

JANUARY 26, 1996

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Volume 33 Number 1  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

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

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## How We Can Save America

Since Jehovah rules in the kingdoms of men (Daniel 4:25) and in His sight "the nations are as the drop of a bucket" (Isaiah 40:15), we must face up to our immediate responsibilities if we are to preserve America. In one of the most familiar statements regarding national concern, James Russell Lowell declared.

"Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide. In the strife of truth and falsehood, for the good or evil side."

An impartial appraisal of American degeneracy demands that godly citizens awaken, arise and meet the challenge before us. In 1940, in one of his fireside chats, Franklin Roosevelt made this

monumental statement that is so apropos today,

"We build and defend not for our generation alone. We defend the foundations laid by our fathers. We build a way of life for generations yet unborn. We defend and we build a way of life, not for America alone, but for all mankind."

Those even remotely conversant with the decline and fall of the Roman Empire and the parallels in world affairs today ought to be convinced that now is the hour to stand up, speak out and help save America. So many people in the world are looking to us for guidance, maturity and leadership in the crises of life. However, presently, we are a great

disappointment to many friends of the past due to the rebellion and immortality of a whole generation of our citizenry. Will it be said of us, as it was of Rome, that "our vicious lives alone have conquered us" and "there is more wickedness being committed than can be counted."

What can we do to stem the tide of reprehensible conduct that will eventuate in hell? There are several things we must restore if America is ever to be strong again.

- (1) Godliness In Our Homes.
- (2) Respect for Authority.
- (3) Bible Preaching.
- (4) Evangelistic Zeal.
- (5) Personal Purity.

In the final analysis, the real salvation of any nation is the personal integrity of individual citizens. There is no substitute for purity and virtue and Christ-likeness. It is in this area that America is suffocating. Our morals are at an all-time low ebb. Can God allow our age of nudity, filth, licentiousness and adultery to long endure? When shall we awaken to the satanic influences we have created, allowed and catered to? There must be a major backlash on behalf of decency and common sense or we shall, as a nation, crumble into the dust. Truly, "a monstrous contest of wickedness is going on" and only the pristine beauty of Christianity can overwhelm

its odious charms. Unless a deep spiritual surge comes soon, the carnality of America will bring sudden and sure decay. What a tragedy should our epitaph read.


"Here lies America. . . a nation that died for the lack of righteousness by its citizenry. . . Where were the Christians?"

But, across the centuries and the meandering scenes of time, the voice of the Christ firmly cries, "Follow Me." Our destiny - now and eternally - will depend upon our response to that plea.

Let Us All Study the Bible  
More!

Johnny Ramsey

## Obedience To Civil Authority

 With all the accusations flying between the politicians of our nation, it can be difficult to maintain proper respect for civil authority. Yet, we must! New Testament Christians faced a much more corrupt and, oft times, mean spirited government, but they were instructed by God to yield to those in authority.

The apostle Paul, in Romans 13:1-10, deals with the subject of Christian obedience to civil authority. Whiteside says this might have come up because Jewish converts would still carry their national antagonism to the Roman government. Also, the Gentiles might feel that

submitting to Jesus as king released them from obligation to earthly kings.

Paul says God's children are to obey civil authorities (Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:13-15). Their purpose is to keep order, protect a person and his property and keep the peace. Christians should be thankful for the opportunities to serve which this allows (I Timothy 2:1-3). Of course, when civil law would require disobedience to God's law, then God's law takes precedence (Acts 5:29; Matthew 10:28). As the Lord says, there is no legitimate or rightful authority that does not come from God. God does not put governments in power to do wrong, just as he did not

create man to sin (John 19:11).

In the Old Testament, God used wicked nations to carry out his will (Isaiah 45:1-4; Habakkuk). As Jesus noted, both God and government can be rendered their due under most conditions (Matthew 22:21). Since God ordains governments, to resist their authority is also to oppose God's authority and be deserving of punishment from both.

As Whiteside suggests, the apostle seems to lay down some general principles upon which all governments should build, in verses 3-4. For one government to go wrong does not prove God did not originate the power upon which it is based. Good people

do not fear law, but are praised by it. Wicked people should fear law because God has given it the right to use capital punishment to enforce obedience (Genesis 9:6). We should obey governmental authorities to avoid the punishment for disobedience and to keep a clear conscience.

One might ask, "Do I have to pay my taxes?? Paul's answer is clear. "Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor." "Taxes" describes any tax on a person and his possessions, while custom is a tax on imported goods. Christians should pay all their taxes because the

government is doing a service God would have it do and is worthy of pay.

Of course, the ultimate debt Christ's followers must pay is loving one another. Whiteside says, "the obligation to love one another is always due, and is never fully paid; it is a perpetual debt." Lipscomb says this law mentioned in verse 8 is the royal law of James 2:8 (Matthew 7:12). Just as Paul does in verse 9, Christ had summed up the whole law in two laws. One was the love of God, which is in turn expressed through the love of man (Matthew 22:36-40).

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# From The Editor

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## The Parable of the Two Sons

This weighty parable is only recorded by Matthew. By inspiration he writes in Matthew 21:28-32,

"But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, 'Son, go work today in my vineyard.' He answered and said, 'I will not'; but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir', and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, 'The first.' Jesus saith unto them, 'Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him; and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward that ye might believe him."

The identity of the two sons in the parable is obvious. One represents the Jewish leaders, the other the common people of the day. The Jewish leaders were proud, even binding laws on the common man which they themselves didn't bother to obey: "For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers (Matthew 23:4)". Compared to them, they saw the common man as having little value or importance to God. And yet, when John the Baptist, who was sent by God, came to preach, who was first in line to show "fruit meet for repentance" and be baptized? Read Matthew 3:5, 6:

"Then went out to him

Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisee and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, 'O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance. . ."

These Jews, Pharisees and Sadducees, were the brother in the parable who said "I will go", but later would not. They professed to be God's people and to respect God's will, yet their actions spoke much louder. In reality they were following their own preferences and traditions. When the Father called, they said in essence, "Sure, Father, we will obey willingly. Everyone knows that we always obey." Then they disobeyed.

On the other hand, the common people were often excited about the possibility of repentance. Mark 12:37 says, ". . .and the common people heard him gladly." These people, sometimes rejected by the society about them for their evil deeds, craved forgiveness. They wanted to feel valuable, and the Gospel offered that. They wanted to feel loved, and the Gospel offered that. They wanted to know Christ and possess salvation, and the Gospel offered that (Romans 1:16). Matthew 9:11 notes, "And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, 'Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?'" The answer to that is in Luke 19:10: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." From our lesson today, the question is also, "Why were the sinners eating with

Christ?" Because He had what they desperately wanted and needed - release from the guilt of past sins. For that reason, "Then came also publicans to be baptized, (Luke 3:12)."

Remember that Jesus began His earthly ministry with the reading of these words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord, (Luke 4:18, 19)."

In commenting on this passage, McGarvey says, "These rulers had demanded that Jesus show his authority for his assumption of right as teacher, prophet, etc. The parable is an indirect response to this demand, as if Jesus said, "It is in vain for me to tell you that I act under the authority of the Father, for despite all your great profession to the contrary, you really and actually, in your persistent rejection of another (the Baptist), who also acted under it, repudiate utterly his authority; though in so doing you see yourselves condemned by the conduct of even the publicans and harlots, who have felt the force of the Father's authority, and have repentedly obeyed it."

(*The Fourfold Gospel - Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, McGarvey/Pendleton, The Standard Publishing Foundation, Cincinnati, Ohio, pg. 590.*)

From this parable we learn these important lessons:

**1. External observances of righteousness are worth very little from a man**

**whose heart is not humble and penitent before God. Paying lip service to doing right is not the same as doing right.**

It is foolish to think that in our generation we cannot make the same serious mistakes as did the Jews of Christ's day. As long as the world stands there will be worship which can be practiced in an empty and meaningless fashion. There will be good works which can be prompted not by love (I Corinthians 13), but by a desire to be seen of men and draw their applause (Matthew 6:1-18). There will be hypocrites in all walks of life, and the potential for each of us to fall victim to the devil as he promotes the hard heart of hypocrisy. I must rise higher in the practice of my religion! I must love God with all my heart, soul, strength and mind (Luke 10:27). I must love my brothers and sisters in Christ with a pure heart fervently (I Peter 2:25). I must "Obey from the heart that form of doctrine delivered" by Christ and the apostles (Romans 6:17). Never allow yourself

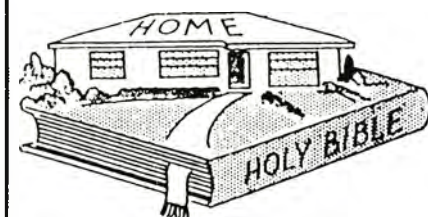
to settle for a "Christianity" which is little more than a mask to wear and impress others. It must spring from the heart. It must be genuine.

**2. Obedience in works has always been a part of obtaining God's approval.**

In the final analysis, and the Jews knew it, obedience was the critical question in the parable. Did the sons obey their father or not? That's what really mattered here.

The religious world has shown again and again a misunderstanding of how faith and works can live in the same family. "Either," some say, "our salvation is of faith and grace, or it is of works. It can't be both. The two are mutually exclusive of each other. If someone believes his works are necessary to be saved, then he has negated, voided, and misplaced the possibility of being saved by grace through faith." Yet the truth lies in a clear, Biblical understanding of the two terms with relation to our salvation - and the two - faith and works - live quite well together.

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### The Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

#### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. thirty-five per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$18.20 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, P.O. Box 430, Haleyville, AL 35565.



# The Parables of the Two Sons

Continued from page 1

First, consider that there are two kinds of works. The kind of works described in Matthew 6 is one - the one in which these Jews were involved. Showy, pre-tentious, "done-to-be-seen-of-men type works were their practice. They intended to be ushered respectfully into the Messiah's kingdom and eventually past the pearly gates because they earned the right. Remember the elder brother in the parable of the prodigal son? "All these years have I served thee... and thou never gavest me..." (Luke 15:29)." Jesus summed them up by observing that whatever pleasure they derived here and now from those kinds of works was all they would get for their trouble! As Jesus put it, "They have their reward," (Matthew 6:2). It was this kind of works Paul was considering when he said, "are we saved. . .not of works, lest any man should boast," (Ephesians 2:9).

Second, there are works which are God-approved, and for which we must be zealous (Titus 2:14). They are works which express our faith. Consider please that by

obedient works a man expresses his faith in God. He simply does what God says, and in so doing, expresses to God that he has faith in God. James argues this point in the book bearing his name when he writes, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, 'Thou hast faith, and I have works; shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2:17-20). Jesus forever made this plain when he said, "Not everyone that saith unto me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven, (Matthew 7:21)."

As in the parable, people today must obey to be God-approved. II Thessalonians 1:7 warns, "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."

**3. Repentance is more than confessing and saying "I'm sorry." Repentance means changing my mind and my actions.**

In the parable before us, even the prideful Jews could see who was on the Lord's side and who was not. The man who repented and obeyed was the better of the two brothers. He was approved by the father.

The Greek word used twice in this parable for "repented", is *Metamelomia*. It is used of Judas in Matthew 27:3, "Then Judas which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, *repented* himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders." The writer of Hebrews 7:21 uses the word and writes, "... the Lord sware and will not repent. . ." The word suggests a change, a turning from one direction to another to follow a difference course. It is a change of heart, a change of will, and a change of actions. The parable of the two sons demonstrates this well.

It would be incredible to

the attending destruction of Jerusalem, then to address "the sign" of "the end of the world" (Matthew 24:3). Jesus answers the first question first (cf. Matthew 24:4-35), then answers the later question (Matthew 24:36-25:46). Jesus, with the other, proved the "Noah story" crucial in making their points about the Day of Reckoning.

**Things Will Be Happening As Usual (Matthew 24:38).** Until the day of accounting (the flood), "they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. . ."

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hear a man argue that in this parable the son could have first said, "I will not go", then repented in his heart, but failed then to go work. We would all observe that if his heart didn't move him to actually do the right thing, then true repentance had actually not taken place at all.

Just what repentance demands has become more a topic of interest and controversy since the popularity of divorce and remarriage in our society. When a man accepts what Jesus taught in Matthew 19:9, and realizes that he is in a marriage not God-approved, one which is Biblically described as adultery, he may ask if he can't simply repent of getting married to his new spouse, and continue living with her afterwards as his

wife. Asked another way, can a man repent, get forgiveness, and then continue living with the spouse with whom he married into adultery?

The answer is no. While we must and do sympathize with those who are in this sad situation, we must be committed to the truth that repentance from sin demands a change of heart towards that sin. If my heart will permit me to deliberately continue in that sin, then repentance has not taken place. Can a sincere prayer change unholy adultery into holy matrimony? No it can't, because repentance requires a ceasing of my sin. The Lord said, "he repented, and went".

Glenn Colley

## Most Of A Minute

### I Just Got Old and Couldn't Help It!

I am often impressed with the way that children and old people say just what they mean without holding back. Plain talk comes from youngsters and oldsters.

Although she didn't hold a candle to Methuselah, The Guinness Book of World Records listed Jean Louise Calment as the world's oldest person. 117. Remarkable.

When Mrs. Calment was asked about her amazing longevity, she thought a minute and said, "I just got old and couldn't help it." You know, there's a lot of truth to that.

James 4:14 says, "For what is your life? It is even a vapor which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. . ."

Job said, "My days are swifter than a weavers shuttle."

What this should tell us is that it's a great deal less important to count our days than it is to make our days count. In II Peter 3, Peter talks about the end of time and the destruction of the earth. He writes, "Seeing these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be?" Let's answer together, "I want to be a faithful Christian."

## "As The Days of Noe Were. . ."

Sadly, ours is a day when scripture-filled teaching and preaching has its share of detractors. Such instruction is caricatured as "three points and an illustration." Meanwhile, some public teaching contains (maybe) a scripture reference, but is indistinctly pushed along by punchlines and tales of human interest. A plea for more "practical and less perceptual" lessons can be heard. Is there not a balance, wherein one draws practical lessons straight from the Bible? Are not the most relevant lessons the ones most heavily reliant upon God's revelation?

A clear example of scripture-based teaching

comes from the Bible! It is the story of Noah, as expounded upon by such New Testament instructors as Christ, the Hebrews' writer, and Peter. With the life and times of the patriarch of old, great men brought their audiences practical lessons on one of the most important themes of all. These wonderful proclaimers used Noah to illustrate key points about the Judgment.

In introducing His teaching on the Judgment, Jesus says, "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:37). The disciples had asked our Lord to reveal more of the coming punishment of the Jews and



## “If Any Man Speak, Let Him Speak As The Oracles Of God” #2

### WIDESPREAD VIOLATIONS OF THIS APOSTOLIC INJUNCTION

We have come to expect such from Romanism, Protestantism, cultism, occultism and the World Religions of our day. But it is a sad day in Spiritual Israel when such is characteristic of more and more of our preachers, professors, teachers, elders, deacons and the rank and file of our members. Such is a departure from the type of preaching apostles, prophets and evangelists did in the first century. Such is also a serious departure from what once characterized us when, uniformly, we were a Bible believing, Bible quoting, Bible defending and Bible practicing people. In those days sermons were saturated with Sacred Scripture. When people came to hear our preachers they knew they were going to hear lessons packed and overflowing with the Bible. But alas, it is not that way with much of modern day preaching. The Scriptures have been put on the back burner, the very back burner. The late and lamented Gus Nichols once said, “The Lord has a mighty hard time getting His say into modern day preaching.” What would

the founding father of Words of Truth say if he came back and witnessed the picture more than twenty years after he left earthly scenes? The situation is much worse among us than it was in 1975 when he died.

What currently forms the content of so much of the speech filling talks (such is not gospel preaching or sermon presentation by the wildest stretch of the imagination) currently? Culture has come in for a large measure of content. They had culture in the first century but it never took the place of down-to-earth gospel preaching. Paul determined not to know anything among the Corinthians except Jesus Christ and Him crucified (I Corinthians 2:2). Were it not for philosophy and psychology many preachers would have very little with which to fill their Sunday talks. The angel of release told the now freed apostles, “Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life” (Acts 5:20). Pleasing platitudes, catchy sayings, entertainment and far more jokes told than Scriptures quoted and explained radiate from more and more pulpits in our day. Yet Paul is on record as saying, “. . . yea, woe is unto

me, if I preach not the gospel!” (I Corinthians 9:16). Skits and drama are replacing gospel preaching among more and more churches of Christ. Sermons are considered to be old hat, boring and minus motivation among the baby boomers, baby busters and the unchurched who may attend our services with infrequency. I do not recall ever reading where it pleased God to save man by skits and dramatic presentations. I do recall what he said about preaching the gospel in the last half of I Corinthians 1. While here Jesus trained men to preach; he did not train skit and drama coaches! Political correctness is not only popular in Washington and the state capitals of our land but also has invaded pulpits among us. Never be offensive in what is said; always be positive; never allow anyone to leave but he feels good about himself and his sinful lifestyle. Phillip in Acts 8 and Paul in Acts 13 did not seek to make Simon and Elymas respectively feel good about their sorceries. Paul in I Corinthians and Galatians did not seek to create a good image among violators of gospel demands. Current events, secular book reviews, poems, promotion of self and one’s family and modern

testimonials currently crowd out sound, solid and sensible gospel preaching. The Pauline charge to “Preach the word” in II Timothy 4:2 is largely lost on an age of people who have long ago lost sight of the glorious gospel of God, the good news of redemption in Christ Jesus.

Some have turned in the direction of lessons that are never filled with anything controversial. Accept this fatal philosophy and there is not much one could present from the Book Divine. Far more of it is controversial than non-controversial.

Many preachers today preach from an overflow but not an overflow of seasoned Bible knowledge; quite to the contrary it is an overflow of what they have learned from popular and prominent denominational preachers of the day. Were I an elder seeking a man to fill the pulpit where I shepherded souls, I would want to know what kind of books he planned to read while among us. I would want to know who his favorite religious authors are.

Far too few preachers today can march to the side of Paul and say what he said in the following Scriptures, “But none of these things move me; neither count I my life

dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. . . Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. . . And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. . . Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and where in ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believe in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (Acts 20:24, 26, 27, 32; I Corinthians 15:1-4).

This passage in I Peter 4:11 needs to be restored to preaching priority in our era.

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## “As The Days Of Noe Were”

(Continued from page 3)  
They were going about their routine, daily events. The *status quo* was the state of things then. “So shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

**No “Signs” Will Precede His Coming (Matthew 24:39).** The unrighteous neighbors of Noah “knew not until the flood came, and took them all away.” While Noah warned that a flood would take place (cf. 2 Peter 2:5), even Noah had no way of knowing when the *flood* was coming. Unlike some denominational evangelists, who often in search of either fame or fortune “predict” the exact moment

of time of Christ’s second coming, Noah did not know. Neither did the world. There were no signal warnings then. “So shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

**All The Ungodly Will Be Destroyed (Luke 17:27; 2 Peter 2:5).** The flood “destroyed them all.” By it, God purged the earth of the wicked-hearted inhabitants thereof (see Genesis 6:5). After the floods subsided, God promised never to destroy the earth *as He had done* (cf. Genesis 8:21). But, the ungodly “shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of

his power” (2 Thessalonians 1:9). In Noah’s day, God brought “in the flood upon the world of the ungodly” (2 Peter 2:5). They were utterly punished and were not “spared.” “So shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (cf. 1 Peter 4:18).

**Judgment Will Have Been Preceded By Divine Long-Suffering (1 Peter 3:20).** There was not only justice on the part of the Divine in bringing the flood. “The longsuffering of God awaited in the days of Noah.” God strove with Noah’s contemporaries (cf. Genesis 6:3). In seeing the general, widespread state of man’s wickedness, God did not immediately annihilate

the race, though He despised the evil (cf. Genesis 6:5). He was long-suffering with those in Noah’s day. “So shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (2 Peter 3:9).

**Some Will Be Prepared (Hebrews 11:7).** Who were the prepared in Noah’s day? Those who walked “by faith,” who heeded the warning “of God,” who “moved with godly fear,” and who considered their “house.” Noah and his family were saved. He, along with them, “became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” One can be prepared at Christ’s coming. When the floods came down, some were

prepared. “So shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (cf. Matthew 25:46; 2 Timothy 4:7,8).

Teaching the great lessons of the Judgment Day by referring back to the Old Testament, Christ and His disciples give great precedence to today’s teachers and preachers. We should be illustrative in our lessons, and such can be effectively accomplished *with* the occasional use of humor and human interest. However, the meat of our lessons must be the Bible, and the weight of them must depend on the wisdom of God (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:18-21).

**Neal Pollard**



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Volume 33 Number 2  
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# The Words Of Truth

" I am not mad, most noble Festus; but  
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## Great Tests Of Faith

God has always used tests to measure Man's faith. How does faith come? Faith is not miraculously given as many claim. We will permit God's revelation of truth to answer: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). This writer believes what the Scripture says about its origin. Do you?

Hebrews 11:1-40 is a wonderful chapter which gives many examples of a working faith. A faith that does not work is a dead faith (James 2:24-26). Faith makes it possible for one to see and understand things that cannot be seen by physical eye sight (Hebrews 11:1-3; II Corinthians 4:16-18).

Hebrews, chapter 11, furnishes us with a long catalogue of ancient worthies who demonstrate faith in their action. Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, et al., demonstrated their faith through their obedience to the commands of God.

For example Noah passed God's test of faith when he built the ark according to God demands (Genesis 2:14-22; Hebrews 11:7). Abraham passed God's test of faith when he offered his son, Isaac, upon the altar (Genesis 22:1 ff; Hebrews 11:17). Moses passed God's test of faith when he led the Israelite slave out of Egyptian slavery (Hebrews 11:23-29). Read Hebrews

11:30. "By faith the walls of JERICHO fell down after (not before) they were compassed about seven days."

Why quote these Old Testament passages? Because your Bible teaches that these things were written for our learning and admonition (Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:11).

As strange as it may sound to some, we do not live under the Old Testament today (Ephesians 2:14-10; Colossians 2:14-17). It is for this reason Christians do not offer animal sacrifices, keep the sabbath day, go to the Jerusalem temple to worship, and keep the three great feasts of the Jews---Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacle.

It was necessary for God's law to be changed if Jesus were to become High Priest after the order of Melchisedec (Hebrews 7:11-14). Jesus was not of the tribe of Levi; rather He was of the tribe of Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. It is sinful to require conditions of which God "spake nothing about."

The Old Testament ended when Jesus died upon the cross (Hebrews 9:14-17). When did the New Testament begin? It began on the First Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection (Acts 2:1-ff). Here was the beginning of the Lord's church, here was preached

the first gospel sermon, here the first members were added to the church (Acts 2:36-47). There is no joining the church of one's choice. The Lord does the adding. In Apostolic times no denominational churches existed. For proof read any standard encyclopedia. We do not wish to offend our readers, but the names of denominational churches are not mentioned in your Bible. Denominational churches represent departures from the teaching of the Holy Bible.

Today, are there tests of faith for alien sinners? Yes, indeed! Faith is not mere mental accent. An Obedient faith must express itself in overt acts of compliance with God's will. Many examples of Old Testament worthies show the impossibility of severing faith from works. In fact faith and works go hand in hand. Works bring faith to completion. Bare, unproductive faith cannot save anyone (James 2:18-26).

Does not the Bible demand repentance? But many do not wish to repent of their sins. They love drinking, fornicating, lasciviousness (that which excites disgust), and the like. Is your faith strong enough to withstand Satan's overtures? Satan often mixes with the sons of God (Job 1:6-12; 2:1.). Their are a plurality of evil spirits, with Satan as their head (Matthew

8:28; 9:34; 12:26). He is a murderer and the father of lies (John 8:44; I Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:9).

Confession of Jesus' name is required of all (Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 8:37). Will your faith pass the test here? Or will you confess His name with your mouth, but deny Him with your conduct? If we confess Him, He will confess us (Romans 10:9-10) We might confess Confucius and Buddah but it would be to no avail.

Now we come to baptism, a very controversial subject. Some will say that since we are not saved by works, we are not saved by baptism. Friends, baptism is no more a work than is faith. Read closely. "Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of GOD, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:28-29). Note: Man does the believing; man does the confessing, but when it comes to baptism man is passive---he puts himself in the hands of another to bury him in the water of baptism. (Romans 6:3-4; Acts 8:30-39). One is baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26-27); one is baptized to be saved (I Peter 3:21; Acts 22:16); one is baptized for remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Baptism is a great test of faith because it

shows whether men justify or rejects God's counsel (Luke 7:29-30).

What about Great Tests of Faith for the Christian? There are many but we shall mention only a few:

(1) The Bible demands faithfulness of service for each Christian (Revelation 2:10). But many members find it difficult to attend the assembly regularly. Oftentimes their allegiance lies elsewhere: visiting, vacationing, ball games, or too lazy to attend services. On again, off again, gone again describes so many (Hebrews 10:25). What will you do when the Lord calls for you?

(2) Proper use of money is a great test of faith. God called the rich farmer a fool (Luke 12:16-21). His sin was not theft, drunkenness, or adultery. His selfishness is shown by his use of "I" and "my". When this man thought he was set for many years, his soul was required of God. Death scatters possessions (Psalm 39:6; Ecclesiastes 2:18-19).

(3) Any church that is unscriptural in origin, doctrine, practice and name, to use a military term---cannot pass MUSTER.

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W.A. Holley



# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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## Abraham Lincoln, March 1863

I recently came across a copy of a very special but little known document written by Abraham Lincoln. He submitted it to congress, at their request, in March of 1863. It swells with the conviction of truth, the love for a torn country, the reverence of God, and holds a message which is desperately needed in the towns and cities of America 133 years later in 1996. As Bill Murphy, a teacher at Central High School in Columbia, Tennessee observed in the *Nashville Tennessean*, "...America is again divided and suffering. Unity and peace have lost battles called rampant materialism, violence, cynicism, racism and bigotry, abortion, AIDS, pornography, family disintegration, and addictions of every dismal description. To fight these battles, many of our leaders have given us the degradation of greed, scandal, fiscal irresponsibility, and political correctness that breeds moral weakness and vacillation.

Will Americans become

too proud to pray and confess their sins? Will The Bible cease to be the widely respected foundation standard to which we look for guidance? The answer is that Christians who are Americans will always be looking to heaven in prayer (I Thessalonians. 5:17), in worship (John. 4:24), in confession of sins (I John. 1:9), and in showing others the light (Psalms 105:119) and the Way (John. 14:6).

I hope you enjoy reading this document as much as I have. Pray Christians. Pray that we will again have leaders in America who will feel this kind of dependency on the Creator.

"Whereas, the Senate of the United States, devoutly recognizing the supreme authority and just government of Almighty God in all the affairs of men and of nations, has by a resolution requested the President to designate and set apart a day for national prayer and humiliation;

"And whereas, it is the duty of nations as well as of

men to own their dependence upon the over-ruling power of God; to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon;

"And to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord;

"And insomuch as we know that by His divine law nations, like individuals, are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world, may we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be but a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people?"

"We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown;

but we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us;

"And we have faintly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us.

"It behooves us, then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.

"Now therefore...I do by this my proclamation designate and set apart Thursday the 30th day of April, 1863, as a day of national humiliation, fasting,

and prayer.

"And I do hereby request all the people to abstain on that day from their ordinary secular pursuits, and to unite at their several places of public worship and their respective homes in keeping the day holy to the Lord, and devoted to the humble discharge of the religious duties proper to that solemn occasion.

All this being done in sincerity and truth, let us then rest humbly in the hope authorized by the divine teachings, that the united cry of the nation will be heard on high, and answered with blessings no less than the pardon of our national sins, and the restoration of our now divided and suffering country to its former happy condition of unity and peace." (Signed: Abraham Lincoln).

Glenn Colley

## The Main Point

On December 17, 1903 Orville and Wilbur Wright sent a telegram to their sister in Dayton, Ohio. The telegram read as follows:

**"FIRST SUSTAINED FLIGHT TODAY 59 SECONDS. TO BE HOME BY CHRISTMAS."**

As you might expect, their sister was thrilled with the news and so she immediately rushed the telegram over the local newspaper office and

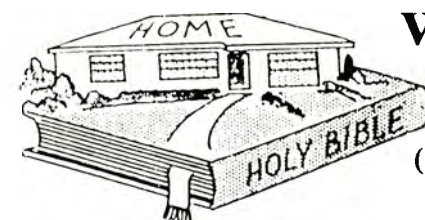
gave it to its editor. The next morning, believe it or not, the newspaper headline stated in big, bold type, "Popular Local Bicycle Merchants To Be Home For The Holidays." What had happened? The editor had missed one of the great stories of the century because he had missed the main point.

While it's tempting to laugh at this incident, how often are we not guilty of the

same oversight? We read the clear, simple message that God has given for our life, and yet, we somehow miss the main point.

Dear listener, the Bible must be read with the keen realization that it applies to you. Yes, read your Bible today, but make sure that you don't miss the main point - God is talking to YOU.

Mike Benson



**The Words Of Truth**

(USPS 691-760)

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

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

**Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. thirty-five per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.**

**Individual rates are \$18.20 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, P.O. Box 430, Haleyville, AL 35565.**



# “If Any Man Speak, Let Him Speak As The Oracles Of God” (No. 3)

## FAITHFUL PRACTITIONERS OF THIS APOSTOLIC INJUNCTION

We need to speak as the oracles of God direct relative to the Godhead. Job's three friends did not speak correctly of Jehovah in the various speeches they made throughout the book as per Job 42:7. Language of carelessness is often employed relative to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

We need to speak as the oracles of God relative to the fundamentals of the Bible. This includes matters that are most momentous such as its inspiration, its infallibility, its authority, its all-sufficiency, its power, its profit, its eternal nature and its preciousness. Making it just one of the religious authoritative guides today is not speaking of it accurately by any stretch of the imagination.

We need to speak as the oracles of God relative to the three great dispensations-- Patriarchal, Mosaic and Christian. Mixing them up with each other and failing to distinguish who was and who was not under which will never add up to speaking as the oracles of God.

We need to speak as the oracles of God relative to creation as set forth in Genesis 1 and 2 and the many

other allusions to such scattered throughout the Bible. To write "myth" by the side of Genesis 1 is not speaking as the oracles of God. To fit these chapters into some type of theistic evolutionary framework is not speaking as these Mosaic oracles did in the beginning of the Sacred Volume. To cast any type of doubt upon the faithfulness of these two chapters is not speaking as the oracles of God. Faith begins or ends with Genesis 1 and even with 1:1.

We need to speak as the oracles of God relative to the miraculous element of the old Testament. Too many want to discredit the miracles of creation in Genesis 1, 2, the coming of the flood in Genesis 6-8, the miracles Moses wrought in Egypt and later in the wilderness, the miracles in Joshua's era and all the ones permeating the lives of Hebrew prophets. Scoffers have a heyday when they get to Jonah and the great fish Jehovah prepared to swallow him. They turn thumbs down on the raising of the dead as we see in the lives of Elijah and Elisha in 1 Kings 17 and 2 Kings 4. Skeptics have never been in real position to speak as the oracles of God even if they desired to do so.

We need to speak as the oracles of God relative to the

giving of the Abrahamic promises in Genesis 12:1-3 and the rich development they enjoyed in later Scriptural settings. Involved here are a people promise, a land promise and a Person promise. The people and land promises were fulfilled in the old Testament era and the Person promise reached fruition in Christ and the redemption He offered man by means of Calvary. Premillennial proponents have NEVER been able to speak as the oracles of God direct relative to these promises. They make shambles out of all three of these precisely given promises to Abraham and later to Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 26:3-5; 28:13-15).

We need to speak as the oracles of God relative to the historical and scientific accuracy of the Old Testament. The Bible does not err in either of these categories regardless of how much skeptics contend to the contrary.

We need to speak as the oracles of God relative to Old Testament prophecies, types and shadows as they pointed to the coming of better and brighter things for the future. These, along with personalities, constitute the very heart of Hebrew History between Genesis and the birth of the Christ child.

We need to speak as the oracles of God relative to the balance between negatives and positives. The Old Testament is not all negative; it is not all positive either. There is a logical balance maintained all the way through the Old Testament relative to the negative and positive.

We need to speak as the oracles of God relative to Christ and coming Christianity as depicted so vividly and comprehensively by Old Testament prophets. We especially need to keep from reading into passages what is not there such as some type of double fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14. It is very vital that we speak of the coming kingdom to be established as the oracles of Old Testament prophets demand.

We need to speak as the oracles of God direct relative to the proper divisions of the Old Testament--law, psalms and prophets or the books dealing with the law of Moses, the history of Israel, the poetic section of the Old

Testament or the writings of the prophets from Isaiah through Malachi.

We need to speak as the oracles of God direct relative to the coming end of Mosaic law and the establishment of a far better covenant even as Jeremiah 31:31-34 clearly established.

In the preaching Peter did in the book of Acts as well as his two epistles, he made many references and allusions to the Old Testament. He spoke as these Old Testament oracles directed him to speak. He was never careless or irreverent in regard to such whether he was quoting David, Joel, Moses or writing about Old Testament personalities such as in 1 Peter 1 or 2 Peter 2 and 3. What we have from his lips in Acts or what he wrote in his two epistles without exception coincided with what he wrote in 1 Peter 4:11, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God;..."

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## Overcoming Evil!

Evil must be overcome! If we fail to overcome evil, the evil will overcome us. It is for this reason that the Bible says, "Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). Let us observe Romans 12 to see the evil that is mentioned and the good that can overcome it.

1. Overcome conformity by transformation (V.2).
2. Overcome high-mindedness by soberness (V.3).
3. Overcome diversity with unity in Christ (Vv.4-8).

4. Overcome dissimulation with love (Vv. 9,10).
5. Overcome slothfulness with service (V.11).
6. Overcome tribulation with patience (V.12).
7. Overcome need by distributing (V.13).
8. Overcome persecution by blessing (V.14).
9. Overcome evil with good! (V.21)

M.Floyd Bailey, Jr.

## Most Of A Minute

### Returning Echoes

A little boy, whose mother had answered "no" to his request, became angry and ran outside and to the top of the hill behind the house and shouted "I hate you, I hate you!" To his surprise, a voice came back in echo from the valley below, "I hate you, I hate you". He ran back home distressed and told his mother what happened and that someone hated him. She told him to go back to that place and holler, "I love you." He did, and to his delight, the voice bellowed back love.

The Lord teaches us an old principle about how we treat people that you learned in the first grade, but that is always relevant. "Therefore, whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." By working to live this way every day, the "I love you" echoes will be yours again and again. (Matthew 7:12).

Glenn Colley



# Candidates For Baptism

It is wonderful when people are interested in obedience young, old, or in-between! However, Christianity is a taught religion, and one must know what it is he is obeying to become a Christian. Thus, the practice of what we often call "infant baptism" is performed in error. Baptism is never designed for, nor commanded to be administered to, a member of the church (i.e., one who has been saved) nor to one who is safe in the eyes of the Lord. This challenges us to consider what must be found in one who is a candidate for baptism.

**The candidate for baptism is one who has heard the gospel of Jesus**

**Christ.** Before salvation on Pentecost, the Jews heard Peter preach Jesus of Nazareth is "both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:22-36). The Gentiles had to hear "that through His (Jesus' A.K.) name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins" (Acts 10:38-43). No one can be saved who does not know Jesus is the Christ, but "How shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard?" (Romans 10:14; cf. v. 17).

**The candidate for baptism is one who has believed and come to trust in Christ Jesus.** Having faith is knowing of a certainty that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (cf. John 6:69;

Hebrews 11:1). Without faith one cannot please God (Hebrews 11:6). The Ethiopian asked, "What prevents me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:36). Philip replied, "If you believe with all your heart, you may" (v. 37).

**The candidate for baptism is one who has repented of his sins.** To repent is to make a change in principle and practice. Peter preached, "Repent therefore and return that your sins may be wiped away" (Acts 3:19). This alone should tell us something about the maturity necessary for baptism.

**The candidates for baptism is one who has confessed his sins and his**

**faith in Jesus as the Lord and Master of his life.**

The confession must be publicly (Matthew 10:32,33; Romans 10:10). When we think of this statement of faith, we think of what Peter and the Ethiopian eunuch said: "I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (cf. Matthew 16:16; Acts 8:37). To make such a statement, one must relate to the fact that Jesus was God and man, born of woman but begotten of God, and the Anointed One (the Christ) of God.

**Therefore, the candidate for baptism is one who is of accountable age and of a certain degree of maturity in mind and spirit.** Jesus, our example, was twelve

when He was carried to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover (Luke 2:41-52), and He Himself was baptized at the age of thirty (Luke 3:21-23). In Matthew 18, Jesus, setting a child before the disciples, said that one must become as that child before he can enter the kingdom of heaven. All indications are that this child was "of a more advanced age" (Thayer's **Greek English Lexicon**). Why would this child need baptism?

While some may not yet need to be baptized because of a lack of maturity, it is nonetheless true that others need to put Christ on in baptism now!

Andy Kizer

## Why Homosexuality Is A Sin

**1. It Violates Biological Naturalness.** Same-sex practices violate the established, natural design of the body. Homosexuality makes that which God designed within the boundary of marital, physical love impossible. It also is deemed unnatural affection (Romans 1:31).

**2. It Prevents God's Mandate To Replenish The Earth.** God institutes that mandate for mankind in Genesis 1:28, and while God does not command us to marry (I Corinthians 7:1-2) and while some married couples are physically unable to produce children there is a general rule which God has not repealed. "Replenish" means literally "to fill" (Wilson 350) and speaks "of populating the earth" (BDBG Lexicon 570). Homosexual activity can in no instance replenish the

earth.

**3. Divine Sentiment Has Always Been Against Its Practice.** Those who believe the Bible is the verbally (in word), plenary (complete) inspired word of God recognize three Divine laws delivered by God to man. They are Patriarchal Law, Mosaical Law, and Christian Law. In Patriarchal law giving, speaking to humanity through the heads of every family or tribe, God expressed disdain against homosexuality such that He destroyed four cities in lower Palestine during the Patriarchal Age (cf. Genesis 19; Deuteronomy 29:23). Under the "Old Law", the penalty of death was imposed against homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Deuteronomy 23:17). Under the "Law of Christ" (cf. Galatians 6:2), homosexuality is dubbed

"sin" by God and condemned (Romans 1:26-27).

**4. It Fits The Classic Definition Of "Fornication."** Thayer says the general definition of the word fornication refers to "illicit sexual intercourse in general". As stated, the divine sanction for sexual relations falls within the bond of marriage. Any sexual activity, including homosexuality, outside of marriage is illicit (unlawful).

**5. It Is The Antithesis Of The Biblical Family Structure.** One preacher said, "You'll not find, in Eden, Adam and Steve. God made Adam and Eve." If God wanted to promote homosexuality as natural and acceptable, He had 66 books and two testaments in which to demonstrate, in a positive light, a homosexual couple or insert, in at least one verse,

an exaltation of this behavior. Note that those who try and twist the relationship of David and Jonathan, Ruth and Jonathan, Ruth and Naomi, or even Christ and John fail to employ any semblance of honest, biblical interpretation (2 Peter 3:16).

**6. It Is Unhealthful.** Man has a responsibility to avoid that which harms and destroys the body (Romans 12:1; I Corinthians 6:19-20). Let us leave the AIDS problem out of the picture. It is reported that homosexuality, not unlike promiscuous heterosexual activity, spreads **twenty-five** other sexually transmitted diseases. Prominent among them are hepatitis, gonorrhea, and syphilis. The average life span of a homosexual male is between 39-41 (Russell Young 3; Note: for more of

the health horrors and other information on this topic, one should consult this fine, 29-page document by brother Young. He may be contacted via Cold Harbor Road Church of Christ, P.O. Box 745, Mechanicsville, Virginia 23111).

Whatever feeble excuses and justifications one may submit in favor of the now socially vogue, but ever sinful, practice of homosexuality one submits without biblical authority. Homosexuality is sin, the wages of which is spiritual death (Romans 6:23). Through genuine turning from such behavior, thus exhibiting true repentance, one can be forgiven (2 Corinthians 7:10-11).

Neal Pollard



FEBRUARY 9, 1996

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**Husbandmen**

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\* **More About Special Music**

**In Worship**

\* **Absent**

\* **Salvation Is Free, But It Is Not Cheap**

**Volume 33 Number 3**  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

" **I am not mad, most noble Festus; but  
Words of Truth and soberness.**"--A

**h the**

## **"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" - No. 4**

The focus of the last article dealt almost exclusively with the oracles of God as they are set forth in the Old Testament. In this concluding article of this short series attention will be riveted on the oracles of God as set forth in the New Testament. Since we are amenable or answerable to the New Testament it is very vital that we speak as its divinely derived oracles inculcate. Peter was writing New Testament Scripture when he wrote I Peter 4:11.

We need to speak as the oracles of God direct in calling Bible things by Bible names. The Catholic, Protestant, cultic and occultic world of our day has introduced a totally new vocabulary of religious terms which bear no resemblance to Bible terminology in the New Testament. The perverted versions of our day must come in for their share of this blame also. In many of my lectures against version dangers throughout this nation, many people have said something like this to me again and again, "One of the reasons I do not like the new Bibles is because they do not sound like the Bible with which I grew up!" Well, they are not like the Bible with which we grew up and from which

we learned how to become a Christian, how to worship and how to live the Christian life.

We need to saturate ourselves with the language that appears in the four books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, 89 wonderful chapters that are faith inducing. surely, it would be far, Far FAR better to speak of our Saviour the way these inspired biographers did than to borrow from religious leaders who are still strangers to the real Son of God. Much memory work done in these four books would acquaint us with how we should speak in regard to the Son of man and the Son of God - our Lord Jesus Christ.

We need to speak as the oracles of God in Acts set forth. The beloved physician, Luke, wrote this book of some 28 chapters. He wrote exactly what the Spirit of truth directed him to say. This book deals with the early preaching of the gospel and the conversions to Christ of both Jews and Gentiles all over the Mediterranean world of that day. Great familiarity with Acts and fuller loyalty to it would keep so much denominational talk from permeating our speech patterns relative to the plan of salvation and the church.

We would know the difference between divine testimony relative to conversion and human testimonials that make up the religious conversations of people in our day.

We need to speak as the oracles of God direct in the epistles which teach us about our work, worship, watching and waiting for the Lord - the four great W's summing up so well the Christian life. When we talk about the gospel we need to speak as the oracles of God. When we speak of the church we need to speak as the oracles of God. When we talk of men in leadership roles we need to speak as the oracles of God - not as the denominations which have a foreign language relatives to those in religious leadership such as pastor or preacher. When we talk about worshipping God in spirit and in truth we need to speak as the oracles of God. Look at the foreign language terms people have developed just about the Lord's Supper. When we talk of the great mission of the church we should speak as the oracles of God do relative to evangelism, edification and benevolence. Look at all the foreign terms that permeate our conversation just in terms of fellowship. When

we speak of final things, we need to speak as the oracles of God. It is nothing short of amazing how much premillennial people have influenced the religious world in this area of thought - Rapture, Great Tribulation, thousand year reign, etc.

Sermons and Bible class messages need to be filled with sound doctrine such as Paul had in mind in giving instructions to Timothy and Titus in the thirteen chapters he wrote them in I and II Timothy and Titus. Paul issued a directive to Timothy in II Timothy 2:2 that what things Timothy had heard from Paul he was to commit to faithful and able men who would pass the same lovely legacy to those who heard them and were influenced thereby. Timothy was to hold fast the form of sound words (II Timothy 1:13). Titus was to speak the things which befit or become sound doctrine as per Titus 2:1, 7, 8.

Book, chapter and verse preaching or proof-texting, once very common among us, has made a sad departure in the preaching philosophy of a new breed of preachers who have come along. Liberals and Change Agents are not about to engage in this type of preaching. In fact, they

have nothing but disdain for it though many of them did such in their younger days. But this was before they grew smarter than God and outgrew His word.

Extending the invitation either in the lesson or at its end is rapidly going the way of all the earth with many of our preachers. They just do not intend to do it and resent any one, even an eldership, telling them it must be done. Were I preaching a sermon to a group of elders and preachers, I would still give the invitation at the end. The arguments against it pale to nothing when compared with the good reasons in its favor.

### **CONCLUSION**

Peter's stirring exhortation in I Peter 4:11 needs to be rekindled among preachers, professors, teachers and all of us today. Every instructor needs to speak as the oracles of God; each auditor needs to accept the oracles of God as they are given in his hearing; both speaker and listener alike need to practice diligently what the oracles of God inculcate. This wonderful and worthy passage is not optional; it is absolutely mandatory.

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# From The Editor

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## The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen

In Matthew 21:33-46 we read, "Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country; And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first; and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying 'They will reverence my son.' But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.' And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, 'He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.'"

The main point of this parable is made clear to the Jewish leaders by Jesus: "Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on

whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them."

The householder is God. The vineyard represents the Hebrew nation. The husbandmen are the Jewish rulers. The son of the householder is Christ. Keep in mind that Jesus gives this parable in the last week of his life. These same Jews who on this day produced a hailstorm of criticism and logical traps will shamelessly cry, "Crucify him!". They wanted the Lord to look foolish in the eyes of the people and they proudly pulled out all the stops to do it. But they were fighting a battle against the fortress of truth using the feeble weapons of lies and malice. It is mighty difficult to condemn a perfect man.

Let's spotlight one main thought in this parable. The wicked husbandmen said, "This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance." Just think of that. They consider the vineyard now as their personal property. They didn't earn it, buy it, or hold deed to it. They are employees. That's all. Nothing more. Furthermore, there is no reason for them to think that they will eventually own that vineyard. No such long-term contract has been offered by the owner. And yet, in their twisted reasoning, the fact that they have been working that vineyard somehow gives

them the right to treat it as if it were theirs.

The point Jesus was making was stinging and true. These Jewish leaders had started thinking that the Jewish nation was theirs. They loved the spotlight. They were kings over their kingdom. They made laws. They demanded chief seats and titles of honor. They wore "kingly" attire. They "sat" in Moses' seat (Matthew 23:1-12). When the Father sent His only begotten Son these men saw *their* kingdom threatened. People listened to Jesus. People wanted to be His disciples (Philippians 2:5-8, Hebrews 1:1-5, Hebrew 2:1-3). In John 12:19 they fumed, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him," and in John 11:47, "If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation."

The dear reader, nation was not theirs. Those Jews belonged to God. The law to which those common Jews were responsible was God's law, not theirs. They were to serve and listen to His prophets. Yet they killed them. Surely they would reverence the Son of God! But they killed him too. Why? To seize on His inheritance.

We are fools if we miss the obvious application today in the church. The church belongs to Christ, not us (Matthew 16:18). We are instructed plainly to do only

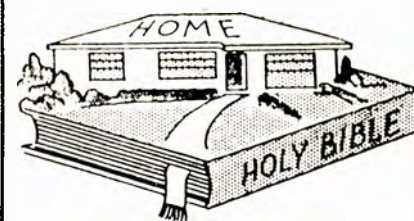
those things for which we have authority from the Lord Jesus. Colossians 3:17, "Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus..." God has spoken unto us by His Son (Hebrew 1:1, 2). The Lord Jesus will one day come in vengeance on those who didn't obey Him (II Thessalonians 1:7, 8).

With this in mind, consider the present day efforts underway to change the church of Christ. While change is not bad per se, and some change is good and right, some of the changes taking place among our brethren are fundamentally wrong and are dividing and splintering congregations of God's people. One of the key players in the change movement is Lynn Anderson, the author of a well-known "how-to" book on changing the church of Christ, entitled, "Navigating the Winds of Change" (Howard Publish-

ing, West Monroe, LA 1994). Already the ideas which are reflected in this book have split churches in many parts of the brotherhood. Brother Anderson implies that this will probably happen when his ideas are implemented, (pg. 142, 143). In chapter 11 entitled, "Getting Change Into Your System", page 161, brother Anderson writes,

*"To change a church is to change a system...Companies such as...are developing teams of skilled change agents...Think about this: if fast-moving, successful corporate giants have difficulty in changing rapidly enough to stay in touch, how much more intentionality is needed to keep old, slow-paced, traditional organizations like churches in touch with the times. On page 173 of this chapter, under a minor heading Strategy one, we*

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### The Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

#### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

**Congregational Rates:** Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. thirty-five per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

**Individual rates** are \$18.20 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, P.O. Box 430, Haleyville, AL 35565.



## More About Special Music In Worship

In a previous series of articles, and in my book **Among The Scholars**, careful scrutiny was given to the current practice of some congregations' use of choirs, solos, and such like in worship. Since that time, those who advocate the practice have offered additional defense for special music. This article will attempt to answer the concerns some have.

Let us make clear from the outset that it is not "our tradition" which determines the scripturalness of a practice; rather, does the New Testament authorize it? Also, we are not saying special music is only wrong during the assembly; in fact, in the previous series, this argument was never used! In any place where worship is being

offered, both in private and public, the New Testament must be the guide.

Consider the nature of worship. In **John 4:24**, Jesus said, "God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Worship involves both an attitude and an action. (For a fuller treatment of what worship is, read chapter six of **Among The Scholars**, "What About Special Music in Worship?")

It is claimed by some, "Whatever is scriptural and right for one Christian to do in the presence of other Christians is scriptural and right to do in the presence of all the Christians in any location, i.e., the assembled congregation."

At first glance, this claim seems harmless. But,

examine it carefully. It says nothing about worship. Thus, **anything** could be incorporated into worship, using this reasoning! Consider: Burning incense is scriptural and right for one Christian to do in the presence of another Christian. Thus, burning incense is scriptural and right to do in the presence of all the Christians in the local congregation. Or: Playing on an instrument "Happy Birthday To You" is scriptural and right for one Christian to do in the presence of another Christians in the local congregation. Or we could go, with eating steak and potatoes, (e.g., Lord's Supper,) counting beads, and a host of other things.

If it be claimed that this is

a stretch, consider again the statement. "Whatever is scriptural and right. . ." Again, no mention is made of worship, but the argument is made in defense of a practice in worship!

Another argument is like the first. "If it is scriptural for a group to sing spiritual songs while others listen at any time before or after 'the worship service,' it is also scriptural for that group to sing the same songs while others listen during 'the worship service.'" Again, apply the above test to this claim. Anything could be incorporated, such as washing hands and adding jelly to unleavened bread.

Let us again emphasize: it is not only during "the worship service" where such practices are wrong; at **any** time and **any** place where worship is offered, the New Testament must be our guide!

Another claim is made concerning **I Corinthians 14:15, 26**. It is said by some that Paul was approving solo singing at Corinth, and not condemning it. But, in chapters one and eleven, Paul uses the phrase, "every one," in condemning a practice: in **1:12**, he condemns division

among them. In **11:21**, he condemns their practice concerning the Lord's Supper. Why should it be different in **14:26**?

Robertson & Plummer state concerning verse 26, "We cannot safely infer that we have here the **order** in which the manifestations commonly took place at Corinth." (p. 320.) They further suggest these people did not come to public worship in the right spirit, and what they should do is use their gifts for the good of all. They also say, "It is remarkable that there is no **propheteian echei**. (hath a prophecy.) Was that gift to despise at Corinth that those who possessed it did not often come forward?" They also quote from Abbot's Johannine Grammar, where the passage is translated to mean Paul is condemning the practice.

In the epistle to the Corinthians, Paul gives instructions concerning the Lord's Supper. In chapter 11, individuals are told what to do. If one allows special music in worship, he will also have to allow solo or

Continued on page 4

## The parable of the Wicked Husbandmen

Continued from page 2

*read, "Weave! Alternate between safety and disequilibrium. Teach new ideas a while, stretching your church out beyond comfort zones and into fresh thinking. At first you may hear, "Wow! I never noticed that in the Bible before!" This is only mild disequilibrium. But when you feel your church approaching the limits of tolerance, back off! Talk about familiar and safe things for a while. Then, move back to edge again. Weave out with new ideas, then weave back in with talk of comfortable things. Then weave out again by implementing new practices; then weave back to some old practices that feel safer. Weave! Two steps forward and one step back."*

Notice in these quotes the use of this phraseology: "Getting change into your system", and "stretching your church...", and "when you feel your church...". It's true that sometimes Christians will use the phrase "my church" or "your church" in passing to define one congregation from another. They know the church is not theirs, and would immediately defend the truth that the church belongs to Christ if the issue arose. And yet, when men like brother Anderson use the phrase "your church", we must assume they are choosing their words carefully. They are teaching people how to change the church. They have no right to use the terms of personal possession or to change the church of the New Testament. They should be ashamed.

As the Pharisees of old came to consider the nation of Jews to belong to them, some today may view the church likewise. They seek to change things such as what people believe regarding the kind of music authorized in the New Testament, or the roll of women in worship, or baptism for the remission of sins, or the grace of God. What should Christians do? We must first make certain that we do not make a similar mistake in reference to His church, and then we must use our voices against such abuse in this so-called change movement. The church is not mine or yours. It belongs to Christ Jesus! We do not determine the truth behind it's practices, the Lord does, through His word. Let us serve Him in His church, not us in our church. Ponder with the penetrating words of the Holy Spirit through the pen of the Apostle.

"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Ephesians 5:23-27).

Let us be faithful members of *His* church.

Glenn Colley

## Most Of A Minute

Now, you figure this one out:

"Turning the heart to God is good for the heart: According to the International Journal of cardiology, non-religious people have a heart-attack risk two and a half times higher than that of religious people - regardless of serum cholesterol or blood pressure levels."

Why? Well, I have a pretty good idea.

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Psalms 23)

Glenn Colley



## More About Special Music in Worship

**Continued from Page 3**  
small group taking of the Lord's Supper for the entire congregation. Remember, the command is given to **individuals** within the congregation! If not, why not?

A further argument contends there is no "theological difference" between speaking and singing. To which, we reply, **God** has made the difference! In the New Testament, speaking and singing are two separate acts. Is a sermon a song? A song a sermon? Songs teach as well as sermons; but, the New Testament gives separate

authority for preaching, (II **Timothy 4:2**) teaching, (**Hebrews 5:12**) and singing. (**Ephesians 5:19**; **Colossians 3:16**).

The last two passages authorize congregational singing. The epistles are written to the churches at Ephesus and Colossae, and the Colossian letter was to be read in Colossae and exchanged with Laodicea. (4:16). How could they, as a congregation, have gotten the idea that Paul intended for them to engage in choir or solo singing?

A final argument to consider deals with the

reciprocal pronoun "to one another" in the Ephesian and Colossian passages. It is said that we claim, "every member speaks the same words at the same time 'to one another.'" In the previous series of articles, we pointed out the nature of reciprocity. All those must participate but not necessarily simultaneously; several songs in our songbooks are written so that every word is not sung by everyone at the same time, but the entire assembly still sings the song together. Jack Lewis states, "I know of no way in which one can distinguish in Greek between

a command (the plural imperative) addressed to two individuals and that addressed to a group (or community) of more than two when a subject is not specified." (**The Instrumental Music Issue**, p. 36.)

In both passages, there is an imperative verb followed by a series of masculine plural participles, which take the force of the imperative. A similar construction is used in **Matthew 28:19, 20**. Lewis again says: "The actions designated by such a construction are not optional." (p. 35.)

In spite of contentions to

the contrary, the Lord's church must engage in fervent, congregational singing. Just as it would be wrong for one to refuse to take the Lord's Supper, it is wrong for one to refuse to sing. But, how can one refuse to sing praises to the one who redeemed him from his sins and translated him into the kingdom of His dear Son? Let us all involve ourselves faithfully in His service.

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**Spring Valley**  
**Church of Christ**  
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**Tuscumbia, AL 356740.**

## Salvation Is Free, But It Is Not Cheap

Jesus tells the story of two debtors: "There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?" (Luke 7:41-42).

This is a beautiful picture of the tremendous grace of God. Jesus said, "He frankly forgave them both" (Luke 7:42). He did not take the advantage of the law against them--order them and their children to be sold, or deliver them to the tormentors (Matthew. 18). What does the Bible teach about the marvelous grace of God?

### SALVATION IS FREE

This cancelled obligation in both cases was "a purely gratuitous act, on the part of the creditor, on the ground only of the bankruptcy of the debtors." The same word is translated "freely give" in Romans 8:32 and "freely given" in I Corinthians 2:12. Forgiveness is not something we may purchase or earn, because we are bankrupt--we have nothing with which to pay. "For by grace are ye

saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). The Lord will forgive sinners through His marvelous grace. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7). Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Peter 1:18-19).

### SALVATION IS COSTLY

In the Parable of the Two Debtors, the creditor took a loss. Since the debtors were bankrupt and he "frankly forgave them," he had to pay the price of their debt. Salvation is free, but it is not cheap. It cost Jesus His life on the cross. "...feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). No one in that banquet hall knew how much it cost Jesus to say to that woman, "Thy sins are forgiven." Picture the same group around the cross when

He said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do..." (Luke 23:34). Why is He doing this? Because He told the prostitute she could be forgiven (and they might go around and say, "...and me," "...and me...").

### SALVATION IS CONDITIONAL

There is a difference between the *efficiency* of His atonement (it is for all) and the *efficacy* of the atonement (it works only for those who have an obedient faith). A man who refuses help when the hotel he is staying in is burning down does not by his foolish act condemn the firemen--he condemns himself. God's forgiveness is not automatic; we can reject His grace if we will.

In 1830, a man named George Wilson was arrested for mail theft, the penalty for which was hanging. After a time, President Andrew Jackson gave Wilson a pardon *but he refused to accept it*. The authorities were puzzled: should Wilson be freed or hanged? They consulted Chief Justice John Marshall, who handed down

his decision: "A pardon is a slip of paper, the value of which is determined by the acceptance of the person to be pardoned. If it is refused, it is no pardon. George Wilson must be hanged" (Weirsbe). "And being made perfect, he became the author of the eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews. 5:9).

Are you pardoned? Jesus taught that one should hear

His Word (Romans 10:17), believe in His deity (John 8:24), Repent of sins (Luke 13:3-5), confess faith in Him (Matthew 10:32-33), and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 16:16). If you have never obeyed Christ and availed yourself to His marvelous grace, please accept His invitation and come to Jesus.

**Allen Webster**

## Absent

The statistics hit like a sledge hammer. Listen:

Nearly one in four American children are born to unmarried women.

In 87 per-cent of single-parent families in the U. S., that parent is the mother.

Studies of young criminals have found that more than 70% of all juveniles in state reform institutions come from fatherless homes.

Fatherless boys account for 72% of all adolescent murders and 70% of long-term prison inmates.

5.6 million children under the age of 15 are being raised without a dad in the house.

Daughters raised by their mothers alone are 164% more likely to bear a child out of wedlock.

Tonight about 40% of U.S. children will go to sleep in homes in which their fathers do not live.

(Taken from Ken Ruettgers, "Superdad To The Rescue", Home Field Advantage, pp. 57-59)

A father does more than just participate in the conception of his children. He teaches, and trains, and disciplines, and leads, and guides, and **MOST IMPORTANTLY** loves (Ephesians 6:4).

Dad. . . please. . . please...don't be an absentee father. Your children need you now more than ever.

**Mike Benson,**  
**Parsons, TN**



FEBRUARY 16, 1996

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- \* The Marriage Of The King's Son
  - \* Assumption
- \* The Man I Used To Be
- \* Who Are The Only Christians p(No. 1)
- \* Give God Your Best

Volume 33 Number 4  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak the  
Words of Truth and soberness."--Acts 18:13

## NEW ASSOCIATE MINISTER AT SIXTH AVENUE

The elders of the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ in Jasper, Alabama are happy to announce the addition of Jason Roberts as our more recent graduate of the Memphis School of Preaching, a graduate of Harding University and a February 1. We have eagerly anticipated his arrival, and look forward to a long and prosperous work together. We know our readers will enjoy reading articles like this one from Brother Roberts in the *Words of Truth*.

## “Did Paul Practice What He Preached?”

II Timothy 4:2; Acts 17:16-34

A popular saying in the religious world is, “why don’t you practice what you preach?” There is a tremendous amount of validity in that statement for preachers who are admonished to “speak as the oracles of God” (1 Peter 4:11), and for every Christian into whose hands the gospel has been Divinely entrusted (Jude 3b). The responsibility to rightly handle (divide) the word of God (2 Timothy 2:15) as well as to live it, is a serious matter for all who proclaim the “unsearchable riches of Christ” (Ephesians 3:8). If a man fails to live the message he proclaims, he will lose his immortal soul. Contrariwise, if a man faithfully lives the message he proclaims from the pulpit, he will spend an eternity with the saints of all ages and with his blessed redeemer (Revelation 2:10; cf. Acts 20:27; 2 Timothy 4:7-8).

The apostle Paul was a man of sterling character, with an unswerving loyalty to his message and to his Maker. He was a man who practiced what he preached and he sets before us a supreme example for which all preachers should strive to follow. Paul stated to his young son in the faith, Timothy to “preach the

word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (2 Timothy 4:2, ASV). Previously, in the same chapter Paul admonishes, “And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2). In order for the beloved Timothy to live the message that Paul charged him (II Timothy 4:1), the apostle Paul would have first had to live and preach the same message that he had been taught. Did the apostle Paul practice what he preached? Let us examine his statement made in 2 Timothy 4:2 and compare it with one of his great sermons, namely his sermon on Mars Hill (Acts 17). If there were ever a sermon well-structured for the situation that confronted Paul it would have to be his defense of Deity before the Athenian philosophers. In this sermon, Paul “preaches the word, he reproveth, rebuketh, exhorteth, with all longsuffering and doctrine.” Moments before his address, the text states that “his spirit was stirred (literally, irritated, provoked, aroused to anger)

in him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry” (Acts 17:6). First, Paul had a reason to preach. He rose to the occasion not just because he wanted to say something, but also he saw the situation at hand and had a need to say something. He manifested the same burning desire that the prophet Jeremiah had in the long ago, “And if I say, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name, then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain” (Jeremiah 20:9, emp. added JRR). Paul was in the proper mind set before he preached, a mind set that we need to manifest when we stand before our audiences.

Second, Paul begins his sermon by gathering interest from his hearers before he reproveth them. “And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus, and said, Ye men of Athens, in all things, I perceive that ye are very religious” (Acts 17:22, ASV). It appears that the KJV’s rendering (“too superstitious”) and the ASV’s rendering of the passage, conveys the idea that Paul began his sermon rebuking them, when in fact the construction of the phrase

conveys the thought that they were “very religious” in their devotion. J.W. McGarvey observed, “Paul’s first remark was not that they were “too superstitious,” nor that they were “very religious,” though both of these would have been true. But the term he employs *deisidaimoneterous*, from *deidw* to fear, and *daimwv* a demon, means *demon-fearing, or given to the worship of demons*. This was the exact truth in the case, and the audience received it as a compliment.” (McGarvey’s Original Commentary on Acts, 220).

Thus, Paul’s accusation is not a severe rebuke. Rather, it is an effort to arouse the interest of his hearers. He continues his accusation through the end of verse 23 by indicating that the altar in which they erected “TO THE UNKNOWN GOD,” had been ignorantly worshiped.

