not uncertainly: so fight I, not as beating the air: but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself

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Christian Olympics

Continued From Page 2

should be rejected (I Corinthians 9:24-27, ASV).

The apostle Paul has in mind the Olympic Games, which were very popular in Paul's day. These contests, with some interruptions, have been held for centuries, and are still popular, even today.

What are some special lessons that we can learn from various mentions of these games in the Scriptures?

(1) To run in the Christian Olympics one must first qualify. All are called, but few are chosen (Matthew 20:16; 22:14). All are invited to run in this great race, but only those who hear the gospel (John 6:44-45), believe that Jesus is the Son of God (Hebrews 11:6), repent of all sin (Acts 17:30-31; II Peter 3:9), confess the Lord's worthy name (Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 8:37), and are baptized in water for remission of sins can enter this noble race (Acts 2:36-38; 10:47-48; Romans 6:3-4; I Peter 3:20-21). It is not enough to enter the race, one must finish this race (Luke 14:25-34).

(2) Under the rules of the Olympic Games one was required to run inside the arena. One might run even faster outside the arena, but one could never win. Jesus wants labors to work in his vineyard, not in Satan's vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16). The Lord's arena for the Christian is in Christ, or His church, or His kingdom (Matthew 16:18-19). Salvation is in Christ, in His church or kingdom (II Timothy 2:10; Ephesians 5:23-33; Acts 20:28). It is erroneous for one to contend that the church established by the Lord Jesus Christ is a non-essential!! The same act that puts one into Christ also puts one into the church (Galatians 3:26-27; I Corinthians 12:13, 20, 27).

(3) In Christian Olympics all can be winners. Unlike the Grecian Games, where there could be but one winner, per contest. Jesus urged: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30). Again, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take of the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). Salvation is conditional, and all who meet God's conditions can be saved (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:38).

(4) In order to win one must remove all hindrances. "Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race, that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and hath set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2, ASV). If one is burdened down with drunkenness, adultery, fornication, alcohol and drug abuse, negligence, *et al.* . . . he is too encumbered to enter heaven (Matthew 7:13-14). The Christian runner must run with patience (steadfastness), if he

wishes to become a winner. Galatians 5:19-21 and I Corinthians 6:-11, are scripture selections which need to be perused.

(5) Christian runners must spend much time in training exercises. One's senses must be exercised so as to discern good and evil (Hebrews 5:14). ". . . Bodily exercise is profitable for a little (time); but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now in, and of that which is to come" (I Timothy 4:8).

Verily, this spiritual exercise is accomplished through a program of Bible reading, prayer, seeking to teach others, faithful church attendance, and faithfulness as exhibited through daily activities (Luke 9:23; Acts 2:43-47).

(6) The element of time is involved. Where Christianity is concerned, there are no vacations and no retirements. The Lord Jesus demands a lifetime of service (John 9:4; 12:9; 12:35-36). Do the very best you can do, where you are, with whatever talents you have, and for as long as you shall live on this earth. It is "high time" we became busy in the Master's service . . . we have no time to waste (Romans 13:11-14; James 5:8; I Peter 5:5-

11).

(7) All who run in Christian Olympics run by the same rules. God does not one set of rules for the Russians but another set of rules for the Americans!! God has but one gospel for all nations of the earth (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Romans 1:16-17). ". . . By that same rule let us walk" (Philippians 3:16). "And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be unto them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16). Galatians 2:2, shows that it is possible for one to run in vain. With God there is no discrimination (Acts 10:34-35).

(8) In those Grecian Games of so long ago, the contestants were striving for a perishable crown of flowers, but Christians are striving for an imperishable crown. ". . . When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I Peter 5:4). Paul talks of a crown which he expects to receive at the Lord's coming (II Timothy 4:6-8). Later Jesus promises a crown of life to those who are faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10). We urge all our readers to believe and obey the Lord's truth today.

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

Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage (Part IV)



Cecil May, Jr.

Some Practical Considerations

A. Evangelizing the Unscripturally Remarried.

The gospel still has power to convert, and Christians are still commanded to evangelize.

It will not do to say, "He's living with his second wife. There's no

point in trying to teach him;" or, "As we studied, I learned they were divorced and remarried; so I didn't see any point in continuing." Certainly, we should not close our eyes to the difficulties of such situations, but neither should we deny the power of the gospel to touch the hearts of those in sin, even when it involves their marriage. The gospel is still able to bring about faith, repentance and salvation.

To write off the divorced as not even worth preaching to is too close to the Pharisee's attitude toward publicans and sinners (Luke 5:29-30). Our attitude must be our Lord's, "Those who are well do not need a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:31-32).

Neither will it do to pretend there is no problem. Someone said, "We are required to confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God; not that we've only been married once. When someone wants to be baptized, the Bible response is 'If you believe with all your heart, you may,' not, 'that is, if you're not

divorced and remarried."

There is truth in these assertions, but not if they are meant to imply that marital status at baptism is never of concern to the evangelist. One who said, "I know drunkenness is wrong, but I plan to continue to get drunk whenever I feel like it," demonstrates that he is not ready for baptism. The Bible says "Repent, and be baptized" (Acts 2:38). So also, persons who refuse to extricate themselves from sexual relationships they know to be sinful are not ready for baptism. It is impossible to scripturally baptize a person who refuses to repent, just as it is one who boasts of unbelief.

This does not mean that one must be fully taught regarding every possible sin or error before baptism. Repentance before baptism is a commitment to follow the Lord wherever he says go, but it cannot involve knowing everything we may ultimately be called upon to turn away from. However, it certainly does involve a commitment to forsake *every* sin known about at the time.

To evangelize is to preach Christ, the love of God, and the possibility of forgiveness. But we must also preach faith, which means acceptance of God's way as best, and repentance, which involves forsaking every relationship understood to be sinful. For the same reasons that we teach polygamists in Africa not to continue to live with many wives, or homosexuals and unmarried heterosexuals that they cannot continue their live-in relationships, people in a relationship the Lord calls adultery need to remove themselves from that

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Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage

(Part IV)

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relationship.

If we are attempting to teach someone the gospel, and we learn from them that they are involved in second or subsequent marriages, and their own account of the facts do not fit the scriptural pattern, what do we do then?

For one thing, we should not compromise the power of the gospel. The wonderful story of the unbounded love of God for us, as demonstrated in the gift of his Son, is the power of God to create faith and bring about repentance unto life. It is premature to tell people what God says they must give up, before they even know who God is or why they should love him or care what he says.

Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples unto myself." In explanation, John added, "This he said, signifying by what death he would die" (John 12:32-33). People do difficult things, make unusual sacrifices and suffer persecution gladly, when they know Christ and appreciate his life and sacrifice. It is unrealistic, and unbiblical, to expect them to do so apart from the motivating power of the gospel. Some patience, therefore, is required while teaching continues.

Judgments may differ in regard to how much patience to show, how long to continue the teaching process and at what point baptism should occur. Outsiders looking on, however, need to recognize that these are matters of judgment, and the answers are best left to those working with the situation and most aware of the attitudes being shown.

Those who understand that scripture condemns their relationship as adultery, but rebelliously refuse to submit to what they know God wants them to do, cannot be really baptized. Whether we proceed to dip them in water or not, they are not really baptized. But if, instead, we are dealing with people who earnestly want to obey God but are confused about their situation and about what the Bible requires them to do, it may be appropriate to baptize them, feed them with milk, nurture them with love and fellowship and help them grow in faith and knowledge to the point where they are better able to make difficult decisions.

The way to evangelize anyone, whatever their sin, is to show them the love of God that passes knowledge, let love for God grow in them in response to God's love toward them, show them what God has to say about their condition and life, and let the love of God constrain them to obey. If they cannot be evangelized that way, they cannot be evangelized.

B. Teachers, Not Detectives or Judges.

While we must maintain, without compromise, the Biblical standard for marriage, we must also be careful not to compromise the liberties God has given us in Christ. It is not a virtue to be more rigid than the Bible. The "except it be for sexual immorality" clause is as much God's word as is the

rule to which the exception applies.

Some divorced and remarried people are married scripturally. They can be taught the gospel, be baptized on confession of their faith in Christ, and faithfully serve the Lord as man and wife. We must be careful not to judge a situation before we know the facts.

Someone says, "Aren't all remarriages scriptural, to hear those involved in them tell it?" The implication is that any who say their second marriage is scriptural are likely to be lying, and that we should deal with them very skeptically. We do need to be sure they understand from the Bible what constitutes allowable remarriage, but we have no warrant, under normal circumstances, for assuming the facts in their case are any different from what they say they are.

We may need to give heed to facts or persistent reports that come to our attention, but, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, the word of a person or couple wanting to become Christians should be sufficient. What do they gain by lying? Certainly not heaven! What do we lose, if we believe them, and they are not telling the truth? We have still maintained integrity and stood firmly for every Biblical truth. The idea that we have to become private detectives and snoop into the background of every couple we deal with, that we must personally see photographs, court records or motel registrations before we can believe that sexual immorality occurred, compromises the law of love. "Love . . . thinks no evil, . . . believes all things, hopes all things" (I Corinthians 13:5, 7). It does not close its eyes to the obvious, but it leads us to be accepting and believing. Not just in regard to marriage, but in everything that relates to their relationship to God, whether the reality of their faith, the purpose of their baptism, or the sincerity of their commitment, we are dependent on their word. There is really nothing wrong with that.

C. Divorced Because of Their Unfaithfulness.

Some maintain that for a divorce to be scriptural the legal decree itself must state that the divorce is for marital unfaithfulness. However, it is the reality of the situation and the intent of the one putting away that are the determining factors, not the wording of the divorce certificate. For many years, in New York State as well as in England, adultery was the only acceptable cause for a legal divorce. Some couples who wanted divorces in those jurisdictions got around those laws by stipulating that adultery had been committed when in fact it had not. If that did not constitute scriptural grounds for remarriage, and surely it did not, then it is not the writing on the certificate, but the facts of the situation itself, that make the difference.

Under our legal system it is possible in many states for the party guilty of fornication to file for a divorce, get it on some trumped-up trivial cause and be married to his or her illicit lover, almost before the innocent party knows what is

happening, certainly before the emotional trauma has subsided sufficiently to be able to take any action. The guilty party's speed of action does not negate the innocent party's ability to rightly claim to have put the mate away "for fornication," when that is exactly what they did.

It is not right, of course, for a husband or wife to put away a mate just for something they have decided they do not like about them, and then to claim the right to scripturally remarry when and if the unlawfully put away one commits adultery. Neither is "the waiting game" scriptural, in which the two mutually split, and then "Whoever gets married first frees the other to scripturally remarry."

Consider, however, a different scenario. A husband decides for no good reason to leave his wife and, against her will, gets a divorce. Since no other woman is involved, the wife, because she still loves him, because of her respect for the Biblical teaching on marriage, or both, continues to consider herself his wife. She desires and works for a reconciliation, doing as much to bring one about as he will allow and accept. All, however, is to no avail and, while she is still trying to reconcile, he becomes involved with someone else, whether in an affair or a marriage. She, at that point, gives up, and puts him away as her husband, because of his sexual unfaithfulness. She would then be free, from the time of her putting him away because of his unfaithfulness, to marry another. If that leaves a great deal to the honesty and intent of the party involved, that is exactly, as we have seen, where it should be left.

D. Sin Not Cured By Time of Change of Location.

When we are acquainted with a marriage, and one of its parties leaves his or her God-joined mate to marry someone else, we recognize that to be sin, and decry it. How does it become something different, just because time goes by, or children are born to the union, or we did not know them until they were in their present marriage, or they are happier now than they were with their former mates? None of those factors turns wrong into right, or adultery into an approved relationship.

God is concerned for the sanctity of the marriage relationship. His plan is, "One man for one woman, for life." Let it be ours, too. [The End].

--P.O. Box 1101, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

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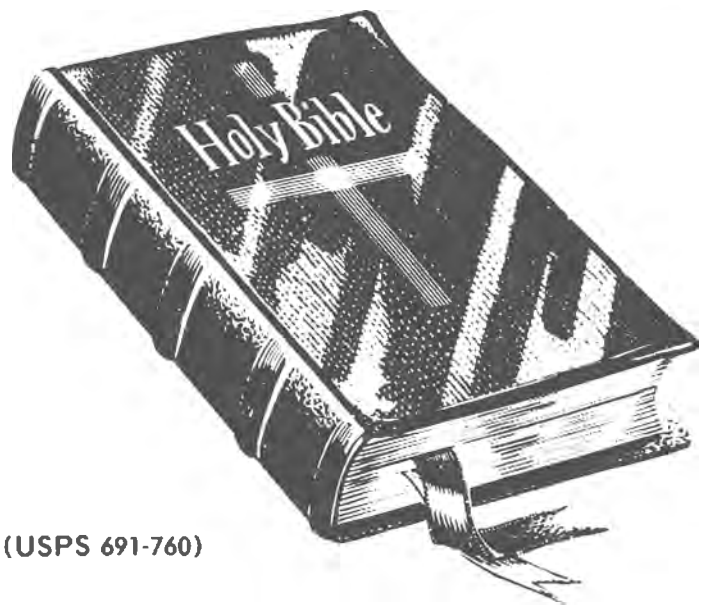
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Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Fest
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VOLUME 27

SEPTEMBER 27, 1991

NUMBER 39

Freedom To Preach The Bible



Glenn A. Posey

What has now begun in Russia, we Americans have enjoyed for hundreds of years. Though missionaries have visited the USSR and preached on a very limited basis, until now this huge country of almost 300 million people have been denied access to God's precious Word.

Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Therefore God's truth must be preached by those who know it. The truth is God's power unto salvation (Romans 1:16).

Basically, Communism is dead in Russia. The people are tired of Marxism. It died with people knowing a better way, and were willing to risk their lives for this new freedom.

But, will Russia be any better off, spiritually, if we who know and believe the truth, sit idly by and do not go and teach them the truth? (Mark 16:15). People can't be saved by a perverted gospel. The Russian people need to hear the gospel preached by loyal preachers.

People can't be saved by a perverted gospel. The Russian people need to hear the gospel preached by loyal preachers.

Today, basically, denominationalism is dead. We once knew what these groups stood for, but not anymore. Their doctrines change so often you can't know where they stand. You identify religious groups by their doctrine. If they don't have a distinctive doctrine you can't tell where they stand. That's exactly where denominationalism is

today. It's dead. It never has and never will save anybody.

The doctrine of Christ is distinctive. I believe the Church of Christ believes and preaches Christ's doctrine in its distinctive form (II John 9-11). Let's preach it to the Russians NOW, while we have the opportunity lest we be faced with the task of trying

to undo what denominationalism has done. Those who can go, let them go, and the rest can give and pray, again, and again.

May God help the Church of Christ to reach Russia.

--9th Street and 7th Avenue S.E., Cullman, AL 35055.

I'd Rather See A Sermon



T. Pierce Brown

would walk with me than merely tell the way. The things that you are saying may be very fine and true, but I'd rather get my lesson by observing what you do." If we have quoted that or the rest of the very good poem, we have probably thought of our quoted along with it the passage of Matthew 5:16, which says, "Even so let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

Every commentary I ever remember reading about that verse, and every sermon I have ever preached or heard preached made it appear that Jesus is saying, "Let your good deeds be seen before men that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father." I am going to suggest today that after about sixty years of reading it and thinking of it that way, I have decided he probably meant something a little different.

There is no question that our good deeds should be seen in a light that would glorify God. But let

Some who read the title of his article would agree because they do not like to hear sermons anyway. Most of us have probably heard or quoted Edgar A. Guest's "Sermons We See" many times: "I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day; I'd rather one


us raise some questions and at least provide you with a slightly different exegesis of the passage.

Suppose a person sees you buying shoes for some poor boy. He knows you, and knows you are a member of the Kiwanis Club, and belong to some church -- maybe even the Lord's church. But does he automatically glorify God by what he sees, or will he as likely glorify you or the club? Or suppose he sees you buying glasses for some person who can not see very well. He may know that you are a member of the Lion's Club and belong to some (or no) church. Does that deed cause him to glorify God? If so, why would it? And if not, why not?

I submit to you that it does not! The only way he can know the motive, purpose, reason, and attitude you have is for you to let it be known by words!

Psalms 119:105 says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my pathway." The principle applies here. Suppose a person sees a minister of the Gospel, a Baptist preacher and a Jehovah's Witness each baptize 30 persons. Who or what is glorified? How and why? Suppose he sees you come to the assembly, take the Lord's Supper and give generously. Does he know why, unless he is told? If he does not know why, may he not as well assume that you are obeying some "church ordinance" related to some man-made organization that has nothing whatever to do with salvation and admitted by those who uphold it 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

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David Wade Editor

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Contact, Cultivate, Convert



David Wade

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 went out of their way to bypass the Samaritans (John 4:9).

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.

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).

Jesus, who knows all men perfectly (John 2:25),

The Universal Aspect



Winfred Clark

Many many people will live a lifetime and never travel very far from the place of their birth. They will live most of their life within a county or state. Most of their interest would be in local things. They do not see themselves as world travelers. But, when one of those people becomes a

Christian, he becomes a part of something that is universal in nature.

1. HE SERVES A GOD WHO HAS UNIVERSAL CONTROL

The local Christian finds himself in the position of being subject to "the Judge of all the earth" (Genesis 18:25). He is able to "call heaven and earth to account" (Isaiah 1:2). There is not a single person or being in the universe that is not amenable to God. God has universal control.

Yes, the Christian is responsible to local rules and officials but then all of these are subject alike unto the God of the universe.

2. HE ADORES A SAVIOUR WHO PROVIDES UNIVERSAL BENEFITS

There have been cases where people have enjoyed benefits from others. You will find an occasion where an orator by the name of Tertullus said to Felix the Roman governor, "See that through you we enjoy great peace, and prosperity is being brought to this nation by your foresight" (Acts 24:2). In short, he is saying that they have enjoyed some great benefits because of the things

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Things Always With Us

Tim Rice

Jesus was anointed by Mary with expensive ointment from an alabaster box. The apostles, and especially Judas, griped about this. They said the ointment might have been sold for much and given to the poor. Jesus answered, "Ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always" (Matthew 26:11). This challenges us never to forget to help the poor, but also introduces an interesting thought. There are things that will always be with us on earth. Let us think of some.

The devil will always be with us on the earth. Although we are told, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7), we are also told, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8). Only a dead lion would quit being hungry. If the devil has died, I haven't heard about it. He wants to devour us. If he flees from us for a while, he then circles around us to try to attack again. Paul urged the Corinthians to be obedient in all things: "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not

ignorant of his devices" (II Corinthians 2:11). The devil is always with us.

Persecutions are always with the Christian. Paul said, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Timothy 3:12). Christians are very seldom persecuted to the extent the first century Christians were, but they are persecuted. A young person who stands up for Jesus is jeered by his friends. A Christian at work suffers snide remarks because he does not indulge in the sins of his co-workers. Persecutions we have always with us.

Problems will always be with us. We do not even have to prove this statement, for no one would deny it. But it is good to know we can lay our

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The Universal Aspect

Continued From Page 2

Felix had done.

You will agree that Joseph rendered great benefits to Pharaoh and the people of Egypt by the way he made preparation for the famine.

You will find that Gideon would act in such a way that the children of Israel would enjoy freedom from the Midianites (Judges 6-8).

But Jesus goes beyond the matter of benefits for food or physical deliverance. He would come to deal with the sin problem. He is the Saviour of all men (I Timothy 4:10). When John, the apostle wrote of him, he would say "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (I John 2:2). When John the Baptist spoke of him, he would say, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world" (John 1:29).

Yes, we adore a universal Saviour.

3. HE HOLDS MEMBERSHIP IN A UNIVERSAL BODY

There are clubs where only men can attend. There are others where only ladies can attend. There are restricted groups.

When you think of the church you will find it composed of both men and women, "he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison" (Acts 8:3). You will find the church not only composed of men and women; you will find it composed of men and women from every nation (Matthew 28:18-20). The church will have in its membership people from all kinds of ethnic groups. It will not make any difference if one is a Jew or Gentile, they are all equal in Christ as far as

spiritual blessings are concerned (Galatians 3:26-29).

4. HE OPERATES UNDER A COMMISSION THAT IS UNIVERSAL IN SCOPE

We all know of companies who assign salesmen to a particular territory. They are limited as to where they can sell their merchandise.

There was a time when the apostles operated under the limited commission (Matthew 10:1-6). They were not to preach to the Samaritans or the Gentiles. They were restricted.

The child of God today has his obligation under the commission of our Lord that will send him into all the world (Mark 16:15-16). That commission will send him to every nation under the sun (Matthew 28:18-20). That is the reason that Paul was ready to preach the gospel at Rome (Romans 1:14-16). Since it is the power of God unto salvation, then it should be preached where the need of salvation exists. But we all know that such a need exists all over the earth where men and women reside. Paul described the plight to such people, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Since all have sinned, then all need to be saved. Only the gospel will show one how God will save him. He must have the gospel. That need exists in every part of the universe where men and women are found.

Yes, there is a universal aspect to the commission.

5. HE FACES A JUDGEMENT THAT IS UNIVERSAL IN NATURE

I am sure that there are some seats of judgement

that some of us do not have to be concerned about. We have no fear of having to be judged by Castro. But this cannot be said with reference to the judgement of God.

Jude in the long ago spoke of this judgement when he said, "To execute judgement upon all" (Jude 15). You can be assured that Jude did not overstate the case. He described the matter as it will be. This is in keeping with Paul's language, "And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgement of God?" (Romans 2:16). Paul knew that all men would face the judgement and he knew that the secrets of men's heart would be judged at that time (Romans 2:16). You will find Matthew saying, "before him shall be gathered all nations" (Matthew 25:32).

Yes, there is a universal aspect to the judgement. This will involve all men. We need to view our relationship to God from the universal aspect.

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

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I'd Rather See A Sermon

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be non-essential? If so, who gets the glory?

Since it seems improbable that Jesus is saying, "Let your good works be seen that your good works may be seen and your Father thus glorified," and since it seems impossible that seeing good works without hearing the words that prompted them would give glory to the right one, we suggest the following exegesis of the passage. "Let the light of the gospel message and God's Word in general be so presented before men that they may (in the light of that message) see what you are doing and glorify God."

Remember that Jesus began both to "do and to teach" (Acts 1:2). If one teaches without doing, he is probably a hypocrite. If one does without teaching, he is in danger of allowing the glory to be given to the wrong person or thing!

Can you imagine Peter on Pentecost saying, "I just do not think it necessary to say anything about the risen Lord, or the plan of salvation. It embarrasses me to tell people they are wrong and need to be saved. I would rather take the high road and just let them see the power of the Holy Spirit at work in my life!" If you have that vivid imagination, you would probably make a success

as a denominational preacher!

If the entrance of the Word of God gives light (Psalm 119:130), then we need to be teaching that Word, so that in the light of that Word, men may see whatever good we do and glorify God. If you have missed my point, it is that your light cannot shine and glorify God merely by doing good works, but by teaching God's Word so that when you do good works those who see will know they are related to God's will.

If you have been perverting dear old Edgar's quotation from his excellent poem in order to justify your failure to do your part in carrying out the Great Commission, let me urge you to cease and desist forthwith! As important as our actions are, it is impossible to do all the teaching for which you are responsible merely by your actions. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). Since that gospel includes facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed, and promises to be enjoyed, including motives and reasons for doing what is done, it cannot possibly be presented solely by living. Such cute little expressions as "Christianity is as much caught as taught" have a point, but that does not excuse us

from being personal evangelists-speaking God's Word.

Remember that Jesus began both to "do and to teach" (Acts 1:2). If one teaches without doing, he is probably a hypocrite. If one does without teaching, he is in danger of allowing the glory to be given to the wrong person or thing!

One nice thing about an article like this: Even if my exegesis is wrong, my conclusion surely is bound to be right! Surely there is no question among Bible students that God cannot be properly glorified without words and deeds.

--Rt. 2 Box 144X, Wartrace, TN 37183, (615) 454-9042.

Life After Confession

Bobby J. Norris

John was writing to Christians when he wrote, "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). I once heard a denominational preacher quote this verse as being God's plan of salvation for alien sinners.

Confession is good for the soul. You can be forgiven and feel a lot better, but sometimes life is still complicated and difficult after confession.

Confession is good for the soul. You can be forgiven and feel a lot better, but sometimes life is still complicated and difficult after confession.

After confession, some must still suffer the natural consequences of their sin. Achan confessed, "I have sinned" (Joshua 7:19-21). But he had broken the covenant of God, and had been responsible for the deaths of 36 brethren. He and all his family and possessions were stoned and burned. David confessed, "I have sinned" (II Samuel 12:13). But he had been guilty of adultery, and responsible for the murder of an innocent man. He was forgiven (v. 13), but the sword would never depart from his house (v. 10). No doubt, David went to his grave in grief and sorrow for his sin, and the consequences it brought on his house.

The confession of some is made void by other things in their life. Judas confessed, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood" (Matthew 27:4). But Judas could not live with his own conscience. He could not face the consequences of his sin. He could not forgive himself. If the Lord could forgive the murderers of Jesus, he could surely forgive his betrayer (Acts 2:36-47). But there is now no hope at all for Judas, nor for others who cannot face life after confession.

God will forgive after confession, but man may not. The prodigal son confessed, "I have sinned" (Luke 15:21). His father forgave him, but his elder brother refused to forgive him. Surely, life at home was never again what it once was. But what more could the prodigal do? He had done all he could to correct his sin and therefore his situation at home was no longer his problem, but his brother's. One great price we pay for sin is that some will never

forgive, whether we confess or not.

We should always be ready to confess. Job did not know of any sin in his life, but would have immediately confessed it, if he had been guilty. He said, "If I have sinned" (Job 7:20). We must also be prepared for life after confession. It may be difficult. Indeed, "the way of transgressors is hard"

(Proverbs 13:15), sometimes even for forgiven transgressors. But whatever comes in the future, we cannot change the past. The best we can do is obey God and strive to please Him in all things to the best of our ability.

--HC-60, Box 4, Detroit, AL 35552.

Responses Continue To Climb From Mailout



W. T. Allison

Just sixty days after the initial mailing of the One Nation Under God brochure, approximately 150,000 individuals have responded to the brochure's message according to campaign workers.

This number represents all responses that have been received, both from the toll-free numbers and the mail-in coupons. A significant portion of the responses have been classified as "immediate" due to the fact that the respondents have requested something other than a Bible course, usually an immediate study.

To date, over 3,400 congregations have been involved in the follow-up to the brochure. These are congregations that have supported the campaign, some from the very beginning months.

"These people who have stood by us all the way are now reaping the harvest of souls," stated Horace Burks the Sycamore deacon who conceived the idea and who has spearheaded its development.

"We're anticipating another major surge of activity when we are able to release the mail in New York state," Burks continued, adding, "That is the only state that hasn't received the 'solo' mail."

Responses peaked early on in the campaign with the high-water mark being over 19,000 in one twenty-four hour period. NeoData Services, the company responsible for taking the calls, began forwarding the names, en masse on computer tapes, as the demand continued.

Though responses have slowed dramatically, they still continue to arrive at a rate of 700-1,000 per day, indicating that the brochure is generating a

substantial residual response.

"Our decision to produce the brochure as an illustrated piece is paying off now." Burks stated, "We had adopted that because of its appearance it would stay around the house for a while, prompting folks to read its message more than once. Apparently we're seeing the response from that now," he concluded.

In addition to the responses that have been mailed or called in to the campaign, hundreds of congregations have organized local efforts that have garnered responses that will ultimately number in the thousands. Staffers have no means of tracking these responses.

--1901 Schillinger Road, Mobile, AL 36695.

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

Things Always With Us

Continued From Page 2

troubles at the feet of Him who loves us. Peter told his readers, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you" (I Peter 5:6, 7). Therefore, as problems are always with us, God can be too.

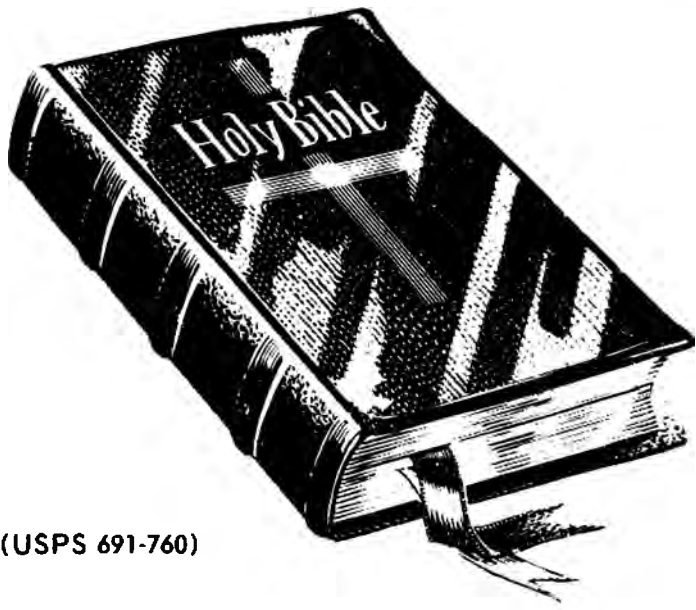
False teachers and gainsayers are always with us. God set as a qualification of elders in Titus 1:9:

"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." If ever there were a time in which gainsayers (contradictors) fail to exist, we can eliminate this qualification of elders. But they are always with us and must be met with sound doctrine.

Thankfully, God is always with us. He said, "I will

never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:5, 6). Add to this what Paul said in Romans 8:31: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" These passages explain perfectly how to vanquish the fear brought on by the above things with us. Is God for you today?

--Via The Visitor, Adamsville, AL.



(USPS 691-760)

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Be An Encourager



W. T. Allison

"But Joshua the son of Nun, Who stands before you, he shall go in there. Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it" (Deuteronomy 1:38).

I read where an American tourist was visiting a small town in Europe. He asked a local resident, "Were any great men born in this town?" The reply was, "No sir. Only tiny babies have been born here."