Third, Paul then begins his proclamation of God by means of reproof (v. 24). The word reprove means to convict, to find fault with, to correct. Paul wastes no time (*he is urgent, in season and out of season*) in stating his case before his audience. He doesn’t tell a series of hilarious stories, there is no sidestepping the theme of his

sermon, rather, he knows that his audience is lost without a proper knowledge of God, therefore he immediately refutes the very thing that prompted him to speak, their idolatry (v. 16). His proclamation of God Almighty as the creator of all things (v. 24) is logical in arrangement and he wastes no time presenting his case before the Athenians. Paul then reproveth their idolatrous practices by refuting their Pantheistic philosophy (God is in everything). Paul stated that the “God who made the world...dwelleth NOT in temples made with hands” (v.24). Paul stated that here (in their temples) was ONE place where God did not dwell, therefore he corrects (reproveth) Pantheism as a false system of belief. He then reproveth their worship, stating that the true and living God is to be the only object of their worship (v. 25; cf. Matthew. 4:10; John 4:24), and that this God is completely autonomous and does not depend upon man for anything. Paul knew that their only hope for salvation was found solely within worshiping and obeying the God who made all things. He then speaks of the Author of  
(Continued On Page 3)







# “Did Paul Practice What He Preached”

(Continued From Page 1) of peace (Isaiah 9:6) and refutes their false beliefs about life not existing beyond the grave (v. 26). Paul knew the needs of his audience. The Epicureans were hedonistic in their thinking. They were given over to the fleshly pursuits of life, they did not believe in the immortality of the soul and they denied the resurrection. Incidentally, this was one of the themes that Paul was preaching when the Athenians encountered him (v. 18), and at the close of his sermon, the resurrection is preached again. The Stoics were apathetic in their thinking. They held the idea that everything was inherently good, whether it had a reason behind it or not. In other words, if a man dies, this is good, if a man lives, this is good. They also did not believe in the resurrection or that life existed beyond the grave. So here is the apostle Paul standing in front of the “wisest” men of his day, refuting their error and proclaiming to them exactly what they needed to hear. We need more men like the apostle Paul in our pulpits that are not afraid to take a stand for the Lord. So often the “wants” outweigh the “needs” in our

church buildings, and as a result, many preachers cave in to what the masses want rather than preaching to them what they need.

Although his audience probably did not consist of believers in evolution, Paul does refute the theory of evolution by stating that God, “hath made of **one blood all nations of men**” (v. 26). But, Paul, in this setting is informing them that God is the source of all life, and therefore, it is He that they should be seeking (v. 27), not the gods of the unknown world. Then Paul admonished them that God was the sustainer of all life, “For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring” (v. 28), consequently, the Godhead is not shaped by art and man’s devices (v. 29).

Fourth, Paul offers the **invitation** before his audience (vv. 30-31) by beginning with a **rebuke** (to admonish, chide or charge sharply) “And the times of this **ignorance** God overlooked ...” (v.30). Immediately following his rebuke, he begins to **exhort** (to call for, to beseech) his hearers by proclaiming that God is the great lawgiver and He

commands “*all men everywhere to repent* (v. 30). In continuing his exhortation, Paul states that God is the source of all judgment and the reason why man needs to repent is because there is coming a day when God “*will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead*” (v. 31). Because Paul preached what was needed he, as a result, upset most of his audience. They were offended when he mentioned the resurrection. So far as we know, his audiences up to this point were listening intently. But as soon as Paul mentioned the resurrection, they actually interrupted his sermon, “*And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said We will hear thee again of this matter*” (v.32). How many people in the religious world will listen to the message we proclaim from the pulpit, TV, Radio, and journals, and agree with everything that is said, but as soon as they hear or read that we preach baptism for the remission of sins, they turn and walk away. They walked away in Paul’s day,

and the message has not changed, and sadly, there are multiplied millions who are walking away from the gospel invitation today. However, some remain minimally interested, indicative of those who displayed an attitude of **procrastination**, “*...some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.* (KJV).

Fifth, Paul manifested an attitude of **longsuffering** (patience, endurance) throughout his sermon. There is no indication that Paul displayed a mean-spirited attitude (2 Timothy 2:24). He did not bicker and complain over the fact that most of his sermon fell on deaf ears. The text says very succinctly at the close of his sermon, “*So Paul departed from among them*” (v. 33). Fortunately, some believed the message and responded accordingly

(v. 34). Throughout his sermon Paul is preaching with conviction and yet at the same time his message was seasoned with compassion (Jude 3, Ephesians 4:15).

The apostle Paul in his great sermon on a hill displayed a brilliant example of preaching what he practiced. He admonished Timothy to, “*Preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching*” (2 Timothy 4:2). With a careful examination of his sermon on Mars hill, we are impressed with the fact that Paul preached the word, he was urgent, in season and out of season, he reproved, rebuked, and exhorted, coupled with an attitude of longsuffering for his fellow man. Paul practiced what he preached.

## Assumptions

One of my graduate professors recently told me about a man who entered a local pharmacy and asked the druggist if he had anything for a severe case of hiccups. Seizing the opportunity, the druggist quickly grabbed a cup of ice water and splashed it into the face of the customer in an effort to bring an end to his malady. The man was incensed! He

asked, “Why did you throw water into my face?” To which the druggist replied, “I thought you said you had the hiccups.” The man said, “My wife has the hiccups, and she’s out in the car!”

Assumptions can be costly. I can’t tell you how many people down through the years have said to me, “Mike, I know it says it somewhere in the Bible”

when in **r e a l i t y** the Bible teaches no such thing.

In I Thessalonians 5 Paul said, “Prove (test) **ALL** things, hold fast what it good” (v. 22). Friends, let’s be sure that we don’t merely assume the Bible teaches something. let’s be **SURE** that it does.

Mike Benson

## Most Of A Minute

### The Man I Used To Be

*Shortly before his death, George Bernard Shaw granted a rare interview to a well known journalist. After many questions to the aged playwright, the reporter asked, “Mr. Shaw, you have know some of the greatest men of our time: statesmen, artists, philosophers, writers and musicians. You’ve now outlined most of them. Suppose it were possible for you to call back one of those great minds - which one would it be? What man do you miss most?”*

*Without hesitation, Shaw replied, “The man I miss the most is the man I used to be!”*

How many today have felt the same stinging emotion! How things would be different, we think, if we could roll back the hands of life’s clock.

Sin often leaves us the way. We commit the wrong, are gripped with fierce guilt, and desperately wish we had another chance at the decision to commit the deed or not.

Jesus offers a type of clock back-up. When I’ve committed those wrongs, although I can’t change the fact that I’ve done them, I can have guilt-removing forgiveness. Acts 2:38 says, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.”

Glenn Colley



# Who Are The Only Christians? ( No. 1)

It would be difficult indeed to find a word in current usage more abused, misused and misunderstood than the word Christian. It is used to refer to political partisans in the Middle East, as a synonym for Roman Catholics and Protestant denomination-ists of all varieties, to describe a nation such as the U.S.A. in which there are countless atheists, agnostics and infidels and to describe the very best of all who are in various religious bodies. One lady once defined a Christian as one NOT a Jew. She failed to realize that the very first people who accepted Christianity were Jews in the early chapters of the book of Acts. Paul and Peter were both Jews and they were Christians. So were many others in the first century.

The Scripturally clear waters as touching who is and who is not Christian and how the term should be and should not be used have been muddled more recently by some among us from whom we expected better things. They now tell us there are devout, sincere and knowledgeable Christians scattered among all the denominations and

that it is now a flagrant falsehood to insist that people have to know that baptism is linked with remission of sins or being saved at the time baptism is received. It is incredible that such teachings exist among us but stern reality constrains us to realize that such errors are rampant in our day of loosing where the God of heaven and His Holy Son Jesus have bound and binding where Deity has loosed.

Relative to the above errors some observations are in order. If people are knowledgeable, they know the difference between the Lord's church and human denominationalism. Sincerity and devoutness will not allow such people either to go in or remain in something that is human such as Protestant denominations. How can a person be a Christian, "a follower of Christ," and go into and remain in something the Lord NEVER led him into in the first place? Jesus Christ does NOT lead people into something He never established. Just how long does it take to teach a potential convert that baptism is FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS? It

did not take Peter long at all to impress on some three thousand people this vital link between baptism and remission of sins in Acts 2:38. As per the record not that first one in that three thousand assembly who gladly received the word quibbled about the purpose of water baptism in their lives. I can teach a person the purpose of New Testament baptism, for the remission of sins, just as quickly as any of our brethren can teach them to be baptized to please God or for A Bible reason.

## THE NAME CHRISTIAN IN THE BIBLE

This noble name is not used with great frequency in Sacred Scripture. It occurs but three times. In Acts 11:26 we read where the disciples were called Christians for the very first time in Antioch of Syria. This is a striking fulfillment of Isaiah 62:2 and is surely a divine call as envisioned and used here. In Acts 26:28 King Agrippa referred to the perceived realization that Paul was seeking to make of him a Christian. However, he was only ALMOST persuaded not ALTOGETHER persuaded to become a Christian. In I Peter 4:16

Peter wrote, "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, Let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."

A Christian is a follower of Christ or one who belongs to Christ. The noble name of Christian is composed of Christ with an IAN. If one does not have Christ, the IAN means, "I AIN'T NOTHING!!"

This is its uniform usage in the three passages wherein it occurs. NEVER in the Bible is it used as a synonym for one is partly a Christian and partly something else--that something else being a religious affiliation NEVER so much as mentioned within Holy Writ. There were Pharisees in the New Testament but NO Christian-Pharisees; there were Sadducees in the first century but no Christian-Sadducees; there were Essenes in the first century but NO Christian-Essenes; there were the various Roman and Grecian religions in the first century but NO Christian-Romans or Christian-Greeks in the sense of a mixture of Roman/Greek religious with that of Christianity. In the latter part of the first century there arose the

Gnostic errors but not New Testament writer ever says there were Christian-Gnostics--either Docetic or Cerinthian. NO New Testament writer ever affirmed that there were devout, sincere and knowledgeable Christians scattered among all the Jewish, Roman and Grecian religious of that first century. There were NO hyphenated Christians then, with a prefix before or a suffix after, as some claim there are today.

There is positively NO case in all the New Testament of where any person added to the Lord's church and at the same time joined something human in origin. If so, WHERE is book, chapter and verse authority for it?

In the three articles to follow I propose to give three comprehensive answers to this fundamental query, Who Are The Only Christians? I will not say all that needs to be said until all three answers have been given.

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## Give God Your Best!

In America today we have a real problem with giving our best. It seems that our attentions are often placed on obtaining the best. We want the best job, the best clothes, the best car, house, etc.; but to give our best is viewed as a hindrance to "getting the best".

Sadly, many Christians fall into the mind set. Unfortunately, we have been fooled into thinking the only way to "get" is to "keep". This is just not so!

The Bible teaches plainly that if one gives, he will find himself to be the recipient: "Give, and it shall be given unto you;

*good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again"* (Luke 6:38).

Some are thinking, "I give! and I give plenty. In fact, you won't find many who give as much as I." This may be true, I hope it is, but the size of the gift is not always important. The quality is what matters. Quantity is important for those who have much (Luke 12:48), but not just a quantity of anything. God requires the best. I'm sure that those in Malachi's day

could boast of large gifts, but the quality was rotten (Malachi 1:13-14). Ananias and Sapphira could probably have boasted of a quantity gift. In fact, that gift must have been large enough so as to possibly get away with the claim that it was the full price received for their land. The problem was that it wasn't the best they could do, and they lied to God (Acts 5:1-11).

Other folks build up the best in their storehouses with the attitude of Judas (John 12:3-6). When Mary anointed Jesus' feet with a very expensive ointment, Judas hit the roof. "This ointment could have been

sold for three hundred pence and the money given to the poor!" was his claim. The last phrase of Verse 6 reveals Judas' true heart. He just liked the thought of carrying around a lot of money. How many of us fall into this category? We want to boast of large savings plans and retirement programs. We want discretionary income, and such is fine if we have given the best to God.

The subject does not apply only to financial concerns, but transcends every aspect of life. The way we dress for worship should reflect the best we have (Matthew 22:11-14).

When we give our time, we shouldn't work half-heartedly, but rather diligently (Ecclesiastes 9:10). Preparation for teaching should not be last-minute, but rather should reflect much diligence (II Timothy 2:15).

If we apply these principles to secular activities as well as spiritual ones, we will be living the kind of lives God requires - and that is indeed our best for God!

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FEBRUARY 23, 1996

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Volume 33 Number 5  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

" I am not mad, most noble Festus; but  
Words of Truth and soberness."--A

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## Is Doctrine Really All That Important?

I)

*"...the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having  
Matthew 7:28-29*

A popular cry from some today is, "why don't you quit preaching so much doctrine and start preaching more about Jesus." Statements such as this not only hurt the message that faithful gospel preachers are trying to preach, but they reflect on the very message our Lord preached. Clearly, some people have a misunderstanding as to the biblical meaning of doctrine? For some, "doctrine" may be any sermon that falls outside the realm of the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord. In other words, sermons on marriage and divorce, the role of women, and New Testament worship, would be categorized under the title of "doctrinal sermons." This distinction that some make is harmful for two reasons: First, it causes one to shuffle the message of our Lord into "personal preference preaching," failing to see that the entire message of Christ should be our preference. Second, it blinds one to the fact that the gospel and doctrine are one and the same (Romans 1:15; cf. 6:17). Is doctrine really all that important? Why are some having difficulty in understanding the biblical meaning of doctrine? I believe that a careful examination of the Lord's sermon on the mount will answer these questions.

Is doctrine really all that important? At the conclusion of His sermon there are two simple, yet often overlooked passages with four key words that inseparably attach biblical doctrine with Christ. "and it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes"(Matt. 7:28-29). Observe first of all the word "sayings." This is quite simply the message that he spoke. The word "sayings" (logos) means a discourse, doctrine, the moral precepts given by God (Robertson). Then the text reveals that after his sermon the people were astonished at his doctrine. Question: were the sayings of Jesus considered to be doctrine? The word "doctrine" (didache) means teaching, the act of teaching or instruction (Robertson). The Jews had no problem understanding that the message delivered to them was doctrine. Matthew, writing by inspiration, stated that "they were astonished at his doctrine." How sad, that a group of unbelieving, rebellious, stubborn-headed Jews had no problem equating the message of Christ as being doctrine, yet, today, some who are Christians fail to see the same relationship.

I have read this great sermon and have arrived at twenty six different themes that our Lord taught. These themes from the entire hub of Christian living! When a person broadly suggests that we need to quit preaching so much doctrine and start preaching more about Jesus, notice what he does to the Sermon on the Mount. He eliminates preaching on: (1) those who are spiritually destitute as result from being outside of Christ (5:3), (2) sin and Godly sorrow (5:4), (3) humility (5:5), (4) thirsting and hungering after righteousness (5:6), and since all of his commandments are righteousness (Psalm 119:172), and righteousness is found only in the gospel (Romans 1:17), this eliminates all preaching!, (5) attitudes toward others, forgiveness (5:7), (6) morality (5:8), (7) living with our fellow-man (5:9), (8) persecutions (5:10), (9) our influence in the world (5:13-16), (10) the Old Testament (law of Moses) (5:17-20), (11) hatred and murder (5:21-22), (12) worshiping correctly (5:23-26), (13) lust in the heart, adultery (5:27-32), (14) pure speech (5:33-37), (15) retaliation (5:38-40), (16) doing more than one's duty (5:41-42), (17) true love (5:43-48), (18) true religion (6:1-18), (19) worldliness (6:19-24), (20)

the church (6:33), (21) prayer (7:7-11), (22) the golden rule (7:12),(23)heaven and hell (7:13-14), (24) false teachers (7:15), (25) obedience (7:21-23), (26) improper and proper foundations of building (7:24-27). Is doctrine important? Dear friend, one of the greatest sermons, containing the supreme virtues of Christian living is eliminated from the Bible if doctrine is meaningless. Our Lord thought, the Holy Spirit thought, and the Jews thought that doctrine was not incidental, rather they thought it was fundamental. What about us today? Do we view the teachings of God's Holy Word as doctrinal or to we pick and choose what we consider to be doctrine? When someone diminishes the value of doctrine by attempting to elevate Christ above it, he fails to see that when one preaches Christ he is preaching doctrine.

Why are some having difficulty understanding the biblical meaning of doctrine? I believe it is found in tow words from the last verse of our study from the sermon on the Mount. "For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes (7:29). Jesus' teaching was authoritative and the Jews recognized his message as being such. His message was unlike the message from the scribes of

their day. On one occasion they said, "never man spake like this man" (John 7:46). The problem that so many have with doctrine is the fact that it is restrictive. The word of God is powerful (Hebrews 4:12), it comes from the mouth of Almighty God (2 Timothy 3:16a), and it is authoritative (Matthew 24:35). We live in a age when people do not want to be restricted when it comes to religious matters. Our nation (as well as some in the church) has adopted this devilish philosophy of, "You can't legislate morality, you can't tell me what to do. I'll do my thing and you do yours." Yet, God has legislated morality and he can and has told people what to do, and therefore his word is restrictive. Why? Because he does not want anyone to get hurt. His commandments are for our protection. When God says, "Thou shalt not...", he is doing this for our protection and benefit. So the Christian should be thankful that the doctrine of Christ is restrictive. This thought is clearly seen when the apostle Paul contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5:19-21). Paul lists a series of prohibitions from sin, because these commands not only will keep one from going to heaven but they also

(Continued On Page 3)



# From The Editor

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## The Tax Trap, Matthew 22:16-22

It was apparently on the Tuesday just prior to the Crucifixion of Jesus that Christ answered so many loaded questions from the Jews. In almost every case the questions had nothing to do with a desire to learn, but rather a diabolical attempt at trapping the Christ. They desperately wanted to make Jesus less appealing to the masses. Let's consider the tax trap:

"And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teaches the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. 17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? 18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? 19 Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. 20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? 21 They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. 22 When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way."

Strong's Greek lexicon, #2778, defines tributes as, "Census, (among the Romans, denoting a register and a valuation of property in accordance with which taxes were paid), in the New

Testament the tax or tribute levied on individuals and to be paid yearly." This tax which Caesar exacted of the Jews, not only helped finance the Roman government, but it also served as a reminder to the Jews that they were under Roman Rule. The set-up for this trap is interesting. The Pharisees sent their disciples, or students, with the Herodians to carry out this scheme. Even today false doctrines are often spread this way. False teachers often focus on the youth of university campuses to spread their doctrinal poison.

They will trap Him in His words. They first establish the doctrine which Christ has taught, namely that He is true (they didn't believe this, but saying it boosts their point), that he teaches the truth of God, that he and is no respecter of persons. To show "respect of persons" would be to show partiality in one's teaching toward one individual over another because of friendship or desire to impress. They knew Jesus didn't approve that kind of spirit in teachers. Perhaps they had even heard Jesus quote Leviticus 19:15 "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty: but in righteous shalt thou judge thy neighbor." Or perhaps Deuteronomy 16:19, "Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the

wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. 'By spelling these things out, they flatter Jesus with things they don't believe. Adam Clark, in his book on this passage, recalls the Italian proverb which translates, "He who caresses thee more than he was wont to do, has either deceived thee, or is about to do it."

Now the bait. "Is it lawful to pay tribute, or tax, to Caesar or not?" These Herodians obviously reasoned this way: If Jesus says, "Pay the tax", he violates his own teaching. We'll say he teaches respect of persons one day and against it the next, and therefore can't be trusted. If, on the other hand Jesus says, "Don't pay the tax", we will tattle to the Romans that Jesus is guilty of treason against Rome. The Romans will whisk Jesus away never to be heard of again.

Jesus, in his divine brilliance and instant logic, reduces the trap to ashes. "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

Now to the practical applications:

1. The Bible speaks of a variety of legitimate ways a Christian may (or in some cases should) spend his money: Contribution to the work of the church, I Corinthians 16:2; payment of taxes, Romans 13:6-7; providing for the necessities of one's family, I Timothy 5:8; Investment to make more money, Matthew 25:14-

30; private benevolence, Luke 10:35; the purchase and selling of land, Acts 5:4; hiring laborers for work and paying them, Matthew 20:2; etc.

2. Money, as we know it, is tied to a government system. That's why Caesar's picture was on the money. That's also why Jesus said to give back to Caesar what was, in a taxation sense, his.

God supports governments. He does not always approve everything a government may do, but He supports the need for people to have civil government, Romans 13:1-7. While we may be strongly opposed to what Washington is doing from time to time, American Christians still continue to support the office of president, the existence of congress, and all other duly elected forms of government.

3. Christians should pay their taxes, even to govern-

ments who are known to use money in sinful ways, as did Rome. Romans 13:6 says, "For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor."

4. Not even the most clever of thinkers of the day were able to thwart the purpose and wisdom of Christ Jesus. People still try today, but to their own misery and harm and to the loss of those souls who they may influence away from Jesus. Ultimately, "who-soever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God," (II John 9). The truly wise among us hear the sayings of Christ and do them, Matthew 7:24.

Glenn Colley



### The Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

#### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. thirty-five per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$18.20 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, P.O. Box 430, Haleyville, AL 35565.



# Is Doctrine Really All That Important? (Part 1)

(Continued From Page 1) will hurt us if we engage in them, and so his doctrine is restrictive. When he lists the fruits of the spirit, Paul states, "against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:23b). Who would want to have a restriction placed upon the amount of love they should manifest in their life? There are no restrictions when it comes to things pertaining to the fruits of the spirit, but those things that are harmful to us, God, by

His divine authority, and for our eternal well-being, has placed restrictions on what we can and cannot do.

Perhaps some are having as difficulty in the area of understanding what doctrine is because they had equated it with something the church of Christ began teaching. Friends, doctrine began the moment scripture was recorded (Gen. 1:1). Doctrine is not something that began with Alexander Campbell or anyone else. The

word simply means instruction or teaching. People must see that a sermon on the subject of the role of women in worship and a sermon on the crucifixion of Jesus Christ are both doctrinal sermons! In fact, it is rather interesting to study how the terms doctrine, gospel, faith and word are all used interchangeably in the scriptures. The entire message of the Bible is the doctrine of God, and it is also the gospel. Paul stated to the Ephesian

elders, "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27) Paul did not categorize his sermons as being either doctrinally oriented or Jesus oriented, he simply preached the word (2 Timothy 4:2).

When people suggest that we need to preach less doctrine and more about Jesus, they fail to see the true meaning of the word doctrine and they mishandle the very message that is able to save their souls.

Is doctrine really all that important? Let's ask the apostle Paul if he thought so. "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Timothy 4:16). Important indeed!

Jason R. Roberts

## Who Are The Only Christians? (No. 2)

The noble name of Christian occurs thrice in our beloved Bible (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16). Neither Luke nor Peter used the term in the careless fashion as is used in our day. They used it precisely and preciously, not loosely or flippantly.

In this and two subsequent articles I wish to give three comprehensive answers to the query raised for this short series.

### THE ONLY CHRISTIANS HAVE HEARD THE RIGHT PERSON JESUS CHRIST NOT THE WRONG PERSON

There was a time in the Old Testament era when God's people were to hear Moses as lawgiver. He had received their law on the summit of Sinai and had faithfully delivered it to them as per Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. There was a time in the Old Testament when the people were to hear and heed the Hebrew prophets such as Elijah. Be it recalled kneely to mind that the Transfiguration of our Lord witnessed the return of Moses and Elijah talking with the glorified Christ on the high mountain perhaps Mount Hermon. One of the significant lessons of that Historic occasion was the Father's own testimony spoken from the bright cloud that over shadowed "The Inner Three" Peter, James and John, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am pleased; hear ye him" (Matthew 17:5). The crystal clear implication from the Father's testimony was that Moses has had his day to be heard; Elijah has had his day to be heard; now it is imperative and important for

you to hear My Son. That great treatise of truth, Hebrews, opens with the dynamic declaration that God now speaks to us by His Son (Hebrews 1:1-3).

We live in an era when men en masse want to hear what the Pope and his celibate priesthood have to say even about marriage though no any of them can be married with Catholic approval. The Jewish world wants to hear what modern Jewish Rabbis have to say. The gullible Protestant world wants to hear what the so-called Reverends have to say. Have you watched some of the popular religious programs on TV and observed the people's countenances as they sat glued to every word the preacher was saying when much of it is not in harmony with the Bible? I have and it never ceases to amaze me as I witness such. Some are far more interested in what some prominent person thinks about religious matter than what the Holy Spirit has said through inspired scribes such as Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James and Jude the eight penmen of the New Testament. Not any of these humanly imposed standards constitutes authority in the realm of religion.

We are to hear Jesus and His word and that word should NOT be mixed and mingled with ANY man-made error of falsehood. Mark 4:23 and John 6: 44-45 both stress the importance of our hearing. Mark 4:24 and Luke 8:18 both stress that we are to take heed what we hear and how we hear it. Romans 10:13-17 emphasizes that we hear the

word of God for this alone produces faith that leads to salvation. It is doubtful there is another command that Jesus stressed more than man's great need to hear and to hear TRUTH ONLY. We are not to be hearers only. James refutes such in 1:22-25. Hearing only is no better than faith only or grace only. Even after we have obeyed the gospel we are to continue to hear him. Hebrews 12:25 states, "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven." Seven times in Revelation 2-3 Jesus enjoins members of the seven churches in Asia, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches" (2:6,11,17,29; 3:6, 13,22).

Potential converts to Christ cannot hear and heed error and be in clear position to hear and heed truth and TRUTH ONLY. This cannot be the case in becoming a Christian; it cannot be the case in remaining one subsequent to one's initial conversion to the Christ.

Precarious positions are being taken today that leave the impression that people can grow up on denominational teaching all their lives such as faith only, Calvinism, the wrong confession made, that baptism has nothing to do with salvation and somewhere and somehow these same people scattered in ALL the denominations have learned saving truth, have become New Testament Christians and are now approved in the sight of high and holy heaven. Yet

these same people do not have an inkling of an idea of the nature of the kingdom or that denominationalism is grossly wrong. How in the name of sound and sensible intelligence can such be? Is this hearing the gospel? Is it the formation of saving faith? How have such people repented of fallacious error accepted or embraced when they do not know such fallacious falsehood has been sowed in their hearts and has influenced all their religious actions? In the framework of such how could there be

Scriptural confession and Biblical baptism practiced in their cases?

When wrong people are heard and heed Scriptural conversion is not the end result! The right person MUST BE heard and that right person is Jesus Christ not some self-appointed mouthpiece for the Lord of glory.

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## Most Of A Minute

### Things Which Never Change

I suppose if someone had to form the key "catch" word for the 90's it would have to be change. People clamor for change in our government Mr. Clinton says, "No more big government!" We shall see. People often want change in religion or in social standards or in laws. And many changes are good. Many of us wouldn't be alive today were it not for great advancements in the medical field. Furthermore, many changes have contributed to the great comfort and convince we enjoy over preceding generations.

But not all things change. Recently I talked with a man who had convinced himself that there was no absolute truth anymore; nothing that is always right and never wrong. That's a sad and wrong perspective. Hebrews. 13:8 assures us, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever." He doesn't change in truth, His salvation, His hope, or the way people get their sins forgiven. People become saved today just like they did in the book of Acts many years ago. In Acts 8 a man from Ethiopia heard the Gospel. He said "here is water, what hinders me from being baptized?" He was immediately baptized. Why? Because Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:16)." And that's not going to change.

Glenn Colley



# Living In The Path Behind The Penknife

How wonderful to live in America the beautiful! No other land on the globe can compare. The marvels of our medicine, technology, and comfort have no rival anywhere in the world. No other place grants the freedom of religious expression like the USA.

In spite of this, often we are reminded that the spiritual health of many is declining in this great land. With amazement, we follow the path of the figurative penknife guided by the hand of sin. Most are familiar with Jehoiakim's scabbard (cf. Jeremiah 36:23). With it, he cut out the sections of the word of God which met with his disapproval. He audaciously discarded the comments of God out of tune with his feelings. He wanted only self-government (cf. Proverbs 16:25). This has a familiar ring to it as some are repeating his mistake even today.

When one pauses to view some traits of our culture and, at times, the Lord's Kingdom, one is left with the impression that we are living in the path behind the penknife of unhealthy change. Consider some of God's commands so often swashed through with the invisible blade of unbelief.

**Turn not to the right hand nor to the left (Proverbs 4:27).** Has there ever been an age, both secularly and religious, where division has been more dominant than at present? The volley of action and reaction is constantly fired. Too many, failing to heed the above passage, bind where God permits not while countless others loose where God forbids such loosing (cf.

Revelation 22:17-18). Shielding ourselves behind the violent arm of radicalism, we see the result of "the penknife." Strewn along the road behind are assassinated characters and wounded influences. How tragic!

**No man can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24).** Oh no? Many would get up from bowing before the alter of money just long enough to debate our Lord. There are those who feverishly attempt constant accumulation of *things* to the neglect of service and worship to God, but who still deny they are not putting Christ first. This time, the unfortunate victims behind the penknife are spiritually and emotionally neglected children, marriages, and souls in the world who will never get to hear the gospel because materialistic Christians are stingy givers of their time, talent, and resources. The penknife here reaches for similar verses like Luke 12:15.

**Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 3:11).** Atheist, humanists, and denominationalists do not like this passage. Practically speaking, all of them have gone about to remove this verse from the hearing of the world. As such an idea does not conform to their thoughts (cf. Isaiah 55:8-9), they bare their razors and seek to remove it from the record of truth. Determined, that steadily pour the faulty foundations of evolution, human creeds, communism, and the like beneath their vanity (cf. Matthew 7:26)!

**Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works**

**of darkness (Ephesians 5:11).** The swish of the penknife is heard when one says, "we are all going the same way but on different roads." Removing the dagger from their sides, some try to clear the path for ecumenism and syncretism. Though the loving Father forbids compromising the worship and doctrine of Christ (cf. John 4:24; 2 John 9), opponents of truth seek to remove the ancient landmarks of the gospel (Galatians 1:6-9). How sad!

**Children, obey your parents (Ephesians 6:1).** How careful we must be not to be hypocritical of the home. Parents successfully raise godly children with difficulty. Often, parents are left to questions the hard decisions they must make. Yet, it is apparent that some parents and children are playing with knives. Have you ever come across a young person who seemed to be the chief of the teepee? It happens. There are children who tell their parents what to do. It should not be this way. In **eight** different places, God reminds His precious little ones to "honour thy father and mother"!

**Flee also youthful lusts (2 Timothy 2:22).** So many soldiers of modern music, movies, television, magazines, cyberporn, and advertisement have replicas of Jehoiakim's penknife as standard issue with the rest of their gear designed to combat godliness. In the path behind the penknife stagger confused, ruined, and hardened little hearts, bodies, and souls.

**Be...keepers at home (Titus 2:5).** The question most asked by some little

ones is, "Where's mommy?" Eternal and impressionable souls are victimized by the penknife. Some children's needs are denied in the name of career, success, and comfort. Easiness in Zion cannot be that worthwhile, can it (cf. Amos 6:1)? There are quite a few who selfishly think so.

**Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone (James 2:17).** Many "scholars" and commentators have their fingerprints on Jehoiakim's penknife, believing faith alone is sufficient. Despite the admonition of James and the clear, precise biblical teaching on the necessity of performing the works of repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10), confession (I John 4:15), baptism (I Peter 3:21), and continued faithfulness as a child of God (James 1:12) in order to accept the grace of heaven and be saved, so many of the world's religious "experts" have carved away everything from around their core doctrine of *faith alone*. In the fallout behind the path of the penknife lay the souls of millions of adherents who have blindly accepted this false teaching.

**Love the brotherhood (I Peter 2:17).** There are those who have come to this passage with the framed penknife in hand who then paste words and phrases like "be suspicious of", "slam", "defame", "write up", "change", and "divide" where the word love belongs. In the path behind the penknife lay many with their faith shaken, some asking "what's the use?", and others "quitting the church" altogether. Yes,

there are a multitude of problems therein which need fixing. But, they cannot be fixed with Jehoiakim's penknife!

The rest of this story in Jeremiah is vitally important to our concluding thoughts. Notice God's message for the bearer of the penknife.

*Thou hast burned this roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast? Therefore thus saith the LORD of Jehoiakim king of Judah; He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them: but they harkened not (Jeremiah 36:28-31).*

What a high price to pay for disobedience! A face value acceptance of the inspired scriptures is a must for offering ourselves as acceptance sacrifices to God (cf. Romans 12:2). May we pray that the guilty will cease their fascination with the deadly penknife of rebellion. It has no place in the life of any child of God whose aim is to please Him.

Neal Pollard



MARCH 1, 1996

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- \* The Father As Leader And Provider In The Home
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  - \* Priests Must Fulfill Their Ministry!
- \* Democracy, Monarchy, Theocracy
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Volume 33 Number 6  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

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

## The Father As Leader And Provider In The Home

A recent issue of *U.S. News & World Report* (February 27, 1995) revealed the appalling state of fatherhood in America in the 1990's. It states that "Newly 2 of every 5 kids in America do not live with their fathers" (p. 39). "An astonishing 38 percent of all kids now live without their biological fathers -- up from just 17.5 percent in 1960" (p. 39). "More than half of today's children will spend at least a part of childhood without a father" (p. 39). "Only 51 percent of kids still live with both biological parents" (p. 39).

Have people sorely second-guessed the importance of stable, two parent families? Consider these remarks from the same *U.S. News Article*: "Studies have shown that only 43 percent of state prison inmates grew up with both parents and that a missing father is a better predictor of criminal activity than race or poverty" (p. 39). *Heritage Foundation* analyst Patrick F. Fagan agrees: "There is a wealth of evidence in the professional literature of criminology and sociology to suggest that the breakdown of family is the real root cause of crime in America" (*Imprimis*, p. 2).

These frightful statistics and statements point of the fact that men have left God's way for the home and family. Some recognize that

there really is a problem and they are trying to fix it in their own way. There are scores of grassroots organizations all over the country trying to reconnect fathers with their children. I am sure that these organizations are good and have their place, but the only way back to healing the broken family structure in this country is for men to return to God's way for the family. The deteriorating condition of the home will not improve until the father (and all family members) assumes his rightful place in the home!

In this connection a few basic and fundamental facts are worth repeating. First, marriage and the home are of divine design, origin and purpose (Gen. 2). Second, marriage is intended to bless all mankind (Prov. 18:22). Third, immorality (fornication, adultery) is always wrong (Heb. 13:4). Fourth, the sanctity of marriage must be respected (Matt. 19:3-9).

In God's scheme of things the man is the leader in the home (Eph. 5:22-23; Col. 3:18). It is regrettable that this arrangement does not please everybody today. This teaching does not please those men who are no good (devoid of morals, principles and character), and abandon their families (wife and children); otherwise known as "dead-beat dads." This teaching does not please those weak men who will

not shoulder their responsibilities as leaders and providers in the home. This teaching does not please those women who have imbibed the modern feminist mystique and insist on a "Murphy Brown lifestyle." This teaching does not please those distorted misfits who promoted a unisex society, where men and women have no distinctive roles which belong primarily to them.

The Bible teaches that the man has the primary role of providing for the family both materially and spiritually (I Tim. 5:8). The word "provide" means, "taking thought in advance" (Romans 12:17). Parents have the responsibility of providing for their children such things as life's necessities (food, shelter, clothing); a good education and above all spiritual development (Eph. 6:4).

There is more to being a good provider than simply supplying the material needs of a family (Lk. 12:15). It seems that many men are able to do this well enough, but will not provide the greatest needs a family has, such as guidance, love, discipline and example (Prov. 17:6). Many men are happy to have nothing to do with the spiritual development of their children by leaving it all up to the wife. In doing so he is wrong in not assuming that which in

his God-given responsibility (Eph. 6:4).

We tend to think of providing as meaning the same as bringing home a pay-check or two. The most important provision goes beyond what money can buy. Have we forgotten Paul's words in Timothy, Titus and to us? "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house; give no occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully" (I Tim. 5:14), and "The aged women likewise..That they teach the younger women...To be discrete, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Tit. 2:3-5). Are these words anachronistics to our lives today and no longer worthy of our attention? More and More women are deciding that the work force is not for them and that home is where they belong. Sorry, Betty Friedman. It is a turn for the better and our culture will reap handsome dividends in the future. Wives who wish to stay home with their children should receive overwhelming support from their husbands! Titus 2:5 is not a petty passage to be ignored.

The woman plays a dual role in relationship to her husband. First, she is the wife of his youth. Second, she is the mother of his

children. Her work at home is so important, and seems to go unnoticed by many. Thankfully, there are still some women who want to fulfill God's plan that they "guide the house" but, society heaps disgrace upon them and they are discouraged in that task. How encouraging must have been the words of one observant sister to a preacher's stay-at-home wife, when she wrote: "Your works have not gone unnoticed \_\_\_\_\_ is out with his work, but you are home making it possible for him to go. So many young women are happy to turn the rearing of their children over to anyone who will do it for them. They are on your feet now but just a little while, they fly out on their own...I look at you and see your mother...She was always home. It meant so much to us."

The government with its programs cannot heal the broken home; neither can grassroots organizations bind up the wounded and bleeding family structure. Men simply must return to God's will for them as leaders and providers.

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# From The Editor

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## The Same Kinds Of Troubles

The Associated Press published a news paper article entitled "Conservative Presbyterians object to 'contemporary' worship practices." It seems a group calling themselves "Concerned Presbyterians" are trying, according to the article, "to convince the denomination's membership that certain forms of worship are unacceptable." Because this editor has several friends who are members of the Presbyterian religion, and because I love the church of my Lord, this article was of great interest to me.

On one side of this dispute are the conservative members of the Presbyterian church. Here's their position: "Charismatic practices such as speaking in tongues and dramatic healing services, for instance, should not be allowed...Dance, drama and other forms are OK outside of church services but the Bible doesn't sanction them for worship." said Kenneth Gentry Jr., a member of Concerned Presbyterians. "The Bible regulates how we should worship--not modern tastes or anything of that nature." These conservatives also say that the belief that God speaks through individuals today undermines biblical authority. "If God is still speaking in the world today and someone is next to you speaking the very word of God, why bother trying to look up things in the Bible when you can go directly to someone who has access to the mind of God?"

On the other side of the dispute is Lee Mashburn, pastor of Shannon Forest Presbyterian. According to

the article, he believes dance and other contemporary elements can be used effectively in worship--are aren't displeasing to God. One of the largest PCA churches, Briarwood Presbyterians in Birmingham, Alabama, uses classical and contemporary ballet as well as liturgical dance. They also use dramatic vignettes to illustrate sermon points and full-length productions as part of their outreach ministry, says Barbara Barker, director of the dance program. "Our feeling is that God gave all of the arts to be used to praise and worship him."

First of all, isn't it interesting that the more liberal element of the Presbyterian church sounds so much like the liberal element among churches of Christ? That makes us a bit suspicious about their contention that they are working to restructure the church because the Bible leads them to do so, or because they feel the Holy Spirit's fresh breezes blowing. It's looking more and more like this is a problem in many religious bodies, and is tied more to a desire for religion to better fit the baby-booming "me first" generation than anything else.

Brethren, while not all the things the Presbyterians are saying and doing are the same as what is being said and done among the members of the church of Christ, one must admit a striking resemblance. And these similarities are worthy of our thoughtful observation.

For years we've pled for unity with all religious people. Unity, that is, based on the Bible. We continue to encourage folks to go back to the Bible. We continue to teach that we can all unify by letting the bible be our only guide--saying Bible things in Bible ways--letting God decide our doctrine through the study of His Word. Yet, the liberal thinkers in the body of Christ are using the same kind of terminology as the liberal thinkers among the Presbyterians. They are striving for unity--and achieving it in some places--but not because of a dedication to the Word of God. They are unifying in error. The appeal toward unity is not a clear "Let's go back to the Bible", but "Let's make the Bible fit our contemporary desires."

It should be the case that when any denomination has members who are fed up with the religions of men and want to go back to respecting the authority of the Bible, the New Testament Christians--members of the church of Christ, the body of Christ, would be there to say, "Come; unite with us. We respect the authority of the Scriptures. We are Christians only. We have shed the trappings of man-made doctrines and obeyed Christ. Here is where you belong." And yet, many churches among our brotherhood, ("Contemporary," "change" churches), would hold no appeal to these Presbyterians who are seeking authority-based religion. They already have what the contemporary, liberal, thinkers are offering. They're saying they want the

Bible. They're saying they want to be with people who submit to God's authority in all things (Col. 3:17).

Shame! Shame on those who are trying to restructure the church of Christ. These denominational folks who now are crying out for religion founded soundly on the New Testament ought to be able to look to us and find that simple Christianity. And truly, in the local sense, they often can. Yet, overall, who could blame them if they looked to the churches of Christ and apathetically shrugged," not much difference there". If these new divisive brethren who are splitting churches of Christ all about us want a denominational church, let them join one. That's their choice. But may they come to the realization that this movement is *destructive* to the distinctive call of Christ's people! We are Christians. Christians only. Not denominational. Not Catholic or

Protestant. Just simply, New Testament Christians. We worship, not with a motivation of entertainment for participants, but to please the almighty God. We live, not to see how much like the sinful world we can be, but to follow the pattern for pure living given in God's word. We seek to teach people how to be members of the church they can read about in their New Testament. We reject religious patterned largely after the appetites and preferences of men.

Pray for our brotherhood. There are still many, many strong and faithful churches with elders and preachers who are rejecting the modernistic change movement and it's proponents. May we all unite to sing, "I love thy kingdom Lord; the house of Thine abode. The church our blessed Redeemer saved with His own precious blood..."

Glenn Colley



### The Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

#### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. thirty-five per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$18.20 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, P.O. Box 430, Haleyville, AL 35565.



# Priests Must Fulfill Their Ministry!

In the last pair of history books in the Old Testament is given this information, that "...the Levites were appointed unto all manner of service of the tabernacle of the house of God" (I Chronicles 6:48). The book of Leviticus repeatedly emphasizes that the special priesthood for the people of God was chosen by Him from among Aaron's sons ("the Levites"). God consecrated them to minister in such an office (Numbers 3:3).

Of course, God's chosen people from Abraham to Christ were the seed of Abraham, the Jews. The generations thereof were to worship and live under the law of Moses until the Messiah fulfilled it with a perfect life, a sacrificial death, a temporary burial, a triumphant resurrection, a glorious ascension, and a new government. The Law of Moses is now "done away" (2 Corinthians 3:7,11,14), with Christ blotting it out and nailing it to His cross (Colossians 2:14). The new covenant forged by the blood of the cross is starkly different from the old, having, among other things, "a more excellent ministry", "a better covenant", and "better promises (Hebrews 8:6). Under the new law, Christ has become our Higher priest, the Old Testament high priest being a type of Christ. A summary of the differences between the two is given in Hebrews 9:11-12: "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal

redemption for us."

For this high Priest to have a ministration and a law, He must have a priesthood to govern. The inspired Hebrews writer writes that the priesthood and law have changed (Hebrews 7:12), but that the priesthood will not change again so long as the earth shall stand (Hebrews 7:24). Peter, speaking to all saints, identifies **them** as being the priesthood appointed to "offer up spiritual sacrifices" according to the pleasure of the Divine (I Peter 2:5). Thus, as Christ's incarnation, sacrifice and exaltation have caused Him to be the High Priest for a new, chosen people ("Christians") forever, then the priests in this new priesthood have responsibilities and tasks to fulfill.

There are warnings and admonitions which Christians, as priests, should glean from the shortcomings of the old priesthood (cf. Romans 15:4). Most Old Testament students are keenly aware of the recurring lapses of the Israelites nation into idolatry, idleness, and iniquity. The tainting nature of sin affected even the priests. Ezekiel records a particular morally destitute period wherein God proclaimed that they "defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and have profaned my sabbath. For when they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it; and, lo, thus have they done in the midst of mine house" (Ezekiel 23:38-39). Moral bankruptcy frequently characterized the priesthood under Moses' Law (cf. Lamentations 4:13; Hosea 6:9).

The Old Testament also

records instances where the priesthood sought to change the set pattern of worship to God. Perhaps the most notable of any priests' disobedience was that of Nadab and Abihu, who offered upon the altar a fire not commanded by God (Leviticus 10:1-2). Jeremiah notes the spiritual ignorance of the priests in his day (Jeremiah 2:8), the result of which was grievous rebellion as "the priests" bore "rule by their means" (Jeremiah 5:31). God, through Ezekiel, charged the priests with outright violations of His law (Ezekiel 22:26). Even as the Old Testament closes, the reader is reminded of the priests' defilement of the worship, such that they could be rightly charged with despising the very name of God (Malachi 1:6).

In other places in the Old Testament, one reads of the priesthood failing to do what they were commanded to do. They at times left undone their duty as priests. During the reign of Hezekiah the priests had to be ashamed out of lethargy back into active service to God (2 Chronicles 30:3-15). For a period of time before the restoration of Nehemiah, the priests were guilty, along with all Israel, of failing to keep the law (Nehemiah 9:34). Again, in the time of Malachi, the priests had to be called to action by God (Malachi 2:1ff).

The priests were the very hub of spirituality under the Old Law. One could correctly say, "As went the priests so went the nation." The priests were to take the lead in demonstrating moral, doctrinal, and sacrificial uprightness.

As God's people in the Christian dispensation are priests of God, we must be

found in the ministration of God's will (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:1). Like the priests of old, Christians are sanctified by God to render good works for God's glory (2 Timothy 2:21; cf. Exodus 29:1). Christians offer, not animal sacrifices (Exodus 29:38), but rather themselves (Romans 12:1,2; cf. Philippians 2:17). Consecration and devotion are to characterize God's priests (I Thessalonians 5:23; I Peter 2:5).

Thus, consider that each time child of God is willfully absent from the worship assemblies he is shunning his *duty* as a priest of God (Hebrews 10:25). When a child of God participates in unwholesome and worldly activities, he is defiling his priesthood (cf. James 1:27). When Christians refuse to reach out to the lost and strengthen the saved, they are denying their God-given calling as priests of the Lord (Ephesians 4:1ff).

One should be eager to become a child of God in order to receive the manifold blessings connected to such (cf. Ephesians 1:3). The Christian life faithfully lived will bring one joy, both in this life and the eternal one to come (Romans 15:13). However, let God's children never forget that bearing the name Christian and accepting the grace of God carries with it great responsibility and expectations. The Christian priest, in honoring the worship, mode of conduct, and duties laid upon Him by God, will "fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified..." (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12). Christian priests must fulfill the ministry God has given them to do in this world (I Peter 2:9).

Neal Pollard

## Most Of A Minute

### Democracy, Monarchy, Theocracy

In I Samuel 8:7 of the Bible Samuel cried to God because the people of Israel were demanding an earthly king. God told Samuel that the people weren't really rejecting him, but were rejecting God. And then He added: "that I should not reign over them." Israel already had a king! It was God!

There are at least three different types of government: Democracy, Monarchy, and Theocracy. In a democracy, we elect our leaders. We call this a government of the people. A monarchy is different. In a monarchy people have a king, who generally lives until he dies and is replaced by his son.

Now consider a theocracy. "Theo" refers to God. When God told Samuel that He reigned over the people, He was referring to a theocracy. There is a major difference between these three governments. In a democracy, when we become dissatisfied with the way a president is leading, we elect another in his place. In a monarchy, when the people become dissatisfied, they overturn the monarch. Yet, in a theocracy, people have nothing to do with making, or unmaking the king. King Jesus will reign forever. The question isn't "will I vote for Him for king?," but will I *serve* Him who is King?

Glenn Colley



## Is Doctrine Really All That Important? (Part II)

The child of God is to be constantly on guard against the "wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:10b). The deceptive tactics the devil employs to subvert men and women away from the truth of God can hardly go unnoticed. As an *angel of light* (2 Cor. 11:14) he appears on the surface as gentle as a lamb, but inwardly he is roaring lion, who walks about "seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). The "god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4) will do all that he can and use every method available to pursue our souls. He is aware of the testimony of scripture that "the whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5:19), and as he travels to and fro across our land, he is by and large pleased over what he sees. He is aware that the power of God is found within the word of God (Rom. 1:16, Matt. 13:19 cf. Luke 8:11), therefore if he can get good and honest men and women to have a misconception towards any part of God's word, then that individual is already in his hands or is another step closer to the same. Since the salvation of man's soul depends upon doctrine (Rom. 6:17), which is the gospel (2 Thess. 1:6-9), satan is doing all within his power to confuse and twist the mind of man into thinking that doctrine is not really all that important. This is exactly what he accomplished when he slithered his way into history and deceived Eve. You can almost hear him saying, "Now Eve, don't be foolish, doctrine is not all that important, it doesn't matter what God has said, go ahead and try it you might like it." If someone were to ask Adam

and Eve if they thought doctrine was important or if they could ask Nadab and Abihu the same; what would be their response? Nadab and Abihu are suffering eternally because they were doctrinally wrong! How much more should the child of God heed the admonition Paul gave to his beloved son Timothy, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4:16. emp. added JRR). This scripture clearly and inseparably attaches the salvation of man's soul to doctrine. Therefore, it goes without saying, that doctrine is important; if it is not, then salvation is not an important issue?

When men belittle doctrine, they are in effect, attacking the very message which they are trying to convert the world with. Someone says, "preacher, there is a difference between the gospel of Christ and the doctrine of Christ, you're supposed to preach the gospel to the world and doctrine to the church." Nothing could be further from the truth. Paul wrote, "If ye continue in the faith grounded and sheltered, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister" (Col. 1:23) Paul faithfully carried out the great commission that the Lord gave him (Matt. 28:18-20) thus he preached the gospel to the world. However, in addressing his letter to the church at Rome Paul

wrote, "...I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also" (Rom. 1:15). Further in that same letter, Paul reminds them of the former condition they were in prior to their obedience to the gospel, "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" (Rom. 6:17). These individuals were lost and they obeyed the gospel which Paul refers to as being "that form of doctrine." The honest reader will have no problem associating the gospel of Christ and the doctrine of Christ as being one and the same. The Bible makes no distinction between the two and in no way even implicates the idea of preaching the gospel to the world and doctrine to the church.

Is doctrine really all that important? When Peter concluded his marvelous sermon recorded for us in Acts two, there is an interesting statement penned by Luke that's worthy of our consideration. The writer affirms, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). The reader should observe the words "continued" and "doctrine." Peter along with the eleven are obviously preaching the gospel, for Jesus had already commissioned them to do such (Matt. 16:18-19; Luke 24:47; Matt. 28:18-20). But if doctrine is not all that important then that eliminates many themes found in their sermon. The

text reads, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine." The word "continued" demands that the audience had previously involved themselves in something. What was it? It was the message the apostles were preaching, the word, the gospel, and as the verse indicates it was "the apostles doctrine." Would any honest Bible student suggest that this sermon was not doctrinal in nature? They discussed the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Are the change agents who contend that the death, burial and resurrection of Christ ("core gospel") are the only criteria for fellowship prepared to answer that the doctrine of Christ and the gospel of Christ are the same? They ridicule doctrine, as if it were something that was dreamed up by members of the church of Christ. Yet what they are propagating attacks the very foundation of Christianity which is the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

Brother Curtis Cates, faithful gospel preacher, in his book "The Core / Bull's Eye Gospel" *Concept Refuted* lists ten reasons why doctrine is important. To those who contend that doctrine is not all that important in religion, brother Cates states that if you are correct, "...let us see what else is not important in religion" (p. 87).

1. **Service** is not important, for it depends on "doctrine" (Rom. 6:17-18) 2. **Unity** is not important, for it depends on "doctrine" (Eph. 4:13-14) 3. **Saving ourselves and them that hear us** is not important, for it

depends on "doctrine" (1 Tim. 4:16) 4. **Being a godly teacher** is not important, for it depends on "doctrine" (1 Tim. 1:4-7) 5. **Living a righteous life** is not important, for it depends on "doctrine" (1 Tim. 1:9-11) 6. **Refusing to blaspheme and to be "puffed up"** are not important, for they depend on "doctrine" (1 Tim. 6:1-5) 7. **Being "perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work"** is not important, for it depends on "doctrine" (2 Tim. 3:16-17, KJV) 8. **Having the father and the Son** is not important, for that depends on "doctrine" (2 John 9-11) 9. **Stopping the mouths of false witnesses** is not important, for it depends on "doctrine" (Titus 1:9-11) 10. **Being a good example, a pattern of good works** is not important, for it depends on "doctrine" (Titus 2:8-7). I don't think the above statements could have been worded any clearer than they have been.

No honest student of the Bible would affirm that doctrine is really not all that important. The salvation of our souls depends upon whether or not we follow the doctrine that God by his rich grace has given us. It is the doctrine of Christ that answers all of man's needs. It is the doctrine of Christ that will safely carry a man across the sea of sin and safely land him on the shores of eternity. It is the doctrine of Christ that will one day judge all men (John 12:48). The doctrine of Christ really is important. Are we ashamed of it (Mark 8:38)?

Jason R. Roberts



MARCH 8, 1996

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Volume 33 Number 7  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

" I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak words of truth and soberness."--Acts

1e

## The Silence Of The Lamb

*Isaiah 53:7*

*"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."*

Sheep are interesting creatures. One by one they come, clothed in purity, defenseless and dependent upon their master to make them "lie down in green pastures" and to lead them "beside the still waters" (Psalm 23:2). They typically go about their business quietly and passively, except for a cry of help from time to time when in need of water or to have their heads anointed with oil to protect them from briars and thorns, which become entangled in their thick fur (Psalm 23:5). They have only one purpose and that is to do the will of their master. When they come to the end of their appointed purpose and they "walk through the valley of the shadow of death" (Psalm 23:4), they fear no evil, remaining motionless and silent, they are then slaughtered.

The prophet Isaiah, in the fifty-third chapter of his Messianic book, graphically pictures the death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. No other writer in God's Holy Word deals this extensively and graphically with the suffering that our Lord experience during the last

week of His life. It is indeed Messianic in its thrust (Acts 8:32-39; John 12:37-38), and when it is read it will bring a tear to the eye and profound gratitude to the heart.

One of the interesting things about the Bible is how precisely it reveals the prophetic statements concerning Christ. Suppose the Lord was not silent while the accusations were being hurled against him while in Jerusalem? Would this not render the prophecy of Isaiah invalid? Would it not also eliminate the authenticity of the scriptures? When an individual recognizes that people, places, and even weather conditions were accurately prophesied by men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Pet. 1:21), they should stand in amazement with the psalmist in the long ago who heard God say "be still and know that I am God!" (Psalm 46:10).

Was the Lord silent when the chief priests and the scribes mocked and hurled insults at him? Let's examine the word of God to see how accurate Isaiah's testimony was concerning the attitude

our Lord displayed during the last week of His life. "Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God" (Matt. 26:59-63). Here the sinless Son of God (Heb. 4:15) is being unjustly criticized, and yet he remained silent. Mark's record of this event reads, "And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But he held his peace, and answered nothing..." (Mark 14:60-61). The word

"peace" (*siopao*) written by both Matthew and Mark, is the same word used by Jesus when He said to the raging sea of Galilee, "Peace be still" (Mark 4:39). The word means, "a voluntary refusal or indisposition to speak, stillness" (Strong's). Just as surely as one could see their face mirrored in the smooth surface of that sea, they could see the innocent Son of God on trial, motionless, and not a ripple coming from his throat.

After He was delivered into the hands of Pilate, "Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest. And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly" (Matt. 27:12-14). Pilate's anger had been kindled to the extent that he "went again into the judgment hall and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him

no answer" (John 19:9).

The prophet Isaiah, writing by the inspiration of God (2 Tim. 3:16a; 2 Pet. 1:20-21), centuries before Christ climbed that rugged hill we call Calvary, accurately penned the manner and disposition that Jesus would have. Like an innocent lamb before her shearers, Jesus remained peaceful and still, voluntarily laying down his life for the sheep (John 10:11, 17-18).

Is this the one who was "The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!?" (John 1:29-36). Is this the lamb that was "slain from the foundation of the world!?" (Rev. 13:8) Is this the "lamb without blemish and without spot!?" (1 Pet. 1:19) Yes! this was the one who despite all of the oppression, all of the mockery, and all of the affliction, was as silent as a lamb. Yet, somewhere deep within those Jerusalem hills, in the midst of his silence we can still hear those words, "my sheep hear my voice...and they follow me" (John 10:27).

Jason R. Roberts



# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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## The Woman With Seven Husbands

The same day come to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and , having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitude heard *this*, they were astonished at his doctrine." (Matthew 22:23-33).

These conniving Sadducees, in their efforts to de-throne the King of Kings, used a ploy which

people still use today to promote false doctrines. They mixed truth in with their lies. What they said about Moses was true. Here it is from Deuteronomy 25:5,6

If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. And it shall be, *that* the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother *which* is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel.

We assume that the Sadducees, whose distinguished mark was their denial of the resurrection (for an excellent examination of this doctrine, read I Cor. 15), had made this particular argument many times before. It was probably very effective in their efforts to convince people that there was no resurrection of the dead. This particular argument begins with the assumption that marriage continues to exist after the resurrection, and then it paints a ridiculous picture--a woman standing in the afterlife looking at seven different men, all of whom are her husband! Which will she pick? Will she take time about? Will she

drop all seven?

The reason no one up to this time had been able to crack the argument is that no one up until now had actually seen the afterlife. They couldn't speak about how marriage was in heaven, because they had never been to heaven!

The Lord said that their mistake was due to their not "knowing the scriptures". He then made two points. The first to give them information about the resurrection, which they didn't know, and the second to show that the Scriptures clearly implied the existence of the afterlife and thus the resurrection. God had said, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Was God, *at the moment*, the God of these great departed spirits? Yes. Those Jews had perhaps often made reference to God in those very terms: "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob". Jesus said, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." In other words, if He is their God, then they are somewhere still in existence, and still living.

The second particular Jesus addressed was the specific quibble of the Sadducees. Our Lord said, "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." The argument against the resurrection

melted into the dust. Jesus could speak an eye-witness about the afterlife. The Sadducee's argument goes flat if people married in the resurrection. The multitude was astonished with Christ's teaching.

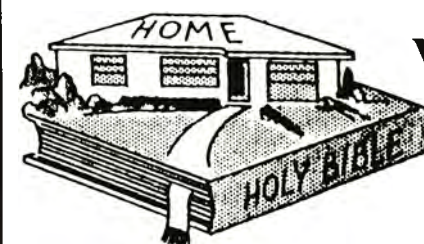
Whenever this remarkable passage is discussed, people are curious about knowing their spouses in heaven. We just cannot imagine seeing our husband or wife in the hereafter and not being married to them. Our problem however, is that we can only think in human terms. That's all we've ever known. This passage does not teach that we won't know one another in heaven, but just that we won't get married or be married there. How will God do that? We don't know. And yet we do know that "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be

changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality." (I Cor. 15:51-53)

We do not know all the particulars in how the good Lord will change us, but we accept the fact that He will.

People who believed Jesus then, and who believe Him now, long for the resurrection and that great assembly of the saints in heaven. We will exchange our crowns and crosses for a seat beside the great throne of God. Won't it be wonderful there!

Glenn Colley



### The Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

#### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. thirty-five per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$18.20 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, P.O. Box 430, Haleyville, AL 35565.



# Who Are The Only Christians? (No. 4)

Three propositions are being set forth in these short series of vital studies. To date I have discussed with the precious readers of Words of Truth that the only Christians are those who have heard the right person--Jesus Christ--not the wrong person (s). The second proposition was that the only Christians are those who have obeyed the right plan--the gospel of Christ--not the wrong plan--not even a part of the right plan and a part of a wrong plan. We now stand upon the threshold of setting forth the third and concluding proposition. Again, I ask, Who are the only Christians?

## THE ONLY CHRISTIANS ENTER THE RIGHT PLACE-- THE LORD'S CHURCH--NOT THE WRONG PLACE

In Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus, the authoritative One, commissioned His disciples to make disciples through a process of teaching and baptizing. The taught ones were to be baptized into the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They were to be taught to observe all Jesus has tendered them by way of truth. In Mark 16:15-16 Jesus authorized His

disciples to preach the gospel to all creation. Believers who were baptized were saved; unbelievers were damned or condemned. In Luke 24:47 Jesus commissioned His disciples to preach repentance to all nations beginning at Jerusalem. In John 20:22-23 the apostles were granted remitted and retaining powers. They would lay down the stipulations upon which men, when obedient, would have their sins remitted. From all these accounts by the four biographers of our Lord's life we conclude that it was a foregone certainty that our Lord NEVER intended any person who would be submissive to His will to enter both His church and some human organizations simultaneously. And NO person who just obeyed the terms of the Great Commission ever did enter two institutions simultaneously--the Lord's church and some religious sect. If such ever happened, I would be interested in knowing the WHO, the WHEN, and the WHERE.

Those on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 just obeyed the gospel and nothing more. The Lord

## Aim

Our recent bout with winter weather reminds me of a story about an old railroad conductor. It seems that on one particularly frigid night he was ever-so-carefully punching tickets at the entrance to a train. Well, several of the passengers were huddled outside, shivering in the cold, waiting to get on board, when suddenly one of the

folks said in a rather critical tone, "You're not very popular tonight, conductor." To which the conductor calmly replied, "*I'm mainly interested in being in good standing with the superintendent of this railroad.*"

Doing what is right is not always popular, but our primary goal ought to be to please our "Heavenly

added them to the church (Acts 2:41-47). They did not join something human when they just obeyed God's glorious gospel.

People at Samaria were taught about the nature of the kingdom (the church) prior to their being baptized into Christ as we learn in Acts 8:12. They did not enter the Lord's church and something else simultaneously. They entered ONLY the Lord's church.

The Corinthians had been taught thoroughly by Paul while he prosecuted his second missionary journey in their midst. He stayed there a long time as per Acts 18:11--much longer than he usually remained in one locality. They learned right early when they heard, believed and were baptized, they just entered the Lord's church (Acts 18:8). In fact, they were baptized into the body of Christ according to I Corinthians 12:13. They knew what that body was not. It is not some human denomination. They knew what the body was--the Lord's church. Ephesians 1:22-23 and Colossians 1:18 so attest. What Paul taught the Ephesians and the Colossians relative to the church he taught the

Superintendent" and not to worry so much about what other people say. The Bible urges, "Therefore we make it our AIM...to be pleasing to Him" (2 Corinthians 5:9).

Good listener, which is more important to you...to be pleasing God or to be pleasing to men?

Mike Benson  
Parsons, TN

Corinthians. He was a uniform message as per I Corinthians 4:17. The same is true with all other cases in the New Testament.

Why did they just enter the Lord's church and not it and some other organizations at the same time? There is a mighty good reason why they did not. They were NEVER taught to enter two institutions simultaneously. People would not enter two at the same time today, or at least think they are, if they were taught just the truth and abided by the same.

## CONCLUSION

The trust of these four articles has been that the term Christian should be used today just as it was in the New Testament and not recklessly and flippantly as is the case today. Then followed the threefold thrust that the only Christians have heard the

right PERSON, have obeyed the right PLAN and have entered the right PLACE. The right person is CHRIST; the right plan is His GOSPEL; the right place is the LORD'S CHURCH, the one He established, the one He died to purchase, the one He heads and the one He promises to save upon His return the second time.

I am neither ashamed nor afraid to stand for what I have written in these articles. On April 30, 1989, I spoke on The International Gospel Hour at the invitation of brother V.E. Howard as I had done a number of times earlier. For that day I spoke on this very theme--Who Are The Only Christians? I would be willing to repeat that to anyone and at anytime.

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## Most Of A Minute

### Abortion

There's something about presidential candidates and the subject of abortion that really concerns me. I understand the president who **always** votes pro-abortion. I consider his position to be of the devil, but I understand it. I understand the one conservative candidate now who says he will always vote against abortion, and I appreciate his courage. What I don't understand is those candidates who will say that they are opposed to abortion, and would even make it illegal in some cases, such as later-term abortions, but who are not willing to speak strongly on the subject during their campaign for the White House. You see, that "thing" in the womb is one of two things. Either it is nothing but a mass of fetal tissue, or it is an unborn baby. If they say abortion is wrong in some cases, it must mean that they believe this is a baby, because there's nothing wrong with removing useless tissue. And if abortion is taking the life of an unborn baby, that's murder. And how can a man of character *not* make legalized murder a big issue in his campaign?