I need to remember that. All great men and women were once tiny babies. But something happened along the way. Someone spoke an encouraging word. Someone opened an important door. Someone made the critical difference that helped that tiny baby grow toward greatness. Barnabas is called the "Son of encouragement" in the Bible (Acts 4:36). Notice what he did to encourage others.

1. He made a significant financial investment, "having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet" (Acts 4:37). Sometimes the buying of a meal, a book, groceries, or helping with one's education or other need not only gives financial aid but also imparts hope for the one being helped.

2. He was willing to be seen and identified with one who was distrusted by the group. When the disciples were afraid of Saul of Tarsus and did not believe that he was a disciple, "Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles" (Acts 9:27). He expressed his confidence in him.

We preach that it is possible for one to change. However, it is sometimes easier and includes less risk to believe that one cannot. "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." "You know that's the way he is and he will never change." "No one in that family has ever been worth much."

3. He was willing to give a quitter another chance. For whatever reason, John Mark left Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey and

went back to Jerusalem.

The issue of what to do with a quitter became the focus of a sharp contention between Paul and Barnabas. The controversy became so pronounced that Paul and Barnabas went their separate ways. "And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus" (Acts 15:39). Barnabas made a good investment. Later Mark would also be a blessing to Paul. Near

the end of his life, Paul wrote, "Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry" (II Timothy 4:11). What can you and I do today to help make great people out of tiny babies?

Let me encourage us to encourage someone today!

--1901 Schillinger Rd., Mobile, AL 36695.

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 knows

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.

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

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The Editor's Pen
David Wade



Abortion Facts



David Wade

Recently I saw a bumper sticker which said, "Be a hero, save a whale; save a baby, go to jail." Such points out the gross inconsistency of our court system and "laws" written to protect the rights of Americans. All Americans have the right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,"

who have had two, three, or more abortions.

FACT: Adoption is an option. In 1970, three years prior to federal legalization of abortion, there were 89,200 adoptions. In 1986, the most recent data available show only 51,000 adoptions while the estimates of the number of people wanting and waiting to adopt range to over two million. These figures include prospective parents wanting to adopt minority and special needs children. Currently there is a bi-partisan bill in the U.S. Senate which provides incentives and help to women to choose adoption instead of abortion. The bill should pass and will give powerful momentum to the adoption alternative.

that is, except the unborn. They are fair game for anyone who desires to destroy them.

Solomon said, "The legs of the lame are not equal" (Proverbs 26:7). Isaiah said, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20).

We tend to look the other way and not take notice of what is happening in our midst. Consider these facts about abortion in Alabama. This information is from the Alabama Family Alliance, Fact Sheet, dated June 12, 1991.

FACT: The Human Life Protection Act limits the availability of abortion to cases of rape and incest, and to save the life of the mother.

FACT: By definition, the bill affects the intentional taking of a human life in the womb of a woman known to be pregnant. This protects contraceptives, caesarian sections, and any other procedures not intended to injure the baby.

FACT: Almost 30,000 abortions are performed each year in Alabama; 80 per day; one every 20 minutes.

FACT: The bill does not prohibit abortion, it is a reasonable and responsible approach to limiting abortion. The bill would reduce the number of abortions in Alabama by approximately 98 percent.

FACT: Abortion is legal through all nine months of pregnancy; abortions as late as six and a half months are advertised and performed regularly by abortion clinics around the state.

FACT: For over 100 years in Alabama unborn children were protected by state law.

FACT: Abortion is legal for any reason including sex selection and is used regularly as a means of birth control. Nationally, it is reported that forty percent of all abortions are performed on women

At this writing the Clarence Thomas nomination for the United States Supreme Court hangs in the balances. If confirmed, it is altogether possible that *Roe v. Wade* may eventually be overturned.

Christians should work and pray, as never before, that the terrible source of abortion may be removed from our land!

"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

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

stopped to really look at what that man was saying.
1. He is saying "I ought to follow."

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What Are You Working For?

Continued From Page 1

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 possess.

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

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?

--1569 Berry Rd., Birmingham, AL 35226.

"I Will -- But"

Continued From Page 2

"I ought to follow," "I would profit by following." But, here is a man, like 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 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.

Legalizing Sin Does Not Change It

Kenneth McClain

There is in our society a tendency to try to soften the seriousness of sin. Alcoholism is as much of a sin as murder, adultery and lying.

The drunkard shall not enter heaven. "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, reveling, and the such like: They which do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19-21). Isaiah 28:7-8 says, "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean." How well Isaiah's words describe this nation. There are many places in this nation where liquor is legalized. Where it is not legal there are continued attempts to try to make it so under the guise of taxes. Don't be misled by promises of additional revenue from legal liquor sales. Studies conducted by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism show that alcohol costs the state and our local communities many more dollars than it brings in.

The Bible has much to say about strong drink and

the evils that are associated with it. Solomon said, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1). "Who hat woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine" (Proverbs 23:29, 30).

The Bible condemns drinking. Legalizing sin does not change it. Civil authorities and legislative bodies cannot change sin into righteousness.

The Bible condemns drinking. Legalizing sin does not change it. Civil authorities and legislative bodies cannot change sin into righteousness.

--2842 Shelby Street, Indianapolis, IN 46203.

Those Old Things Are Out Of Style



Betty Burton Choate

We live in an ever-changing world. Activities that were once popular lose their appeal. Styles in clothing come and go. Ways of thinking can become "old-fashioned."

Even in the church, we find ourselves changing with the times. Things that were once very

effective and were on the activity list of every progressive congregation have now been dropped or are low on the priority list. It is said that they "don't work anymore."

In the old days, gospel meetings might run for two weeks, allowing time for cumulative teaching to be done and for an enthusiastic spirit to be developed. Then they were reduced to a week, then to five days, and finally to three days, with continually declining effectiveness. Will their total cancellation be the ultimate solution for having the right-length meetings?

Home Bible Studies, personal work, and filmstrips have had their hey-day. Every

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Those Old Things Are Out Of Style

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congregation had to have a training program in "how to do personal work," and members were encouraged to become involved in the showing of filmstrips in home studies. "Door knocking" to locate new contacts was an important out-reach element. All of these "work" efforts have evidently lost their appeal and little seems to be said about them anymore. Vacation Bible School used to be another highlight of the summer, and even though most congregations still have them, the excitement surrounding them has waned.

Summer Bible Camps have been important events for the children who could afford to go. Many young hearts have been won to Christ during those weeks of concentrated teaching and fellowship. But many camps are not as well attended as in the past.

Busing, too, has waned and waned. Churches lost members over the issue, but all who could get into the program bought as many buses as they could strain to keep operational. And then the "personal work" crew, the willing teachers, and the financial and spiritual facilities of the church were taxed to their limits until "busing" had lost its glamour.

There was a time when mission workshops were popular. Everybody talked them up, and people who were interested drove for miles to be inspired by the lessons. Now, very few churches have them anymore.

In years past, announcements were regularly made concerning new families who were moving to this country or that country to be resident missionaries. Living overseas for long periods as a family has lost its appeal and that type of mission effort has largely been replaced by one, two, and three-week campaign groups. Two or three thousand dollars may be required for each of fifteen or twenty novice "missionaries" who will be leaving for home almost by the time they arrive in the field. No matter what quality their work might have been, the new converts are left without the aid of those who were necessary in their conversion, which means that their absence creates a hurting hole. The church's available mission budget is being eaten up by campaign expense, leaving little for serious, sustained resident work.

"Exodus" movements were once considered an effective way to start new congregations in mission areas here in the States. Large groups were encouraged to participate in these movements, with families finding jobs and settling in new areas in order to help establish the work. Gradually, this new approach, too, has lost its appeal.

"Church schools" had their day of being the "fad." Many congregations strained every fiber to develop a preacher training school, even if their efforts were duplicating efforts of nearby sister congregations. Others concentrated on K-12 schools, building classrooms, struggling to meet state and federal education requirements. Probably the most lasting effect of these schools was the breaking of the barrier between the spiritual

education role and the secular education role for the church: i.e. once a program of financing "Christian secular education" from the church funds was approved, the door was open for church funding for many things. The schools were church supported; the schools had to have gymnasiums and sports equipment; therefore "Family Life Centers" have become an "acceptable" expenditure for the Lord's money.

Many of these activities that were tried have been abandoned. In some cases they were only expensive fads replacing other cast-off expensive fads. In other cases, because times and appeals had changed, new or revised methods had to be sought if the church was to continue to be effective.

So what are the methods being used today? What is the church involved in?

As in the past, the index for the church's activities can be read in the weekly announcements. I suggest that you listen to them closely for a few weeks, in your home congregation, and keep tabs on what is being done.

These are the stylish things, the activities that seem to be "top priority" in the church today:

1. Potlucks
2. Picnics
3. Skating or bowling parties
4. Showers
5. Canoe or raft trips
6. Theme park trips
7. Ball teams and competitive games with denominational teams

Please don't misunderstand. Christianity is a way of life and it must include the pleasure of activities

and fellowship with other Christians.

But we need to watch the drifts that develop among us. Each person has work, school, and family responsibilities that must consume much of his time. At best, only a relatively small proportion of each week can be devoted to spiritual activities. Are we spending most or all of that time on social or fun things?

Perhaps we have mistakenly concluded that the old, out-of-style work activities are no longer effective in evangelism and that our best appeal these days is through wholesome recreation and fellowship.

But how many denominational friends have been converted to the gospel through the many seasons of ball games? Can you name one?

Do we not realize that if our appeal to the world consists of what we have to offer socially or in terms of "fun things," the larger, more-moneyed and less restricted denominations will always be able to out-do us? We can't compete, and hope to win, on that basis.

But even if we did win, what would be gained? If people become members of the church because we are "good guys," fun to be with, sociable people, have they really been won to the distinctiveness of the truth? Would they leave the church in a huff if the apostle Paul were invited to preach one Sunday on I Corinthians 1 or Ephesians 4?

We need to take stock. We live in a changing world, and we must be able to make necessary adjustments. But we cannot afford to forget our commitment to Christ and that He left us in this world to work, not to play.

--P.O. Box 72, Winona, MS 38967.

Would We Sin Less If We Feared More?

We hear shallow references to God (keen, neat, Jesus keeps on trucking). A cheap twisting of Him for relevance sake. God requires an exalted place in our lives. He is not our Pal or Buddy. He does not bow to our pace, but waits for us to meet His pace. He is holy, exalted, Lord and Master. We do a disservice to the next generation when we are casual. Think about it.

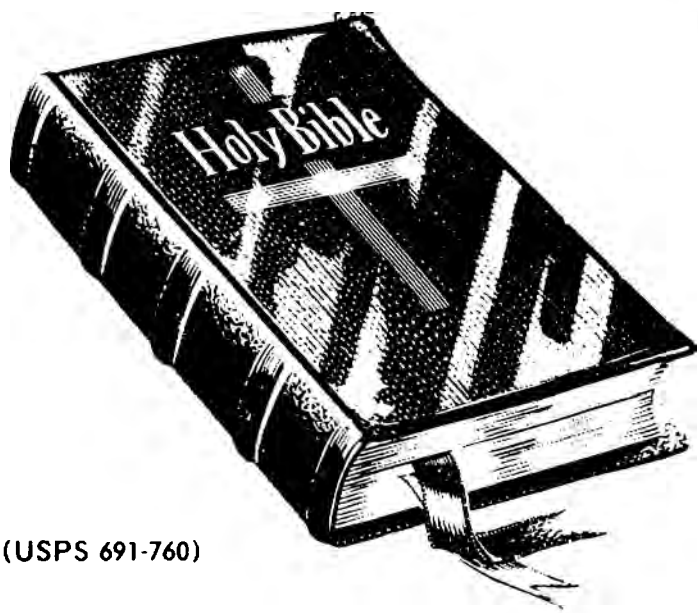
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Verse To Remember



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 redeemer (Psalm 19:14)



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

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

Orth the
ts 26:25

VOLUME 27

OCTOBER 11, 1991

NUMBER 41

Value Of Christian Magazines



J. C. Choate

We are so blessed in our country, yet we take so much for granted. For example, how many of us receives one or more of the magazines that are published by our brethren? How many of us read the ones that we get? The fact is, there are enough of us over the land that we can stay in contact with each other, help one another, and work together to the point that we do not feel the great need for literature of any kind. If we do have a need, then, of course, it also is always met. But what about much of the rest of the world, where there are only a few congregations and where individual Christians may find themselves isolated from their brethren? What about those countries where there are so few missionaries and not enough local preachers to work with the congregations? It is in places like this that Christian literature, and especially a good monthly magazine, can make all of the difference. Such a magazine makes it possible to stay in contact with these brethren, to keep feeding them basic Bible teaching that will sustain them, strengthen them, and help them to hold on until they are stronger or until a preacher can be sent to them.

The longer I serve the Lord in foreign fields the more convinced I am of the great importance of using monthly magazines to put materials into the hands of the local people on a regular basis. Whether it is sent to a Christian or to one who is not a Christian, it is going to bear fruit in time. Not only will the individual who receives it be helped, but also his family, relatives, friends, and any others who frequent his home may come across that magazine and be influenced by it. Not only so, but that magazine may continue in that home for years or be taken elsewhere and it may go on influencing any and all who read it. Now where

else could you find such a bargain?

I have visited countries like Korea, Philippines, Indonesia, Ghana, and many others and I have found that a good Christian magazine going out month after month, would do wonders in those countries. Again, in all of those places there are not enough workers to stay in contact with the scattered Christians. As a result, they are left to themselves for the most part and over a period of time they either die spiritually or they drift into error on various points. In recent times some of the congregations in Korea have brought mechanical music into their worship. Others have accepted the title of Pastor for their preacher. In other nations, brethren have gone off after these things or other false teachings, whether it be belief in miracles, speaking in tongues, the one-cup question, having fellowship with denominational churches, or other such things. But the sad part is that many of these congregations and individual Christians could have been spared this if only they had been fed on a regular basis with sound Christian literature.

What about those countries where there are so few missionaries and not enough local preachers to work with the congregations? It is in places like this that Christian literature, and especially a good monthly magazine, can make all of the difference.


In third world countries, in particular, we have a number of things going for us. In the first place, the people as a whole are starved for reading materials. Many of them will read anything they can get their hands on. Why not move in and print

literature that will be good and wholesome, that will teach them of Christ, and will seek to influence them to become believers in Him and to encourage them to obey His teaching? The printing presses are wide open for these purposes and prices in most cases are very reasonable. Most of these countries also have a good postal system, where postage is inexpensive on the local level, and where a monthly magazine, Bible correspondence courses, tracts, books, etc., can be sent all over the country and into neighboring countries. In some places a postal permit can be obtained that enables this literature to be sent out at even lower rates.

The time is right, the opportunity is there, the church has the resources if we will only use them. There is nothing to stop us but ourselves.

Brethren, help us to use these methods to evangelize the world. The time is right, the opportunity is there, the church has the resources if we will only use them. There is nothing to stop us but ourselves. How our hearts bleed to see all of these needs, these opportunities, and to see the little that is being done to take advantage of them. Surely the Lord will not be patient with us forever.
--P.O. Box 72, Winona, MS 38967.

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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

Rate Increase



David Wade

Effective October 1, 1991 Words of Truth subscriptions increase from \$11.44 to \$18.20 per year. This increases the cost from 22¢ to 35¢ per issue. The recent 60% increase in postage, rising paper and labor costs have necessitated this change.

Subscribing churches will be billed at the new rate of 35¢ per copy beginning 10/30/91. Individuals who wish to subscribe at the old rate of \$11.44 per year may do so through 10/30/91. Afterward, the annual individual subscription rate will be \$18.20.

Words of Truth is published under the oversight of the elders of the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ

on a non-profit basis. All monies for the paper go directly to our publisher, Northwest Alabamian of Haleyville, Alabama. The Sixth Avenue congregation pays for its subscriptions at the same rate as all other subscribing churches and individuals.

For several months Northwest Alabamian has been bearing the postage increase and taking a loss on the paper. We knew the inevitable increase would come, and now it is here. The new rate is not out of line with cost increases of other brotherhood publications. For instance, twelve issues of the Gospel Advocate now cost \$16.98 or \$2.50 per individual copy.

We hope you will stay with us and that we will be able to provide timely articles to our subscribers. Our special thanks to all of you faithful writers who donate your time and effort to help Words of Truth live up to its name.

Death Is A Beatitude



Bobby Key

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15). "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord" (Revelation 14:13).

The one who knew the most about life and death spoke of future life with absolute certainty. A brief time before his death on the cross Jesus said to the

penitent thief, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). He spoke with complete assurance that there was something after death.

Most of us don't think or talk of death. Even Christians are reluctant to think of their own death. The living know they must die. Every year in America there are 852 deaths for each 100,000 population. If you live in a city with 20,000 population you can expect over 170 deaths this year. "What man is he that liveth and shall not see death?" (Psalm 89:48). "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit. Neither hath he power in the day of death" (Ecclesiastes 8:8).

There is some fear in death (Hebrews 2:14, 15). The ancients said there were three fears, (1) Guilt (2) Death (3) Meaninglessness. They believed there was no bad mother or good death. This would be true if death ended it all, but God puts death among the great beatitudes.

The dead are blessed because they rest from their labors. They are free from oppression, persecution,

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Russian Trip

Lord willing, I will depart for the Soviet Union October 18 and will return November 8. In my absence, Joe Spivy, Associate Editor, will be editing Words of Truth.

Ray Passeur, Buck Hall, Keith Wilson, myself, and perhaps one or two more, will be traveling to Dnepropetrovsk in the Ukraine. We will be working with English speaking students conducting Bible study classes during the daytime at the local university. Also, we will be holding nighttime evangelistic services at the city hall with the help of interpreters.

To date, there have been twenty conversions in this city, during one earlier campaign. We will be working to strengthen this new congregation and

will be seeking additional conversions. Please pray for our efforts.

Our mission trip is being coordinated through the efforts of Clifford Yeldell and the Hunter Station Church of Christ in Montgomery. Also, the faculty and administration of Alabama Christian School of Religion are working closely with the Hunter Station efforts. Several of the faculty members, among them, Rex Turner, Jr., Randall Bailey, Demar Elam and Jesse Long are making periodic mission trips to the USSR.

If you want more information or would consider going, or helping financially, contact Hunter Station Church of Christ, Rt. 6 Box 66-B, Montgomery, AL 36108. Phone (205) 277-2211.

From One Body To Another



Ray Hawk

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24).

What was "the body of this death" Paul referred to? The Hebrew writer tells us, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the

same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all

their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14, 15).

"The body of this death" and the "death passed upon all men" are the same.

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned . . . Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come . . . For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the

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From One Body To Another

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gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) . . . That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:12, 14, 17, 21).

When Jesus died upon the cross, he took away this death sentence which had passed upon all men from Adam.

"But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (II Timothy 1:10).

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2).

When Saul of Tarsus and others obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ, they put off that body of death and entered another body.

"In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Colossians 2:11).

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:13).

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:6).

"And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Ephesians 2:16).

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Romans 7:4).

"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (I Corinthians 12:27).

Jesus stated,

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).

From Adam until the cross of Christ those who were faithful were under bondage to sin. The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins (Hebrews 10:1-4). When Jesus died upon the

cross, he provided the way for all men, Jew and Gentile, to pass "from death unto life." What Paul cried out for in Romans 7:24 he received in Christ Jesus!

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,

who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 7:24-8:4).

--90 McDaniel Drive, Jackson, TN 38305-2528.

Great Evangelistic Preaching



Cecil May, Jr.

If we are to preach with evangelistic power and achieve evangelistic results, we must preach with conviction and faith founded on the following facts:

Without Christ, no one can be saved. Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father except by me" (John

14:6). "There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). J. M. McCaleb wrote in his famous hymn, "Unless they hear, they cannot live; the gospel is for all." If the world is all right like it is, why tell them anything? If we do not passionately believe we know something the world does not know, we will not fervently proclaim the One who can save.

The gospel is God's power to save. "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but to us who are saved it is the power of God." (I Corinthians 1:18). "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). God's love, demonstrated in the sacrifice of his Son, is what will draw us to God (John 12:32-33) and cause us to love (I John 4:19). The gospel can make the drunk and the stoned sober and the carouser and profligate pure. It instructs the teacher of error in the way of the Lord more perfectly. It turns the selfish materialist into a joyful giver. The word of the gospel, "the voice of the Son of God," brings eternal life out of death, and justification from condemnation (John 5:24-25).

Preaching is God's chief instrument for saving

man. The gospel is in earthen vessels (II Corinthians 4:5). Jesus commanded, "Go . . . preach the gospel" (Mark 16:15). "After that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Corinthians 1:21). The Bible does not here elevate one method of communicating the gospel over another; it does make communicating the gospel the means of salvation. Preaching is communicating the gospel.

Great things happen in the act of preaching. Peter's preaching pricked about 3000 with conviction of sin and desire for salvation (Acts 2:37). Philip's preaching brought one man an understanding of the work of Christ and joyous acceptance of salvation (Acts 8:27-39). Paul's preaching at Athens brought mockery and procrastination, but it also brought faith to some (Acts 17:32-34).

Trite repetition of outworn traditions will empty church buildings. "Nattering nabobs of negativism," to whom the gospel consists entirely in unrelenting condemnation and exposure of others, drive their hearers to look for positive light elsewhere. A diluted gospel, soothing syrup for itching ears, that never reproves, rebukes or teaches, may attract some, but will save none, and will eventually cloy those it attracts. Preach "all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27) with Christ always at the center (I Corinthians 2:2). Imbibe and live the word of God. Love the people to whom you preach. Weekly lay open the gospel to the people. Apply it pointedly and livingly to their problems and needs. That kind of preaching usually reaches people. It always glorifies God.

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

Death Is A Beatitude

Continued From Page 2

pain, sorrow, disappointment and cares of this world. God wipes all tears from their eyes. They are at rest as far as this life is concerned -- they are still busy in the other world serving God -- but the sorrow and suffering of this life is over.

The righteous dead are blessed because their works do follow them. Every soul won to Christ, every kind deed, every encouraging word has been noticed by the Father. It is comforting to know that

our labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Death is a beatitude because it is a necessary part of God's plan for us. It would be tragic if we were destined to live in this world forever. A grain of wheat must die before it can live. There are eggs in a bird's nest not far from me this moment. The egg is full of life pecking its way to freedom from its confinement in its shell. It has a throat for song and wings for flight, but the bird will never fly or

sing until it breaks free from the shell. So it is with man. Paul spoke of death as a departure.

God said the death of a saint was precious -- it is precious to God. It is said to be very far better. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (II Corinthians 5:8). In death we fall asleep in Jesus (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). Death is not so much leaving home as going home.

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

What Christ Has Done For The World



W. A. Holley

is described as Him "who went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). The Holy Bible says, "Jesus began both to do and to teach" (Acts 1:1). Notice the order in the verse cited: doing comes before teaching. Any preacher or teacher who does not practice what he preaches is a disgrace to God and His church!! (I Timothy 4:12, 16). Verily, no one was ever made worse by the practice and teaching of Jesus Christ.

It is always best for suffering humanity to follow the example of Jesus Christ (I Peter 2:19-25). Christians, read these verses and measure your life by them. We shall now cite a few areas where Jesus' accomplishments are great indeed:

(1) Jesus has given us the greatest and best teaching the world has ever known. Antiquity reveals many philosophers and teachers but the teaching of Jesus surpasses them all. Jesus' teaching covers all the ground of every relationship, and every subject of physical and spiritual endeavor (II Timothy 3:15-17).

Jesus has provided the highest standards of ethics available. He condemns all sin, and upholds all truth and righteousness (Matthew 22:34-40; 7:12, 21-23). His law is perfect (James 1:25; Psalm 19:7; Luke 6:46). In order to be saved from sin, His law must be obeyed (Hebrews 5:8-9; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38). Should one reject obedience to the gospel of Christ, he, in effect, signs his own death warrant (I Peter 4:16-17 with II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

(2) Jesus made the greatest sacrifice possible for the sins of the world. Jesus Christ spent 33 and a half years of service here upon this earth. He came from heaven and he went back to where he came from (John 6:38, 62). One day he will return a second time and judge the world (Hebrews 9:27-28). Jesus became sin for us, dying as a criminal that we might live (II Corinthians 5:14-21; Isaiah 53:6, 9; I Peter 2:21).

Involved in this great drama was His crucifixion upon the cruel cross. There he shed His blood to redeem us and to purchase His church (Luke 1:68; I Timothy 2:6; Titus 2:14; Acts 20:28). This fact makes the Lord's church essential to one's salvation. One is washed in the blood of Christ when one is washed in the waters of baptism (John 19:32-33; Romans 6:3-4; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Ephesians 5:26; Hebrews 10:22; Titus 3:5; Revelation 7:14; Colossians 1:13-14). Allow no prejudice to close the door of your heart.

All human beings contribute something to the world in which they live -- some of it good and some of it bad (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). All human beings (if responsible) have sinned and come short of God's holy standard (Romans 3:23; 6:23).

Jesus Christ is in a class to himself. Jesus

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13; Read the entire context).

(3) Jesus gave us the greatest and most noble institution this world has ever known. Jesus purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). The church is so valuable one should sell all one has in order to possess it (Matthew 13:44-45). The church was in the mind of God from all eternity (Ephesians 3:9-11, 21). Jesus is its builder (Matthew 16:18-19). He is its head and its Saviour (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:22-23). The church is the pillar and ground of the truth (I Timothy 3:14-15). Denominationalism, in all its shapes and forms can never match the splendor of the Lord's church, since they are of human origin. To become a member of the Lord's church simply believe and obey the truth of God (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38, 47).

"Unto him be glory in the church by Jesus Christ throughout all ages, world without end, Amen" (Ephesians 3:21). The church of Christ stands as God's exhibition of His grace and power which demonstrates what it has done for sinful men. God took sinful men, redeemed them, added them to His church, and in the church God's glory is being manifested throughout all eternity in the body which he has redeemed. Throughout all ages, world without end means, "to all courses of the age of the ages." Here is a very strong expression for eternity.

(4) Jesus is blessing us here and now. He is the way, the truth, the life (John 14:1-6). He is our advocate who can approach the Father for us (I

John 2:1-2). All who will are welcome to come unto Him (Matthew 11:28-30; Revelation 22:17).

Is the sinner arbitrarily drawn to Christ? Indeed, he is not! Read John 6:44-45. One is drawn to Christ when one hears and learns of the Father. It is the gospel of Christ that is God's power to save the believer (Romans 1:16). Only those who believe (Hebrews 11:6), repent of their sins (Luke 13:3), confess Jesus' name (Acts 8:37), and are baptized into Jesus Christ are saved (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Galatians 3:26-27).

(5) In view of what Christ has done for you, what are you doing for him? Are you trying to be a soul winner for Jesus? (Proverbs 11:30; I Corinthians 9:19; James 5:19-20). Have you gathered any sheaves for Him? (Psalm 126:5-6). It is time we look on the fields, for they are white unto the harvest, but the laborers are few (John 9:4; 4:34-38).

Are you trying to make the way easier for those who follow you? Are you a stumbling block? Have you tried to shut up the door to the kingdom of God? (Matthew 23:13).

"Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye enter not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered" (Luke 11:52).

How many backsliding church members are dragging the bloodstained banner of Jesus Christ in the filth and corruption and dirt of worldliness?? Correct your mistakes, walk again in wisdom's way that heaven may be you eternal home (Titus 2:11-12; Revelation 2:10).

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

Snap Judgments

While on a walk one day, I was surprised to see a man hoeing his garden while sitting in a chair. What laziness! I thought. But suddenly I saw leaning against his chair a pair of crutches. The man was at work despite his handicap. The lesson I learned about snap judgments has stayed with me for years: The crosses people bear are seldom in plain sight.

via Taylors, SC

How Do You Spell Love?

A class of little children was learning to spell. They spelled a number of words such as cat, dog, and cow. After each word they were asked to imitate the sound that the animal makes. When Mary was asked to spell love, she didn't stop to spell the word but ran and threw her arms around the teacher's neck and kissed her on the cheek. "We spell love that way at our house," she said. The teacher said, "That's the best way."

via Central Bulletin
Norfolk, VA



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Word Of Tri

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

Speak forth the

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 27

OCTOBER 18, 1991

NUMBER 42

The Bible Passes The Test



Wayne Jackson

The Bible contains two kinds of information. Some of it can be checked; some of it cannot. For example, it is not possible to scientifically "check" the accuracy of Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." While the affirmation is not in any way inconsistent with scientific data that are available, at the same time the statement is one of pre-human history, and does not lend itself to empirical investigation.

On the other hand, the Scriptures contain hundreds of references that arise out of the background of human history. These may be tested for accuracy. If it is the case that the Bible is demonstrated to be absolutely precise in thousands of historical details, it is not unreasonable to conclude that its information in other matters is equally correct.

One of the most amazing features of the Bible is its uncanny reliability in the smallest of details. Let us note a few examples of incidental biblical precision.

During His personal ministry, Jesus once passed through the region of Samaria. Near Sychar the Lord stopped for a brief rest at Jacob's well. He engaged a Samaritan woman in conversation, during which He suggested that He could provide the woman with water which could perpetually quench her thirst. Misunderstanding the nature of the Master's instruction, the woman, alluding to Jacob's well, declared: "Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep" (John 4:11). The statement is quite correct, for even now, some twenty centuries later, Jacob's well is approximately 80 feet deep. That's the equivalent of an eight-story building.

Reflect upon another example. In Acts 10 there is

the account of Peter's visit in the city of Joppa. Luke declares that Peter was staying in the home of Simon, a tanner of animal hides. Then the historian says, almost as an afterthought, "whose house is by the seaside" (Acts 10:6). Hugh J. Schonfield, a scholar who is certainly no friend to Christianity, and author of the infamous book, *The Passover Plot*, has commented on this passage: "This is an interesting factual detail, because the tanners used sea water in the process of converting hides into leather. The skins were soaked in the sea and then treated with lime before the hair was scraped off."

One of the most amazing features of the Bible is its uncanny reliability in the smallest of details.

Consider another interesting case of Bible precision. When Paul was enroute to Rome for trial, the ship upon which he sailed became involved in a terrible storm. When it eventually

became apparent that the vessel was in a very dangerous circumstance, the crew cast the ship's anchors into the water. At the same time, they "loosed the rubber bands," hoisted up the foresail, and aimed the ship towards the beach" (Acts 27:40). There is an interesting and subtle point in the Greek text that is not apparent in the King James Version. The original language actually says that they "loosed the bands of the rudders" (plural). This is amazingly precise, for in ancient times, ships actually possessed two paddle-rudders, not a single rudder as with modern vessels. In 1969, a submerged ancient ship was discovered in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Cyprus. An examination of the ruins gave evidence of dual rudder-oars by which the boat was steered (see *National Geographic*, November, 1974), thus demonstrating the remarkable accuracy of Luke's record.

The Bible can be tested repeatedly -- historically, geographically, scientifically, etc. And it always passes the test. Its incredible accuracy can really only be explained in light of its divine inspiration.

--Via Reasoning From Revelation, 230, Landmark Drive, Montgomery, AL 36117.

Fourteenth Place?


Bobby Dockery

A panel of 28 historians, educators and journalists were asked by the publishers of a history book to rate history's most important. According to these "experts" the most significant event of history was the discovery of America by Columbus followed by Gutenberg's invention of the printing press. In a 5-way tie for 14th place on the list of history's all-time most important events was the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Regarded as being equally important with the death of our Lord was the development of painless surgery, the discovery of x-rays, the flight of the Wright brothers, and the adoption of the U.S. constitution.

The death of my Lord tied for 14th on the list of history's most significant events??? How can the "experts" be so wrong? It is no wonder that we live in a world which has come unraveled in chaos and has descended into savagery! The times are out of joint and many lives are disintegrating because the world has forgotten that Jesus Christ and His cross stand at the very center of human life and existence!

The sad truth is that a lot of people put Jesus a whole lot lower than 14th on their list of priorities! The question is, What place does He hold in your life?

--Fayetteville, AR.



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 Tea Party

By **CONNIE LEE KRUTE**

As a writer and editor you sometimes run across an assignment that is a true joy and a spiritually enlightening experience. My first major editing job with **WORLD EVANGELISM** was such an experience. I worked on the book, "His Hand and Heart: The Wit and Wisdom of Marshall Keeble," with author Willie Cato of Nashville, Tennessee. If I may, I'd like to tell you a little about this marvelous book and the man who gave it life.

Willie wrote of his labors for the Lord with the great black preacher, Marshall Keeble. They worked and traveled together during the racially troubled decade of the 1960's, a totally uncommon occurrence for an elderly black man and a young white preacher. The book was never meant to be a biography, although there are portions which tell facts about Keeble's life. What Willie captured was the heart of the man -- you read on each page exactly what it was that made Marshall Keeble "tick." You could see clearly that it was an undying love for God that kept Keeble going through good times and bad.

"His Hand and Heart" is filled with parable-type lessons which were written down by Willie on any kind of paper he could find handy. There are also many incidences and private conversations recorded which occurred during their travels together throughout the country. If I may, I would like to give you an excerpt directly from the book. Willie writes: "Brother Keeble wanted to die preaching. Once when planning a trip to Nigeria,

Continued On Page 3



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

The Enduring Word



David Wade

ambition. In fact, after his death, Voltaire's residence was used as a print shop for the printing of Bibles.

Robert Ingersol, atheist of the past century said, "No one will be reading the Bible in the twentieth century." The fact is that the Bible remains the number one seller of books in print to this day. With the dismantling of the Iron Curtain, Bibles are now being distributed unhampered by governments once antagonistic to such activities.

Granted, most people do not read and study the Bible as they ought, but we should be impressed with renewed interest growing around the world to seek Bible answers to man's basic problems.

It is no mere accident that the Word of God endures in the face of many enemies. Jesus declares, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). Peter declares, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; wherunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place" (II

Peter 1:19). John declares the Word to be "the everlasting gospel" and that it should be preached to all, "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6).

John Clifford, British preacher of the nineteenth century wrote:

I paused last eve beside the blacksmith's door,
And heard the anvil ring, the vespers chime.
And looking in I saw upon the floor
Old hammers, worn with beating years of time.
"How many anvils have you had?" said I,
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"
"Just one," he answered. Then with twinkling
eye:

"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

And so, I thought, the anvil of God's Word
For ages skeptics' blows have beat upon,
But though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unchanged; the hammers gone.

Isaac Taylor said, "The deathless book has survived three great dangers: the negligence of its friends; the false systems built upon it; and the warfare of those who have hated it."

Arthur P. Stanley wrote, "You never get to the end of Christ's words. There is something in them always behind. They pass into proverbs; they pass into doctrines; they pass into consolations; but they never pass away. And after all the use that is made of them, they are still not exhausted."

Truly, "the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isaiah 40:8). "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (I Peter 1:25).

The Inspiration Of The Scriptures



W. A. Holley

Man cannot guide himself (Jeremiah 10:23). We live not by bread alone, but by every word of God (Matthew 4:4). God's ways and thoughts are not man's ways and thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-11). The weakness of God is stronger than men, and the foolishness of God is wiser than men (I Corinthians 1:18-25). The word of God is not a dead letter: rather, ". . . The word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of the soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and is quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart"

(Hebrews 4:12).

We shall now lay down some fundamental principles for our readers to consider: God is God or He is not. Jesus Christ is the Son of God or He is not. The Bible is the word of God or it is not. Verily, when the Scriptures speaks, it is God who speaks to suffering and dying men and women.

The only way we can know God is for Him to reveal himself to us. This He has done in and through the Holy Bible. God uses words to convey His will to men (I Corinthians 2:11-14). If we cannot accept the inerrancy of the Holy Bible, we are forced to accept the inerrancy of our own personal judgment.

The Holy Scriptures claim to be inspired of God. We shall now read several passages of Scripture, "And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred

Continued On Page 3

The Tea Party

Continued From Page 2

some tried to discourage him from going, but Keeble wanted to go to preach to "his folks." Another time he made a trip around the world and some did not want him to make that journey. They felt he was too old and that he might die while he was gone. Neither was a concern to brother Keeble: He did not care where he died, as long as he was preaching. He wanted to die preaching, and he almost did. Marshall Keeble's final sermon was delivered on Wednesday evening, April 17, 1968. On Saturday, April 20, he ceased from a life of preaching, for the Hand which he had held led him home."

Willie Cato learned well from this powerful man of God. As you read the book you find that Willie was also a gentle soul, full of love for his Maker and for his fellow man. Never did you hear an unkind word from him about others. And Willie shared this very same desire to preach until his final breath.

Sunday, September 22, 1991, was a very busy day for Willie Cato and his beloved wife, Maxine. They had visited two congregations of the Lord's church, where Willie spoke to the brethren. As president of African Christian Schools, Willie was also asked to say a few words at an area-wide singing which was held at International Bible College in Florence, Alabama later that evening. I had the privilege of being in that audience. When I saw them come in I immediately made my way to the front to give Willie and Maxine a big hug before the singing began. It was always a joy to see these two special friends in the Lord.

After a few opening songs, Willie went to the podium to speak. During his talk, the crowd learned that he would be retiring on December 31st and that a younger man, Henry Huffard, had been selected to take his place. Henry was on the front row and you could see that he was a quiet, humble man, full of the love of the Lord, just like Willie Cato and Marshall Keeble. Willie concluded by inviting the audience to a special breakfast the next morning which was being sponsored by African Christian Schools.

Carefully, Willie took his cane and made his way down the stairs to sit by Maxine. The glorious singing began once again to fill the room. Within minutes another heavenly event occurred. Brother Willie Cato did exactly what he had always wanted to do -- he went away to be with his Lord and Savior after preaching three times in one day! I saw his head, weary from all the days events, lean over onto his wife's shoulder. Help was immediately summoned, but God was already taking care of my dear friend.

The human side of me wept and prayed throughout the evening. But a portion of the book Willie and I had labored on kept going through my mind:

"Seeing Marshall Keeble in Heaven will be a great joy for me. I can almost see him at the gate with his hand outstretched saying, 'Well, son, I'm glad to see you. Come on in!'"

Once, when communicating with each other

about the book, I told Willie I hope to sit down and have a cup of tea with him and with brother Keeble when we all get to heaven. Willie said he would have it ready for me.

That's one "tea party" I plan to attend!

--World Evangelism, P.O. Box 72, Winona, MS 38967.

The Inspiration Of The Scriptures

Continued From Page 2

writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (II Timothy 3:15-17). In connection with the passage just cited, we suggest that II Peter 1:3 be read.

Another passage, I Peter 1:10-12, shows that God, through the Holy Spirit, guided the prophets as they wrote of the coming Messiah and the gospel of Christ. We quote: "Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what time or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them. To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preach the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven; which things angels desire to look into." Thus, the message preached and taught by the prophets and apostles was above and beyond the comprehension of ordinary human beings.

Another passage of Scripture is of supreme importance. Please read carefully: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved (carried along, as the wind bears along a sailing ship) by the Holy Spirit" (II Peter 1:20-21). Hence, the prophecies of Isaiah, or Jeremiah, or Daniel, *et al.* were not their own interpretations. It is foolish to say, as do the Catholics, that one cannot understand the scripture without infallible aid, for God has commanded us to understand it (Ephesians 3:3-4; 5:17). People with intelligence can read and study the word of God with understanding if they put their minds to it (II Timothy 2:15).

Another passage of great importance is I Corinthians 2:11-13, which shall now read: "For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teaches; combining spiritual things with spiritual words."

What is the meaning of the foregoing quotation?

Well, just as one cannot know what is in the mind of a man until he, in words, tells him: even so, one cannot know what is in the mind of God until he, in words, tells him. This is what is spoken of as verbal inspiration. God not only chose the thought but also the very words needed to express his will to the human family. Hence, the Bible is the verbally inspired word of God (I Corinthians 14:37; II Peter 3:15-16).

That verbal inspiration is demanded is shown by the fact that the truth of a certain passage turns upon whether words used are singular or plural.

We shall see: "Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Galatians 3:16, emphasis mine, W.A.H.).

Another striking example of verbal inspiration is found in John 8:58, which reads as follows: "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." Thus, Jesus' argument turns upon the tenses of the verbs. "Was" is past tense, but "am" is present tense. Sometimes, gospel preachers are accused of splitting hairs over nothing, but what about Paul and Jesus??

In Matthew 5:18, Jesus teaches that even the jots and titles are so important that not one of these shall fail until all of the law should be fulfilled. This example shows that not only the thoughts conveyed by Scripture, but also the individual words themselves, as valid vehicles of thoughts and as spelled out by individual letters, are possessed of infallible truth and will surely find their fulfillment.

Jesus said, "The Scriptures cannot be broken" (John 10:35). If the Scriptures could have been broken, they would have been centuries ago. Infidels, agnostics, atheists, and humanists are powerless to destroy the word of God.

God's word will be His standard of judgment in the great day to come: "He that rejects me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

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Your Teaching -- "From Heaven Or Of Men?"

By **KENNETH McCLAIN**

While Jesus was teaching in the temple, "... the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or of men? . . . " (Matthew 21:23-25). Jesus always answered any proper question that was asked him. However, on this occasion Jesus used their question to expose their insincerity. Jesus is saying that John's teaching and preaching is either by the authority of the God of heaven or by the authority of men. How do some people prove their teaching today?

Some prove their teaching by the writings of Joseph Smith; some follow the writings of Mary Baker Eddy; some accept the Watchtower publications; and some believe the Pope of Rome has the final authority. Division will come when we follow the ideals of uninspired men. I Peter 3:15 tells us: "... be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." Many religious people today if asked for a reason for their practices, will respond by saying, "That is what my church manual teaches -- my preacher or my priest teaches." They say such even after you have shown from the scriptures that their doctrine is wrong. Should not our teaching be proven by the scriptures? "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21). The Bereans "... were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they . . . searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

There is no way we can have unity without a common standard of authority. Think of the confusion we would have without a standard of weights, measurements and telling time.

There is no way we can have unity without a common standard of authority. Think of the confusion we would have without a standard of weights, measurements and telling time. God is not the author of confusion (I Corinthians 14:33) and does not approve the conflicting doctrine of religious sects of our day. The God of heaven gave all authority both in heaven and earth to His Son Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18). Christ, having all authority in heaven and earth sent the apostles, guided by the Holy Spirit, to teach all things he had commanded them (Matthew 28:20). The Spirit

guided them into all truth (John 16:13), so they only taught the doctrine of Christ. In II John 9 we read: "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." We are not to listen even if an apostle or an angel from heaven teach another

doctrine (Galatians 1:8). The inspired scripture is all we need to make us complete in Christ. We need to be like David when he said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

--2842 Shelby Street, Indianapolis, IN 46203.

Scriptural Authority



Dalton Key

The New Testament clearly teaches that all authority in religion stems from Jesus Christ. Just prior to his ascension Christ declared, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). Because all authority has been divinely ascribed to Christ, we must limit ourselves within the bounds of this authority. We must abide in his doctrine (II John 9). The doctrine of Christ, and thus the authority of Christ, is contained within the New Testament. In fact, the authoritative, binding doctrine of our Lord is the New Testament. All that we believe, teach, and practice must therefore be grounded within the New Testament law of Christ. This is the very idea inherent in Colossians 3:17, which teaches, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." In short, if we haven't the authority of Christ for a teaching or a practice, we had best not promote the teaching or perform the practice. Apostasy begins where respect for divine authority ends.

In short, if we haven't the authority of Christ for a teaching or a practice, we had best not promote the teaching or perform the practice. Apostasy begins where respect for divine authority ends.

And yet a thing is not wrong simply because it is not mentioned specifically within the pages of the New Testament. The law of Christ authorizes many things without ever mentioning them specifically. Where in the New Testament do we find church buildings, song books, microphones, gospel papers, etc.? We fully and firmly believe these and many other things within the sphere of the church are divinely authorized though never mentioned by name within the Sacred Text. How can such be true?

When the Bible commands us to do something (by means of direct command, necessary inference, or approved example), yet fails to specify how or by what means it is to be done, we are left free to choose an expedient method to carry out the command, so long as it does not violate another precept or principle of Scripture.

For example, observe the command to "go" and "preach" (Mark 16:15). In issuing this command, Christ did not specify a required method of going; neither did he bind upon us a manner of preaching. Thus any expedient manner of going or preaching is authorized within the general sphere of the command to "go" and "preach." We may go by air, by sea, by land in any of a number of expedient ways; further, we may preach by radio, by television, from the pulpit, through newsprint, by personal contact, or by any other honest means. To bind a manner of going or a method of preaching upon others would be to bind a law which has not bound.

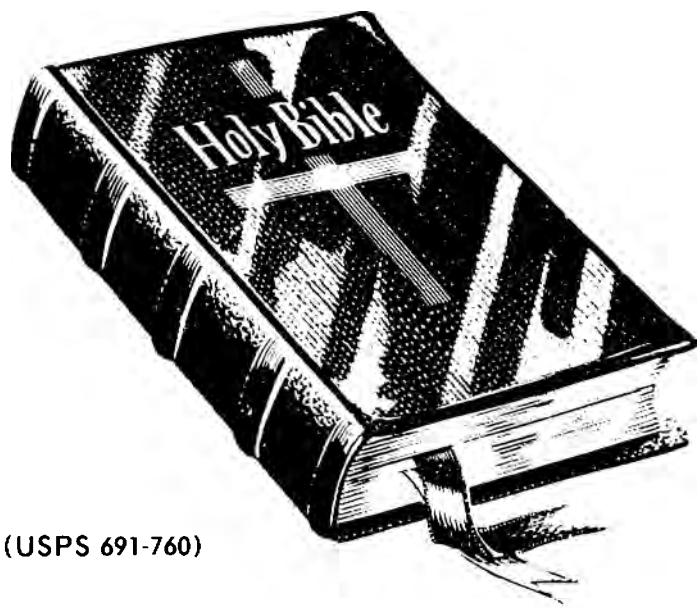
But we must also be careful not to loose that which God has bound. Look again at Christ's command in Mark 16:15. Christ not only commanded that preaching be done, but he went on to specify the message that was to be preached. He has not left the content of the preacher's message within the realm of expediency. He commanded, "Preach the gospel." Some time later, Paul charged Timothy to "Preach the word" (II Timothy 4:2). No other message is authorized.

We realize the complexities of this issue. Some matters are not as "cut and dried" as the foregoing examples. Yet the matter of divine authority is important. It is a foundational building block upon which the church must come to rest. Conflicting attitudes with regard to divine authority have prompted the division which currently plagues the religious world. May we take care to "speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11).

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"I am not mad, most noble
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—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 27

OCTOBER 25, 1991

NUMBER 43

In Memoriam

Editor's Note: This special edition contains the transcription of the funeral service of sister Gus Nichols, held Wednesday, October 9, 1991 at the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

A Tribute



William Woodson Being here today stirs so many memories in my mind. I think often of the church here in Jasper. I think of the Nichols family and think of those very pleasant times now, not too long ago. But, I think also that in a very real sense, a great chapter of my life is closing, and there is a sadness about that, not for me, but for a past that never can be known again. I know you understand what I am saying.

We have assembled today because all of us have known and loved and appreciated a great Christian lady, truly one of God's great works in this world. I know that you would "Amen" that it has been a joy, a privilege and an honor to know her, to be known by her, and to both love her and be loved by her.

Matilda F. Nichols, residence 500 Third Avenue, Jasper, passed away on October 6, 1991, age 97 years. She is survived by her four sons, Flavil Nichols of Jasper, Foy Nichols of Indianapolis, Indiana, Hardeman Nichols of Dallas, Texas, Hudson Nichols of Falls of Rough, Kentucky; her four daughters, Gracie (Mrs. Frank) Young of Jasper, Vodie (Mrs. A. J.) Kerr of Jasper, Bertha (Mrs. Rile) Blackwood of Jasper, and Carrie (Mrs. W. T.) Hamilton of Waxahachie Texas. She is survived by one sister, Pearl (Mrs. Ted) Ellas of Jasper, 15 grandchildren and 22 great grandchildren.

And to read that record, while true, certainly is not adequate. It does not underscore the countless deeds of kindness and love and admonition and



Mrs. Gus (Matilda) Nichols
March 29, 1894 - October 6, 1991

discipline and all that went in to making, as the late brother Gus Nichols used to say, "forty cents worth of nickels." You can't put all of that in an obituary. You can't put all of that into a tribute, and I am sure that the four sons and four daughters and the companions, and the grandchildren and great grandchildren understand that much better than even any of us could.

There are some passages that I have thought about, just two, and I'm sure that you remember these well indeed, from the book of Psalms. "Precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of his saints," (Psalm 116:15). Isn't that a beautiful thought? Our eyes are somehow blinded by the sadness and even tears that we understandably will shed, but God does not see such things as we do. He says that's previous. And then the great statement that we have all heard so many times, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from

henceforth, yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labors and their works do follow them," (Revelation 14:13).

And to read that record, while true, certainly is not adequate. It does not underscore the countless deeds of kindness and love and admonition and discipline and all that went in to making, as the late Bro. Gus Nichols used to say, "forty cents worth of nickels."

I have thought the last two or three days what I would say on this occasion. I want to talk about three words, one very briefly, and two with a bit more and then brother Duncan will speak. First, is the word "honor." One of the great joys in my life has been to be the son of my mother and father. I have been honored by that all of my life. The longest day I live, I will cherish and appreciate them for giving me life and caring for me and helping me. Never forget it! There is also a very close honor that brother and sister Nichols established with me, as they did with so many other people. It was an honor to know them. It was an honor to be in their home and by their hearth and especially in their heart, and it's an honor for me today to be asked to say something. Some sixteen years ago brother Gus Nichols was also buried. I thought about the words of that old country song. I'm not a great fan of country music, but one of the songs tells, "Where have you been? I have waited for you forever in a day. Where have you been? Life is just not the same since you're away. "If what brother Nichols taught me, and I believe it, after nearly sixteen years, this good couple is together again. Isn't that a great thought.

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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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In Memoriam

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It has been an honor to know her and to be known by her.

The second word is the word "home." There are a lots of things that could be said about the home as I remember it. First, in the home there was love and trust of each other. The writer of Proverbs said, "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her," and then, "She will do him good . . . all the days of her life" (Proverbs 31:11-12). If any lady ever was ever trusted by her husband and did good to her husband all of the day of her life, sisters Nichols did that. I don't know whether anybody else in this world knows about what I am going to say just now. You may know it well. But except for my dear wife, Jean, as far as I know, nobody else in this world knows it. Just before Jean and I were married, brother Nichols thought I needed to be told something. I'm sure you had that experience as well. You know, he kindly squinted that right eye just a little bit and cocked that head over to the side and you knew that something was going to be said that you better listen to. We were standing out in the yard at the old home place, and he said, "Well, you're going to be married." I said, "Yes sir." He said, "Well, want you to be a good husband, want you to have a good home. Want the Lord to bless it. Want you to have children, want you to have a good life." "But, he said, "I want to tell you something." He said, "Let me tell you how to do that." I knew he was going to tell me, so I said, "Yes." When he got on one of those notions, you must might as well accept it. He was going to tell you. You may not want to hear it, but he's going to tell you any way. He said, "Be sure that you and your wife trust each other." He said, "When Tildie and I got married, we promised each other that as long as we lived, we would trust each other completely, and we would never, never do something to destroy that trust." Now he said, "You remember that and you live like that." To the



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Guest Editorial



Nick Hamilton

[Editor's Note: The following editorial appeared in the Pleasant Valley Bulletin the week following sister Nichols' death]

I wish you could have known my grandmother. She was as remarkable of a woman as you

would ever have met.

It was granddad who receive the attention during his life as a preacher. He was known as a man of the book, a walking Bible. His thorough knowledge of the Scriptures became the standard by which the rest of us who preach measured our commitment to studying. He paid the price by spending the necessary hours -- and I do mean hours -- every day in his study of that sacred book. And he mixed his knowledge with action. No one I know was more affected by what he had learned in Scripture than was he.

But it was grandmother who was our favorite. She had that gentle spirit which drew people like a magnet. Her brilliance shown most in her keen sense of humor. You simply could not stay sad when around her. Give her a minute and she would have you laughing, too.

If hospitality is the standard of Christian service, she tops the list of God's favorite. She never knew how many people would have their feet under her table at any given meal,

right up to the time grace was said. Granddad invited whoever was around to lunch. She never fussed about it- just got down more plates and fed them all. Most meals at her house were like the circus-big crowds and lots of entertainment.

She kept her priorities clear all her life. She stayed home so granddad could be out preaching, shouldering a hefty load of responsibility. She played a big role in the rearing of her eight children. Of the four boys, all of them preach, and three of them are fulltime preachers. Three of her daughters married preachers. Not too shabby! Then, there were the two grandchildren and several other people's children whom she also raised. The next generation came along and called her "Ma Nickie". I am only sorry they could not have the intimate contact with her which so dramatically influenced me--and so many others. Any idea how much her influence will be felt in eternity?

Ninety-seven years of really living wore out the earthly body God gave her. But, my, did she ever use it for His glory! About the only thing different this past Sunday, she met with Him without the limitations imposed by the flesh. What a day!

Certainly I will miss her. I already do. But with a mind full of memories, and a heart bowed low, not with grief, but with gratitude, what could I possibly want to change? Her life has been absorbed into glory. Her memory will be treasured by a host of descendants, both physical and spiritual, who, today, rise up and call her blessed.

-- Via Pleasant Valley Church of Christ, 10900 Rodney Parhans Road, Little Rock, AK 72212.

best of my ability, I have tried and Jean has through the years. I believe that was true in that home.

The second thing about that home that always impressed me was the children. You can tell a lot about a home by the children. That is why the Lord included the rearing of children in the qualifications of elders. You can do all sorts of things with the neighbors and their kids, but something about your own children, you can't always succeed in tricking them. And if you are not genuine, they will catch on. And if you are not genuine, they will let it show. And so in that home, there was the influence of a godly mother and a godly father that has reflected itself in eight children and fifteen grandchildren, and so on. Isn't that a marvelous monument to a life? Isn't that a legacy to remember and to cherish? And so when

the diapers were being changed, and the meals were being cooked, and the songs were being sung, and getting ready to go to church and going to school, and all the other things of rearing of the family, the real ingredient that was being put into that family was the love of God, the service of Jesus Christ, and the loyalty to the church, and the loyalty to the Bible. The children take on the characteristics which the parents impart to them. I remember about that home also that it was a refuge for those that needed a place for a meal, for a visit, or for a stay. I think now we smile at the arrangement that sometimes was made for a meal. I think one of the strangest to me was a meal with cornflakes and turnip greens and corn bread. Where would you find that? And yet, if it was a

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In Memoriam

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bowl of black eyed peas and cornbread, or cheese and macaroni, it didn't make any difference, because you were in a home of a man and woman of God, who loved you, loved the Lord. It didn't make any difference whether you were eating cheese or crackers with water or a seven course meal if they ever had one, because that was a home where what was important was present. And they knew whether it was finery or simplicity, it was only for a time, and what they were about, and what they wanted to help you to be about was for eternity. That's the kind of home they had.

The next word I want to talk about very briefly is the word "heaven." Most of you perhaps knew that sister Nichols was led in obedience to the gospel of Christ after she was quite well grown. First, she was not a Christian when they married, I understand. The day finally came when she was baptized into Christ, and if you knew her as I knew her, and I'm sure that others knew her even better, she did not make that change because somebody pressured her. She had a kind of stubborn streak in her, call it fortitude, that's a better word, but she didn't do things like that just to please somebody. She made a decision about the truth of God from the heart because she wanted to go to heaven when she died. And so how ever many years ago it was, I don't know exactly, but the day of her baptism, one of the reasons for it was that at some point in her life there would be a service in which she would be remembered as a woman who wanted to go to heaven when she died.

Secondly, she wanted her husband to go to heaven. She wanted her children to go and as many people as could possibly be reached by her husband and family and herself, would go with her. Perhaps you have heard the story of the cyclone that blew away most of the property. But there is also the story of the conversation, and I remember hearing them tell it one winter evening again, just the three of us. She said, "I told Gus, I'll take care of the family, you do the preaching." You can't be the kind of preacher that the Lord wants you to be when you are always tied up with other things besides preaching and studying. And you think about a woman that's willing to take the responsibility of all that entails and you can just be assured there wasn't going to be all that much money. Here is a woman who didn't care all that much about whether there was a lots of money or little money, but there would be folks in heaven, because of what her husband could do. And if he doesn't have the opportunity to do it as he is capable of doing, there are a lot of folks that, otherwise, wouldn't be in heaven. And when you think about it that way, isn't that a marvelous tribute to a Christian woman's heart? She knew about heaven as it related to the church. It wasn't a problem with her about being present for services. She didn't have to say well now, look, you know, if you need to we will stand on our heads and we will turn cartwheels in church, and we will address your felt needs with every conceivable kind of gimmick and trick, just so we can somehow entice you to come, because otherwise, you won't come. I

guess she would say, "I don't even know what you're talking about, but that's not why I go to church." "I go to church because the Lord has taught me that by means of what I am doing in my life, in my family, with my neighbors, and in the work of the church, that's the way I'm going to heaven by the love and grace of God." I don't know that she ever put it into that kind of words, but that is what was going on.

And so you and I are here because we remember this wonderful lady. We are here because we love and appreciate and we share the grief of the family, but you know deep down inside there is a sense of Christian awareness of victory. Long years ago, she knew that some such day as this would come. Isn't it touching that on the Lord's day, both she and brother Nichols went to meet God. And so today we are sad, yes. Last night driving back from Montgomery, I had to quit thinking about her and brother Nichols or I would have been crying so much I couldn't even drive home. I understand about that grief, but I also understand about that victory. I understand that by their character, they have encouraged and strengthened, and provided examples for us. And so they have come to be together in the care of God, and they have left a legacy of Christian character, devotion, love, and service. And so it is an honor to be here today, and it is also an honor to say a word of encouragement and commendation concerning this great lady.

And now brother Bobby Duncan, who preached here for a number of years and now preaches in Adamsville. He is one of the truly great preachers of the gospel of Christ, not only in Alabama, but in our great brotherhood, loved and respected, brother Bobby Duncan.

A Tribute



Bobby Duncan

when he was talking about funerals. He said, "If you want a lot of folks to attend your funeral, you had better die young. If you live to be old you will outlive all of the people who know you." Sister Nichols has proven brother Lonnie to be mistaken in that respect today, but we must confess that she is an exception to the rule.

I, like all of you, have known the Nichols family for many, many years, but I really didn't know them well until about 1976, after brother Nichols died and it was learned that I would move here to begin preaching where sister Nichols' illustrious husband had been preaching. As you might

It is truly an honor to be invited to say a few words on an occasion like this. I suppose my task would have been somewhat easier if William Woodson hadn't done such a marvelous job. He said so much, and he said it so very well. I remember some words that I heard Bro. Lonnie Kelly say a number of years ago

imagine it was with some anticipation, some anxiety that I prepared to move. A number of people spoke words of encouragement. Some of the most encouraging things that I received were words of encouragement, cards and letters, from members of the Nichols family. We have a large number of preachers here today. You can imagine how I must have felt moving here to preach where brother Gus Nichols had preached for so long. And of course, I had known the Nichols family for a long time, but not really. I had known them at a distance. I was not in Jasper very long until I realized that I wasn't going to have any problem at all from sister Nichols. She was one of the greatest supporters, one of the greatest encouragers that I had in this congregation, or that any preacher could ever have anywhere.

It is with some sadness that we have come here today, but we have all known that this time was coming. I do not believe that there is one of us here, who believes the Bible, who would say that we are sorry that sister Nichols has ended her earthly pilgrimage. She lived a long time, relatively speaking, on this earth, and now she has gone to be with the Lord. Sister Nichols was a strong woman. She had to be strong physically in her younger days to be able to take care of the family, to rear eight children. My wife and I haven't reared eight children, most of us have not. Sister Nichols did a marvelous job. She was a great deal stronger I think than the brotherhood was when brother Nichols died. She seemed to adjust better than the rest of the brotherhood at his loss. She was a strong person.