Never be afraid to speak the truth. For you see, it is the truth that makes us free, (John 8:32).

Glenn Colley



## Childish Tantrums

There are all kinds of personalities in children. Some are quiet and easily controlled. Others seem always a little stronger than their parents, and a step ahead of them in managing a situation. They often resort to some type of tantrum in order to have their way.

What is a tantrum? The dictionary defines it as: "An outburst of anger or rage; a violent display of temper" (New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language, 1984).

Tantrums take numerous forms. Some children "pout," acting sullen and withdrawn until the parents give in to their wishes so they will change to a good mood. Others scream and

cry, perhaps even bumping their heads against the floor or kicking because of their anger. Abusive language is used by some children in their tantrums. Others may slap at the parents.

Parents of children who habitually have temper tantrums defend themselves with the half-hearted excuse, "We must do what he wants. Otherwise he won't stop."

Is this true? Are the parents compelled to obey the child in order to have peace?

The answer is "No." Children are intelligent enough to practice whatever works. A show of temper bluffs the parents so the children are allowed

to do as they please, then they will practice tantrums regularly. However, if from the beginning the parents refuse to give in, there will never be a problem with childish tantrums.

How can parents respond effectively to tantrums?

(1) Whatever the child is demanding is the one thing he must be denied, absolutely.

(2) Conviction in the parent's voice can do much to quell the storm. If the child hears wavering and indecision, he will continue his tantrum with increased strength. However, if there is certain determination in the parent's voice, the child will recognize it and submit to it.

(3) Often, denying the child an audience will stop the fit of anger. Send him to another room to be alone until he can come out with a smile and an apology. This strategy works amazingly well and spares everyone of a prolonged confrontation.

(4) Physical punishment should be meted out only when necessary, and then with judgment and control. Parents should never hit a child about the head and ears. But controlled punishment of the offending part of the body can be very effective. If the legs and feet are kicking, a slender switch used decisively on them can correct the problem immediately. Hands that hit

out at parental authority should be slapped.

But the best way to deal with tantrums and conflicts of will is to prevent them by never losing control the first time. Parents owe that guidance and protection to the unknowing little ones they have brought into the world. The scriptures say, "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying [and set not thy heart on his destruction]" (Proverbs 19:18). Parents who choose not to discipline their children, with love, are setting their feet from an early age on the path of disobedience. It will usually end in spiritual death.

Betty Choate

## Pray For The Mission Preacher's Wife!

Consider the physical proof of the devotion to the domestic mission fields. It reads like a score card at a ball game.

1965 - Artesia, Mississippi

1965-1968 - Munfordville, Kentucky

1971-1974 - Hawkinsville, Georgia

1977-1980 - Cairo, Georgia

1980-1985 - Franklin, Georgia

1989-1990 - Allenhurst, Georgia

1990-Present - Hiawassee, Georgia

Add to those works a few, larger congregations they have served and you can envision a housewife's nightmare and a moving company's dream. Over thirty years and three grown children later finds her still one of the godliest,

most content women one could meet. As she remembers the past, she thinks fondly of the small part she and her family have contributed to the growth of the Kingdom of God.

Oh yes, she remembers sending her children over the hill to get drinking water from the neighbors. She remembers making clothes for her family. A few of her brothers and sisters in Christ have broken her tender heart through the years. Yet, all the crosses and the losses to her pale beside the crown of glory for which she longs.

Mission work is *slow*. It requires patience. If the congregation triples in size, it is probably still quite small. This can discourage

"supporting congregations", which, in turn, discourages the missionary. "Getting away from it all" is nearly impossible. Financially, there is very often a dark cloud overhanging the missionary and his family. She has lived through these "disadvantages." Yet, through them she has held the example of Abraham close to her heart. Taking hold of her husband's hand and God's sustaining hand, she has repeatedly assured her family, "Don't worry God *will* provide." And He always has!

With the joy of her heart evident in the tone of her voice, this woman relates the thrill of evangelism. She says, "People you are trying to reach have never heard of the church, like in

the parable of the pearl of great price. Honest persons who have never heard it always excited to hear the good news." There is always plenty of work to do. She adores the closeness that can be achieved in a special way with a small congregation. The close relationships with those of like faith are often magnified when the number of Christian families is so few.

She teaches in the Bible school. She does quite a bit of baby sitting. She fixes meals and plays hostess to countless "prospects." She sews for needy families. She has housed and fed entire mission teams from Christian colleges in her home. She usually serves as secretary (without wages). She is in charge of

moral support for her husband and children. She raised those children. Knowing this about her has merely scratched the surface in an attempt to estimate her value to her preaching and evangelizing husband.

She very often is the emotional glue for her family. She contentedly stands behind the scenes, dutifully assisting in the work of the Lord. Only the judgment will fully uncover her multiplied good works.

God bless you, Mom. God bless all the missionaries' and preachers' wives in our world! You all are very special to God!

Neal Pollard



MARCH 15, 1996

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\* How To Make Soul  
Winning Come Alive

\* Attitude

\* Lessons Learned By  
The Timid Judge

Volume 33 Number 8  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

" I am not mad, most noble Festus; but :  
Words of Truth and soberness."--A

the

## Who Are The Only Christians? (No. 3)

The noble name Christian occurs in Acts 11:26; 26:28 and in I Peter 4:16. Within Holy Writ it is never used improperly, carelessly or flippantly as is the case today. Inspired men did not label people as Christians who had never obeyed the gospel of God's only begotten Son. There should be NO departures from that rule today., But alas, there are many departures from such!

In the previous article I stressed that the only Christians are those who have heard the right person--not the wrong person (s). The right person is Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory and the one in whom all authority resides.

But I ask in the second place, Who are the only Christians?

**THE ONLY  
CHRISTIANS HAVE  
OBEYED THE RIGHT  
PLAN NOT THE  
WRONG PLAN WHICH  
IS THE GOSPEL**

Gospel means good news, the good news of redemption IN Christ--not OUT of Christ. This gospel is not optional to the one who seeks salvation; it is a marvelous must.

This gospel must not be

fixed with the doctrine and commandments of men such as Jesus warned against so stringently in Matthew 15 and Mark.

It must not be substituted for another gospel as the fickle Galatians were doing in Galatians 1:6-9. It must not be reduced to a damnable heresy as the Colossians were doing in Chapter 2 of that Pauline epistle. It must not be mixed with damnable Gnosticism as some were doing in the sunset years of John the apostle and which he fought so valiantly and victoriously.

The RIGHT plan calls for a gospel that has not been adulterated with any mixture or manmade error or Satanic falsehood.

The right plan calls for the hearing of the gospel and it only. It calls for right belief or faith. It calls for right repentance. It calls for making the right confession--not a denominational fac-simile. It calls for the right kind of baptism. The right kind of hearing is not hearing a little bit of truth and a big bit of error and not knowing the difference between the two. The right kind of faith or belief is not faith only, no faith at all or

even a combination of faith and repentance with a period of finality put after the repentance. Repentance is a change in mind; godly sorrow precedes it; a change of lifestyle succeeds it. Deeply embedded in the term is an abhorrence of sin and all that is wrong. Going into and remaining in denominationalism is not a manifestation or exhibition of real repentance. Could Jews on Pentecost have stayed in Judaism and still be saved in Christianity? Could Lydia and her household of women have stayed in Judaism and still be saved by the gospel of Christ? Could Saul of Tarsus have stayed in Phariseism in Acts 9, 22, 26 and still been saved by God's grace as manifested in Christ and the gospel? The person who stays in denominationalism after supposedly obeying the gospel has not repented of all wrongs in his past. The right kind of confession is what Peter confessed in Matthew 16:16, what the eunuch confessed in Acts 8:37 and what Paul inoculated in Romans 10:9, 10. To confess in pardon's projected plan that God for Christ's sake

has forgiven my sin is not the right confession by ANY stretch of the imagination. Such people have not been taught the right plan for a surety and have not submitted to it at all.

The right plan calls for right baptism. There must be a recognition of who a proper candidate is, viz., one who is a sinner, one who has been properly taught, a believer, a penitent believer and a confessing, penitent believer. Babies and little children are not candidates. Those who refuse to hear, believe, repent and confess are not ready for baptism. There must be the right action employed. Sprinkling and pouring bat out promptly--WAY OUT! Immersion is that proper action as per Romans 6:3,4 and Colossians 2:12. Their must be the right element. It is not Spirit of fire. The right element is water as per Acts 8:36; 10:47; Ephesians 5:26 and Hebrews 10:22. There must be the right purpose. It is for or unto the remission of sins--not just to please God in a general sort of way or with a Bible reason in mind. Denominationalists claim

both of these in their unbiblical brands of baptism. Acts 2:38 eloquently establishes its purpose or function in God's Scheme of Human Redemption.

**IT IS NOT ERROR TO  
INSIST THAT PEOPLE  
MUST KNOW WHY  
THEY ARE BEING  
BAPTIZED AT THE  
TIME OF ITS  
RECEPTION FOR IT  
TO BE VALID.**

If one does not have to know the purpose of baptism--salvation or the remission of sins--what is the next step in elimination? Will action, candidate and element be next in the perilous plunge? If fact, can anyone of these three be far behind with some among us who are going far afield relative to baptism's purpose.

One cannot accept the wrong plan and be baptized correctly? If so, how, How, HOW? One cannot accept part of the right plan and part of a plan that is wrong and be baptized correctly? If so, how, How, HOW?

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# From The Editor

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## Three Things God Gave The First Man In Paradise

"And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it is very good, (Gen. 1:31)."

Thus we have a small insight into the beauties and richness of Eden. It was the material masterpiece of the Almighty, the creative genius of the Creator. That such a place would be home to a mortal is amazing and awe-inspiring. "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed, (2:8)." It wasn't heaven, yet it was the sweetest this old earth has never been.

Today let's observe an eye-opening reality about the garden paradise. To begin, take a moment to make a mental image of Eden. What do you picture? What was it like? Let your imagination put you in the garden with Adam and Eve for a moment and consider the gentle moments of the paradise garden.

The reality is that some major ingredients that made this the paradise of God, are still here with us today. You can see them in the basic needs of man. In the Garden of Eden, God gave the first man,

1. A home. We are not told about a shelter, presumably because there was no need for shelter; Yet Adam had a place to call home. Whether he owns it, rents it, or simply inhabits it by the kindness of someone else, he needs a place where there is love and security. The law of Moses included a provision for a new newlywed to

have time to well established his home:

"When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken," Deuteronomy 24:5. The inspired apostle Paul taught that the wife is to be the keeper of the home, Titus 2:5. After living here, the righteous will be gloriously welcomed into their "long home" Ecclesiastes 12:5.

A home was part of Adam's paradise, and most men have a home of some kind now.

2. A wife. The proverb writer observed in Proverbs 18:22, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD." The order of events in Genesis 2 is interesting. The Lord noticed that Adam was lonely, and that this was "not good". He decided to make another human, a helper, perfectly suited for the man. But God didn't go directly to the business of creating the woman. He first had Adam to conduct the naming of the animals. Genesis 2:19-20, "And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam

there was not found an help meet for him."

Why did God do this? Why do the animal naming before the woman making? There is probably a hint in the words, "but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him." Some assume this means that God and Adam together looked through the animal kingdom trying to decide on the perfect companion for Adam. A horse? An ape? A dog? But that's obviously not what happened. God knew that an animal wouldn't do for the wife of man. It is more feasible that God held the animal parade for Adam's benefit. Adam could see the male and female horses, and cows, and chickens, and cats. Seeing the animal kingdom and its wonderful design would make Adam realize that he had no such companion. God was preparing Adam to love and appreciate Eve.

Perhaps Adam was still wiping the sleep from his eyes when he first saw Eve walking out of the trees or beside the water. A beautiful creature. He had never seen an animal like this before. She was like him, only different. A woman. They were created with the ability to talk remember that Adam had just performed a difficult and impressive feat--the naming of the animals. He had a vocabulary. Furthermore remember that Adam and Eve could understand when God spoke. We can't help but wonder about the first words Adam and Eve said to one another.

In the paradise called Eden, God gave Adam a wife. Many men today have a wife.

3. A job. This one may be surprising. Some folks today are hard workers but don't particularly enjoy working--and they certainly never include hard work in their imagination of paradise. But Adam worked in the Garden of Eden: Genesis 2:15 says, "And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." The word "dress" here is the Hebrew word "abad", and means "to work, serve; to labor..." (Hebrew Strongs, #5647). Work of Adam was not something inconsistent with the garden paradise. It was part of paradise. This demonstrates that a man is happier when he works.

We would do well in this time of heated debates over America's welfare system and how to reform it, to

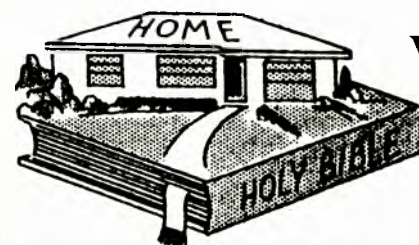
remember what the Good Book says with reference to work: "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." (I Timothy 5:8). "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

In the paradise called Eden, God gave Adam a job to work. Many men today have a job to work.

The point of this article isn't that men today have everything Adam had in the Garden of Eden, but rather to point out that most men do today have three of the essential elements which made the Garden so sweet.

May God help us to be more thankful for our little parts of paradise.

Glenn Colley



### The Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

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# How To Make Soul Winning Come Alive

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; And he that is wise winneth souls” (Proverbs 11:30, ASV).

The Christian, symbolically, can become a tree of life to those he may lead to Christ where forgiveness of sins is found. The original tree of life was in the Garden of Eden but now it is located in Heaven (Genesis 3:22-24; Revelation 22:2) What man lost in Eden he can regain in Heaven.

In Proverbs the “tree of life” is mentioned three times: Wisdom is a tree of life (3:18), the fruit of righteous (11:30), and a gentle tongue (15:4). These can deepen the spiritual life of the individual. Verily, man’s salvation is tied to the tree on which Jesus died (Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29; Galatians 3:13; I Peter 2:24).

It is the duty of Christians to be soul winners for Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; II Timothy 4:2-8). Daniel the prophet wrote, “And

they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:3, ASV).

As strange as it may seem to some, even church-members often need to be won back to Christ (James 5:19-20; Luke 22:31-32). All of us know what backsliders are (Proverbs 14:14). These need to be restored to their duty and fellowship in Christ (Galatians 6:1).

## SOME SUGGESTIONS

(1) Memorize a certain list of Scriptures: Genesis 1:1-2; John 1:1-4, 17; Hebrews 2:1-4.

The Great Commission: Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47.

The church, Matthew 16:13-19; Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47; Romans 16:16; Acts 20:28.

The Lord’s Day. Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 10:25; Revelation 1:10.

(2) Methods of Activity:

Begin at home...work to convert your own

family.

Visit those who live on your street, from house to house (Acts 20:20).

Visit those who are in the hospitals and nursing homes (James 1:27.) Read newspapers and listen to the radio to learn of those who are in distress. Send cards, make telephone calls to make contacts. Find a way to do something nice for those in distress; this will encourage them to listen when you talk.

(3) If possible volunteer to keep the children of a sick neighbor for a few hours. Offer to go shopping for the aged or the disabled. This will open many doors for Christ’s word. Never be like the priest and the levite who passed by on the other side (Luke 10:30-37). Many people stand aloof, not wanting to become involved (Psalm 38:11). Job’s three friends saw his condition but offered no help.

(4) When visiting the nursing home or the hospital don’t rush in or out. Carry a track and other reading material

which you can give away. Establish a rapport or a warm and friendly relationship with those whom you visit. Remember you are competing with denominational visitors too. Don’t rush in and rush out; take time to build a warm and friendly basis for serious talk. Opposition must be overcome; many are against you.

(5) Set up a schedule for mailing cards and making telephone calls. Use the U.S. mail to deliver our message. After a time those in whom you are interested will come to understand that you are serious in trying to communicate Christ to them. If you do not possess a burning desire for souls little can be accomplished.

(6) Talk your religion at home, on the street, in shopping centers, and on your job. If you are ashamed of Christ and the church there is little chance you can win souls to Christ (Romans 1:16). Jeremiah once thought about ceasing to speak for God but he could not

(Jeremiah 20:9-10). Let enthusiasm, not indifference, reign in your heart. “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest” (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

(7) Follow Jesus’ example. He taught those who wished to hear Him. As he walked along the way, by the way-side, while seated in a boat, on the plains, in the mountains, and even from the cross (Luke 23:34-38).

Follow the example of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James and Jude. During their life-time, they preached the gospel to every creature under heaven (Colossians 1:23; Romans 10:18).

Do not say that this job cannot be done; yea, verily, it has been done and it can be done again, if we commit ourselves to the work of the Lord.

**W.A. Holley**

## Attitude

Each afternoon while the grandkids were in school Grandpa would lie down for a nap. One day, the kids came home early and found him fast asleep on the couch, and so they decided to have a little fun with him...they dabbled Limburger cheese

in his mustache. Moments later, Grandpa woke up, took a few sniffs and then observed, “Why, this room stinks”. From the couch he made his way into the kitchen, but it wasn’t long before he decided that the kitchen smelled too. So

he stepped outside for a breath of fresh air. Much to his chagrin, the air outside smelled just as bad as the air inside, to which he exclaimed, “The whole world stinks!”

In Philippians 4:4, Paul wrote, “Rejoice in the

Lord always...” Ironically, these words were penned while he was in a Roman prison! What I learn from the apostle is that while I can’t control all of circumstances in my life, I can control my ATTITUDE toward those

circumstances.

What about you dear reader, have you got “Limburger cheese” in your attitude? Does the whole world smell bad? It may be that you need an attitude adjustment.

**Mike Benson  
Parsons, TN**



# Lessons Learned By The Timid Judge

The wheat-threshing judge was an important instrument of God in some strategic battles against the Israelites' oppressors, Median. He was the reluctant sort, however. When God called him to action, he made excuses. He said, "My family is poor in Manasseh" (Judges 6:15), then, "I am the least in my father's house" (Judges 6:15). To "make sure" that he really was God's man, this son of an idolater amidst an idolatrous group of apostates asked God for a miraculous sign to confirm his commission some three times! Convinced God was with Him, Gideon set his sights on the common enemy of all Israel.

There are amazing, practical lessons this timid judge learned. Through trust and obedience, Gideon lived up to the meaning of his name ("Warrior"). In terribly wicked times one discovers a heroic, though imperfect, follower of the Lord. Observe some of the lessons Gideon learned.

**Man Is Inclined To Glorify Self When The Battles Are Easy (Judges 7:2).** This was obviously so throughout the checkered period of the judges. When none oppressed them, Israel turned wickedly to exalting idolatrous gods. God would allow their enemies to press Israel. When they cried for deliverance, God was merciful to send them a deliverer. When God "raised up" Gideon, He seemed to wish to teach a unique lesson here. God knows the nature of men's hearts. He inspired a later Old Testament writer to reveal, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud" (Proverbs 16:18-19).

Isaiah, the great prophet, shows the absurdity of trusting one's own strength and ignoring God's power, rhetorically asking, "Shall the ax boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood" (Isaiah 10:15). That is somewhat like suggesting that the tail wags the dog. How foolish for man to think he can do anything without God. On the other hand, every one should learn to say, "I can do all things which Christ which strengthened me" (Philippians 4:13). God warned Gideon, "The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me." God is not negating the necessity of works! He would require works for the victory. He did not, however, want His people to think that they did not need Him (cf. Revelation 3:17).

**Many Of God's Children Fear Doing Battle For Him (3).** 32,000 soldiers from among the people pitched their tents by the well of Harod, prepared to do battle. God would soon narrow the field to 300! One way he culled out the "cream of the crop" was by allowing the fearful to sit out the battle. Nearly seventy left Gideon. Though there is no explicit condemnation of these 22,000 men, no doubt God had to be disappointed in them. But, imagine what Gideon must have thought when the vast majority of his force vanished down Mount Gilead. He learned that few are they who will

enter the fray against the foe. Things seldom change in the nature of mankind. Sin is ugly and has high profile in the today's world. Why are not things like immodesty, drunkenness, fornication, and adultery condemned more often by God's people? Why are not false doctrines confronted and exposed more frequently by more Christians? Could it be that many of God's children fear doing battle for Him today?

**God Anticipates Fear, Even In The Leadership (10).** The fear God sensed Gideon may have felt was different from that manifested by those excused from battle. Gideon did not desert his post. Gideon learned that God anticipates fear. God said, "But if thou fear to go down..." Gideon was about to go up against "the host of Median" with 300 men armed only with trumpets, lamps, and pitchers (verse 16). The enemy, "like grasshoppers for multitude" (verse 12) was armed with swords (verse 22). To address the understandable fear of Gideon God foreshadowed the vision of an unnamed prophet (vs. 11+13-14). How can the eldership of a church quail its various fears. like taking an unpopular stand against some immorality in the local church, facing the prospect of practicing church discipline, or competing with ungodly message of the world? Simply, God's leaders must take solace and find courage from His word (cf. Psalm 119:28; Acts 4:29). God does not excuse fear in the leadership that keeps it from carrying out His will, but He understands the things that cause them apprehension!

**The Word Of The Lord, When Believed, Produces Courage (11,13,14).** God

foresaw and spoke, saying, "Thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host." Gideon went down to scout out the host, where he had heard a man tell his dream and another interpret it as meaning Gideon would deliver Israel over Median (vs. 13-14). Notice that when Gideon heard this, "he worshiped" (verse 15). The text says only that he returned to the Israelite camp, but one could imagine that his steps were lively. His message to his fellow-warriors there was, "Arise" (verse 15)! He believed that God would give the victory. Thus, he was ready for the battle. God is displeasing with faithlessness (cf. Deuteronomy 32:20; Luke 9:41). Truly, faith is the victory that overcomes this world (cf. I John 5:4). If only more believed this, more valiant warriors would now stand with confidence upon the spiritual battlefield (cf. I Timothy 1:18-19).

**God's Promises Are Conditional (9).** This same lesson was taught by God in the taking of Cannan (cf. Joshua 6:2+ 20,21). While God had said, "I have delivered it [the host] into thine hand" (verse 9), God would not have given it if Gideon and Israel had not proceeded to overtake the host according to God's prescribed plan. Only after Israel had met the conditions did they experience victory. Today, God promises eternal life (John 3:16). Yet, the same verse that teaches about the promise presents the condition. One must believe to have everlasting life. Moreover, "faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17). One must place their belief in the Word, which prescribes what one must do

to be saved. This includes repentance (Luke 13:3), confessing Christ as God's Son (Matthew 10:32), baptism (Acts 2:38; I Peter 3:21), and continued faithfulness until death (Revelation 2:10).

**Even Unlikely Victories Occur When God's Plan Is Followed (7+16-22).** What man would have predicted that 300 men, having no traditional weapons of war, would cause the enemy to turn in fear, run, and be slaughtered? Mustn't it have sounded strange to Gideon to hear God say, "By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the midianites into thine hand..." Why are we not winning more lost souls to Christ? Why are we not making a greater impact upon our community? Why are so many works stagnated, not having experienced significant growth for some time? Could it be that we are too focused upon the fact that there is only "300" of us, losing sight of the effectiveness and viability of God's plan (cf. Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Timothy 2:2)? By planting the seed (Luke 8:12), we will see God give the increase (I Corinthians 3:6). Don't we believe that?

How fruitful to revisit those things written aforetime (cf. Romans 15:4)! Let us learn the lessons Gideon learned. As a result, our lives will change like Gideon's did and we will be *transformed* into Christ's likeness (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:18), *conformed* to His image (cf. Romans 8:29), and *reformed* by God's decrees, laws, and commands (cf. Leviticus 26:15,23).

Neal Pollard



MARCH 22, 1996

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\* Why Bother?

\*Ye Were "Ensamples"

\*Know When To Say When

\*The New Testament Era

Volume 33 Number 9  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words of Truth

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

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## Building Better Homes

As we view the home it is not made of lumber, brick or mortar. Just as the church is not the house in which it assembles, the home is not the building in which it dwells. Both the church and the home are required to meet certain Scriptural specifications (Matthew 16:13-20; Ephesians 5:22-32).

Homes can be superlative in degree or they can be a total failure. Moms and dads can strive to improve their home life or they can take the hands-off approach. For example, Jezebel ran rough shod over all who stood in her way. She opposed Elijah, arranged for death of Naboth and promoted idolatry in Israel. Athaliah, her daughter learned well from her rebellious mother. The scripture says, "He (Ahaziah)...walked in the ways of the house of Ahab; for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly" (II Chronicles 22:1-4, ASV.) Mothers should take warning for the Scripture says, "...As is the mother, so is her daughter" (Ezekiel 16:44).

A far better example is that of Joseph and Mary (Matthew 13:55-56; Mark 6:3). Read carefully and you will see that there were at least six biological brothers and sisters in Mary's family. Count them! The doctrine of the "perpetual virginity of the blessed Virgin" is unknown in the Holy Bible. What a marvelous family this must have been!

How can one go about

building a better home? We shall note:

(1) Both husbands and wife must become Christians. This is accomplished through obedience to the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Never become too friendly with the opposite sex because this will destroy your marriage. Remember, there is such a thing as honesty, integrity, and plain human decency, and common sense.

(2) Seek to build a harmonious life for you and for those who are involved in your family. Eliminate all fussing and quarreling and fighting. Simmer down, be quiet, calm and peaceful. (II Timothy 2:22; Hebrews 12:14).

(3) Forgive your spouse of his/her injustices, real or imagined, toward you. Never hold a grudge (Leviticus 19:18; James 5:9). A grudge is a deep feeling of resentment or ill will, which becomes a cancer that leads to spiritual ruin.

(4) If there are things that cannot be changed, learn to live with them. We have reference to various afflictions, health problems and old age. Paul had some kind of affliction but he never gave up (II Corinthians 12:1-10; 11:23-28). A little determination and will power goes a long way (Philippians 4:13).

(5) Learn to accept reality. You may not have much

education, or much money, or political power. But you do have what the Lord has given you. You may be a one talent man. That one talent must be used in the Master's service. All is lost if we bury the Lord's talent. Buried talents accomplish nothing! Read Matthew 25:14-30.

(6) Husbands, wives, children, read you Bible together. Bible reading is far better than watching television. Set aside an hour each day devoted to Bible reading, to prayer, and to meditation. Let this practice be a part of your regular activities. As an example Moses commanded the Hebrew fathers to teach their children (Deuteronomy 11:18-21). The New Testament requires instruction be given to our children (Ephesians 6:1-4; II Timothy 1:5).

(7) Empty your mind of all negative thoughts and fill it with things of a more positive nature. Excuses should be avoided. Get rid of all resentment, hostility, enmity, which means deep-seated dislike or ill will. Go to the backside of your lawn, dig a deep hole, and bury all these things, forever. Jesus taught forgiveness. (Matthew 6:12-15). There are conditions of forgiveness such as confession and repentance (Matthew 18:15-20).

(8) Learn to like yourself. Low self-esteem is very destructive. Believe in your self. Be your own best friend. Set high goals of

accomplishment; work toward improvement in all areas of your life. Strive to be delightful, pleasing and agreeable even to your enemies. Jesus could not please everyone in His teaching and practice, but He never tried to turn them off. You can be a friend to God and man. Avoid being friends with the world of sin and shame (James 4:4).

(9) Talk about your marriage relationship and what it means to you. Do you want it to succeed? Do you understand what the Scriptures teach with regard to it (Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:11-12). Fornication is such a terrible sin in God's sight, it should not be the subject of conversation among Christians (Ephesians 5:3-4). According to God's law it is adultery for the man as well as the woman to have sexual relationship with another person whom he/she is not married.

Parents, teach these Biblical principles to your children. Talk to them about sexual relationship and the consequences involved. You might save yourself from many tears and devastating heart break. According to a report a young girl, age 10, is in trouble because someone failed somewhere along the way.

(10) Learn something about money-management. Do not be a spent-thrift. If possible, put aside money from your payday to be used for

emergency purposed, only. Do you know that money has wings, and that it will soon fly away? (Proverbs 23:5).

(11) Temper must be controlled. It is true that Jesus became angry (Mark 3:5). On two occasions Jesus became so upset because the Jews had turned the temple into "a den of thieves," when it should have been "a house of prayer" (John 2:13-22; Matthew 21:12-17). This what we call "righteous indignation," an act that offends one's dignity or self-respect. Those who fly off the handle and seem to explode can accomplish little good.

(12) Especially, where children are concerned, there must be no partiality. Joseph had a coat of many colors which father gave him. His brothers took exception to it. Joseph was sold as a slave into Egypt because of it (Genesis 37:1 ff) James 2:1-7 discusses partial treatment among brethren.

(12) John the Revelator said, "...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Revelation 2:10). What does this verse mean? As answer we shall cite 3 John 5, which reads, "Beloved, thou doest a faithful work in whatsoever thou doest toward them that are brethren and strangers withal" (ASV). Be faithful to the Lord no matter what may come.

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# From The Editor

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## Why Bother?

### Guest Editorial, Allen Webster

Another seven days pass and we get up, have breakfast, get the kids dressed, make our own way from our houses to again assemble ourselves in the Lord's Day. We greet others, find a seat, get a song book and wait for the service to begin. WHY? Why do people come to religious services? Some may come because they feel that they have to because their parents or spouse makes them. Others see it as a tolerable exercise in spiritual attainment sort of punch a spiritual clock or get brownie points with the Maker. To others it is a time to socialize see and be seen. To others it is an essential part of the week, a positive force for good in their lives. The late Batsell Barrett Baxter, once observed that "worship is the most important yet, at the same time, the most difficult experience in the Christian's life." Worship is the Christian's highest duty and will be his occupation in eternity. It is to Christian living what the mainspring is to a watch. It is the very core of our response to God. *Why bother to worship?*

#### GOD DESIRES TO BE WORSHIPPED - HE "SEEKETH SUCH TO WORSHIP HIM"

(Jn. 4:23).

He has commanded us to worship Him (Psm.45:11; Rev. 22:9). This is one of the shortest commands in the Bible, yet it entails so much. God is not in vain, yet He wants to be worshipped. He made us for this purpose (1 Pet. 2:9).

#### MAN DESIRES TO WORSHIP (Psa. 42:1).

Worship is the theme of history from Genesis to Revelation. Man feels upward pull Men will worship - the variable is what they worship. The ancient Egyptians worshipped the sacred white bulls and lowly scarabs. The Greeks had their marble gods and goddesses. The American red men had totem poles. The

people of India worship the sacred cow. We worship the God of heaven. To be healthy spiritually, we need to worship (cf. 1 Cor. 11:30). A tree, although it must have water to live, cannot stay alive by receiving water. It must give away gallons of it every day though its leaves. If in some way a tree should stop giving, it would stop growing and soon die (cf. Psa. 1:3). So it is with a Christian - we have to give back to God.

#### GOD DESERVES WORSHIP.

The English word "worship" originally came from the Anglo-Saxon *weorthscipe*, from *weorth*, (worthy, honorable), and *scipe* (ship), developing later into "worship" (attributing worth to a thing or person). Of course, only God is worthy of supreme honor. The primary Old Testament word for worship (*shachah*) means "to bow down; to prostrate one's self; to be obeisance" (cf. Gen. 24:52; Ex. 4:31). The primary New Testament word (*proskuneo*) 61 occurrences; cf. Mt. 2:2; 4:10) means "to kiss the hand toward," from the pagan custom of showing affection to the "gods". Taking all the New Testament words in worship, one can get a full grasp of what it is. Worship should have the motivations of making obeisance to One greater (*proskuneo*), of feeling awe in His presence (*sebomai*), of reverently "bowing the knee" before Him (*gonupeteo*), of humbly offering our lives in sacrificial service to Him (*latreuo*), and of establishing a pattern of life consistent with our worship (*leitourgeo*) (Gilmore).

If we do not praise God in each worship service, then we have failed. The Hebrew word for "praise" is *hatal*, which literally means "to shout." From this word we get *Hallelujah* ("Praise Jehovah"). We praise by singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; cf. Ex. 15:1; 32:18), praying, and, sometimes, studying. At the birth of Jesus,

angels praised God saying, "Glory to God in the highest" (Lk. 2:13). If we had the tongues of angels and the voice of birds, we could not praise Him as He deserves to be praised. If we were born speaking praises and had breath to never cease, we could not adequately praise His name. If every rock could speak, it would praise God. If the stars could sing, their song would be one of praise.

Since Jehovah is the greatest God (the only true and living God), He deserves the very best worship this world can offer Him (cf. Gen 4:4; 22:16). When he finished high school, Al Kaline walked off the sandlots of Baltimore to begin playing right field for the Detroit Tigers. Without playing a day of minor league or college ball, he played right field for the Tigers like no one before or since. Later, he turned a \$100,000 contract saying that it was too much. He signed that year for 90,000. At the age of thirty-four, Kaline batted .379 in the 1968 World Series. Near the end of his career, he was asked how he would like to be remembered. His reply was, "As a man who gave his best every day." We need the "Kaline attitude" when we come before God in worship.

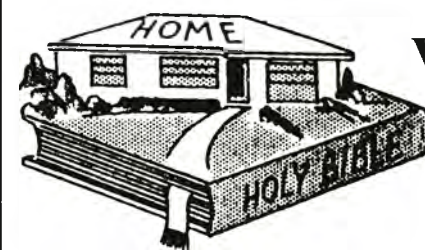
We praise God for his *greatness*. Such wonder is not born in ignorance, but knowledge. The greater our knowledge of God, the more awesome wonder we feel in His presence. He is Creator of all. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, always present, and infinitely loving. He is eternal. We also praise God for *deliverance* (Ex. 15:11-2 Sam. 22:50). David said, "We must declare among the people His doing" (Psa. 9:11) and "I will declare thy name unto my brethren in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee" (Psa. 22:22; cf. Heb. 2:12; 13:15). We praise God for *blessings received*. Worship is a time of praise (Psm. 69:30-32; 71:8,14; 86:5,15; 92:1-8; 95:1-7; 100:4; 150:6). Leah rejoiced in the

birth of her son and cried, "This time, I will praise the Lord" (Gen. 29:35), and she named her son "Judah," which means "Praise." It was from the tribe of Judah that Jesus came, according to the flesh (Gen. 49:10). When Zacharias answered the question, "What shall his name be?" with "His name shall be called John," his mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed. After nine silent months, his first words were of praise to God (Lk. 1:64). When we take time to count our blessings (Jas. 1:17), it makes us want to worship God.

We want to avoid making worship man-centered instead of God-centered. Worship too often becomes, "Entertainment but don't detain me." The emphasis is upon getting and receiving (cf. 1 Sam. 15:22). We want a "spiritual high" or an "emotional wow." This clamor for more and more exciting, moving performances is being generated by a generation brought up more on television than on the Word of God. Worship is not a cheap amusement, but an overwhelming encounter with God that involves gratitude, reverence, fear, and love.

Worship is not a "spectator sport." When we worship, we must be careful lest we fall for the subtle danger of being more occupied with the invisible; with the temporal rather than the eternal; and with the outward and formal rather than the inward and spiritual. God must always be approached with reverence, contrition, and humility.

When we look back to Calvary, we are brought to worship God. Tearfully we recall the darkened hill and the pitiful cry of God's beaten and bruised only begotten Son, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mt. 27:46). The Omnipotent One did not lift a finger; the Omniscient One did not say a word; the Omnipresent God left the scene. The heartbreak that He bore in allowing His Son to die for my sin-sick soul speaks unutterable volumes of his love for me. "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15). What a privilege indeed to give to praise, to adore, to worship, and to prostrate one's soul before the throne of such all-consuming, sin-destroying, everlasting love (Watkins). Let's never lose focus of what worship is all about.



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(USPS 691-760)

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

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## Ye Were "Ensamples"

The image of Washington on one quarter is identical to that of all other quarters in circulation. The stone coffins housing Pharaohs and other mummies often bear their images. Children are often called the "spitting image" of their parents. The idea conveyed in these three examples is the same idea expressed by Paul in I Thessalonians 1:7, where he said, "So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia."

The Christians at Thessalonica had "become an imitator of Paul and hence also of the Lord, and for its part it [was then] and example to others" (Friedrich, Theological dictionary, Vol. 8, 249-250). The church in that place observed the life and teachings of Paul, Silas, and Timothy, imitated them as the three imitated Christ (cf. Philippians 3:17; 4:9), and became a model for others to safely follow. Logically, "the more a life is moulded by the word, the more it becomes a model or mould" (ibid., 250).

Are we reliable models of New Testament

Christianity, as outlined by Christ and the inspired writers? As others follow us, are they drawn onto the path of righteousness or away from heaven? Thessalonica church of Christ was held up as the model of "Christlikeness"! What did they do to become "ensamples"?

### THEY FOLLOWED THE RIGHT EXAMPLES (1-6).

The imitated Paul, Silas, and Timothy. New Christians should seek out the good, faithful Christians as role models, not a "Sunday morning only", "hypocritical", and "church hating" brother or sister. **And**, what Christian should serve as a bad "role model"? Also, they imitated the Lord. We should aspire to be like our Savior, and what characterized Him? Was not he prayerful, humble, forgiving, convicted, and courageous? Truly, to be good leaders, we must pick out the proper examples and follow. More importantly, we should never waver in our imitation of God.

### THEY SOUNDED OUT THE WORD (1:8).

Remember, to do

something acceptable unto God, one must find out how God commands one to do it. How are we to sound out the word? We must do so in love (Ephesians 4:15), in doctrinal soundness (Titus 1:9; 2:1-7,10), reproving, rebuking, exhorting (2 Timothy 4:2), edifying with pure words (Ephesians 4:29), with a sense of urgency (John 4:35), with a sense of its gravity (James 3:1), etc. The Thessalonians "sounded" the word. One cannot sound out the word and keep silent, for sounding implies activity. God's people, too, must keep in mind that sounding the word **will** make enemies out of enemies of the cross (cf. Galatians 4:16; Acts 13:10). This includes the world (James 4:4), false teachers (2 Peter 2), denominational friends, and sometimes family, friends, and associates.

### THEY WERE TRULY CONVERTED (1:9).

They "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God." They "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God." Notice, conversion involves turning from

idlatry (cf. Ezekiel 14:6). Whatever has kept us from salvation must be escaped (cf. I Corinthians 6:9-11). Nowhere in God's truth is there any mention of "gradual repentance", giving up sinful practices a bit at the time. We must turn to be converted (Acts 3:19). Conversion also involves turning to God (James 4:7-8). Third, conversion entails servicing the living and true God. Christianity is not passive. It is not to be self-gratifying (cf. Colossians 3:17).

### THEY MADE READY FOR THE JUDGEMENT (1:10).

Only the truly converted and full time Christian anticipates such. Anticipating is not synonymous with sitting around and waiting for Christ's return. There is too much to do, saving souls, strengthening the church, and meeting our obligations. The Thessalonians "waited". On whom did they wait?

Paul says they waited on "God's Son," the sent One, the sacrificial One, the service-oriented One, and the supplying One (cf. Philippians 4:19). They waited on the One "from

heaven", One fully divine in nature (cf. John 1:1 ff). They waited on the One "raised from the dead", the One "firstborn from the dead" (Colossians 1:18), the resurrected, victorious Lord (I Corinthians 15), and thus the one approved of God (Acts 2:22). They waited on the One "who delivered us from the wrath to come", referring to His vicarious death, His victorious resurrection, and his vengeful judgment to be exercised on the wicked. They waited on "Jesus," an attestation to His human identity and nature while on earth. Christ's credentials as Savior and Judge firmly embedded in the rock of truth, He gives hope of reward to those who wait His coming (2 Thessalonians 1:7).

Due the foregoing factors being present in the Thessalonian church, others were influenced for good! They had the image of Christ "stamped deep on their heart." What a powerful reputation for a congregation to have, that they wore the imprint of Christ.

Neal Pollard

## Know When To Say When

Know when to say when." Why? Because alcohol will destroy you! Who doubts it? The distillers coyly admit it in their advertising. The government admits it by regulating and controlling it. It is not just the "Bible thumping" zealot who is concerned about this national disgrace. Reasoning men agree that

alcohol abuse is both a symptom and a cause of our nation's misery.

"Know when to say when." Can you? When is the best time to say "WHEN--I've had enough?" The poison producers (who bear no guilt for the destructive consequences of their product) will advise you to "drink wisely" but drink

nonetheless! Society pressures you not to say "when" until your behavior becomes obnoxious--if then. And, what about the alcohol itself? Will it ever let you say "when"? Some poor souls are virtually addicted from the very first drink! It is a mindless, shameless, deceptive, godless evil! "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is

raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1). How many wretched souls would gladly say "when" if they only could!

Young person, hear me. The time to say "when" is now before the first drink, if it is all possible. Parents--will you neglect this area of your sacred trust? Social drinker--why continue to

deceive yourself? Your influence for the Lord and righteousness is absolutely zero so long as you conform to the world (cf. Romans 12:2). May God help us all to realize that the time to say "when" is NOW!

Grady Miller  
Arnold, MO



# The New Testament Era

In Romans 5:6 Galatians 4:4 we learn that Jehovah sent Christ "in due time" or "in the fullness of time." All history is divided into two categories: Before Christ and "anno domini -- in the year our Lord was born! A great gospel song tells us:

"Out of the ivory palaces  
Into a world of woe, Only  
His great eternal love Made  
my Savior go."

As we open the New Testament, the Roman Empire rules the world, the Herod family dominates Judea. Synagogues cover Palestinian soil, Pharisees and Sadducees are popular Jewish sects and Greek is the language of the masses of men. "All roads lead to Rome" is an accurate statement. How did all of these things happen to be? What background material produced the dramatic scenery for the advent of Christ?

Five centuries before Jesus was born in Bethlem (As Mican 5 had foretold) The children of Israel, Abraham's seed, were returning from 70 years of Babylonian Captivity. While in bondage due to their own sin, the Jews had begun to erect synagogues as temporary "places of assembly" until they could return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple which Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed. They faced these synagogues toward Jerusalem. About 60 years ago an ancient synagogue was uncovered by historians who were amazed to find three murals on the walls of the building. Each mural reflected thoughts of the Messiah:

- (a) The anointing of David as King
- (b) The Scape-Goat on the Day of Atonement
- (c) Ezekiel's Valley of Dry Bones

In II Samuel 7 we learn that Christ came out of the loins of David.

In John 1:29 Jesus is called "the lamb of God which

taketh away the sin of the world." The fruition of Ezekiel's vision was the restoration of God's people after Captivity which resulted, finally in the coming of the Savior. The synagogue movement kept Judaism alive until the Redeemer came "to seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10). Since the majority of the Jews never returned to Judea but scattered throughout Babylon, Persia, Greece and then later, in Roman territories they built these synagogues wherever they were dispersed. Often Greeks would attach themselves to these assembly halls. After the Septuagint translation of the Old testament wherein the ancient, dead language of Hebrew was translated into the common vernacular of Greek, in 280 B.C., the Gentiles could understand clearly - and without prejudice - the Messianic passages. These "devout Greeks" (Acts 17) often gave the apostles a fair hearing while the biased Jews would attempt to kill God's servants (read Acts 13:41-46). Remember three words each beginning with the letter **S**, as a reminder of the days prior to the Coming of Christ.

## Scattering Synagogue Septuagint

At the close of Babylonian Captivity the Medo-Persian empire conquered Babylon. Some of the last Old Testament books have their setting in the days of the Persian rulers. Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai and Malachi are some of those books. But, on the horizon loomed a character that would reshape the destiny of millions of people in the political arena at least. The son of Philip of Macedonia, Alexander the Great, conquered Persia and from 330 B.C. till Rome overthrew Carthage in 146 B.C. the dominant factor in world affairs would be Greek culture. The influence of Alexander lived long after his

early death - due to immortality - because of the benefits of his emphasis upon educating the minds of men. For instance, the Septuagint translation of the Scriptures came from the scholarly efforts of men attached to the tremendous Library in Alexandria.

There were three great philosophers that contributed mightily to the background of the New Testament Era. From 375 B.C. onward the teachings of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle made monumental strides in a state-dominated existence. Socrates was put to death for installing within men the desire to Think for Themselves. His influence broke the shackles of robot-like living for millions captivated by governmental tyranny! Finally, due to Socrates' courageous message, men were thinking for themselves. Plato taught men to Think Spiritually. Aristotle gave to the world great rules of logic and thereby taught men how to think. Today his material on logic is used in universities and debating societies. These three brilliant teachers left a rich legacy for the first century preaching of the Apostles of Christ. Every sermon of theirs, recorded in the New Testament, demanded that the audience think for themselves, think spiritually and react logically to the arguments presented. In due time God sent His Son!

After Alexander the Great died his kingdom was divided into four parts. A careful reading of Daniel bears out these points, incidentally. Actually, two of the groups came to the top of the heap and dominated the Greek scene for nearly two centuries. The Ptolemy regime was gracious and cultured. They furnished the Alexandrian Library, for instance. This group was kind to the Jews. Conversely, the Seleucidans were coarse and warlike people who eventually became the bitter

enemies of the Jewish people. Their most infamous ruler was Antiochus Epiphanes whom Israel referred to as The Mad Dog! Deep, mutual hatred existed between Antiochus and the inhabitants of Judea. On December 25, 168 B.C. that evil, unprincipled warmonger defiled the Temple in Jerusalem and demanded swine's flesh be offered on the altar. Since this was strictly forbidden by the Levitical system of the Jewish Nation the people of God called this occasion,

## The Abomination of Desolation

Just as Daniel 11:31 predicted. Due to this blasphemous action by Antiochus and his tenacity in spreading such abomination even into the rural areas the famous Maccabean revolt ensued. An aged priest in the little village of Modin refused to defile the altar - even at the demand of Epiphanes' soldiers - and thus began fierce warfare in the Judean hills led by the sons of the priest at Modin. One of his sons was "The Hammerer" - Judas Maccabees. In three years - on December 25, 165 B.C.- Antiochus was purged, the Temple cleansed and the glorious moment was called: "The Feast of Dedication" (John 10:22).

But, alas, human nature struggles to maintain balance. Out of this great victory came unwise decisions. The high priest's office was given or sold to the military hero of the day. Of course, the Mosaical law demand that only descendants of Aaron occupy such positions. Naturally a group of pure ones arose to cry out for a return to God's will. They were called the Hasidim. From this group came to Pharisees (Seperate Ones) who demanded a clear-cut separation of "church and state." The compromising sect that remained neutral was the sophisticated Sadducee group.

Greece had ruled for well over a century and a half but Rome was gaining ground. From 200 B.C. onward a brilliant Roman Senator named Cato began an incessant plea which he shouted each year as he closed their governmental meetings:

## "Carthage Must Be Destroyed"

Finally after 54 years Rome took him seriously and conquered that last outpost of Grecian power. In 146 B.C. the Roman era began. However, it would be exactly before the actual Roman Empire blossomed. This came about through the struggle for power between Pompey and Julius Caesar. An astute Idumean named Antipater - a descendent of Esau - observed the power-struggle of the two men. On a strategic day Antipater assisted Julius in defeating his foe and the balance of power fell to Caesar. He was so grateful to Antipater that he offered a rich reward to the half-breed Jew. Antipater and his seed received Judea as a vassal state. Thus began the strange lucrative alliance the Caesars and the Herods for Antipater's son was none other than Herod the Great!

So, the stage was set for the fullness of time. In due time Christ did come! On the first page of the New Testament we see the virgin Mary (Isaiah 7:14) in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) giving birth to "Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

The New Testament is carefully divided into four sections:

- (1) Matthew - John: The Life of Christ
- (2) Acts: How To Become A Christian
- (3) Romans - Jude: How To Live As A Christian
- (4) Revelation: The Hope of A Christian

Johnny Ramsey



MARCH 29, 1996

• See Articles Inside:

\*The Second Coming Of Christ

\* Assisted Suicide

\*"A Penny For Your Thoughts"

\*When Its Right  
To Be Embarrassed

\*Raggedy Ann

Volume 33 Number 10  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

" I am not mad, most noble Festus; but  
Words of Truth and soberness."--A

h the

## The Second Coming Of Christ

John 14:3. "I come again."  
Hebrews 9:27, 28. Christ  
"shall appear a second time."  
Acts 1:11. "This same Jesus,  
which is taken up from you  
into heaven, shall so come in  
like manna as ye have seen  
him go into heaven."

Revelation 1:7. "Behold, he  
cometh with clouds; and every  
eye shall see him, and they  
also which pierced him."

I Thessalonians 4:16. "For  
the Lord himself shall descend  
from heaven with a shout."

As an introduction we shall  
consider a few facts we  
account to be of extreme  
importance. The first coming  
of Christ was the grand climax  
of the Old Testament; the  
grand climax of the New  
Testament will be the second  
coming of Christ. Christ is  
vaguely pictured in Genesis  
3:15. Abraham saw Christ as a  
spiritual benefactor of all  
mankind (Genesis 12:3). Jacob  
said the He would come  
through Judah (Genesis 49:10).  
Moses taught that Christ would  
be a prophet like him  
(Deuteronomy 18:15-18).  
Balaam saw him as a Star and  
a Scepter (Numbers 24:17).  
David pictures Him as a king  
on the throne (Psalm 24).  
Daniel set the correct time of  
his coming (Daniel 9:25-27),  
and announced his authority  
(Daniel 7:13-14). Micah  
announced the city of his birth  
(Micah 5:2). Isaiah foretold his  
virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14).  
David foresaw the crucifixion  
of Christ for the sins of the  
world (Psalm 22; Cf. Isaiah  
53). Philip said, "We have

found him, of whom Moses in  
the law, and the prophets, did  
write, Jesus of Nazareth, the  
son of Joseph" (John 1:45; see  
also John 5:46; Luke 24:44).

Although it has been nearly  
2000 years since Jesus Christ  
ascended into heaven, the  
certainty of his second coming  
remains true and steadfast.  
Peter the apostle warned those  
of his day who doubted His  
coming the he would indeed  
come, and the passage of time  
has nothing to do with it (II  
Peter 3:1-18).

Jesus used the destruction  
of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) to  
illustrate His second coming.  
Read Matthew 24:4-28. The  
signs of the fall of Jerusalem  
are: 1) The coming of false  
Christs (Matthew 24:4,5). 2)  
Wars and rumors of wars  
(Matthew 24:6,7). 3) famines  
and earthquakes (Matthew  
24:7,8). 4) Persecutions  
(Matthew 24:9-13). 5) The  
spreading of the gospel  
(Matthew 24:14) 6) It's  
destruction was to be in that  
generation, sudden and  
unexpected (Matthew 24:15-  
35).

What about the time of  
Jesus' coming? We answer:  
"But of that day and hour  
knoweth no man, no, not the  
angels of heaven, but my  
Father only"(Matthew 24:36;  
cf. Mark 13:32-33). Our  
reader's should "...learn not to  
go beyond the things which are  
written" (I Corinthians 4:6).

But thousands do not  
believe their own Bible. They  
have gone on making sundry  
statements regarding the Lord's

second coming. The Thess-  
alonians were concerned about  
the Second Coming of Christ.  
Read II Thessalonians 2:1-5).  
Let's no man deceived you by  
any means: for that day shall  
not come, except there a  
falling away first, and that man  
of sin be revealed, the son of  
Perdition" verse 3. From this  
time there are records of  
history which show those who  
set the time of Jesus' Coming  
and the end of the world. So  
far all have failed. We shall  
name a few of these infamous  
time-setters: Hippolytus, A.D.  
222-235; J. Lilch set 1798 as  
the time of Jesus' second  
coming; William Miller taught  
that October 22, 1843, but later  
revised his calculation at  
October 22, 1844, but he was  
wrong. Still today, we have  
those who think they can  
discern "the signs of the times."

We suggest that these  
references be closely read:  
Revelation 1:1,3; 22:7,10,20;  
Philippians 4:5; James 5:8; I  
Thessalonians 4:13-187; II  
Thessalonians 2:1-5; II Peter 3:  
8-13; John 21:22. Be aware  
that the Bible---the word of  
God---is so written that each  
succeeding generation feels the  
urgency and power of God's  
Message to man. Hence, you  
and I should live as if we know  
that Jesus Christ would surely  
come in our day. The truth is:  
There will be no signs!! No  
one knows when that day will  
be. There are six illustrations  
in Matthew 24 and 25 teaching  
us what His coming will be  
like. (A) The coming of the  
Lord will be like the flood of

Noah's day (vs. 37-42). (B)  
Separation of the righteous  
from the wicked, is suggested  
by the two men "in the field"  
and the two women "at the  
mill." (C) Negligence is  
pictured by the thief at the  
unguarded moment. (D) The  
necessity of constant readiness  
is emphasized by the servants  
preparation for the unexpected  
return of the householder  
(Mark 13:34-37). (E) The  
fallacy of waiting too long to  
prepare, is the lesson from the  
ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13).  
(F) The wisdom of improving  
each opportunity is the theme  
of the parable of the talents  
(Matthew 24:14-30).

Since Christians are to be  
awarded according to their  
works, we must not embrace a  
false concept of grace, which  
the change agents allege,  
which displace works  
(Jeremiah 25:14; II  
Corinthians 5:10; Galatians  
6:7; Revelation 22:12).

Jesus Christ often uses the  
term "the last day" (John  
6:39,40,44,54). But the last  
day is the Judgment Day (John  
12:48). There can be no day  
after the Judgment Day. Time  
is no factor. God does not  
count time as we count time (II  
Peter 3:8-10). "...One day is  
with the Lord as a Thousand  
years, and a thousand years as  
one day. "The earth will be  
burned up; there will no place  
for a millennial reign on earth.

What about the so-called  
"battle of Armageddon?" First,  
the Bible says nothing about  
"the battle of Armageddon."  
This term is used one time in

the Bible, Revelation 16:16.  
Armageddon is a symbolic  
term for the decisive struggle  
between good and bad...with  
good always winning; evil  
always losing. Megiddo, a city  
and the area around it, was a  
famous battle ground in early  
times. The author of this article  
has been there. Your Bible tells  
of these conflicts. Question:  
Why would Jesus need to fight  
a literal battle? Read John  
18:36. Jesus could have  
summoned legions of angels  
had He so chose (Matthew  
26:53). A legion is from 4,200  
to 6,000 men in Roman times.  
Jesus could have called  
"twelve legion, of angels" to  
defend himself, but He did not.  
Did not God use angels to slay  
185,000 Assyrian soldiers? (II  
Kings 19:35). Is Jesus  
incompetent?

The Bible tells of what will  
take place at Jesus' coming:  
His coming will not be pre-  
announced. He will come  
suddenly (Luke 21:34), a  
trumpet shall sound  
(I Corinthians 15:51-52), as a  
thief (II Peter 3:10), a general  
resurrection of "both the just  
and the unjust" (Acts 24:15;  
John 5:28-29) We shall "be  
caught in the clouds, to meet  
the Lord in the air" (I  
Thessalonians 4:14-17).  
"Blessed is he that readeth, and  
they that hear the words of this  
prophecy, and keep the things  
that are written herein"  
(Revelation 1:3).

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# From The Editor

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## Assisted Suicide

Have you considered euthanasia? Webster defines it, "Mode or act of causing death painlessly or as a relief from pain." Today we have complicated the idea of mercy killing a bit more by creating what is called "Doctor-assisted suicide," a process in which a physician administers the necessary drugs to patient who allegedly wants to die. Americans, over the last five years, have been hearing more and more on the subject, and I fear are in danger of gradually becoming comfortable with the idea.

Most Americans were probably unaware of the moment, or even the day on which the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals struck down a Washington state law which made assisted suicide a felony, ruling not only that patients in nine Western states have "a right to die," but that physicians have the right to kill. Physicians-assisted suicide, stripped of its euphemisms, is taking the life of someone else, or consciously giving them the means (and thus encouragement) by which they make take their own life.

It should be noted that suicide has been a reality among the human race since the early days of our existence. The first recorded instance of suicide is found in God's word, Judges 16:19,20. Samson died by his own choice and by his own hand. We even read the first recorded instance of someone requesting assisted-suicide

in the Bible, I Samuel 31:4, 5. "Then said Saul unto his armour bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armour bearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. And when his armour bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him."

This article is focused not just on suicide. It is about *assisted* suicide. Gerald Klooster made the news recently because of a difference of opinion in his family about him. Mr. Klooster suffers from Alzheimer's disease. His wife contacted the doctor who champions the assisted-suicide cause, Jack Kevorkian, assumably to inquire about his services. No one would call Dr. Kevorkian to ask advise about getting well! Mr. Klooster's son quickly went to court and won custody of his dad to keep Mrs. Klooster from legally killing her husband.

These occurrences are of natural concern to Christians. We know that these tragic and frightening changes in society are a direct result of pushing God out of our government, our schools, our homes, and in many cases, the churches. Americans lied to themselves when they thought they could create a God-less, Bible-less country and still enjoy freedoms and gentle people. According to a

recent article entitled "The power of a good name," Armstrong Williams observes that "while the population has increased only 48 percent since 1960, violent crime has increased a staggering 550 percent". Truth and right hasn't moved. We've moved.

The brazen spirit necessary to advocate doctor-assisted suicide has its roots in the fertile soli of abortion. Twenty three years of abortion set the stage for decisions such as the one just passed down from the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. When we came to the place where we could abort 1.6 million babies America per year, even late term babies, and not be ashamed, we gave up our love for the sanctity of life. The killing of the elderly is but a short ethical step from the killing of unborn babies.

The American Medical Association, in the following statement is to be applauded. When asked about its views about doctor-assisted suicide it said that assisted suicide is "fundamentally incompatible with the physician's role as healer and care giver ." Maggie Gallagher, an affiliate scholar at the institute of American Values commented, "After all, it is keeping patients alive, not helping them die, that requires extensive medical training. Making it the responsibility of doctors to kill patients is a form of barbarism not seen since the Dark Ages, when barbers both cut hair and performed surgery, because

both acts happened to require the use of a knife."

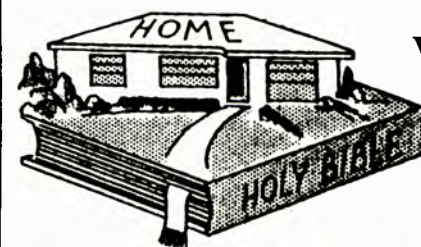
If Americans do indeed, on a widespread basis, begin accepting assisted suicide, they should leave the doctors and medical field out of it. The only true reason doctors are favored to be the ones to administer the poison or gas is to make the family and friends feel more professional and civilized about what they are doing. They should simply let the funeral director handle the suicide. He will be handling the funeral anyway. Let him bring his hearse to the victims house, administer the death inducer, set up the funeral arrangements while he is there, and remove the body. Or perhaps the family could simply drive the loved one to the funeral home and drop them off. But of course the advocates of assisted suicide won't do that. Too morbid. Too much like murder. It is more

comfortable for the family doing this awful deed if the doctor in a sterile white suit does the job than if a man in a black suit does it. Yet regardless of who does the assisting, the facts are the same and the end result is the same.

No one who has been around terminally ill and suffering people could possibly fail to grieve with the patient and his family in this difficult time. Yet and still, murder is wrong. Americans must awaken to this dangerous trend in our society, and oppose it. And Christians, with this subject as well as all others, must continue pointing people to Christ and to the Word of God.

I John 3:15 says plainly, "...and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

Glenn Colley



### The Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

#### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. thirty-five per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$18.20 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, P.O. Box 430, Haleyville, AL 35565.



## “A Penny For Your Thoughts”

I am holding in my hand a piece of copper, it is old and tarnished, and dated 1909. Through time it has become weather-beaten and has no doubt traveled for many miles and throughout many states. Hand after hand has received it and hand after hand has thrown it to the wayside, but it still travels on. There is a figure of a man on one side, he appears to be a very rugged individual, although it is hard to tell because the hands of time have taken their toll on his facial features. Over his right shoulder there seems to be a word that says...well I think it says “L-I-B-E-R-T-Y.” Yes, that’s what it says! L-I-B-E-R-T-Y! Above his wavy dark hair there seems to be another inscription. It is shaped as a rainbow and it reads...“IN-GOD-WE-TRUST.” Yes, “IN GOD WE TRUST” is the foundation upon which our nation was built. It is the foundation upon which the presidents of yesteryear trusted and protected our glorious nation with. It is the foundation upon which America must return to or else the nation that we call “the land of the free and the home of the brave” will soon be called “the land of the imprisoned and the home of the vanquished!” The motto that once graced the four corners of this wonderful place we call America, “One Nation Under God,” seems to be marching under the banner of “One Nation Under Sin.” Has the motto, “Liberty and Justice for All” been in reality changed to “Liberty for Some and Mercy for All?”

Has the nation that has etched “IN GOD WE TRUST” in all of her US currency forgotten that this statement should be etched forever in the hearts and lives of every American, rather than “IN SELF WE TRUST?” The Red, White and Blue that proudly waved throughout foreign soil is treated like a common dishrag, forgetting the stalwart soldiers who gave themselves for that Flag and for some whose graves have yet to be found. Millions of Americans will pillow their heads and cover themselves with blankets tonight, forgetting that the United States Flag, the blanket of freedom, is what allows them to do such.

The piece of copper mentioned earlier, was a penny, and the man whose face it bears was the sixteenth President of the United States of America. He was a man who believed in the title that was engraved above his head, a man with many thoughts to which our nation would do well to listen. The voices of antiquity cry out and their message is being thwarted daily, but within the hearts of really honest Christian Americans, their voices carry on. Abraham Lincoln, in my estimation, was one of the greatest Presidents to occupy the Oval Office. His ideas for our beloved nation rested supremely upon the word of God. Let us examine and consider some of the valuable thoughts the sixteenth President of the United States had, comparing them with the word of God.

First, consider what

Lincoln thought about parents, “*All that I am, or can be, I owe to my angel mother.*” Abraham Lincoln was a man who loved and respected his parents. History tells us that as a young boy he was loyal to both his mother and father. Our nation today has often forgotten the word “authority.” The lack of respect that young people fail to give their mothers and fathers is one of the reasons why the escalation of rebellion has skyrocketed within our nation. Are you aware that in the next sixty minutes 1,370 teenagers will take some form of a drug, 376 teenagers will drink an alcoholic beverage, 570 teenagers will become victims of broken homes, 114 teenagers will run away from home? If we lose our young people, we have lost our homes. Parents need to instill in the hearts and lives of the children the absolute necessity of respecting authority. Under the Old Testament Law, a rebellious son was taken outside the city gates and was stoned to death! His mother and father stood nearby and thus showed their approval of their son’s execution. If we were living under the Old Testament Law today, our nation would undergo an enormous population decrease! In Romans 1:30, disobedient and rebellious offspring are blacklisted with some of the most wicked individuals on earth. Thank God we have some young people who love and respect the authority of their parents, but payday is coming for those who persist in their

wickedness (Acts 17:30,31).

The apostle Paul taught, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right” (Eph. 6:1). Language could not be any clearer in this command. A child who says, “I don’t have to do what my parents say” is wrong! The child who obeys mom and dad is right! The Hebrew writer said speaking of fathers who corrected their children that they (the children) gave them REVERENCE! (Heb. 12:9). The problem with our children today is not reverence, rather it is irreverence. Lincoln respected his mother and father and had given us his thoughts concerning them.

Second, consider what Lincoln said about prayer. In July of 1861, Lincoln

declared the fourth Thursday in September, the 26th, as a *National Day of Prayer*. “*It is fit and becoming in all people, at all times, to acknowledge and revere the Supreme Government of God; to bow in humble submission to his chastisement; to confess and deplore their sins and transgressions in the full conviction that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and to pray, with all fervency and contrition, for the pardon of their past offenses, and for a blessing upon their present and prospective action*” (Abraham Lincoln, 1861, Proclamation of National Prayer).

(Continued On Page 4)

### Most Of A Minute When It’s Right To Be Embarrassed

Have you ever felt embarrassed? *Really* embarrassed? Of course you have. We all have. Slips of the tongue, maladjustments of clothing, and accidents have all caused us embarrassment from time to time.

Armstrong Williams, a black conservative columnist, recently spoke of embarrassment in a *Readers Digest* article. He said, “Doing drugs, abusing alcohol, stealing, getting a young woman pregnant out of wedlock -- today, none of these behaviors are the deep embarrassment they should be.” He points out that our population has increased only 40% since 1960, violent crime has increased a staggering 550%, and we’ve become used to it.

We need to teach our children a sense of shame about things which are shameful. This liberal mentality which suggests that there’s an understandable reason for every bad behavior, and that no one is really to be blamed, is insulting to thinking, Bible-believing people. And it must be insulting to God.

Jeremiah 6:15 asks of some people, “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.”

Glenn Colley



## “A Penny For Your Thoughts”

(Continued From Page 3)

Lincoln was a man of prayer, and he knew that the prosperity of a nation was not in wealth, or bigger government, rather he believed it rested solely and supremely within that nation's ability to pray. Would to God that our Government would heed the admonition Paul gave to the church at Thessalonica to *“pray without ceasing”* (I Thess. 5:17), as well as Benjamin Franklin's solemn charge, *“I therefore beg leave to move that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of heaven, and its blessing on our deliberation, be held in the Assembly every morning”* (Benjamin Franklin, 1787, Constitutional Convention).

The taking of prayer out of our public schools was a precise reflection of the moral decline of our nation. The Bible still reads, *“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people”* (Proverbs 14:34). It doesn't take a Solomon to know

that our Educational System has declined in the last 30 years substantially. And anyone who suggests otherwise has been hopelessly deceived or just lying. Last year, a high school graduating Senior wanted to lead a prayer at the commencement of his graduation. Out of the 108 graduating seniors, ONE graduate objected to the prayer being led, and as usual the A.C.L.U (which stands for Against - Christ - Lovers of Unrighteousness) said that it was a violation of “church and state,” and since one person was offended, the school overthrew the graduates request to lead a prayer. Question? What about the 107 graduates who were offended because they couldn't lead a prayer! Truly the *“legs of the lame are unequal.”* Thank God for the good schools and the morally upright teachers and administrators who oversee them. Prayer is an essential attribute to a nation's spiritual prosperity. Lincoln believed in prayer and practice it and

encouraged it for a land that claims Jehovah as their God. He said, *“It behooves us then to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins and to pray for clemency and forgiveness”* (Abraham Lincoln, 1863, Proclamation of National Prayer).

Third, consider what Lincoln thought about the Bible, *“Take all that you can of this Book upon reason, and the balance of faith, and you will live and die a happier man...In regard to this Great Book, I have but to say, I believe the Bible is the best gift God has given to man. All the good Saviour gave to the world was communicated through this Book. But for this book we could not know right from wrong. All things most desirable for man's welfare, here and hereafter, are to be found portrayed in it”* (Abraham Lincoln, September 5, 1864, *Washington Chronicle*).

Lincoln was a man who

trusted in the sacred pages of God's word, and He was not afraid to tell fellow Americans how he felt about the Bible. If the President today would only *“search the scriptures”* (John 5:39; Acts 17:11), rather than searching for votes, then the principles of right and wrong would have freer course to stretch across our land like they once did. We do not have a money problem in our nation. We have a moral problem! It's time to start facing responsibility through righteous living, rather than riotous living! This can only be achieved by the gospel of Jesus Christ, *“for therein in the righteousness of God”* (Rom. 1: 16-17).

We thank Abraham Lincoln for his inestimable accomplishments as the President of the United States, and though he has passed from this life, his voice still echos throughout our beloved nation. The voices of antiquity are still speaking today. Will America learn from the past

to secure its blessings for the future? Or will she fold her hands and allow herself to go down in history as nation that forgot God...(Psalm 9:17)? Thank you Abraham Lincoln for giving us your thoughts relative to the prosperity and future betterment of our nation.

Is there any word from the Lord? Centuries ago, God appeared to Solomon by night and said unto him, *“If my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked way; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land”* ( 2 Chron. 7:14). Ladies and gentlemen God has sounded the alarm clock...and we dare not hit the snooze button! When we are humble, and then become holy, then we will be heard. America, wake up...you're too young to die.

Jason R. Roberts

## Raggedy Ann

The little golden haired girl was far too young to understand the terrible circumstances which had her and her parents standing on a muddy, windswept lot where their house once stood. The mangled trees, shattered glass and piles of broken, twisted lumber bore mute testimony that a devastating tornado had been through their community. Rubble and debris were everywhere.

As the distraught parents stood weeping, and surveying the heart-breaking loss, their little girl was rummaging through the wreckage. The

parents were startled by a scream of pure delight from the little girl. Mommy, Daddy, here's my dolly! Here's my Raggedy Ann. Sure enough, there was the doll. The storm had flung it out into the road, where people had walked on it. Cars had run over it, and red mud was all over it, but the little girl had no trouble recognizing it because it was precious to her.

Many a “Spiritual Raggedy Ann” now lies amidst the rubble and ruin of a life lived without restraint or concern for what's right. Tearful pleadings have been

ignored, wise counsel has been discarded, and Spiritual teachings have been forsaken in exchange for bright lights, loose living and failure to count the cost. It's easy for one to kick up his heels and have a merry old time while the sun is shining, but the time comes when one must “Pay the fiddler”. After all, the Bible does most clearly teach that”. . . whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6:7).

Why are these, who have gone astray, not been found and returned to the fold of safety? Could it possibly be that we're

NOT LOOKING for them? Are they not important to us anymore? Sure! Some of them are so bruised, and tattered, and so far removed from where they ought to be, that it's not easy to recognize them, but their souls are still just as precious as before the “storm”. Do you have a “Spiritual Raggedy Ann” in your family? Are you diligently searching for them? Do you pray fervently that you'll be able to reach them and teach them before it's too late? Have you considered what God's Word has to say in this regard? “Let him know, that he which

converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.” (James 5:20) “And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever”. (Daniel 12:3) Any Raggedy Anns in your plans?

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APRIL 5, 1996

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\* A Mother's Power

\* Gospel Preachers Identified

\* They Grow Up Too Fast

\* Dance Fever

\* Success?

Volume 33 Number 11  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but I speak the words of truth and soberness."--A

h the

## "The Well-Dressed Christian"

It would be safe that from time to time all of us enjoy a new suit of clothes. Young people look forward to Fall when they can wear their new clothes to school. Think back to the time when you had your first date, and you scrambled through the closet to find the right shirt or pair of shoes to wear. You wanted to be dressed for the occasion. Or think about wedding ceremonies today, everyone has to look a certain way, the right dress and tuxedo are a must for all who are in the wedding. No one wants to be under dressed for the occasion.

Christians need to be properly dressed at all times, not just with reference to modest apparel, but with reference to the inward attire that we should wear at all times. Let's notice some articles of clothing that God insists that we put on daily.

Job said, "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my judgment was a robe and a diadem" (Job 29:14). To be a well-dressed Christian, we must clothe our lives with righteousness and proper judgment. Righteousness is the state we attain when our lives are right with God. It is "right" living. The apostle John wrote, "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous" (I John 3:7). Judgment is the

proper decisions we make in reference to righteous living, not only with God but with our fellow man. Improper judgment is condemned in God's word (Matthew 7:1), proper judgment is commanded (John 7:24). "Righteousness" and "judgment," two articles of clothing we need to wear at all times.

Peter admonished Christians to "be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (I Peter 5:5). The word "clothed," as used here, means a "knot or band by which two things are fastened together, to fasten or gird one's self" (Strong's). It was customary at the beginning of the Christian age for slaves to wear a white scarf or apron, which was fastened to the belt of the vest, distinguishing them from freeman. Used figuratively here, the meaning is "Tie on humility like a slave's apron."

One of the seven things that God hates mentioned in Proverbs 6:16-19 is a "proud look." We need to ever be on guard against the sin of pride. Some people, including preachers, have exalted themselves to such an extent that their pride has mounted up from earth to heaven and has become a stench in the nostrils of God! Preeminence, pride and loving the praises of men are things we need to guard

against (3 John 9). How can we keep our lives from being engulfed with the sin of pride? By putting on another article of clothing called humility. The garment of humility is something that needs to hang safely and daily around our hearts, rather than corrupting in the closets of our pride.

The apostle Paul commanded us to, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another...and above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness" (Colossians 3:12-14). Paul urges us to put on several other articles of clothing that make up the well-dressed Christian. Are we merciful to others as our heavenly Father is merciful to us (Luke 6:36)? Are we meek like Moses (Numbers 13:3)? Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). It is the meek that will ultimately be satisfied (Psalm 22:26). Are we longsuffering towards others like the Lord is (was) towards us (2 Peter 3:9; Romans 5:6-8), or do we give up on others easily? Are we forbearing and forgiving people? Are we under control when someone provokes or persecutes us? Are we a forgiving people, or do keep

a daily journal of our brother and sisters faults? (I Cor. 13:5-7)? Are we above all things, putting on charity? Are we manifesting the spirit of love toward others, or are we hatred and mean spirited? "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 2:24-25). Mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing, forgiving, and charity, several more articles of clothing with which the well-dressed Christian should be appropriately attired.

Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus admonishing them to "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). In the battle with sin and with Satan we need to be well-equipped for the occasion. Leaving off any piece of our spiritual armor causes one to be vulnerable to a wound administered from the enemy (I Peter 5:8). The well-dressed Christian will always keep his armor on to withstand the fiery attacks of the evil one.

These are just a few of many articles of spiritual clothing that make up the well-dressed Christian. For

the alien sinner, God calls him or her through the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14) to clothe themselves with salvation. This salvation was made available at the cross. "And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head" (Mark 15:17). Yes, it was the day that he wore my robe and my crown, and today He invites lost humanity to clothe themselves with the "garments of salvation" and to wear "the robe of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:10). How does one clothe themselves with salvation? "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:26-27).

Friend, are you a well-dressed Christian? Are you dressed for the occasion? Or when the King comes will he find you unprepared, and without your wedding garment (Matthew 22:11)? One must be individually and properly prepared to meet the Lord. At the marriage feast of the Lamb one must clothe in purity and adorned in righteous acts (Revelation 19:7, 8). Are you a well-dressed Christian?

Jason R. Roberts



# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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## A Mother's Power

What is the greatest demonstration of power you can imagine?

Whatever comes to mind, we should add to our list a mother sitting with her child teaching the simple verses and principles of the Bible. There's meaningful power. We should appreciate how important her work really is.

A young mother in her twenties patiently sits with her one-year-old and repeats a little song she made up with these words: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Again and again. Pretty soon the child can say it too. That mother is laying the first building blocks in what will one day be that child's great edifice of faith. Why teach our children Genesis 1:1? There are many reasons:

### 1. To keep them from sin.

What connection is there between Genesis 1:1 and training children to keep away from sin?

The fact that we are created beings implies that we are under the power of our Creator.

We should do His will. Creation is the purest form of ownership. He made us and we are His, (Psalm 100). When a man foolishly teaches that the human race did not originate as the Bible says in Genesis one and two, but rather that we came about through some freakish glitch in nature, he places us in an amoral

position. If we didn't come from God then we aren't responsible to Him.

A man who doesn't believe Genesis 1 reduces man to animal status. We are animals. We are more intelligent than the others, but still animals. In the wild, animals such as lions or hawks or wolves are governed by nothing more than instinct. They may become angry and kill other animals. They may steal another's food. They may participate in reproduction with various different partners. If we aren't from God, and therefore not responsible to Him, then by what authority could anyone claim and condemn these same actions in humans? Human animals should just do whatever comes natural to them!

If children don't get "In the beginning God..." where will they get their sense of right and wrong? They will get it from their personal experiences. Those activities from which they derived a positive result will be repeated. Those which produced negative results will be avoided. That's it. Ultimately nothing higher than themselves.

What that young mother is doing when she teaches Genesis 1:1 is very powerful.

### 2. To build the framework for their storehouse of knowledge.

The Proverb writer didn't specify any

particular area of knowledge when he made his statement in Proverbs 1:7.

It will apply to every single child who grows into adulthood and pursues a field involving knowledge. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." Trying to learn knowledge without a foundation of faith in God is to build on sand. Although certainly some knowledge can be attained, it will never reach as high or so deep as it would begun with faith in God.

What that young mother is doing when she teaches Genesis 1:1 is very powerful.

### 3. To give them a solid foundation for their homes.

Who can make a connection between such verses such as "In the beginning God created..." and our homes? How can this verse have anything to do with our children's future marriages? Jesus is the One who made the connection: "But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife...(Mark 10:6,7)." A marriage built with two people who love and obey God is different from one between two people who don't believe in God or Genesis 1:1. The quality of our marriages will be in direct proportion to the degree to which we apply God's truths in our homes.

Said another way, doing right makes marriage work right.

What that young mother is doing when she teaches Genesis 1:1 is very powerful.

### 4. To give them an anchor for life and security in death.

Paul wrote, "For our citizenship is in heaven...(Phil. 3:20)." If we had a thousand lives to live we would still be foolish to live a single day away from the Lord. The knowledge of God as the Creator of our world offers a sense of security to all those who will obey Him. Even in times of struggle and suffering your children will have something to see them through. Their faith; begun by their mother, nurtured by study of God's word, and depended upon in life's darkest days. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us as

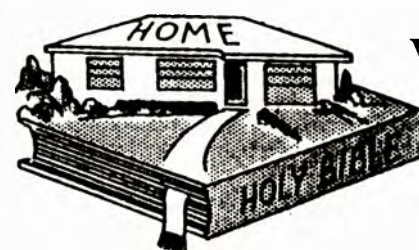
far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, (II Cor. 4:17)."

And then one day, when she is gone, and her children too must go the way of the earth in death, they will know security and strength. They will remember mother's knee and that "In the beginning God...". They will, in their hearts, tie to that truth hundreds of others which they have learned through the years.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, (Psalm 46:1, 2)."

What the young mother is doing when she teaches Genesis 1:1 is very powerful.

Glenn Colley



## The Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. thirty-five per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$18.20 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, P.O. Box 430, Haleyville, AL 35565.



# Gospel Preachers Identified

Gospel preachers are important because their roots are found in the New Testament. The church began with twelve of them. They were first called apostles (Acts 1:12-26). Matthias took the place of Judas who betrayed Jesus Christ.

These man became gospel preachers because they were commissioned to preach the gospel of Christ, which they did, carrying it to all the world (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). In that early day, when transportation and communication were primitive, the gospel was carried throughout the Roman world (Colossians 1:6,23; Romans 1:8)). Brethren, should we not in our day do as well or better?

Gospel preachers are not gospel preachers just because they claim to be gospel preachers. Nay, verily! Gospel preachers preach the gospel with out addition, subtraction, or emendation. (Revelation 22:18-19). God's word is complete; nothing should be added or subtracted from it. Denominational doctrines are never found in God's holy book. We do not wish to be offensive, but denominational preachers do not preach the plain, simple, pure gospel of Christ. Methodist preaching will not produce a Baptist church. What we have here said applies to all denominational preachers and churches. We believe our readers have logical minds who can think for themselves. We sincerely urge them to follow the Bible and the Bible only in religious matters.

Gospel preachers are men--not women. (I Timothy 2:11-12; I Corinthians 14:34). We not wishing to infringe upon women, but we do wish to urge them to follow God's word. Women may teach and admonish others in song, but they must not to assume

either leadership or the teaching office in the church. God has assigned a special role to the woman based upon the events that occurred in Genesis chapter 3. In the wisdom of God this stricture was placed upon the role of Christian women. Hence, Paul was not a chauvinist pig when wrote the words we are studying.

Thus women are not to function in the teaching role so as to subordinate man nor to dominate him (Acts 21:8; I Corinthians 11:7-9). Man is the head, woman must be in the submission to him (I Corinthians 11:3; 14:34).

Incidentally, all the apostles---the first gospel preachers were men. Why did not Jesus apoint some women to this honored list? Can it be because He knew the Father's will concerning women?? One should understand that both man and woman are creatures of God and that salvation comes to male and female alike, but the sexes have different roles in the Lord, each complementing the other (Galatians 3:26-28).

Gospel preachers are determined to "rightly divide the word of truth." "Study to show thyself approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

Jesus Christ divided the Old Testament thus: "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me" (Luke 24:44). Note, Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. When Jesus died upon the cross, the Old Testament law ended (Colossians 2:14-17). God never intended for the Old Testament to be permanent (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Galatians 3:24-25); when it

was fulfilled it was abolished (Matthew 5:17). Today, no one can be saved by keeping the Old Testament law!

Gospel preachers never, in the light of what we have just said, go to the Law of Moses, the prophets, the Psalms, the personal ministry of Jesus to teach sinners what to do to be saved. The book of Acts is the only book in the Bible the design of which is to teach sinners what to do to be saved.

Some one correctly said, "a text taken out of context becomes a pretext." II Chronicles 7:14 is a text often misused by denominational preachers. But it does not refer to salvation in Christ; it refers to backslidden Israel. Matthew 19:16-22 relates a story of a Young Ruler who asked what to do to inherit eternal life. He was told to keep the ten commandments. The ruler lived under the law of Moses. He was also told to sell his possessions and give to the poor. In Acts, the book of conversions, no such requirement is mentioned. Sinner, would you wish to follow such and example today?

The great commission was spoken by Jesus after His resurrection and just before His ascension to heaven (Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-12). The Holy Spirit descended shortly after Jesus ascended. The Holy Spirit speaks to humanity through the inspired words as recorded in the Holy Bible (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 3:15-16; Hebrews 4:12; I Peter 1:22-25). Thousands of preachers give lip-service to the word of God but they do not preach it. They tell sinners to "take Jesus as your personal Saviour," "to get saved," "to pray through to salvation," "to get the Holy Ghost," get religion, "join the church of your choice," they claim the direct impact of the

Spirit upon the sinner, claiming the baptism of the Holy Ghost."

Such preachers are blind leaders. Vain worship is undergirded by the traditions of men, leading thousands to engage in ignorant worship (Acts 17:23). No matter how sanctimonious they may be, such preachers are always wrong. We suggest reading Mark 7:13. There were false prophets in the Old Testament times and there are false preachers in the New Testament times. We find false teachers within and without the church (II Corinthians 11:13-15). Some of them come disguised as sheep (Matthew 7:15).

Gospel preachers have been severally criticized for selecting various passages scattered here and there in the Bible Friends, that is the only way all the truth can be known. The various subjects treated in the Bible have not been classified. For example, all that is said about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the church, baptism, repentance, faith, et al. cannot be found in one verse, in one chapter, or in one book. We rightly

divide the scripture when we collect together all the verses on various subjects (II Timothy 2:15). The Psalmist taught that we should consider the "sum" of God's thoughts (Psalm 139:17).

Preachers, it is not whether one likes or dislikes what God has said; one must preach it even if it costs him his life (Revelation 2:10; Jude 3; Acts 7:1-60).

What about a preacher's character and education? Well, if a preacher's conduct brings shame and disgrace upon his message, he should vacate the pulpit. If a preachers cannot read the scriptures with understanding, he is not qualified to be a preachers (I Timothy 4:13). The preacher must read so as to help others understand the scriptures; he will be a failure should be fall short here (Nehemiah 8:8; II Timothy 2:15; I Timothy 1:6-7)

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## Most Of A Minute They Grow Up Too Fast

You know, its hard to think like an old person until you are old. There are some concepts which only the weight of years will enable you to fully grasp.

Old folks understand some things, for example, about children which we should consider. They know that little children need to be children. Before they are exposed to the "real world" they need time to experience life in small slices surrounded by the loving guidance and security of their mom and dad. The last decade or so Americans have forgotten this. First grade wasn't until 6 years old so we started kindergarten at 5. "They need a head start" we reasoned. Then we decided that they probably would never meet their potential unless they were herded into preschool at 3 or 4. "They need a head start" we reasoned.

But old people know the truth. Children need time with momma. Learning, maturing, growing, and being taught God's word from the most important person in the world.

In Titus 2:4,5 of the Bible we learn that women are to teach the young women to love their husbands, love their children, and to be keepers at home.

And old people really understand that.

Glenn Colley



# Dance Fever

Every year about this time the issue of dancing crops up in connection with high school graduation. The reason for this is that it remains in the minds of many Christian parents and their children an unsettled matter. Our kids are wanting to attend that last big even associated with their high school years. And mom and dad sure don't want to be perceived as a wrench in the spokes, so they give into the "pressure" of youth and send them off to the dance with one bit of advice, "Remember, you're a Christian". Sound familiar?

And if you think the issue of dancing is a newcomer to the church of Christ, then think again. Between 1835-1855 Alexander Campbell dealt with the issue of dancing in various issues of his paper *The Millennial Harbinger*. Brethren David Lipscomb and E.G. Sewell were answering questions in the *Gospel Advocate* concerning dancing about 100 years ago. Brother Sewell stated:

**"Dancing is worldly and fleshly in it's whole tendency and in all it's effects upon those who engage in it."** [Questions Answered, Lipscomb and Sewell, editor K.C.

Kurfees, 1921, p. 154]

But it is commonly reported by some that dancing is not inherently wrong as is murder, fornication, or stealing. Brethren, that's right dancing is not INHERENTLY wrong, but does that make all dancing right for Christian participation? Absolutely not! Now I can use the same argumentation with reference to instrumental music, which is not inherently wrong-BUT the use of instrumental music in and as worship to GOD is sinful. There is simply no New Testament authority for its use as worship. Likewise, all appeals to the Old Testament to justify dancing are to no avail. Many things were authorized and/or allowed under that system that are not authorized today under the Christian system. The old covenant system has been abolished (Ephesians 2:15).

Now, I want to be perfectly clear that although dancing is not inherently wrong some dancing would be wrong depending on where you are dancing and with whom you are dancing. Certainly I'm not talking about a husband and wife dancing in the privacy of their own home. Nor am I thinking of same-sex

aerobic dancing. But at the same time let's not be naive, mixed-sex modern dancing between unmarried partners is another thing altogether. Consider some of the reasons listed below why this type of dancing would be wrong.

**OUR INFLUENCE-** All one need do is view most of the dancing that goes on today with its hopping around, hanging on to, bouncing off of, swinging on to, and handling of others to know without a doubt that participation in such cancels out all godliness and Christian influence we might have. Our Lord expressly taught that we are to be the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13). And anyone with a lick of sense knows that salt acts as a season, preservative, and antiseptic. But salt loses its saltiness by being diluted. Likewise, we lose our influence by diluting it with ungodliness and worldly lust (Titus 2:12), in which categories dancing falls. Jesus went on in Matthew 5 to say we are the light of the world (vs. 14-16). Our light is to shine that men will see our good works and glorify the Heavenly Father. Surely, no one would advance the notion that dancing is a good work.

**OUR ASSOCIATION-** The Scriptures are more than clear on this matter.

Paul through inspiration taught, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:21-22). If we had nothing more than this verse to wield in opposition to dancing, it would be more than sufficient. And the principle contained in these verses in age-lasting. Brethren, dancing is worldly and is associated with more worldliness. While I lived and preached in Poplar Bluff, MO a dance club opened and began to thrive not only because dancing was advertised but perhaps as much so, if not more so, because alcohol was served on the premises. The experience of others tells me that dancing is just the first step in an evening that's headed in the wrong direction.

**OUR DESIRE-** Galatians 5:19-21 says, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the

Kingdom of GOD." One word in verse 19, the word lasciviousness, warrants a closer look. It is defined as:

**"Wanton (acts or) manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females, etc."** [Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1889, pp. 79-80]

**"Inclined to lustfulness; wanton; lewd: 2. Arousing sexual desire: lascivious behavior."** [Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary, 1992, p. 808]

It would appear from these definitions that any behavior which incites sexual desire would fall into the category of lasciviousness. Isn't it the case that dancing does just that? Yes indeed!

Considerably more could be said about the evils of dancing, but space now forbids. Yet, it should be evident to all sincere Christians that these factors all add up to something (dancing) that should be avoided.

**Mel Futrell**  
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## Success?

Has it ever occurred to you that if we wanted to judge our Lord's success as a TEACHER, we probably wouldn't want to look at His disciples around the time of His crucifixion. Why not? Well, because:

- One of His disciples betrayed Him and then

later committed suicide (Mark 14:10, 11, 18; Matthew 27:3-5).

- Another tried to start a fight, denied even knowing Jesus, and then cursed when some suggested that he was a disciple (Matthew 26:51,52; 69-75).

- In fact, the Bible says

that eventually all of His disciples forsook Him and fled (Mark 14:50).

Of course, it might be helpful for us to look on down the line and see these same men days, even years, after the crucifixion. The Bible says the disciples, save Judas, were

boldly preaching Christ as Lord (Acts 4:13, 18, 19, 31; 9:29; 14:3; 19:8).

Teacher, when results aren't immediately forthcoming, when you wonder if you're making any impact, and when you're ready to throw in the towel because it seems

that nobody's listening, it is then that you must not give up. Remember...it may take awhile before you will ever see the fruits of your labor.

**Mike Benson**



APRIL 12, 1996

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- \* "The Seven Wonders Of Heaven (Part 1)"
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- \* Will We Reject Or Accept The Divisive?
- \* Making Time Count
- \* Where Are The Dead
- \* "Know When To Say No"

Volume 33 Number 12  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

" I am not mad, most noble Festus; but si  
Words of Truth and soberness."--Ac

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## "The Seven Wonders Of Heaven" (Pa

The world in which we live has many wonderful attractions. When one peruses across our vast universe, he is struck with awe at its majesty and splendor. The creative power of God is proclaimed boldly and forcefully throughout the sacred text (Psalm 19:7-11, Acts 17:24-25). The Bible affirms that God created the world out of nothing, ordered it, shaped it, fashioned it, and by the sheer power of His word, spoke it into existence (Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26; Psalm 33:6, 9).

When one ponders the ancient world of yesterday, he cannot help thinking about the wonders for which they are remembered. For example, we recall the Seven Wonders of The World namely, *The Pyramids of Egypt, The Hanging Gardens of Babylon, The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, The Statue of Zeus at Olympia, The Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, The Colossus of Rhodes, and The Pharos of Alexandria.* These "wonders" have gone down in History as the *Seven Wonders of The World* because they were indeed wonderful. But there is a place that we call heaven, that's far more wonderful than anything that is found upon this earth.

When one sits back and honestly ponders the place that has been prepared for us (John 14:1-3), he can't help but to wonder about several things. Consider please for the remainder of this article along with next week's, *The Seven Wonders of Heaven.*

**I WONDER IF THERE IS A HEAVEN.** Is there

really a place out there "beyond the bright blue" that has been prepared for me and for you? We sing of it, we pray about it, the Christian longs for it, the skeptic denies it. What does the Bible say about Heaven? It is a real place, prepared for real people. It is not a fragment of one's imagination. We don't have to see something before it is real (2 Cor. 5:7, Heb. 11:1). The Bible, as well as nature, provides man with ample evidence of the place called heaven. It is the "heavens that declare the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1, cf. Romans 1:19-20). Rather than wondering about its existence, we need to believe its existence, and start preparing for this glorious place that God has prepared for all the redeemed of the ages. This brings us to second wonder of heaven.

**I WONDER FOR WHOM IT WAS MADE.** Who are the recipients that will one day bask in the eternal rays of that heavenly sunshine? All men have the chance to partake of the eternal bliss that awaits us on the other side. Jesus Christ "tasted death for all men" (Heb 9:22). He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). The Calvinistic (Baptist) doctrine of election and predestination is foreign to scripture. Can you imagine knowing that Christ has prepared for us this wonderful place heaven, and then at the same time knowing that he has arbitrarily selected those who would and who would not go there before the

foundation of the world? You'd get to spend your whole life wondering whether or not you are among God's elect and if you are lost at the great day, there really was nothing that you could do to alter what God had "fixed" from all eternity. "If I'm lost, it was God's will that I should be lost." Who can believe it? Our Baptist friends who insist that they love the souls of all men actually deny the very thing they believe. Why are they taking their "gospel" which is not the gospel (Gal. 1:6-9) to a lost and dying world? If the people to whom they are "evangelizing" have already been predestined to either spend an eternity in heaven or an eternity in hell, then what do they have to offer them that will alter this decision? They are in reality wasting their time, and it would be helpful to the cause of Christ if they ceased from "evangelizing" so the Lord's church can fulfill the great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) with a freer course. Heaven is a place prepared for all men. Paul declared speaking of God, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). Those who obey the gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38), and who remain faithful even in the face of death (Rev. 2:10), are the people for whom heaven is made. This brings us to the third wonder of heaven.

**I WONDER WHAT IT WILL BE LIKE.** The human mind, finite as it is, can only wonder about what it will be like in heaven. The Bible describes it as a place of rest

(Rev. 14:13). Rest implies work. Yes, we must work those works that God has instructed us to do (Acts 10:34-35; James 2:24, I Cor. 15:58), before we can trust rest from our labors and sit down with the Lord on His throne. We may not know everything about its beauty and splendor, but the Bible does give us a glimpse of this wonderful place. The apostle Paul said that he "knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12:13-14). There are some things about heaven that are hidden from us. With this being the case, it should make all of us want to strive for those pearly gates with more earnestness.

The apostle John, with the stroke of his quill, painted a beautiful picture of what he saw relative to heaven. His language is highly figurative, but nevertheless, it gives us a small glimpse as to what awaits us beyond those heavenly clouds. In Revelation 4:2, 3, John refers to One who was to sit on the throne, "And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round the throne, in sight like unto an emerald." Verse four mentions people wearing crowns of gold (Rev 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:8; James 1:12; I Pet. 5:4). Verse six describes heaven as a sea of glass like crystal. It is a place of satisfaction. "They shall hunger no more, neither any

shall the sun light on them, nor any heat" (Rev. 7:16). Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness in this life will not only be filled in this life (Psalm 22:26; Matt 5:6), but will be filled for an eternity in the life to come. Those who drank of the water of life (John 4:10) in this life shall never thirst, become hungry, or be uncomfortable in heaven.

All the pain, sickness and sorrow that we go through in this life are only for a season (Rom. 8:18), and will be eliminated in heaven. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:1-4). The suffering, the sorrow, the sickness, the death, the tears will all be wiped away in that sweet - sweet land we call heaven. How wonderful heaven must be!

--Continued next week.

Jason R. Roberts



# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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## Dangers Facing The Church

The following article was written by the late and beloved Gus Nichols on June 19, 1970.

I hope you enjoy it as much as I have.

Glenn Colley

The great apostle Paul warned the elders at Ephesus night and day, and with tears, that there were great dangers confronting the church (Acts 20:17, 28-32.) Some one has said that, "To be forewarned is to be forearmed." As Christian soldiers we are greatly blessed if we know what enemies are lying in wait for us, and of the dangers facing us.

**1. THERE IS DANGER THAT THE CHURCH MAY DRIFT INTO SECULARISM AND MATERIALISM.** Our nation has never had such affluence as it has now. We are about 8 per cent of the world's population, but we own about 80 per cent of the wealth of the world. There may be more spiritual danger in wealth than in poverty. We are so close to this world that we are sure to be somewhat affected by it. We are in danger of exchanging the spiritual for the secular and material things about us. The masses are now looking at nearly all things through dollar marks. It is easy for the church to drift with the tide, and to put the emphasis on material things. There is danger that elders and leaders may become primarily a glorified finance committee. (I Tim. 6:5-19; Mt. 6:19-21.) Men of Israel, (in its apostasy), would not close the door for naught. (Mal. 1:10.) Joyful, sacrificial service is lacking.

Preachers should, if possible, give full time to the teaching and proclamation of the gospel. (I Tim. 4:12-16; Acts 6:1-7; I Cor. 9:1-14; 2 Cor. 11:8.) They should not be buried alive with secular and material things. It is not

enough for preachers, elders and deacons to be busy. A dog may chase cars all day long; but what good does he accomplish? Let us keep the church spiritual and busy winning souls. Let us use mass media for reaching the billions who do not know the gospel - have never heard it. Let us use the printed page, radio, and TV. Let us not forsake the old time gospel meetings. Look ahead! (2 Cor. 4:16-18.)

**2. WE ARE IN DANGER OF DEPARTING FROM BIBLE PREACHING.** Paul charged Timothy to "PREACH THE WORD." (2 Tim. 4:1-3.) Christ charged his disciples to go into all the world "AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE." (Mk. 16:15.) And "they went forth and preached every where". (Mk. 16:20; Col. 1:23; Rom. 10:18-20.) Paul said the time would come when they would not endure sound doctrine. The ears are itching for man's wisdom and fables instead of the powerful, saying word. (Rom. 1:16.) The time has come when many want to apologize for reading the Bible in the church. (Neh. 8:1-22; Lk. 4:16-21.) The man with a "Thus saith the Lord" is still needed in the pulpit. Ignorance in the church is the cause of the divisions among us today.

The brotherhood is spending millions of dollars on meeting houses, with the doors opened about 4 hours per week (of 168 hours). A totally converted and committed church would gladly assemble for an hour each night in the whole year. The fact that worldly

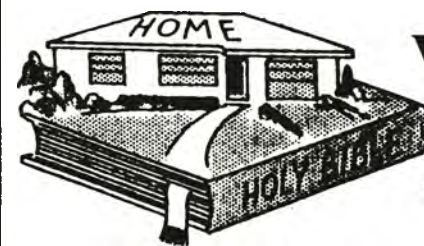
members would do this, if offered enough money, proves it could be done -- if we were so transformed that spiritual things would motivate us.

**3. THERE IS A DANGER THAT WE MAY OVER-EMPHASIZE LITTLE THINGS AND NEGLECT THE WEIGHTIER MATTERS, OF MERCY, LOVE, UNITY, AND THE LIKE.** Good and adequate meeting houses are important, if the church would do its best work. But they are a poor substitute for conversion, godliness, true service and devotion. Our confidence must not be in material things, but in the Lord. Buried talents are worse than no talents. And there is no substitute for hard work in the kingdom of God. There is something each one can well do, and he should specialize in doing it and become efficient in his field of service. (Rom. 12:4-6.) The preacher must prepare sermons for the pulpit, radio, TV, articles for paper, lessons for classes, and what ever his teaching opportunities may be, there is a challenge for preparation! The same is true of all the class teachers, the elders and deacons. And the song leader should give time to preparing to be efficient in directing the singing. We must all work. It is wise to plan the work and services of the church. (I Cor. 14:40; Mk. 6:40.) But no sort of plans will work themselves. Ninety nine per cent of success in church work, is WORK! And one hundred per cent of the members who are normal must work to be Christians--to be Christlike. (I Cor. 15:58; Tit. 3:1.)

**4. THERE IS DANGER THAT THE CHURCH MAY LOSE FAITH AND BECOME A MERE SOCIAL SOCIETY.** Many are in the church (?) for material reasons--they follow for the loaves and fishes. They are not in the church to give, but to eat. They are not out to work, but to criticize those who do what is done. They "murmur" and complain at every thing done, or undone, and yet they will not lay a little finger on the job to do it themselves. (Mat 23:1-3; Phil. 2:12-16; I Cor. 10:1-12.) They slave their smarting consciences with lip-service and criticisms. They are a liability, and not an asset to the church. If asked to do something, they say, "Let George do it." They are interested in socializing the church, and in following every trend away from the truth, and from the faith of the gospel. (Heb. 3:12; I Tim. 4:1-5; 2 Jn. 9:11; Rom. 16:17-

18.) **5. WORLDLINESS IN THE CHURCH IS ONE OF OUR GREATEST DANGERS.** "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (I Cor. 5:1-13.) "The works of the flesh" kill the zeal and darkens the light of the truth preached. (Gal. 5:19-21.) The motto of many is to compromise with the world, and get on friendly terms with it and its ways. (Jas. 4:4; I Jn. 2:15-17.) They want us to conform to the world and its standard in more ways, and still try to be the true church. They want us to be conformed to the world. (Rom. 12:1-2.) They want the church to be popular by dancing, social drinking, general pleasure seeking, and the like. God says, for us to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. (Jas. 1:27.) While the church is in the world, the world has no place in the church.

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The  
 Words Of  
 Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. thirty-five per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$18.20 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, P.O. Box 430, Haleyville, AL 35565.



# Dangers Facing The Church

(Continued from Page 2)

**6. ANOTHER DANGER FACING THE CHURCH IS LIBERALISM.** The Bible must be believed and strictly obeyed. Christ has all authority and power in Christianity. (Mat. 28:18-20.) He is to be obeyed in all matters. (Heb. 5:8-9.) There were liberals in New Testament times, who worshiped after the commandments of men. And their worship and religion were vain. (Mt. 15:9; Mk. 7:3-13.) Liberalism trifles with specific law, and sets aside, as it sees fit, the plain, positive commandments of the lord. It rejects the verbal inspiration of the bible, the virgin birth, the atonement of Christ, his bodily resurrection and ascension, along with his

coming at the end of the world. (Jn. 14:1-3; Jn. 5:28-29; Mt. 25:31-46.) In a counseling problem an elder of a large church was teaching a young people's class that the virgin birth of Christ is a fable, and is not to be believed. They thought he ought to be let alone, that he was doing a good work, he was giving \$100 per Sunday.

**7. ANTI-ISM IS ANOTHER DANGER CONFRONTING THE CHURCH.** This attitude trifles with generic commands, and tries to make and force its own laws upon the church in the realm of liberty, and where God has not told us how to do something commanded. They say "There is no realm of opinion", or of human

judgment in the service of God. The Lord said "GO" and "TEACH", but did not tell us how to do this--did not give all the details. But some make laws for God and teach that there must be only one class taught at a given time in the meeting house where there are many rooms for teaching. They oppose other things; some of them are against the use of the baptistry; others against the individual communion cups. Still others are against the church taking money out of its treasury to buy food for hungry, destitute children. Some are against Bible colleges supported by individuals. Others teach the saints only doctrine.

**8. THERE IS THE DANGER THAT FOR A**

**LACK OF DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCH IT MAY BECOME ROTTEN TO THE CORE WITH UN-GODLY CHARACTERS AND WORLDLY PERSONS.** It may not be long now until such members will be calling the elders "Pigs", and will be rioting to get their men at the steering wheel to take over the church for the devil. The church is commanded to withdraw from every member who walks disorderly, and not according to the truth. (2 Thes. 3:6; I Cor. 5:1-13.) God killed two of the members of the church at Jerusalem in discipline. (Acts 5:1-14.) This shows his attitude toward sin in the church. It also shows the apostle Peter's attitude toward the discipline that

should be used against ungodly members, who cannot be corrected and converted from the errors of their ways. (Jas. 5:19-20.)

Yes, there are problems everywhere--even facing the church. But **STRONG CHRISTIANS** don't give up because of dangers and problems ahead. Rather they more fully arm themselves for the battle. (Eph. 6:10-17.) They know the church cost Jesus his blood and life, and they stand ready to preserve it in its purity, regardless of the cost. (Eph. 5:25; Acts 20:28.) By God's grace and help we shall win at last! Our faith will overcome the world! (I Jn. 5:4.) We shall win by the word, sword of the Spirit!

Gus Nichols

## Will We Reject Or Accept The Divisive?

In Titus 3:10-11, the apostle Paul warned: "A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." It is interesting to examine the word Translated heretic in the king James. Arndt-Gingrich renders the word, "divisive person." What Paul has in mind is one who causes division contrary to God's Word. Are we heeding his admonition?

In an earlier epistle, the apostle had told the brethren at Rome to have no fellowship with the divisive. Hear him:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." (Romans 16:17-18).

The word mark simply means, "watch; take note of." But, involved in this is a clear identification of those who

are guilty of unscriptural division. Faithful brethren are to have no part with them. Now, according to Galatians 6:1, we are to be about the business of restoring erring brethren back to the truth. However, when one demonstrates he will not come back, we are to avoid him.

These are troubling times in society, and in the Lord's church. As has always been the case, there are those who are intent on ripping the church asunder with false teaching and drawing away disciples after them. In spite of this, God has not left us in the dark as to what is to be done. The elders of each local congregation must resolve to stand firm with the gospel, even though it may mean difficult times ahead.

When godly elders heed the Lord's instruction through his inspired men, the local congregation will be kept pure and free from false teaching. But, what about those in sister congregations?

The benefit of the doubt must always be given to the elders of the congregation, since they are the shepherds of the flock. If a sister congregation desires to

investigate the situation further, its elders must first go to the elders of the church doing the marking. It would be unwise to rely on hearsay and secondhand information in making a decision on anything, especially regarding the topic at hand.

Of course, this assumes that the elders are what they ought to be. Again, though, that must be assumed unless compelling evidence to the contrary surfaces. When brethren are marked as being divisive, usually there is a serious doctrinal matter at issue.

The same passages we referred to earlier not only apply to the local congregation, but the church as a whole. If a congregation follows the instruction of Romans 16:17-18, and notifies others it has done so, it is the obligation of every faithful child of God to respect what has taken place. The reason that Paul instructed such is not only keep the local congregation pure, but the entire body of Christ, as well!

But, when brethren accept with open arms those who have been handled in this

way, it is in effect is bidding Godspeed to error. 2 John 9-11 clearly indicates we are not to have fellowship with those who teach and promote error. Again, let us emphasize that we are to take every opportunity to bring them back to the truth; but when they openly defy it, we cannot treat them as faithful

to God.

This brings us back to Paul's admonition to Titus. The divisive person is to be rejected, not accepted, after the first and second admonition! However, some would not heed this instruction. The fact remains,

(Continued on Page 4)

## Most Of A Minute Making Time Count

Last week the man who killed Israeli Rabin was convicted of murder and sentenced. The newsman said he was sentenced t life in prison for the murder, and six additional years for injuring some other people in the process. Now don't you think that's interesting? Technically speaking, he is sentenced to spend six years in jail after he dies! Of course, you and I both know that not even the highest court in Israel, or anywhere in the world for that matter, can bring a man back from the dead long enough to serve additional time in prison.

Quick --look at you watch -- what time is it? The most illusive and independent thing in this life is time. You can ignore it, fight it, even get a high court to rule contrary to it, but it will go on.

When Peter was discussing time in the Bible and how it would someday end, he asked, "What manner of persons ought you to be, (II Pet. 3:10)?" Are you living in relation to the Lord like someone who realizes the truth about time, or are you someone who ignores the time? A lot of folks spend a great amount of energy counting time. The Bible teaches us that it's much more important to make time count.

Glenn Colley



# Will We Reject Or Accept The Divisive?

(Continued from Page 3)

it will stand until the Lord comes again. We cannot encourage those who divide the Lord's body with impunity!

If it was left up to some, the passages we have cited in this article would be omitted from the Bible, much in the same fashion as

old Jehoiakim did with his penknife to the prophet's words. But, as much as they try, the words of the apostle come back time and time again, like the words of the prophet did to the evil king.

Life is too short and eternity too long to be trifling with God's Word. Those who would fellow-

ship those whom God has rejected will give an answer for their actions. In effect, what Jesus prayed for in **John 17** means nothing. Brethren had better think long and hard before attempting to foster divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine they have learned.

To give the right hand to the factious is to work against the unity of the Spirit, which Paul describes in **Ephesians 4:1-6**. When clear doctrinal error is described as "personality disputes," something is wrong! To have the unity Jesus prayed for takes hard work. But, it involves

fidelity to the truth.

Let us all resolve that we will stand firmly for the right, oppose the wrong, restore the erring, and save the lost for Christ. In this way, we will attain what God wants.

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## Where Are The Dead

The Bible teaches that we will all die or put off the physical body at the second coming of Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). We are also told that "it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this judgement" (Hebrews 9:27). The Apostle Paul declared, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Perhaps the biggest question at this point would be, "What happens to one between the time he dies and the judgment? In other words, during the time, where does one abide? Is he still alive? Is he conscious? Or does he remain in the tomb or the place of the dead in an unconscious state?"

In Luke 16:19-31 Christ tells the story of the rich man and Lazarus. He says that both of these men died. The poor man's soul was taken by angels to Abraham's bosom or to the place of the righteous dead, which is described as being paradise. But the rich man's soul went to hell and was tormented in the flames. Then he cried out to Father Abraham to have mercy on him and to send Lazarus that he might dip the tip of his finger in water to cool his tongue. Abraham reminded him that in his life he had received all of the good things that the physical world had to offer but Lazarus received the evil things or had done without. Then he goes on to say that now Lazarus is comforted but he is tormented.

It is explained to the rich man that it would be impossible anyway for

Lazarus to come to him since there was a great gulf between the two and that one could not pass over the other.

Next, the rich man requested that Abraham send Lazarus to his father's house to warn his five brothers not to come to that place of torment. Abraham told him that they had Moses and the prophets to listen to and if they would not hear them then they would not listen even though one rose from the dead to warn them.

But the rich man is already in hell or torment here and Lazarus has already gone to paradise. What about a resurrection (John 5:28-29), and a general resurrection for all? There is no problem here. Just as in this life, if a murderer is caught, he is kept in prison until his judgment day and the time

he is sentenced to pay for his crime. The scriptures therefore teach that when the righteous man or the faithful Christian dies that he will go immediately to paradise or the place of the righteous dead. It further teaches that when the wicked person dies that he will go immediately to torment or to the place of the wicked dead.

When the Lord returns (1 Thessalonians 4:16), all will hear his voice and will be resurrected from the grave or will come forth from paradise and torment: to appear before the Lord to be judged and sentenced (Acts 17:31; Matthew 25:31-46). Finally, the record says in the words of Jesus that the wicked or unsaved "shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matthew 25:46).

That means then that

those who die remain conscious of who they are, of what they have done, and of others. The soul or spirit then goes into paradise or torment, according to whether they are saved or lost. Then at the judgment they will be sentenced by the righteous judge to an eternal hell with the devil and his angels or to live with the Lord in heaven with all of the saved forever more.

Death and the judgment will be final and one's destination will be eternal. There will be no second chance and neither will the wicked cease to exist. The soul will live on forever either in heaven or hell.

My friend, we have today to prepare to meet the Lord and to get our soul ready to live in heaven. Please do not neglect your salvation and end up lost for all eternity.

J.C. Choate

## "Know When To Say No"

For the past few years the Anheuser-Busch brewery in St. Louis has sponsored a high-profile advertising campaign. Television commercials, bill boards along our interstate high-ways, magazine and news-paper ads all stress the importance of "knowing when to say when."

This high-priced, high-powered campaign is noteworthy for at least two reasons. First, it assumes-- and rightly so-- the

destructive and damning nature of beverage alcohol. Second, we must oppose any effort designed to cause people to believe that alcohol, a killer, can be controlled and regulated through education, experience, will-power, or whatever. That is just not so.

Only one out of three of all adults in our nation do not drink alcohol. It is estimated that there are some 95,000,000 drinkers in the U.S. Ten million of these

are classified as "problem drinkers" (defined in 1978 by the Department of HEW as one who drinks to such an extent that his physical, mental or social functioning is impaired); some three million teenagers are included in this category. A USA TODAY -- Lou Harris poll indicates that two out of three Americans know someone who drinks too much, fifty-six percent say that a heavy drinker is "close to me," and more

than a third of our nation's households are suffering from alcohol-related problems. Alcohol is the third ranking cause of birth defects, 80% of all fire deaths, two thirds of all deaths by drowning, a third of all suicides, 70% of all fatal falls, 50% of all major crimes, more than half of all highway fatalities. All told, alcohol is involved in 95,000 deaths each year. Medical research has uncovered a link between

alcohol and some thirty major diseases. And, these recent studies have demonstrated that it is not only the heavy drinker and chronic abuser of alcohol that suffers; the first sip of beverage alcohol begins to break down and harm the body, brain and soul of man. We need to learn when to say when!

Author Unknown



APRIL 19, 1996

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Of Heaven" (Part II)

\* The Meaning Of  
"Private Interpretation"

\* Pictures From Life's Other Side

\* Phone Tag

\* Have You Been Offended?

Volume 33 Number 13  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

" I am not mad, most noble Festus; but s] Words of Truth and soberness."--Ac

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## "The Seven Wonders Of Heaven" (Part II)

In the previous article, I discussed three of the Seven Wonders of Heaven, they were: **I WONDER IF THERE IS A HEAVEN, I WONDER FOR WHOM IT WAS MADE, and I WONDER WHAT IT WILL BE LIKE.** The purpose of this article is to reveal the last four wonders of heaven.

**I WONDER WHEN HEAVEN WILL BEGIN.** They say the anticipation of something wonderful is sometimes greater than the thing itself. That may be true in references to things pertaining to this life and perhaps true for things in the life to come. Consider a faithful Christian, who is now on his death bed, anticipating the moment he breaths his last on this side of eternity, and then passes into the peaceful bliss on the other side. Or, consider all those loved ones who have stepped out into eternity before us, and how we long for the day when we will see them again. On that day we will attend the "family reunion," of all "family reunions," a "family reunion" that will never come to an end. When will such a marvelous event take place?

The Bible tells us that; that the day will come at the judgment. The apostle John wrote, "Marvel not

*at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation"* (John 5:28-29). It is a day that will be prompted by the Lord descending from heaven. *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with a 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"* (I Thess. 4:16-17). It is a day that will begin when the last enemy has been abolished (I Cor. 15:25), which is death. It is then *"...when the chief Shepherd shall appear,"* and all the faithful will *"receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away"* (I Peter 5:4). This brings us to the fifth wonder of heaven.

**I WONDER WHO WILL BE IN HEAVEN.** The Bible clearly teaches who will make up that heavenly roll. We sing that wonderful hymn *"When the roll is called up yonder I'll be there."* Do

we really want to go to heaven as genuinely as we love to sing about it? Those who have obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ will be there (Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38). The apostle Peter said that Christ was *"...the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him"* (2 Pet. 3:9) In the very face of death, those who withstand and remain faithful, will be there (Rev. 2:10).

I wonder if my mother and father will be there. What about my brothers and sisters? I wonder if my neighbor is going to be in Heaven? I wonder if I will make it to heaven if I fail to carry the gospel to my loved ones, and to my neighbors, and to those who are across the great seas beyond (Matt. 25:31-46, Matt. 28:19-20)? Some of us need to stop "wondering" and start "working," lest the Lord appears and finds us unprepared. This brings us to the sixth wonder of heaven?

**I WONDER WHO WILL NOT BE IN HEAVEN.** Those individuals who have failed to render obedience to the gospel of Christ will not be in heaven. We read these thundering words from the apostle Paul, *"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, 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"* (2 Thess. 1:6-9). We read such passages as this and we shudder at such stern language, yet we have been preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ in America for more than 200 years and by far the greatest percentage of our population could care less about obeying the gospel of Christ. How many people come to the worship assemblies and sit there occupying that same old pew and hear the glories of Heaven and the horrors of hell, and then walk out of the building unaffected, and repeat the same process every Sunday? They hear that wonderful invitation extended every time they're in the building, but they refuse and refuse to respond to the Lord's invitation. How, oh how many people today are lifting up their eyes in

torment and pleading to hear just one more stanza of "Just As I Am?"

Secondly, those individuals, who have obeyed the gospel of Christ and have since fallen victim to the world, will not populate Heaven. How said it would be to come to a knowledge of Almighty God and then because of the attractiveness of worldliness become entangled therein, and as a result fall away? Peter reminded us of this great truth. *"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire"* (II Peter 2:20-22). This brings us to the seventh wonder of Heaven.

(Continued on Page 3)



# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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## The Meaning Of "Private Interpretation"

2 Peter 1:20 says, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation."

Surely among the most popular verses to misunderstand and mis-apply, this note from Peter would be included. How many times has the keenly sharpened sword of the Spirit been considered weak and dull by someone who shakes his head and declares, "That's just your interpretation, and the Bible is of no private interpretation!"

Over the years speculation has suggested that the meaning of this passage is that no prophecy can be interpreted of itself, but can be understood only by comparing it with the event. Others have said that it teaches that the prophets did not themselves understand what they wrote, but were passive organs under the dictation of the Holy Spirit to communicate to future times what they could not themselves explain. Still others have said that it teaches that the prophecies, besides having a literal signification, have also a hidden and mystical sense which cannot be learned from the prophecies themselves, but is to be

perceived by a peculiar power of insight imparted by the Holy Ghost, enabling men to understand their mysteries. In the past some Catholic leaders asserted that this passage proves that the people at large should not have free access to the word of God, and should not be allowed to interpret for themselves.

Just what did the Holy Spirit have in mind when He revealed to Peter these interesting words: "...no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation."

First, look at the original words. "Private" comes from the Greek word "idos" (pronounced id'-ee-os), which means according to Strong's, "Pertaining to one's self, one's own belonging to one's self." It is translated "his own" 48 times, "their own" 13 times, and "privately" 8 times, etc..

The word for interpretation is found only once in the Bible. In the Greek it is "epilusis," (Pronounced ep-il-oo-sis). It simply means "a loosening, unlossing." Metaphorically, "interpretation." It points to the idea that what is thus released or lossed was before bound, entangled, or obscure.

Defining the Greek words doesn't give us a

complete understanding, but the context certainly does! A with many misunderstood passages, a careful reading of the surrounding verses is very enlightening. Read this verse with the one which follows:

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Clearly the point Peter is making is that the scriptures originated with the Holy Ghost and not in the mind of men. It has nothing to do with suggesting that no one is at liberty to assert the meaning of a given verse, and thus claim truth. Nor does it suggest that some mystical communication from the Holy Spirit is necessary to understand God's word. And it certainly doesn't teach that religious organizations should keep the Bible out of the hands of the common man.

This text discussing "Private interpretation" simply refers to where the scriptures came from. We can place certain trust in God's inspired word because it was not filtered through the fickle mind of opinionated men. What

we have in the Bible is actually the word of God.

This passage re-affirms something we learn from other passages which point to the origin of the Bible:

Matthew 4:4 says, "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Look at the respect which Jesus had for the written word! It's origin? It "proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

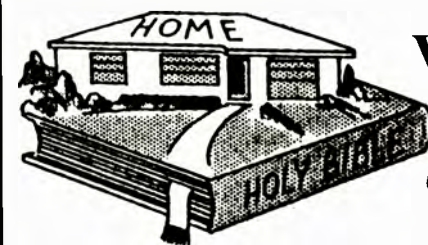
2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...". This principle, though originally applied to the Old Testament, applies

equally to the New Testament scriptures.

2 Samuel 23:2 says, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue."

The validity of the Bible, and what makes it the "lamp unto our feet and light unto our pathway," is that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Glenn Colley



### The Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

#### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. thirty-five per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$18.20 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, P.O. Box 430, Haleyville, AL 35565.



## “The Seven Wonders Of Heaven” (Part II)

(Continued from Page 1)

**I WONDER HOW ONE CAN GO TO THIS PLACE CALLED HEAVEN.** First, we are going to have to be prepared. Procrastination is not only a thief of time, but it is a thief of souls. Paul said, “Behold, now is the day of salvation!” (II Corinthians 6:2. emp. added JR). Solomon said, “Remember now they Creator in the days of thy youth” (Ecclesiastes 12:1) Why? “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:14). The time to start preparing for Heaven is today. Someone

has said, “that one good thing about procrastination is that the individual always has something to look forward to the next day.” That may be humorous when it comes to secular matters, but friends it is dangerous when it comes to spiritual matters. The time is today. Tomorrow may be too late.

Have you ever read Hebrews 11:13-16? “*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.. For they that say such things declare plainly*

*that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore (here’s the reason) God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”*

We talk about those mansions the Lord has prepared for us, but friends he has prepared those mansions for those who will forsake the world, and their friends, and their kindred, and everything else. It is for these individuals that God has prepared a city for,

and who is not ashamed to be called their God.

The apostle John told us that at the judgment there are going to be two classes of individuals present. “*And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming*” (I John 2:28). What is the key to being confident and not ashamed when he returns? When we do the things that God has commanded us to do, and continue therein, we are abiding in Him (2 John 9-11). Then when he appears we will be confident and not ashamed. It is then when we

can rejoice, knowing that our “*names are written in heaven*” (Luke 10:20), and can all remember that wonderful hymn we used to love to sing:

*Often I'm hindered on my way,  
Burdened so heavy I almost fall;  
Then I hear Jesus sweetly say,  
Heaven will surely be worth it all,  
Heaven will surely be worth it all.  
Worth all the sorrows that here befall  
After this life with all its strife,  
Heaven will surely be worth it all.  
How wonderful heaven must be!*

**Jason R. Roberts**

## Pictures From Life's Other Side

The Holy Bible may be likened a great store-house of information. In the Bible we can read of God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We can learn of how God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1-2). Here we have the story of the first man and the first woman. (Hebrews 1:1-2; 11:3). Man is the “offspring of God” (Acts 17:28). Man’s nearest relative is God---not the monkey, not the ape as is asserted by Agnostics.

To illustrate, the story is told of a young couple who had been told that if a baby monkey were given the same training as that given to a baby, the monkey would be equal to the baby. Thus, when their first baby was born they obtained a baby monkey and gave it the same training they gave their baby. When the baby grew to be 18 years of age, he went away to the University, but the monkey went back to the Zoo. Suffice it to say that both parents were University people.

Here we suggest that our readers turn to Luke 16:13-31. Jesus taught many great lessons in these verses. We shall call your attention to several of them. (1) Man, no

matter how sincere, cannot serve God and mammon (wealth). (2) The Pharisees who loved money justified themselves in the sight of men but God knew their hearts (vs. 14). Many things which are revered by men are an abomination before God, as wealth at any cost, or religious institutions not established by God’s authority (Matthew 13:15; Colossians 3:17; Matthew 28:18-20). (3) God’s marriage is always true regardless of any rationalism (vs. 18). (4) Heaven and earth shall passaway but His word shall not fail (vs. 17).

Refresh your mind by reading again Luke 16:13-31. Is this a parable? Jesus did not so teach. We take the position that this is a historical account, although we would not be dogmatic. Here we have the story of two men who lived, who died, and who ended up in the next world. Their identities are the same, their memories are intact, they are conscious. If our identity is lost and our memory perishes. how could we be rewarded according to our works? (II Corinthians 5:10; Ephesians 6:7-8; Colossians 3:24-25).

Some lessons we can learn from the state of the dead as pictured in Luke 16:19-31? We shall note...

(1) The doctrine of materialism is wholly false. Man is subject, intellectual and spiritual forces. Man is not wholly matter. Man possesses a body and a soul (Matthew 10:28). Jesus said, “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall he give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26). Hence, one part of man can be seen but the other part cannot be seen (II Corinthians 4:16-18). Paul taught that those faithful souls whom he taught would be present at the coming of Jesus Christ (I Thessalonians 2:19). Thus man lives after death (Matthew 8:11; 17:1-5).

(2) We learn that the doctrine of universal salvation is false. The rich man was lost but Lazarus was saved. Read again the text. Jesus stated the truth in the following words: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). Acts 2:36-38 is a divine example of how the Great

Commission was carried out. What happens to those who refuse to obey the gospel of Christ? (I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Obedience to God’s commandments assures entrance into heaven, but disobedience classes one with sorcerers, whoremongers, murders, idolaters, and those who love lying (Revelation 22:14-15).

(3) We learn that the doctrine of purgatory, indulgences, and penance, although popular with many people, is false. This is the doctrine of a second chance. But your Bible teaches no such doctrine. There is a great Gulf which separate the saved and the lost.

(Continued on Page 4)

### Most Of A Minute Phone Tag

I don't know who coined the phrase "Phone tag", but I play it alot. He's out, so I leave my message on his machine. When he returns the call, I'm out, so he leaves a message on my machine. For busy people like you and me, this frustrating game could go on for days!

There are some things about God which I believe, but cannot comprehend. One has reference to the thousands or million people praying to Him at any given time, and He hears. It's the same amazement I have with the hairs of our head being numbered and God knowing when a little sparrow falls. He hears and answers the prayers of His people.

There is a time when He will not answer your "call" of prayer. The Bible teaches over and over that if we reject God's word when we shouldn't expect an answer to our prayers. In fact, Proverb 28:9 says, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination. "Live for Christ, and enjoy the blessings which accompany faithful Christianity; like the answer to your "calls".

Glenn Colley



## Pictures From Life's Other Side

(Continued from Page 3)

"And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence" (Luke 16:26). Where is the Scripture which teaches that sins can be forgiven after death? If the Rich Man's request had been granted his brothers would not have believed their brother was in hell.

(4) We learn that the doctrine of the inadequacy of God's word is false. The rich man who was already in hell became very interwasted in his five brethren. He didn't want them to come where he was. He said, "I pray thee, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren, that he may testify

unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment" (Luke 16:27-28). He wanted something in addition to God's word--His divine revelation (II Timothy 3:16-17). Today we hear those who claim prayer and the direct operation of the Holy Spirit as the avenue of salvation. (Hebrews 4:12-13; Psalm 19:7; Ephesians 6:17; I Peter 1:22-25; Romans 1:16). Sometimes people depend upon their feelings rather than the truth of God.

Listen to the Scripture, "Abraham said unto them, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose

from the dead" (Luke 16:29-31).

God does not use miracles and signs and feelings to save sinners. The rich man "was clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day." This was his only crime. He refused to aid the beggar. He used his money only for himself. The rich man was guilty of self-indulgence. This Jesus condemned, but the Pharisees justified it (Luke 16:14-16). One can be deceived by his wealth. It is not money but how it is used that is sin.

(5) We learn that man's destiny is determined from the way he responds to the truth of God. The only means by which the Holy Spirit speaks to sinners is through the word of God (John 17:1; I Peter 1:23). Feelings cannot be evidence of one's salvation. Feelings would

justify all false religions on earth, for all these feel like they are saved, although they are a million miles from the truth of God.

A) Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

B) Jesus said, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man which built a house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock; and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it; for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a

foundation built a house upon the earth; against which the streams did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great" (Luke 6:46-49). Sinner, friend, you must believe (Hebrews 11:6), repent of your sins (Luke 13:3), confess the name of Jesus (Matthew 10:32; Acts 8:37), and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:36-47). Following one's obedience to the gospel of Christ, one must be faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10). If one does not become a Christian, one will end up where the Rich Man did.

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## Have You Been Offended?

I know of a few scriptures that have been more mishandled and misapplied by brethren than the apostle Paul's comment in Romans 14:21, where he said, "It is neither good to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or made weak." This passage has been consistently utilized by those who claim their "feelings" have been hurt and then have concluded that they've been "offended." This hackneyed retort has been applied to everything from sermons that were too strong for the liking of some, to the way some brethren greet one another.

If the passages implied what some have inferred, Christians would be so shackled by the "feelings" of weak brethren, that preachers could not preach the whole counsel of God, nor could any action be undertaken by

brethren without first consulting every brother or sister's feelings about an issue or circumstance. Hurt feelings are not what is under consideration in Romans 14:21.