I suppose we think we have to be fancy, and so it's just not worth the trouble. Sister Nichols proved that is not so, and yet those who sat at her table always felt welcome and were always satisfied, and felt like they had participated in a great feast.

Brother Woodson mentioned the hospitality that was always present in the Nichols home. I didn't understand that a great degree until I moved to Jasper and then I learned to some degree why that was true. I came to realize that if brother Nichols was going to eat lunch somebody was going to eat with him, because there was probably somebody with him nearly all the time. And how wonderful it is that he had a wife and that I have a wife who was willing to share whatever fare we had with whomever happened to be present when meal time came. Hospitality is becoming a lost art. I suppose we think we have to be fancy, and so it's just not worth the trouble. Sister Nichols proved that is not so, and yet those who sat at her table always felt

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welcome and were always satisfied, and felt like they had participated in a great feast.

Sister Nichols was an example of faithfulness and strength in service to God. She was always present at the service whenever she had the opportunity of being present and was physically able to come.

When we had the very first Gus Nichols Words of Truth Lectureship, the attendance was not what we had hoped. Some of the members of the church here at Sixth Avenue and some of the members of the church throughout the county took the seriousness of that rather lightly. It was a taxing thing to come out here and be here at 9 o'clock in the morning and stay all morning and then all afternoon, and then back again at night, but sister Nichols didn't know that. She just came to every one of those sessions. She did that as long as she was able. Can you imagine what kind of encouragement that was to those of us who were doing everything that we could to have a program like that?

I never knew her to be involved in any fusses, any controversies. She was a peaceable woman. She was firm in her stand for that which was right. She believed the truth, and she lived conscientiously in harmony therewith.

I want to mention three passages which I believe are appropriate. First of all, Proverbs 31:10 says, "Who can find a virtuous woman, for he price is far above rubies." Whoever wrote that had his sense of values properly arranged. He knew something about priorities. They are like the old hog that brother Nichols used to talk about. He said you could set a bucket of slop and a bucket of diamonds down before an old hog, and he would choose the slop every time. There are some people like that about their priorities. The writer of that statement in Proverbs says that a worthy woman, a virtuous woman has a price far above rubies. Now, we wouldn't want to read that passage at a funeral of some woman who was not what she ought to be. We have no reluctance, no hesitancy to read that passage as we think about sister Nichols.

A second passage is a passage that was written in connection with the death of a man. In Genesis 25:8, the Bible talks about the death of Abraham and chronicles his death in these few words. "Then Abraham gave up the ghost and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people." Now you think about all that the Bible says about Abraham, all about his greatness, his mighty deeds, his mighty faith, and then whenever time comes to tell about his death, it tells about his death in those few words. But look at those few words. Abraham gave up the ghost. That's what death is. When the spirit leaves the body, death occurs. James said in James 2, "the body without the spirit is dead." He didn't say the spirit without the body is dead. "The body without the spirit, is dead." The spirit lives on. Abraham gave up the ghost and died. The Bible is not reluctant to talk about death. We don't like to use that word. We say somebody passed away, somebody expired. We talk about the deceased. The Bible said Abraham gave up the ghost and died. You see, those who put their faith and trust in God don't have to be afraid to talk about death. Sister Nichols has died; her spirit has left the

body. This says that Abraham gave up the ghost and died in a good old age. Not many people in this world live past 97. Relatively speaking, she has lived a great deal longer than most other people. But this also says that "Abraham gave up the ghost and died in a good old age, or an old man and full of years." I think that was talking about the quality. Sister Nichols had a good old age, not just the number of years, but the kind of old age she had. She was not bitter. She did not grumble and complain. Since the early part of this year, she has had to spend her time in a health care center, but there was not an hour of the day that she was there in all of those months, that some member of the family was not with her, sitting with her. One did not leave until the other came to take that one's place, the few exceptions in two or three cases where members of the family went to a funeral and some close personal friend of sister Nichols, usually sister Frances Evans came and sat with her. And so sister Nichols died in a good old age. Who could hope for anything better than that in old age. And "full of years" has reference not to the number of years, but to the quality of life that characterized her. She was full of years. Brother Woodson has already talked about those years and how full they were with her husband, with her family, with the great work that she did.

Then the latter part of that verse says that Abraham was "gathered to his people." That doesn't mean that Abraham was carried out to the family cemetery and was buried, he wasn't. His family members were buried down in Ur of the Chaldees or up in Haran. Abraham was carried down there to the Cave of Machpelah where Sarah was the only member of that family who had been buried there. Why does it say he was gathered to his people? It is not talking about the cemetery to which the body was taken. It is talking about where the real man went. Abraham was gathered to his people, and his people were not necessarily his family members. I don't know where his family members were. Indication is that they were idolatrous people down in the land of Ur of Chaldees, but I know where his people were. His people were those, who like Abraham had been faithful to God and who died in that faith, and therefore, went to be with the Lord.

Sister Nichols has been gathered to her people. In a little while, we are going to take the body up to Walker Memory Gardens and deposit it there, but that is not where she is. She has been gathered to her people. Brother Ray Dutton made reference to the fact that if what brother Nichols taught is true, and we think it is, that she is now gone to be with him. Next month it would be sixteen years since we gathered here to pay a tribute of respect to brother Nichols. Ray said, "I can just hear him saying, 'What took you so long?'" I really believe that she is gone to be with her Lord and with the sainted dead of all ages. This is a sad occasion and emotional experience for us, but I thank God that the members of this family have the faith to be able to be happy at this time, as well, to rejoice. I am sure that you have seen the little parable for mothers that I am going to read to you as we gather here today to pay a tribute of respect to this godly woman.

"The young mother set her feet on the path of life. 'Is the way long?' she asked. And her guide said, 'Yes, and the way is hard and you will be old before you reach the end of it, but the end will be better than the beginning.' But the young mother was happy, and she could not believe that anything could be better than these years. So she played with her children, and gathered flowers for them along the way, and bathed with them in the clear streams, and the sun shone on them, and life was

good. And the young mother cried, 'Nothing will ever be lovelier than this!' And then night came, and storm, and the path was dark, and the children shook with fear and cold, and the mother drew them close and covered them with her mantle and the children said, 'Oh mother, we are not afraid for you are near and no harm can come!' And the mother said, 'This is better than the brightness of day. For I have taught my children courage.'

And the morning came and there was a hill ahead, and the children came and grew weary, and the mother was weary. But at all times she said to the children, a little patience and we are there. So the children climbed and when they reached the top they said, 'We could not have done it without you mother.' And the mother said when she laid down that night and looked up at the stars, 'This is a better day than the last, for my children have learned fortitude in the face of hardness. Yesterday, I gave them courage. Today, I have given them strength.'

And the next day came strange clouds which darkened the earth, clouds of war and hate and evil. And the children groped and stumbled, and the mother said, 'Look up, lift your eyes to the light. And the children looked and saw above the clouds an everlasting glory and it guided them and brought them beyond the darkness. And that night the mother said, 'This is the best day of all, for I have shown my children God.'

And the days went on and the weeks and the months and years, and the mother grew old and she was little and thin, but her children were tall and strong and walked with courage and when the way was rough they lifted her for she was as light as a feather. And at last they came to a hill and beyond the hill they could see a shining road and golden gates flung wide and the mother said, 'I have reached the end of my journey and now I know that the end is better than the beginning, for my children can walk alone and their children after them! And the children said, 'You will always walk with us mother, even when you have gone through the gates.' And they stood and watched her as she went on alone, and the gates closed after her, and they said, 'We cannot see her but she is with us still. A mother like ours is more than a memory, she is a living presence,' by Temple Bailey.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, the apostle Paul wrote, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (precede) them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

I feel as Bro. Woodson said, that as we leave here today, we certainly will leave behind a portion of our lives, some very precious memories indeed, but we do not leave here without hope and without joy because of the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Overcoming The Past



Johnny Ramsey

In our victory over sin, no battle is more important than the struggle we often face in overcoming the past. The devil tries hard to dishearten us concerning the mistakes of yesterday. Conversely, no blessings from heaven exceeds the joy we know in the forgiveness of sins. One of the brightest

contributions of Christianity is to realize that God is merciful toward unrighteousness (Hebrews 8:12). When we truly come into a covenant relationship with our Maker, our iniquities are blotted out (Acts 3:19). In 1750, Oliver Goldsmith wrote of "memory as a fond deceiver that turns all the past to pain." Aristotle, quoting a contemporary, bluntly stated: "Even God cannot change the past."

It is true that "bread cast upon the water will return again" (Ecclesiastes 11:1) and we do reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7), but our Creator has the power to give us a new start where error is cleansed and sin is remembered no more (Hebrews 10:12; I John 1:7).

John Mark lived long enough to overcome his past selfishness and the Bible's final references to him are exceedingly favorable (II Timothy 4:11). Even the immoral man who was withdrawn from by the Corinthian church returned to the fold of truth (I Corinthians 2:1; I Corinthians 5).

The most memorable parable of the thirty-plus that Jesus told is the thrilling saga of a prodigal son who later came back home (Luke 15). There certainly is a land of beginning again! It is far better than the fountain of youth or a magic lamp - it is "the new and living way" that Christ provides (Hebrews 10:20). The poet wistfully wrote:

I wish there were some wonderful place
Called the land of beginning again
Where all our mistakes and heartaches
And all our poor, selfish grief
Could be dropped like a shabby old coat
At the door -- and never put on again."

In a book of poems, compiled by C. T. Howell, is this challenging dedication: "To all who have regrets for the past; to all who have need for faith in the future."

In view of these sentiments that we all share, was it not a glorious act of kindness that Jesus poured out on Simon Peter in John 21? Just before He went back to heaven the Savior gave the apostle who denied Him thrice, a three-fold opportunity to confess his love and loyalty! That day would never be forgotten by the one who had wept bitterly over his cowardice (Matthew 26:75) but now could affirm his devotion to the Master.

Just before He went back to heaven the Savior gave the apostle who denied Him thrice, a three-fold opportunity to confess his love and loyalty! That day would never be forgotten by the one who had wept bitterly over his cowardice (Matthew 26:75) but now could affirm his devotion to the Master.

Zacchaeus promised to clean up his past as far as possible (Luke 19) and Paul later preached "the faith he had once destroyed" (Galatians 1:23). To be a new creation in the Lord is the abundant life Jesus promised (John 10:10; II Corinthians 5:27; Ephesians 4:24). The way of truth is so powerful

that even the Corinthians and the Cretians of the first century left debauchery and turned to the Lord. There is no finer phrase concerning the power of the gospel than the one in I Corinthians 6:9-11 where all the sins of the Roman Empire are listed and then Paul says: "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." When sinners repent there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of heaven (Luke 15:10). Jehovah is the kind of teacher who enjoys using his eraser to wipe out our past mistakes. But we do have to correct our errors according to His standard of Truth.

There is no finer phrase concerning the power of the gospel than the one in I Corinthians 6:9-11 where all the sins of the Roman Empire are listed and then Paul says: "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Sadly, some brethren today try to "play-like" sins are forgiven when they are not. This compounds the problem. In regard to marriage, divorce, and remarriage we cannot make up our own new rules just because the world is messed up. We dare not fill the church with adulterers just because we have an obsession concerning numerical growth. After all, God will only add to the church "such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47) and impenitent

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Something Better

James Watkins

Someone has said, "We should not waste our time doing good things when there are better things that we can do." While this sounds a little unusual upon first hearing, properly considered, it makes good sense.

Sacrifice to God is good, but obedience is better (1 Samuel 15:22). One may feel on occasions, that his liberality will suffice for his attendance, but, of course, it will not. God will accept only love as our motivation (1 Corinthians 13:1-3), and true love does not make deals. To the contrary, it seeks out and utilizes every avenue to manifest itself.

A day spent with God, in his worship and service, is infinitely better than a day spent in good, clean, wholesome recreation. How many times, however, do we find people, yet basically good people, putting their sports, secular interests, likes and even their dislikes ahead of the assembly? Dedication to God, fidelity in his service, is a matter of pre-determined commitment, i.e. priority. The key to proper priority placement is

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The Editor's Pen



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

Assistant Editor

"Teaching"



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

It is imperative that the church teach the gospel to those who know it not. It alone has the power to save the souls of men. It has often been said that God only had one Son -- and that Son was a TEACHER. Surely, that shows us how important it is to teach. In the great commission Jesus gave instructions, ". . . teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you . . ." (Matthew 28:20). When the great persecution arose in Jerusalem, the disciples were scattered, going everywhere preaching/teaching the word of God. With the great need for teaching and great need for teachers, I submit these "Beatitudes for Teachers."

1. Blessed are the teachers who set a good example before their students in all things: for they are worthy members of a great calling.

2. Blessed are the teachers who know their subject: for their students shall learn much.

3. Blessed are the teachers who share with their students that which they have learned: for this is the true nature of teaching.

4. Blessed are the teachers who strive to understand their students: for they will be able to comfort and guide them.

5. Blessed are the teachers who make provision for differences in individuals: for their students will rise up and praise them for their understanding.

6. Blessed are the teachers who make their work interesting and profitable: for they shall attract many into their classes.

7. Blessed are the teachers who exhibit self-control: for they shall influence their students to do likewise.

8. Blessed are the teachers who plan their work wisely: for their students shall be led to more successful understandings.

9. Blessed are the teachers who use a variety of methods: for their classes do not become dull and boring.

10. Blessed are the teachers who maintain good classroom order, for they are leading their students toward self-discipline.

11. Blessed are the teachers who are fair and impartial in evaluating students' work: for they shall enjoy the respect and loyalty of their students.

12. Blessed are the teachers who accept criticism constructively: for they shall improve their efficiency and their personality.

13. Blessed are the teachers who work cooperatively with their associates: for they shall be worthy of recommendation.

14. Blessed are the teachers who hunger and thirst after new materials and ideas: for they shall broaden their own perspective of teaching.

15. Blessed are thou, teacher, though your reward may seem small, and some may criticize you, and rebuke you, and say all manner of discouraging things to you -- Rejoice; and be exceeding glad: for yours is a great work.

--Selected.

(Editorial Note: Let us never fail to honor teachers in our Bible classes and teachers in other areas of the work of the church. Tell them that you as a parent, as a student, as an elder, deacon, preacher, or member of the body of Christ do appreciate their efforts. It takes great teachers to grow great congregations).

Humility . . . A Righteous Virtue

Danny Burleson

Who is the greatest? Even the early disciples were not immune from asking this question. But Jesus was ready for them. Seeing the little children laughing and playing He called one of them to Him, sat the child before 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 is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3, 4).

Jesus dealt with the Jews daily. He knew their besetting sins. He could see the distrust, the greed, the impurity in their lives. How needful it was that

they should return to a child-like state, casting away the wicked ways of the world.

But if Jesus preached the need of child-like humility, He also exemplified it in His life. Only in this way could He command His disciples to be filled with love, having a humble spirit, and expect them to accept His words.

The Lord knew that pride and ambition are rooted deep in the nature of man. It is easy to be overcome by greed for power and lust for high positions. Even the disciples were anxiously awaiting the establishment of the earthly kingdom

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The Challenge Of Our Degenerating Society



Tim Rice

Perhaps at no time in the history of the world has it been more acceptable to commit sin than at the present. One might counter, "But always those three avenues of sin: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life have been available to man." Yes, but when in the history of our country

has it been so acceptable to embrace the sin that comes through these avenues?

In many ways, the climate is proper in our society for the devil to plant and harvest his crop of sin and destruction. Marriage, divorce, and remarriage is accepted by popular demand, as people either ignore or twist the Scripture's teaching against such practice. Fashionable nudity is all the vogue and is more likely to keep one out of a good restaurant than some professed churches. Pornography is becoming more available each day via the VCR and cable programming. Movies are seldom geared to anything but monetary profit and therefore cater to the animal desires of the masses. Television subtly or overtly urges tolerance for what the Bible defines as sin. The writers imply that those who are intolerant of sin are narrow-minded and bigoted, and perhaps a little ignorant. God's word is not simply being twisted by the entertainment industry; more than that, it is being treated as if it did not exist! Intellectualism is being substituted for holiness. Materialism has supplanted spirituality.

Once liquor was available across the county line, or the state line, but now it is across the checkout line, next to the cereal. A recent high school football player told of his recruitment by Notre Dame and the several drinking parties in which he indulged on his visit to the university. Should we expect it any different when on each televised college football game beer is advertised? The sin of drinking is acceptable in our society. Even the babies wear "Spuds" sweatshirts. And then mothers and fathers wonder why their children become alcoholics or are killed in automobile accidents.

Sins of the tongue are at an all time high. Why is this true? Television writers were responsible enough not to let "The Beaver" curse, but many

young hero actors today would put a sailor to shame. This terribly irresponsible action on the part of television networks results in our innocent children learning to curse even while in nursery school. Especially repulsive to Bible believers is the phrase heard almost every night on the tube: "Oh, my God," delivered, usually, in a sing-song fashion. Such lack of respect for deity is profoundly discouraging. And some of the gutter language on television is not worthy of discussion, but only revulsion.

The acceptance of sin in our society has resulted in the creation of "psuedo-religion," which seeks to accommodate those who want both sin and the Savior. There are religious groups in which homosexuals are accepted without change, and groups that allow almost every possible violation of the Bible in their efforts to retain membership. Even some congregations who were once faithful to God have become harbors for those trying to serve God and mammon.

The acceptance of sin in our society has resulted in the creation of "psuedo-religion," which seeks to accommodate those who want both sin and the Savior. There are religious groups in which homosexuals are accepted without change, and groups that allow almost every possible violation of the Bible in their efforts to retain membership. Even some congregations who were once faithful to God have become harbors for those trying to serve God and mammon.

What shall we do in the face of these problems? First, we should be "prophets." The word prophecy means "speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God" (Vine's, p. 221). Since in this day God does not speak directly through man, we must use his

inspired word, the Bible, to speak forth the words and counsel of God to those around us. Jonah did not believe his preaching to the heathen of Ninevah would help them, but it did. Micaiah was the one prophet among 401 who would tell the truth, and he did always. God's word can change the world one person at a time!

Secondly, we must remember all accounts are not settled immediately. But Paul reminded a group to whom he spoke to repent "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness . . ." (Acts 17:30, 31).

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Humility . . . A Righteous Virtue

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for personal reasons. Each one wanted a place of position and authority.

This thinking so permeated the mother of two of the disciples, James and John, that she went to Jesus requesting that when the kingdom was established, one of her sons might sit on the right hand of Jesus, and the other on His left. She wanted the best for her sons. And to her that meant the two most prominent positions.

But if Jesus preached the need of child-like humility, He also exemplified it in His life. Only in this way could He command His disciples to be filled with love, having a humble spirit, and expect them to accept His words.

Greed and selfishness have long been the downfall of men. The Lord was aware of the disciples ambitions. He knew they were "babes" in the understanding of His kingdom. The Lord finally brought the question out in the open by asking them, "What were ye reasoning on the way?"

They were ashamed that they were disputing with one another about who would be the greatest in the kingdom. The problem was there. Jesus was aware of it. He then commanded His disciples to lay aside their ambitious views and their pride, and be willing to occupy their proper station -- a very lowly one.

What position are you willing to occupy in the kingdom?

(ED. This was written some seventeen years ago. Yet it is still current. JTS).

Overcoming The Past

Continued From Page 1

people are not in that number (Acts 2:38). As Longfellow brilliantly stated over a century ago so do all sinners need to heed: "Let the dead past bury its dead; Act, act in the living present." Wadsworth was exactly right when he told men not to sigh for the past but to make the future sure! Only in Christ

can this be a joyous reality. When the gospel overwhelms our lives our fellowmen may "think it strange" (I Peter 4:4), but the Judge of all the earth will say, "Well done." We can overcome the past in Jesus' name (Colossians 3:17).

How Much Of My Money Does God Need?



John Gipson

Some people are funny when it comes to giving. I once read about a preacher who visited one of the most stingy members of his church to ask for a contribution to the building fund.

"All you want is my money!" exclaimed the

enraged church member.

"Yes," said the preacher, "that's about all you have that the Lord can use."

A few days later, the man invited the preacher to have lunch with him.

"Preacher, you were right about me," he said. "In my present condition, I am of no value to God. About all I have to give is my money. I realize that God really doesn't want my money but he wants me."

It would be well if all of us could understand this important principle. There is a sense in which God doesn't need anything we have. After all, the gold and the silver and the cattle on a thousand hills belong to him. The apostle Paul reminded the

Athenians, "The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all men life and breath and everything" (Acts 17:24, 25).

Except as expressions of our feelings of penitence, or trust, or gratitude, or homage, all offerings are an insult to God's majesty and power. God is independent. He does not need the service of human hands.

But once we realize who God is and what he has done for us, the natural question will be, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his bounty to me?" (Psalm 116:12).

Remember the churches of Macedonia. Paul said, "For in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of liberality on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will . . . but first they gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God" (II Corinthians 8:2, 3, 5).

There is a sense in which God doesn't need anything we have. After all, the gold and the silver and the cattle on a thousand hills belong to him. The apostle Paul reminded the Athenians, "The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all men life and breath and everything" (Acts 17:24, 25).

When we truly give ourselves to the Lord we will not be quibbling over dollars and cents. "Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work" (II Corinthians 9:7, 8).

--823 W. 6th Street, Little Rock, AR 72203.

The Challenge Of Our Degenerating Society

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Judgment will come!

Finally, never quit being faithful just because the world is sinful. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego trusted God to save them from the fiery furnace. But they said whether he would or not, they would not worship a golden idol (Daniel 3:17, 18). In the

same way, we must be "children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation" (Philippians 2:15).

--4207 Adamsville Parkway, Adamsville, AL 35005.

Something Better

Continued From Page 3

spiritual mindedness (Romans 6:6). Spiritual mindedness comes only when we fill the heart and mind with the teaching of the Spirit (Matthew 5:6; Romans 8:9).

It is equally true that without the practice of this teaching in our lives we cannot establish and retain spiritual priorities (Hebrews 5:12-14; James 1:22; John 7:17). How important then the injunction of Hebrews 10:25 relative to the assembly; not out of duty or necessity, not because of peer pressure or the expectation of others, but from a heart properly motivated and bent upon pleasing him who loves us enough to make complete preparation, at awesome cost, to redeem our souls from death and fill our hearts with joy and gladness.

Sacrifice to God is good, but obedience is better (I Samuel 15:22). One may feel on occasions, that his liberality will suffice for his attendance, but, of

course, it will not. God will accept only love as our motivation (I Corinthians 13:1-3), and true love does not make deals. To the contrary, it seeks out and utilizes every avenue to manifest itself.

Earthly wealth, honestly gained and properly employed is good. Think of the good things we could do if we were financially able. A good name, however, is better than great riches (Proverbs 22:11). Let us, therefore, concentrate on the faithfulness and service that will give us a good name with God and with man, and use the wealth that we have for the promotion of his cause.

Brethren, let us pray to God that he will illuminate our thinking, through the study of his word, to the end that we may set our affections on things that above (Colossians 3:2). This is the better way. Shalom.

--305 W. Church Street Lewisburg, TN 37091.

Could It Be True?

We heard of a man in Texas who would not consent to having his name placed before the congregation to serve as an elder. This was his reason:

"I drink quite a bit, and love to dance. I am also inclined to gamble and my attendance is not what it should be. My Bible teaches me that elders should not do these things. I'd rather be just a faithful, humble, consecrated member of the church and let someone else serve as an elder."

via Flint, MI



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but my words are words of truth and soberness."

the
6:25

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Those Wise Men



Winfred Clark

When one refers to "the wise men," the mind remembers those men of whom Matthew wrote (Matthew 2:1-13). In the verses that give the account of their activity, you will find them described as wise men. We may not know all about their wisdom, or why they are called wise, but we can see some wisdom in the

things they did and said.

If one reads the third chapter of the book of James he will find this topic discussed. That is who is a wise man? There might be some who claim to be wise but their conduct and character will not justify the title. When James said, "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you?" he did not leave it at that point (James 3:13). He goes on to say, "let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom." What James is saying is this, the proof of whether or not one is wise, in the true sense of the word, will be measured by what he does and says. James describes the wisdom that is from above as that which "is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17).

Take a moment to look at the wisdom of these men as seen in the reaction to the birth of the Son of God. I think we will be able to say, "they were indeed wise."

1. THEIR WISDOM IS SEEN IN THE INTEREST SHOWN TOWARD CHRIST.

Surely one would say they were interested. Such would be seen in the distance they travel and the questions that were asked. It is said, "they came from the east" (Matthew 2:1). How far from the east we are not told. They would not make such a journey without being interested.

There are some people, they, or we, might not show any interest in and still be alright. We could ignore men like Castro or others like him, and still be saved. But can one ignore Christ and pay no attention to him? Can one afford to show no interest in Christ? Surely not. But why not? There are several reasons. For one thing, he is our Saviour (Matthew 1:21). One surely has to be interested in one who saves him. In the second place, he is our judge (John 5:22). It is to him that we must answer in the last day (John 12:48). It is to his word that we either stand or fall. Surely, surely, it is a mark of wisdom to show interest in one who has to do with our eternal welfare.

There might be some who claim to be wise but their conduct and character will not justify the title. When James said, "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you?" he did not leave it at that point (James 3:13). He goes on to say, "let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom." What James is saying is this, the proof of whether or not one is wise, in the true sense of the word, will be measured by what he does and says.

2. THEIR WISDOM IS SEEN IN THEIR WILLINGNESS TO SEARCH.

There was a great deal of effort put forth on their

part. They are willing to travel a mile after mile to find him. They are willing to expend as much effort as was necessary. This could not be said of all those referred to in these verses. For example, you will read of the chief priests and scribes (Matthew 2:4). They could quote the old Testament passage that pointed to the place of the Lord's birth (Matthew 2:5-6). You do not read of their going to Bethlehem. They were not more than 5 or 6 miles from where the Christ was born, but put forth no real effort to find him. But the wise men were willing to go.


Jesus found others during his personal ministry that would not come to him that they might have life (John 5:40). It is not that they could not find him. It was not that they could not come to him. It boils down to the fact that they were not willing to do so.

Jesus found others during his personal ministry that would not come to him that they might have life (John 5:40). It is not that they could not find him. It was not that they could not come to him. It boils down to the fact that they were not willing to do so.

3. THEIR WISDOM IS SEEN IN THE GUIDANCE THEY SOUGHT.

It is easy to see they were not ashamed to ask questions nor were they too timid to ask for directions. They came to Jerusalem asking, "where is he that is born King of the Jews?" They do not feel by the asking of such questions, they are saying they know nothing at all. That is not the

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Words Of Truth
(USPS 691-760)


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

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The Editor's Pen

Joe T. Spivy, Sr.
Assistant Editor

The Lord's Supper



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

In Acts 20:7 Luke recorded that upon the first day of the week that "the disciples came together to BREAK BREAD," or as we often say to "partake of the Lord's Supper." As we read Paul's writing to the Corinthians we find that they had abused the observation of the MEMORIAL FEAST. It is my purpose to address

the Lord? Have we? Let us be thankful for everything (this is a command), but specifically, let us be thankful for the bread and the fruit of the vine when giving thanks around the "Lord's table."

SECOND, when we partake of the Lord's Supper, are we doing so to remember his death, burial and resurrection, or some combination thereof? Is the Lord's Supper really a memorial to his death, his burial and his resurrection, or is it a memorial to his DEATH?

Dillard Thurman recently wrote (Gospel Minutes, June 28, 1991), "When Jesus instituted the supper, He was with His disciples at the table: 'And he took bread, and gave thanks, and break it, and gave unto them, saying This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you' (Luke 22:19, 20). He spoke of giving His body for them, without specifically mentioning His death, burial or resurrection. But recorded by Matthew and Mark, he does say His blood was shed for many for remission of sins."

Therefore this question, "Is the Lord's Supper strictly a representation of the Lord's death, burial and resurrection, or more correctly, just of his death?" In I Corinthians 11:26 Paul said, "as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, YE DO SHEW THE LORD'S DEATH till he come." He had just quoted Jesus in the preceding verse, "This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it; in remembrance of me." We find that Paul had not one thing to say herein about the burial or resurrection of the Lord. Rather he emphasized the death only.

Let us stay our minds of the death that Jesus died for all of us "for the remission of sins." Through the weekly observation of the Lord's Supper we commemorate his death, teaching that he died for the sins of the world. Remembering that the Lord's Supper shows "the Lord's death till he come" (I Corinthians 11:26), let us control our minds and reflect on that great sacrificial death of the Lord. When you partake of that memorial feast, do you remember the death that paid for your forgiveness?

How To Get The Most Out Of Worship

Bobby J. Norris

In John 12:1-8, we find the account of Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, anointing the feet of Jesus with an expensive ointment, and wiping his feet with her hair. This provoked covetous Judas to complain that the ointment could have been sold and the proceeds donated to the poor. But Jesus told him, "Let her alone; against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always."

This gives us some wonderful insights into our worship and devotion to Jesus. We sometimes hear people say, "I just don't get anything out of worship." From Mary we can learn how to make our worship more meaningful and fulfilling. From Mary we can learn how to leave worship with the feeling that we are better off, that we have received something worthwhile in our life. David surely felt like he got something out of worship, because he eagerly looked forward to it. He said, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psalms 122:1). Let us learn from Mary how to get the most out of our worship.

We must worship because we want to, not because we have to. Mary was under no obligation to do this. It was her own idea. It was done of her own free will and choice. Worship must be in spirit, as well as in truth (John 4:24).

two issues surrounding the Lord's Supper.

FIRST, with reference to the giving of thanks before partaking of the Lord's Supper, why do we give thanks for everything (the Lord's day, beautiful weather, many blessings of life and other interesting and important items) and sometimes even fail to express thanksgiving for the bread and the fruit of the vine? When Jesus ate the Passover with his disciples, some versions say he "blessed it" and others say he "gave thanks." But regardless of the translation one used, it is certain that what Jesus did was to give thanks for the items he was holding.

Albert Barns noted ". . . blessed it. Or sought a blessing on it; or gave thanks to God for it. The word rendered blessed not unfrequently means to give thanks. It is also to be remarked that some manuscripts have the word rendered gave thanks, instead of the one translated blessed." H. Leo Boles says "some think that the word 'blessed' means more than giving of thanks; that is signified a prayer for all the blessings which may properly be desired for the object which is blessed." There should be great emphasis placed on the giving of thanks for the bread and the fruit of the vine as was done by the Lord. This will cause us to remember the Lord as he instructed, do this "in remembrance of me," and cause us to be thankful for those items. If we fail to give thanks for the Lord's Supper and yet thank God for the many things that we might mention, have we really followed the example of

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Those Wise Men

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case at all. It is a mark of wisdom to ask when one does not know. Doesn't a homemaker ask another homemaker for a recipe when she has enjoyed a new dish? She does not think such will reflect upon her intelligence to ask for such. Does one cast reflection upon himself, when traveling, to stop and ask for direction when he is lost or does not know the way? It is a mark of wisdom to seek information that you do not have.

Take a look at some similar situations found in your Bible. There are those folks described in Acts chapter two. When they have heard the preaching done by the apostles and had learned of their awful sin, they asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Such a question does not bring ridicule upon the ones asking the question, but shows wisdom. They know they need to do something, but they want to be sure they do the right thing.

One is impressed with the fact that Saul of Tarsus would inquire of the Lord (Acts 9:6). He is not ashamed to ask, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" That is, in fact, the very natural thing for a man in Paul's position to do. He certainly did not have the answer and he surely needed the right answers. Such is a mark of wisdom.

When the eunuch of Ethiopia was not able to determine just who it was that Isaiah had in mind, he was not ashamed to ask, "of whom speaketh the prophet this, of himself, or of some other man?" (Acts 8:34). That to him would be a most natural and wise thing to do. Yet, he does not think such would reflect upon his intelligence.

Yes, these men are wise in that they will seek guidance in the right way and at the right source.

4. THEIR WISDOM IS SEEN IN THE FACT THEY WOULD LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD.

They are told by Herod to go to Bethlehem and find the Christ and bring him word again (Matthew 2:8). They did come to the village of Bethlehem and did indeed find the Christ. But, they were warned of God that they should not return to Herod (Matthew 2:12). Now they have the word of a king, like Herod. On the other hand, they have the word of God. The words of God is in conflict with the word of Herod. Herod asks one thing, God asks another that is opposite. What will wisdom dictate in this case? That question is not hard to answer. The answer is evident. You would say, and rightly so, that they ought to take the word of the Lord. They should, under no circumstances, listen to Herod. As you well know, they did not return to Herod. They obeyed the word of the Lord. That is a mark of wisdom.

Isn't that still the case? Shouldn't the word of the Lord be obeyed above the word of all others? We can see the validity of such action. Can we see it when such comes closer home? What if that conflict is between the word of a parent and the word of the Lord? What then? Would wisdom still say, "listen to the word of the Lord?" You and I know such would be the case.

5. THEIR WISDOM IS SEEN IN THEIR STAYING WITH THE TASK UNTIL COMPLETION.

Yes, we are all aware of the fact that they faced obstacles. Yes, they had traveled quite a distance. In fact, they had done more than many others had done. They did not stop short of Bethlehem. They could stop in Jerusalem and say, "We have come further than others." That would do them no good. They would still fall short of the goal. They would be like the children of Israel (Hebrews 3:19; 4:1). They made a good start but did not make it to the promise land. Not these men, they went all the way to Bethlehem.

Wouldn't it be the height of folly for them to travel as far as they did and then turn back within a

few miles. Wouldn't their closest friends try to tell them to go on? They would have wasted all the effort they expended. They would have gained nothing but disappointment.

Yes, they are seen as wise in staying with the task until completed.

Conclusion: We do not know how many men were involved in the search. We do not know their size or ages. We do know there are areas in which they show themselves to be wise. We would do well to exercise the same kind of wisdom in our efforts to follow our Lord.

--1602 W. Hobbs Street, Athens, AL 35611.

How To Get The Most Out Of Worship

Continued From Page 2

We must worship because we want to, not because we have to. Mary was under no obligation to do this. It was her own idea. It was done of her own free will and choice. Worship must be in spirit, as well as in truth (John 4:24).

Worship really means something if we think about the benefits, not the cost. All Judas could think about was the cost: what was being wasted. Judas could not worship here because his mind was distracted. When we come to the place of worship, but our mind is on riches and cares and pleasures of the world, it is impossible to worship properly, and we leave with an empty feeling.

In order for us to get the most out of worship, we must neglect other things of less importance. Mary could have been doing other things. She could have been helping her sister, Martha, as Martha had suggested in Luke 10:38-42. But Mary chose the better part, just as we do when we choose to let

other interests go in order to worship. If we have our priorities mixed up, we will be miserable in worship. It will be only duty and drudgery. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness . . ." (Matthew 6:33).

We get the most from worship when we give the Lord our very best. After all, we are there to please him, not ourselves. Jesus commended Mary for giving a very expensive gift. The poor widow gave all her living to the Lord (Luke 21:1-4). Don't you think the poor widow's worship that day was deeply meaningful and fulfilling to her? I do. David felt that his worship would be meaningless if he offered to God that which had cost him nothing (II Samuel 24:24). No wonder you don't get anything out of worship, if all you offer God is your leftovers of time, talents and treasures.

--HC-60, Box 4, Detroit, AL 35552.

Gates Of Death



John Gipson

Poor Job! God asked him one question right after another. He could not answer any of them. He had no alternative but to be dumbfounded. For example, God asked him, "Have the gates of death been revealed to you?" And the answer is "No."

Regardless of the roads you have traveled, and the distance you have come, there is still mystery behind these gates. In fact, apart from what God has revealed, we are left in total ignorance.

THESE GATES ARE ALWAYS OPEN. Night and day, summer and winter, spring and fall, they stand ajar. Some have entered them in the spring-time of youth, others in the winter of old age. They are gates which shall remain open until God may be everything to every one, for as the apostle Paul says, "The last enemy to be destroyed is death" (I Corinthians 15:26).

THESE GATES ARE ALWAYS CROWDED. Cease your counting. It is an exercise in futility, for the train began with Abel and has continued to this very hour. Some have passed this way because

of bloody wars, others through famine and starvation. Disease has claimed its millions, and old age has taken its share. Of all who have lived upon the earth, only Enoch and Elijah have failed to walk through its portals. The rich and the poor, the humble and the great have found a common meeting place -- the gates of death.

THESE GATES HAVE USHERED SAINTS TO GOD. I am not saying that death is a good thing. Paul calls it an "enemy." But as strange as it may seem, I have often seen joy at the death bed. A godly brother or sister in Christ will frequently exhibit the faith of the apostle who said, "To die is gain . . . My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better" (Philippians 1:21, 23). Such saints have little desire to live life over again. They long for their Lord. They are eager to shout, "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 15:57). If flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom, if the perishable cannot inherit the imperishable, then show them the gates of death. They will shake off the man of dust in order to "bear the image of the man of heaven" (I Corinthians 15:49).

--823 W. 6th Street, Little Rock, AR 72203.

True Shepherds



Johnny Ramsey

One of the Bible's most brilliant verses is found in Psalm 78:72, "So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands." In the sacred text, we can read of many types of shepherds. The ancient art of caring for sheep is reflected in passage after passage of Holy

Scripture. Perhaps the most loved of all Bible passages is Psalm 23, where the spotlight is upon the Lord who safely guides us as only the Good Shepherd can! "The Lord is my shepherd . . ."

Christ beautifully points to His own work in an analogy with the fold of God and the kind of sheep who will be blessed (John 10). In a powerful and unique way, however, Jesus is not only "that great shepherd" (Hebrews 13:20), but He is also "the lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). Paul besought the Corinthians to have "the meekness and gentleness" of the Savior (II Corinthians 10:1). Our blessed redeemer gave His very life for the sheep, and is able to come to our aid in every time of need (Hebrews 2:18; 7:25). Whether it be beside still waters or in presence of our enemies, what is needed will be supplied by the One who was smitten for the sheep (Zechariah 13:7). Unlike the selfish, indifferent and worldly leaders rebuked by God's prophets (Jeremiah 23; Ezekiel 34), the "chief shepherd and bishop of your souls" will make sure our needs are supplied (I Peter 2:25). Tenderly, lovingly and constantly our Master will reach out to us and grant us peace in the midst of turmoil (I Timothy 2:2; I Peter 5:7).

As long as our help is in the name of the Lord (Psalm 124:8), we can claim His promise: "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him" (Psalm 91:15). Samuel Johnson was almost correct when he said that "example is always more powerful than precept." However, in Philippians 1:27 the Bible instructs Christians to combine "teaching" and "living" as an unbeatable tandem of righteousness.

As long as our help is in the name of the Lord (Psalm 124:8), we can claim His promise: "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him" (Psalm 91:15). Samuel Johnson was almost correct when he said that "example is always more powerful than precept." However, in Philippians 1:27 the Bible instructs Christians to combine "teaching" and "living" as an unbeatable tandem of righteousness. In I Peter 2:21, 22, we learn that the Savior did exactly that! In a pungent passage from a gospel song we read:

"Jesus, the loving Shepherd, gave his dear life for thee;

Tenderly now He is calling; Wanderer, come to me.

Haste! for without is danger.

Come! cries the Shepherd blest,

Enter the fold of safety, enter the place of rest.

W. A. Ogden was certainly biblically perceptive with such words!

In a practical way, parents are supposed to be the guardians of their own flock. Since "children are an heritage of the Lord" (Psalm 127:3), we must surround "our sheep" with the proper pasture and healthy provisions which Ephesians 6:4 directs. Joshua spoke well the sentiment of all godly parents when he cried: "As for me and my house,

we will serve Jehovah" (Joshua 24:15). Some quaint poet penned these challenging words for us:

When Mama plays the cards, and Papa plays the races,

The children play the devil, and kick out the traces."

How urgently do we need parents who, with skill and integrity, lead their offsprings to glory.

Another vital application of Psalm 78:72 deals with elders in the church of the Lord. In Othello we have these pointed words of Shakespeare to remind us: "We cannot all be masters." Sadly, some who are supposed to be overseers of the flock of God are not very masterful themselves (Acts 20:30). Certainly the most awesome responsibility any human could have is the solemn charge of Hebrews 13:17, where we learn that elders in the body of Christ "watch for your souls, as they that must give account." We sincerely need leadership of integrity, compassion, dedication and skill to guide us in this wicked world -- if Heaven would ever be our home! We ought to pray for the shepherds of the flock daily, and hold up the hands of courageous men who love the family of God so dearly. There is no more noble heron on earth than a godly elder who carefully tends the flock of God.

Do You Know Where You Are?



Edsel Burleson

One of the greatest needs of the day is for one to realize where he is. Many times one is heard to say, "I'm trying to find myself." Sadly, many young people spend years of study and thousands of dollars and still do not know what they "really want to do."

As tragic as this condition is in physical relationships, it is much more so in spiritual matters. Too many folk have not really tried to find themselves spiritually. Usually one does not know where he is or where he is headed. All could know. The Bible clearly reveals from whence we came, where we now are, the direction we are going, and how to get to the better place. Paul said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16, 17).

Self-improvement only follows self-knowledge. One will change his course in life only when he sees a need for change. If one is pleased with a particular action, he must be shown a danger with that action, or shown something better, before he makes a change. The prodigal, of Luke 15, had to realize "where he was" before he made any changes. Verse 17 states "and when he came to himself," he began to realize the tragedy of a wasted life. He began to think of the past and the comforts of home. He took a look at the present and saw what could have been a busy, successful young man, as a hungry rejected beggar. He looked at the future and realized that there was a

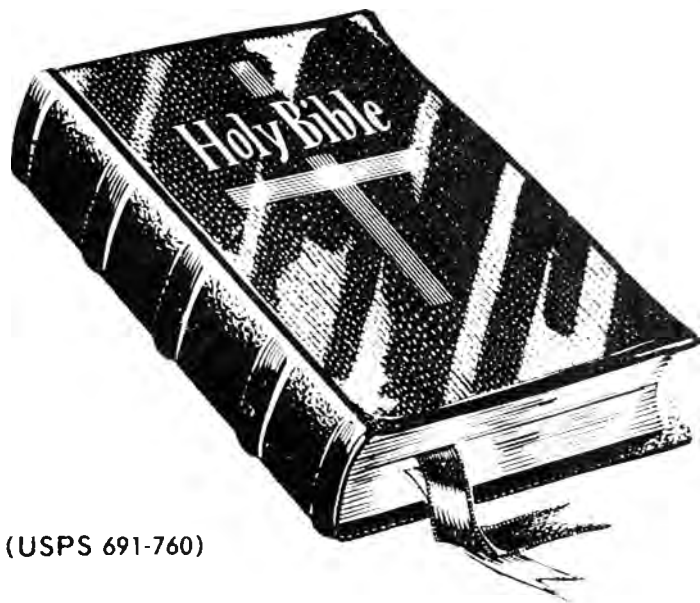
silver lining in those dark clouds but that the silver lining depends upon his willingness to say "I was wrong." Many folk are not ashamed to commit sin but are ashamed to admit sin. He said, "I will arise, go to my father, and say, 'I have sinned.'" And he did just that.

Self-improvement only follows self-knowledge. One will change his course in life only when he sees a need for change. If one is pleased with a particular action, he must be shown a danger with that action, or shown something better, before he makes a change.

A self-made preacher once announced his subject as "Adam! Where Art Thou?" He then explained, "There are three divisions of my subject. Firstly, every man must be somewhere. Secondly, some people are where they got no business being. And thirdly, they that are where they shouldn't be, are going to find themselves where they don't want to be."

No truth is more clearly stated in the Bible than that every man shall stand before God's judgement bar. Where we are now could very well determine where we will be then.

--712 No. 25th Street, Birmingham, AL 35202-2499.



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Words of Truth

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

the
1:25

VOLUME 27

NOVEMBER 15, 1991

NUMBER 46

The First Thanksgiving Proclamation Of The United States -- 1789

Issued By President George Washington

WHEREAS, it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits and humbly to implore His protection and favor; and

WHEREAS, both Houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me "to recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness;"

Now, therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday, the twenty-sixth day of November next to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our service and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the favorable interpositions of His providence in the course and conclusion of the late war for the great degree of tranquility, union and plenty which we have since enjoyed; for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness and particularly the national one now lately instituted; for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and, in general, for all the great and various favors which He has been pleased to confer upon us.

And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations, and beseech him to

pardom our national and other transgressions, to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually; to render our National Government a blessing to all the people by constantly being a government of wise, just and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed; to protect and guide all sovereigns and nations (especially such as have

shown kindness to us), and to bless them with good governments, peace and concord; to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us; and generally, to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as He alone knows to be best.

Given under my hand, at the city of New York, the third day of October, A.D. 1789.

Great Is Our God

Dan Harless

In January, 1986, Voyager 2 passed by Uranus, coming within 50,000 miles of that great planet. At that point, some 1.8 billion miles from the earth, Voyager 2's signals required 2 hours and 44 minutes to reach earth, and that as they traveled at the speed of light or about 186,300 miles per second. It flew between the 10 rings and 15 moons of Uranus, delivering more information that the astronomers had learned in the entire 205 years since the four times larger than earth planet was discovered.

Originally, Voyager 2's itinerary was planned only as far as Jupiter and Saturn; however, a fortuitous alignment of the planets, occurring once in 177 years, enabled scientists to extend its journey. Saturn's powerful gravity was used to propel Voyager 2 toward Uranus.

Some scientists regard Uranus as a planet of "nearly unfathomable mystery." Speculation is rife about the planet's rings, moons, rotation on a horizontal rather than a vertical axis, and many other vagaries so perplexing to the experts. Let us give the brilliant scientists their due in bringing to us the wonders of a faraway planet. And let us glorify the One who created Uranus. Let us thank God for making possible the study and exploration

of His creation.

The most profound statement of which we have any knowledge is found in the opening of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). How strange that great minds, purportedly in search of "origins of the universe" are loath to accept the one, viable answer. The psalmist was moved to praise God as he considered the illimitable heavens, "the work of thy fingers" (Psalm 8:3).

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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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Great Is Our God

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The most profound statement of which we have any knowledge is found in the opening of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). How strange that great minds, purportedly in search of "origins of the universe" are loath to accept the one, viable answer. The psalmist was moved to praise God as he considered the illimitable heavens, "the work of thy fingers" (Psalm 8:3). In one of the older books of the Bible a striking reference is made to Arcturus, Orion and the Pleiades (Job 9:8, 9). In Jude 13 we find an oblique reference to comets. Also, inspiration reveals the earth's rotundity (Isaiah 40:22) as well as the fact that it floats freely in space (Job 26:7).

The Bible reveals that "all the host of heaven shall be dissolved" (Isaiah 34:4). Jesus echoes Isaiah's prophecy: "Heaven and earth shall pass away . . ." (Matthew 24:35). And Peter enlarges upon this eschatological theme: "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 be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Peter 3:10).

Only in "the great day of the Lord" may we look for a full revelation of the vast mysteries of the universe. Till then, as stated in the final words of God's revelation, may "the grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints" (Revelation 22:21).

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was altered very little. Originally it was written by brother Dan Harless, who was associated with the Hillsboro church in Nashville for so many wonderful years).



The Editor's Pen

Joe T. Spivy, Sr.
Assistant Editor

Things "Most Needed" In The Brotherhood



Joe Spivy, Sr.

is "most needed" in our generation? Will there ever be a time when those "most needed" things will not be needed, at least, this side of eternity? I am certain that they will always be in demand, by God, if not by men. Here are the six things that brother Nichols suggested as "most needed" in the church.

CONVERSION OF THE MEMBERS. The new birth consists of more than baptism. One has to be born of the Spirit and of the water. Those of us who have been baptized must have been led to believe in Jesus as the Son of God and the Lord of life. So many Christians seem to take the casual approach to Christianity. We must remember that conversion is in reality a matter of surrendering one's life and commitment to Jesus as the Lord of ourselves. Read Matthew 10:38; 16:24, 25; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23; 14:27, 33 and Acts 14:22 which establish the fact that one must commit his life to the Lord if he hopes to please him.

REGULAR ATTENDANCE. Surely we would not assert that attendance is all that is necessary to please the Lord, but who would avow that we may please God without regular attendance at worship? How is one to develop a Christ-like personality without regular worship periods and Bible study, and that with the saints of God? Separate and apart from the source of spiritual blessings, and all spiritual blessings are in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). Hebrews 10:25 and other passages teach the importance of attendance.

SANCTIFICATION. What is needed today is a clear-cut distinction between the church and the world . . . we must be "set apart" and meet for the Master's use. If the church is not different, distinct and decisive something is certainly wrong. The meshing of the church with the world is one of the

greatest problems facing the 20th and 21st centuries. Read John 17:17; Acts 26:18; I Corinthians 6:11.

Quite some time ago I found an interesting article that related to the late brother Gus Nichols, the founder of this paper. It seems that someone asked him what he considered to be the "most needed" things in the brotherhood. After I read the article, I wondered if the same might not be true today concerning what

greatest problems facing the 20th and 21st centuries. Read John 17:17; Acts 26:18; I Corinthians 6:11.

LIBERALITY. God's people must learn more about sacrifice and generosity. Remember what Paul gave as words of Jesus in Acts 20:35 "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Let us always plan big things in the name of the Lord. Special contributions have been registered above one million dollars, but it takes more than special contributions to make a liberal people. It takes weekly and regular contributions of money, time and efforts to develop such.

UNITY. Schisms have marred many congregations of the Lord's people. We see factions and disharmony on many sides. For the success of the local church, there must be sameness in belief and in hope. There must be a sameness within the church with regard to working for the same mutual goals. The work of the church must be so challenging that it requires the unity of all to succeed. We must remember Matthew 16:18, 19, Romans 12:5, Ephesians 1:23; 2:16; 4:4, and I Corinthians 10:17.

INFORMED LEADERSHIP. Before anyone else it would seem that the leaders must be well informed, else how can they correctly lead as shepherds of the heritage of God. Leaders must know not only the Bible, but they also must know the sheep (the people). The emphasis should never be, "Who is running the church" but rather, who is getting the pre-eminence? Is God getting glorified through the church, through the leaders, and through the followers? Remember the words of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount when he said "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and GLORIFY YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN" (Matthew 5:16).

Things have not changed after all! The things that were suggested by brother Nichols so many years ago as the "most needed" things in the church are still just as needed today.

Wisdom And Folly

Harvey Porter

I recently talked with a fine young lady who worked in a business where I often go. We have become friends and since she knows that I am a preacher, she often speaks of the Bible and spiritual things. She told me of a class she was taking at the university. The teacher was belligerent toward the Bible and those who believe it. He often challenged the students to defend it. His belief was that it was filled with inaccuracies and was composed of myth and fable.

That same week I saw Bill Moyers interview Dr. Joseph Campbell, who was a noted professor of a leading university who has written a number of books on myth and the origins of man's religions. This was presented on the Educational Television channel. Dr. Campbell opined that all religion came from the mind of man. Man invented all gods, moral codes and spiritual beliefs. Moyers did not ask penetrating questions. He dealt in generalities. He seemed impressed with Campbell's credentials and his seeming expertise in this area of study.

We are often over-awed by someone who speaks well, is well-traveled, has several degrees. An expert in a field is sometimes not challenged by his colleagues, and certainly not by the uninitiated.

Paul wrote almost two thousand years ago about this phenomenon. He said, "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate'" (I Corinthians 1:18, 19).

Paul wrote almost two thousand years ago . . . "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate'" (I Corinthians 1:18, 19).

The real truth is that God has spoken to mankind (Genesis 3, 8, 12; I Samuel 3, 22; I Corinthians 2; Hebrews 1). We did not create Him; He created us (Genesis 1, 2; Psalm 100; John 1). We have not revealed what He is like. He has revealed Himself to us. This is hard for a rationalistic person to accept. Faith is a lost commodity in an empirical society. The teaching that does not fit into man's mode of reasoning is not accepted. It is true that the cross does not fit man's way of thinking. God would die for sinners! Nonsense. God would love us when we were totally unlovable! Folly. And what is this about "loving your neighbor as yourself?" It is unnatural and will never work.

Don't even suggest that it is possible for a man to "love his enemies." Any fool knows that will never work (Matthew 5:43-46; 22:39; John 15:12, 17; Romans 13:8; I Peter 2:17).

Faith is a lost commodity in an empirical society . . . the cross does not fit into man's way of thinking. God would die for sinners! Nonsense! God would love us when we were totally unlovable! Folly! and what is this about 'loving your neighbor as yourself?' It is unnatural and will never work.

Let it be said that the historical sections of the Old and New Testaments can be verified for those looking for proof that the Bible is set in human

history. Ur of the Chaldeans was really a city. Jerusalem was there is the time of Abraham. Merneptah, pharaoh of Egypt, did indeed record that Israel was a people in 1220 before Christ (BC). And Thebes, Nineveh and Babylon, the largest, most powerful cities of their day, all fell and were never rebuilt just like the Bible predicted.

The Book of books is not myth and fable. It is the only one of the 800 religions of the world that is based in history and could not have come out of the imaginations and creativity of man's mind.

It is still true! "The intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." Why should some think that the educated can not believe in spiritual things. Why should some sophisticates scoff at those who believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

The battle is not just for what is true; it is for the salvation of the human family. We are not just trying to win an argument. We are trying to win a soul, an educated one.

--Albuquerque, NM

What Did I Do For The Lord Today?

George D. Spivey

Did I allow another day to go by and not do anything to the glory of God? In the teachings of Christ, he said to them all, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Did I criticize someone unjustly today, and yet failed to do anything constructively for Christ? The apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10).

What will the Lord say? He told those in Matthew 25 to depart from Him for He said he "never knew them." Our prayer should be: "Oh, Lord, help me to get my priorities straight and help me to become active, every day in doing at least one good deed for someone else! In Jesus' Name, Amen."

Did I fail to pray? Christ taught his disciples to pray (Matthew 6:5-15). Did I fail to share the wonderful story of Christ with someone? Did I fail to invite my friends to come and study with me at my kitchen table or in Bible classes?

We live a busy life, don't we? Yet, when you and I look at what we think is important, is it really that important? I dare say that when we look back over our lives in ten years from now, very little that we do will be as important as we thought. We

will probably say, "How foolish . . . how foolish!" Many times we put our emphasis on the wrong things. Am I too busy with my own things that I am forgetting the Lord's business?

How do I spend my time? Selfishly? Do I fail to help care for the orphans and widows? Do I spend my time arguing over how to care for them? Do I fail to spend time with my children, wife/husband or do I push them aside for selfish excuses? Do I visit and care for the sick? How long has it been since I have honestly taken time to visit with someone who is sick? Our Lord teaches us to care for the sick. What about the hungry? What about those in prison? Have I ever tried to help feed and care for those in need? (James 1:27; Matthew 25:41-46).

How long has it been since I have honestly taken time to visit with someone who is sick? Our Lord teaches us to care for the sick. What about the hungry? What about those in prison? Have I ever tried to help feed and care for those in need? (James 1:27; Matthew 25:41-46).

Our answers to many of these questions might have to be that I watched my favorite ball game or TV program, shopped in my favorite store or read my favorite book. I must have allowed the time to slip away -- I meant to do a number of things. On

Continued On Page 4

Stand Up For Jesus!



Joe Spivy, Sr.

I am indebted to Edsel Bureson for the following story. It seems that several years ago thousands of people gathered into the large municipal auditorium of a large city. One of the world's most noted atheist was delivering a speech on the subject of atheism. His speech was powerful and the silence of the audience spoke of its power. Then, after what seemed to have been the greatest bombardment on

the Christian faith ever witnessed, there came that moment of choice. If you still believed in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, you were invited to stand up and be counted. Again, the silence was completely overwhelming. Surely, in that large auditorium, somewhere some- one would stand up. After a momentary deathly silence, way toward the back of the auditorium, two young girls stood up. With tears in their eyes and a quiver in their voices, they began to sing, "Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross. Lift high his royal banner; it must not suffer loss. From victory unto victory His army shall he lead, till every foe is vanquished, and Christ is Lord indeed." Within a very few moments after they started, the entire auditorium was filled with the resounding and re-echoing of the name of Christ. Why? Because there were two who dared to STAND UP AND BE COUNTED.

When the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees "came upon" Peter and John at the temple as found in Acts 4, they took security of them and held them until the next day. The following day they heard the defense of the two apostles and when seeing the boldness of "Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, THAT THEY HAD BEEN WITH JESUS" (Acts 4:13). Why were they called unto question by the Jewish leaders? They had the courage to STAND UP FOR JESUS!

What Did I Do For The Lord Today?

Continued From Page 3

my job I am very prompt and carry my part of the responsibilities. I meant to do a number of the things that you have mentioned, but I just did not get AROUND TO IT.

What will the Lord say? He told those in Matthew 25 to depart from Him for He said he "never knew them." Our prayer should be: "Oh, Lord, help me to get my priorities straight and help me to become active, every day in doing at least one good deed for someone else! In Jesus' Name, Amen."

(EDITOR'S NOTE: George D. Spivey is a distant relative, even though we spell our names differently. He is the faithful preacher for the church at Sevierville, TN).

--318 Parkway, Sevierville, TN 37862.

In Acts, chapter 5, we find that the "believers were the more added to the Lord," that "they brought forth the sick into the streets . . . that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them," and that many from cities round about took their sick to be healed (Acts 5:14-16). The high priest was angered because of that and "laid hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison" (Acts 5:17, 18). After they were released by an angel (5:19) and apprehended by the authorities again (5:36), they were beaten and commanded not to speak in the name of Jesus again (5:40). As they were let go, what was their attitude? They rejoiced that they were "counted worthy to suffer for his (Jesus) name" (5:41). Why were they jailed at all? Because they had the courage to STAND UP FOR CHRIST.

How were God's people saved during the days of Noah? Those eight precious souls were saved from the flood, when all others perished, because they had the courage to STAND UP FOR GOD. How were God's people saved when they were confronted by the giant Goliath? Simple, David had the courage to STAND UP FOR WHAT WAS RIGHT, FOR GOD.

When one reads in Hebrews, chapter 11, of those who "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword . . ." one only need ask, "Why?" The answer comes back loud and clear, because they had the courage to STAND UP FOR CHRIST.

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Have you ever wondered at the degree of the disappointment of God with regard to our willingness to make a firm commitment of the Heavenly Father and to STAND UP FOR CHRIST? A question has been raised, "If you were arrested and tried for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?" Paul said in his second Corinthian letter that he had wanted to know "The proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things" (2:9). Later, Paul said they were to show "the proof of your love, and of our boasting of your behalf" (8:24). Paul had written his first letter to the

Corinthians with the idea of "correct the things that are amiss in the Corinthian church." Later in the second letter, he is glad that they took his advice, that they indeed did correct the improper things within the church, so he speaks of the proof, that is, they were willing to STAND UP FOR CHRIST.

If Timothy was to "make full proof of thy ministry" (II Timothy 4:5), he would STAND UP FOR CHRIST. Instead of STANDING UP FOR CHRIST, too many use their time negatively -- criticizing everything and everyone. People like that would never be convicted of being a Christian, or having Christian attitudes or supporting Christian endeavours. They lack the courage to STAND UP FOR JESUS, so they take 'pot shots' at Christians, the church, and at Christ. If only the energy could be pointed in the right direction, STANDING UP FOR CHRIST, how much greater would be the impact of Christianity on the world!! If you were, and often you are, the only Christian the world sees, what would they believe about Christ, the church, truth, honesty, righteousness and Christianity as a whole?

When asked by a friend about playing golf with him on Sunday morning, one replied with great disdain, "Oh no, I couldn't. I always go to church on Sunday morning." His friend replied, "whatever your religion is, I do not want any part of it. Keep it to yourself. I've asked you to play golf many times, but you have not invited me to church even one time."