First, Romans 14 deals with, according to verse 2 of this chapter, "Doubtful disputations," or matters of dispute. Paul was addressing things not right or wrong within themselves, but matters of opinion. The eating of meat had to do with meat that was initially offered to idols and then bought in the marketplace. I Corinthians chapter 8 gives us the whole picture on this issue. While meat eating in itself was neither right or wrong, Paul made it clear that a Christian ought never use his liberty in Christ to set a stumbling block before a brother or sister who is weak in that matter (I Corinthians 8:9). Second, the phrase

"stumbling block" refers to an obstacle that causes one to fall. Paul speaks of a matter that causes one to think that they have fallen from grace. When a brother or sister sees another brother or sister engaged in an action, that, if they were engaged in, they would think that they had fallen out of the grace of God, then that action is parallel to what Paul was speaking of. This is far more than "hurt feelings." This is an action which causes one to fall in a practice where one's soul is lost. Paul was specifically referring to those weaker brethren who had not grown sufficiently to see clearly that a matter regarding meats ought to be a non-issue. These weaker brethren found themselves eating and violating their conscience, and the stronger brethren were well aware of what they were doing. This was condemned by Paul. The

weaker brethren were first to be taught before the stronger could except them to participate in the eating of meat. before making application of what is taught in Romans 14:21, one ought to ask these questions: (1) Did the brother or sister involve themselves in an action, that I believed, if I were involved in, would cause me to fall from the grace of God? And (2) did that brother or sister attempt to force their beliefs and actions upon me, without considering my conscience in this matter? Understanding this passage surely throws out most instances in which brethren feel offended.

Incidentally, the wine in this passage, like the meat, was wine offered to idols. The word "wine" from the greek "oinos" can mean, and does here, simply a product from the vine (Isaiah 65:8; Jeremiah 40:10; Judges 9:13;

Habakkuk 2:15). Paul spoke about being ready to be "offered," (2 Timothy 4:6). The word in the original is "spononia" which refers to drink offering likened to Numbers 15:1-10. The wine in the passage must be understood as the meats; offered to idols and then sold in the marketplace.

Remember too, that the Pharisees were offended at Jesus' words in Matthew 15:12. Jesus' response to the fact that he had offended those Jews with the truth is recorded in Matthew 15:14, "Let them alone, they be blind leaders of the blind." The preaching of the truth will always offend the worldly and carnal minded, but that does not mean we should not preach the truth.

Hopefully, these principles will help us to know when someone is really "offended."

Holger Neubauer



APRIL 26, 1996

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\*If You Believe Mark 16:16, Why Don't You Believe In The Healing And Miracles Of Mark 16:17?

\* The Methodist Conference Convenes

\*Lost Church Members

\* The Sins In The Sea

\* Leave The Judging To God

Volume 33 Number 14  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

" I am not mad, most noble Festus; but  
Words of Truth and soberness."--A

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## If You Believe Mark 16:16, Why Don't You the Healing and Miracles of Mark 16

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First of all, let ME assure you that we do believe Mark 16 the entire chapter. Certainly so - for we believe II Timothy 3:16-17, which affirms that the whole Bible is inspired. There are some religionists who discount verses 9-20 of the last chapter of Mark in order to avoid the necessity of baptism in verse 16. A while back, in a discussion with a denominational preacher from Penwell on the subject of baptism being essential, he told me that if he believed Mark 16 were in the Bible, he would be unable to escape the necessity of immersion as an entrance requirement into Christ! Well friends, it is in in the Bible.

In regard to verse 17 of Mark 16, let us quickly say that we believe it to be a part of God's Word. We accept what the Bible says in Mark 16:17 but not what our "Holiness" friends say about the passage under question.

The one who asked the question no doubt had in mind this situation: "You teach that baptism is a part

of the great commission. You teach that this command will be essential until the end of time. Why don't you also believe that miraculous signs will follow the believers till the world ends as per verse 17 of the same text?"

First of all the signs mentioned as following (or pertaining to) those who were believers in Christ made up no part of the great commission but were results of it. Secondly, even in the first century these signs were not promised nor given to every single believer. Third, we must let the Bible have its full "say" on any given subject. For instance, on this very matter of miraculous signs, we find in Acts, chapter 8, that only the apostles could transmit these gifts unto others. Philip, and evangelist, one who could perform miracles did not have the ability to pass this power on! Thus, the way to acquire these signs or gifts ceased when the last apostle died. Fourth, the purpose of these signs in the New Testament times

was not for personal gain as per the famous "healers" of this age, but it was "to confirm the word." Mark 16:20 and Hebrews 2:4, coupled with Jude 3 and Revelation 22:18-19, prove that we do not need these signs today, as all of God's Word has been revealed and confirmed. Last of all, let me remind you of the signs that did follow some believers in the first century. Verses 17 and 18 of Mark 16 mention the ability to cast out devils, speak with new tongues, take up serpents, drink deadly poison and heal the sick! Can you do those things, my friend. We have big "healing campaigns" (so-called), but I have yet to hear of a "deadly poison drinker" campaign! Some zealous ones in Georgia get killed by handling serpents every year in their campaigns just because they fail to "handle aright the word of truth," II Timothy 2:15, in regard to Mark 16:17 and the purpose of miraculous gifts in New Testament times.

In the Old Testament,

when Jehovah gave Moses the power to perform miracles, it was for the purpose of proving to Pharaoh and the Israelites that Moses was sent to deliver His people from bondage, Exodus 4, Jesus performed miracles to prove that He was the Messiah, Matthew 11:1-6; John 20:30-31. The miraculous powers given to the apostles were bestowed to "confirm the word" which they preached, Hebrews 2:1-4. We now have in the New Testament that confirmed or verified word. We need not look today for the signs which followed the apostles' work - for we have the message which the signs attended. When builders are erecting a building they work on a scaffold. But when the building is finished the scaffolding is removed. The miraculous gifts existed in the Apostolic age until John had penned the final words of the New Testament. When the purpose of miracles ended, so did the miracles.

Some affirm that the

major purpose of the miracles of Christ and the apostles was to relieve suffering and affliction. Such preachers today often infer that healing and salvation go together.

Question: If Jesus performed miracles just to show compassion why did he raise only Lazarus that day in Bethany? According to the logic of "faith healers," he should have raised the entire cemetery!

Question: If the real purpose of the apostles' miraculous power was to accompany salvation with healing, why were great Christians like Paul, Timothy and Trophimus allowed to suffer physical afflictions? Read II Corinthians 12; I Timothy 5:23; II Timothy 4:20.

Those who believe the Bible to be the complete revelation of God to man, realize that the purpose of the miraculous gifts was fulfilled when the Scriptures were completed 1900 years ago.

Johnny Ramsey



# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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## The Methodist Conference Convenes

On Monday, April 22, the 1996 General Conference of the United Methodist Church met in Denver to hammer out the churches official "policy" on various subjects of interest. Much time was spent discussing the subject of baptism, and finally a clear statement was issued. According to a front page article in the Birmingham News, April 23, 1996, "When it comes to baptism, United Methodists insist one infant sprinkle is enough and a second baptism is too much.

Getting baptized again later in life after an infant baptism should never be done, according to a position statement condemning re-baptism that was adopted Monday as official policy of the 8.6 million-member United Methodist Church."

Through the rest of the the article (which I will gladly furnish for you upon request), various statements were made to clarify the churches policy on baptism. Let's note some of these clear statements, and contrast them with the Word of God.

**1. CONFERENCE POLICY:**

"You can't be rebaptized in the United Methodist Church." Frances Moore, a member of Vestavia Hills Methodist Church who

worked on the committee that approved the document.

**BIBLE:** It is right to be "rebaptized" when ones first baptism was not according to God's will. There is only one true baptism (Ephesians 4:3-6). In Acts 19:1-5 we read of twelve men who were baptized with John's baptism after the baptism into Christ had been begun. They thought they were doing right. They were doubtless baptized out of a desire to do God's will. Yet, they had to be baptized again.

People who have been sprinkled as infants have never been baptized in accordance with the Bible. The need to be baptized in a way which the Bible teaches God will approve.

**2. CONFERENCE POLICY:**

"Whether a baptized infant grows up to be a professing Christian or not, that baptism stands valid."

Face the fact. Infant baptism is done without the clear knowledge or consent of the one being baptized. A baby hasn't a clue what the church is, or the meaning of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. This policy demonstrates that this practice involves forced entry into the Methodist church; and furthermore, that person who was sprinkled has no

way to reject his status as part of the Methodist "baptism."

**BIBLE:** In Acts 2, the people needing forgiveness from sins and to be added to the church were told this: "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins...(vs. 38)." They weren't forced to be part of the church. Furthermore, only those who repented of their sins were permitted by God to be part of His church. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, (vs. 41)."

**3. CONFERENCE POLICY:**

"That baptism is never negated," Mrs. Moore said. "It was a covenant with God and God's side of it is always there."

**BIBLE:** Acts2:38, "Repent and be baptized every one of you..." Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned..." Acts 22:16, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

The Bible clearly teaches that only those who can and will believe in Jesus and repent of sins is God's candidate for baptism. That leaves babies out of this discussion. They can neither

believe nor repent. Furthermore, they have no sins needing forgiving. They are not born in sin. Infant baptism cannot be a covenant with God if God has never agreed to accept it.

**4. CONFERENCE POLICY:**

"The baptism study reaffirmed Methodist belief in one-time infant baptism, but it also emphasized the need for a profession of faith in Jesus Christ."

**BIBLE:** "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...(Mark 16:16)."

The Methodist conference said that after a child has been sprinkled and then grows to age, he or she should profess faith in Christ. In essence this says, "He that is baptized and believes shall be saved."

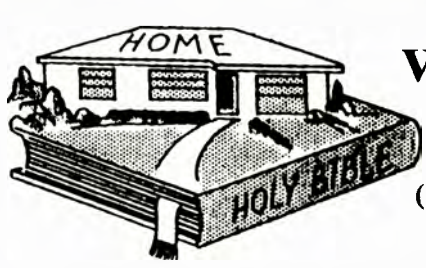
Many denominations today teach it in this order: "He that believeth and is saved shall be baptized."

Pretty confusing? It doesn't have to be. Just stick with Jesus and the Bible (John 12:48, John. 8:32). Either these conferences of men are confused about the order, or Jesus is confused. I will trust Jesus. Will you? "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Hopefully no one will take offense to this article. None is intended.

The Bible is God's Word. It is our lamp and our light. It shows us the will of Christ, and He will not be our Savior if we will not let Him be our Lord.

Glenn Colley



### The Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES**  
 Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.  
**Congregational Rates:** Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. thirty-five per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.  
**Individual rates** are \$18.20 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, P.O. Box 430, Haleyville, AL 35565.



# Lost Church Members

Most elders and preachers among churches of Christ know, personally, those members of the church who have been lost to the church. Their names can be called effortlessly.

Think of the "lost sheep" as mentioned by the Master (Matthew 10:6; 15:24). Branches that bear no fruit are cut off and burned (John 15:1-6). Any church who does not keep his/her body in subjection is certain to become a reject (I Corinthians 9:27).

Even churches of Christ can go so far from God's will and way, they cease to be churches of Christ. If you do not think so, read Revelation the 2nd and 3rd chapters. Describing the church at Laodicea the writer uses live adjectives to disclose to true nature of its spiritual condition: wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.

Salt is recognized as an agent of preservation. For centuries man has used salt. Christians (the churches of Christ) are represented as salt of the earth. "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men" (Matthew 5:13). This verse teaches that the church of Christ is to keep the world from putrefaction and corruption. The antediluvian world and Sodom were destroyed because there was not enough "salt" to save them. Christians, you should be aware that you can lose those qualities which make you salt.

Do you know that one can honor God with his lips, but be a hypocrite? (Isaiah 29:13; Ezekiel 33:31; Matthew 15:7-9). A reprobate in Scripture is one who cannot "stand the test." (Romans 1:28; II Corinthians 13:5,6,7). In Paul's day some members of

the church had become "enemies of the cross of Christ" (Philippians 3:18). Those who work to change the Lord's church can properly be described as "enemies of the cross".

In the light of what we have said, we wish to pose some pertinent question:

(1) Do you make excuses for your absence at worship? We suggest that you read Luke 14:16-24. Remember, excuses are not reasons. Excuses are pretexts; an alibi, and whitewashing. We must not allow ourselves to be hindered by love of possessions, the affairs of business, or by social affairs. The kingdom of God comes first (Matthew 6:33). The kingdom of God is our real goal---other achievements will pale into insignificance at the Great Judgment.

(2) Are you one among those who have simply cut attending the assembly? (Hebrews 10:24-25). God expects man to know and do right; the greater one's opportunity to know the truth, the greater his sin (Luke 12:47-48), if he dies in rebellion against God.

Daniel Webster, asked what was the greatest thought that had passed through his mind, answered, "My accountability to God. "You have a destiny to meet, a job to be done, a soul to be saved, victory to be won, Do not except anyone else to do your fighting or praying or suffering for you. None of us is responsible for all the things that happen to us, but we are responsible for the way we behave when they do happen. Man's whole duty to God is to fear Him and keep His commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). Under the New Testament the Lord Jesus Christ tells us clearly what we must do to be saved. Read Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47, if you truly wish to know.

(3) Have you become somewhat peeved because the elders or the preacher or some other member of the church have not done exactly as you would want done? Could it be that you are looking for a church which you will never find? A perfect church does not exist. For example the church in Corinth had many greivous problems, but it was still the church (Acts 18:8; I Corinthians 1:1-2).

(4) Are you present in your body but absent in the spirit? "For verily I, as absent in body, but present in spirit..." (I Corinthians 5:3; Colossians 2:5). One could be in the assembly while his mind is focused on the north pole. Hear Isaiah, "Forasmuch as this people draw nigh unto me, and with their mouth and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment of men which hath been taught them; therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even marvellous work and wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid" (Isaiah 29:13-14). Thus hypocritical worship is strongly condemned! Jesus quoted the foregoing Scripture in Matthew 15:7-9; Mark 7:6-9). A warning: It is very difficult for some to learn to make a distinction between serving God as He wishes to be served an serving Him as we wish to serve Him. Learn to be yourself, pretend no greatness, be willing to pass for what you are, dare to be right, though you have to stick out like a sore thumb to do it. When you come to the end of the rope, tie a knot in it and hang on (Revelation 2:10).

(5) Are you the kind of a church-member who wants to see the church of our Lord

modernized by the addition of pianos, organs, reverends and the like? Hence, the church would become just another denominational church. Thus, we would surrender all claims to being the Apostolic Church about which we read in the New Testament? (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2:36-47; Romans 16:16). We have some preachers now who assert that the church of Christ is but another denomination!! They are dreadfully wrong; we will not surrender an inch of Scriptural ground! In many places the doctrines and commandments of men are becoming very popular!

(6) Are you a church-member who through negligence fallen away from Christ and the church? One church member said, "I, little by little became concerned and indifferent and disinterested in attending the services until I just quit." Negligence is one of man's greatest sins (Hebrews 2:1-4) The Apostle Peter said, "For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus

Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first. For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back from holy commandments delivered into them" (II Peter 2:20-22, ASV).

A few words of encouragement are in order: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. let all that ye do be done in love" (I Corinthians 16:13-14).

"Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ: that, whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving from the faith of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27). Dear Christian friends, let your life be filled with both zeal and enthusiasm for the will and the way of the Lord.

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## Most Of A Minute The Sins Of The Sea

I love the enthusiasm of children.

Philippians 4:4 says to Christians, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice."

One boy put that to practice in a rather vocal way. He often exclaimed, "Hallelujah" in school. It naturally would disrupt the class from time to time, so the teacher told him to stop. Unwittingly, one day, he let out a loud "hallelujah!" and was quickly sent to the principals office. The principle, busy for the moment, gave him a geography book to look at, thinking there was nothing in there to excite the lad's religious enthusiasm. Suddenly, the principle heard a loud "hallelujah" and came running to see what made the boy so excited.

The boy smiled and said, "I was just reading in the geography book about oceans, and I came to a sentence which says that the depth of some seas has not been discovered, and my Bible says that my sins have been cast into the depth of the sea - Hallelujah!"

Micah 7:19-- "...and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea..." Yes. Hallelujah.

Glenn Colley



# Leave The Judging To God

Have you ever heard someone say, "Leave the judging to God"? On the face of it, one might think this is always a valid statement. Whereas there are certain times or contexts in which this statement might be correct, it is not always a matter of waiting for God's judgment. Sometimes we must simply accept what judgment God has already given. Unfortunately, this statement is abused all too often.

Many times this phrase is used when someone is uncomfortable with the realization of what God has already judged, it would be analogous to my saying to my son who asks me, "Dad, can I buy some candy?" "No, Son, you cannot have any candy today." Dad, could I make some candy?" he queries again. "No, Son, you cannot have any candy today" is my judgment. "Dad, could the neighbor give me some candy?" "No, Son! You cannot have any candy today." It is in this manner that many question God's revealed judgments, looking for loopholes as they do with their taxes. How foolish it is for us to refuse to accept the judgements that are already made and pretend that because we have ignored them, God is somehow going to change His decisions. God does not change (Malachi 3:6).

**1. The laws of judgment are already settled in heaven, and we can know and apply them.** God's judgment is not going to be based on

some surprise standard. The Bible is very clear how our eternal judgment will be determined. Jesus said, "*The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day*" (John 12:48). Paul revealed, "*He [God] hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained*" (Acts 17:31). Paul also wrote, "*In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel*" (Romans 2:16). James said, "*So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty*" (James 2:12).

John records the words of our Lord Who said, "*Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free*" (John 8:32). If we can know God's will on any given matter than we can, by the same token, know God's reaction to our sin and the destination of those who "*know not God and obey not the gospel*" (II Thessalonians 1:8).

**II. Where does grace fit in?** Some have a problem with fitting grace into judgment. We know that God has a part of His nature grace, love, mercy. Many questions how God can have these attributes in light of eternal damnation, specifically. Unfortunately, the modern concept of grace often fails to realize the necessity of obedience. Paul made it very clear to Titus: "*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us*

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

In no biblical account can one find the grace of God being bestowed upon the disobedient. If God had ever given grace to the ignorant, Acts 17:30, 31 declare that it is now not to be. If there is grace outside of Christ, then it would follow that there is salvation outside of Christ. If there is salvation outside of Christ, then Christ died in vain. Those who are faithful to God's Word know that there is no salvation apart from Christ (I Thessalonians 5:9; II Timothy 2:10; Hebrews 5:9).

**III. God judges both positively and negatively.** Matthew 7:21-23 contains both negative and positive, guilty and innocent judgments. Jesus said, "*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven...And I will profess unto them, I never knew you.*" "There are many who are doing wonderful works, but they are not doing the will of the Father; thus, the condemnation is passed. Notice that Jesus didn't say He might say, "Depart", but rather He "will profess depart".

Some will say that this is true with regard to a class of people, those who "do not the will of the Father", but that we should never apply it to

individuals. In other words, some argue that we can never make a determination about anyone's eternal destination. This is simply not the case, for if I cannot tell what God is going to do with regard to someone else's soul based on clear evidences of life and doctrine, then I cannot tell what God will do with my own soul.

Stephen knew that those who were stoning him to death were sinning by their deeds, and he also knew they would pay for their sins; thus, he pleaded on his attackers' behalf (Acts 7:60). Paul delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan (II Timothy 1:20); he also said that the Lord would repay Alexander the coppersmith for his evil works (II Timothy 4:14). Previously Paul and Barnabas judged that the Jews had rejected the word of God and said, "*[ye] judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life*" (Acts 13:44-46). These cases and many others demonstrate that one can know and apply that knowledge about the eternal destiny of those from whom such evidence has been manifest.

On the other hand, I can also know of one's eternal destination as a faithful Christian. Paul assumed that those in Thessalonica knew who was asleep in Jesus and could be comforted by the thoughts he penned in his first letter (4:13-18). John wrote, "*Now by this we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments*" (I John 2:3). Truly, "In

*this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest*" (I John 3:10).

**IV. Ignorance is bliss...until...** Oh, yeah, ignorance is bliss alright - until I find out what I missed by being ignorant, or until I find out what was hurting me in my ignorance. Some, however, make ignorance bliss for all eternity, at least as far as God is concerned. If the ignorant are going to fare just fine on the day of judgment, why in the world would I want to teach them the truth of the gospel and make them amenable?! Paul said to the Corinthian brethren that because he knew the terror of the Lord, he persuaded men (II Corinthians 5:11). I believe that Paul knew something about their destiny that they were ignorant about, so he went and warned them. Ezekiel's watchman was held accountable if he failed to give the warning to those who lived in his city in ignorance. However, the destruction would come upon all, regardless of their ignorance (Ezekiel 33). One fact that we must remember: It is not God's fault if someone lives his entire life in ignorance. He has done His part. We must do ours (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).

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2/28/96



# THE WORDS OF Truth

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

1996

Issue not numbered.

## THE PROPHET ELIJAH

W. A. Holley

Volume incomplete

"And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I am taken from thee. And Elisah said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing; nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, which parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisah saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof" (II Kings 2:9-12, ASV).

Elijah was one of the greatest of the prophets. He wore a garment of coarse camel-hair, which was fastened with a leather girdle. He was known for his sudden appearances prompted by great crises. He won a great victory over Jezebel, the chief supporter of Baal (See I Kings 18). Elijah proclaimed a three-year drought which came to pass (James 5:17; I Kings 18:1 ff) Elijah actually raised the dead (I Kings 17:17-24).

Centuries later John's boldness and effectiveness would be compared to "the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17). John the Baptist was not Elijah reincarnated (Matthew 11:14; 17:10-13; Mark 9:11-13; Malachi 4:5). John the Baptist showed "the spirit and power of Elijah," in his ascetic dress and life, and in his message of repentance.

What were some of Elijah's character

traits? We shall note...

(1) He was a man of remarkable courage. He would not permit formidable opposition of Jezebel the Queen, to terrorize him. He challenged the prophets of Baal to a public contest (I Kings 18:17-40). Jezebel had slain some of God's prophets (I Kings 18:13; II Kings 9:7).

Elijah was not afraid to put the truth of God on the line. (I Kings 18:21-40). Elijah was one man against 450 prophets of Baal. Truth must be defended against all opposition (Philippians 1:7,17). Today, we have some weak-kneed elders and preachers who have surrendered the truth of God to denominationalism. Believe it or not, some have joined them.

Ahab had the audacity to charge Elijah with being the source of all his trouble. He asked, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" Elijah's reply was, "I have not troubled Israel, but thou, and they father's house."

It is those changers who trouble the church now. They wish to build on the sands of permissiveness, popularity, compromise, liberalism, and anything that tends to please the majority of people. Jesus charges some of His day, saying, "Ye blind guides, that strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel." (Matthew 23:24). What does this statement mean? It refers to those who care for little things, but have an unconcern for major problems. We are charged to "MARK" those who compromise the truth of God (Romans 16:17-18). How can this be done if everything is to be swallowed?

(2) Elijah was a man of prayer. He prayed for it not to rain and he prayed for it to rain. His prayers were answered (James 5:16-17). Hence, prayer of a righteous person avails. All prayers are not answered (James 4:3). Only children of God can address Him as their Father (John 8:44). God has children and Satan has children (I John 3:10).

Note the setting: Elijah is on Mt. Carmel. He sends his servant to the top of Mt. Carmel, ordering him to look toward the Sea. He makes seven trips there; the last time he reported to Elijah, "Behold, there ariseth a small cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand." God uses natural phenomenon to answer prayer. We must pray according to God's will (I John 5:14: 3:22).

We must try to answer our own prayer. For example, if you pray for food, work for it, if you pray for sinners, teach them the gospel, if you pray for the sick, see that they have doctors and medical care (Luke 5:31-32). A well person does not need a physician.

Prayer is wonderful, prayer is powerful, prayer can change some things. Prayer can also be misused as, for example, at the mourner's bench. Where is the Scripture that authorizes it? James 5:13-15 has been abused. If the sick prayed to be healed, and if he kept on praying, he would never die. Yet, all must die (Hebrews 9:27).

(3) Elijah was one who would not compromise the truth. He uttered these words, "...How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him" (I Kings



18:21). There is no middle ground. Jesus taught that no man can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24). Even Jesus could not please everybody. Joshua ask the people to make a choice: serve God Almighty or serve idols (Joshua 24:15).

(4) Elijah was a man of moral indignation. He stood for what was morally right regardless of high political office or the wealth involved. Naboth possessed a plot of land that Ahab the King wanted. Jezebel the Queen was unscrupulous: she took what she wanted at whatever cost (I Kings 21:1 ff; II Kings 9:30-36). A Christian does the right thing no matter the cost. Thus, whatever is right or just in itself, whatever conforms to the revealed will of God. Right includes all that has been appointed by God to be acknowledged and obeyed by man. Included are the terms of salvation, worship as ordered in the Bible and all Christian living (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2: 36-38; Titus 2:11-12).

Elijah pronounced an awful curse upon Ahab's house. He said, "Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?" He continued, "In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine." Just as gods licked Naboth's blood, even so shall

they lick Jezebel's blood. See II Kings 9:30-36.

Ahab had the temerity to question Elijah; he said, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? The reply was, "I have found thee because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord." Verse 20 shows that Ahab's family was to be destroyed. Are we incensed when a brother, or the elders, or the preacher is maligned??

(5) Elijah was human. He sometimes became depressed and discouraged. He even prayed the Lord to let him die (I Kings 19:1 ff) He thought he was the only righteous person living. He was instructed that there were 7000 faithful servants still living in the land. The Bible is a strange book; it tells the good and the bad about its characters.

Courage can be present in adversity. Moral and physical courage can be summoned your will. Paul knew what it was to be beaten, shipwrecked, imprisoned, stoned, and in perils of many kinds, but he exclaimed: "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13, ASV).

P. O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580

## A NEW LOOK FOR THE WORDS OF TRUTH

*Glenn Colley*

This great periodical has been in print for thirty-three years. Begun as a joint effort between Gus Nichols and brother Jay Thornton in 1963, the Words of Truth has been a dependable source of spiritual reading material for Christians in the United States and beyond. The writers for the paper have consistently been men and women who love God's word and who through their writing, offer sound teaching and biblical insight. This has never been a paper which just reflected what people around the world were teaching, good and bad, true and false, so readers could pick and choose from the confusing lot. It has rather been what the name implies: Words of truth. It is a dependable source of solid teaching. It has always been the objective of the editors and writers of the Words of Truth to simply present sound doctrine to those who wished to read. Past editors over the years have been Gus Nichols, Bob Duncan, Flavil Nichols, David Wade, and Joe Spivey.

Now, after great consideration and planning, the Words of Truth is about to get a facelift. Naturally, what is being changed is not so important as what is being left the same—good, meaty articles filled with God's word. the writers you have

enjoyed and whose articles you look forward to reading each week will still be there—men like Johnny Ramsey, Mel Futrel, B. J. Clarke, Dennis Gullede, Neal Pollard, Robert Taylor, Allen Webster, Jason Roberts, Winfred Clarke, W. A. Holley, and so many more. You'll still see The Most of A Minute featured each week. You'll read clear and reasoned articles which sometimes focus on issues from strengthening the parents of young children to problems troubling the brotherhood. The paper will continue to come to your home or office or church building every week, and although the paper is making some handsome changes, the price has not increased. This is a non-profit venture. Every cent paid in subscription goes directly to the publisher and the postal service. We believe the money a family or church spends in subscribing to the Words of Truth is money well spent. Christians need more each week than Time and Newsweek and Readers Digest, and the Words of Truth is a great addition to our weekly reading. Placed on the coffee table or countertop in your home it will bring questions from visitors who happen to pick it up, and hopefully open conversations which will lead them to Christ.

What we are changing is the layout and design of the paper. We've added color to the front, and changed the measurements so each issue will fit into a binder for permanent keeping. We feel that this more attractive design will encourage people to pick it up and read it. The type will be clear, dark, and pleasing to the eye.

This particular issue is our first in the new design. We are mailing it out, free of charge, as a sample to let our current subscribers get a look at the new Words of Truth, and to build interest in potential subscribers.

We would welcome your comments or suggestions.

May God continue to bless us with His wonderful grace as we seek to do His will.



# MOST OF A MINUTE

Glenn Colley

## I WISH I HADN'T SAID THAT

Do you ever say words you wish you could pull back?

I love the story of the two men who happened to meet after having not seen one another for several years. "How is your wife?" One asked.

"She's in heaven." replied the friend.

"Oh, I'm sorry." Then he realized that was not the thing to say, so he added, "I mean I'm glad!" And that was even worse. He final-

ly came out with, "Well, I'm surprised!"

James three of the Bible expresses great caution regarding the words we speak. How quickly in a time of anger or inattention words are spoken which do real damage to people's lives. In discussing this subject the Bible says, "How great a matter a little fire kindleth." With a cardboard match you can burn a forest of trees. With thoughtless words you can destroy good relationships and reputations.

Let us taste our words before we speak them.

# COMMUNITY CHURCHES AND GENERIC NAMES

David Sain

Some churches of Christ are changing their names from names like FIRST STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST to generic names, such as THE COMMUNITY CHURCH or THE FAMILY OF GOD. Proponents of such a change, with whom I have discussed the matter, say that the traditional name, CHURCH OF CHRIST, has "too much baggage" attached to it, and that "it has a negative effect when people see that name on a sign in front of the church building." It is argued that a generic name will not "turn people off" and will be more effective in reaching people.

I find this to be so ironic because of something that took place recently in Florence. After worship one Sunday morning, I met a young couple who was visiting us for the first time. Sean and Candice had just moved here from Oregon, after he accepted a position with Big River Broadcasting Company. He was Catholic and she was a Mormon.

Rarely have I studied with anyone as hungry to know the Truth as they were, so I was not surprised when they were baptized for the remission of sins and became Christians three weeks later.

Now, here is the ironic part. Sean told me that, before they came to worship that first Sunday, they were walking in downtown Florence and saw our sign which reads, WOOD AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST. They did not know anything about us—had never even seen a "church of Christ building." But, Sean said they decided to come to Wood Avenue because they wanted to be a part of a church that unashamedly identifies themselves as a church that belongs to Christ!

How ironic. That which initially attracted Sean and Candice is the very thing that some want to change!

Florence, Alabama

Beautiful parables illuminated Jesus' words in the minds of His hearers. In fact, Jesus used parables so often that Matthew wrote concerning Him, "All these things spoke Jesus unto the multitudes in parables; and without a parable spoke he not unto them" (Matthew 13:34)

It has often been said that a parable is "an earthly story with a

heavenly meaning." In other words, a parable is an illustration which describes that which is common to teach a moral which is uncommon.

Not everyone who heard Jesus' parables understood His meaning. Some were so wrapped up in the common that the uncommon, spiritual thoughts passed right by them. Thus, parables separated the good from the bad, the spiritually-minded from the carnally-minded, the righteous from the unrighteous (cf. Matthew 13:11-17; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40).

There are somewhere in the neighborhood of sixty parables recorded in scripture. It is difficult to be exact because of the varied definitions of parables. Some of the most heart-warming parables are

- \*the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-24)
- \*the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)
- \*the Pharisee and the Publican (Luke 18:9-14).

Parables about the precious church/kingdom are also very inspirational.

- \*A House Divided (Matthew 12:22-37)
- \*The Mustard Seed (Mark 4:30-32)
- \*The Pearl of Great Price (Mark 18:45, 46)

Parables which remind us of judgment to come are very effective in getting us to look at eternity.

- \*The Drag Net (Matthew 13:47-50)
- \*The Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13)
- \*The Barren Fig Tree (Luke 13:6-10)

As you can see, there are many different types of parables and many different parables. Each one teaches its own unique lesson designed to reveal a valuable lesson to those who hear. If you wish to develop a stronger appreciation for Christ, His church and the grace by which you are saved, sit down and read the parables of our Lord. You'll be glad you did.

M. Floyd Bailey, Jr.



# LESSONS FROM JOSEPH

Study from any portion of scripture would be profitable for all (II Timothy 3:16-17). A true understanding of the Old Testament for our lives demands that we recognize that it is not binding on us as our law (Col. 2:14). But, a study thereof is demanded, necessary, and so very profitable (Rom. 15:4). Think of all the examples recorded for our admonition (I Cor. 10:6, 11). Your life can be greatly enriched by a study of the Old Testament. One marvelous example who though long dead continues to speak volumes to us by his life if we will only study his life. This man is Joseph, son of Jacob and Rachel. There are so many powerful lessons we could glean from the portion of the Book of Genesis that deals with his life. Notice with me four verses from the Bible record that relate to this account of Joseph. We will notice them in the order that they appear in the Book of Genesis. These lessons can have a tremendous effect in our lives.

I) GENESIS 39:9, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Would to God that we all had this attitude toward sin, purity, and the Lord. Here was a man, a young man, that could see beyond the glitter of sin to the real ugliness of sin. Joseph would not do that which would bring hurt to the heavenly Father. O how the world needs to see the truth about sin as did Joseph. Sin is against God. Sin separates one from God. The way of sin is hard. Sin has a stiff penalty. Its pleasures are ever so temporary. May we all see the result of sin and not just its pleasures.

II) GENESIS 44:30, "His life is bound up in the lad's life." This has reference to the feelings of Jacob toward Benjamin, the youngest full brother of Joseph. Parents lives ought to be bound up to a great extent in the lives of their children. Parents are to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:1-4). Spiritual traits are to be instilled within (II Tim. 1:5). Parents ought to lay up for the children (II Cor. 12:14). Parents are to provide for

them (I Tim. 5:8). Parents have only a few precious years with their children. Take advantage of them.

III) GENESIS 45:28, "Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die." Death is coming sometime. It could come anytime. What do you need to have taken care of before you die? Are there things that you sure want to do before death comes? What are you doing about it? Some plan to obey the gospel; others plan to be restored. Wouldn't it be sad if you died before these things were done? Please get busy doing the things you need to do because time could be very short. It most certainly will be for some and it could be for you and me.

IV) GENESIS 50:20, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good." This is such a marvelous and mature attitude toward suffering, mistreatment, and misfortune in life. God can override the evil that others inflict upon us and even bring something good therefrom. He can make all such work for our good (Rom. 8:28). Patience can be produced. God is in control. We don't have to get even. Lean on the Lord.

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# THE WORDS OF Truth

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

Issue not numbered.

## Elders Aren't Deacons

Glenn Colley

1996

Great care should be taken in the church of Christ to preserve the church government as taught in the New Testament. Just because the church was once restored in a town doesn't necessarily mean it will stay restored to the ancient order of things. With reference to this article's title, consider an irony. In some denominational churches deacons play the role of elders. In some of the churches of Christ, the elders play the role of deacons. One practice is no better than the other. Both are contrary to God's way.

There was once a corporation employing many men. All had their own duties, and did them well. Duties ranged from company president to loading dock assistant. One day, one of the vice presidents retired. The board of directors quickly promoted the likely choice, the next man down in the chain, the supervisor over shipping. It made sense. He'd been there the longest. He was a shoe-in.

But it didn't work out. He was great as a supervisor, but now that he was vice president, he just kept right on doing what he knew best—being a supervisor. That caused a bit of chaos. The president had to start doing some vice-president's work to make up. The new supervisor who had replaced this man had to do dock work instead of supervising, because the new vice-president was still doing supervising work. What gradually happened was that the jobs behind each title changed. The jobs were reduced in each department simply because a man was placed in a position for which he was not suited. And one more thing: he was not happy in the new job.

This can happen in the church. The elders do the deacons work, the deacons do the Christians work, and the Christians do little. In some churches deacons are considered junior elders. The Bible does not teach this idea, we have simply found that young men who meet the qualifications for deacons in I Timothy 3 often later grow to also meet the qualifications for elders. But a man may certainly become an elder who never served as a deacon. Deacons fill an important role and may surely do so throughout old age as health permits.

Elders need to act like elders and not like deacons. When the eldership of a church becomes timid, or fearful, or lazy and prefers to do the work suited to deacons, they fall into a devil's trap. God isn't playing games in the design of His church. He sent His Son to die to purchase the church (Acts 20:28), and gave us His word for a pattern of instructions on how to please Him in the church. We are not at liberty to change the truth about church government in the church of Christ any more than the Catholics are in making a pope.

Elders have different qualifications than deacons, (I Tim. 3:1-7, I Tim. 3:8-13). While there are similarities between the two lists of qualifications, the fact that the Holy Spirit gave us two separate

offices demonstrates that elders are different from deacons.

The deacons, with all the members of the church, are to submit themselves to the elders. A deacon has no more right to reject the rightful decisions of the elders than any other member of the church. Hebrews 13:17 says, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." This is clearly speaking of the elders, for to the elders Paul said in Acts 20:28, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

Elders have different duties than deacons. This is seen easily in the meaning of the job descriptions. The word deacon in First Timothy three, according to Strongs, means "one who executes the commands of another, esp. Of a master, a servant, attendant, minister." The word can mean, according to the Greek Lexicon, "the servant of a king," "a deacon, one who, by virtue of the office assigned to him by the church, cares for the poor and has charge of an distributes the money collected for their use."

On the other hand, the word elder in passages such as First Timothy three and First Peter five, means, "Overseership, office, charge...the overseer or presiding officers of a Christian church," "among Christians, those who presided over the assemblies or churches. The New Testament uses the term bishop, elders, and presbyters interchangeably." The word Paul used to describe elders in Acts 20:28 is "overseers." In the Greek language that word means, "A man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian or superintendent," "The superintendent, elder, or overseer of a Christian church."

Elders may find that the frequent duty of visiting with church members about their spiritual well-being is difficult, time consuming, and sometimes stressfully uncomfortable. The shepherds (elders) are clearly the ones who must lead in church discipline, and that's never easy. They may prefer the job of the deacons—caring for the physical needs of the church—building and grounds, feeding of widows, etc. Yet to do so puts an elder in the position of compromise. He has abandoned his post, and needs to repent and return. You were ordained as a shepherd and elder. Act like one! Lead like one! The church desperately needs dedicated, godly elders today as much or more than ever before. Take heed ye shepherds; don't scatter the sheep.

Elders aren't deacons.



# “There’s No Omission In The Great Commission”

Matthew 28:18-20 • By: Jason R. Roberts

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” The reader will observe that our Lord in this brief text announced three challenges for every child of God.

First, the Lord States a Declaration. He said “Go Ye. . .” (v.19), and thus brother Ivan Stewart’s book was accurately titled, “Go Ye Means Go Me!” Yes, the responsibility of carrying out the Great Commission rests squarely upon the shoulders of every child of God. The gospel was not given solely to missionaries, nor was it given to elders, or deacons, or preachers, or men versus women, but it was given into the hands of the saints (Jude 3). We are the divine depositors of truth, and so that means grandmothers, grandfathers, young men, young women, and yes, even teenagers who have obeyed the gospel, all have the sacred, solemn responsibility of fulfilling the Great Commission! And friends there’s going to be more “Christians” in hell for refusing to carry out the Great Commission than there will be there for committing the sin of adultery! A lot of our brethren would never be unfaithful to their mates, but they will emphatically refuse to carry the gospel to a lost and dying world, as well as refuse to send someone who could. We know of a certainty that those individuals who step out into eternity unprepared to meet God will be lost, eternally lost! But what we often fail to remember is that we are going to be lost if we refuse to teach them.

Second, our Lord States the Destination. He said, “Go ye therefore and teach all nations” (v. 19a). Mark’s account instructs us to “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). God Almighty wants the gospel message to ring throughout every village, every town, every city, every nation, throughout all our lifetime.

Walter Scott, a pioneer preacher, more than one hundred years ago stated truly what our task really is. He said, “Go is a verb in the imperative mood. It is not simply indicative and declarative. It does not merely state a fact, but enjoins a duty. ‘Go ye into all the world,’ to Europe to Africa, to America, and to all the islands of the sea. Leave your footprints on the snows of the frozen north. Trace out your pathways in the flowery pampas of the balmy south. Seek the setting sun, the far west, the wild prairies and the wildest men that inhabit them. Search out the lands of figs

and dates, the lands of the vines and olives. Tread over the golden sands and along the rivers gleaming with diamonds and gold far, far away. Go to those who water their steeds in the Rhine; to those who bathe in the Nile and the Niger, the sacred Ganges, Indus, Brahamaputra and Irrawaddi. Go to the ends of the earth for your success will be the ratio of your mobility. Words are God’s daughters and works are man’s sons: to be fruitful they must be married to each other.”

God Almighty wants an ingathering of souls in every generation; so that not one single creature will step out into eternity unprepared to meet their God. Statiticans tell us that within every twenty-four hours that passes, more than a hundred thousand men, women, and children step out into eternity. Every single one of them that have reached the age of accountability is accountable to God Almighty, and by far the greatest percentage of that number that step out into eternity are unprepared to meet Jehovah God. The Bible teaches us that “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” (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

Third, the Lord States the Duty. “. . . make disciples of all nations (ASV), baptizing them . . . teaching them (v.19 -20a). The only way by which a lost soul can be saved is through the process of teaching and baptism (John 6:44-45; Acts 2:38, 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21), and the Christian has the only message that will save that soul. Denominational folks do not have the message to redeem lost humanity. Their message is “soul destructive,” rather than “soul reconstructive.” Therefore it goes without saying, that Christians have the only hope for this lost and dying world, and it is the precious book called the Bible and the redemptive message found therein. Let us not be ashamed to declare the gospel to every creature within our power, throughout every generation, throughout all our lifetime. We have nothing to lose by teaching others the gospel of Jesus Christ, however, we have everything to lose if we fail to do so.

There is no omission in the Great Commission. It applies to us all. Remember as you look at the word Commission that the middle letter is “I.” And let that reminder help you see that the duty to go belongs to every one of us personally.

## Most of a Minute

Glenn Colley

### FREE THINKERS

By now most Alabamians heard about the handful of students at Pelham high school in Birmingham who have started a young atheist’s club called the “free thinkers”. How sad.

Their club name is interesting and ironic because people who deny and rebel against God are not free at all. Actually they are willfully walking into the bondage of the Devil. Prov 5:22 speaks of those in sin as “holden with the cords of sin”. That is, the longer we persist in rebel-

lion against God, the more difficult it is to leave our sin.

Romans 6:16 says that you and I will always serve something. It is inherent in our nature. “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?”

Would you like to be free — free from sin and it’s punishment? A man who is truly free is free because of the truth. John 8:32, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”



# Whose Responsibilities are Orphans?

Neal Pollard

James 1:27 says, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” The writer, inspired of God, penned this epistle for a specific audience. Who received the letter from James? According to James 1:1, the Holy Spirit moved James to address “the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad” (many scholars believe this to refer to Jewish Christians made to scatter because of persecution, as the text suggests). It was directed to “brethren” (1:2; 5:20 et al), “beloved brethren” (1:16), and “my brethren” (3:1). Obviously, some of what James wrote is intended for individual Christians and the rest of it is intended for entire churches.

How does one determine (1) what the Holy Spirit through James write generically to the church, (2) what He wrote specifically to individual Christians, and (3) what, if any matter, He directed both to the church and to individual Christians? Simply, one does so through examining the context in which the command, the example, or the implication is recorded.

That there are examples in our New Testaments wherein congregations have a responsibility while individuals, in the same matter, have a responsibility is irrefutable. The Great Commission, received from the Holy Spirit by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is a charge for every congregation of God’s people to fulfill. As such, are individuals exempted therefrom? That individuals are responsible for soul-winning does not negate the church’s responsibility in that regard, either.

Observance of the Lord’s Supper is a “corporate” (collective) activity of a congregation. However, in such, individuals each have the responsibility to “examine himself” (1 Corinthians 11:28). All in the congregation are to participate in singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, “teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs...” (Colossians 3:16). In doing this, the singing must also be directed inward, for Paul tells each individual that in congregational singing one is “speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19). Singing is both a corporate and individual obligation, and both obligations are fulfilled at the same time. Corporate Bible study (1 Timothy 4:13) does not relieve the individual of personal Bible study (cf. 2 Timothy 2:15). The church is taught to pray as a part of its worship, but what is each individual Christian to be doing as he is led in prayer? All these examples do not, of themselves, prove the responsibility of Christians to take care of orphans as a congregation, but they do demonstrate that there is precedence for Christians having a dual responsibility in certain areas of life, both as a participant in something God has given the church in general to do and as an individual Christian.

James 1:27 is written to the church generally. In verse 26, James speaks in the second person plural “you.” This we know, for James says, “if any among you...” (emph., NP). In James 2:1, James continues, “My brethren...” If James is writing verse 27 to individuals, what grammatical clue do we have to show that he has switched from the plural “you” to the third person singular?

Also, what clue do we have between 1:27 and 2:1 that James is no longer talking to individual Christians, but rather is again talking to the church as a whole? Context proves that, in fact, James is giving the entire church the charge to care for the orphans and widows in James 1:27.

One may object just here, saying, “in what way is the church to ‘care’ for these destitute ones? Is that concept inherent in the word ‘visit’? Does the word ‘visit’ indicate anything more than merely stopping by to see someone? What about the Greek *episkeptomai*, which is translated ‘visit’ here? What does it generally mean?”

The church is to do whatever is involved in “visiting” these unfortunates. As we study the origin and usage of the Greek word which the Holy Spirit uses in James 1:27, we find its appearance in eleven New Testament verses (Matthew 25:36 & 43; Luke 1:68 & 78; Luke 7:16; Acts 6:3; 7:23; 15:14 & 36; Hebrews 2:6; and James 1:27). Many of the verses (specifically, Luke 1:68, 78; 7:16; Acts 15:14; Hebrews 2:6) speak of the way God visited us through His eternal plan of salvation. This is benevolence of an unparalleled degree. God gave something far superior and more necessary than material things. He gave us Christ and hope. Several of the remaining verses (Matthew 25:36, 43; James 1:27) indicate God’s command that men see to the physical needs of their fellowmen (notice the insufficiency and absurdity of the “be ye warmed and filled” religion of those in James 2:15-16). Acts 7:23 recounts Moses’ visiting Israel, and the succeeding verses demonstrate it was more than a social call. He delivered the people from oppression, introduced God’s covenant to the nation, and later sustained their physical needs in the wilderness. That leaves Acts 6:3 (where *episkeptomai* is translated “look”) and Acts 15:36 (where Paul and Barnabus determined to gauge the spiritual progress of those they had converted in their extended journeys). Thus, the overwhelming import (meaning) of *spiskeptomai* involves assisting with the needs of the needy. The needs of these fatherless and widowed persons would be physical, spiritual, and emotional. Not one part of those needs can be neglected.

We see that James 1:27 is addressed to the church, commands relieving the needs of the fatherless and widows, but in no way excuses the individual from the inspired Paul’s command that, “as we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 1:27).

How the church fulfills its obligations to orphans and widows is in the realm of judgment, as God nowhere gives a specific method for how their needs are to be met. While there may be several ways to fulfill the command of James 1:27 with regard to these needy ones, one proven way (after the example of first-century churches in Acts 11:27-30; 2 Corinthians 8-9; romans 15:26; et al) is through the cooperation of individual churches through means which do not cause each individual congregation to lose their autonomy.

May we prayerfully consider these things, knowing with certainty the obligation God has given congregations to “visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction” (James 1:27).



# Church Growth: At What Price? (No. 1)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

## Introduction

The apostle Paul spoke of church growth when he wrote, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (I Corinthians 3:6,7). Solomon, Wiseth of the Ages, spoke of the high premium we should place on truth when he wrote, "Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding" (Proverbs 23:23).

Misconceptions abound within the realm of church growth. If members are being added on a regular basis, whether converted or not, many just assume we must be doing something right else such would not occur. This is basically what one of our preachers, now deceased, said about the Crossroads people in their heyday, "They must be doing something right; look at how they are growing!" Moslems, Mormons and Catholics can produce the same argument and in far greater numbers than can we.

Church growth at any price is on today's front burner with men and women en masse and with far too many among us. Some eight major points will be presented in this short series. I shall number and note the eight!

### (1) Not At The Price of Truth

The apostle of love, John, was also the apostle of truth. He quoted our Lord as saying, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make your free...Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth...To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (John 8:31, 32; 17:17; 18:37). In his third epistle to the "well-beloved Gaius," lovable and truthful John wrote, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth (3 John 1,4).

Paul linked love, truth and growth in one precious passage, "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ..." (Ephesians 4:15)/

Truth was all powerful and precious to Simon Peter who wrote, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."

Truth should be the pearl of great price to all of us. There can be no real spiritual growth in the wake of sacrificing truth in the process.

### (2) Not at the price of compromise

Many of the church growth experts, as they like to view themselves, are not really opposed to compromise if such will aid in growth. Read what they are writing and listen to what they are saying

and see if that is not so!

Nehemiah, the great wall builder around 445 B.C., was invited to come down to the plain of Ono and dialogue with Jehovah's and Jerusalem's enemies. He refused to do such. He knew what they had in mind and he refused to have any part with such. When we are invited to come down to some modern plain of Ono, our uniform answer had better be, "ONO, I will not yield and come down." Souls will be in hell because of what has been done on the plains of Ono across the centuries.

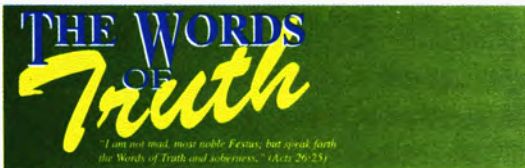
Stalwart soldiers at the Jerusalem Conference refused to bow to any sort of compromise with deadly Judaism. Paul wrote, "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Galatians 2:4,5).

Compromise is lethal. In a familiar fable there was a hunter with a gun pointed at a bear. The bear asked what were the intents of the hunter. He responded by saying, "I want a fur coat." The bear said, "All I am interested in is a full stomach; let us talk." The hunter lowered his gun and both had their wishes realized but the hunter in a far different way than he had visualized!

The door of compromise, when once opened, is mighty hard to close again. Usually that open door swings wider and wider all the time. One compromise leads to another, and another, and another, etc. A fish merchant had an advertisement written in front of his business, "Fresh fish for sale today." A critic said, "Why use the word fresh; all who know you realize you would never sell anything but FRESH fish." Off came the fresh. Another inquired as to why he had for sale on the sign. He said all knew he was in the selling business and therefore knew what he had was for sale. Off came the for sale part of his sign. Another inquired as to why he had today on the sign. He reasoned that all this man's customers knew that what he had was for sale to today. Off came the today from his sign. All he now had left was fish on the sign. The final critic of his advertising said he did not need fish on the sign because he smelled it a block away! Off came the fish with nothing left but an empty sign. We can barter away saving truth by deadly compromise. Compromise is not the way to attain and then maintain true church growth!

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# THE WORDS OF Truth

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

Issue not numbered

1996

## The Brevity of Life

by B.J. Clarke

They didn't even know what hit them. Some years ago, three professional baseball players, out for an evening of enjoyment and relaxation, smashed into a boat dock at a high rate of speed. Steven Olin died instantly. Tim Crews died hours later at the hospital. Both left behind young wives and young children. In a split second the youthful exuberance, earthly hopes, dreams and goals of these two men were snuffed out of existence. The high priced contracts they had signed were suddenly meaningless. They didn't expect to die that night, but they did.

He didn't even know what hit him. He was sitting in his house in California when a large boulder came tumbling down the mountain adjacent to his home. It smashed through the roof of his house and landed on top of him as he was reclining on the couch. He didn't expect to die that day, but he did.

They didn't even know what hit them. Their names are recorded on the pages of Sacred Scripture for all to behold. Their lives were put out like a candle in an instant. Who can forget about Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10), the 250 men who offered incense (Num. 16:35), the thousands in the congregation of Israel whose lives were taken by the Lord "as in a moment" (Num. 16:45ff), the Philistines slain at Samson's death (Judg. 16:29,30), Goliath (I Sam. 17), Uzzah (2 Sam. 6:6ff), Job's children (Job 1:18, 19), 185,000 Assyrian soldiers (Isa. 37:36), the men who threw Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego into the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:22), Belshazzar (Dan. 5:30), the 18 upon whom the tower of Siloam fell (Luke 13:4), the rich fool (Luke 12:13-21) and Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10)?

The aforementioned examples remind us of the need to heed the inspired words of Proverbs 27:1, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Truly, there is but a step between me and death (I Sam. 20:3). We are just a heartbeat away from eternity. We know not the day of our death (Gen. 27:2).

While it is true that God does not miraculously extinguish life today, and whereas we may never die suddenly and without warning, life is still very, very brief. James wrote, "Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (Jas. 4:13,14). The Psalmist declared that we spend our years as a tale that is told. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away" (Psm. 90:9,10). Man is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down. He flees like a shadow and does not continue (Job 14:1,2).

I don't expect to die today, but I might. So might you. That being the case, we must number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom (Psa. 90:12). We must redeem the time (Eph. 5:16) by being prepared at all times for the day of our death. You're not ready to live until you're ready to die! Are you ready?

## Most Of A Minute

Glenn Colley

### GETTING THE ORDER RIGHT

\* I love to study the details of scripture. Jesus said, "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth from the mouth of God, (Matt. 4:4)."

Take for example what Jesus taught in Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Consider the order in which Jesus placed these things. A man believes, he is baptized, and as a result he is saved.

Now, some today practice sprinkling of babies and say that saves them, and later that baby will grow to believe. "He that is

baptized and saved shall later believe."

Others today practice baptism but claim it has nothing whatsoever to do with salvation. They believe that "faith only" saves a man. "He that believeth and is saved shall be baptized."

I reckon someone is confused about the order of things; but considering the fact that out of these three sources for teaching belief, baptism and salvation, Jesus is the one who will judge us in the last day, so we should stick with Him. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." To be saved you must believe and be baptized.



# Do You Like A Challenge?

Johnny Ramsey

There is no greater challenge than being a Christian nor richer reward for one's endeavor than pursuing the way of righteousness. If there were no eternity, judgment day, heaven or hell, still, by far the best way to live upon this earth would be the life of a genuine Christian. The demands of the gospel make better people of us and make us far more valuable to those about us as we strive to walk in the footprints of Jesus (I Pet. 2:21). But it is not an easy way to traverse though the effort is well repaid. Even the Savior marked the roadway as one of self-denial (Luke 9:23) and Paul referred to the necessity of bringing one's thoughts and actions into subjection in order to be victorious as a Christian (I Cor. 9:27; 2 Cor. 10:5). Some folk cannot meet the challenge of the gospel because of their lack of conviction and desire. How sad it is to realize that many who once were loyal servants of Christ have now turned back to libertine existence because of the appeal of fleshly appetites (2 Peter 2:18).

The demanding nature of Christianity is based upon the integrity of the Bible. The depth of the sacred page is beyond the shallow pace of earthly existence and millions are just not willing to pay the price of stalwart devotion to the Man of Galilee. It takes no effort at all to follow Satan while the Redeemer will accept only the finest devotion (Luke 14:33). It will not work to try to compromise the integrity of the Scriptures to mesh with the lackadaisical attitude of mankind. Jesus made it clear that the message of salvation could not be compromised (John 10:35; 15:3). The poet pungently reminds us:

We have traveled together  
My Bible and I,  
Through all kinds of weather  
With smile or with sigh,  
In sorrow or in sunshine,  
In tempest or calm,  
Thy friendship unchanging,  
My lamp and my psalm.

What consolation the precious Book divine is to all faithful students of its delightful contents. The message of the Bible provides a richness that demands the best within us!

Christianity is challenging because it is built upon the deity of the Master. He has the words of eternal life (John 6:68), a name above all others (Phil. 2:9) and a glory unsurpassed (John 14:6). To be King of kings we owe allegiance that propels us into a sojourn that people of the temporal world cannot fathom (Acts 4:13). Even Napoleon, in his famous speech to General Bertrand, admitted that "the spirit of Christ overawes me." As another leader of men later wrote, so we believe as well, that our blessed Lord supersedes all rulers, armies, navies and heroes that ever lived in power, splendor and influence.

The impact of Christianity challenges us also because it is promulgated by the great commission and not by some bombastic plan set forth by mankind. The parting words of the Savior prior to going back to heaven are so simple and yet so profound. Nothing could have permeated the Roman Empire so successfully as the

humble servants of the crucified Nazarene pressing the claims of the Messiah upon that profligate society. The early saints "went everywhere preaching the Word" (Acts 8:4) and soon the message of redemption covered the ancient world as the waters cover the sea!

Truth never dies. The ages come and go,  
The mountains wear away; the stars retire,  
Destruction lays the mighty cities low,  
And empires, states and dynasties expire,  
But caught and handed onward by the wise,  
Truth Never Dies!

Christianity demands our very best because it is demonstrated by purity of life. The basic, fundamental values of the religion of the Son of God can best be seen in the dedicated demeanor of fervent disciples of the Lord. Too many times the world received a faulty impression of the way of the Cross because of our failure to portray the ethics of godliness. There is an enthralling stanza in a seldom used gospel song that ought to ring in the ears of every Christian:

Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me,  
All His wonderful passion and purity;  
May His spirit divine all my being refine,  
Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.

In Philippians we learn anew of the intense value of power of a life that magnifies Christ and shares the message of the Redeemer with others! Oh, what demands the gospel placed upon the devotees of the Savior!

Christianity is great because it brings optimism, hope and joy into the daily walk of children of the heavenly Father. Trusting in the Creator (Proverbs 3:5) instead of earth's vain trinkets gives us the enrichment that only the hope of heaven can bequeath to us. We never look back to a life of sin but ever press on to the beautiful home of the soul. As parents we choose early in life to indelibly etch into the mural and fabric of our children's lives that this world is not our home (Heb. 11:10).

A careful man I ought to be;  
A little fellow follows me;  
I do not dare to go astray  
For fear he will go the self-same way.

Let us, therefore, meet the challenging nature of Christianity with a firm commitment and deep resolve that, one day by the grace of God, when the saints go marching in to glory, we shall be there!

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# Atheism Exposed

Atheism is simply the doctrine or belief that there is no GOD or gods. And it is the opinion of this writer that it is the most anti-religious and anti-intelligent notion to ever spring from the mind of man. But for those of us that believe the Bible is GOD-breathed, the statement of David in Psalm 14:1 represents the final word:

“The fool hath said in his heart, there is no GOD.”

Brethren, either GOD exists or he doesn't. There is no middle ground. And it boils down to who or what do you believe.

Our brethren have been debating atheists for years. Alexander Campbell took on the infamous skeptic Robert Owen in 1829. W.L. Oliphant exposed the founder and first President of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, Charles Smith, in 1929. James D. Bales out-smarted Woolsey Teller in 1947. More recently Thomas Warren repelled the threats of A.G.N. Flew and Wallace Matson; while Wayne Jackson polished off Tom Carroll. These and several other brethren have taken bold steps to beat back the threat Atheism poses to our society.

In the Oliphant-Smith debate of 1929, atheists Charles Smith argued “the five fundamentals of atheism:” Materialism, Empiricism, Evolution, Hedonism, and the Existence of Evil. These items remain, to one degree or another, constants in the debate over the existence of GOD up to the present hour. But one argument of the atheist has perhaps plagued mankind more than any other. That is, the existence of evil and human suffering. The argument is an old one. Some 2200 years ago the Greek atheistic philosopher Epicurus said:

“Either GOD wishes to destroy evil and cannot; or he can but will not; or neither wishes nor has the power; or he both desires and is able. If he wishes and cannot, he is impotent; if he can but will not, he is wicked; if he neither wishes nor can, he is impotent as well as wicked; if he can and will, why does evil exist?” [As quoted in, Oliphant-Smith Debate, F.L. Rowe Publisher, 1929, p.28]

Back in 1929 Charles Smith said of the above quotation, “Epicurus bottled up GOD with logic forever in these words.” and “For two thousand years the priests have been unable to refute the Greek atheist.” But brethren, is that really true? Is there no answer to this atheistic quibble? Even though many atheists today consider the moral argument of Epicurus persuasive, it has been and will continue to be refuted. Let me suggest four brief responses.

First, no one denies that there is evil in this world; but is GOD to blame for it? Evil exists because man (a creature of free will) chose to disregard the will of GOD. Man is responsible for the entrance of sin into this world (Romans 5:12). And because of his personal wrong choices he sometimes suffers (1 Peter 4:15). True GOD could have created man as a machine with no control over his own actions (would they then even be his actions?) but this would not be good for man and GOD knew that. Thus man was created in the image of GOD (Genesis 1:26-27) and given the ability to choose.

Second, if it is admitted by the atheist that evil exists in this world; does he not then imply by that admission, as Professor Norman Geisler suggests, “an ultimate standard of justice?” [The

Intellectuals Speak Out About GOD, 1984, pp. 133-134] I believe so! And if he denies this he has either contradicted himself or abandoned reason. As brother Wayne Jackson has noted, “If there is no GOD, hence no universal system of ‘rightness’, how could there be any such thing as ‘evil’?” Essays in Apologetics, Vol. 1, 1984, pp. 98-104]

Third, a clear weakness of Epicurus' argument is that it assumes there is no benefit to or purpose for suffering and evil. Please consider the following benefits.

(1) It develops patience [James 1:2-3]

(2) It reminds us we are strangers in this world [Hebrews 11:13; 1 Peter 2:11]

(3) GOD allowed his own son to suffer [Hebrews 5:8; 1 Peter 2:21] and he is our example.

Fourth, the Epicurean argument is usually taken and used by atheists in this syllogistic form:

(1) If GOD is all good he would defeat evil.

(2) If GOD is all powerful He could defeat evil.

(3) But evil is not defeated.

(4) Therefore, no such GOD exists.

But again a false assumption is present in this argument. Premise 3 makes no allowance for time. Professor Norman Geisler has said, “Once the time factor is placed in the premise the conclusion no longer follows. For simply because GOD has not yet defeated evil does not mean that He never will defeat evil in the future.” [The Intellectuals Speak Out About GOD, 1984, chp. 9, p. 131] And isn't this what we all believe brethren, that there will be a day of reckoning. [Mt. 25:46; Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:12, etc.]

Brethren, Atheism offers nothing constructive. It is altogether destructive. How has Atheism helped our homes, schools, or society in general? It has done nothing but tear apart the very fabric which holds us together. What do you have to believe to be an atheist? Nothing. What do you have to do to be an atheist? Nothing. Atheism offers no GOD as our creator. Therefore, every atheist is an evolutionist. Atheism offers no Savior of the world, and thus, no salvation from our sins. Atheism offers no inspired Word, the Bible, to govern and guide us. And thus finds itself in the position of denying the absolute.

Only fools deny the existence of GOD (Psalm 14:1)! This is what the Bible says. What do you say?

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## SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published weekly under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. thirty-five cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month. Individual rates are \$10.50 per year. All bills payable to Words of Truth, 3051 McQueen Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36107



# Seeing Possessions As They Really Are

Glenn Colley

Do we measure a man's worth by his wealth? Do we, in our interaction with others from day to day show more attention to a rich man than to a poor one? If so, we sin (James 2:1-5, 9). Sadly, some will trade friends, loved ones, and even God for more money. Money has a blinding effect sometimes. There is a great temptation to spend our total energies trying to get more of it. To some it becomes a god.

David's prayer in I Chron. 29:11-17 is good medicine for us when we get a bit out of balance in our view of money.

1 Chronicles 29:11-17 "Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. O LORD our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own. I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee."

Now, draw some lessons.

Everything belongs to God. "All that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine...(vs. 11)." This is how I must see God in relation to all things —material and non-material. To God David ascribes ownership of greatness, power, glory, and all that is in the earth. Psalm 24:1 says, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."

Whatever you possess comes from God. Mentally pile all your earthly possessions into one big heap and declare that this is God's and you possess it because of Him. "Both riches and honor come of thee... and in thine hand it is to make great... and to give strength unto all... all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee, (I Chronicles

29:12-14)." How sad for people to be given all they have from God, and then arrogantly claim the credit for themselves without truly acknowledging Jehovah! Some might object, "I work hard. I have what I have because I stick to my job and do it well!" Yes, hard work is necessary, but who gave you the mind and ability to do that job? Deuteronomy 8:18 says, "It is he that giveth thee power to get wealth." No matter what you have gained, you cannot claim ownership independent from God.

There is a right way to look at material wealth. In verse fifteen of David's prayer he said, "For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding." There is nothing wrong with having these material blessings. The question swirls around how we will view them and use them. Through Paul the Holy Spirit wrote, "1 Timothy 6:10 10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." James 5:1 says to some who were rich and had a wrong view of their wealth, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you."

The passion for wealth is based on weak appeals and values. Why? Because we don't really own that wealth. Solomon said, "I shall leave it unto the man that shall be after me, ( Ecc. 2:18)." Tomorrow, someone else will enjoy the same blessings which you claim to own today. Furthermore, we cannot possess that wealth for very long because of the brevity of life.

In view of this impressive prayer from David we are moved to ask ourselves to ask these questions: "Do I put my material interests ahead of my God?", and "Do I give of my means to the church in a manner to please God?" I Chronicles 29:17 says, "I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee."

For today, let us work to re-adjust our view of the wealth God has given.

"Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah."

Psalm 68:19



3051 McQueen Street  
Montgomery, AL 36107

## THE WORDS OF TRUTH

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Montgomery, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to 3051 McQueen Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36107.

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# THE WORDS OF Truth

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

Issue not numbered

1996

## Searching For Jesus

A recent (April 8, 1996) cover of Time Magazine announces; "The Search for Jesus" and then proclaims that some "scholars" are debunking the Gospels. Inside, the article tells us that according to the Jesus Seminar, not much of the New Testament can be trusted. For example, some 50 panelists found it "highly unlikely" that Judas betrayed his Lord for 30 pieces of silver. Many other events in the scriptures are equally rejected. Author Stephen Mitchell is credited with deleting "many of Jesus' sayings and most of the events in his life." He is further quoted as saying "we can't be sure of anything that Jesus actually said." In the same week, the April 7 edition of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution ran a feature article called "A new look at the Good Book." It informs us that some "scholars" say it is time to revise the New Testament. In fact, some are calling for an open-ended canon, which would "allow inclusion of work by church leaders...over the 1600 years since the canon was completed." One Episcopal priest suggests "adding a third section to the Bible sort of a Newer Testament." As we contemplate these latest attacks on the word of God, three questions come to mind: (1) What makes men think the Gospel needs "debunking?" The Gospel is truth (Col 1:5). It doesn't need correcting or revising. "The word of the Lord is right; and all His works are done in truth" (Psa 33:4). Debunking implies that something is untrue. Jesus said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Incidentally, Webster defines debunking as "to expose false or exaggerated claims." Wouldn't it be a blessing if the liberal news media underwent some debunking? (2) Why would men want to revise the scriptures? What possible motive could there be that would cause men to attempt to discredit large portions of the word of God? Of course, Jehoiakim and his penknife comes to mind (Jer 36:23). His "revision" involved cutting out sections of God's word and casting it into the fire. Sounds like Jehoiakim would have been a qualified participant in the Jesus Seminar. Why attack the scriptures? Jehoiakim had no fear nor respect for the word of God (Jer 36:24). If you can do away with the Bible, you can do away with other things too, like obedience (Matt 7:21). No responsibilities, no rules, no restrictions, no restraints. A few choice cuts in the right areas, and man is left to do exactly as he pleases (Judges 17:6). (3) Will they ever find Jesus? Not the one you read about in the scriptures. As long as men continue the assault against the word of God, the true Jesus of Galilee will elude them. In spite of the efforts of the "scholars," they will

be "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim 3:7). "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Tim 3:5). Jesus said unto the mistaken religious leaders of his day; "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matt 22:29).

The search for Jesus need not be difficult, but He will never be found by human wisdom. "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor 1:21). One only needs to turn back to the Bible to find the real Jesus.) Modern day "scholars" would do well to follow His advice: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).

Jim Gillaspie 330 East Avenue Cedartown, GA 30125.

## "No Bible, No Faith"

Romans 10:17 "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." By: Jason R. Roberts

The subject of faith is fascinating and richly rewarding to any serious Bible student. The word "faith" is found no less than two-hundred and thirty-one times in the Bible, two-hundred and twenty-nine of which are in the New Testament. The word "belief" is only found once (2 Thess. 2:13) and the word "believe" is found one-hundred and thirty one times, seventeen of which are in the Old Testament. The word "believed" is found one-hundred and eleven times, twenty-two of which are in the Old Testament.

Bible faith always involves the hearer. To say it more clearly, one cannot arrive at true biblical faith unless he hears God's word. It times past, God Almighty spoke to men in various ways (Heb. 1:1-3), but now he speaks to them through his written word. There is not a continuing revelation coming down from God. His message is complete (Jude 3, 2 Tim. 3:16-17, 2 Pet. 1:3), and it is sealed (Rev. 22:18-19). Therefore, if man wants to come to a proper knowledge of the Almighty, he is only going to find his answers in the sacred pages of His holy word (Eph. 3:4). We cannot look to the stars for our answers, or to some other property in our vast universe, but only to the One who spoke the universe into existence (Gen. 1:1-2) and created those stars. Sight is a blessing to have, but sight alone is not a sufficient standard from which one



# FROM THE EDITOR

## Prayer in Public Schools

Religion touches the deepest feelings of many people and has long been an emotional issue in public schools. There have been many cases in courtrooms involving prayer in school, each one forbidding it.

May students pray at school? May students pray with others, one-on-one, or in group settings outside the classroom? May students pray over their meals on campus although others may overhear them? May students ask others to join them in prayer? These are all common questions being asked today on high school and college campuses everywhere.

Frequently we hear that students may not pray at school and school officials are instructed not to lead in prayer. In the most known case dealing with school prayer, *Wallace vs Jaffree* (1958), the Supreme Court declared that authorized "periods of silence" for meditation and voluntary prayer are unconstitutional. Because the prayers were school directed, the Court said that such an activity was helping to establish or advance religion, which was forbidden in the First Amendment of the Constitution. The First Amendment also gives us the freedom of speech, which is the right of people to say publicly or privately what they believe. Does this not pertain to prayer? It should.

The Court decision that established the law that school officials may not lead prayer was in *Engel vs Vitale* (1961). In this case, a school in New York had a daily program of invocation to God. The nature of such prayers has always been religious which was interpreted to as "establishing or advancing religion." In yet another case, the federal court once again reinforced its decision not to let the state get involved in activities involving prayer. Even state directed or state initiated prayers at football games were ruled improper because the games are school-sponsored events.

The Supreme Court's interpretation of the First Amendment declares that a state and its officials may not establish religious activity on campus. In contrast, the court declares that the state may not hinder religious activity by its citizens (students) who are participating on a voluntary basis within the compounds of the public school campus.

Today a new form of intolerance and bigotry has entered our society and it is targeted at those who hold God and religious beliefs in high esteem. However, the laws of our nation forbid such intolerance and bigotry against its citizens. Being a student in a public school does not nullify one's citizenship. Therefore, a student should be able to pray alone or with others as long as the prayer does not conflict with school activities, is not disruptive and is not forced upon other individuals.

For many supporters of school prayer the issue is values, not constitutionality. There are fighting for prayer in school to try to restore discipline and Christian values to the nation's classrooms. *"Almighty God, we ask that you bless our parents, teachers, and country throughout the day. In your name we pray, Amen"*

These sound like simple words that were not in any way meant to pressure anyone into any certain type of religion. Yet a principal in Jackson, Mississippi, Bishop Knox, lost his job after allowing the student body president to read this prayer over the intercom.

Last year a federal appeals court ruled that students could lead prayers at a Texas high school graduation. Therefore, Knox concluded that students at Wingfield High School could do the same every day. When student government leaders put the idea to the student body in

November, the vote was 490 to 96 in favor.

For three days, Knox permitted students to read a 21 word prayer over the school's intercom immediately after morning announcements. The school Superintendent ordered him to stop, suspended him when he refused, and finally fired him the day before Thanksgiving for insubordination.

A picket sign that one student held during a rally in Jackson, Mississippi, where the principal lost his job read, "Prayer changes things." Yes, it does. We need to pray for the students, teachers, and administrators in our public schools. Why not do it where they can hear it? This place is school.

Another student from the same school said that prayer should be an answer, not a problem and that we need prayer because of all the violence, among other things. The student said that it seemed as if the violence only worsened when the praying stopped. Knox too believes prayer can help alleviate problems brought only guns, gangs, drugs, and despair.

Carman, a well-known contemporary "Christian" musician, stated, "If you look at a graph on violent crime among teens, you will see that in 1962, 40 different categories of statistics relating to national morality broke...The only thing that happened in 1962 to explain this is that we took prayer out of our public school system." In fact, thousands of people blame the eliminating of prayer in public schools for the decline of morals in our country.

How can people refer to America as "a Christian nation" and then forbid prayer in certain places? How can we say we have freedom of religion and freedom of speech if we cannot exercise these freedoms? These are questions to be considered.

Prayer in school may not be the "magic pill" that we want it to be, but I believe it is a good thing. It might do at least one person good to hear a prayer if, perhaps, just the right words were said. It has to be a good thing if it could keep just one person out of a gang, away from some sort of violence, or cause them to stay away from drugs.

After all is said and done, prayer in school could do more good than harm and any place that Americans want to pray ought to be the place for prayer. Jennifer Gable. Do you think Shakespeare was right when he said, "All the world's a stage and we are but the actors or players?" Once in a while my wife and I enjoy attending a theatrical performance. Naturally, what we need to remember is that life is more serious and real than a play. After a play is finished, the actors step out of their make-believe roles and go home to resume reality. Christianity is a religion that deals in reality. The Bible speaks of life and death and the judgment as being real. Hebrews 5:8 says that Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all them who will obey Him. Are you living your life in faithfulness to the One Who teaches us how to live in this real world and in His real world to come?

*A few weeks ago I held a meeting in Snead, Alabama and was introduced to a fine Christian school-age girl named Jennifer Gable. One of the brethren suggested I read an essay Jennifer had recently written on prayer in public schools. I enjoyed the reading so much that I decided to run it in this issue of the Words of Truth. If you wish to write to Jennifer, you may send your letters to me and I will gladly forward them. —the editor.*



attains biblical faith. Paul admonished “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). The individual who trusts in any source except the Bible as the standard by which he arrives at faith is not walking by faith. The person who has insisted that faith can be achieved in any other way is destined for failure. And like a lost ship at sea, he will drift aimlessly until he crashes upon the rocks of sin.

The Hebrew writer, writing by inspiration has given us an easy yet precise definition as to what biblical faith is. He wrote, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). Please observe the following words as they are listed in this verse: “faith,” “substance,” “hope,” “evidence,” “things,” “seen.” Now my faith (belief) is based upon a substance (literally foundation) which is the Bible that provides my hope by giving me the evidence for things that cannot be seen. Now in reverse order: The things that are seen do not provide the evidence to give me the hope necessary for me to build upon a sure foundation (substance) on which my faith can be sustained. Our faith must be rooted and grounded in Christ and not in the doctrines and commandments of men (Matt. 15:9).

In Romans 10:17 the order is: faith, hearing, and then word of God. In Second Corinthians 5:7 the order is: walk, faith, and not by sight. Thus in Romans 10:17, the word of God produces faith

in the human heart when that heart becomes receptive (willing) to hear its message. In Second Corinthians 5:7, the word of God, which is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path (Psalm 119:105) provides our sight by producing the faith that is sufficient to aid us in our walk.

Let it be known that there has never been a Christian produced where the word of God has not gone. Men are saved by faith, true, but that faith only comes about by hearing the glorious message of Christ. Where there is no word of God there is no faith, and where there is no faith, there is none who are pleasing to God. “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” (Heb. 11:6). Again, observe the following words in their respective order: faith, cometh, believe, seek. The one who desires to seek God must believe that He is who claims to be, because no man cometh unto the father but by Christ (John 14:6). And before he can come to the Father he must be drawn (John 6:44), which is accomplished by means of teaching (v. 45a). “Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me” (45b). Without the Bible, there is no faith, and without faith we are lost. With the Bible, there is faith, and with an active faith we are saved.

## Is Eating The Lord’s Supper A Command?

Glenn Colley

Several years ago (1968) my father, Gary Colley, was having lunch with Foy Wallace, Jr. (who is now deceased), and they began discussing what the Bible has to say about the Lord’s supper. The conversation came around to the best way to answer this question: “Is the eating of the Lord’s supper today a command?”

Brother Wallace was a deep and brilliant Bible student. In my personal library I have several books which he authored. He had a great mind. At that lunch table that day, on the back of a scrap of paper, he wrote out seven points to prove that we are commanded to eat the Lord’s supper today. On his paper he did not write out each verse referred to, he just put his point and where the verse was found. I am offering it today with the full verses to make it more useful for your consideration. The approach used here with reference to the Lord’s supper would be useful in other matters as well.

### THE LORD’S SUPPER A COMMAND:

1. Early disciples were commanded to eat the Lord’s supper.

Matthew 26:26-28

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. 27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; 28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

1 Corinthians 11:17

Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.

1 Corinthians 11:28 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let

him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

1 Corinthians 11:33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.

2. They were commanded to assemble.

Hebrews 10:25 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.

3. They ate the Lord’s supper when they assembled.

1 Corinthians 11:17

Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.

1 Corinthians 11:28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

1 Corinthians 11:33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.

4. They assembled to eat the Lord’s supper.

1 Corinthians 11:33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.

5. They assembled on the first day of the week.

Acts 20:7

And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

1 Corinthians 16:2 Upon the first day of the week let every



one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

6. They assembled to break bread.

Acts 20:7

And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

7. Commandment of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 11:2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remem-

ber me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.

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

1 Corinthians 16:1-2

1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

## New Testament Worship

The True Story By Dalton Key

The concept of prescribed and systematic assembling as a body for the purpose of worship is presently under attack. One writer relegates the worship to the heap of unscriptural non-essentials. He claims the New Testament nowhere commands or infers that Christians meet together each Lord's Day for the purpose of worship. Another cynic, in a feeble attempt to justify the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship, has argued that singing, with or without the instrument, is nowhere suggested in the New Testament as part of the "corporate worship." He writes, "When we gather as a group to sing we do so without a New Testament command, example or necessary inference!"

Strange positions? Absolutely. But stranger still is the fact that they are catching on and gaining ground with many members of the Lord's body.

The New Testament categorically forbids the forsaking of "the assembling of ourselves together" (Hebrews 10:25). The early church in Corinth, though in error on many points, still knew enough of God's will to come together each week for worship services. Paul reports they "came together" for the purpose of worship (1 Corinthians 11:18). This same apostle tarried seven days in Troas, until the Lord's day, when he met with saints of that city in worship (Acts 20:7).

These regular, first-day-of-the-week services were important to the early disciples. In their worship, in accordance with heaven's authority, the first century saints prayed (Acts 2:42; 6:4-6; 13:3), shared in the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:20-29), gave freely of their means as they had been prospered (1 Corinthians 16:1, 2; 2 Corinthians 9:6, 7), were instructed in the Lord's will (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7) - and yes, they sang! (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12). These expressions of christian worship were not optional, neither were they left open to substitution or alteration; they were divine approved and authorized.

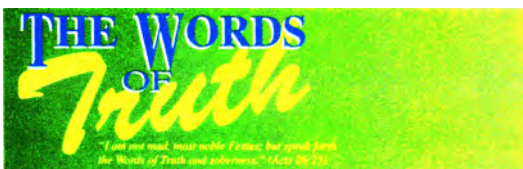
Moreover, early writers and historians of the first few centuries A.D. serve only to corroborate the inspired record of early Christian worship. Pliny the Younger, the proconsul of Bithynia and Pontus during the latter part of the first century, wrote a revealing letter concerning the Christians and their worship and sent it to Emperor Trajan. A portion of the letter reads, "They were in the habit of meeting on a fixed day ... when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god." Justin Martyr, in his First apology, written near the beginning of the second century, wrote, "On Sunday a meeting is held of all who live in the cities and vil-lages...they rise together and send up prayers." Tertullian, an oft hailed "church father" of the second century, reported, "We meet together in an assembly and congregation so that praying to God we may win him over by the strength of our prayers...We meet together in order to read the sacred texts...with the holy words we feed our faith...We have a kind of money-chest...every individual puts in a contribution."

Our worship services each first day of the week are not the result of human design; they are not the product of mere modern tradition. Our assembling together may be traced back to the authority of Christ and to the time of the apostles and early disciples.

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Published weekly under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.  
**Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. thirty-five cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.**  
**Individual rates are \$18.50 per year. All bills payable to Words of Truth, 3051 McQueen Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36107**



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# THE WORDS OF Truth

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

**SEE ARTICLES INSIDE:  
God's Second Law of Pardon  
From the Editor  
Unholy Matrimony  
The Born Again Thing**

Vol. 33 No. 16

July 9, 1996

## God's Second Law of Pardon

W. A. Holley

One of our fine Sixth Avenue ladies has requested that I compose an article concerning God's Second Law of Pardon. As a matter of fact I agree with her that such a lesson is needed.

As we read the Bible, we soon learn that from ages past some of God's people have departed from God. Read Genesis, chapters one through three. Cain became the world's first murderer (Genesis 4: 1-15). In Noah's day all the people of that generation perished except eight righteous souls (I Peter 3:20-21).

Moses and Joshua saw many examples of departure from God's holy will of the people of God. Many of them worshiped, but worshiped idols. Hypocritical worship is never accepted to God. God was disgusted with hypocritical worship in the time of Amos. We read, "I hate, I despise your feasts days, and I will not smell in you solemn assemblies, though ye offer me burnt offerings and your mear offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream" (Amos 5:21-24).

Jesus taught that oftentimes some draw nigh to God with their lips, while their hearts are far from Him (Matthew 15: 1-13; Mark 7:6-13). Thus, we can have brothers and sisters sing the praises of God but who deny through their conduct their loyalty to Him who created us all.

Man does not fall upward; he falls downward. Man is a sinner whether he wishes to admit it or not." For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23, ASV). One can fall away from the grace of God (Galatians 5:4). It is possible for one to fall so far into sin it is impossible to bring him to repentance again (Hebrews 6:4-6). These become case hardened (I Timothy 4:1-5).

The sinner is alienated from God; he is an alien sinner who has been separated from God by sin. (Isaiah 59: 1-2). God has a plan by which sinners can be reconciled to Him.

Jesus came and died upon the cruel cross that sinners might be saved. Just before He ascended into heaven, He gave to his disciples the worldwide and age-lasting Great Commission.

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28: 18-20).

"Go ye into the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned: (Mark 16:15-16).

"Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to

rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-47).

When the conditions of salvation in the foregoing verses are added up, we have (1) preaching, (2) faith, (3) repentance, (4) baptism, (5) salvation. Confession of Christ is taught in other verses (Matthew 10:32; Acts 8:37).

Sinners were never told to "get religion," to "get saved," "to pray through to salvation," to join the church of your choice."

The first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection is the day when the Great Commission began to be executed. (Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 42-47). When sinners ask what to do to be saved, they were told to "Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). As a result about 3000 souls were added to the church that day (Acts 2: 41-47). This is God's first law of pardon. All alien sinners must obey this law to be saved!

God's second law of pardon is applicable to those children of God whose devotion to Christian duty has become negligent—careless—lax—slack in their duty to God and His church.

Do we have an example of one who became a Christian but who fell from grace? Indeed, we do. We suggest that Acts 8:5-25, be scrutinized. Under Philip's preaching many heard, believed, obeyed the word of God. (Verse 12). Present was also Simon the sorcerer, who had deceived the people of Samaria with his tricks. But Simon also believed and was baptized. He thus became a child of God (Verse 13). "When Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." (Verses 18-23). Simon requested Peter to pray for him. (Verse 24). Peter seems to express some doubt as to Simon's forgiveness. Here we have a man who became a Christian, but who fell into sin again.

Simon was told that his heart was not right before God, that he should repent and pray to Him in whose presence we ever live. Do we have those of this category attending the assembly who need to correct past mistakes so as to have their sins forgiven?

Those who have wandered away should be restored to full fellowship (Galatians 6:1). Some are present in body but their mind is



# FROM THE EDITOR

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## Most of a Minute - God Can Raise The Dead

There are some passages of scripture which I believe, but do not fully understand. There are a few, like I Cor. 15:51, 52 which at first seem amazing, but which can certainly be believed if we just think right. The passage says,

“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changes, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

## Come Watch Me Worship

*Glenn Colley*

Newsweek observed Mount Moriah Baptist church in Harlem and published an article entitled “Soul Voyeurs Invade the House of God”, (June 3, 1996, pg 71). It describes what some Harlem church-goers consider a real and growing problem in these black churches. Although every Sunday their auditorium is filled to capacity, only 20% of the folks are there to worship. 80% come to hear the “rhythmic gospel music” of Harlem’s fabled choirs. They rarely stay for the sermon. Camcorders hum and cameras flash during the singing. James Forbes, described as the “world-renowned preacher at Riverside Church” said this: “When people begin to perform for spectators, that brings an erosion of authenticity.” His caution is going mostly unheeded. Those tourists make the collection plate heavier.

Harlem, admittedly, is an extreme case. Nevertheless, some real similarities exist between the Harlem churches and each and every church in America in which choirs sing to the rest of the church has somewhat or totally replaced congregational singing. These observations are particularly important to us in the church of Christ because of the “new left” preachers and elders who are advocating what they call “special music” in our worship assemblies.

Just what is wrong with having a choir sing in our worship?

First, as in the Mount Moriah Baptist Church, some are worshipping, all others are simply “experiencing” the worship which the choir offers. The Bible will not support this spectator-style arrangement. This arrangement is alright for a play at your children’s elementary school, or for a basketball game at the high-school, but it is out of place in the church of the New Testament. The commands and instructions given in the New Testament are given to all Christians, and require participation. We must all sing! Consider God’s word: “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,” (Ephesians 5:19). “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord,” (Colossians 3:16).

Was the instruction given here to “admonish one another...in hymns...” only for some Christians, or for the entire church assembled? The Ephesians letter is written “to the saints which are at Ephesus...” (1:1), and the letter to the Colossians was written “To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at

The dead will be raised on that last day, the judgement day. But how can that possibly be? How can God raise the dead? Then I remember my garden, and a grain of corn. I plant it in the rich, moist soil. What happens? It breaks down, and from it springs new life—a stalk of corn, and ears of corn containing hundreds of such kernels.

I’ve seen that with my very eyes. How hard can it be for a God who can grow corn from seeds to raise the dead?

Colosse...” (1:2). In other words, to the whole church. The whole church was commanded to admonish each other in song. One cannot do the singing for another any more than one man can eat the Lord’s supper for another man. Someone might object and say that in prayer we have a leader and all others are silent, but that is different from the choir arrangement. When the prayer is being led, all others are still praying, he is just leading them as they pray. When a soloist, quartet, or choir is singing, the audience is typically not singing at all. Even if they were singing, that doesn’t resolve the second problem:

Mount Moriah Baptist is similar to other churches which use a choir arrangement in the entertainment factor. Listening to music is entertaining. Mount Moriah Baptist in Harlem has sold 30,000 copies in Brazil of its singing. People come from miles to enjoy their talents, to snap pictures, and to tape their melodious artistry. But can’t you hear the words of Jesus echoing over the centuries? Can’t we read them in His word and learn from Him? “Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve, (Matthew 4:10)”. Worship is part of the way we serve God. When we worship we are serving only Him. In a choir arrangement the “performers” are also serving their audience.

There is a sense of course in which our worship benefits other worshippers (Eph. 5:19), and yet the design of our worship is not for their ears or eyes. We gather to worship God. When the choir or quartet arrangement is used, God’s pattern of worship is violated, and people are being entertained rather than worshipping. People are performing for men rather than just offering worship to God. No where in the New Testament do we find people worshipping spectator-style. Furthermore, the Bible never describes acceptable worship in any kind of an entertainment context.

When men begin to worship, the purity and quality of that worship will be greatly determined by the first question asked. Will it be, “What will be the most pleasing to the ears of those who come to assemble,” or, “What does God desire?”

Let’s leave the entertainment-style worship to those who seek to please men more than God.



*Continued from page 1*

elsewhere. Is the service too long? Do you have your mind on a football game? As you partake of the Lord's supper, are you thinking of visiting Mother?

People can walk disorderly (II Thessalonians 3:6). Disorderly is a military term meaning, "not keeping rank, insubordinate." (See I Thessalonians 5:14). Some are unruly!!

Other passages suggested are Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-17. We

## "Unholy Matrimony"

*By: Jason R. Roberts*

Nearly 200 homosexual couples—some in drag, others in traditional wedding garb—two months ago clasped hands before and only-happy-to-oblige-you Willie Brown, the new Mayor of San Francisco. Twenty couples at a time walked the isle to Mr. Brown and said among other things: "We pledge, while in this union, to be responsible for each other and to be committed to a relationship of loyalty and mutual caring."

Then a jubilant Mayor Brown gave his city's official endorsement to the couples: "I hereby pronounce you lawfully recognized domestic partners. You may consummate the relationship," as if they hadn't already!

The homosexuals in our land are crying that we are interfering with their civil liberties, "You speak against us, but you don't understand us," said one radical homosexual. Does one have to become a murderer to know it's wrong? Does one have to become an adulterer to know it's wrong? Does one have to become a thief to know it's wrong? No, one can only turn the sacred pages of his Bible and see what God Almighty says about this perverted lifestyle. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, at the hand of a just God, in seconds, were turned into a modern day Ghost Town (Gen. 19:24-25). Jude tells us that the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were laid to waste and remain today as an example of how one should not live. "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." (Jude 7)

Interestingly, the homosexual agenda is propagating their filth, and encouraging same-sex "marriages" as an example for proper living among those who would choose such. Ms. Oakley - Melvin said: "We feel it's our responsibility to create role models for people who aren't in an environment like San Francisco," she added: "Straight America and gay America need to look to us for models of what gay culture is."

No thank you! America does not need to be looking to these filthy, perverted, reprobates (Rom. 1:26-28) as a model (example) for acceptable living. If you would like to know where modern day Sodom and Gomorrah are located today, you guessed it, downtown San Francisco. What is currently taking place in San Francisco is only the beginning of what could bring our beloved nation to a downfall. If the Hawaii Supreme Court next summer rules, as expected, that same-sex marriages are legal in that state, they will have the largest tidal wave of filth imaginable infiltrating that beautiful state! And because of the "full faith and credit" clause in the U.S. Constitution, other states could be forced to recognize those unions.

Are we ready for this America? Are we going to sit back and allow such perversion to persist in a land where we are commanded to be as lights shining throughout the world (Matt. 5:14-16)? Are we going to use our voices to speak against such ungodliness, or are we

humbly suggest that those who should correct their mistakes, publicly, do it now! This may be your last opportunity!!

Note: When things that God requires are done with the wrong motives or attitudes, God "despises" such action: "I hate, I despise your feast days..." (Amos 5:21). Purity of heart and attitude are more important to God than any outward display. —P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580

going to remain silent as the grave (Eph. 5:11; Psalm 119:104)? It is a sin to be silent (Obadiah 10-11).

Suppose the Supreme Court rules in favor of same-sex "marriages." Have you stopped to think of the harm it could have upon the Lord's church? Let's suppose a homosexual couple, who are legally married by state, decide to place their membership with God's people at the church where you attend. Are you going to speak against it, or are you going to be like thousands of other congregations that openly embrace sin in the camp? Why not accept the homosexual marriages in our assemblies? Some churches accept fornicators and adulterers by the hundreds, why not embrace several same-sex "marriages?" Before you know it, they will be inviting their friends, and we can have an entire assembly of filth. And then what we can do is have split assemblies, a traditional service for the husband and wife and their kids. Then we can have a same-sex service for "husband and husband," and then after that we can have a service for "wife and wife." Then we can take down the sign out in the church yard and replace it with "The Politically-Correct Church." Now this may seem to be far fetched, but friends it isn't. There are already churches that exist in America where homosexuals meet every Lord's day and profess that they love the Lord, but by their works they deny him (Titus 1:16).

If the day comes when the Lord's church becomes infected with homosexual couples who are married (or not married) then we must not sanction what the Lord calls an abomination, and we must say as the apostle Peter said centuries ago when the enemies of the church tried to silence the gospel "we must obey God rather than man" (Acts 5:29)!

These radical homosexuals are not demanding just to be recognized as individuals wanting the same rights and privileges as everyone else. They are trying to erase the Biblical view of marriage and rewrite marriage all together. Homosexual activist Michelangelo Signorlie wrote last year in the homosexual periodical *Out*, that activists should "fight for the same-sex marriage and its benefits and then, once granted, redefine the institution completely . . . to demand the right to marry not as a way of adhering to society's moral codes but rather to debunk a myth and radically alter an archaic institution." He said one thing that was true in this statement and that is he referred to marriage as an "archaic institution." I agree wholeheartedly; it dates back to over 6,000 years ago in the garden of Eden when God Almighty instituted the origin of marriage (Gen. 2:18-25), archaic indeed!

Let's preserve the sanctity of marriage between one male and one female. Let's become a voice to sound out the word of the Lord in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, and let us never allow the radical homosexuals to redefine what God calls divine.



# “The Born Again Thing”

Quite recently I watched an interview with Ralph Reed, director of the Christian Coalition, by David Frost on PBS. At the outset let me say that I found myself in agreement morally and politically with most of what Mr. Reed said. At the same time, I was disappointed that he failed to appeal to the Scriptures as I had imagined he would. Throughout the interview Mr. Frost kept coming back to “The born again thing” as he preferred to call it. He asked such questions as, What was it like? How did it feel? Was it an immediate thing? And on and on like he would go.

All along I’ve been appalled by the denominational misuse of the phrase “born again.” And as is typical these days this is just another example of a word or phrase that has been stolen from its legitimate context only to be given a meaning it doesn’t possess. In most religious circles today “born again” has come to mean something far different (a miraculous experience) than what our Lord noted it as being in John 3:1-7. There is no doubt that in the world of “Christendom” to be “born again” has little or not connection to water baptism. What is the truth on the matter? What is it or what does it mean to be born again?

Revealing may be the best word to describe that night time conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus recorded in John chapter 3. Here stands a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews (possibly denoting his membership in the Sanhedrin) and the teacher come from GOD. Right off the bat Jesus says to Nicodemus, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be BORN AGAIN, he cannot see the kingdom of GOD.” (vs. 3)

From the verse we note that one cannot see the kingdom of GOD unless he is born again. So whatever born again is it is necessary to see the kingdom. Further evidence of this is found in verse 7 where we find Jesus saying “...ye MUST be born again.”

A normal, unbiased reading of the text reveals to us that born again and born of water and the spirit (vs. 5) are parallel expressions. In fact to be born again could be defined as to be born of water and the spirit. Thus we have one birth consisting of two elements, water and the spirit. A comparison of verse 3 with verse 5 looks like this.

EXCEPT BORN AGAIN CANNOT SEE KINGDOM  
EXCEPT BORN WATER/SPIRIT CANNOT ENTER KINGDOM

It should be evident to all then that to be born again involves water. The only question then left to ask is, Is the water of verse 5 an allusion to baptism?

In the August 1988 issue of his journal “Christian Courier” brother Wayne Jackson appealing to the monumental work of William Wall, “History of Infant Baptism” commented,

“...not a single writer of antiquity denied the connection between the “water” of John 3:5 and baptism. He suggested that John Calvin was the first to disassociate the two items, and that even Calvin conceded that his interpretation was “new”. Of course, subsequent to Calvin, numerous denominational clergymen have denied that baptism is a part of the new birth, due to their doctrinal bias against the necessity of immersion for the remission of sins.” (p.13).

Clearly our Lord’s notion of what is involved in being born again is not that of many folks today. It is not some wild experience that has the Holy Spirit directly operating on the heart of an individual. Yet the Holy Spirit is involved. Brother Guy Woods put it like this:

“...the part the Spirit plays in salvation involves the begettal act and that this is accomplished in believing the message which the Spirit through his revelation gave.” (Questions and Answers, vol 2, 1986, p.144)

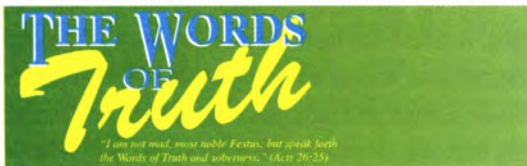
In my opinion David Frost’s reference to “The Born Again Thing” amounted to ridicule. But remember only those who have truly been born again are in the kingdom.

—Mel Futrell

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# THE WORDS OF Truth

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## SEE ARTICLES INSIDE:

What if He wanted you hung there?  
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Prayer  
The Babies In Sin  
What Jesus Said About Divorce  
Christian Living

Vol. 33 No. 17

July 11, 1996

## What if He wanted you hung there?

Neal Pollara

What would happen if God changed "the plan of salvation" in the following dramatic way? What if the voice of God cleaved the skies asunder and spoke a new revelation to man, saying, "I you are only crucified on a cross for your sins, you will be eternally saved!" Would you do it? Assuming that His mighty voice was heard and understood by every human living, do you suppose countless millions would line up to fulfill this requirement?

The Bible affirms, with Divine credibility, that death on the cross was absolutely necessary for the saving of mankind. Though so many scoff, that truth must be believed. Yet, no man could save himself by dying on a cross for his own sins. God would reject that sacrifice! Consider that such a sacrifice is blemished and flawed by the filth and disease of sin. The only spotless and unblemished sacrifice that could ever be offered was Jesus (1 Peter 1:18), who condemned sin in the flesh (Romans 8:3), and "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26). He was "once offered to bear the sins of many [read, "all mankind," NP]" (Hebrews 9:28) upon the cross.

If Christ had taken the mockers' challenge to come down from that cross to prove His deity (cf. Mark 15:32), man would have lost all hope of heaven. He endured the shame and pain of Calvary (Hebrews 12:2) to make heaven a possibility for those who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9).

Now, consider. Through the Bible, the voice of God rings out, demanding that we figuratively crucify our desires and our lives on Jesus' cross through earnest obedience (Galatians 2:20). He tells us to obey the Sacrificial Lamb, Jesus, in order to have sins forgiven (cf. Romans 6:17). No one has to die the death of a thousand deaths, nailed to a literal cross. No one could! But, if we come to the One who did thus die, we shall avoid the only fate that is worse than crucifixion (see Revelation 14:10-11).

God does not call you to get up on a cross for your sins. He calls you to take up Christ's cross and follow Him (Matthew 16:24). In this way, crucify yourself (Galatians 2:20)!

## "Three Key Words For Answered Prayer"

*James 5:16 "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."*

Jason R. Roberts

Persistence is the key to unlocking the throne room of the Almighty. Our Heavenly Father, whose "eyes are over the righteous" (1 Pet. 3:12; cf. Psalm 34:15), who requests our cares and burdens to be cast upon him (1 Pet. 5:7, Psalm 55:22), who desires to be glorified when the righteous suffer (1 Pet. 4:16), who attends the funeral of every sparrow that falls to the ground (Matt. 10:29), is extremely interested in our well-being as well as our ability to pray correctly; so much that the Holy Spirit moved James to pen "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16b). We will note specifically the three key words in this given text: (1) Effectual (2) Fervent and (3) Righteous, with an analysis of each one.

The word "effectual" *energeo*, (verb here) although not in the original text, means "to be operative, to be at work, to put forth power" (Strong's). It literally means the "inworking supplication, suggesting a supplication consistent with inward conformity to God" (Vine's). There is power in prayer as suggested from the word "effectual" in this text. Too often, Christians underestimate the power of prayer. We live during a time when we need things immediately, without any delay whatsoever. In Luke 18 there is the parable of the unjust judge. The widow persistently plead with the evil judge to avenge her adversary until finally he granted her request. The point is, that if this calloused, unjust judge will grant one's petition, how much more then would an Almighty, Sovereign, Just,

*Continued on page 4*



# FROM THE EDITOR

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## THE BABIES IN SIN

Are babies born in sin? That is, do babies come into this world carrying the guilt of sin which they have inherited from Adam? Some people think so. A multi-faceted doctrine carrying the name "Calvinism", after a man named John Calvin, (1509-1564), holds that all babies are born in sin. Although he never started his own church, a number of churches hold to his erroneous teachings. Among denominations today, probably Presbyterians are best known for Calvinism. Calvin's teaching includes "Hereditary Total Depravity," which simply means, "Inherited sin".

This doctrine has a companion called predestination, the belief that God pre-determined before we were born which of us would be saved and which would be lost. Calvinists believe this is irreversible. If you were born to be lost, you cannot come to Christ. If you were born to be saved, you cannot live in such a way as to be lost. Such teaching makes the verses of the Bible ridiculous which offers salvation to "all the world," or, "every creature," (Mark 16:15,16). Titus 2:11, 12 says, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men..."

But back to the baby. This doctrine crumbles beneath the weight of passages which teach where babies and their souls come from. For example, if we say babies' souls come marred by sin, then we face this army of truth:

Acts 17:29— "Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device."

Ecclesiastes 12:7— "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall

return unto God who gave it."

Hebrews 12:9— "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?"

The originator of your soul and mine is the Almighty God! For hereditary total depravity to be true, God would have had to create us in sin. Who can believe it? Jesus didn't. "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." (Matthew 18:3)

"But," suppose someone objects, "It is not the spirit which is born with sin, but the flesh."

And yet, this too falls when scripture is allowed to stand. John 1:14 says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Who would be willing to say that Jesus our Lord was born in sin? He obviously was not, but he was born in human flesh.

We do not inherit the guilt of any part of the human race of the past. Ezekiel 18:20 says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

John 5:28-29 — "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

## Most Of A Minute

### What Jesus said about divorce

When was the last time you heard someone express their views about somebody's divorce? Probably not long ago. These days divorce is as common as hamburgers and french fries. But when was the last time you heard someone express God's views about marriage and divorce? Probably a long time. That's our problem in life. Too often we won't let God get in a word edgewise.

Well, let's talk about it. After being quizzed with the different philosophies of their day on the subject

of marriage and divorce and remarriage, Jesus said this in Matthew 19:9: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."

I recommend that before you discuss divorce again, and certainly before you get married again, you spend some time reading what Jesus has to say. It might just open your eyes to some very important realities.



# Christian Living

By Johnny Ramsey

There is no way to answer the riddle of our earthly sojourn apart from Christianity. We have all wondered, at times, as to why we are here and where we are going. James tells us that our life is but "a vapor that appeareth for a little while and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14). Peter informs us that those who would live life and see good days must "refrain their tongues from evil." Paul clearly stated: "For me to live is Christ" (Philippians 1:21). The real purpose of living is to live for Jesus. Our Savior beautifully expressed this thought in John 10:10:

"I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."

The word purpose suggests dedication, decision, conviction and planning. The religion of our Redeemer provides all of these items; it gives substance to living. Just as Daniel "purposed in his heart not to defile himself" (Daniel 1:8), so does Christianity cause us to cleave to the Lord "with purpose of heart" (Acts 11:23). A statement from Moses is appropriate at this point in our discussion: "It is your life to set your heart upon all my law and to teach your children to observe all my commandments" (Deuteronomy 32:46). We shall not take out of this life any of our accumulated wealth or fame but only the influence of a righteous life. When we stand before our Maker in the last day it will be of the highest import how we lived while upon the earth. If you are not a Christian you lack real incentive for living!

"But they that would be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."

Christianity alone gives one true purpose in life. What a friend we have in Jesus! He is indeed "all the world to me!" We have a personal, powerful and precious Savior. Paul expressed our exact sentiments in 2 Timothy 1:12: "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." If Christ lives within us (Galatians 2:20) we have the exuberant hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). The very One who bore our sins in His own body upon the Cross is vitally interested in our every need. In times of sorrow, illness, bereavement and disappointment, He is our constant Shepherd. Are you a Christian?

## What life is all about

There are many precious things about christianity that would not be available if the Savior had not left heaven and graced this earth with His presence! How empty and meaningless our daily existence would be apart from the richness and depth of the gospel era. We owe so very much to the resplendent beauty of New Testament Christianity. Whatever the world offers in its most glorious moment fades into nothingness when the radiant hues of

the Messiah beam forth. For years faithful children of god have sung:

"Take the world but give me Jesus,  
All its joys are but a name;  
But His love abideth ever,  
Through eternal years the same."

Mankind struggles in vain to find genuine purpose in life apart from Christ. When the Lord and heaven's message enter our thinking we are transformed from a dreary pursuit of merely existing to an exciting motivation and goal. Following our blessed Redeemer provides a destiny where God "will make all things new" (Revelation 21:1-5).

"Beyond the sunset's radiant glow,  
there is a brighter world I know,  
Beyond the sunset I may spend  
Delightful days that never end."

Let us notice several key points that Jesus contributes to our sojourn upon the earth (1 Peter 2:11) that we would otherwise be bereft of had He not come.

1. All Spiritual Blessings—Ephesians 1:3
2. The New And Living Way—Hebrews 10:20
3. Our Perfect Example—Hebrews 4:15
4. Sin Clearly Defined—John 15:22
5. Salvation Absolutely—Hebrews 7:25
6. Satan Defeated—John 12:31-33
7. Heaven Accessible—Hebrews 6:18-20
8. Sinners Made Saints—1 Timothy 1:15
9. God's Grace In Us—1 Corinthians 15:10
10. Someone Who Never Leaves Us—Hebrews 13:5-6

When we weave all of this into one fabric of truth we realize that we surely do have "life more abundantly" as the Master taught in John 10:10. The Psalmist makes a tremendous contribution to this life of thought in the cogent words of Psalms 124:

"If it had not been the Lord who was on our side...our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth."

Living with, for and in Christ Jesus is truly what life is all about. How vain would the struggles be if our Savior had not come.

Two centuries ago Thomas Gray wrote of folk with "obscure destiny in the short and simple annals of the poor." Millions live and die that way—outside of the Savior—without hope in this world or the one to come (Ephesians 2:11-12).

Christians should praise God every single day for purpose, depth, richness and meaning in lives that bask in the sunlight found in the shadow of the Cross!



Judge answer one's prayer. Her persistence led to her petition being answered. This brings us to the second key word to effective prayer.

The word “fervent” (another verb) means “exhibited or marked by great intensity of feeling, to boil over with zeal” (Webster's). Do we feel this way when we pray? The word denotes a process, that is, it is going to take some persistence on our part. And right along with this persistence and this power comes our patience. In fact no less than seven times in the book of James the word patience is mentioned. Patient is found twice (5:7,8) and patience is found five times (1:3, 4, 5:7, 10, 11). Can we honestly say that we are effectively praying when our only approaches to the throne of God's grace in a rushed hurry? Paul admonished us to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17), but there is no indication of hurrying one's requests to God. The words “pray without ceasing” mean that the child of God is to be in the attitude of prayer and thanksgiving on a continual (effectual fervent) basis. The late brother Gus Nichols, I am told, would begin a prayer in the morning, and then he would say Amen that evening before pillowing his head for the night. That is praying without ceasing. Effective prayer is often going to take some time and effort on our part. This brings us to the third key word for effective prayer.

The word “righteous,” dikaios (adjective here) means “one who is upright, virtuous, observing divine laws, keeping the commands of God” (Strong's). In fact, the apostle John in referring to the righteous man stated “he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous” (1 John 3:7, cf. 2:29). The man who lives a life of righteousness will have his requests answered by God. On the contrary, the man who lives a life of unrighteousness, will not be heard. “Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth” (John 9:31). Sometimes we hear people say that “God never answers my prayers.” This reveals a lack of faith in God. His answer may not be the one we were requesting, but nevertheless he is faithful and just to his promises, and if he says he will answer prayer then he will.

The man who has power (effectual) behind his prayer, who is persistent (fervent) yet patient, and who is righteous will be answered. What's the promise for a man like this? His prayer “availeth much” (v. 16b). “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Eph. 3:20). “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

#### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published weekly under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.  
**Congregational Rates:** Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. thirty-five cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

**Individual rates are \$18.50 per year. All bills payable to Words of Truth, 3051 McQueen Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36107**



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# THE WORDS OF Truth

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

SEE ARTICLES INSIDE:

How Do You Spell Cross?  
The Road To Heaven  
You Can See Christ  
Bombing In Saudi Arabia  
Family Feud • ASK  
Crossroads Are You Listening

Vol. 33 No. 18

July 18, 1996

## How Do You Spell "Cross?"

*Neal Pollard*

1. "SEE"—Look at Calvary. Don't turn away. I know it's not easy. What is done to Him is shameful. I know. But, look closely! Past the spittle. Beyond the blood. There. In His eyes. Friend, that is love. It is love for you! See the nails in His hands and feet, fastening Him to a tree He created for man's use. Look at the love He has for you!
2. "Are?"—Are you able to see that He bled and died for you? Are you willing to admit you're lost without Him? Are you ready to submit to His will, to obey Him, and live for Him? Are you prepared for eternity? Are you convinced?
3. "OH!"—Hear His cries of pain and agony. The death of a thousand deaths. Bitter moans of His disciples. The gasp of heaven's angels. The

sorrow of a Father for His only begotten Son! The gasps and exclamations of a hateful mob.

4. "SS"—That's the hiss of the beguiling serpent. The one who is bruising the heel of the perfect One, putting God The Son in the tomb. This is the moment of his triumph. Though resurrection will soon equal victory for Christ and hope for man, at the cross the devil must be enjoying his front row seat at Calvary. Doesn't he anger you? Disgust you? Motivate you? Live for Jesus. Don't live for the snake!

Friends, the cross spells the difference between heaven and hell, hope and hopelessness, joy and sorrow, night and day!

## The Road To Heaven

*John Ramsey*

Everyone talking about heaven will not make it to those mansions in the sky. Millions talk a better game than they play. We often sing a stronger religion that we live—yes, even in the church of the Lord. How we thrill to such hymns as In The Land Of Fadeless Day and When The Roll Is Called Up Yonder. However, the way that leads home to God passes by the old rugged cross, the valley of sorrow and the mountain of surrender and some folk always take a detour through the sinking sands of Easy Street. The road to heaven is not congested. Traffic on that highway is rather sparse. Only the truly dedicated, committed and determined see the journey through. Pilgrims seeking a far better country (Hebrews 11:10-13) are willing to forego mundane pleasures and the Devil's dainties for a surer grasp on an everlasting home with the redeemed. Christ has invited all men to walk with Him in righteousness but multitudes with one consent, begin to make excuses (Luke 14:18). There is room for

everyone in the narrow path (Matthew 7:14) but it is easier to wander aimlessly about in the broad way that foment into perdition. The challenge attached to the heavenly route costs more than myriad's of earth are willing to pay. Having counted the cost of obedience such folk immediately admit their spiritual bankruptcy and manifest no further effort toward the beautiful home of the soul. Bereft of spiritual depth, motivated by carnal interests, beset by worldly associates and led by temporal emphasis, these poor misguided human beings pitch their tent toward hell and wait for the darkness of the ages.

But saints their watch are keeping; they cry:  
'How Long, How Long?'  
And soon the night of weeping  
shall be the morn of song."

What is the road that leads to heaven?

The road of surrender

*Continued on page 3*



# FROM THE EDITOR

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## YOU CAN SEE CHRIST

That some would find it hard to follow a Savior they couldn't see is shown in Peter's book, 1 Peter 1:8 "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." He leads and governs us with the New Testament which he left for us to follow, ( Heb. 9:1-17).

It should be noted, however, that there is a sense in which we can see Christ today.

In Acts 9:4, when Jesus appeared to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, He asked, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" How could Saul possibly persecute the Christ? Jesus had died and been resurrected to His Father in Heaven in Acts 1, and yet Jesus asks Saul why he is persecuting Him. The answer to this is simply found in Acts 8:3 where we read, "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison." The fact is, when Saul, or anyone else for that matter, hurts the people who wear Christ's name, they are hurting Christ.

There is such great security in knowing we serve a Lord who loves us this much. Even from heaven itself Jesus watches us and knows us and cares. Consider Stephen as a case-in-point. We know that Jesus went to heaven, and took his honored place, sitting on the right hand of God. Colossians 3:1 says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." But in Acts 7, as Stephen's courageous character fueled his heart with a passionate sermon about the Savior, the people gnashed on him with their teeth and began picking up rocks. They were going to stone this man. Quick — look at Jesus. Notice His posture. Stephen said, "Behold, I

see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God," (Acts 7:56). Standing. Jesus was standing instead of sitting. He came to His feet in heaven as His servant Stephen prepared to give the ultimate sacrifice for his Lord.

We can also see Jesus when we care for and love Christians. The concept will be expressed in the judgement: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For 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. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," (Matthew 25:34-40). The teaching is too clear to miss. To see the face of our Lord we must only look as far as our brother or sister sitting next to us. Whatever kindness we show to them is being received by Christ. When we see their face, the face of our brethren in need, there is a sense in which we are seeing the lovely face of Jesus.

It's no wonder that the church is called the body of Christ, (Eph. 1:22,23). We are not just His friends, we are His body; And we can see Him today. As the old song says, "Does Jesus care?...I know He cares."

## Most Of A Minute

### Bombing in Saudi Arabia

Recently the entire world gasped at the news of the bombing in Saudi Arabia. When it comes to threats to man, terrorism rates very high.

I want to make a simple observation which I hope you won't fail to consider.

When news of the bombing and the deaths began shooting it's way into every radio station and newspaper, world leaders began denouncing the vicious act. The "G-7" met and discussed how to curb terrorists. Now folks, you might be able to curtail the building and arming of nuclear war-

heads, but that won't stop terrorism. The Oklahoma City bomb was made mostly of fertilizer. Terrorism can occur at any time and any place. We cannot put a policeman at every house and on every street in our world to prevent terrorism!

The answer has to happen in the home. The answer, as simplistic as it may sound is mamas and daddies teaching Jesus Christ to their children, bringing them up, as Ephesians 6 says, "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." No one has a greater influence on their children than their parents, and that's as true in Saudi Arabia and Iraq as it is in Jasper and Carbon Hill and Parrish.



In Luke 9:23 and 14:33 Jesus implores us to deny ourselves, give up our devotion to worldly cares and follow Him completely. There is no other way to become a part of His system. Those who “halt between two opinions” are “unstable in all their ways” (1 Kings 18:21; James 1:8) and thus miss the resplendent blessings of Christianity. Paul admitted that he only lived when Christ lived in him. The path that bends toward heaven is the road where self is slain and Jesus is enthroned in our hearts.

#### The road of service

The Master came not to be served but to give His life a ransom for all (Mark 10:45). We have been saved to serve! There will be no home in heaven for those too proud to humble themselves in loyal service in the kingdom. Our easy, catered living does not naturally lend itself to sacrificial endeavor. But, the Christian, with peace passing understanding (Philippians 4:7), does the unnatur-

al—he gladly goes to work in God’s vineyard. With devoted energy he “bears much fruit” (John 15:8) as he continues in the word of the Lord (John 8:31) as a faithful disciple. He does not need to be told to stay busy in the work of Jesus—he just naturally is busily engaged in the greatest work on earth. He is a servant of Christ!

#### The road of satisfaction

As strange as it may seem to our libertine generation the only way to really be happy is to completely lose ourselves in a cause much greater than self. To submerge our identity into the religion of the Son of God brings joy unspeakable and full of glory. There is tremendous contentment in the Savior. No other way of life can be so productive, thrilling and satisfying. And, then, at the end of life’s journey an added blessing—a golden street, the tree of life and the presence of the redeemed of all ages. Truly the road that leads home to God is the only one worth considering. May we press on!

## Family Feud

*Mike Benson*

Remember the old story of the Hatfields and the McCoys? Sure you do. These two feuding families fought each other for generations.

But do you know what the feud was all about in the first place? Want to venture a guess? Would you believe a pig? That’s right. A pig. It seems that the Hatfields claimed a certain pig belonged to them, while the McCoys said otherwise.

Imagine. For decades these families were at odds all because of the disputed ownership of one simple animal - a pig. Of course, as I think about it, it occurs to me that I have observed numerous fam-

ilies today who fuss among themselves over things much less significant than a pig. And yet, the real tragedy is not that these fusses are often over such small issues, but that the people involved in their foolish pride, refuse to be reconciled to one another. The Bible urges. “Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and all evil speaking be put away from you will all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you” (Ephesians 4:31, 32). Dear listener, to WHOM do you need to be reconciled today (Matthew 5:23, 24)?

## At your house?

*Wendell Winkler*

What priorities will be established in your children when...

- .you are early for a ball game, but late for worship?
- .you check on their homework regularly, but never check on their Bible class lessons?
- .you won’t let them stay up late on school nights, but let them stay up late on Saturday night?
- .you know the names of all their school teachers, but do not know who is teaching their Bible classes, nor what they are studying?
- .you will serve as room mother or volunteer at school, but will not help with classes, activities, pro-

grams which involve spiritual matters?

.you will not go on vacation during school days, but go on vacation during VBS, a lectureship, or a gospel meeting?

Yes, with such situations prevailing, what priorities are being established in the hearts of your children?



# ASK

Mike Benson

A seven-year-old boy prayed one night before bed for God to give him a baby sister. When he awakened the next morning, the little boy found that there was no baby. Undaunted, he prayed a second time for the same thing. Still no baby.

Some months later, the boy and his father made a trip to the local hospital. When the two of them arrived, they stepped into a room in the maternity section and found the boy's mother holding a precious little baby sister in her right arm, and yet another baby sister in her left! The proud father

looked down into the eyes of his young son and said, "Now, aren't you glad you prayed?" To which the little boy responded, "Yes, and aren't you glad I stopped when I did?!"

Oh, if only we could learn to pray with the confident expectation and faith of a seven-year-old. The Bible says, "Ask, and it will be given to you..." (Matthew 7:7; cf. Luke 18:1, 8; James 1:5, 6). Dear Christian, what blessings have you forfeited because you failed to ask in faith?

## Cross Words Are You Listening?

Mike Benson

Jerrie Barber tells the true story of a gospel preacher who heard the sound of someone clipping their nails during the course of his sermon. The sound was disruptive to both preacher as well as congregation, so the preacher scanned the audience in an effort to find the "Guilty party." Suddenly the preacher discovered the culprit...it was the song leader...but he wasn't clipping his fingernails, but his TOENAILS!!

Before you laugh, let me ask a question. It is

any less disruptive, any less disrespectful, when we busy ourselves by playing with children, talking, flipping through the song book, and so forth during the time when God is speaking to us through His Word through the preacher (1 Corinthians 2:1-5)??

On one occasion Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 13:9). Christian, when the Word of God is being taught, are you listening?

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Published weekly under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.  
Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. thirty-five cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$22.50 per year. All bills payable to Words of Truth, 3051 McQueen Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36107



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# THE WORDS OF *Truth*

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

SEE ARTICLES INSIDE:

The High Cost of Calvary  
The Human Potential  
God Bless Agents of Change in  
Eldership  
How Shall We Escape?

Vol. 33 No. 19

July 24, 1996

## The High Cost of Calvary

Johnny Ramsey

Paul made it exceedingly clear in Romans 6:23 that the wages of sin is death! In the Bible, from Genesis 3 onward, death means **separation**. In Matthew 27:46 Jesus realized that He would be momentarily separated from the Father because of **our sins** the Savior bore at Golgotha. Jehovah, who is of purer eyes than to look favorably upon inequity, looked away from the Son to give sinners like you and me an opportunity for redemption (Habakkuk 1:13; 1 Peter 2:24).

Our precious Lord was born to die and become a sin-bearer for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). We must truly be loved in heaven (Romans 5:8). The high cost of Calvary meant the separation, sorrow, suffering, sacrifice and surren-

der of the Lamb of God! Christ shed precious blood to purchase the church (Acts 20:28) and the remission of our sins (Matthew 26:28). This alone makes Him worthy to receive our praise, loyalty and eternal dedication (Revelation 5:12-14). A brilliant poem challenges our heart's adoration:

*He borrowed a room on His way to the tomb  
The Passover Lamb to eat.  
They borrowed a cave for Him a grave  
They borrowed a winding sheet  
But the crown that He wore  
And the cross that He bore  
Were His own—The Cross was His own.*

## On Calvary's Cross

*They crucified my Lord and God, and pierced His gentle heart;  
And though it happened long ago, I know I played a part;  
My very pride and passion and my selfishness and greed;  
Contributed the nails that caused His hands and feet to bleed.  
Each sinful deed became a thorn upon the crown He wore;  
And every cruel word I said increased the rabble's roar;  
I made Him walk and stumble on His way to Calvary;  
And there I raised Him on a cross for all the world to see;  
And there in agony He died, that we might live anew;  
In the divine forgiving words, "They know not what they do."*

*-J. Metcalfe*



# FROM THE EDITOR

*Glenn Colley*

*Sixth Avenue Church of Christ*

*1501 6th Avenue*

*Jasper, AL 35501*

## GOD BLESS AGENTS OF CHANGE IN THE ELDERSHIP

It is sad when any legitimate word or phrase is lost to those who promote evil. Among churches of Christ "change agents" conjure up images of grievous division and strife and false doctrines. May the Lord deliver us from these self-styled change agents.

And yet, the church cannot function in this world without change. Another word for change is repentance, and without it people perish, (Luke 13:3, I Peter 3:9).

We need shepherds in the church of Christ who seek change in people who commit fornication and adultery. Far too many shepherds do not lead people to change from their sinful ways. In I Corinthians 5 Paul writes to the church which failed to withdraw from a member who was living in sin and said, "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you....4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 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. 6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened... But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat...Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

Elders who overlook adulterous marriages (Mt. 19:9) and those living in other forms of fornication (Col. 3:1-7) to "keep the peace," need to become change agents and work in God's way to change these sinful brothers and sisters. They need to take their rightful place as spiritu-

al leaders who watch for people's souls (Heb. 13:17). They need to work to change Christians from that which is wrong to that which is right.

We need shepherds in the church who will change preachers who teach false doctrines. Preachers are charged with the responsibility of preaching the word of God (II Tim. 4:2), but what if they fail to do so? What if they teach a perverted gospel (Gal. 1:8)? Then the elders must step in and correct the problem. The Bible commands elders to "feed the church of God" (Acts 20:28), and to "take the oversight" of the church (I Pet. 5:1,2). That certainly implies that they must see to it that no false doctrine is coming from the pulpit or classroom. While false teachers are clearly to blame for the size of the change movement in the church of Christ, they couldn't have gotten such a large foot hold in some churches were it not for elders who didn't have the knowledge or courage to put a quick stop to it.

We need shepherds in the church who will change those who want to adopt unscriptural worship practices. Some members of the body of Christ today call for changes in our worship assemblies, and that is not all bad. There are many facets of our time together which are left to our judgement such as song books or overhead projectors, meeting in the evening or the afternoon, one prayer or two or five, etc. Wise shepherds watch carefully however, that these changes don't cross over into more serious matters of worship such as the use of instrumental music, women leaders, "special" music, etc. Shepherds must be ready in times like these to be agents of change, and lead the flock in things which are right.

Other examples could be shown, but you get the point. Lead us shepherds. Don't sleep on the job. Feed us healthy spiritual food. Help keep us from evil. Be agents of righteous change.



# The Human Potential

*Neal Pollard*

A woman, her clothes ragged and dirty, her odor strong and offensive, her speech ignorant and profane, and her lifestyle endlessly littered with immorality and ungodliness, obeys the gospel!

Her physical appearance, with its slovenliness, does not miraculously improve on the other side of baptism. Her hygiene will slowly improve, as thoughtfully tactful sisters guide her. Demonstrating true repentance in coming to Christ, she will try—and fail and fail and fail—to turn away from the incessant smoking and cursing habits she has long ago developed. Truthfully, she can be crude and disgusting at times. She will forget basic lessons taught her in both Bible study and the follow up studies. But, kind and firm guidance by her elders, the preachers, and others, reinforced by profuse praise and encouragement, just might produce a faithful and viable member of the Lord's church.

Twenty years from now, she likely will be an asset who encourages other new, struggling Christians to be better. Her adolescent sons, once hopeless prey to the criminals and deviants of the neighborhood, just might be faithfully proclaiming the gospel two decades from now! Through their small efforts, dozens of souls may obey the gospel. These boys, if properly instructed on how to search out their mates, will probably marry faithful, Christian young women. Each couple will likely bear children. The male children, the grandchildren of this converted woman, might grow up to be preachers, elders, Christian educators, missionaries, or faithful in some other aspect of Christian living. The female children, also her grandchildren, should marry faithful, Christian husbands who serve the Lord mightily. Now, literally thousands of souls have been affected by the conversion of an uneducated, uncouth, ungodly, "unreachable" wretch!

Have you stopped to see that lowly, poor, dirty

person in such a manner? Stop and think about how God views her. God saw in her such potential that He thought Christ's death a fitting price for her welfare (cf. John 3:16). He, through James, rebukes the arrogant, Pharisaic Christian who makes distinctions about people based on earthly standards (James 2:1-9). How embarrassing to see people who should know better turn their nose up on people who have missed the finer points of refinement and social grace, people who thus, sadly, cannot see the vast potential in people like her.

Man, in sin, is at his lowest (cf. Romans 1:18-32; 2 Peter 2:10-15)! Man, in Christ, is at his highest (John 1:12, 13)! Some of those in Christ were born and raised on the other side of the tracks. They need special care and attention. They have a bundle of problems and needs. They require greater patience. But, just remember this. The apostle Paul was an untouchable (cf. 1 Timothy 1:15; Ephesians 3:8). Matthew was an undesirable, as even his own countrymen despised him for his profession (Matthew 9:9). Zaccheus, with his unsavory business practices, was probably considered an untouchable (Luke 19:2,7-10).

Untouched by the gospel, this poor woman would have been eternally destitute. She would have been just one more sufferer among a numberless mob of the everlasting lost, weeping and moaning forever. But, when the seed took root in her honest heart and she obeyed the gospel, she became royalty (cf. 1 Peter 2:9). If she remains faithful until death, she will have a place of honor in heaven. Think of the good accomplished by God through pitiful men and women. Our part in the lives of people like this woman is vital. It is we who must identify and groom their human potential!!

## Cross Words Household Remover

*Mike Benson*

Recently I read a sort of "household" tip that beer will remove grass stains from summer clothes. I have no reasons to doubt such a claim. It has been my studied observation that beer will also remove the summer clothes. It will remove the spring and winter ones too, not only from the fellow who drinks it, but from his wife and children also. It will remove furniture from his house and food from his table. It will remove smiles from the faces of his innocent children and happiness from his home. You know, as I think about it...nothing can beat beer as a remover.

The bible says, "...Intoxicating drink arouses brawling, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise" (Pro. 20:1). Friend, do yourself and your family a favor - remove the remover from your life (Gal. 5:19ff) before you loose everything that is precious.



# How Shall We Escape If We Neglect Our Blessed Lord Who died that We Might Live?

The wages of sin has always been the same. Sin and death—separation from the Lord—have always gone together in a sorrowful tandem (Romans 6:23). Only the power of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary can triumph over the hold Satan has on the human race (Mark 3:27). What happened at Golgotha can never be changed. Hope for humanity echoes down the stream of time in a message of unchanging beauty and glory.

Jesus died for me  
All to Him I owe  
Sin had left a crimson stain  
He washed it white as snow.

Thus we conclude with this major thought—just think soberly of the success of the first century Christians. They grew phenomenally in spirituality in spite of rabid opposition on every hand. How? Their very lives reflected the sentiment of sacred prose..."God is our refuge and strength...Our help is in the name of the Lord...He will never leave us nor forsake us...Our sufficiency is of God." For all of those who have tasted "that the Lord is gracious," the summation of each Christian's dependence upon the Lord comes from Paul's words in 2 Timothy 4:16-17: "At my first answer no man stood with me but all men forsook me. But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me."