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STAND UP FOR JESUS! It is not always popular, but it always pays greater rewards than not doing such. It is not always popular, but it is always right. Often what those around us are needing is to see someone dare to be a Daniel, an Abraham, a Paul or maybe YOU! Let me encourage you to STAND UP FOR JESUS! Dare to be different! Dare to be in the minority (God's people always have)! Decide that the world will "take knowledge that you have been with Jesus" as you STAND UP FOR JESUS! And, do it today!

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Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but my words are words of truth and soberness."

the

25

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NUMBER 47

Awakenings



Al Price

Recently, there was a motion picture titled "Awakenings" which depicted the story of a doctor who began working among the chronically ill patients in a Bronx, New York hospital in the summer of 1969. It was a depressing environment providing primarily custodial care

with no expectation that the patients would improve. Some were just existing in a seemingly hopeless catatonic state, virtually waiting to die.

On the ward to which the doctor was assigned, there were patients who had fallen victim to a mysterious form of sleeping sickness and some of them had not been responsive to reality for over forty years. In one sense, they were alive, breathing, walking, but in another sense they were only shells whose personalities had vanished into little more than blank stares into empty space.

This research doctor began a series of experiments that convinced him that there was a possibility that these patients could be "awakened" from their living death. His colleagues thought him foolish but he persisted with an all-consuming passion to discover the pieces of this medical puzzle. Finally, a new medication was successfully used which gradually awakened them to a new world of reality in which they laughed, sang, conversed and truly lived.

In a spiritual sense, Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:1-3, that people without Jesus Christ are "dead." They exist in a spiritually catatonic state and need to be awakened to the following:

The Reality Of Sin

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Romans 5:12). Formerly, the Ephesians were dead in their trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1). The wages of

such sin brought death (Romans 6:23). Sin is the disease and we have all been afflicted.

Human Accountability

The hospital patients were not responsible for their mental state, but we are declared to be responsible for our sins and iniquities which have separated us from God (Isaiah 59:2). Even though many live as if there is no ultimate accountability, Paul says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (II Corinthians 5:10).

The Opportunity For New Life In Christ

In our baptism into Christ, we experience a spiritual awakening which leads to a newness of life (Romans 6:3-5). The blood of Christ is the curing, redeeming agent and it creates the new person in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17).

Promise Of Abundant Life Now And Eternal Life In Heaven

I Corinthians 2:9 refers to possibilities for this life, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love

Him." "But God being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:4-7).

Instead of just existing and functioning in all the ways of any human being, let us be awakened to the new and marvelous potential realized in Christ.

Instead of just existing and functioning in all the ways of any human being, let us be awakened to the new and marvelous potential realized in Christ.

--456 Galbraith Street, Henderson, TN 38340.

Regeneration


W. Gaddys Roy

The word regeneration appears twice in the King James Version of the Bible (Matthew 19:28; Titus 3:5). Regeneration means to be born again. Man was born physically when he came into this world. Man must be regenerated or born again to become a child of God and to be in His kingdom (John 3:5). To be regenerated means to be redeemed, saved, sanctified and justified (Ephesians 1:7; Mark 16:16; John 17:17; Romans 5:1).

We are now living in the time of regeneration. The time of regeneration was future when Jesus said to the apostles, "That ye which have followed

me, in the regeneration when the son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28). Jesus made that statement before He was crucified. The time of regeneration is now, not in the future. We can now be saved according to His mercy "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing to the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5). People are now being born again or regenerated by the word of God (I Peter 1:22, 23). The time to be

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The Editor's Pen
David Wade

Mission Work In The Soviet Union



David Wade

The present opportunity to do mission work in the Soviet Union and our great responsibility to these people are summed up well in Matthew 9:36-38. "But when he saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

There is also great spiritual anxiety among the people. For some life seems helpless and hopeless. For over seventy years atheism was the official dogma. Now, people are beginning to search and ask questions. There seems to be widespread interest in the Book Communists hated so much. However, there is a great problem. These people cannot go to the local bookstore and buy a Bible. They are not available, and if they were, many could not afford one. Bibles are being shipped into the USSR and some native publishers are printing Bibles, but it will be some time before all will have access to the word of God.

Then He said to his disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

There is a great need for missionaries to enter the land. Efforts are underway to send more workers into the harvest. We must help train and teach local converts to carry on the work. The Soviet harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few.

Jesus' words "weary and scattered" aptly describe these people. The Soviet Union, as we knew it, now lies in shambles. The old line Communism is dead and many of her heroes are disgraced. The Secret Police (KGB) and the military are powerless to turn the people back to the old ways.

If you as an individual or congregation wish to get involved in this great work, please contact us and let us know. There are ongoing efforts in several major cities right now. Soon I will have my slide film presentation ready. I hope to share this information with area congregations as soon as possible.

The people are very anxious and weary. The ruble continues to fall in value. The Soviet government is almost powerless to pay her foreign debt and to provide food and consumer items to her people. There are all kinds of shortages everywhere, especially food.

Brethren, the Soviet mission field is by far the greatest missionary challenge of this century. Will we meet his challenge? "Therefore pray the Lord of harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

Getting New People Involved



Joe T. Splivy, Sr.

How will we fit into this new congregation? Will we find fulfillment in the programs of this church? Is there something that we can get involved in very quickly? What if we do not fit here? These and other questions have often been asked by people who move into new environments and

by new converts. They are very serious questions and need to be addressed. It is a challenge for leaders to find a way to get new people involved in the work of the local congregation. It is recognized that if one is involved he will more likely be faithful and be of service for a longer period of time. With the great exodus rate of members, it behooves leaders to do everything possible and scriptural to see that every new member is involved.

Four suggestions for involving new members have been given by Craig Tappé. **FIRST**, leaders must help new Christians to grow socially. Many times a new member knows very few people with the exception of the ones who taught him or those with whom they may work or go to school. Unless the congregation makes efforts to socialize the new members, they will not likely stay around too long. Studies reveal that the fewer ties a person has within the congregation, the greater his potential for falling away.

Reading Acts 9 we find that Barnabas took Paul and introduced him to the saints of Jerusalem when they still were afraid of him. In Acts 18 we find that when Aquila and Priscilla led Apollos

The Preacher's Wife



Gaye Hickey

It seems everyone has an opinion about the preacher's wife, but seldom is the preacher's wife asked for hers! Since I am the daughter of a preacher and my mother is a preacher's wife I had first hand knowledge growing up. Then for a quarter century, I have been married to a preacher. I have some thoughts on

the subject and want to share them with you.

First, let us consider the use of the words, "Preacher's Wife." It sounds almost like a title, doesn't it? You do not hear people talking about the farmer's wife, the grocer's wife, or the truck driver's wife, but we who are married to preachers seem to have an identity problem. And with this

"title" come many expectations and preconceived ideas about the role of the preacher's wife.

My name is Gaye Hickey. I have my own identity, my own personality, my own talents and interests apart from my husband, just as other wives have. Although I do love him very much, he is the preacher, I am his wife. Be nice to me because of who I am, not because of who he is.

The only reference to wives of preachers in the Bible is found in I Corinthians 9:5 when Paul said, "Have we not the power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?"

Because there are no qualifications listed in the Bible exclusively for preachers' wives, I believe we are bound by the same teachings given to all Christian women. When we read Genesis 2:18 that woman was made as an helpmeet for man, we understand that helpmeet means "companion, cooperator, and one who meets the needs of her

Regeneration

Continued From Page 1

born again or regenerated is in this life for after death we must meet the judgment (Hebrews 9:27).

People are now being born again or regenerated by the word of God (1 Peter 1:22, 23). The time to be born again or regenerated is in this life for after death we must meet the judgment (Hebrews 9:27).

Jesus promised the apostles that He would sit on His throne and reign in the regeneration (Matthew 19:28). Since now is the time of regeneration, Jesus is on His throne now. He was raised to sit on His throne (Acts 2:29, 30). His throne is in heaven (Psalm 11:4). Therefore, Jesus had to ascend to heaven to receive His kingdom and get on His throne (Daniel 7:13, 14).

Jesus is on His throne now as He promised (Matthew 19:28). Both John the Baptist and Jesus taught that the kingdom was at hand (Matthew 3:2; 4:17; Luke 10:9; Mark 9:1). The kingdom came as promised. Paul and John were in the kingdom (Colossians 1:13, 14; Revelation 1:9). We have the kingdom now (Hebrews 12:28). The kingdom was established on Pentecost in the days of the Roman kings just as it had been prophesied (Daniel 2:44; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4). Jesus is on His throne now, and He will come again and "deliver the kingdom to God, even the Father" (1 Corinthians 15:24).

Jesus promised the apostles that they would sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. The apostles, therefore, were to reign with Jesus (Matthew 19:28).

The doctrine of Premillennialism postpones the kingdom and reign of Christ until His second coming. If the kingdom was postponed so was the time of regeneration. Therefore, no one could be born again until after His second coming.

Jesus promised the apostles that He would be with them "unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). "The end of the world" in which Jesus would be with the apostles was to "the end of the" age in which Jesus would reign or the end of age of regeneration, which was the same (Matthew 28:18-20). Therefore, the apostles are reigning and judging through their influence (Matthew 19:28).

The apostles had the keys of the kingdom and the authority to loose and to bind (Matthew 16:19; John 20:20-23). The apostles were given the word of reconciliation, and they were the ambassadors of Christ (II Corinthians 5:18-20).

The doctrine of Premillennialism postpones the kingdom and reign of Christ until His second coming. If the kingdom was postponed so was the time of regeneration. Therefore, no one could be

born again until after His second coming.

There is also a doctrine that no one can be born again until after the second coming of Christ. If one cannot be regenerated now then Jesus is not regenerated.

Any theory that dethrones Christ destroys the doctrine of regeneration. The time of the regeneration and the reign of Christ is the same age (Matthew 19:28).

Getting New People Involved

Continued From Page 2

into a more thorough knowledge of the gospel, they wrote a letter to encourage the Corinthians to receive him. Because man has this need for human relationships, it is imperative that relationships be found within the church for the newcomers, and that, as soon as possible. Sadly, most members do not take time or the initiative to meet someone new. Because of this, it falls to the leadership to assure (not assume) that new people get involved.

Because man has this need for human relationships, it is imperative that relationships be found within the church for the newcomers, and that, as soon as possible.

SECOND, we must help new people to grow intellectually. New members are new 'babes in Christ.' They must come to understand fundamental matters before being involved in deep philosophical studies. There is a need for special classes for new converts and those who have been restored after years of neglect. This is good, but how much better might it be to have some Bible studies wherein leaders instruct the new people in their own homes during the week. I can already hear many people saying, "We are already so busy, we just do not have the time." Was it possible that this was the method that converted and educated many who are in the church today, and are still faithful? Could it just be that someone had the time for us? And, where would we be if they had not had the time? Did the first century church not instruct within the homes? Jesus often was found within the homes and what great lessons he taught there. Whatever methods we use, let us be concerned with the intellectual needs of the new people. When people have left denominationalism they may have some terms and phrases and ideas that are unfamiliar to us, and even unscriptural, but let us love them, not be satisfied to embarrass them.

THIRD, we must help new people to grow actively. They need to be actively engaged in the work of the church. There is a challenge to help the new people to understand their responsibilities and to find the places where their talents will be

used to the greatest benefit. We need to avoid two things: (1) getting a babe in Christ into something that is overburdening to them and (2) giving them something to do 'just to keep them busy.' While the new Christian may not know his limitations and accept something 'over his head,' he will certainly know if he is simply being patronized by job assignments that are insulting. Remember when the persecution arose in Jerusalem the new people went everywhere preaching and teaching the gospel; they were up to the task.

Let us always be busily involved in helping new people to know the joy of serving the Lord by incorporating them into the work of the local church. If we succeed, they will be around longer and become great helpers in the greatest work on earth.

FOURTH, the new Christian needs to grow in his imagination. We need to help the new people to try new things, things they would not have thought earlier that they were capable of. What is the direction of a Christian life, from beginning to the end? -- UPWARD. That demands 'a launching out' by faith, trying to stretch our wings, achieving new heights daily. Sometimes we will fail (the new Christian as well as the old ones) but we have help that comes from the Lord. Remember the words of Paul in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me." That applies to the new and the old Christian. When leaders of God's people help new comers to overcome their fear and dread of failure, they have done much to assist that person on his way to heaven.

Let us always be busily involved in helping new people to know the joy of serving the Lord by incorporating them into the work of the local church. If we succeed, they will be around longer and become great helpers in the greatest work on earth.

--1400 6th Ave. Jasper, AL 35501.

The Preacher's Wife

Continued From Page 2

husband." Preachers have peculiar needs in their vocations, often quite different to the needs of husbands in other types of work. We need to study to learn what those needs are and how we can help to meet them. Our husbands have a tremendous responsibility to the church, and it is our duty to help in any way we can -- of course, always in subjection to his wishes.

Bill Flatt, Christian Counselor at Harding Graduate School of Religion, says that our priorities must be as follows: (1) God, (2) Husband and his needs, (3) Children and their needs and (4) The Church and its work. This is a good rule of thumb for all Christian wives. When we seek to please God first, everything else has a way of falling into place. But we must learn to serve Him out of love rather than fear. Our service must never be motivated by a desire for the praise of men, nor to please other people. If our seeking to please God pleases others, that is great, but what people think must not be the motive behind our service to God.

My Dad, a gospel preacher, has always told me that he thought the greatest work a preacher's wife could do is to provide an atmosphere for her husband that is as pleasant and enjoyable as possible. If he is happy at home and has the support and encouragement of a good wife, he can handle just about anything that comes along.

Let us be reminded of the short tenures of most preachers at the local congregation. Because of this, our children may not have roots, or a feeling of belonging. When we move, we cannot take our friends with us, and without nourishment, these friendships cannot survive. It takes at least five years to develop enough memories and shared experiences to make a deep and lasting friendship. We often have periods of feeling alone, even though people in general are very kind to us. We do not have the sense of history with you that you may have with each other.

We live in glass houses. Our children are observed constantly, putting tremendous stress upon them. They want to be accepted as part of their age group, but they also want to live as they've been taught. Sometimes overwhelming congregational or parental expectations can push them out of the church completely. The label "preacher boy" can haunt a young boy all of his life when it is spoken in derision. Instead of being a role model, our children, who did not ask to be "p.k.'s," need to be encouraged and forgiven when they fail, and dealt with patiently rather than criticized. More importantly, they should never be pressured to deal with life as miniature adults.

Another way in which we live in glass houses is our lack of privacy in financial matters. Our salaries are published and probably critiqued as well. We are judged harshly sometimes by those who do not have all the facts. Many of us do not own our homes, and never will. Most preachers and their wives put a much larger portion of their income back into the work than do other members. Many of us have no health insurance, no retirement plans, and no security whatsoever, except in the Lord.

We also have to deal with some unnecessary attitudes toward preachers and their families. We are probably discussed more than any other family in the congregation. We are criticized, or we are praised, but few people are indifferent about us. We learn to build a protective shield around ourselves to keep from being hurt.

Sometimes we are manipulated by those seeking power or who have an ax to grind. Sometimes wives are expected to be by their husband's side in everything he does. We are made to feel guilty if we are unable to do so.

Because of these attitudes, we wives go through several stages, at some time, during our marriages. The first is feeling responsible for the growth of the church. Second, we feel we must set goals to that end. Third, we feel enormous disappointment and frustration when these goals are not met, when just as often they depend upon others rather than ourselves. Fourth, we become depressed and guilty. Then comes the burnout.

After a preacher's wife has burned out, she will usually become withdrawn from other church members, drop out of church activities, and maybe even begin to miss worship services. Fortunately, this does not last, and with prayer and study, she can grow spiritually so that she realizes the responsibility of the whole church does not rest upon her shoulders.

Partnership Magazine did a survey to find out what the greatest source of stress is for the preacher's wife. What they found was surprising. The number one source of stress for the wife is the stress of the husband. The second greatest source of stress for the wife is criticism of her husband. We are the only group of wives in any profession who's greatest stress is directly related to our husbands' stress. Ironically, the stress and criticism of our husbands bothers them much less than it does us. Other stress sources were found to be -- number three, the lack of close friends; number four, congregational attitudes and expectations and number five, the desire to do better.

Many of us eventually learn to cope by learning to think positively. We come to realize that God's work does not depend totally on us. We take our problems to God in prayer more often. We continue to study God's Word, and we learn to develop a sense of humor.

Now that I have given you some information about us and what makes us tick, let me offer some suggestions as to how you can help make our lives happier and more effective for the Lord's Work. First, put yourself in our place. It is difficult enough to be rejected by unbelievers when they learn we are married to preachers. But it is even more difficult to be rejected by our fellow Christians. This only adds to our dilemma. Do not have a double standard for us and other women. The Lord does not expect any more from me than he does from you. When you put your expectations and your judgments upon me, you are taking the place of God, and that is the kind of judging God condemns.

Second, accept me for who I am. I am only

human. Please do not compare me to other preachers' wives. We all have our limitations. We have different personalities, different talents, different states of health, and we are at different stages of our lives. Learn to look at me as an individual. Treat me as you would like for me to treat you.

Third, love me like a sister, because that is what I am. Include me. Do not set me apart by putting me on a pedestal. I will only fall off sooner or later and you and I both will be disappointed. What I need from you more than anything else is to be treated as your equal. I want to be able to share with you, talk with you, cry with you and laugh with you. I want to be there for you and I need you to be there for me.

In conclusion, I want you to know that there are a lot of positive aspects to my life. I have my own personal counselor to go to with my problems day or night. We have lived and worked with some wonderful congregations in different parts of the country and have friends in several states. We have the wonderful and unique privilege of watching people give their lives to the Lord, and then growing spiritually. That is the greatest thrill and sense of satisfaction there is. My husband's "job" has eternal benefits.

The people at Steens are wonderful to us and have always been supportive and understanding. I wish all preachers' wives could be a part of such a loving group of ladies.

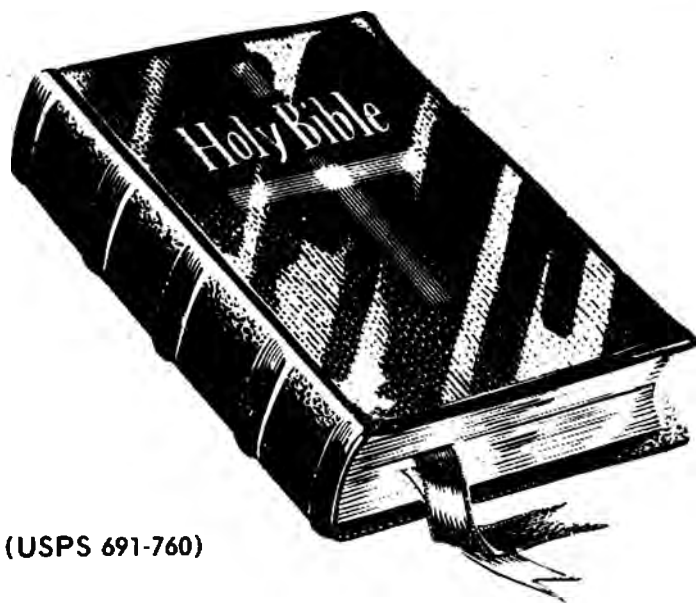
(Gaye Hickey is the wife of H. Curtis Hickey, who for a number of years has been the preacher at the Steens Church of Christ near Columbus, and the daughter of John and Girthel Wheeler who work with the Louisville Church of Christ. She is a licensed Social Worker employed by The Convalescent Center, Vernon, Alabama. She deals daily with her own severe rheumatoid arthritis).

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Reflections About My Parents



Flavil H. Nichols

Mrs. Matilda Frances Nichols, 97, died October 6, 1991, in Jasper, Alabama. Her husband, the late Gus Nichols, was minister of the Sixth Avenue church in Jasper for forty-three years, and a world-renowned evangelist of the churches of Christ.

Born March 29, 1894, she was the daughter of the late William Christopher Columbus Brown, and his wife, the late Naomi Caroline (Kitchens) Brown, of the Howard community, near Carbon Hill, Alabama. She married Gus Nichols, also of Carbon Hill, on November 30, 1913. They said they wanted four boys and four girls --in that order. Many years later she jokingly remarked that the Lord evidently got their "order" mixed up -- because he first sent them two girls, then one boy, 2 more girls, and then the last 3 boys! All eight children survive. They are: Gracie (Mrs. Frank D.) Young, Jasper, Alabama; Vodie (Mrs. A. J.) Kerr, Jasper, Alabama; Flavil H. Nichols, Jasper, Alabama; Bertha (Mrs. G. Rile) Blackwood, Jasper, Alabama; Carrie (Mrs. W. T.) Hamilton, Waxachie, Texas; Foy W. Nichols, Indianapolis, Indiana; S. Hardeman Nichols, Dallas, Texas; and W. Hudson Nichols, Falls-Of-Rough, Kentucky. She leaves 15 grandchildren, two of whom she and brother Nichols reared: Karen Ann (Nichols) Land, of Birmingham, Alabama; and Charles Edwin "Eddie" Nichols, of Montgomery, Alabama. One sister, Pearl (Mrs. Ted R.) Ellas, of Jasper, Alabama, also survives; and there are 22 great-grandchildren. Her only brother, and four of her sisters predeceased her.

When Matilda Brown married Gus Nichols, he was a farmer. To supplement their meager farm income, during the winter he worked twelve-hour shifts in the coal mine for a dollar a day, and later on the railroad 'section gang,' or 'bridge crew,' for a

dollar-and-a-dime a day.

Not long after his conversion to Christ, her husband rode the train with an empty suitcase to visit brother C.A. Wheeler, the preacher who had converted him, to borrow such books as he recommended. They included The Gospel Plan Of Salvation by T. W. Brents, The Christian System by Alexander Campbell, A Commentary On Acts by J. W. McGarvey, Milligan on Hebrews, The Campbell-Rice Debate, et al. At nights while she churned, or quilted, or did some sewing, etc., "Tildie" (as she was affectionately known) heard her husband read aloud these and many other books by the light of pine knots burning in the large open fireplace. When she noticed his eyes becoming red and bloodshot, she would urge him to stop for the night. But he often would cover one eye with his hand, thus forcing it to rest while the other eye did all the work! He would continue -- alternately reading with first one eye and then the other! In this way both she and he grew in Bible knowledge and love of the truth.

Both "Tildie" and her husband had been reared in the Missionary Baptist Church, which he left first; but in a few years she also was baptized into Christ. Seven years after he became a Christian he began to preach on Sundays. Both of them soon realized that, if he were going to preach, he needed a better education so he could better study the Bible. Encouraging him, "Tildie" said, "Gus, if you are going to preach, don't be a 'two-by-four' preacher! --Make a good one! And I'll stand behind you!" And she did! They were married for sixty-two years, and she was a tremendous source of encouragement to him in his work as a gospel preacher.

Because both of them were by nature "given to hospitality," and because of their wide range of acquaintances, "Tildie" Nichols entertained an untold number of visitors. Before her death, one of the children inquired of the others if they had any idea how many meals their mother had prepared for --and served to --guests whom she had never previously met? Instantly one of the daughters


replied: "Ten thousand, at least!"

She had been afflicted by arthritis for many years, walking with a cane thirty years ago, then later was on a "walker." Part of the time in recent years she used a wheel-chair. Last February she suffered a broken leg (femur), perhaps by just rolling over on it the 'wrong way.' After an orthopedic surgeon bolted a steel plate onto it, she was in the hospital for 30 days, during which time one of her children was at her bedside continually. Unable to care for her at home, they moved her into a Health Care Center, where likewise one of them or one of their spouses was with her round the clock for the next six months, until her death.

"Tildie" said, "Gus, if you are going to preach, don't be a 'two-by-four' preacher! --Make a good one! And I'll stand behind you!" And she did! They were married for sixty-two years, and she was a tremendous source of encouragement to him in his work as a gospel preacher.

She, like her husband, died on the Lord's day. Her funeral was the following Wednesday at the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ in Jasper, where she lay in state two hours prior to the service. William Woodson, minister of the Granny White church in Nashville, Tennessee, and Bobby Duncan, minister of the Adamsville, Alabama, church, spoke words of comfort and encouragement. Brother Woodson grew up in Jasper, was baptized by brother Nichols, and was almost like a member of the

Continued On Page 3



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The Editor's Pen
David Wade

Opportunities Unused Are Soon Lost



David Wade

Opportunities unused are soon lost, and sometimes they are lost forever. We had better wake up to the great missionary opportunity we have in the Soviet Union right now! The borders are open and we can come and go almost at will, but it may not long remain

our mission efforts, unless we as brethren can mount massive relief efforts much in the same way as was accomplished in Ethiopia.

Also, the "resurrected" Russian Orthodox church is making quite a stir over the influx of Evangelical missionaries and non-Christian forces entering the Soviet Union to make converts. This is all part and parcel with religious freedom. It remains to be seen if the Orthodox church can exert enough political power that would bring pressure on government to curb our missionary efforts. I do not foresee this as an immediate major problem for us.

Of greatest concern to me is the need to plant the seed of the kingdom throughout the Soviet Union before other groups sow the tares. Right now it is much easier to teach the untaught than it will be later when we have to unteach the taught. Much of the Soviet Union remains virgin territory and a field white unto harvest. We cannot wait until enough qualified missionaries learn their language. We cannot wait until the borders are closed. We had better get going right now. Thankfully, there are many Russian people who speak English, some very fluently. There are good people there who are willing to help American missionaries communicate the gospel. More later.

that way. There are some volatile situations within the country that could change at any moment the open door opportunity we have at present.

The hostilities in neighboring Yugoslavia are of great concern. Regional hostilities among ethnic groups are always a possibility in the USSR. When this happens, an area is suddenly closed and missionaries cannot enter. In fact, missionaries caught in the midst of such conflicts usually try to get out, if possible, to avoid the conflict.

There are predictions that the Soviets will experience a hard winter with severe food shortages in some areas. Hungry people have been known to riot. It all adds up to the strong possibility of civil unrest. This will only hamper

Regeneration

W. Gaddys Roy

The word regeneration appears twice in the King James version of the Bible (Matthew 19:28; Titus 3:5). Regeneration means to be born again. Man was born physically when he came into this world. Man must be regenerated or born again to become a child of God and to be in His kingdom (John 3:5). To be regenerated means to be redeemed, saved, sanctified and justified (Ephesians 1:7; Mark 16:16; John 17:17; Romans 5:1).

We are now living in the time of regeneration. The time of regeneration was future when Jesus said to the apostles, "That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28). Jesus made that statement before He was crucified. The time of regeneration is not now in the future. We can now be saved according to His mercy "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing to the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5). People are now being born again or regenerated by the word by the word of God (I Peter 1:22, 23). The time to be born again or regenerated is in this life for after death we must meet the judgment (Hebrews 9:27).

Jesus promised the apostles that He would sit on His throne and reign in the regeneration (Matthew 19:28). Since now is the time of regeneration, Jesus is on His throne now. He was raised to sit on His throne (Acts 2:29, 30). His throne is in heaven (Psalm 11:4). Therefore, Jesus had to ascend to heaven to receive His kingdom and get on His throne (Daniel 7:13, 14).

Jesus is on His throne now as He promised (Matthew 19:28). Both John the Baptist and Jesus taught that the kingdom was at hand (Matthew 3:2;

Continued On Page 3

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Regeneration

Continued From Page 2

4:17; Luke 10:9; Mark 9:1). The kingdom came as promised. Paul and John were in the kingdom (Colossians 1:13, 14; Revelation 1:9). We have the kingdom now (Hebrews 12:28). The kingdom was established on Pentecost in the days of the Roman kings just as it had been prophesied (Daniel 2:44; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4). Jesus is on His throne now, and He will come again and "deliver the kingdom to God, even the Father" (I Corinthians 15:24).

We are now living in the time of regeneration. The time of regeneration was future when Jesus said to the apostles, "That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28). Jesus made that statement before He was crucified.

Jesus promised the apostles that He would be with them "unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). "The end of the world" in which Jesus would be with the apostles was to "the end of the" age in which Jesus would reign or the end of age of regeneration, which was the same (Matthew 28:18-20). Therefore, the apostles are reigning and judging through their influence (Matthew 19:28). The apostles had the keys of the kingdom and the authority to loose and to bind (Matthew 16:19; John 20:20-23). The apostles were given the word of reconciliation, and they were the ambassadors of Christ (II Corinthians 5:18-20).

The doctrine of Premillennialism postpones the kingdom and reign of Christ until His second coming. If the kingdom was postponed so was the time of regeneration. Therefore, no one could be born again until after his second coming.

Reflections About My Parents

Continued From Page 1

family. Brother and sister Nichols helped him to attend Freed-Hardeman, and encouraged him to preach the gospel of Christ. He now is a member of the faculty at David Lipscomb. Another close friend of the family, brother Duncan moved to Jasper after brother Nichols' death (in 1975), and preached at Sixth Avenue for almost eight years, endearing himself even more to her and all her children.

Never has there been a more glorious sunset in the golden west than the close of a life spent in faithful service to Christ. Hers was such a life. her children collectively could not recall a single word, nor a single deed, by their mother [or father, either] of which they were then ashamed, or which caused them later embarrassment. They, of course, realize that no human is sinlessly perfect. However none of her faults were of the baser sort. By God's grace and through her faith (Ephesians 2:8-10), she was saved (Mark 16:16) many years ago when she obeyed the gospel. Her family confidently claim the precious promises of Christ. As a faithful, penitent, prayerful Christian, she was kept white as snow, cleansed from all sin (I John 1:7-10) by the blood of Jesus. They rely on Christ's assurances that he will prepare a place for us (John 14:1-3), and that all will be raised from the dead (John 5:28-29) when Jesus comes. I Thessalonians 4:13-18 holds special meaning and comfort when a Christian dies. Since she died "in the Lord"

(Revelation 14:13), they are confident she is among the "blessed" dead. They weep over their loss, not hers! Therefore her funeral was not a doleful occasion, but one of joyful hope mingled with tears.