If we will but transfer the following speech made by Booker T. Washington out of the secular realm into the divine we will learn what it takes to "go on unto perfection." the great Negro educator spoke

these words at the **Atlanta Exposition** on September 18, 1895. Notice how well they can apply to the gist of this lesson:

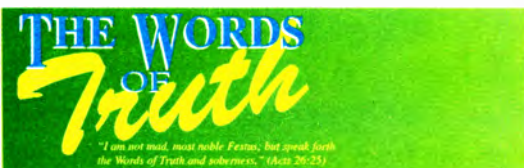
"Our greatest danger is that in the great leap from slavery to freedom we may overlook the fact that the masses of us are to live by the production of our hands. We shall prosper as we learn to draw the line between the superficial and the substantial, the ornamental things of life and the useful. No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top. Nor should we permit our grievances to overshadow our opportunities."

May each Christian—whether old or new—work out his own salvation, realizing that God works within us to accomplish that end (Philippians 2:11-13).

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## SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published weekly under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.  
Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. thirty-five cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.  
Individual rates are \$22.50 per year. All bills payable to Words of Truth, 3051 McQueen Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36107



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# THE WORDS OF Truth

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

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38117  
SEE ARTICLES INSIDE:

Before There Was A World  
How God Chastens His Children  
Good Marriage Needs Trust  
Friends To The End

Vol. 33 No. 20

August 1, 1996

## "Before There Was A World" (Part I)

*"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."*

*Matthew 13:35*

By: Jason R. Roberts

When a Christian begins to ponder the nature of God and the celestial universe that He spoke into existence, He is awe struck at its splendor and majesty. It is amazing to know that there were things that existed in the mind of God before the foundation of the world. That is, before God created the universe and man, He etched into his immutable nature many wonderful things before either were created. Consequently, the child of God should daily reflect and remember some things that existed before he did.

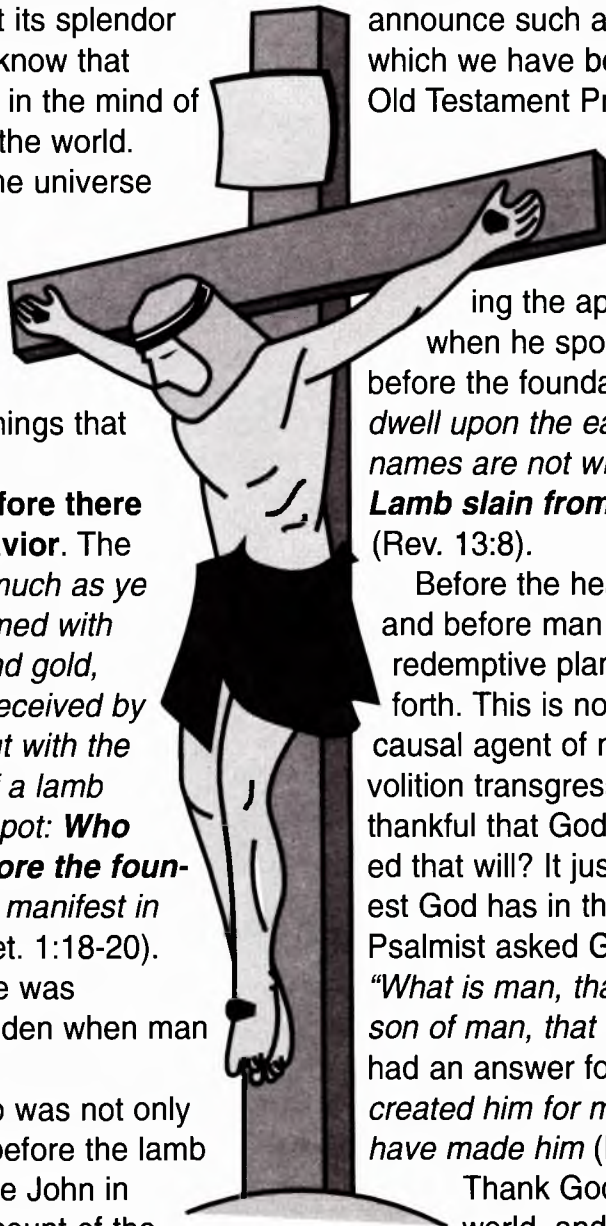
Observe first of all that **before there was a sinner there was a savior**. The apostle Peter wrote, *"Foreasmuch as ye know that he were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: **Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you**" (1 Pet. 1:18-20).* the lamb of which Peter spoke was announced in the garden of Eden when man fell victim to sin (Gen. 3:15).

In the next place, the lamb was not only **spoken** of but it wasn't long before the lamb was **sent**. The beloved apostle John in the commencement of his account of the gospel announced *"Behold the Lamb of God, which*

*taketh away the sin of the world."* (John 1:29). It must have given the apostle good pleasure to announce such a mighty declaration. This that for which we have been waiting, this is that to which the Old Testament Prophets pointed; This is that upon which; Christainity hinges; Thank God for the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world! But what an even greater blessing the apostle was privilege to experience when he spoke of the Lamb that was **slain** before the foundation of the world. *"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life **of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*** (Rev. 13:8).

Before the heavens and the earth were created, and before man committed his first sin, the redemptive plan of God had already been set forth. This is not to suggest that God was the causal agent of man's downfall. Man by his own volition transgresses Divine Law. But aren't you thankful that God had a plan for us before we violated that will? It just further illustrates how much interest God has in those whom he had created. The Psalmist asked God the question in the long ago *"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"* (Psalm 8:4) God had an answer for his question. He said *"... I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him* (Isaiah 43:7).

Thank God, that before the foundation of the world, and before there was a sinner there was a Savior!





# FROM THE EDITOR

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## How God Chastens His Children

For those of us who were blessed to have good fathers, Hebrews 12 brings back memories. Verses five through eleven say, "...despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

We know from these verses that the Lord's chastening reflects His love. Further more we know that it is often not pleasant, but rather that which must be endured. Just how does the Lord chasten His children today? How can we know when we are being chastened by the Father?

Let's consider five ways the Lord chastens Christians:

### 1. By commanding Gospel preaching from the Word.

2 Timothy 4:15—"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." Preaching today which never provides chastisement through the Bible isn't what God demands. God works to chasten His people through the faithful pulpit.

### 2. By permitting our conscience to hurt us when we sin.

John 8:9—"And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst."

No one enjoys a guilty conscience. but conscience, operating with a heart which is filled with the Bible, is a blessing. It makes us miserable until we do right. Through conscience God chastens us.

### 3. By letting us suffer the consequences of our wrong deeds.

1 Peter 4:15-16—"But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or

as a thief, or an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf".

God will certainly watch quietly as we suffer the consequences for our sinful deeds here on earth. If we break the law, we will pay a fine or go to jail. If a student cheats in school, he will be handed proper punishment, such consequences hurt, but in good people will serve as building blocks of strong character.

### 4. By commanding our fellow Christians to seek our repentance when we sin.

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

1 Corinthians 5:11-13

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such as one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

"But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

### 5. By permitting us to endure the general sufferings which commonly befall mankind.

Christians are not immune to suffering. Paul wrote that Christians would face "perilous times" (1 Tim. 3:1-6). Early Christians suffered because of what they believed and taught about the Christ (Acts 2-7). We suffer today through family distress, sickness, the death of loved ones, and so other areas of life. In what way is this chastening of God?

James has the answer: James 1:23—"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

As we gave our earthly fathers respect, let us reverence our God, even during times of chastening. And may we all develop the peaceable fruit of righteousness by being exercised through His chastening.

## Most of a Minute - Good Marriage Needs Trust

In describing a good, happy, healthy marriage, what words would you use?

I was reading Proverbs 31 recently and came across verse eleven. The passage is describing the wonderful characteristics of a "virtuous" woman, and it says, "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her."

Trust. A marriage cannot survive without it, and it can flourish with it. A husband needs to be able to trust that his wife always has his best interest at heart, and that she will never

intentionally deceive him. The same is true in the reverse too.

A man needs to be able to take his wife for granted. No, I don't mean in things like not remembering her birthday or your anniversary—that'll get you in real trouble—but rather with reference to trust. when she is late coming home, his concern should be about the traffic, or the tires on the car, not on the possibility that she might be spending time with another man.

Never do anything to damage the trust between you and your spouse. As the Bible says, "the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her."



# Church Growth: The Congregation's Part (No. 1)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

## Introduction

Church growth on the congregational level requires the help of the Lord (He gives the increase), congregational cooperation and congregational activity. In the early years of Christianity in Acts congregations grew by leaps and bounds. In the early years of the Restoration Movement, before digression set in over the mechanical instrument in worship, the missionary society, the drive for open membership, etc., many, many congregations experienced remarkable growth. Those of us a bit older can remember during the 1950's and the 1960's when Churches of Christ were reported by the religious media as being the fastest growing religious body in this country. An avalanche of problems have hit us and hit us hard during the 1970's, the 1980's and well into the 1990's. As a result of having to fight so many battles against false teachers growth has diminished, especially in the U. S. A., during the same decades. What part does a congregation play in ATTAINING such healthy growth patterns again and the MAINTAINING them? I shall number and name some crucial answers to the foregoing question.

### (1) A Solid and Sound Eldership

The Jerusalem congregation at first was governed by apostles but later it had elders. The part they played in the Jerusalem conference was admirable indeed. They, along with the apostles, were set for the defense of the gospel against the Judaistic threat. In the latter part of Acts 20 Paul met with and extended excellent counsel to the Ephesian eldership. Note especially what he told them in Acts 20:28-32. Paul had much to say relative to elders in 1 Timothy 3, 5 and in Titus 1. In two of these chapters, 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, Paul sets forth the various qualifications for elders. In 1 Timothy 5 he gives Timothy some needed advise on matters touching the eldership—his relationship toward them and how the congregation should respond toward them. Obedience to their authority is set forth in Hebrews 13:17. Peter, himself and elder in some local congregation, gave helpful counsel in 1 Peter 5:1-4. What he wrote is filled with practicality.

Elders must be solid and sound if they expect to head a growing, glowing and going congregation of the Lord's people.

### (2) Solid and sound preachers in pulpits and Bible teachers in classrooms

From the princely Paul we learn some fundamental concepts relative to preaching. He spoke these words of wisdom and weight to the Ephesian elders in Acts

20:24ff, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God...Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." He wrote in 1 Timothy 4:13-16, "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Mediate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." In his final chapter he wrote, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine...do the work of an evangelist...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, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:2, 5, 7, 8).

Gospel preachers must know sound doctrine, believe sound doctrine, preach sound doctrine, live sound doctrine and defend sound doctrine when it is under attack or assault, as currently it is most all the time.

The teacher in each Bible Class establishes the tone and tenor of the class. Only men should teach mixed classes or men's classes. Women can and should teach other women and children's classes. The teacher must be a dedicated Christian, a faithful child of God, one who loves to teach, one who is capable of teaching or imparting truth to other people and who loves his/her students with growing affection. In one marvelous verse Paul sums up successful teaching, "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" (2 Timothy 2:2). Here is the twofold obligation of every teacher—faithfulness and aptness of teaching skills. This does not mean apt to teach anything and everything but capability in imparting truth into the hearts of eager and impressionable students.

Congregations will now grow the gospel way if pulpits are weak and bland in their offerings and Bible classes are void of the real milk and meat of the gospel.

P. O. Box 464

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# Friends To The End

Cindy Colley

We'd walk to the corner together,  
Eat M&M's and wait for the bus.  
I remember she'd always stick up for me  
When Tad Smith would make fun of us.

We played for the Rascals together.  
She knew how to clean up the bases.  
She pitched. I was catcher. We had secret signals.  
I'd laugh when she made silly faces.

We'd share a shake in the food court  
When her mom drove us to the mall.  
We'd pretend not to notice the boys when they passed;  
By now Tad was not bad at all.

I was better with numbers. I helped her with trig.  
We'd painstakingly work each equation.  
She grabbed me and hugged me, then straightened my cap  
When we lined up for our graduation.

So many memories of glad times;  
So warm was the laughter and fun.  
Where did the years go when we left that place?  
How could our lives here be done?

We went to the Judgement together,  
Once more we were standing in line.  
I had one more chance to look into the face  
Of this wonderful old friend of mine.

It spoke of the bus stop, the ball field, the school;  
Of math class, the mall, and the show.  
In all of these times I never had told her  
Of this one final place we would go.

Just one more day at the bus stop,  
Or shopping and sharing a shake;  
Just one more test for eleventh grade trig;  
One more, that's all it would take.

I'd be sure this time not to miss them;  
Those everyday chances to show  
The Christ of the cross, His hope for the lost  
This time I would tell her I know.

But there's no going back. It's all over.  
A whispered "goodbye," and it's severed;  
A friendship so strong, yet it ended so wrong.  
It's all over forever and ever.

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# THE WORDS OF Truth

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SEE ARTICLES  
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Three Marks Of A Christian  
What Waylon And Rubel Have In  
Common  
Terrorism 1996  
Before There Was A World (II)  
Church Growth (II)

Vol. 33 No. 21

August 8, 1996

## Three Marks Of A Christian

Neal Pollard

That earnest epistle, Jude, begins, "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called..." A Christian himself, Jude addresses the people of God. He identifies them with three terms, sanctified, preserved, and called. These three words represent three facets of Christianity.

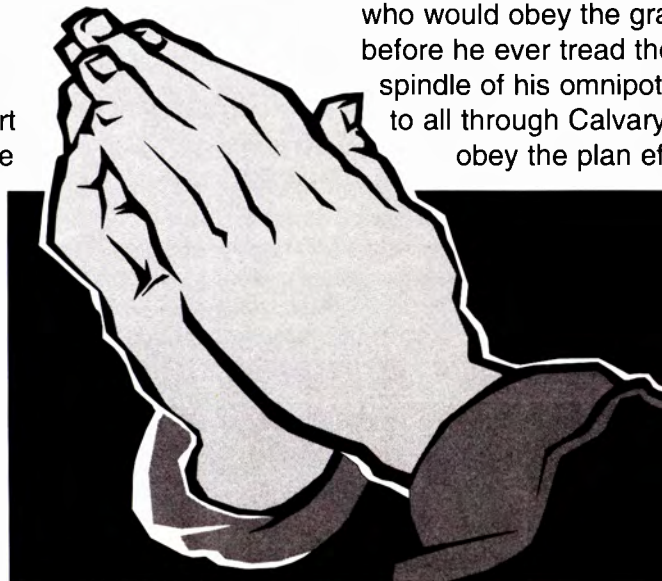
The Christian is **pardoned**. God sets apart the obedient for salvation (Hebrews 5:9). When God views the non-Christian, He sees sin, damnation, and loss. No blood covers their iniquities (cf. Hebrews 9:22). The Christian is indebted to "him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Revelation 1:5). As the child of God continues to walk in the light of Christ, the blood of the Son covers his sin on an ongoing basis (I John 1:7). When God looks upon the life of the faithful Christian, He sees the blood of His Son. Being pardoned, the Christian is set apart (sanctified). The sanctified have a heavenly inheritance (Acts 20:32). The sanctified are the ones cleansed at baptism, having submitted to the word of God unto salvation (Ephesians 5:26). The sanctified have been purged from dead works, having obeyed the gospel of Christ (Hebrews 9:13-14). The sanctified who continue in Christ are "perfected for ever" (Hebrews 10:14). Sanctification and pardon are not identical terms, but the only set apart ones are those who have been thus set apart by the cleansing, saving blood of Christ contacted in baptism.

The Christian is **protected**. Jude notes that he is "preserved." How many times does God hear the saint pray, "And keep us safe from harm's way?" The Bible speaks of God's protective posture as He oversees the daily affairs of His children. Where are more comforting words offered to God's children than in Deuteronomy 33:27, where Moses says, "The eternal

God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms..." In 1 Thessalonians 5:23. Paul longed, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." God has promised to protect His own, never leaving nor forsaking them (Hebrews 13:6). While many Christians have lost their lives being true to the faith and many have and will continue to suffer from doing right, all Christians who put God first are assured that all which happens is for their good (Romans 8:28). The world does not have that protection, and it has no hope of the everlasting preservation in heaven.

The Christian is **petitioned**. He is "called." Jesus sorrowed that "many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14). God predestined the salvation of all who would obey the gracious scheme of redemption before he ever tread the first lump of clay with the spindle of his omnipotence. His grace has appeared to all through Calvary (cf. Titus 2:11), but few souls obey the plan effected by the cross (Matthew 7:13-14). The Christian not only answered the call to salvation, he continues to answer the call of God made through the Word. Christians are called to be saints. Christians are petitioned to do "all the will of God" (Colossians 3:17). That is his service, his obligation, and his privilege as a member of God's family. Christians have specific, outlined roles and functions to fill and perform. The Christian life is purposeful!

It is great to be a Christian, as the rich, spiritual treasures abundantly flow from the wells of salvation (cf. Ephesians 1:3). The Christian, sanctified, preserved, and called, walks through life knowing from whence he has come, what he has to do while he yet remains in his frail body here, and looks with fondness out over the horizon of time with a wishful eye toward heaven. Let the redeemed of the earth say so (Psalm 107:2).





# FROM THE EDITOR

Glenn Colley

*Sixth Avenue Church of Christ*

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## WHAT WAYLON AND RUBEL HAVE IN COMMON

The following is a direct quote of an entire newspaper piece which ran in the Nashville Tennessean on July 10, 1996.

### PREACHER RESPONDS TO WAYLON

From the Brad About You mailbag: lots of comments on Waylon Jennings' calling the Church of Christ "self-righteous" and "wrong" in his autobiography. Rubel Shelly, minister at the Woodmont Hills Church of Christ, provided the most thoughtful and sensitive. He acknowledges the church in days past might have fit such a description. Shelly says he hopes, though, the church has grown beyond the views that only Church of Christ parishioners are true Christians.

"Thanks for the quote," Shelly writes. "It will serve me well in trying to teach against what I inherited and have had to come to terms with."

The article also carried a photograph of Jennings.

For the last decade Rubel Shelly has distinguished himself as a mover and shaker among preachers in the Church of Christ. In his preaching and writing he has supported, (some say led), a movement in the church to radically change our beliefs, preaching, and worship. This movement has been rightly called the "change movement." One who studies what these change agents are saying quickly becomes aware of the primary agenda among men like brother Shelly. It is to create the confusion and perception that the church of Christ is actually a denomination as are man-made churches. The motivation for this agenda seems to be a desire to have closer fellowship with various denominations. Since those churches aren't willing to conform to the New Testament on matters such as worship and baptism, the change agents have decided to abandon the truth to achieve this fellowship. Sadly, many churches of Christ have been bitterly split over this movement. Many are splintering even now.

The Church of Christ is not a denomination. It is true that folks could be the church of Christ in name only, and not in doctrine or practice, but that does not mean that the true Church of Christ doesn't exist today. It certainly does.

What we are preaching, and have been preaching for decades, is that folks should go back to the Bible to see how they be the Church of Christ. This is not optional for those who wish to go to heaven, because only those people who are in Christ's church will go to heaven. Waylon and Rubel cannot change that. Consider:

1. Only those people who believe and are baptized are saved. Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. (KJV)

2. Only those people who obey the gospel as it is spelled out in the New Testament are going to heaven. Those who do not will be lost. 2 Thessalonians 1:8 — "... 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."

3. Only those people who are cleansed by Christ's blood in baptism have their sins washed away. Acts 22:16 — "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

4. All the people who have been baptized according to the scriptures are part of Christ's church. Acts 2:38, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Furthermore, only those people are part of His church.

Acts 2:47 — "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

5. Jesus came to build only one church, and it was that church that Paul had in mind when he referred to the "churches of Christ," (Rom. 16:16). Matthew 16:18 — "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

6. In the New Testament, only Christians were part of Christ's church, and Christ's church held the only Christians.

7. All who abandon the doctrine of Christ, including the teaching in the New Testament with reference to His church, lose God's approval. 2 John 9— "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."

Rubel, and those who follow his lead don't believe the Church of Christ is the church of Christ. They believe it is simply another denomination. They are wrong. It is not self-righteous to believe the Bible. It is not self-righteous to do what the Bible says with reference to Christ's church and then claim to be Christ's church.

We can know the truth, (John 8:32). We can be members of Christ's church, (Col. 1:13 ; 1 Cor. 1:2). And grand is the fact that any group of people can be the Lord's church by faithfully following the teaching of the New Testament! We do not own the church, nor hold copyrights on it. It is Christ's. Whoever will follow the New Testament pattern will be approved of Him.

Rubel implies that there are people outside the church of Christ who are true Christians. We are left to assume that since the Bible teaches that all true Christians are in Christ's church; and that no true Christians are outside His church, then:

1. The church of Christ today is not Christ's church.

2. Another religious body, (or bodies), is Christ's church.

We are left to wonder

what church that is.

The church of our Lord has always had critics like Waylon who persecuted the Lord with their slander. It is however, unique and sad to have members of the church thanking them for their insight.

appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

The only real security in this life is with Jesus, the Christ. He's the only real anchor for life. Listen: Whenever you think about terrorism, let your next thought be from the mouth of Jesus. "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away, (Mt. 24:35), and, Hebrews 13:5-6 — "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.

## Most of a Minute - Terrorism, 1996

Oklahoma City, 1995. Value Jet. TWA flight 800. Atlanta Centennial Park.

Terrorism. We all hate it. But it reminds us and teaches us some lessons which are very important. We humans are vulnerable creatures. We don't like to think so, but we are. The truth is that the plans I have made for later today, or tomorrow, or next year, may never come to pass. James 4:14 says, "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that



# “Before There Was A World” (Part II)

*“That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret **from the foundation of the world.**”*

*Matthew 13:35*

By: Jason R. Roberts

Deuteronomy 29:29 reveals to man that *“The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”* The child of God is privileged and thankful that the Almighty has an intense interest in His precious offspring (cf. Acts 17: 28b). For revealing to man His Diving will we are extremely grateful. The thoughts of God are unlike any other. *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”* (Isaiah 55:8-9). But in spite of all of the secret thoughts God has stored up in His Divine mind, He by his own volition revealed to us those things that are pertinent to our understanding and ultimately our eternal destiny. Last week we discussed **before there was a sinner there was a savior** (1 Pet. 1:18-20). This article will center on the theme **before there was a punishment of life there was a promise of life.**

The apostle Paul, writing by inspiration, penned in the commencement of his letter to Titus *“Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; **in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began**”* (Titus 1:1-1).

Imagine knowing that the hope of eternal life for weak, sinful humanity had been promised before God spoke His marvelous universe into existence (Gen. 1:1). And just in case one questions the validity of the above thought, Paul supports the *“hope of eternal life”* and the *“promise before the world began”* by inserting the fact that God **cannot lie.** The Hebrew writer further clarifies that it is **“impossible for God to lie”** (Heb. 6:18). Yes, one can say with the Psalmist in the long ago *“...the testimony of the Lord is sure”* (Psalm 19:7b). But not only is His testimony sure it is **“very sure”** (Psalm 93:5).

This testimony reveals to us that before there was a punishment of life there was a promise of life. This promise is for all men who possess three vital characteristics.

First, before there was a punishment of life there was a promise of life for those who would **come** to the Lord. During his earthly ministry the Lord said **“come”** (John 1:39). Those who are wearied and burdened with sin he said **“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give your 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”** (Matt. 11:28-30). When it comes to the salvation of mankind *“...the Spirit and the bride say, **Come.** And let him that heareth say, **Come.** And let him that is athirst **come.** And whosoever will,*

*let him take the water of life freely”* (Rev. 22:17).

Second, before there was a punishment of life there was a promise of life for those who would **confess** the Lord. Jesus Christ instructed while on earth, *“Whosoever therefore shall **confess** me before men, him will I **confess** also before my Father which is in heaven But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven”* (Mat. 10:32-33). This confession of our faith is not a one time act of obedience. Rather, it is a daily expression of our Christianity. This confession is inseparably linked to one’s salvation. The apostle Paul wrote *“...if thou shalt **confess** with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth **confession is made unto salvation**”* (Rom. 10:9-10, emp. added JRR). This confession will be made by all men. *“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should **confess** that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”* (Philip. 2:10-11). Those who confess his sweet name on this side of eternity will joyfully confess his glorious name at the judgment. On the contrary, those who refuse to confess his name on this side of eternity will confess his name at the judgment to their own shame and damnation, but the confession will be done to the glory of God (Philip. 2:11).

Third, before there was a punishment of life there was a promise of life for those who would **claim** Christ. There is a vast difference between claiming Christ and being ashamed of Christ. There are those who love to hear sermons about the “church” and “baptism” and the “matchless love of God,” but they don’t want to hear sermons about “modest apparel” (1 Tim. 2:9-10). “forsaking the assembly” (Heb. 10:25) or why our young people shouldn’t go to the Prom (Gal. 5:19-ff.). Yes, they sing *“Oh How I Love Jesus!”* But do they really (Matt. 6:33? Jesus said, *“Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me **and of my words** in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels* (Mark 8:38). One cannot claim to be a follower of Christ and refuse to honor His words! How often do we rise to our feet and sing, *“I’m not ashamed to own my Lord, Nor to defend His cause; **maintain the honor of his word...**”* And yet spiritually we are sitting in hypocrisy and sin. Jesus said by their lips they honor me, but their hearts are far from me (Matt. 15:8).

We are to be thankful for the fact that before there was a punishment of life there was a promise of life. This promise was for those who would come to Christ, who would confess Christ, and for those who genuinely claim that Christ!









# THE WORDS OF Truth

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

**SEE ARTICLES  
INSIDE:  
How God Speaks Today  
Who Hears The Tree Fall  
Blessings Christ Provides  
Time**

Vol. 33 No. 22

August 16, 1996

## How God Speaks Today

J.C. Choate

Does God speak today? He most certainly does. The question is, however, how does God speak? This question has been debated for centuries. Is it possible to know? Another related question is, to whom does God speak? Does he speak to a select number or to all? Then another related question would be, how does God speak? Does he speak directly, audibly, by a sign, through a vision or dream, or some other way? Surely there is a way to know.

Recently a man told a Burmese brother that God had spoken to him in two different dreams. How many times have we heard that? And how many times have we had different ones to tell us that God had audibly spoken to them, or appeared to them in a vision to reveal his will to them, or that God had given to them a sign to let them know that he wanted them to do or not to do some particular thing? Where do these people get all of these ideas? Certainly not from the Bible, because the Bible does not teach such things. That means that such people are speaking out of ignorance, out of their feelings and imaginations, or as a result of being deceived by some false teacher. If one is convinced that God has spoken to him directly in some way then that must make him feel very important and to put forth every effort possible to defend such a belief. The devil certainly is cunning and goes all out to not only deceive one but to blind him to the truth and reason so that he will remain deceived.

God does speak to man today, but he speaks to one and all alike through the written word, the scriptures, the Bible, and in particular, the New Testament, which is specifically directed to those who have lived, and will live, after the death of Christ and until he returns again.

The Hebrew writer says, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by

whom also he made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:1,2).

Concerning the things that Jesus did, and are written about him, we read, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in his 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). Then Paul tells us that all of the scripture is given by the inspiration of God and completely furnishes man unto every good work (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). Peter said, speaking of God, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3). We are

told then that we should not add to the word or subtract from it (Revelation 2:18, 19), that we should not substitute something for it (Galatians 1:6-9), but that we should obey the commandments (Revelation 22:14), and be doers of the word (James 1:22). Paul tells us that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17). James calls the scriptures the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25), and Christ says, "And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall

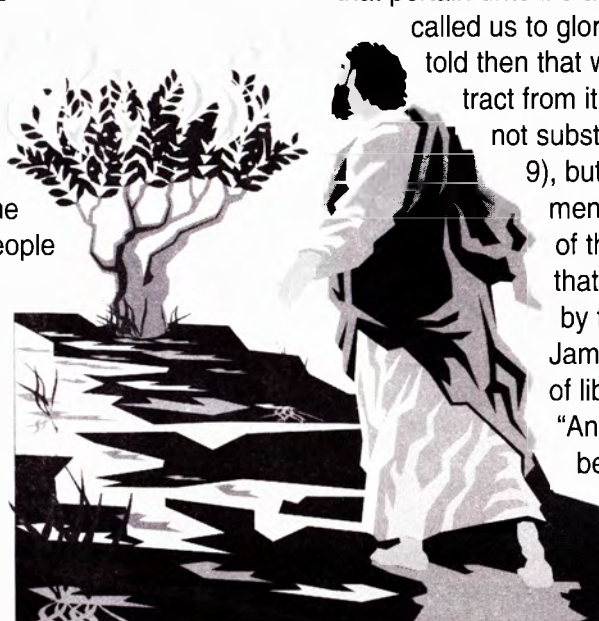
judge Him in the last day, For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak" (John 12:47-50).

What do we have then? The fact is that God has always spoken and in these last days, our days, he speaks to us through his Son as is set forth in the pages of the New Testament. That word is written down for our learning that we might know the Lord and his will, that we might believe in him and obey his commandments. He speaks to all alike, and when all read and study and obey his teach-

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*continued on page 3*





# FROM THE EDITOR

*Glenn Colley*

*Sixth Avenue Church of Christ  
1501 6th Avenue  
Jasper, AL 35501*



## PLAN TO ATTEND!!



### 1996 WORDS OF TRUTH LECTURESHIP

SEPTEMBER 4-6, 1996

6TH AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST

JASPER, ALABAMA

**THEME: THE HEROES OF FAITH, HEBREWS 11**

#### SCHEDULE OF LECTURES:

##### Wednesday, September 4

1:00 p.m. Bobby Duncan — Noah

2:00 p.m. B.J. Clarke — Abraham

7:00 p.m. singing

7:30 p.m. B.J. Clarke - Isaac

7:00 p.m. Singing

7:30 p.m. Gary Colley — Gideon

##### Thursday, September 5

9:30 a.m. William Woodson — Jacob

10:30 a.m. Split Session: Men: Gary Colley  
— Joseph

Women: Melony Webster — Rahab

##### Friday, September 6

9:30 a.m. William Woodson — Moses

10:30 a.m. Split Session: Men: Allen  
Webster — Samson

Women: Cindy Colley — Sarah

##### LUNCH BREAK

1:00 p.m. Vance Huitton — Able

##### LUNCH BREAK

1:00 p.m. Jim Dearman — David

7:00 p.m. Singing

7:30 p.m. Tom Holland — Hebrews Eleven

### Most of a Minute - Who Hears The Tree Fall?

I'm sure that at one time or another you've heard a few of the deeply philosophical questions of life. Questions such as "if a tree falls in a forest, and no one is anywhere around to hear it, does it make a sound?"

While I can't see that the answer to this particular question makes any difference to anyone, it does remind me of an important point. In the book of Job, the man Job questions God. God responds by asking questions of His own. He alluded to the literally millions of details which God attends to in our world

each day without anybody's help or knowledge. For example, who teaches the older ravens to gather food for their young?, or who teaches a mother peacock to leave her eggs in the warm dirt for safe keeping? Who teaches that far away eagle to make her nest on high? (Job 39).

The answer is God. And if God so ably takes care of these, Jesus says in Matthew 6, He will also take care of us. Put your trust in the Almighty God. Live the life of a faithful Christian.



ings then he saves all alike and adds all to his church (Acts 2). Since that word will never pass away (Matthew 24:35), even in the day of judgment we will be judged by it (John 12:48). Those who have believed it and obeyed it will be eternally saved, but those who have not done so, but have rejected it, added to it, or subtracted from it, will be cursed by it and will be cast into torment.

Should the Lord give additional revelation to one and not to another, as many seem to believe, that would make the Lord a respecter of persons. Why would he tell something to one that he would not tell another? Why would he speak to one in one way and to another in another way? All of this would only lead to confusion and distrust in the Lord.

## Blessings Christ Provides

*Johnny Ramsey*

There are so many vibrant passages and principles in the Bible concerning the value of Christianity that one must carefully search for the most eloquent of them all. We are blessed indeed by the contribution the Lord makes to our earthly sojourn. Truly, we are always led in triumph in Christ Jesus (II Cor. 2:14). Since He was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification (Romans 4:25) we owe to the cause of the Savior our best efforts. An unknown poet contributes these words:

"If only I had found Jesus sooner  
If the past I could only recall  
But how thankful I am  
For the blood of the Lamb  
And the fact that I found Him at all!"

How empty and vain our days would be without our blessed Redeemer. He provides sunshine, purpose and hope to an otherwise drab existence. While we were yet sinners God sent His son to die for us (Romans 5:8) and to leave us an example to follow (I Peter 2:21) so that one day we could dwell in heaven. Abundant living is the heart and core of the gospel system (John 10:10) because "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts" (Romans 5:5). The Lamb of God came to take away our sins (John 1:29) and to give unto us the words of eternal life (John 6:68). verily, "the unsearchable riches of Christ" provide us with the best of two worlds (Eph. 3:8-21). Christianity involves four fundamental issues. First of all we must **submit** our wills unto the Lord (Acts 9:6). Secondly, we must **admit** our sinfulness (I Sam. 26:21). Thirdly we must humbly **commit** our very soul to His cause (Romans 12:2) and lastly, we should ever be ready and willing to **transmit** the message of truth to others (II Tim. 2:2). When we consider the bountiful arrangement that the gospel produces in our lives such matters ought to naturally and graciously follow. Another unknown poet tells us of the power in the Cross of Calvary:

"I knelt in tears at the feet of Christ  
In the hush of the twilight dim,  
And all that I was, or hoped, or sought,  
Surrendered unto Him.  
Crowned or crucified, my heart shall known  
No King, but Christ, who loved me so.?"

The fact is, God has revealed all of his will to man today through Christ as it is written in the pages of the New Testament. He speaks to all alike in the same way. He has revealed the same message to all. He has said all that he wanted to say. Had he wanted to say more, he would have done so at the time he was speaking. Be not deceived. God has spoken and speaks today through his written word. He has revealed all of his will and if we are waiting for more we are waiting in vain. We are therefore to hear his word, believe and obey it, and then preach and teach it to others. Only then can we be saved.

Let us briefly notice three major blessings in the life of a Christian. These points alone should make us more grateful as followers of the Man of Galilee:

### (1) Peace in the midst of pain

The Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) with the gospel of peace (Romans 10:15) grants tranquil joys the world cannot fathom (Phil. 4:7). In the midst of evil, sorrow, error and sadness the faithful child of God need not suffer as others do who have not hope (I Thess. 4:17-18). The calm assurance that God's will shall be ultimately accomplished (Daniel 4:25) gives us comfort and help in every time of need (Heb. 4:16). therefore, we will not waste precious moments feeling sorry for ourselves or being bitter toward others. We must be about our heavenly Father's business (Luke 2:49) and just cannot allow Satan an opportunity to gain advantage over us (II Cor. 2:11). We will spend our time in striving to be doctrinally sound (I Tim. 4:16), benevolently kind (James 1:27), morally pure (II cor. 5:17), evangelistically zealous (Acts 5:42) and fervent in hope (Titus 1:2). Being busy in the vineyard of the Lord will occupy our energies in things divine and purposeful. This is a certain prescription for happiness. What a blessing Christ provides in this regard!

### (2) Contentment in the midst of chaos

Paul, from prison, under cruel despotic Nero, wrote of the contentment Christians should have regardless of external circumstances. The Psalmist told of being young and later old -yet never seeing the Lord forsake His own. Christians are told in I Timothy that we can lead tranquil lives in all godliness although the world is in a mess. Indeed, "godliness with contentment is great gain" (I Tim. 6:6). Job is the classic reminder of one who learned the way of inner calmness best of all when he possessed the least of worldly gain and earthly lore. In Psalms 84:10 we read again this principle:

"I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of  
my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

We need to learn the value of gratitude in the midst of grumbling (Phil. 2:12-16) and look for the silver linings when storm clouds peel forth. When things look the roughest and



# Time

Time is a gift from God. It should be used wisely. We must give an account of the time we use for God.

There are some things not necessary to living, but time is not one of them. It is necessary to life itself. We cannot get along without it. When our time is gone here, life ends.

Time passes swiftly. It is divided into three parts: past, present, and future. But while we are talking about the present, it slips into the past.

"Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not" (Job 14:1.2). "For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14)/

Man cannot create a moment, borrow a moment, nor destroy a moment. Time cannot be stored up like money. It cannot be purchased with money. We can only make wise or unwise use of it. It will last "while the earth remaineth" (Gen. 8:22). Regardless how many years we live, God is the giver of them all. "In him we live, move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

Yesterday is but a dream; tomorrow, only a vision; but today we will live. Make every yesterday a dream of happiness, and every tomorrow a vision of hope. Look to this day only; we have no promise of tomorrow.

Mildred Adams  
Midway Church of Christ

## Blessings Christ Provides, *continued from page 3*

we seem to be devoid of materialistic benefits we need to recall Habakkuk's powerful entreaty...

"Still, I will trust in the Lord."

Always remember the little slogan that challenges:

"You cannot be optimistic if you have misti-optics."

All cry-babies to the back of the line, please!

### (3) Salvation in the midst of sin

We certainly do live in an incredibly wicked world. As Jeremiah stated so we now observe:

"The whole land is full of sin."

However, Christians are not of the world (John 15:19) and we can rise above the pettiness and carnality that would seek to overwhelm us. Realizing this earth is not our home (Heb. 11:16) will help us to make our eternal destiny a motivating factor in living for Jesus now! Why should children of

God focus their thinking on sinful, shameful, degrading matters when the joy of salvation (I Peter 1:7) grants unto us "A new and living way" (Hebrews 10:29)? Let us sing anew the fervent words of an old hymn:

"Nearer, still nearer, Lord to be Thine  
Sin with its follies I gladly resign  
All of its pleasures, pomp and its pride  
Give me but Jesus, my Lord crucified."

The blessings Christ provides are just too precious to miss!

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published weekly under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.  
Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. forty cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$20.50 per year. All bills payable to Words of Truth, 3051 McQueen Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36107



6th Avenue Church of Christ  
1501 6th Avenue  
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Organization  
U.S. Postage  
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# THE WORDS OF Truth

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

## SEE ARTICLES INSIDE:

I Cried Sunday  
Church Growth  
What Followed Joseph's Brothers  
Training Our Children  
Claimed By The Antichrist  
What Do I Say And What Do I Do?

Vol. 33 No. 22

August 22, 1996

## I Cried Sunday

*Johnny Ramsey*

The doctor was about to release me from the hardest week of my life. I was tired of the hospital and could barely wait to get home. He was telling me how slow the healing process would be from any serious heart trauma and that complications were barely overcome that would allow me to leave the hospital.

I looked up and said to him, "I cried Sunday," and a puzzled look came upon his face. He asked, "Why?" I said, "Because I missed the worship assembly of my brethren before God. It was one of the very, very few times in the past 50 years that this sorrow has come into my life." I said, "Dr., I preached three times last Sunday and I

don't know when the last time was that I didn't preach and teach on the first day of the week. I wept because I missed my brethren; I missed the privilege of worship; I missed the honor of preaching the gospel; I missed the memories of my parents, who brought me up to feel privileged to worship God. I weep now because some of my brethren don't seem to realize what they miss. It doesn't seem to sadden many people who have other things on their agenda that they deem more important. I guess I really wept for them.

Thank you brethren for your prayers, cards and love. Iris and I will never, ever forget it.

## Church Growth: The Congregation's Part (No. 3)

*Robert R. Taylor, Jr.*

### (6) SCRIPTURAL WORSHIP

At Jacob's well in John 4 Jesus stressed in the ears of the Samaritan woman the right object, the right manner and the right way of worship — God, spirit and truth. The initial assessment of those just immersed in Jerusalem is given in the framework of worship. Hear Luke as he states, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). The high premium Troas saints placed upon the Lord's Supper is given major emphasis by Luke in Acts 20:7. Paul supplies more major emphasis upon the communion in 1 Corinthians 10 and the last half of chapter 11. There is much Pauline emphasis in his writings in dealing with singing, praying, teaching or preaching and the contribution (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; 2 Timothy 2:2; 1 Corinthians 16: 1, 2; 2 Corinthians 8.9).

Worship digression is high on the agenda of the Change Agents. What we have done through the years is old hat to them; they are bored still with it; they have conditioned many young people, even their own children, to disdain worship according to the divine pattern. They want something different, spontaneous, sensational and satisfying to secular minds. They even inject the Holy Spirit into their new forms of worship claiming they do not know at the beginning of a worship period just which direction the Spirit of God will lead them. It is shameful and disgraceful what they palm off on the spirit of Holiness. We speak reverently in His behalf —

### NOT GUILTY!

There can be NO real growth and vibrant development in the absence of worship based squarely on Scripture. How could there be?

True worship is an absolute must. Vain worship as in Mark 7, ignorant worship as in Acts 17 and will-worship as in Colossians 2 are not conducive in the least in contributing to real church growth. In fact these devilish digressions detract, negate and nullify true worship and accompanying growth.

### (7) A FRIENDLY AND JOYFUL CHURCH

Solomon expressed a principle in the Old Testament relative to friendliness. He wrote, "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24). This precious principle applies collectively as well. Paraphrased it would read, "A congregation that hath friends must show itself friendly." Perhaps we all have had the experience of visiting a congregation, say in a gospel meeting, and leaving with only one or two even speaking to us while we were there. I know of a congregation that is notorious for this. Were I looking for a church home, this would not be my choice of one at all! Deficiency along this line is minus any and all justification.

Joy and Jesus have far more in common than simply beginning with the same alphabetical letter; cheerful and Christianity are compatible in every sense of the terms. Joy is one of the ingredients of Paul's fruit of the Spirit in

*continued on page 3*



# FROM THE EDITOR

*Glenn Colley*

*Sixth Avenue Church of Christ  
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## WHAT FOLLOWED JOSEPH'S BROTHERS

Their own bitterness and hatred turned to torment the sons of Jacob after they sold Joseph into bondage. Every time they saw that beautiful coat of many colors they were reminded that their father loved Joseph more than them. To Jacob the coat represented devoted love for his favorite son. To Joseph it represented the sweet and secure love of his father. But to those brothers it was an object of bitterness and anger. To make matters worse, Joseph told his brothers of his dreams, one in which sheaves in a field became animated and the group, representing the brothers, bowed down to one, representing Joseph. In another dream the brothers were the sun, moon, and stars. All bowed down to Joseph. The brother's anger grew to malice and they decided selling Joseph to the slave traders was better than killing him. They expected to never see him again.

Like crazy men they ripped Joseph's coat. They slew a goat for his blood, and spread it on the coat. As they handed it to their horrified father they said, "This have we found; know now whether it be thy son's coat or no." As he wept, they gathered around him and offered their hypocritical sympathy.

Nevertheless, Joseph retained his integrity before God, and God blessed Joseph beyond imagination. After God reveals Pharaoh's dreams to Joseph, Joseph is elevated to prominence and power, second only to the king. Joseph is over the task of saving food in the seven years of plenty, and distributing the food during the seven years of famine. He is brilliant and effective.

More than twenty years pass. The famine ruthlessly robs the land of food. Joseph's brothers stand before an Egyptian ruler unknown to them wearing the robes of a king and speaking the language of the Egyptians. He is Joseph, the brother of the pit, but they do not know him. They long ago decided he was dead and would never be heard of again. Though Joseph doesn't reveal himself, he gives them a hard time. He accuses them of being spies.

Then comes the interesting point. Now facing this trouble they say privately to one another, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." And Ruben answered them saying, "Spake I not unto you, saying 'Do not sin against the child,' and ye would not hear? Therefore, behold, also his blood is required." (Gen. 42:21-22)

When the brothers waved goodbye to Joseph twenty years

ago, they were happy. In their criminal scheme they found revenge and joy. They never expected to feel guilt. Yet guilt is what they got, for years, and years, and years. Even after Joseph revealed himself to them and forgave them, they were still uncertain. He had forgiven, apparently God had forgiven, but they hadn't forgiven themselves, and they worried that Joseph would punish them after Jacob died. These were tormented men.

We can learn some lessons from this Genesis account which will prove valuable for our lives. Consider these five:

1. I must never say with reference to my sin, "No people know about this, therefore God doesn't know about this." In the first place, some man may know of my sin. Even if none do however, God knows all. (Psalm 139:1-14) The brothers of Joseph, though clever, were unable to hide their sin from man or God.

2. I must never put off my repentance, for if I do, I may lose my chance. Joseph's brothers asked forgiveness, but they waited so long. Joseph could have died before they had the chance, and in fact, they probably lived for years believing he had died.

3. It is never too late to right my wrongs, even after twenty years. How sweet the words must have been to Joseph's ears when his brothers sought his forgiveness! If those you have wronged still live, go to them now. Wait no longer.

4. I must do all I can to right my wrongs, and then after receiving God's forgiveness, and hopefully the forgiveness of those on earth against whom I have sinned, I must be content that I am forgiven, and forgive myself. Joseph's brother's were pitiful. Even after Joseph had forgiven them, their frame of mind would not let them believe it. They still carried the guilt and fear resulting from sin after that sin was forgiven. Many today do the same.

5. Godly people are always eager to forgive. Joseph didn't have to be begged to extend forgiveness. He was eager. There are people in the church right now with hearts as hard as rocks and as cold as ice. They are as lost as the elder brother, (Luke 15:1-3, 25-32), and need to repent. Paul taught us in Ephesians 4:32, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Jesus said, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:14,15)

## Most of a Minute - Training Our Children

Parenting is such important business. We only get one chance at raising our children, and the time passes so quickly.

When discussing proper training of their children some parents will say, "We will not influence our children in making choices and decisions in matters of religion!" Buy why not? The ads will. The press will. The movies will. The neighbors will. The forces of sin will. The politicians will.

The Bible says, "Train up a child in the way he should go." (Prov. 22:6), and in Ephesians 6:4, "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Generally speaking, no one has as much influence on the way a child will grow up than do the parents. So parents, let's bring them up right. Let's point them to the Lord.



Galatians 5:22, 23.

The church in Jerusalem was filled with joy. Luke summed it all up by writing, "...did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:46. 47). They were joyful, at least the apostles were, in the midst of severe persecution. Luke records in Acts 5:41. 42. "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." Years later James, half brother of our Lord and His whole brother in the faith, wrote, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:2.3).

The Philippian church was a joy to Paul and faced the

world of its day with a joyful disposition. Paul's letter to them is an epistle of joy, joy on his part and joy on their part as well.

An attractive acrostic of joy would be:

J-esus  
O-thers  
Y-ourself.

Friendliness and joy are essential elements for a growing, glowing and going church with a militant message for a lost and ruined world.

P.O. Box 464  
Ripley, Tennessee 38063

## Claimed By The Antichrist

by Mel Futrell

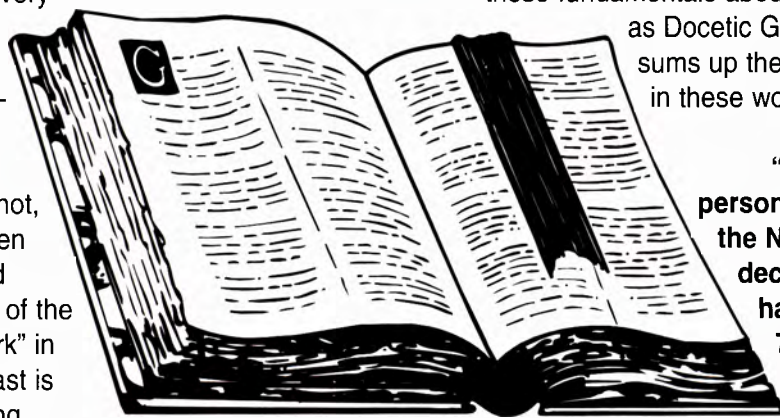
The above title was one of the feature stories recently (June 6, 1996) on the ABC Evening News. It seems that some "fundamentalists" in the country of Columbia claimed the date 6-6-96 represented the "mark of the beast." In response to this public announcement, apparently thousands in this Catholic dominant country rushed out to have their children baptized (sprinkled); fearing that if they didn't they would be claimed by the antichrist, whatever that is suppose to mean. Brethren, it never ceases to amaze me what some people will claim in the name of religion. And at the same time how gullible other folks are in swallowing hook, line, and sinker every discordant cry that ushers forth from some "holy man" or religious group.

To begin with, the mark of the beast was not, nor is it, a date that when rolled off the lips should strike fear in the hearts of the hearers. The word "mark" in connection with the beast is found 8 times in the King James Version (some translations don't have it Rev. 15:2). And in none of these occurrences does it refer to a date or to a physical brand placed upon a person. Whatever this mark may or may not have been we do know that those who received the mark were in league with the beast because they worshiped his image (Rev. 13:15); and by possessing the mark they had certain economic privileges (Rev. 13:17). But again, there is no justification for associating the calendar date 6-6-96 with the symbolic "mark" of John's Revelation. Such claims are purely fanciful.

Now we come to the frequently abused term "antichrist." And once again we see that many religious people throw out this term loosely and mysteriously without ever knowing or showing how it is used in the New Testament. They never tell us who or what it is or will be, they never refer us to Scripture to explain the term—it's just that enigmatic

antichrist who will appear in the final days of the Christian age. However, the Bible does employ the term antichrist and it is to the Bible that we will turn for our answers.

Our English word antichrist is the transliteration of the Greek word "antichristos" which occurs five times in four passages in the New Testament; those verses are (1 Jn. 2:18,22; 4:3; 2 Jn. 7). Immediately you will notice that John is the lone writer of the New Testament to use the term antichrist. And he uses it to describe those who deny both the deity (vs. 22) and the humanity (4:3; 2 Jn. 7) of Jesus Christ. By the 2nd century A.D. the doctrine that denied these fundamentals about Jesus Christ came to be known as Docetic Gnosticism. Brother Wayne Jackson sums up the information about the "antichrist" in these words:



**"First, there is no one specific person denominated "the antichrist" in the New Testament. Rather, John declares that "many Antichrists" have arisen (1 John 2:18; 2 John 7). Second, the Bible does not suggest that a mysterious antichrist is some sinister personage who is to appear in the late twentieth century. There were many antichrists in the first century. '...even now, ' affirms the apostle, 'have there arisen many antichrists' (1 John 2:18; 4:3). A careful analysis of John's references to 'antichrist' reveals that the term is a general designation employed to suggest a spirit of unbelief that can be manifested in a variety of ways, both in the past and present." [Notes From The Margin Of My Bible, 1993, p. 166].**

Brethren, it is remarkable to me how men and women can be duped into believing such nonsense about the antichrist as related in the Columbian story, but such is the case. Evident then is our responsibility to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21).



# “What Do I Say And What Do I Do?”

Don Williams

In recent weeks there seems to be news of one tragedy after another. Last week we spent time at the Christian Training Series with a young lady our age who lost her husband, son and daughter—all in a van accident! Sunday, I was told of a young mother who suddenly and unexpectedly died.

In my work with grief, I have been asked several times as to what to say or do in times of loss and tragedy. The words “I feel so inadequate” are often stated, and rightly so. Nothing we can say or do can undo the death that has occurred. Yet, there are some things that grieving mourners have told me that were done or said to them that were of help and comfort. Following are some of these suggestions.

## “What Do I Say?”

Nothing can take the place of your presence. It is not the words you use as much as your presence that is so important. When death occurs, go to the grieving family and be with them. Job’s friends came to him and sat seven days with him without saying anything. Mary and Martha had friends to be with them after the death of Lazarus. Nothing takes the place of presence.

Some folks do not know what to say, and thus they avoid going to the funeral home or funeral. Others say too much and ask inappropriate questions. Still others burden the family with stories of other losses that have taken place. The best thing I have found that can be said is this: “I am so sorry to learn of your loss. I love you and I am praying for you.” Such words can only be appreciated. These words, followed by a hug or a grasp of the hand, let the grieving family members know that you are concerned, and that you do care.

## “What do I do?”

After you attend the funeral (if possible), do not forget the grieving family. If the loss was sudden or unexpected, the reality of their loss may just be beginning to sink in. They need the presence of family and friends now more than ever. The fact is that 97% of friends stop visiting the grieving family two weeks after the funeral! Continue to go and be with them. Let them know that you will help in any way possible. Look for ways to help. Little things done in time of grief mean a great deal.

If there are kids left at home, offer to keep them while necessary paperwork has to be done. Offers of running errands are usually appreciated. Laundry work, cleaning the house, and taking food to grieving family members can all be beneficial as they try to deal with their shattered lives, a life that must somehow be put back together.

Romans 12:15 tells us to “weep with them that weep.” Our continued love and support to hurting family members can be one way of showing the love of Christ within our lives.

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## SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published weekly under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.  
**Congregational Rates:** Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. forty cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

**Individual rates are \$20.50 per year. All bills payable to Words of Truth, 3051 McQueen Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36107**



6th Avenue Church of Christ  
1501 6th Avenue  
Jasper, AL 35501

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Montgomery, AL



# THE WORDS OF Truth

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

## SEE ARTICLES INSIDE:

The Sin Of Neglect  
Who Then Can Be Saved?  
Far Sighted People  
Gus Nichols On False Teaching &  
False Teachers

Vol. 33 No. 23

August 29, 1996

## The Sin Of Neglect

Johnny Ramsey

One way, in which we figuratively bind Christ today, is by our **negligence**. After we can no longer hide behind the shield of ignorance, after we know God's will and then fail to do it—we are binding the hands of Jesus by our negligent attitude. Let us illustrate this point. Suppose that tomorrow as you were driving through town a policeman would stop and inform you of a traffic law you had just disobeyed. Perhaps, if you could persuade him that this was your first violation and in fact, you were totally **ignorant** of this law, he might let you go. But I wonder how lenient he would be if on the next day in the very same spot he found you disobeying that same traffic law! You could no longer plead innocence. Your neglectful attitude would get you into trouble. Just is it so in the spiritual realm. When we know to do good and are negligent toward our duty, God, the great patrolman, is displeased. In James 4:17 we read these words: "Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not—to him it is **sin**." It is irrefutably true that we, as members of the body of Christ, pass up many opportunities to do good and openly neglect some things which we know should be attended to. Sometimes brethren argue negatively about attending the services of the church. They say: "There is no scriptural reason for my attending all of the services." This passage, James 4:17, could certainly apply. Of course, this principle is also active in our benevolent work and moral living.

In Matthew, chapter 25, we have the interesting parable of the ten virgins—five wise and five foolish. The greatest curse of the foolish ones was their negligence. They neglected the necessary preparation to be ready when the bridegroom came. One day He's coming again—will we be prepared? Today, in the church of the Lord there are many negligent and erring people. Oft times our lethargy and complacency can be the very stumbling-block over which our friends fall on the way to eternal ruin. May we never forget James 4:17. Read it!

Definite inroads of skepticism are being found within the church. a hint here and a compromise there—a dabble of doubt and dabble of philosophy—and soon a congregation "will love to have it so" (Jeremiah 5:31). the result can be numerical strength, but spiritual poverty (Jeremiah 9:3). But, in all honesty, our major problem is not existentialism or humanism or rationalism—it is shallowness! Not very many members of the church are willing to be challenged by deeper studies, assignments, tests, and memory work. They want

to come to Bible class and sit there casually and not be bothered. If their children took that attitude in public school or college they would be vitally concerned. However, many adults seem to think Bible study is optional and certainly nothing to get excited about. Often I have wondered what the Lord really thinks of some of our attitudes toward His Word and our inability to teach it because of our laziness in studying it. Make no mistake about it—someday we shall give an account for this very weakness (John 12:48). We must not remain enemies of the Bible.

One of the strongest passages in the Bible emphasizing the wisdom and necessity of putting the Lord absolutely first is Psalms 132:3-5.

"I will not enter my house or get into my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob."

This is not only one of the most beautiful selections of Scripture but it is also one of the most demanding. What a different life we would lead—what a different world this would be—what a glorious church the Lord would have on earth today—if all of us practiced such consecration.

That the service of Jehovah is often relegated to a lower position than first goes without saying. In the day of Judgment we are liable to be amazed at how few truly placed the cause of Christ at the top of their list. Yet, repeatedly, the Bible affirms the rich blessings that accrue to each who has as his paramount interest the service of Prince Immanuel.

First Things First! Yes, time, money, affection, energy, concern—the first-fruits in all of these manifestations of self belong rightfully to the Creator. Wise, prudent and visionary is the child of God who, like the Psalmist, first "finds a place for the Lord."

If these **sentiments** were translated into **life** we could immediately see a decline in sermons on attendance, giving, moral standards. etc....We could then devote more important time on deeper, more spiritual approaches to the religion of the Son or God. With our whole heart we spontaneously and constantly would praise Him from whom all blessings flow. Our approval would be placed upon those things that are excellent. Remembering the words of Jesus we would "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

*continued on page 3*



# FROM THE EDITOR

*Glenn Colley*

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*1501 6th Avenue*

*Jasper, AL 35501*



## PLAN TO ATTEND!!



### 1996 WORDS OF TRUTH LECTURESHIP

SEPTEMBER 4-6, 1996

6TH AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST

JASPER, ALABAMA

THEME: THE HEROES OF FAITH, HEBREWS 11

#### SCHEDULE OF LECTURES:

##### Wednesday, September 4

1:00 p.m Bobby Duncan — Noah

2:00 p.m. B.J. Clarke — Abraham

7:00 p.m. singing

7:30 p.m. B.J. Clarke - Isaac

7:00 p.m. Singing

7:30 p.m. Gary Colley — Gideon

##### Thursday, September 5

9:30 a.m. William Woodson — Jacob

10:30 a.m. Split Session: Men: Gary Colley  
— Joseph

Women: Melony Webster — Rahab

##### Friday, September 6

9:30 a.m. William Woodson — Moses

10:30 a.m. Split Session: Men: Allen  
Webster — Samson

Women: Cindy Colley — Sarah

##### LUNCH BREAK

1:00 p.m. Vance Huitton — Able

##### LUNCH BREAK

1:00 p.m. Jim Dearman — David

7:00 p.m. Singing

7:30 p.m. Tom Holland — Hebrews Eleven

### Most of a Minute - Far Sighted People

Sometimes Christians are considered a bit nearsighted in their thinking. After all, think of all the things they refuse to do as disciples of Christ. Some would even say that Christians miss a lot of good times and happiness due to the things of which they deny themselves. Have you ever felt this way?

Let me give you some food-for-thought. If we place all pleasures into two categories perhaps we'll understand these Christians a little better. One category is earthly pleasure, the other is heavenly. The earthly pleasure is all temporary, and some of it is sinful against

God. Heavenly, on the other hand, is never sinful, and lasts eternally.

Moses, Hebrews 11:25 says, chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Why? Notice the next verse: "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt."

For Moses, as often for us, the choice was between temporary sinful pleasures now, or eternal heavenly pleasures later.

Are you people more far-sighted than Christians?



Does the Lord come first in your life and mine? That will be one of the basic issues at the Judgment Day. We are building today the house we shall live in tomorrow. Some are building on sinking sand; wisdom demands that we build upon the Rock of Ages. With the Psalmist of old let us do

nothing until Christ has the honored first place in our affections.

First things first will prove to be a blessing in the last Day!

## Who Then Can Be Saved?

*Allen Webster*

If you are a Christian, have you ever considered how blessed you are to have been one of the few in the world's history to be saved? Jesus said that there will be only a few who will get into heaven (Mt. 7:13, 14). Who will qualify? When lists are made of those to attend president's banquets or king's feasts, few are considered worthy of invitation. Who is bidden to the marriage feast of the Lamb? The disciples once marveled when Jesus said how hard it was for a rich man to go to heaven. They asked, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus said it would be impossible for any to be saved by man, but with God all things are possible (Mt. 19:23-26).

Let us look at those converted in the Bible and find out what kinds of people were saved. What kind of person needs conversion? Acts of Apostles is the book of conversions. What does it teach about the background of those who were saved?

**THOSE DEVOUT IN FALSE RELIGION CAN BE CONVERTED (2:1-47).** Those gathered in Jerusalem for the Feast of the Pentecost were devout men from every nation under heaven (2:5). Many had traveled a great distance and sacrificed a great deal to be there for this religious event. These were *religious* people. Surely they would not be in need of conversion. When Peter and the other apostles stood to preach, it was made clear that those in attendance were lost. They needed to do something in order to be saved (2:22, 37, 38). Three thousand were convinced that they needed to change and be baptized (2:41). They were saved and added to the church (2:47). Many people today think that devout, religious people do not need conversion. The Lord does look for dedication in His followers, but He also looks at whether what they believe and practice is *right* or *wrong*. Those who are devoted to false religion will not be saved (Gal. 1:6-9; Rm. 9:2,3;10:1-3).

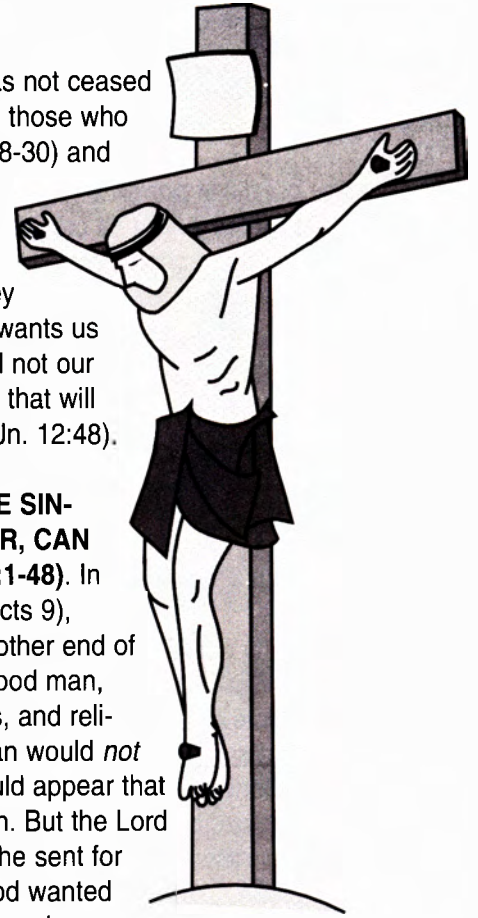
**THOSE DECEIVED BY "MIRACLES" CAN BE CONVERTED (8:4-12).** Simon the sorcerer deceived many into believing that he worked great miracles. He had for "a long time bewitched them" (8:11). But they saw the true power of God and heard the preaching of Philip, they were converted to Christ (8:12). These gullible people are not unlike many today. There are charlatans today who claim to be "some great one" who works miracles, heals the sick, predicts the future, and tells the secrets of God. They go to school and learn how to move an audience and carefully stage their productions. They have learned psychology and closely screen their applicants. Any many people are fooled by their sorcery. These people need conversion. They have not obeyed God's truth and no "miracle working prophet" is going to save them in the end. Miracles have ceased (I Cor.

13:8-10), but Jesus has not ceased working. He still saves those who come to Him (Mt. 11:28-30) and adds them to His church (Acts 2:47).

Further, these people can be converted. They need to see that God wants us to follow His Word and not our feelings. The standard that will judge us is the Bible (Jn. 12:48).

**THOSE WHO ARE SINCERE, BUT IN ERROR, CAN BE CONVERTED (10:1-48).** In comparison to Saul (Acts 9), Cornelius was on the other end of the scale. He was a good man, God-fearing, generous, and religious (10:2). If any man would *not* need converting it would appear that Cornelius was the man. But the Lord sent him a vision and he sent for Peter to learn what God wanted him to do. Peter came and Cornelius was converted along with his house (10:48). There are many today who do not think they need to be converted because they possess good morals, give generously to good causes, obey the laws of the land, and, perhaps attend services regularly. But Cornelius says, "You are not ready to meet God. You need to be converted."