In a humorous vein, one of the grandchildren remarked that the first thing Granddaddy said to her may have been something like: "What took you so long to get here, Tildie?"

Not only was her husband a preacher, but all four of her sons became preachers, three of her daughters married preachers, and one grandson preaches. She also gave encouragement to many other gospel preachers. Therefore her family requested all preachers who attended the funeral to serve as honorary pallbearers. Seven grandsons and one great-grandson were the active bearers. She was buried beside her husband in the Walker Memory Gardens, in Jasper.

Friends who wish may make contributions in her memory to any of the good works in which she was especially interested. These include (but are not limited to) Childhaven at Cullman, Alabama; Faulkner University, Montgomery, Alabama; the Gus Nichols Memorial Scholarship Fund at International Bible College, Florence, Alabama; and the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ: Library Fund, Jasper, Alabama.

--Route 9 Box 541 Jasper, AL 35501.

Continued On Page 4

What Happened To The Peach Trees?

Ola Edgeworth

What did happen to the peach trees? When I grew up, and when I reared my children, we had plenty of peach trees. We gave the fruit to our children for their bodies, and used the limbs to deliver their souls from hell. Proverbs 23:13, 14 says, "Withhold not correction from the child; for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell."

A woman told her little girl that if she didn't straighten up she was going to take her to the peach tree. The little girl asked, "Are the peaches ripe?" I'm pretty sure if she didn't straighten up she soon found out that peach trees were used for more than eating the fruit.

When I grew up, and when I reared my children, we had plenty of peach trees. We gave the fruit to our children for their bodies, and used the limbs to deliver their souls from hell.

Today, that would be called abuse. I know that some people do abuse their children. I think there are two extremes: some don't discipline their children enough and some abuse them. But a few stripes on their little legs sometimes is good medicine; it will make them love and respect you. God meant for us to discipline our children. Proverbs 13:24 says, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." Proverbs 22:15 says, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." A few stripes on our children's little legs may keep them from wearing striped clothes when they grow up.

It takes more discipline for some children than for others. For some, a good talk will do the job.

Regeneration

Continued From Page 3

The doctrine of Premillennialism postpones the kingdom and reign of Christ until His second coming. If the kingdom was postponed so was the time of regeneration. Therefore, no one could be born again until after his second coming.

There is also a doctrine that no one can be born again until after the second coming of Christ. If one cannot be regenerated now then Jesus is not regenerated.

Any theory that dethrones Christ destroys the doctrine of regeneration. The time of the regeneration and the reign of Christ is the same age (Matthew 19:28).

For some it takes a spanking. And if that doesn't work, a switch will more than likely do the job if administered right. Children need to be made to obey, whatever it takes. And this needs to begin early in the child's life. The longer one waits, the harder it becomes.

We need to get discipline back in our homes, schools, churches and government. But if we could get discipline back into our homes as it should be, and demand respect and obedience from our children, they would more than likely have respect for school teachers, the church, and the government.

Discipline is a problem in most all the schools today. Everyone wants to blame society, but who is society? It is you and me. There are too many parents who are not involved in the schools. Parents and school teachers must work together for the good of the child.

Church discipline is almost a forgotten thing. Paul says, ". . . withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (II Thessalonians 3:6). He said we are "to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Corinthians 5:5).

We also need more discipline in our government. Instead of having nice, convenient jail houses, we need to go back to the way jails used to be: one little room, a high window, a cot, and feed them peas and corn bread. And give them work to do. We used to work them on the roads. One time we were passing some convicts working on the side of the road, and my son, about four or five years old, said, "That's what I want to be when I grow up." I

said, "I hope not."

Since the new way hasn't worked, why not go back to the old way? It worked better. If we don't do something, I'm afraid of what this world will be like a few years from now.

If we would discipline more, I don't believe we would have to keep building jails larger. And capital punishment is not wrong. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man" (Genesis 9:6). Paul said the "powers that be" (government) is ordained of God, and that the government "beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Romans 13:1, 4).

I believe the only way this world is going to get better is by getting discipline back in our homes, schools, the church, and the government. This would probably cause more to get interested in being a child of God. At least, the world would be better if more people were morally good.

Since the new way hasn't worked, why not go back to the old way? It worked better. If we don't do something, I'm afraid of what this world will be like a few years from now. Let us work and pray that things will get better.

--Route 1, Box 301 Detroit, AL 35552.

Someone Who Understands



John Gipson

Imelda Marcos has returned to the Philippines. Once again the poor and downtrodden have a hero -- someone who understands their plight. In speaking to those who have lost their all through conflicts and revolutions she brings a sympathetic heart. She knows how to identify with their problems and losses. "You are homeless," she says. "I am homeless, too!" (Poor Imelda! She doesn't have a home. Meanwhile, she is staying in a penthouse at the very reasonable rate of only \$2,000 per day). I'm sure the homeless are thankful that Mrs. Marcos understands their plight. It must be a great consolation.

As for me and my house I choose Jesus. "For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses . . ." (Hebrews 4:15).

Do I feel the sharp temptations to sin? Jesus understands. He is "one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning."

Have I known power and glory only to be

brought low? Jesus understands.

Am I tired, hungry and thirsty? Jesus has been there, too.

Are tears of sorrow falling down my cheeks? Jesus know what it means to weep.

Am I homeless? Jesus said, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head."

Have I been betrayed by a friend? Jesus understands.

Have I been despised and rejected? Jesus knows what that means, too.

Have I been lied about and falsely condemned? Jesus understands.

Have my closest friends turned their backs on me? Look to Jesus.

Whatever your condition there is One who understands. Therefore sing with William hunter:

The great Physician now is near,
The sympathizing Jesus.

He speaks the drooping heart to cheer:
O hear the voice of Jesus.

--P.O. Box 228, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

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

orth the

:ts 26:25

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Answers For AIDS



David Courington

research today, AIDS is spread by 1. By sexual contact (either homosexual or heterosexual) with an infected person. 2. Direct contact to an infected persons blood or other body fluids or 3. Birth. Indeed, there are many cases where the victim is innocent. A baby, infected by its mother who is an IV drug user, or a person who unknowingly marries one with AIDS is no doubt an innocent victim. Therefore, it would be wrong to imply that every person with AIDS brought it on themselves. They have not. Even for those who do sin and bring it upon themselves, there must be some sympathy on our part. It is a pathetic sight and a devastating thing. While you and I may not be guilty of sinful practices that would cause AIDS, we certainly are and have been guilty of other sins. Do we not deserve to die for them? The wages of every sin is death (Romans 6:23). If it were not for Christ we would all suffer not only physical death but spiritual death.

But beyond sympathy and concern there are some concrete ways that AIDS can be prevented. The statement that "It can happen to anybody," implies that one can catch AIDS like a cold by germs that come out of the air. The fact remains that an overwhelming majority of cases are contracted by illicit sexual contact and IV drug use. These practices are sinful and preventable. To tell our youngsters to practice "safe sex" is not the answer. The answer is to practice a godly lifestyle. This involves self restraint and the fulfillment of sexual desires in marriage- one man and one woman for life. There is no place in our lives as Christians for

Again the problem of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) has made the headlines with the news that basketball star Magic Johnson has the virus that causes AIDS. It is a medical problem but it also has some spiritual implications. According to the best doctors

sex outside of marriage. I Corinthians 7 shows that marriage is a proper outlet for our sexual urges. Verse 9 states of those contemplating marriage in the distressing situation of persecution that they were under, "But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn." When people cannot marry, either before marriage or because of some other reason, they must exercise restraint. There is self-denial involved in being a Christian. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any [man] will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). Paul wrote in I Corinthians 6 about fornication. In speaking of this matter he showed that instead of being involved in sex outside of marriage, one must recognize that he belongs to God and his body belongs to God. Note, "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost [which is] in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (I Corinthians 6:18-20). Spirituality must take the place of sensuality in the lives of men. This will prevent the further spread of AIDS. Drug users should also see

their bodies as belonging to God. As for those who practice homosexuality, the answer also lies in self-restraint. A more clear statement could not be made than in Romans 1:26-27 "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet."

To tell our youngsters to practice "safe sex" is not the answer. The answer is to practice a godly lifestyle. This involves self restraint and the fulfillment of sexual desires in marriage - one man and one woman for life.

The answer to this problem is not simply to find a medical cure, but to practice what God has instructed.

--P.O. Box 160, Mulga, AL 35118.

Congratulations, Mr. Finebaum



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

Joe T. Spivy, Sr. Magic Johnson has been referred to as 'a great

Last week in the Birmingham Post-Herald, Mr. Paul Finebaum had an article entitled, "Magic Doesn't Fit Definition Of Hero." Mr. Finebaum began that article, "Since announcing publicly that he has tested HIV positive, the precursor of the virulent AIDS virus,

hero' by everyone from George Bush on down."

Mr. Finebaum wrote, "Magic Johnson should not be called a hero simply because he has contracted AIDS and stepped forward to admit it. To be an effective spokesman, Johnson needs to adjust his message and hopefully he will. Johnson has not talked of the error of his behavior. Instead, he has seemingly taken a cavalier attitude that he lost a numbers game while failing to practice safe sex." With the message of Mr. Finebaum, I wholeheartedly agree. Magic has been truly a "magic-man" on the basketball court, but off the courts he has

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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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Congratulations, Mr. Finebaum

Continued From Page 1

been anything but fine and magic.

Mr. Finebaum continued, "The truth of the matter is Johnson is now suffering the consequence of his promiscuous behavior. He has not admitted his moral failings. Instead, on the Arsenio Hall show the other night, he preached safe sex, stating that the youth of America need to 'put on their thinking cap' Those dots inserted here stand in the place of the words Magic used to express his meaning of safe sex."

Mr. Finebaum goes further to state, "There are negative consequences of delivering such a message, which puts youths in the dangerous position of exposure to the AIDS virus." He then quoted from Dr. Samford Kuvin of the National Foundation of Infectious Diseases, "There is no such thing as safe sex."

Finebaum ended his article in fine fashion, "Johnson can still be a hero in this battle. He can do so by admitting the behavior leading up to this condition was morally wrong. And for the sake of American youth, he can change his message from promoting 'safe sex' to promoting that sex outside of marriage is wrong. Then you could call Magic Johnson a hero."

It was amazing to me that this article was found in the newspaper. That it might be found/heard in some American pulpits would be expected, but to find it in the Birmingham newspaper, THAT'S SOMETHING ELSE. I do not personally know Mr. Paul Finebaum, but I certainly admire his stand on this issue.

--1400 6th Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501.



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

"Are We Ready To Deal With The Reality Of AIDS?"



David Wade

The above caption headlines a recent Dear Abby column discussing Magic Johnson's declaration that he is HIV positive. In the article, Abby quotes Anna Quindlen, "a brilliant New York Times columnist" on the subject, and also adds her own personal

later, the loaded chamber will have your number. It only takes the wrong kind of contact with one infected person to catch the disease.

A fornicator may be extra careful, or be very lucky, and avoid the Aids Virus for a lifetime. However he can never avoid the spiritual consequences of sex outside of marriage (Hebrews 13:4). He contacts the condemnation of God the first time, and every time (I Corinthians 6:18).

In the article Quindlen concludes, "Why can't we learn to deal with our national tragedy with as much dignity and determination as this good man (Magic Johnson - ed.) brings to his personal one?" Good man? Magic Johnson, with his example, compares to a "good man" about like Saddam Hussein compares to Jesus Christ.

Dealing effectively with Aids must first involve the spiritual. We must honor God's prohibitions. To advocate anything else is both physical and spiritual suicide! (Galatians 5:19-21).

notes.

In her personal notes, Abby quotes Johnson as saying it is no longer "a gay disease." Johnson says, "If it could happen to me -- it can happen to anybody." If every man could boast of a "thousand women" as Magic has boasted, then I suppose it could "happen to anybody." The law of averages can soon catch up with a person. It is like playing Russian Roulette with a loaded revolver. Sooner or

There Is No 'Safe Sex' Before Marriage

(Editor's note: The following timely article appeared in Letters To The Editor column of the Daily Mountain Eagle November 24, 1991).



Eva Nell B. Naramore Our teen-agers need people who care to tell them to abstain from sex until marriage and to explain to them why they need to abstain. We are not told to be safe thieves. We're taught not to steal. It's unlawful.

There is no safe sex without lawful marriage, because sex without marriage is fornication. "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). Marriage is God's plan for the family.

To have unlawful sex is not safe, and can never be. (Unwanted babies are born without loving care that parents together could give for years). Treasured virtue is lost and immoral behavior

causes the youth to be left with a guilty conscience.

There is no safe sex without lawful marriage, because sex without marriage is fornication.

We, the parents, are to be examples for our children. We are the potters they are the clay. Shame on you who are saying there is a way to have sex out of wedlock.

Surely you know better than to paint the grim picture in their minds that sex is OK, but use protection. If they are safe from AIDS, they are not safe from the sin of fornication. God has warned us against fornication and adultery.

May we all as we have the opportunity speak out against unlawful sex, and warn our youth to abstain, as God has planned and to build their lives and homes on a firm foundation, both physical and spiritual. Then sex will be safe and honorable as was planned with more health and happiness for life.

--Route 7, Box 95-A, Oakman, AL 35579.

The Gospel Of Christ And You



W. A. Holley

The word gospel means, "glad tidings or good news." It is God's holy message concerning Jesus Christ His Son, addressed to lost humanity (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).

God possesses other powers, but the one and only power that God has

to convert sinners is the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16-17). Under the New Testament plan of salvation, God never uses visions or feelings or sundry experiences, by which to save sinners. As we shall see, God has a plan or pattern by which sinners are saved (Titus 2:7; I Timothy 1:16; II Timothy 1:13). Thus, God has presented us an example, a form, a pattern which guides honest men and women in their efforts to believe and obey the truth of God.

The gospel of Christ is a composite of true elements of truth necessary to the salvation of one's soul. We shall see ---

(1) There are facts that one must believe. What are these facts? They are the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15:1-4). One cannot obey these facts; one can only believe them.

(2) There are promises to be trusted. We shall consider II Peter 1:3-4, which reads as follows;

"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us (by the gospel, II Thessalonians 2:14) to glory and virtue. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lusts."

What are some of these "exceeding and great promises?" They are, (1) The promise of the remission of sins (Acts 2:36-38; Matthew 26:28). Obviously, remission of sins involves faith, repentance, confession of Jesus' name, and water baptism (Acts 10:47-48; I Peter 3:20-21; Romans 6:3-4; Acts 22:16).

(2) The promise of the Holy Spirit to those who obey the primary commands of the gospel (Acts 2:38). The "gift of the Holy Spirit" is a non-miraculous gift, an indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 3:16; II Corinthians 6:16), which is given to all Christians, alike. However, there were miraculous gifts which were imparted by the laying on of the apostles' hands (I Corinthians 12:8-10; I Corinthians 13:8-13; Acts 8:14-20). Thus, when all the apostles died and all upon whom they had laid their hands died, miracles ceased, vanished away, were done away (I Corinthians 13:8-13). Today, there is not one person on earth who can miraculously heal a briar scratch on your hand, the claims of modern-miracle workers not withstanding.

(3) "And this is the promise that he hath promised

us, even eternal life" (I John 3:25). Hence, eternal life is a future possession for the child of God, not a present possession. Here is the divine principle stated: "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Romans 8:24-25). One plows in hope of the harvest to come (I Corinthians 9:10). "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life" (I Timothy 6:12 cf. Titus 1:2). Victory comes after the battle, no before! One does not hope for a 1991 Cadillac, if he already possesses it!

How does Jesus Christ state this proposition? We shall see: "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold 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 10:28-31). Notice the contrast: "In this time" with "in the world to come." These two time elements are not the same, are they??

Dear reader friend, what should your attitude toward the gospel of Christ be? From a Bible point of view, what is the predicament of a person who lives without Christ? Such a person is without hope and without God in the world (Ephesians 2:12-22).

There are three sobering facts concerning sin: These are, sin is real (Romans 3:23), sin grows (James 1:13-16, ASV), sin pays wages which is death (Romans 6:23).

The Great Judgment Day is real (Matthew 25:31-46; Romans 14:12; II Corinthians 5:10). Jesus' example on the cross demonstrated His submission to God's will (Matthew 26:38-46; Hebrews 5:7-9). Should not we do something for Him who did so much for us (John 3:16; Romans 5:18; II Corinthians 5:15; I Timothy 2:6; I John 2:1-2; Revelation 5:9; Hebrews 2:9).

Are you going into eternity without God? Where will you spend eternity, in heaven? or in hell? ". . . What shall be the end (destiny) of them that obey not the gospel of God? (I Peter 4:17). We would not dare answer this question if it were not for the fact that the Bible answers it. We quote, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

To obey the gospel is to do the will of God (Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 6:46). One must hear the word of God (John 6:44-45), believe that Jesus is the Son of God (John 3:16; Hebrews 11:6; Romans 10:17), repent, (Luke 13:3), confess Jesus' name (Acts 8:37), and be baptized (Mark 16:16).

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Stumbling Blocks Or Stepping Stones



T. Pierce Brown

As plans were being made for the second phase of the ONE NATION UNDER GOD program, this problem arose with reference to the shortage of workers in Eastern Europe (and almost every other place) to reply to the tens of thousands of responses that come in when we offer a Bible Correspondence Course. I have about 3000 students in Africa, and there is no way I could keep up with them if I did not have the answers, comments and records computerized. So it was suggested that we go one step beyond that in our efforts to coordinate and assist in the works that are already in progress in other nations.

When the correspondence Bible course lessons are being prepared, the answer sheet can be so arranged that a person can simply mark the appropriate spot in multiple choice answers. then a scanner can be passed over the sheet and a printer can print out the appropriate comments for each wrong answer. The values of this are fantastic. Not only will it save thousands of man-hours of time, but it will enable those on mission fields who have that technology available to enlist the help of hundreds of persons who do not know enough about the Bible to give any kind of proper response, but can let the computer give the Bible answer which is already programmed into it. Any non-Christian who may be used in that kind of work is a natural prospect for personal evangelism.

This is just one of the ways that thousands of stumbling blocks can be turned into stepping stones, provided brethren are willing to cooperate properly, laying aside all pride and selfish concern for their own interests. Hundreds of times we have seen examples of man's problems becoming God's opportunity. We have the technology. If we only have the faith and will to use our abilities properly, God will bless us "exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20). In fact, He already has.

Imagine what could happen if we could multiply our effectiveness by 1000 in all the mission areas where we are already having correspondence Bible course, but a limited number of persons to grade the papers!

Those who are already engaged in correspondence Bible courses work in any intensive way and think you can help with the implementation of the plan to coordinate all possible efforts to get maximum advantage of any available technology should call 1-800-767-9889 or 1-800-251-6871

and offer such help. Imagine what could happen if we could multiply our effectiveness by 1000 in all the mission areas where we are already having

correspondence Bible course, but a limited number of persons to grade the papers!

--Rt. 2 Box 144X, Wartrace, TN, 37183.

Have You Ever Suffered For Jesus' Sake?



Elwood Holt

I am wondering if sorrow has entered the home of some who are reading this? If so, you do not stand alone. If death came only to our households we could charge God with being unfair, but it is no respecter of persons. It strikes the men of both high and low degree. Have you ever stopped to think of the spiritual condition of our world today? Though we are making some progress in the right direction, we are crippled by unfaithfulness and spiritual laziness on all hands. Unconcern seems to be typical of the average person. "I just don't have time," is the pet excuse of the twentieth century. Do you suppose a good strong persecution would snap us out of our lethargy? Someone said, "Persecutions are beneficial to the righteous. They are a hail of precious stones." Another said, "The blood of martyrs is the seed of the kingdom." Satan's biggest mistake is always made when he goes all out to persecute God's people. He is cutting his own throat, but it seems he has to learn his lesson all over again ever so often.

Persecution brings people together, fortifies them, and promotes unity. In unity there is strength. The greatness in many is never seen until the waters are troubled. Sure, men have come through the furnaces of adversity. Some men are never appreciated because of their strength until they are called upon to manifest it.

Persecution brings people together, fortifies them, and promotes unity. In unity there is strength. The greatness in many is never seen until the waters are troubled.

The CHURCH of the LORD did not come to us on a silver platter. The disciples who tried to walk in the steps of Jesus as he led them throughout the Bible land, did not have things easy. They did not have the luxuries of life that we have. They had no homes of their own. They roved about, slept under the heavens with the clouds as their comforts. They were the constant objective of the persecution of the blasphemers of their day. The Church of Jerusalem got off to a big beginning on

the day of Pentecost. Thousands of souls were added by obedience to the Lord. But the Jerusalem church became complacent. The members got lazy. They lost what vision they had. When vision perishes, the people perish, too. We will never rise any higher than our personal vision. Let us remember this and never succumb to the spirit of defeatism. With the Lord helping, we CAN do all things for His cause. No, the disciples did not have things easy. They suffered as their master told them they would do. He suffered and finally a bunch of ugly, vicious men put him to a shameful death. He arose the third day and went back to heaven. But, His worthy apostles had to face an unfriendly world for a number of years before they could go on to be with him whom they had learned to LOVE above all life. How did they die? Tradition says they died in these manners:

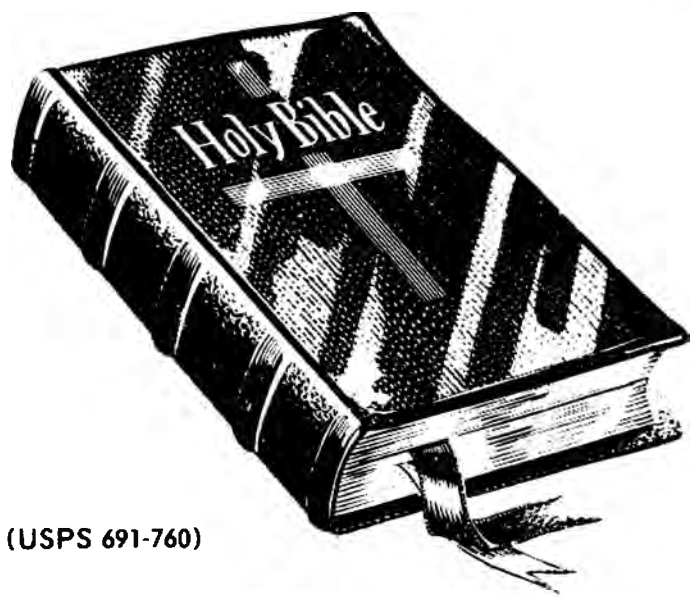
Matthew, slain with a sword in Ethiopia. Mark, dragged through the streets of Alexandria, Egypt, 'til he expired. Luke, hanged on an olive tree in Greece; John, put in boiling oil in Rome, but escaped death to die naturally at Ephesus, Asia. James, the great, was beheaded at Rome. James, the less, thrown from the pinnacle of the temple, then beaten to death with a club. Phillip hanged up against a pillar in Phrygia. Andrew, bound to a cross where he preached until he expired. Thomas was run through the body with a lance. Bartholomew, flayed alive; Jude, shot to death with arrows. Matthias, stoned, then beheaded. Simon, crucified in Persia, and Paul, the last and one "chosen out of due season" beheaded out of Rome.

And then we think we have suffered for Jesus' sake: Oh, we should rise above excuses! Pitiful, frail creatures making excuses for neglect of God's will! We should pray, "Deal mercifully with our unbelief, oh Lord!"

These words should make the Church mean more to us than it did when we began. How great our faith should be -- we who are so abundantly blessed. We should never forsake the Lord's house. And, remember, most of the work of this world is done by people who don't "feel well"! Jesus said, "Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: And where I am, thither ye cannot come" (John 7:34). Jesus also said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death" (John 8:51). It pays to study the Holy Book.

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

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26:25

VOLUME 27

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H. G. Wells And Christianity



Wayne Jackson

Wayne Jackson is an internationally known British author. His most prominent work was perhaps the celebrated book, *The Outline of History* (1920 -- with numerous subsequent revisions). This volume contains one entire chapter titled, "The Rise of Christianity and the Fall of the Western Empire." Within this section, Mr. Wells, certainly no believer in the divine origin of the Christian system, has some very interesting things to say concerning Jesus of Nazareth.

For example, the author writes: "In the reign of Tiberius Caesar a great teacher arose out of Judea who was to liberate the intense realization of the righteousness and unchallengeable oneness of God, and of man's moral obligation to God . . ." (p 527). Without hesitation Wells accepts the historical existence of Jesus Christ. He is confident that Jesus was no mythical character. "In spite of miraculous and incredible additions, one is obliged to say, 'Here was a man. This part of the tale could not have been invented'" (p 528).

Wells had many complimentary things to say about Christ. He declares, for example, that Jesus was "very earnest and passionate, capable of swift anger, and teaching a new and simple and profound doctrine -- namely, the universal, loving Fatherhood of God and the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven. He was clearly a person -- to use a common phrase -- of intense personal magnetism. He attracted followers and filled them with love and courage. Weak and ailing people were heartened, and healed by his presence" (p 529). In one place Wells asks: "Is it any wonder that to this day this Galilean is too much for our small hearts?" (p 536).

But where did this celebrated author obtain his information concerning the character and teaching of Jesus Christ? From the only historical source

available -- the record of the New Testament. Note the following significant quotation. "Almost our only resources of information about the personality of Jesus are derived from the four Gospels, all of which were certainly in existence a few decades after his death, and from allusions to his life in the letters (epistles) of the early Christian propagandists" (p 528).

The unconscious concessions of Wells say much more than he desired. They reflect the positive testimony of an unwitting witness.

Now here is an intriguing question. Why do men like Wells, and others of his intellectual persuasion, accept the New Testament documents as records of reliable history except in matters that involve the miraculous? For example, why would Mr. Wells acknowledge that Jesus was "crucified

together with two thieves" (p 529), and yet not believe, from the same sources, that the Lord was bodily raised from the grave? If one is scholastically fair, there must be some justification, beyond mere personal prejudice, to warrant such a procedure.

The fact is, men like Wells are simply characterized by an anti-supernatural bias! In a most unscholarly fashion infidel critics of the Bible do not hesitate to roam through the sacred Scriptures, clipping and gluing here and there, in order to fashion a narrative consistent with their personal view of history. Such a procedure is academically dishonest.

The unconscious concessions of Wells, however, say much more than he desired. The truth is, they reflect the positive testimony of an unwitting witness. Jesus Christ is a historical Force with Whom to be reckoned. He cannot be explained away in the frivolous fashion attempted by many historians.

--Via Reasoning From Revelation, 230 Landmark Drive, Montgomery, AL 36117.

A Full Time Job



Bobby Key

neighbor in this respect.

When a runner toes the mark, ready for the race, he does so with the desire to run. Without such a desire he might as well stay at home. The runner


toe the mark! Once a year, once a month, once a week, once a day, every person on earth lines up for a new start in life. No matter how badly we messed up yesterday -- today is a new beginning and we start off exactly at the same time with all others. You have no advantage over your

must have made preparation before the race begins. Nothing is accomplished worth while without preparation. Moses spent eighty years preparing. Paul was in preparation many years. We must prepare today for the race tomorrow. To endure we must have the determination to run every minute of every day toward the goal.

May we learn to appreciate the coming of a new day and give thanks to God for it -- for the chance to try again. Do this each morning when you awake and it will surprise you how beautiful life can be. If you fail in the morning you still have another half day to make good.

The race that we are in will take a life-time to

Continued On Page 3



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—Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

When Was Jesus Born?



David Wade

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 30. 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 place great spiritual emphasis on Christmas and Easter. Perhaps it is for this reason that God left in obscurity the date of the Savior's birth. 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.

The Purpose Of A Pattern



Winfred Clark

I think not and so do many other people.

When you speak of a pattern you speak of a plan to follow. You speak of that which is like a map or blueprint. It speaks of something that has been revealed to man in such a way that he can know what God will expect of him. This is surely the case in God's dealings with man.

I am aware from the very beginning that there are those who decry the idea of a pattern for our religious practices. Some are opposed to what they call "pattern mentality." Should this cause us to move away from a discussion of such in an objective manner? I

We should have no reluctance in using the term "pattern." Didn't God use that word when speaking to Moses (Exodus 25:9, 40)? Isn't this the same word that was used by the writer of the book of Hebrews when he said, "See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (Hebrews 8:5)? Listen to the apostle Paul, "Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard of me," ASV (II Timothy 1:13). How would it be possible for one to hold a pattern if one did not exist? The term "hold" carries the idea of "adherence to." But how could you adhere to that which does not exist? Yes, there is a pattern and it serves a very useful purpose. We need to take the time to look are some of the purposes of a pattern.

A PATTERN PROVIDES DIRECTION

None of us should deny the need for direction for

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There Is No God?

Author Unknown

Jim Bishop, popular author of 21 books, including "The Day Christ Died" and "The Day Kennedy Was Shot," died in 1987. This column written in the 1960's, was a favorite of his wife, Kelly.

There is no God. All of the wonders around us are accidental. No almighty hand made a thousand -- billion stars. They made themselves. No power keeps them on their steady course. The earth spins itself to keep the oceans from falling off toward the sun. Infants teach themselves to cry when they are hungry or hurt. A small flower invented itself so that we could extract digitalis for sick hearts.

The earth gave itself day and night, tilted itself so that we get seasons. Without the magnetic poles man would be unable to navigate the trackless oceans of water and air, but they just grew there.

How about the sugar thermostat in the pancreas? It maintains a level of sugar in the blood sufficient for energy. Without it, all of us would die.

Why does the snow sit on mountain-tops waiting for the warm spring sun to melt it just at the right time for the young crops in farms below to drink? A very lovely accident.

The human heart will beat for 70 or 80 years without faltering. How does it get sufficient rest between beats? A kidney will filter poison from the blood, leave good things alone. How does it know one from the other?

Who gave the human tongue flexibility to form words, and a brain to understand them, but denied it to other animals?

Who showed a womb how to take the love of two persons and keep splitting a tiny ovum until, in time, a baby would have the proper number of fingers, eyes and ears and hair in the right places, and come into the world when it is strong enough to sustain life?

There is no God?

--Via Attalla Advocate, Attalla, AL 35954.

The Purpose Of A Pattern

Continued From Page 2

"it is not within man to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). Such was surely the case with Noah in the long ago. When he was told to build the ark; he was told exactly what he was to do (Genesis 6:14). He was told to use "gopher wood." That would mean only gopher wood. He was given directions as to it's size. These directions were followed (Genesis 6:22). He had no trouble knowing what God wanted him to do for he had a pattern to follow.

We have a pattern which gives direction as to what we are to say. Peter points this out when he says, "If any many speak, let him speak as he oracles of God;" (I Peter 4:11). So a man has a pattern to follow as he speaks. He is not left to say just anything in the name of the Lord. It must be according to and in harmony with the words of God. He has a pattern for his speech. This would surely be a part of the reason men are not to add to or take from the word of the Lord. Such would alter the pattern and in so doing not say what God's word would say.

A PATTERN PROMOTES UNITY

If all follow the same pattern, and we must, then all will speak the same thing. There will be unity of speech if all "hold fast the pattern of sound words." This would be a part of the reason Paul would say, "The things that thou hast heard of me, the same commit thou unto faithful men who shall be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2). Take a moment to look at that passage. Paul says, "the things." That would mean something specific,

something definite, something understandable. It would mean the propositional truth that Timothy heard from Paul. It would be the teaching of an apostle. This becomes the pattern. This is the blueprint that is to be followed. After such is heard, this could in turn be passed on by teaching to other men. Those men would be able to pass this same thing on also. This would surely insure unity of speech. This would mean that one generation after another could continue to speak the same thing. Culture or the passing to time would not change it.

Such will promote unity of action. Paul knew that this possibility existed for he said, "as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye" (I Corinthians 16:1). By following the words of the apostle as a pattern for action, you will have unity of action. All in the church at Corinth could do as all in the churches of Galatia. This would be consistent with what Paul had said before, "as I teach everywhere in every church" (I Corinthians 4:17). If all those churches would follow the pattern laid out by Paul's teaching; you would have unity of action. There would be no division.

A PATTERN PRESERVES IDENTITY

The thing that helped identify the child of God under the Old Testament was the pattern which he followed. He was given certain instructions as to how he was to act. You will find that the Jew was to observe the sabbath as a holy day (Exodus 20:8). This would serve to set him apart from the inhabitants of the land into which they came. They

would be identified by such practices as they followed the word of the Lord. His word being the pattern for their lives.

This is also true of the child of God today. He is what he is because he follows a certain form or

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A Full Time Job

Continued From Page 1

complete. It is a shame that most church members spend two hours on Sunday morning and one hour on Sunday evening and about the same amount of time Wednesday evening at the church building believing this to be the sum total of Christianity. Perhaps this is the reason our religion doesn't mean any more to us. What about the six days between Sundays? The race does not end when the last prayer is finished Sunday evening!

It is a shame that most church members spend two hours on Sunday morning and one hour on Sunday evening and about the same amount of time Wednesday evening at the church building believing this to be the sum total of Christianity.

Our buildings are filled with those who have been born again, those who have put on Christ. This means we have taken on us the character of Christ. By faith Christ lives in us. While on earth he went about doing good -- we must do the same. He lived above the world -- so must we.

It is a dangerous thing in life for a people to know more than they practice. No people teach more about the Great Commission -- going into all the world with the gospel -- and do less about it! We teach the necessity of giving as we have been prospered, yet many people give so little! Most of what we do give is spent on a building and local preachers; past this point the average church has little vision. We teach the need to care for the poor, yet many people who are not believers in Christ do far more to aid the poor than do we. We teach Christians to be faithful in attendance, yet many forsake the assembly with little feeling of guilt.

No people emphasizes love more than we do, and rightly so. Then why so much bitterness and bad spirit among us? Is the sort of love we teach based upon the premise that you must do it my way if you expect my admiration, affection, and love. For the most part, we are fighters, not lovers!

Before you throw this piece away, think again of what we have said. Could it be that changes are in order? Is it possible that we have been lying down on the job? Are we undoing in six days what we are trying to accomplish on the one day? Our practice must catch up with our preaching.

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Jesus My Friend



W. A. Holley

have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:12-14). "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3).

REASONS WHY WE SHOULD BE FRIENDS OF GOD

(1) Because of where he came from. Where did Jesus come from? Well, he came from heaven. How do we know? Jesus said, ". . . I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). God sent Jesus into this wicked world to make possible the salvation of wicked men (John 3:16-17, 34; Acts 3:26; 10:36; Galatians 4:4). Where did Jesus go after his resurrection? Listen to him. "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" (John 6:62). Will Jesus ever come again? Indeed, he will. "So Christ was once

The Purpose Of A Pattern

Continued From Page 3

pattern of teaching. In fact, Paul said of those at Rome; "but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you" (Romans 6:17). This would be equal to saying they have obeyed the gospel. Each one of those in the church at Rome would be what he or she was because they have all followed the same pattern in obedience. They have all come from the same form or mold and thus would all be the same. They would all be one in Christ. There would be no difference in their religious identity. To change their identity, you would have to change the pattern they follow. As long as men follow the same pattern then they will all be the same in kind.

As you see the gospel move throughout the Roman world; you see men and women following the same instructions. They are all Christians. you do not have one kind of a Christian in Jerusalem and another kind in Antioch. They all came from the same mold or pattern. The same seed that was planted in Jerusalem was also planted in Antioch. The seed brings forth after it's kind (Genesis 1:12). Such will surely preserve identity. That is surely the case with the gospel which is the pattern for all to follow in matters which pertain to the soul.

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

"The Friend of God" is a title given to Abraham because of his close association with God and his faithfulness to him (II Chronicles 20:7; James 2:23). If one desires to be a friend of Jesus one must hear and obey his word: "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I

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 9:27). Just when that day shall be remains locked in the infinite mind of God (Mark 13:32-33).

(2) Jesus is my friend because his mission is in behalf of lost humanity. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). The world is lost and needs to be saved from all shapes, forms, and colors of wickedness. "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" (I John 5:19). Jesus accomplished his mission because after his ordeal on the cross, he said, "It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost" (John 19:30).

(3) Jesus is your friend because of his great love for sinful men and women. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Romans 5:8-11). Note the words, Christ, sinners, enemies, blood, reconciliation, saved (cf. II Corinthians 5:14).

Such great love manifested by Jesus Christ in our behalf ought to cause us to want to obey him (Matthew 7:21-23; Hebrews 5:7-9).

(4) Jesus our friend is our greatest example. Jesus is God's man as men ought to be: in perfect control, faithful, diligent, loyal, obedient, always speaking the truth. ". . . Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I Peter 2:21). Our world desperately needs the finest examples possible. The murderers, the thieves, fornicators and adulterers, drug addicts, drunkards, and home-breakers, are a curse -- a filthy, dirty curse -- to a civilized society!! (Galatians 5:19-21). Many of our political and religious leaders cannot figure out what America's problems are. There is such a thing as morality -- right and wrong -- good and bad -- truth and error.

The book of Judges stands as warning to those who refuse to recognize and respect authority. This book is a sad commentary which reveals the tragedy of lawlessness and rebellion as people are determined to have their way, regardless! Read the following words and weep: "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25; cf. chapters, 17:6; 18:1; 19:1). We live in a day when humanism, atheism, modernism, the New Hermeneutics, the doctrine of pseudo-scholars, rob the unwary of their faith (I Timothy 1:19-20; II Timothy 2:15-18; 4:14). Many argue that it is wrong to call the names of false teachers, but here their names are recorded forever upon the pages of Holy Writ. When will our brethren learn??

(5) Jesus my friend made the greatest sacrifice ever offered. Who can imagine the suffering and

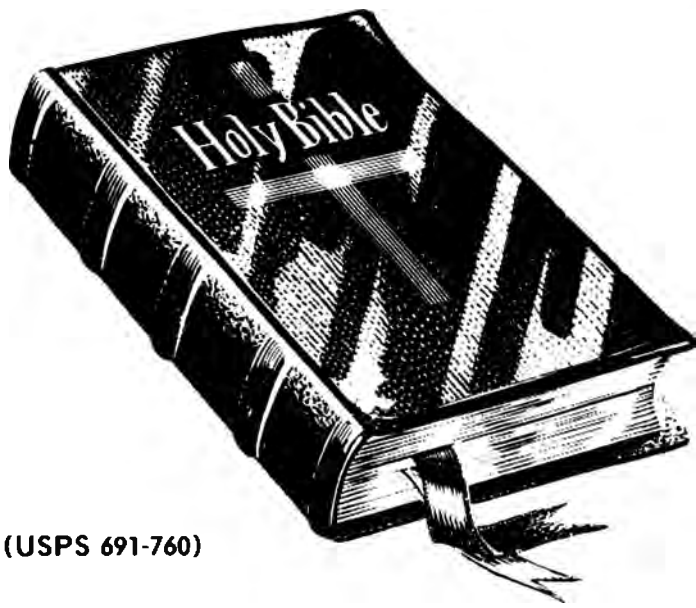
agony of the cross where Jesus Christ died?? No one has ever been able to measure the grace of God or the depravity of man. Jesus spent about six hours upon the cruel cross. Nails were driven into his hands and his feet. Jesus was scourged, mocked, and misrepresented. To be crucified represents the most cruel manner of execution. One great Bible scholar has said, "The wretched position made every movement one of agony; the pierced hands and feet soon became inflamed and then infected, arteries were distended and blocked, fever shot upward, intolerable headaches often drove those thus being put to death into insanity. It was to such a death that our Lord was condemned, and this by men who affected to be the guardians of the truth and the favored of Jehovah" (The Gospel of John, page 402, Guy N. Woods).

Our sacrifices for God, Christ and the church may be great indeed; but they are nothing when compared to the sacrifice by which Jesus offered himself upon the cross (Hebrews 13:15; I Peter 2:5, 9; Hebrews 7:29; 9:28).

(6) Jesus, knowing that man would have to change worlds provided a royal roadmap which directs fallen man to heaven. The Holy Bible is that roadmap. It directs sinners to believe that God is (Hebrews 11:6), to repent of all sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30-31), to confess Jesus' name before men (Matthew 10:32-33), and to be baptized in water for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; I Peter 3:20-21). Following these acts of an obedient faith one must live faithfully the Christian life unto death (Revelation 2:10).

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Birth the
Acts 26:25

VOLUME 27

DECEMBER 20, 1991

NUMBER 51

What Brought Paul To Tears?



Joe E. Galloway

book! Yet, this content, joyful apostle at times also served God "with many tears" (Acts 20:19). Perhaps we can benefit by considering what would cause this great man of God to weep.

Paul shed tears out of concern for the doctrinal well being of the church. He told the Ephesian elders "that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31). The context of this statement is Paul's warning to these elders of coming apostasy, even among the elders, that would result in false teachers leading many away from the truth. Without doubt, were this great apostle alive now he would often be shedding similar tears of concern!

Paul mourned when immoral living of members came to his attention. He rebuked the Corinthian church for being puffed up, instead of mourning, regarding the fornicator among them (I Corinthians 5:2), so we know that he was mourning over this matter, himself. This should always be the reaction of the godly when such godlessness is exhibited! The Psalmist wrote, "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law" (Psalm 119:136).

Paul wept when he had to write harshly to fellow Christians. With reference to I Corinthians, a forceful letter filled with correction of serious problems in the church at Corinth, he later wrote: "Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you" (II

Corinthians 2:4). Paul's tears stained his letter, just as parents' tears flow freely when they, because of love for their children, must exercise harsh discipline.

Paul cried when he had to admit that some members of the church were actually enemies of the Lord's cause. He said, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction. . . who mind earthly things" (Philippians 3:18, 19). How painful it is to have to admit that some brethren are not true to the Lord, and to even have to single them out by name as Paul often did! Yet, faithfulness to God and concern for the well being of the church requires that we sometimes point such out so that they may be avoided (Romans 16:17). The cause of Christ is not helped when, knowing that a brother is bringing havoc to the church, we keep this to ourselves to avoid hard feelings and controversy.

It is noteworthy that the things Paul wept over did not include financial loss, persecution, sickness, being away from friends and family, nor even imprisonment -- and he suffered all these things! His attitude toward such things is well expressed in his statement in II Corinthians 4:17: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal

weight of glory"

Let's be the kind of people who mourn for the proper things, as did Paul: things that dishonor God, endanger Christians, and badly influence the gospel. At the same time let's be a happy, content, and optimistic people who can be joyful in spite of physical hardships and rejection by the world.

Let's be the kind of people who mourn for the proper things, as did Paul: things that dishonor God, endanger Christians, and badly influence the gospel. At the same time let's be a happy, content, and optimistic people who can be joyful in spite of physical hardships and rejection by the world. "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, rejoice" (Philippians 4:4).

--218 Pinecrest Drive, Greeneville, TN 37743.

The Basic "Flaw"



Bill Jackson
(1929-1991)

the search goes on for the "flaw." Science was not

Problems of a thousand kinds, in a thousand areas of life, have the researchers pouring over plans, systems, procedures, behavior, etc. -- all looking for the basic flaw causing the malfunction. Current space probes scheduled, and then repeatedly cancelled, show us that

my "big thing" in school, but we're not speaking of science; rather, we speak of anything in any area that goes awry. Men then turn to try and find the basic "flaw."

In the area of major interest for most readers of this bulletin, I know what the "flaw" is that causes so many problems in the kingdom. This denotes no brilliance on my part, for many of you know it to be so as well. The basic flaw -- causing men to want to turn the church into a playground, substituting fun and games for the work of the

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The Basic "Flaw"

Continued From Page 1

Lord. The basic flaw -- causing men to see the church ministering to the whole man, rather than attending to his spiritual needs. The basic flaw -- causing men to fault all gospel preaching that "hews the line," letting the chips fall where they may.

The basic flaw is feeling that the gospel ISN'T SUFFICIENT! What God has provided just isn't good enough! Though the Word is said to furnish us completely (II Timothy 3:16-17); and though the apostles gave us what they had, completely furnishing us unto life and godliness (II Peter 1:3); and though we are warned against turning to anything else (Galatians 1:6-7 and II John 9), it is true that some who wear the name of Christ don't think the Word is sufficient. Again, some have sought "growth" in ways and using means other than that prescribed by the Lord, applying the Word! (I Peter 2:2). They think the Word is not enough!

The basic flaw is feeling that the gospel ISN'T SUFFICIENT! What God has provided just isn't good enough!

With that basic "flaw," there is a constant move away from the Word, a constant dislike of some of its teaching, a continual distancing of oneself from study, and finally, becoming sectarian completely. With that basic "flaw," there's no way the person can be and can do what is pleasing unto the Lord! The basic "advantage" every faithful child of God has is his love of, and devotion to, the Word of the Lord. In that faithfulness, the joy of living one's life is without the "flaw" that robs one completely!

--Via Newsletter, P.O. Box 371, Amory, MS 38821.



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Can You Gain The "Whole World?"



David Wade

"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, 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

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!

The Language Of Humility



Winfred Clark

them; for thy speech, bewrayeth thee" (Matthew 26:73). The ASV would say, "thy speech maketh thee known." Jesus had already said, "for out of

the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34). So we could well conclude that the language of a person will tell a great deal about that person's attitude and disposition.

There are a number of recorded statements one can find in the Bible that will tell us a great deal about the people who made them.

ABRAHAM'S "I am but dust and ashes"

You can read this statement in the prayer he prayed for those in the city of Sodom (Genesis 18:27). Here was indeed one of the great men of the Old Testament. He would stand head and shoulders above many. In fact God had just paid

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The Language Of Humility

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him a great compliment when he said, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Genesis 18:19). This will give some insight of God's estimate of this good man. But when you come to listen to his prayer; you will find what Abraham thought of himself and how he saw himself in the presence of God. Though he was bold in his faith to pray as he did; he knew his limitations. He saw himself as "dust and ashes." Abraham was aware of his mortality as he considered himself to be a creature of the dust. He knew he owed his very existence to God that being allowed to approach God in prayer was indeed a privilege.

JOB'S "Behold, I am vile"

This is what Job would have to say about himself (Job 40:4). We are not left in doubt as to the kind of man Job really was. We know what God had to say about him even to the devil. Listen to the language of the Lord. "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" (Job 1:8). This good man had gone through the furnace of adversity. He had lost his material possessions. He had lost his children and his wife's faith was gone. His health was his shambles.

We need to remember that Job maintained his innocence when contending with his friends. They

had accused him of being a sinner. Job defended himself before them but in the presence of a holy God you will find him admitting his vileness and sinfulness. That statement has to be described as "the language of humility." Here is the case of a man not thinking more highly of himself than he ought to think.

EZRA'S "I blush to lift up my face"

This was one of the outstanding men of his day. You will find him working by the side of people like Nehemiah and others to bring about a restoration of the people of God to the land from which they had been taken. He would be in the forefront trying to provide the right kind of leadership. However, you will find him at a time when the sinful state of the people was brought home (Ezra 9:1-8). He finds the people mixing with the nations around them and adopting their ways of life. They were marrying and intermingling with pagans. In the midst of all of this you will find Ezra at the time of the evening sacrifice before God in prayer (Ezra 9:5). He is astonished at the sins of the people. He is ashamed of the sinful conditions which exist. He sees them as piling up to the gates of heaven. He will blush to appear before God. There is surely no sense of selfrighteousness in this man. He is not as proud as a peacock. He knows the humiliating effect of sin and he saw nothing within that society to be proud of. Here again is the language of humility.

ISAIAH'S "I am undone . . . I am a man of unclean lips"

This statement comes out of a chapter in which Isaiah has seen a vision of God. When you stop to measure the stature of the man, you are indeed looking at a giant among men. He was an outstanding prophet, a devoted servant of the Lord, a friend of king Uzziah. In fact, it was in the year that king Uzziah died that Isaiah would say, "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple" (Isaiah 6:1). He will also speak of the seraphim who cried "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isaiah 6:3). It is against that background that Isaiah would say, "Woe is me! for I am undone (cut off) because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:5). Though there are many good things we could say of Isaiah, there was not much that he could and would say when he saw himself in relationship to the Lord. He could see God's holiness and that brought to the forefront his sinfulness. This he did not try to hide nor would he try to deny it. Indeed again we are able to read "the language of humility."

It is very revealing to listen to giants of faith as they speak "the language of humility." They show us how we ought to see ourselves.

PETER'S "I am a sinful man."

All of us who read the New Testament are aware of the nature of this good man. We know of his great confession (Matthew 16:16-18). We know of his willingness to defend the Lord (Matthew 26:51, John 18:10). But we also know of his deep humility. There was the occasion where Peter was able to see the power of the Lord demonstrated in the catch of fish after they had fished all night and caught nothing (Luke 5:5). When he saw all the fish that had been taken by following the directions of the Lord, he was ready to fall down before Jesus and say, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man O Lord" (Luke 5:8). You will notice that he is not trying to compare himself with other people. He is not thinking of how sinful others might be. That is not the point to Peter. He is thinking about himself and when he saw himself that close to the Son of God, he knew he was a sinful man. Here again is the "language of humility."

It is very revealing to listen to giants of faith as they speak "the language of humility." They show us how we ought to see ourselves.

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Some Terrible Sins



W. A. Holley

What is sin? According to the Bible, "sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4). Where sin is concerned, sin can be classified as the sins of commission and the sins of omission (Galatians 5:19-21; James 4:17). One need not be guilty of murder or adultery or some other atrocious sin

to make one a sinner!!

Sin is always deadly, for the "wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Adam and Eve died because of sin (Genesis 3:1 ff; 2:9, 16-17; Romans 5:12-19; II Corinthians 11:3; I Timothy 2:9-15).

For our study we shall notice a catalogue of terrible sins. We are aware that there are many other sins, but we shall study these sins because they are so devious and devastating, leaving wreck and ruin in their path: Please read with us:

(1) Smoking is indeed a deadly sin. It destroys its victims. Even "second-hand-smoking," kills innocent people. Some say that this problem is greater than many have ever anticipated. One's body was created by God Almighty, in which dwells one's immortal soul (Genesis 2:7; I Corinthians 6:15-20; II Corinthians 6:16). Tobacco in whatever form it is used poisons one's body. Tobacco is so deadly the United States Government requires warnings to be printed on its packagings. Sadly, many who are addicted to tobacco pay no attention to such warnings!!

(2) The consumption of alcohol is a fatal sin, sooner or later. There are many warnings in the Bible against its use (Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35). "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priests and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean" (Isaiah 28:7-8). What a sad commentary on those who lived so many centuries ago! Yet this same problem continues even today. The distilleries and breweries cannot sell enough of their products. In their advertisements they depict handsome young men and beautiful young women in full vigor of life; but they never recognize the damage done to the human race, through violence, wrecks and blood on the highways, and needless deaths of those under the influence of alcohol. Nor do they take any responsibility for the evil done by their products. To them it is, sell, sell, sell, at whatever cost!!

That alcoholism is a terrible problem is shown by the fact "that 76 million Americans -- about 43 percent of the U.S. adult population -- had contact with alcoholism in their family. About 10.5 million Americans are alcoholics, but it is clear from this study that the statistics on the number of alcoholics . . . greatly underestimate the number of people affected by the disease of alcoholism," (Health and

Human Services, Louis Sullivan, Secretary). Notice the statement . . . "the disease of alcoholism. . ." We deny that alcoholism is a disease. If it is a disease, it is the only disease that can be bought and sold! How ridiculous!

(3) Sexual activity outside of the marriage union is a most devastating sin. It destroys men and women, boys and girls and, sometimes political candidates. Hear the word of the Lord: "Marriage is honorable in all (Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge," ASV), and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). Fornication and adultery is an attack upon the home led by modernist, liberalist and atheistic elements designed to defeat God's purposes. The humanistic approach turns us all into dogs and cats!! Ridiculous in the extreme!! Read what happened to David and King after his sin with Bathsheba. The sword never departed from his house (II Samuel 12:1-14). Some scholars say that in this episode David violated eight of the ten commandments. You count them.

(4) Divorce, as popular as it is, is a very destructive sin. It destroys wives, husbands, boys and girls. Because of it many children grow up without a mother and a father. These become street people, wandering here and there without anyone to discipline and guide them into the finer things of life (Ephesians 6:1-4; Titus 2:1-8; I Peter 3:1-7). One little eight year old boy, after his parents had decided not to obtain a divorce, said to them, "Thank God that you had enough sense to call off that divorce business."

It is true that God under the law of Moses tolerated divorce (Deuteronomy 24:1 ff), just as He tolerated having a king, or the use of instrumental music, but it was never His law. When Jesus came, He reinstated God's original law of marriage (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 5:27-32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:11-12). ". . . Let not the wife depart from her husband: but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband. . ." (I Corinthians 7:11-12).

(5) Religious division is a sin of such great proportions it is difficult to imagine. The church of the Bible began on the First Pentecost after Jesus' glorious resurrection, in the famed city of Jerusalem, ca. 33. Any church that started at some other place, or at any other time, or by any other authority cannot be the church of which you can read in the Bible (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-42, 47). Since the church and the kingdom are one, and since those in the church were also in the kingdom (Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 1:9). IT IS FAIR AND SCRIPTURAL to say that the kingdom has already been established, the contentions of the premillennialists notwithstanding.

Jesus prayed for all believers to be one (John 17:20-23). Denominationalism glorifies religious division, but the New Testament church still pleads for unity. No man can support the Roman Catholic church, the Lutheran Church, the Methodist Church, the Mormon Church, et al., and still think

that somehow the unity of believers can occur. The traits and peculiarities of these churches necessarily separate them one from the other. In New Testament times there were no denominational churches. If such churches existed in those days, it is not strange that the Bible mentions none of them??

Denominationalism takes property, money and time that is used in supporting human efforts (Psalm 127:1; 133:1; Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 20:28), when, as a matter of fact, all our energies should be devoted to the restoration (not the reformation) of the church . . . the New Testament church. Denominational names, denominational dogmas, denominational authority, denominational organizations, and denominational creeds are the source of denominational division. As long as this situation prevails, so-called Christendom can never be united.

Here is a sobering thought: The church as Jesus built it is large enough to include all (of every nation), who are born again (John 3:3-5; I Peter 2:22 ff; Acts 2:36-38; Mark 16:16); but the church of the New Testament is small enough to exclude all who refuse to submit to Jesus' demands. The earnest and sincere prayer of this scribe is that you will cast off all denominational trappings and return to the ancient church as it existed in apostolic times. It can be done (Luke 8:11).

(6) Lawlessness and rebellion against constituted authority are running rampant throughout the land. "Righteousness exalts a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). Shamefully, criminals seem to be taking charge of our nation. Alarmingly, murder, kidnapping, robberies, and other forms of violence are occurring frequently. Across our country various communities are awash with drugs and alcohol and young hooligans. Somehow, we must develop greater respect for law enforcement officers, unless we wish to risk anarchy (Romans 13:1-7; I Timothy 1:8-11; I Peter 2:13-17).

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-Acts 26:25

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Are The Scriptures In Conflict?



R. W. Gray

Underscoring the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ inspiration affirms that our High Priest is touched by our infirmities, having been tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15, 16; John 1:17). Although foreordained to the Priesthood,

Christ, as a Son, was to learn obedience through suffering. Perfected in his exalted office he became author of salvation to all who obey him (Hebrews 5:1-9).

Throughout the New Testament grace is set forth as the ground of hope in Christ. Salvation is not of man. It is the gift of God, that we might not boast (Ephesians 2:1-10).

Through the centuries many have viewed these great truths as being in conflict. Consequently, they wrestle with them on an either/or basis. But are we inexorably locked in an impasse from which there is no escape? Is truth opposed to itself? Are two truths mutually exclusive?

The Antinomian heresy, held in at least quasi-form by the early Gnostic sects, and later resurrected by Johannes Agricola, owes its inception and promotion to a perversion of these two Biblical doctrines. This error holds that Christians are exempt from the obligation of the moral laws of God, grace having revealed them and set them free.

Antinomianism also found congenial soil in Calvinism, particularly among those who would be known as the Plymouth Brethren. It is held to one degree or another by many modern denominations.

Principles of this heresy are surfacing in books, articles, and lectures among churches of Christ. It has, in the past, been generally promoted under the guise of exalting Christ. In 1643 a certain Tobias

Crisp published a work known as "Christ Exalted Alone" which sought to champion the view of salvation by grace alone. As was true of the past, so it is today. Under the guise of exalting the Christ, brethren scoff at the concept of obedience playing a part in man's salvation.

In its most radical form the grace only doctrine denies the requirement for obedience on the part of either saint or sinner. Pockets of brethren here and there are manifesting a troubled spirit when they hear sermons that set forth a necessity for obedience. Like their forerunners they fear we will run past Jesus and embrace the law. Emphasizing the absence of an article before "law" in the original they envision Paul in his Roman and Galatian epistles as setting out the principle of salvation apart from any law whatsoever.

It is evident that to conclude that salvation is predicated upon grace alone places one in serious conflict with inspiration's affirmation that Christ saves the obedient (Hebrews 5:9; II Thessalonians 1:9). Conversely, when obedience is viewed as the ground of acceptance before God one is forced to deal with the grace passages in an awkward fashion. Is it not far more reasonable to seek agreement with these two principles of truth?

Israel was at an impasse at the Red Sea. With a mighty army in hot pursuit closing their only escape route they felt they would surely perish. And but for divine intervention their fear would soon become reality. God opened a passage for them in the Sea, and they all passed over on dry ground (Exodus 14:21, 22). "Thus the Lord saved Israel that day . . ." (Exodus 14:30).

Was obedience involved in Israel's rescue? Yes. God did not transport them to the other side of the Sea in a chariot of fire. They willingly, by an act of faith, passed under the cloud and through the Sea (I Corinthians 10:1, 2). This act of faith amounted to obedience claiming the grace provided. God had done for them what they could not do for themselves. But had they refused to cross over their doom was sealed.

Will Israel now compose a song exalting their great faith? Hear them! "The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation. . . . Thou in thy 'mercy' hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed" (Exodus 15:2, 13). Although as obedient souls they had moved by their own choice to the realm of safety they ascribed to Jehovah the source of their redemption.

Mankind was incarcerated in Satan's prison house. But for divine intervention they will perish. Neither men nor angels could provide a way of escape. Man was at an impasse. God in mercy opened the door (John 10:9; 14:6). In this act of mercy God did for fallen, faltering, perishing men what they could not do for themselves (Hebrews 2:9).


When perishing men perceived that God through mercy had opened passage to salvation, many, just as Israel had done, believed and were baptized (cf. I Corinthians 10:1, 2; Acts 2:36-41). In this act of obedience they passed into the realm of safety. Those who refused the grace provided perished (Mark 16:16b).

Will these obedient souls now sing of their great faith? Hear them! ". . . In times past we were children of wrath, . . . but God who is rich in his great mercy wherewith he loved us, . . . hath quickened us together with Christ -- by grace are ye saved!" (Ephesians 2:3-5).

Any conflict between grace and obedience exists only in the minds of finite men who are unwilling to take God at his word.

Every sinner must decide for sin or salvation (Romans 6:16, 17). Whether we perish in the prison house of the devil or rejoice on the other

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Are The Scriptures In Conflict?

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shore with the redeemed is a choice we must make. God will not transport us into the realm of the saved against our will. Receiving God's saving grace through an obedient faith in no way negates the gift. It does not place God under obligation because of our works. It does leave man a free moral agent (Romans 1:5). Any conflict between grace and obedience exists only in the minds of finite men who are unwilling to take God at his word (Romans 10:1-4).

Jesus, by means of his sacrifice, remains our sympathetic High Priest. We are invited through him to come boldly to the throne of grace where mercy is found. But we must do the coming (Hebrews 4:15, 16). This is obedience (Revelation 22:14). Whether saint or sinner we are said to be justified by grace, by faith, and by obedience (Galatians 5:6; James 2:24-26; Ephesians 2:8, 9).

--563 McGukin Rd., Bremen, GA 30110.



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

New Year's Resolutions



David Wade

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,

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

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 will 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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