**THOSE COMPLETELY IGNORANT OF GOD NEED TO BE CONVERTED (16:30-34).** The jailor who was charged with keeping Paul and Silas was not a Jew. He had not been prepared for the coming of Christ by learning and keeping the Old Law. This man was ignorant of any Bible teaching, though he was possessed with plenty of mental ability. He lacked exposure and instruction. When circumstances permitted, Paul and Silas soon taught him that he needed to believe on Christ to be saved. They informed him of what that entailed, and he and his household were soon baptized. He is then said to be a believer. The jailor says to us that those ignorant of any Bible instruction are candidates for conversion. There are those who oppose foreign evangelism because, they reason, these may not even be Bible-believers. but the jailor says, "Please do not ignore us. We need the truth. We can learn and will obey."





**THE IMMORAL CAN BE CONVERTED (18:8).** There was no Las Vegas or San Francisco in the Roman Empire, but there was Corinth. Evangelism in this city struck fear into the heart of the seasoned, veteran Apostle Paul (Acts 18:9, 10; 1 Cor. 2:3). These people were known for their gross immorality. "Surely," Paul must have thought, "I am wasting my time here." But the Lord knew what Paul did not. There were many in such a place who would obey when they heard. And these were not just those who possessed morals living amid decadence. Those who would compose the membership of the Corinth Church of Christ could have been featured in a gossip column or on police roles (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Yes, the gospel is powerful enough to reach the immoral and the "out-and-out sinner." It can tear the bottle from the drunk, the cigarettes from the smoker, and the needle from the addict. It can take from one's heart the love for sexual perversion and the unlicensed fulfillment of the lust of the flesh. We should never judge one a being unfit for Gospel instruction. Jesus worked among the sinners and publicans. He changed them. The Gospel can do that today. Further, those who have been involved in such behavior should not judge themselves unworthy of conversion or think that they cannot change. They can. It may not be easy, but with the strength of Christ (Phil. 4:13), it can be done.

**THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY BEEN BAPTIZED SOMETIMES NEED TO BE CONVERTED (19:1-6).** Paul came across some in Ephesus who had been taught about baptism and had submitted to this ordinance. Upon questioning, Paul determined that they had not been taught correctly about baptism. He taught them the truth about it, whereupon they were baptized again. There are many today who have been baptized who need to be converted. They may have been taught they were saved before baptism. They may have not been baptized in the correct manner (immersion is the only acceptable form, Rm. 6:4). Others have been baptized without repenting and thus never changed their lifestyle. They need to be converted and baptized correctly.

As one can readily determine, *everyone* can be saved. These examples are comprehensive and show that anyone who is willing to obey God, can be saved. These also teach

Christians about the nature of soul-winning. We are to have confidence in the gospel's power to reach every type of person. May God help our efforts to save the souls of those living at our time in history.

If you are not a Christian, but have learned what to do to be converted, we encourage you to immediately obey God and appropriate His grace for your spiritual welfare. *You* can be saved!

## Gus Nichols On False Teachings & False Teachers:

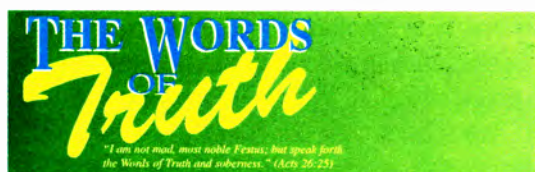
So-called academic freedom gives no man on earth any divine right to teach modernism and liberalism in the church, in a school, or anywhere else. (Gal. 1:6-10). The local church of which such a false teacher is a member should discipline him, even to a withdrawal of fellowship, if need be, so as to stop such false teaching. (Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Thess. 3:6). Furthermore, any school in which liberalism or any other false doctrine is taught should eliminate the teacher from the faculty, just as a hospital would exclude a doctor from his practice among its patients if they were to begin to poison them to death. And no president of any college among us should allow any modernism or liberalism taught in the school. Proper and immediate corrections should be made if such were to inadvertently creep into the school.

—Freed-Hardeman Lectures, 1971; p. 255

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Published weekly under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ. Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. forty cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$20.50 per year. All bills payable to Words of Truth, 3051 McQueen Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36107



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# THE WORDS OF Truth

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

SEE ARTICLES  
INSIDE:

The Well-balanced Character of God  
"Right Away"  
On The Animal Level  
Christ in the New Testament

Vol. 33 No. 24

September 5, 1996

## The Well-balanced Character of God (no. 1)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

### INTRODUCTION

He could not be the Infinite God set forth in Holy Writ were He minus beautiful balance. The scales are not high relative to one of His attributes and low in another of His attributes. Neither are there jarring disharmonies in assessing His many attributes. Yet, multitudes of religious people, especially leaders, hold that He is without this harmonious and equitable balance. This study will seek to set Him forth within a fundamental framework of balance. What we say of the Father equally and forcefully applies to the Son and to the Spirit of Holiness. An excellent Scripture to being our thinking is recorded by Paul in Romans 11:22 wherein we read, "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." His goodness does not say all that needs to be said that is why Paul mentioned also His severity. His severity does not say all that needs to be said; that is why Paul made mention of His goodness. Paul experienced no problem in stressing both His goodness and His severity in the very same passage. Neither should we experience any such problems.



### THE BALANCE BETWEEN HIS WRATH AND HIS GOODNESS

Our opening text gives emphasis to both these attributes or characteristics of God. Brother Thomas B. Warren, one of the ablest Bible students of the twentieth century, has stated there is more in the Bible about God's wrath than about His love or goodness. This ways much for Holy Writ abounds in allusions and affirmations of God's love, or Jehovah's goodness. Paul wrote much relative to love. He is the earthly penman

of the great chapter on love (1 Corinthians 13). Yet he also wrote much about fear or the terror of the Lord. In 2 Corinthians 5:11 He wrote, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men: but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences." If he be the penman of Hebrews, as I have long believed he was, he wrote in a duet of declarations, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God...For our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 10:31; 12:29). As far as the wicked and disobedient are concerned he associated terror and wrath with the second coming of our Lord (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).

The thrilling thesis of Romans is justification. The goodness of God reflected in His glorious gospel permeates the entirety of this profound Pauline product. Yet very early in Romans Paul spoke of God's wrath. In Romans 1:16, 17 he gives the theme of the book. In the very next verse he wrote, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;..." Thrice before the first chapter ends Paul stated that God gave up sinful Gentiles (vs. 24, 26, 28). Paul was deeply cognizant of fear, wrath or terror as being motivational in nature. Yet a liberal preacher among us reportedly stated in a gospel meeting (?????) that there is only one motivational object that is pleasing to God, viz., love. Paul knew love did motivate but he also knew that fear and wrath also motivate. When I was a very young person I heard one of our most effective preachers present a stirring, moving lesson on "God's Blockades To Keep Men Out Of Hell." He did not soothe it all with love. He erected terror as one of those blockades. Paul did that with Felix and Drusilla in Acts 24:24,25. Paul scared Felix as he spoke to him of righteousness, self-control and judgment to come but Felix was not scared enough. He remained in his sins, one of which was an adulterous relationship with beautiful, desirable Drusilla. Her sexu-

continued on page 3



# FROM THE EDITOR

*Glenn Colley*

*Sixth Avenue Church of Christ  
1501 6th Avenue  
Jasper, AL 35501*



**PLAN TO ATTEND!!**  
**1996 WORDS OF TRUTH LECTURESHIP**  
**SEPTEMBER 4-6, 1996**  
**6TH AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**JASPER, ALABAMA**

**THEME: THE HEROES OF FAITH, HEBREWS 11**

**SCHEDULE OF LECTURES:**

**Wednesday, September 4**

1:00 p.m. Bobby Duncan — Noah

2:00 p.m. B.J. Clarke — Abraham

7:00 p.m. singing

7:30 p.m. B.J. Clarke - Isaac

**Thursday, September 5**

9:30 a.m. William Woodson — Jacob

10:30 a.m. Split Session: Men: Gary Colley  
— Joseph

Women: Melony Webster — Rahab

**LUNCH BREAK**

1:00 p.m. Vance Huitton — Able

7:00 p.m. Singing

7:30 p.m. Gary Colley — Gideon

**Friday, September 6**

9:30 a.m. William Woodson — Moses

10:30 a.m. Split Session: Men: Allen  
Webster — Samson

Women: Cindy Colley — Sarah

**LUNCH BREAK**

1:00 p.m. Jim Dearman — David

7:00 p.m. Singing

7:30 p.m. Tom Holland — Hebrews Eleven

## **Most of a Minute - "Right away!"**

I received a letter recently from a man I've never met, encouraging me to start a photo-processing business. Now, I have no interest in such a business, but something in his letter did catch my eye. This businessman pointed out that this business would be successful for various reasons, one of which was that it would "cater to the most important consumer demand of today." Do you know what that is? According to this man, the most important demand is "I need it right away!"

A friend of mine recently pointed out that one

great reason marriages fail quickly among youths is that they expect to begin married life with the same financial lifestyle as their parents. Because that is normally impossible, problems arise. Again, "I need it right away!"

We cannot deny that this bug has bitten all of us from time to time. Perhaps it would be good for all of us to often remember what Jesus said in Luke 12:15: "Take heed and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."



al charms meant more to him than conversion to Christ and sanctification in the Saviour did.

Both wrath and goodness abounded in both testaments. Jehovah's goodness abounded toward Israel in the exodus from Egypt; His wrath was poured out in fury upon stubborn, adamant Pharaoh and his people. The gracious goodness of God abounded toward Israel in the book of Joshua as they entered the land that flowed with milk and honey. His wrath was poured out

in great fury upon the pagan nations that long had inhabited that land. The New Testament abounds in much of the same. Eternal Gehenna will be His wrath in fullness of fury. Heaven will be His goodness in fullness of felicity.

There is balance between His wrath and His goodness.

P.O. Box 464 • Ripley Tennessee 38063

## On The Animal Level

*Allen Webster*

Man is made in God's image (Gen. 1:27), and has many advantages over the animals. He has a soul and will live forever. He has opposable thumbs and the power to reason. He can learn from his mistakes and change behavior. At times, though, men live on the animal level.

**Some folks are like alligators.** Ancient Indians in Florida lived to eat alligator tails. Their problem was that alligators were not very cooperative! The indians soon came up with an ingenious way to trap these ferocious reptiles. Two rows of heavy poles made from rough trees were driven into the earth forming a duct-like conduit wide enough for an alligator to enter, but too narrow for him to turn around. Lured by bait into the conduit, he soon found he could go no further. Since alligators will not back up, and will only go forward, he was trapped. Without turning around, he couldn't do anything. Hemmed in and utterly refusing to back up or back down, he was caught in a death trap. Although struggling and floundering as spears pierced him, he was the victim of his own obstinacy (*West Side Epistle*, Salem, Virginia).

Some people have the alligator attitude. Anger gets them in the trap (Eph. 4:26:27) and pride keeps them there. Having foolishly entered the conduit of a very difficult situation, they refuse to admit wrong. Thus caught in the trap of our own obstinacy, they flounder, as the devil pierces their soul with his arrows ("fiery darts," Eph. 6:16; 1 Tim. 6:10).

The Bible says, "Pride goeth before destruction and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18). Wouldn't it be much better simply to say, "I am sorry. I was wrong. Please forgive me?" "Be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Pet. 5:5b).

**Some folks are like monkeys.** Certain African tribes use gourds to catch greedy monkeys. They take a gourd and cut a small hole in its side and put in it nuts or berries for bait. The little fellow, after reaching in and grasping the nuts, finds he cannot get his clenched fist back through the small hole. But

he cannot bring himself to let go of his newfound prize! The monkey absolutely refuses to unclench his fist and remains there until the natives come back and capture him.

Many people are like the little monkey. They tenaciously hold on to the things of this world and refuse to let go, and become enslaved to their possessions (1 Jn. 2:15). Money is not bad in itself (Prov. 23: 4,5;30:7-9), but the rich often become so mired in a thousand social and business engagements that they have no time for the important things. Money can be very possessive (Lk. 8:14).

King Solomon was one of the richest men who ever lived. It is estimated that his annual income was in the neighborhood of \$25,000,000 (cf. 1 Kgs. 10:14). This vast wealth and the foreign wives it "bought" nearly did him in (1 Kgs. 11:1-4). He later said that riches are not worthy of our confidence (Ecc. 5:9-20; cf. 1 Tim. 6:10, 17-19; Mk. 10:24).

Solomon even indicated that sickness can come from fretting over money. "All his days also he eateth in darkness, and he hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness" (Ecc. 5:17). Dr. Irene Hickman, a professor of psychology at California State University, stated in a report based upon hundreds of case studies, that nine out of ten illnesses are money-related. When John D. Rockefeller was 53 years old his income was one million a week, yet he was racked with anxiety-related sicknesses. It was believed that he would not live another year. He then started giving large sums of money to charitable causes. Incredibly, his health improved immensely. In fact, he lived to the age of ninety-eight!

**Some folks are like cheetahs.** The cheetah is one of God's most graceful and beautiful creatures. It survives on the African plains by running down its prey. The big cat can sprint up to seventy miles per hour! But it cannot sustain that pace for long. Within its long, sleek body is a disproportionately small heart, which causes it to tire quickly. Unless it catches its prey in the first flurry, it must abandon the



chase.

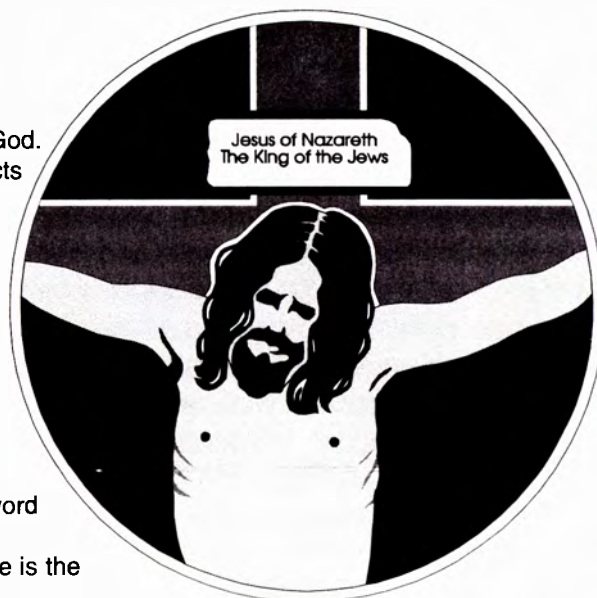
Some Christians take the cheetah's approach to the Christian life. They speed into it with great energy, but lack the heart for sustained effort (Mt. 13:20, 21). They fizzle before the finish. Stamina can come only from a bigger heart. The shallow, emotional person who reacts on impulse and is moved more by sentiment than intellect is taking the cheetah approach. He sees the blessings, but misses the costs (repenting of sins, dying to self, turning from

the old man). He has built his religious house on the sand of emotional experience, and when the storms of persecution or affliction arise to beat on the house, it crumbles and washes away (Mt. 7:26,27). The same shallowness which made him susceptible to the Gospel and quickly responsive to it, makes him susceptible to hardship and easily defeated. Jesus taught us to count the cost (Lk. 14:28).

Animals can't help the way they are. We can.

## Christ in the New Testament

In Matthew He is the king of the Jews. In Mark He is the servant of God. In Luke He is the perfect son of man. In John He is the son of God. In Acts He is the ascended Lord. In Romans He is our righteousness. In I Corinthians He is the firstfruits from the dead. In II Corinthians He is made sin for us. In Galatians He is the end of the law. In Ephesians He is our armor. In Philipians He is the supplier of every need. In Colossians He is the pre-eminent one. In I Thessalonians He is the returning Lord. In II Thessalonians He is the world's merciful judge. In I Timothy He is our mediator. In II Timothy He is the bestower of crowns. In Titus He is our great God and Savior. In Philemon He is the Father's partner. In Hebrews He is the rest of faith and fulfiller of types. In James He is the Lord of Sabbath. In I Peter He is the theme of Old Testament prophecy. In II Peter He is the long suffering Savior. In I John He is the word of life. In II John He is the target of the anti-christ. In III John He is the personification of truth. In Jude He is the believers hope. In Revelation He is the victorious Lamb.



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# THE WORDS OF Truth

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

## SEE ARTICLES INSIDE:

Don't dare Miss Heaven  
Keeping The Children Unspotted  
From The World  
A REASON To Smile  
Bringing Them Up...Right  
License  
Satan Is Alive And Well

Vol. 33 No. 25

September 12, 1996

## Don't Dare Miss Heaven!

Johnny Ramsey

Not only is heaven a prepared place for prepared people it will also be too sweet to miss! How deeply tragic it would be to so live as to be absent when the golden street of that celestial city opens wide to receive its own. We dare not miss the eternal joy of that land beyond the river of death where the redeemed of all ages will gather for the grandest fellowship ever known. H.L. Gilmour wrote these wondrous words of hope:

"How precious the thought  
That we all may recline,  
Like John the beloved and blest,  
On Jesus' strong arm,  
Where no tempest can harm,  
Secure in the heaven of rest!"

We have the ability to hope to the end for the joys yet to be revealed (I Peter i:13) as we look for the glorious appearing of the Lord (Titus 2:13). Because our citizenship is truly in heaven we have genuine hope as an anchor for the soul as we look for a better country (Hebrews 11:16). Christians comfort one another with the eager anticipation of being received into glory after the toils of this life come to an end (Psalms 73:24). We know, because Job 3:17 tells us, that there is a place "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary be at rest." We surely plan to go there.

But, love of worldly things will cause millions to miss heaven. An unknown poet clearly reminds us of the tenacity of materialism:

"You have time to resort to mountain and glen;  
And time to gain knowledge from books and men,  
Yet not time to search for the wisdom of God  
But what of your soul when you are under the sod?  
then, what of the Judgment - pause, think. I implore!  
For time will be lost on eternity's shore."

We certainly need to make a definite reservation for heaven

lest our names fail to be enrolled there "with the spirits of just men made perfect" (Hebrews 12). Such a tremendous goal demands that we abstain from evil, actively pursue righteousness and grow daily in the traits of spiritual maturity that result in an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of heaven (II Peter 1:11). When we come to the crossroads of life, that will determine our destiny, we must, with courage, choose the challenging road of Christianity rather than glitter

and gold of selfishness and compromise (Matthew 7:13-14). Suffering for the cause of the Lord means we will reign with Him forever (II Timothy 2:11-12). Steadfast loyalty shall be abundantly rewarded (I Cor. 15:58) but cowardice will eventuate in a realm wherein many are banished from God's presence (John 8:21-24). For those who are forever lost it would have been far better never to have been born (Mark 14:21)!

Therefore, we need to take heed lest we neglect so great salvation and have to pay the sad dividend of a tragic blunder, called by the writer of Hebrews, turning back to perdition (Hebrews 3:12; 10:38-39). What are the major reasons so many will miss heaven?



1. The Power of Satan: II Corinthians 2:11
2. The Separation of Sin: Jeremiah 3:25
3. Shallow Excuses: Luke 8:14 and 14:18
4. Ungodly Parents: Proverbs 14:11
5. External Religion: Ezekiel 33:31
6. Delay: Hosea 10:12
7. Dying Outside of Christ: Revelation 14:13

We can overwhelm all of these ploys of the Devil through the blood of Christ, the Word of God and a life of surrender to the Savior (Rev. 12:11). Heaven will be too grand and eloquent to miss. Do not dare make the mistake of living in error and dying in sin lest the majestic sweetness of glory pass you by! T.S. Teddlie powerfully wrote this gospel song:

"Now is the time to prepare, my friend,

*continued on page 3*



# FROM THE EDITOR

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## KEEPING THE CHILDREN UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD: THE DESIGN/DESIGNER PRINCIPLE

James wrote, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world, (James 1:27)."

Every Christian parent pleads with God for help to rear his or her child to love the Lord and faithfully follow His word. We pray that we will be able to guide them in a way that is right (Prov. 22:6), and keep them unspotted from the world. But that's tough. Jesus recognized the difficulty among all His disciples when He prayed, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil, (John 17:15)."

From time to time we want to present articles in the *Words of Truth* which will offer practical, helpful advice to Christian parents in rearing their children right, and keeping them unspotted from the world.

Now to the body of this article. Every child, of understanding age, should be able to explain clearly the "Design, Designer" argument when asked why he believes there is a God. This simple explanation should be repeated over and over until the child can say it with confidence and ease. It will not only aid him throughout his life in conversations about his faith, but will also further solidify in his young heart that the existence of God is true and obvious.

the "Design, Designer" argument is simply this: For every intelligent design, there must be an intelligent designer. Our bodies and our world clearly have intelligent designs, therefore we did not come from nothing. We are not a freakish accident of non-living matter. We humans have a design, the intelligence of which is proven every day in science. We are "fearfully and wonderfully made, (Psa. 139:14)."

The Psalmist David beautifully described and espoused the "Design, Designer" principle when by inspiration he wrote, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. *There is* no speech nor language, *where* their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world, (Psalm 19:16)." There is a sermon being preached every day in the sky! Granted, there are many things we cannot know about God by looking into the calculated governing of the planets and stars, and the beautiful colors and cloud configurations, but we can observe that there IS A GOD. How? Because it is an obvious impossibility to have such a design without a great Designer.

Let your children see this principle with a wristwatch. A quartz time piece can be accurate within seconds per month. Amazing really. Did someone design that watch, or did it come together metal, leather, plastic, battery and all, through some accidental evolution? We all stand on the side of a designer. We didn't see him do it. We don't know his name or where he lives or where he learned how to do this, but we know beyond any doubt our bodies and our world. The beautiful and undeniable designs, so much greater than a simple wristwatch, prove we were designed by a great and powerful Designer.

Incidentally, there are but two choices with reference to our origin. Either we came from nothing, as the disbelieving evolutionist believes, or God created us as the Bible affirms. One or the other.

Teach the children. Let's keep them unspotted from the world.

## Most of a Minute - A Reason To Smile

Now folks, we need every verse of the Bible. We need the ones which rebuke and correct us, and we need those which exhort and encourage us. Some time sit down and look up verses in the bible which have to do with the joy of following Christ:

James 1:2

My brethren, count it all joy when he fall into divers temptations; (KJV)

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice. (KJV)

James 1:9 Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted. (KJV)

1 Peter 1:8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. (KJV)

Christians should be the happiest people in the world. The expression of Christianity is not a sigh, but a song.

For today, remember that a smile is a light in the window of your face that shows your heart is at home.



Make your soul spotless and free;  
Washed in the blood of the crucified One,  
He will your answer be.  
What will it be? What will it be?  
Where will you spend your eternity?"

A lack of love for Truth (II Thess. 2:10-12) keeps millions still in the bondage of iniquity and thus, unprepared, to meet the Judge of all the earth (Jude 6). One of the saddest points to contemplate concerning the vast number of those who will be

lost in the final day is the empty lives they manifested while upon the earth. May we so live and love and grow in the Lord's will that heaven can be our eternal abiding place because we chose to live for Christ in the here and now! By matchless grace and mercy of God we dare not miss heaven.

"Sing the song of Moses  
And the Lamb by and by,  
And dwell with Jesus evermore."

## "Bringing Them Up...Right"

M. Floyd Bailey, Jr.

Raising a child is no doubt a great challenge, but it is also one of the greatest privileges one can have, as well as one of life's richest blessings. The Psalmist wrote: "*Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them*" (Psalm 127:3-5). Even though we realize the blessings of parenting, it is at times frustrating and can even be overwhelming.

God's word has not left the Christian parent without counsel. The following points will help parents to make it through the tough times and will encourage steadfastness. As Christian parents we must:

### 1. Point our kids in the right direction.

"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Despite attempts to detract from the meaning of this verse it must be recognized as a general truth. Our kids are going to go in the direction they are pointed.

Sometimes we point our kids without even knowing it. When we "skip" services on vacation, we are pointing our kids toward a worldly view of church attendance. When we watch corrupt television at home, we point our kids toward hypocrisy. When we speak evil of the elders and preacher or other church members, we point our kids toward gossip and backbiting. When we elevate school education and never consider our child's Bible school studies, we point our kids toward mediocrity and failure in the course that will give them eternal life.

We must be careful to point our kids in the right direction so that they will see the proper destination. This means being pointed in the right direction ourselves.

### 2. Don't provoke our children to wrath.

Ephesians 6:4 advises fathers "...*provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*" This verse has nothing to do with our kids getting upset when they are punished. In fact, it is even the opposite. Remember that Verse 1 of the same chapter commands the children to "obey the parents." the NIV translates this verse "...do not exasperate your children..." In this we get the idea.

■ A parent who is inconsistent with punishment will exasperate the child. Today they are punished for doing the same thing they got away with yesterday and they will get away with

it again tomorrow.

■ Sometimes unjust punishments are given and can exasperate a kid. "If you tell me a lie you will get a lecture, if you change the channel while I am watching the news you get a spanking," a this type of misplaced values is very confusing to a child and will cause our children great frustration. "The punishment should fit the crime."

■ Punishment that is anger driven rather than loving and nurture based will exasperate your kids. If you feel like blowing your stack take a deep breath, send your child to the other room, collect yourself and then go and administer discipline. The ten minutes you spend collecting your thoughts and regaining control will mean a life time of security for your child, and their respect for you will soar.

### 3. "Bring them up..."

In the literal sense this means to raise them through the years of their life, but there is also a metaphorical meaning to these words found in Ephesians 6:4. We must boost our children spiritually, emotionally and socially. The following are some ways to boost our children.

■ Let our kids know how much we love them, both in word and in deed.

■ Take an interest in the daily activities of our children by asking about how their day was and what went on in school or at play.

■ Know our children's friends and be ready and willing to give counsel when a friend or relationship is inappropriate or having difficulty. Set relationship guidelines and NEVER MAKE EXCEPTIONS.

■ Tell our children how proud we are of them and give them honor when honor is due.

■ Don't expect our kids to be mature enough to make adult decisions; this will only frustrate the child and disappoint us.

In these things we will give our kids the confidence they need to be spiritually, emotionally and socially capable of learning what they need to know. I know it's tough to keep everything in proper perspective when we're faced with the daily grind, but don't despair; mistakes are only permanent if we refuse to admit our wrong and do right. Let's raise up our kids right!



# License

A gospel preacher told me recently that he had just received a rather disturbing phone call. It seems that a caller gave his name and then announced, "I'm a **practicing homosexual**, and I would like to know what your church teaches on this subject." As you might expect, my preacher said that he was *floored* at first by the call. But after he regained his composure, he explained to the caller that what the church taught wasn't the issue; rather, it was what *the Bible* taught that ought to concern the man.

I'm guessing that this fellow will eventually find a church

that *caters* to what he wants to hear. It has been my studies observation that if enough people want to practice a certain immoral behavior, sooner or later they'll find a church that "meets their needs."

Some people come to the church looking to *license* their behavior, while others come looking to *repent* of their behavior. Good listener, which category do you fall into (Acts 8:9-24; 1 Cor. 6:9-11)?

Mike Benson

## Satan is Alive and Well!

Jim Gillaspie

We see it everywhere - crime, filth, meanness, corruption. Why do we humans do the things we do to one another? Just a few evenings ago, a criminologist stated on television that the disturbing trend of violent crime (including murder) among teenagers is likely to get much worse. With each passing year we grow more distant and unattached from our fellow man. Long gone are the days when neighbors pitched in to rebuild a barn that had burned. These days, neighbors are more likely to litigate than help. There are still a few bright spots, such as the national response to the Oklahoma City bombing, but very often, when trouble strikes our neighborhood, we are too busy or too wrapped up in our private worlds to notice. The concept of the "brotherhood of man" lies dying on the operating table of avarice and lucre. So why do we find ourselves living in this kind of world? How did it happen? Allow the apostle Peter to supply the answer; "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet 5:8). It appears that as a nation, we haven't been too vigilant. Satan is alive and well in the land of the free and the home of the brave.

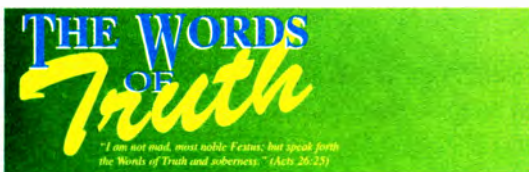
Surely the church is a safe haven from this satanic affront. Surely the institution that was to be known by its love (John 13:34-35) has found a way to insulate itself against the influence of the world (Jas. 4:4). but as we take a long and painful look inward, we realize that such is not the case. We too, as Christians, many become too busy to be concerned with the difficulties of others (Gal. 6:1-2, 10). We, too, may allow Satan to wreck havoc on our relationships, by introducing the attitudes and perspective of the

world among brethren. God meant for the church to be something better, something purer; "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor 6:17-18). We are to develop new attitudes, new ways of thinking (Rom 12:2). We are to care more (Luke 10:30-37), love more (1 Joh 4:20-21), and do more (Matt 5:44-48) than the world. Satan is alive and well, but we must never give him a foothold in the church (Eph 4:27). What can we do to safeguard the church against the veil of darkness that engulfs the world? We can start by focusing on pure things (Phil 4:8). We can get serious about putting God first (Matt 6:33). We can quit looking for the boundary line when it comes to sin ("how far can I go?"), and start keeping our distance from "all appearance of evil" (1 Thes 5:22). Here's the best part - while the world continues to decay without, we can become better and stronger within, for the God we serve is far more powerful than the god of this world. "Ye are of God little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published weekly under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.  
**Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. forty cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.**

**Individual rates are \$20.50 per year. All bills payable to Words of Truth, 3051 McQueen Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36107**



6th Avenue Church of Christ  
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Jasper, AL 35501

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U.S. Postage  
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Permit #42  
Montgomery, AL



# THE WORDS OF Truth

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

## SEE ARTICLES INSIDE:

God Is Not The Author Of Confusion  
A QUESTION OF COLOR  
God's Escape Route  
Predestination and Foreordination  
Will Your Children Go To Heaven?

Vol. 33 No. 26

September 19, 1996

## "God Is Not The Author Of Confusion" — No. 1

"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (1 Cor. 14:33). Nothing could be stated any clearer than this. Yet today there IS "confusion among religious people about many Bible topics. For example, there is "confusion" in the minds of many regarding who should be baptized. Some think babies and other innocent children are fit subjects for baptism, while others insist that it is for accountable people only. But God is not to be blamed for the division or confusion on this [or any other] subject.

Please remember: One cannot be taught wrong about who should be baptized, and be baptized right!

### **God is Not the Author of Confusion About Who Should Be Baptized**

The Roman Catholic Church and some Protestant Denominations "baptize" babies. However, God plainly teaches that before baptism one must be taught. Jesus Christ himself said: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them..." (Matt. 28:19). There is no Bible authority to baptize an infant, nor a little child — one not capable of first being taught. In the Bible, people "gladly received his word" before they were baptized (Acts 2:41). Teaching must precede Bible baptism. God is not the author of confusion on this point.

(2) God plainly teaches that before baptism one must believe. Prior to being baptized, one must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus sent his apostles to "Teach all nations" (Matt. 28:19), or to "preach the gospel to every creature," promising: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:15-16). Jesus did not say, "He that is baptized when he is a baby, and later is taught, and becomes a believer, shall be saved." It does not read that way in anybody's Bible! One who does not believe in the resurrected Christ (Rom. 10:9) will remain condemned, even if he could find someone who would "baptize" him! You see: man is condemned at his first refusal to obey God! Hence Jesus says: "But he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). This ("shall be damned") would be true, even if he got someone to "baptize" him — for without faith such a bogus or counterfeit "baptism" would not please God (Heb. 11:6).

A man from Ethiopia wanted to be baptized. He asked an inspired evangelist named Philip: "What doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God...And he baptized him" (Acts 8:36-38).

Likewise we read of the Samaritans that "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 8:12). Note clearly that only "believers" — no babies! — were baptized" (Acts 18:8). No unbelievers — and all babies are incapable of believing the gospel! — were baptized in the New Testament.

Today, should unbelievers be baptized? No! "God is not the author of confusion" on who should be baptized! It is for believers, not for unbelieving babies.

(3) God requires repentance before one is baptized. To the apostles, Christ promised the Holy Spirit "will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13; 14:26). They were directed to preach "repentance and remission of sins...in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-49). thus, what began at Jerusalem is for all nations. But on the beginning day (Pentecost, of Acts 2) CF, the Holy Spirit guided Peter to demand that they "repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Notice the order: (1) Repent, then (2) be baptized. No sins will be forgiven until we repent of them. Jesus declared: "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). And the Holy Spirit, sent by God unto the apostles, teaches that before one is baptized, he must repent (Acts 2:38). This excludes infants from being baptized for three reasons: (A) Infants do not have any sins of which to repent. (B) Infants are not capable of repenting, which is defined as "a change of mind for the better, heartily to amend, with abhorrence of past sin." This is something which babies cannot possibly do. And (C) infants do not need forgiveness or "remission of sins." Therefore infants are not to be baptized. "God is not the author of confusion" on this point.

Who then should be baptized? One who has been taught the gospel of Christ, one who believes that "God hath raised him from the dead" (Rom. 10:9), must repent of his past sins (Acts 2:38), before he is baptized. "God is not the author of confusion" about who should be baptized!

Please remember: One cannot be taught wrong about who should be baptized, and be baptized right!

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# FROM THE EDITOR

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## A QUESTION OF COLOR

One of our thoughtful readers writes, "I would like to see some articles written on the subject of mixed marriages. By this I mean different races of people, (White, Black, Cajun, etc.). Is this Biblically wrong? Morally wrong? Or did it used to be socially wrong? This matter troubles several people that I have discussed it with. We hope you can shed some light on the subject for us."

Is it a sin for a black man to marry a white woman, or vice-versa? This is a good question which perhaps many have considered. It is good to ask because it underscores our own personal dedication to the Bible as our standard for authority. Do we really let the Lord guide us through His word?

There is a chapter in the Old Testament in which Moses was criticized about his marriage to a woman because of her nationality: Numbers 12:1-2.

And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the Lord heard it." God punished Miriam with leprosy for her sin.

The blockbuster truth here is that God had prohibited marriage of His people to people of some other nationalities, but He had said nothing to prevent Moses from marrying an Ethiopian woman. Incidentally, the text listing the nations they were not to marry is Exodus 34:11-17: Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: But ye shall destroy their alters, break their images, and cut down their groves: For thou shalt worship no other god: for the lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods. Thou shalt make

thee no molten gods."

Pay particular attention to the reason God prohibited these marriages and covenants. He knew that such arrangements would eventually result in a snare for His people. Some would leave God to embrace the heathen and idolatrous religions of their mates. People just can't help but be influenced by the person to whom they are married! This is exactly why we should be strongly encouraging the young people in the church to only marry faithful Christians.

Genesis 6:1-7 is a painful reminder: "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them. That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

And the Lord said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years."

There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. And god saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth."

Now back to the original question. Does the Bible prohibit people of different colors from marrying? The answer is no. Let any who think otherwise produce the scripture. The prohibitions of the bible are in the Old Testament, and had nothing to do with color. It had to do with nations and their gods. Our objections today aren't about nationality, but about color. Furthermore, since the Bible does not condemn the practice of marrying one of a different color, it would be wrong for Christians to treat such couples with anything short of respect and kindness.

*Continued in next issue*

## Most of a Minute - God's Escape Route

Have you ever been in such a fix that you saw no possible way of escape? Most of us have. The author Mark Twain once wrote a story entitled "The Terrible Catastrophe." Before he was finished the characters were in such a predicament that whatever any of them did, they would all be destroyed. He concluded the story with these words "I have these characters in such a fix I cannot get them out. Anyone who thinks he can is welcome to try."

Once in a while we may find ourselves feeling this way about temptation to do wrong. We may feel like any option we choose will be sinful. Is there any way out of this fix? God says there is.

Paul writes in I Cor. 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it.



# Predestination and Foreordination

W. A. Holley

Does the Bible teach that God from before the foundation of the world predestinated and foreordained that a certain number of human beings are to be saved and that a certain number are to be lost, and these human beings had no choice in the matter? We shall quote a few words from the Westminster Confession: "...By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished."

Who can believe the foregoing quotation? It makes God a monster. We wish to go on record stating that we believe all the Bible says about predestination and foreordination, but do not believe what the various creeds teach about this subject.

We do not believe that mankind is hereditarily totally depraved. Sin cannot be inherited from one's parents. Sin is the transgression of God's law (I John 3:4; Romans 4:15). A child is born in a state of innocence and does not become a sinner until he/she is mature enough to know the difference between good and evil. No mother ever thought her dead baby was a little devil!! Jesus invited little children to come unto him (Matthew 18:3). The Prophet Ezekiel wrote, "The soul that sinneth it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezekiel 18:20). Hence, personal responsibility to God really counts. You can repent! Sin is a "voluntarily" transgression of the law, if the child is born "totally corrupt," has he/she violated every law of right? "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies" (Psalm 58:3). They "they go astray," not "born away." No baby is born "speaking."

Acts 17:29, teaches that "we are the offspring of God." Do we come from a depraved God? "God is the father of our spirits" (Hebrews 12:9). Could God be the father of a depraved spirit? "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7). Could God give a totally depraved spirit to anyone?

Throughout the ages God has had His eternal purpose by which He would bring His Son — our redeemer and Saviour — into the world to die for all mankind. There is a golden chain of redemption which begins in Genesis and with Christ's birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension into heaven, where He will remain until His second coming and judgement. This chain begins in Genesis 3:15 and follows through the references we shall enumerate because of a lack of space: Genesis 12:1-3; 49:8-10; Numbers 24:17; II Samuel 7:12-13; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Matthew 1:23; 2:1-15.

But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:4-5). Thus, Jesus did not come too early, nor too late. Jesus could not have come in another age or in another country; he came at the right time so that all the

prophecies utter regarding Him might be fulfilled.

That God had an eternal purpose regarding the salvation of men can be seen by reading Ephesians 3:10-11). Hence, the church was not an accident or an after-thought of God, as some are wont to argue. The premillennial contention notwithstanding.

Peter, on Pentecost declared, "...Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slaw" (Acts 2:23, AVS).

Later, Peter wrote, "Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with the precious blood, as a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ: who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of times for your sake" (I Peter 1:18-20, ASV). Here, we should read John 3:16. In this verse we are told of the greatest giver God, the greatest gift, Jesus, the greatest measure, the world, and the greatest reward, eternal life. Now look at the word whosoever. This word refers to every responsible person on earth!!

Romans 8:28-30 is important. The key words are "called" and "purposed." God purposed to save all who are called by the gospel. The promises of the gospel are extended to all, but, only those who believe it and obey it can be saved (Romans 1:16; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Hebrews 5:8-9). Ignorance, unbelief, neglect, are never excuses acceptable to the Lord for failing to obey the Lord. Thus, before man was created God foresaw his fall, and provided the gospel of Christ for his redemption.

Calvin's doctrine has God arbitrarily fixing the eternal destiny of individuals leaves man no choice in the matter; but man does have a choice. There are two ways through this world — the narrow way and the broad way — you choose which road you will travel (Matthew 7:13-14; Joshua 24:15). Man is called by the gospel of Christ; its not an irresistible call; man is free to accept or reject it (Mark 16:16; II Thessalonians 2:14).

If God unchangeably foreordained some to be saved and some to be lost, why did Jesus taste death for every man? (Hebrews 2:9). Why did Jesus come to saved the lost, if the lost cannot be saved? (Luke 19:10). Why preach the gospel to every creature, if there is no chance of salvation (Matthew 28:18-29)?

God ordained that Nineveh should be overthrown, but it was spared (Jonah 3:3-4, 10). Hezekiah was told to set his house in order, for he was to die; but he did not. God added 15 years to his life (II Kings 20:1-6). Thus, when men change their lives, God does not inflict penalties upon them.

Verily, God had ordained that all responsible people who will believe and obey the gospel of Christ and remain faithful unto death shall be saved.

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# Will Your Children Go To Heaven?

by Jason R. Roberts

The above question should stimulate interest within the hearts of every mother and father who are privileged to have children whom the psalmist referred to as "...an heritage of the Lord" (Psalm 127:3). Children are indeed the product of something Divine (cf. Gen. 2:7; Zech. 12:1; Heb. 12:9). Consequently, they have an immortal soul that will one day spend an eternity with the Lord in Heaven or an eternity in Hell with the devil and his angels. Consider the following.

Some parents today are concerned about whether or not their son will be the star baseball, football, or basketball player. Others are concerned about whether or not their daughter excels in the given sport in which she has developed interest. They are others who may be wondering where their children are going to go to college, and what they will become career-wise. And these concerns in of themselves are not wrong. However, when mothers and fathers are more concerned about the "secular welfare" of their children rather than their "spiritual welfare" they have failed as parents.

Will your children go to Heaven? There are many things that a parent learns by means of rearing children. Parents are going to make mistakes. But there is one mistake that parents cannot afford to ever make, and that is they must never willfully endorse anything that will jeopardize the souls of their children. And yet do parents really want their children to go to heaven when the following takes place?

Will our children go to heaven when we encourage them to excel and excel in their school homework so they will graduate with honors, make it to a prestigious University, and one day make lots of money, and yet fail to encourage them to excel in their Bible school homework which will prepare them for the ULTIMATE and FINAL graduation day (2 Tim. 2:15; Rev. 20:11-15)?

Will our children go to heaven when we encourage them to excel in athletic events so they can win first place and fill the house with hundreds of trophies, and yet fail to encourage them to excel in winning the greatest race or event ever to take place (Heb. 12:1-2. cf. Eph. 6:10; Philip 3:13-14; 2 Tim. 2:2-5), which offers the greatest reward (Rev. 2:10; 1 Pet. 5:4)?

Will our children go to heaven when we attend their championship football or baseball game when the game was scheduled on Sunday or Wednesday or during a gospel meeting at our home congregation, knowing full well that God expects us to be

at the meeting house?

Will our children go to heaven when we tell them that it is alright for them to make the decision to go to this year's prom or school dance even though we feel that it is wrong, knowing full well that God has already made that decision (Gal. 5:19-21; cf. Gal 2:20, 1 Cor. 15:33)?

Will our children go to heaven when we tell them that it is alright for them to go to the party after the Friday night football game when we know that alcohol will be there, even though we are aware of the fact that God specifically condemns social drinking and carousing (Gal. 5:19-21 cf. Eph. 5:11)?

Will our children go to heaven when they see us sing, "Oh How I Love Jesus," and "All To Jesus I Surrender" on Sunday morning, and yet we refuse to bring ourselves and them on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights (Heb. 10:25; cf. Matt. 6:33)?

Will our children go to Heaven when they see how we've treated the precious bride of Christ, knowing that one day they will be making a choice to become or to not become a member of that church, even though that salvation is only found in His Church ) 2 Tim. 2:10, Gal. 3:26-27; Eph. 5-23b)?

Will our precious children, whom God has graciously given us, go to Heaven, when the "kingdom of God and His righteousness" are not the first two items on our list (Matt. 6:33)?

God only knows how many mothers and fathers will be lost at the judgment as a result of encouraging their children to walk down the pathway of destruction.

A better and more fitting question should be, "Will we parents go to heaven if we have willfully encouraged our children to live a life of sin, knowing that they died in rebellion to the one who gave them to us?"

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# THE WORDS OF Truth

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The Lesson From The Great  
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Vol. 33 No. 27

September 26, 1996

## Stand Up For Jesus!

*Johnny Ramsey*

It ought to be a natural response for all of us to defend the cause of Christ because of all of His benefits toward us. By God's grace Jesus tasted of death for every one of us (Hebrews 2:9). We have the hope of glory because of Him (Col. 1:27). Salvation, with eternal glory, is in our blessed Lord (II Tim. 2:10). Our Redeemer grants unto us the light of the world (John 8:12) and serves as our forerunner to heaven (Hebrews 6). Why should we ever be reluctant to proclaim the name of such a Friend? Once, in the end of the world, He put away sin through His sinless life and death (Hebrews 10:12). All grateful saints should ever sing heartily:

"Praise Him! Praise Him!  
Jesus our blessed Redeemer  
For our sins He suffered and bled and died  
Praise Him! Praise Him!  
Jesus, the crucified."

We have ultimate victory within our grasp because of Calvary (I Cor. 15:57) and access to blessings now that are even beyond our comprehension (Eph. 3:20). Giving Himself for our sins we were thus delivered from "this present evil world" (Gal. 1:4) into a buoyant life of peace and joy (Romans 14:17). Truly, as Colossians, chapter two affirms:

"We are complete in Christ."

Having "made peace through the blood of the Cross" (Col. 1:20) we pursue a life filled with purpose, meaning, depth and richness and totally unknown by the world.

"He has filled my life with sunshine  
He has made me what I am  
O that everyone would know Him  
O that all would trust the love  
Of the Mighty Friend above  
And be His forevermore."

Since our gracious Master was willing to leave heaven and come to this old wicked world to ransom us from hell (I Tim. 2:6) surely we can muster the courage to stand up for His powerful cause.

"I am not ashamed to own by Lord

Nor to defend His cause  
Maintain the honor of His world  
The glory of His cross."

### **(1) Let us stand up for the gospel of Christ:**

The good news or glad tidings of Christianity enrich lives beyond measure. Paul reminded the Ephesian elders of "the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24) that had been proclaimed in their city. From prison the apostle made it clear that he was "set for the defense of the gospel" (Phil. 1:17) because it was God's power to save! Ardent servants of Jesus gladly contend earnestly for the message of redemption (Jude 3) knowing we shall one day be judged by it (Romans 2:16). Since men are lost when the gospel is hidden (II Cor. 4:3) we need to turn it loose in a world that is helplessly lost (II Thess. 3:1). When we mature to the point of taking Christ seriously we will obey His final charge: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

Telling the four billion plus, who dwell upon the earth, the marvelous message of the death, burial and resurrection of the Savior will strengthen us and bless mankind. May we ever stand up for the gospel of the Son of God!

"Still far from Jesus  
Many live, in sin and doubt —  
Ring the message out."

### **(2) Let us stand up for the church of Christ:**

If He thought enough of the church to shed precious blood to purchase it what should our honest reaction be in regard to sharing this lovely arrangement with others? How could we ever be ashamed of the Lord's church over which He exercises all authority and through which God is glorified forever (Eph. 3:21)? Christ promised to build His spiritual body upon the confession of His sublime Deity (Matt. 16:18). Not even the bars of death could prevent the solidarity of that divine arrangement. Those in the church Jesus built have their "names enrolled in heaven with the spirits of just men made perfect" (Hebrews 12:23) and we are honored to pass these marvelous truths on to others. May we never be bashful on these grand points but rather, stand up and speak out for Christ and the truth (Eph. 5:32).



# FROM THE EDITOR

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## A QUESTION OF COLOR- *continued from last issue*

Having said that, mention should be made of the potential problems with such an arrangement. Couples in many (if not most) parts of our country should be cautioned of potential wrongs they may commit. While their love for one another may give them courage to face the societal darts, they are not the only ones in the picture. Move them to ask themselves questions. "By marrying someone of a different color am I setting the stage for heartache and problems for my children yet to be born? We unfortunately live in a time in which anger often runs deep against people because of their color, and a child born to such a couple all face grievous ridicule. It is difficult enough for young people today to grow up right without having to face such problems which aren't their fault, and which could be avoided. In some parts of our country this is a serious consideration.

Another question would be, "Will we be as effective in

evangelism in a mixed marriage, or will people have too hard a time with our colors to seriously consider what we say about the Gospel? Again, in fairness, this arguably wouldn't be such a concern in some parts of our country as in others. In Alabama it would be a concern.

Let us be careful. May young people never marry anyone simply because they enjoy making a rebellious statement, as in the case of some of these arrangements. May young people not marry anyone of any color who won't help them get to heaven. Let us who are forming our judgements of mixed marriages keep the Bible foremost, and our opinions secondary. It is as wrong to go beyond that which is written as it is to take from what is written.

Our attitude toward this question should be caution, not prohibition. God made us all.

## THE LESSONS FROM THE GREAT COMMISSION.

In his little sermon outline book from the book of Acts, Tom Holland makes some interesting observations about the Great Commission. From Matthew and Mark, the Great Commission of our Lord is this:

Matthew 28:18-20, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Mark 16:15-16, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Brother Holland notes that in these brief verses contains truth which defies several popular false teachings with which people are challenged. Consider five of these doctrines and how the commission answers with authority.

1. "God decided before I was born whether I would be saved or lost, and nothing I do has any bearing on that decision." This is the doctrine of personal predestination and individual foreordination.

Jesus said, "...Preach the Gospel to every creature...". If some were born predestined to be lost and couldn't change their future, then for them there is no Gospel or "Good News". To preach to them would at best make them more miserable because they are told of that which they will ultimately miss, heaven, and there is nothing they can do. But Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..." While many will indeed be lost, anyone can obey the Gospel and be saved eternally.

2. "We baptize babies in our church. It is a beautiful service when they are sprinkled." This called "infant baptism," or "infant church membership."

Jesus said, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them...". Infants cannot understand the Gospel and cannot be taught the Gospel. They are not candidates for baptism. (Remember too that sprin-

*continued in next issue*

## Most of a Minute - A ROARING LION

As children we all heard fairy tales and stories that sent our youthful imaginations running rampant. Do you remember the animal who won the title "King of the Beasts?" It was of course the lion.

There is something you should know about lions and their roar. A lion will quietly encircle and stalk his prey...never making the slightest sound. Upon killing his prey he will drag it back to where the others are waiting. As he is eating his meal, he will roar out at

the other lions who will attempt to share in the feast.

The reason you need to know this is because of what the Bible says in I Peter 5:8, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

This devil, like a lion is quietly stalking you today—for we are all his prey. But you can escape him; James 4 — "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

# “God Is Not The Author Of Confusion” — No. 2

“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints” (1 Cor. 14:33). Yet today there IS “confusion” among religious people about many Bible topics. There is “confusion” in the minds of many regarding THE ACTION OF BAPTISM. Some (mistakenly) speak of three “modes” of baptism: sprinkling, pouring, and immersion. But God is not to be blamed for the division or confusion on this [or any other] subject.

Please remember: One cannot be TAUGHT WRONG about the ACTION of baptism, and BE BAPTIZED RIGHT!

God is Not the Author of Confusion  
About The Action of Baptism

The Roman Catholic Church, and many Protestant churches, “sprinkle” or “pour” some water on a person and call it “baptism.” Others contend that immersion only is Bible baptism. Some accept either (sprinkling, or pouring, or immersion) as “baptism.” Did God authorize three different “forms” or ‘modes’ of baptism. Is He responsible for the confusion about what action constitutes Bible “Baptism?”

The Greek word BAPTIZO was given an english ending, and became in our language the word “BAPTIZE.” In Greek-English lexicons [dictionaries] this word is uniformly defined as meaning, “to dip, to plunge, to submerge, to immerse, to bury, to overwhelm, to cover up.”

Examine every text in the Bible where BAPTISM is mentioned. Here we will study only a few of them, but uniformly they show that Bible “baptism” requires “water” (Matt. 3:11; Acts 10:47). Yea, Bible baptism requires “much water” (John 3:23), so that John the Baptist baptized “in the RIVER of Jordan” (Mark 1:5). This truth alone does not even remotely suggest sprinkling, or pouring, — does it?

Other Bible verses specify that to be baptized, people

“came unto” the water (Acts 8:36). In order for the baptizing to be done, both the preacher and the one to be baptized “went down into the water” (Acts 8:38). We learn also that after baptism “they came up out of the water” (Acts 8:39; Matt. 3:16). this strongly implies that BIBLE BAPTISM IS IMMERSION. It would not make sense to BURY *one end* of a man, in order to SPRINKLE — or POUR — a little water on the *other end* of him!! This fact alone strongly suggests baptism is IMMERSION.

However, we are not left to imagine, or guess, what the ACTION of Bible BAPTISM is. Guided by the Holy Spirit, the apostle Paul wrote: “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. For if we have been PLANTED together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection” (Rom. 6:4-5). The Holy Spirit here describes baptism as having both a burial and a resurrection, and says it is like being “planted.” Sprinkling and pouring have neither a burial, nor a resurrection. But immersion has both.

We have again the same description of baptism. Colossians 2:12 says one is “BURIED with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him.” Sprinkling and pouring simply do not fit this Bible description.

Since Bible baptism has a burial and a resurrection in it, only immersion fills the requirements for Bible baptism. Verily, God is NOT “the author of confusion” regarding the action of baptism. There is NO confusion where His word is known and respected.

Please remember: One cannot be TAUGHT WRONG about the ACTION of baptism, and BE BAPTIZED RIGHT!

—Flavil H. Nichols, Rt. 9, Box 541, Jasper, AL 35501

## The Devil’s Classifieds: “Help Wanted”

Neal Pollard

Everyone must have an occupation. Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla were, “by their occupation,” tent makers (Acts 18:3). Demetrius and others at Ephesus were “silversmiths” (Acts 19:24-26). Joseph and his household were shepherds (Genesis 46:33-34). Jonah was a preacher (cf. John 1:8).

Spiritually, everyone will have a “vocation.” Christians have a calling of which they are to “walk worthy” (Ephesians 4:1). An individual, in obeying the gospel, is “hired” by God to “fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness” and work “the work of faith...” (2 Thessalonians 1:11). The workers are “holy brethren,” the work a “heavenly calling,” the foreman is “Christ Jesus,” and the work order was appointed by “Him” (the Father) (Hebrews 3:1-2,4). but. even within the context of Hebrews 3, there is warning that Christians might, through hardness of heart, switch employers. The devil surely considers Christians as his most coveted and prized workers, for he already had the world on his “roll” (cf. 1 John 5:19)/

*If the devil advertised, can you imagine the enticing tasks he would list to draw away God’s child?*

“**Needed: Hungry Cannibal.** Must enjoy the taste of division and have an appetite for ‘devouring your brother.’ This

job is risky, as you may get consumed by him. But, if you enjoy having ‘the brethren for lunch,’ this job is definitely for you. Ignore Galatians 5:15.”

“**Skilled stage-actor wanted.** If you are an experienced pretender at religion, enjoy playing church, and wear the name Christian only as a ‘front,’ your skills are needed immediately. Impure motives (Matthew 6:16), lip-service (Matthew 15:7-8), a knack for pretending to be holy while actually being wicked (Matthew 23:13-15,23, et al), and a joy of danger (Matthew 24:51) all are pluses!”

“**Opening for sheep thieves.** Must employ ‘innovative approaches’ (John 10:1), have a willingness to ‘finish the job’ (John 10:10), have a glaring disrespect for the Shepherd, and intimidate the Shepherd’s hired hands (John 10:12). Will supply one camouflage uniform (Matthew 7:15).

“**Work for pirates available.** Can you shipwreck faith (1 Timothy 1:19)? Are you the type who enjoys ‘lying in wait’ to upset the ‘vessel’ of weak Christians (cf. Ephesians 4:14)? Are you bold enough to take hostages for your employer (2 Timothy 2:26)? An ability to take away from God’s word is an

*continued on page 4*



**(3) Let us stand up for the commands of Christ:**

It matters not how spiritual some brethren may claim to be who soft-pedal the commandments of the Lord while claiming a mystical walk with God for the Bible still shouts out loud:

“Why call ye me: ‘Lord, Lord’ and do not the things which I say?”

No one, regardless of claims of piety, can by-pass the plan of salvation and show a disdain for divine mandates and still please Jesus because John 14:15 still is in the Bible:

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”

Earnest, honest seekers will always react and respond as

**The Devil’s Classifieds: “Help Wanted”,** *continued from page 3*

asset (Revelation 22:19). Apply immediately. Too much good is being accomplished.”

**“Would you like a sales position?** We need you to sell Divine truth (Proverbs 23:23), bargain for this world’s goods with your soul (Matthew 16:26), and be willing to make your children expendable to be a ‘success’ (cf. 1 Timothy 5:8; Proverbs 22:6). All receipts are kept on file (cf. 2 Peter 2:13).”

**“Experienced travel agent desired.** Can you give tours of the ‘Far Country’ of sin (cf. Luke 15:13)? Applicant needs to be able to lead others on our chartered destinations (2 Timothy 3:6; 2 Peter 3:17). If you can find creative routes away from the worship assemblies (Hebrews 10:25) and provide distracting excursions that lead groups away from involvement in church work (cf. Haggai 1:4,6; John 4:35; Matthew 25:24), we want you! Slothfulness (Hebrews 6:12) an appreciated quality for this job! Must be willing to travel away from your first love (Revelation 2:4).”

**“Calling all unskilled carpenters:** We are looking for individuals who build on the sand (Matthew 7:26-27). We will provide every foundation for you to build upon except Christ (1 Corinthians 3:10). You don’t even need to be good at framing (cf. Ephesians 2:21). We prefer that you keep busy

did Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9:6...

“Lord, what will thou have me to do?”

Deep, loyal and loving respect for our blessed Redeemer will naturally and obviously lead us to a strong, unbending and courageous stand for His gospel, church and commands. This is not legalism; it is respect for things divine. That is exactly what Scripture says:

“For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments and his commandments are not grievous.”

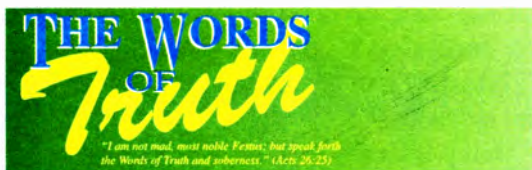
Therefore, when the Lord demands faith, repentance, baptism, purity of life, church discipline, world evangelism or whatever, we joyously stand strong for Truth (Eph. 6:10-12). The fight is on so soldiers of Christ arise! Stand up for Jesus now!

rebuilding the sinful lifestyle you tore down by coming to the Lord (cf. Galatians 2:18; 2 Peter 2:0-22).”

All the while, Christ calls for workers, too (Matthew 9:37-38). Too many have answered the adversary’s ads (2 Corinthians 11:13; Philippians 3:2). both the Lord and “the Liar” (John 8:44) provide extensive retirement plans [after all, they’re both everlasting] (Matthew 25:46). While everyone will be rewarded according to his works (Matthew 16:27), the devil’s perquisites are profitless (cf. Romans 6:23)! For whom are **you** working?

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**Congregational Rates:** Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. forty cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.  
**Individual rates are \$20.50 per year. All bills payable to Words of Truth, 3051 McQueen Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36107**



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# THE WORDS OF Truth

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

SEE ARTICLES  
INSIDE:

Three Tickets

Baptism Into Christ

Sincerity

Adultery In America, 1996

The Lessons From The Great Commission  
God Is Not The Author Of Confusion No. 3

Vol. 33 No. 28

October 3, 1996

## Three Tickets

Mike Benson

My family and I recently attended the local county fair. The four of us had entered some items in the different displays and we were anxious to see if any of them had placed. After we toured the exhibits, we walked down to the midway. Since it was late, and since the girls felt comfortable with only a few rides, we purchased only twenty tickets. Lanore and I then informed Bethany and Katie that they could choose three rides a piece since most of them required three tickets each. Our seven-year-old decided her first ride would be the swings ( e.g., the "Yo-Yo").

Bethany stood patiently with a group of other children as they waited their chance to get on. However, when the time came to actually get on the ride, she rushed over with the group to a seat, but inadvertently forgot to pay her three tickets. She was so excited about the prospect of the swings that she simply didn't pay; her mind was on riding - not on paying. (All of the other children wore their pre-paid ride "wrist bands" and therefore didn't have to stop at the gate and pay admission.)

Suddenly Bethany unbuckled her seat belt, bolted over to where I was standing and then informed me of her omission. With the three tickets still clutched tightly in her hand, she told me she was "sorry" and then asked me what she should do. I suggested that she go back to the ride and then give her tickets to the man when he came around to check her seat belt.

Three tickets. A \$1.50. Hardly a vast sum. Some parents might have been tempted to tell their child, *"The ticket-taker blew it...it was his fault...he didn't do his job. This ride, in essence, is free."* As I think about it, I'm glad I didn't say that to Bethany. (Although I have to confess that the thought did momentarily cross my mind). Later when I commended her for her honesty, she replied, *"Well Daddy, it was the right thing to do."* Indeed.

Just suppose I had told Bethany, *"Don't worry*

*about it sweetheart...it's only a few tickets. It's only \$1.50. Say nothing to the man and you'll get another ride."* What lesson would I have taught her? What lesson would she have learned? Now, am I saying that Mike Benson is the perfect parent, or that I have all understanding in child-rearing? No. While I would like to think that I have, at least in some ways, profited from the example of my own godly parents, I don't have all the answers. With the passing of each day I am humbly reminded of my failings in this regard. Nor am I saying that my daughter is the perfect child. But ***what I am saying is that the cumulative effects of my teaching will have a long-term impact upon this young, impressionable heart.*** If my daughter learns to withhold \$1.50 at the fair, why should I be surprised when she, for instance, cheats on her \$5.00 lunch bill? After all, that's what she has been taught to do. If she learns honesty during her formative years, my prayer is that she will practice honesty as an adult. By contrast, if she is taught, even in small(?) ways that it's O.K. to try to "beat the system" when she is young, her mother and I should not be alarmed when she makes such attempts later in life. Again, am I not suggesting that every (or any) child who doesn't pay their three tickets will grow up to be a bank robber. But the truth is that ***what a child learns and observes during the first eight or so years of life will have lasting repercussions.*** To put it another way, *"As the sapling is bent, so goes the tree."*

***As parents we are modeling a lifestyle for our children*** (Deut. 6:4-9; Prov. 4:3,4; 22:6). Honesty is not, nor can it be diagrammed, on a chalkboard in school. It is not found on a computer disk. ***It is first observed in Mom and Dad and then put into action.***



# FROM THE EDITOR

*Glenn Colley*

*Sixth Avenue Church of Christ  
1501 6th Avenue  
Jasper, AL 35501*

## Editor's note:

The following article is an excerpt from a classroom book entitled, *Loose Change*. The sub-heading is *a class book about the change movement among churches of Christ*. I wrote the thirteen chapter book with the hope of educating elders and members alike of some major issues at stake in the change movement. If you would like to purchase a copy of the book, or would like more information, simply write or call the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, 1501 6th Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501. G.C.

## Baptism Into Christ

Since the change movement's exciting dynamo is the freedom calmly and confidently to support denominational churches, we must force upon agents of change again and again the relevance of Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38. The difference between Christ's church of the New Testament and roughly 95% of the denominations in America isn't just instrumental music and the Lord's supper every first day of the week. It also has to do with the mode, reason for, and necessity of baptism. It is amazing that the agents of change would be willing to bend on principles so fundamental to salvation as the truth of baptism.

Their contention is that any baptism, which is backed by the underlying motivation of "obeying God," is approved by God and accepted by him as the "one baptism" enjoined in Ephesians 4:5.

Consider some passages on baptism, and then we will make some observations.

Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, 'All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...'"

Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

1 Peter 3:21: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

Consider from these passages the promises which are offered to those who submit willingly to the Gospel and its requirements of baptism: "lo, I'm with you always;" "shall be saved;" "doth also now save us;" Be consistent with an "answer of a good conscience;" "into Christ."

The pressing and unavoidable question in uniting with denominations has to do with salvation. Have these good people obeyed the Gospel with their respective baptisms?

Are their baptisms found anywhere in the scriptures? Are they teaching and baptizing other people into a denomination instead of into Christ?

The agents of change would have us to believe that God will make a baptism to be one which is for the remission of sins, even if the man being baptized knows nothing of it. But even that isn't necessarily a clear picture of typical denominational baptism. Let's focus on a more realistic image. A preacher for a popular mainstream denomination teaches a potential convert about salvation in his creed. He teaches the individual that baptism is not essential to salvation, and that we are saved by the blood of Jesus before we are baptized. "Baptism," he says, "is just an outward sign to show that one is already saved." The individual believes baptism has nothing to do with forgiveness, is baptized with words that demonstrate that belief ("I now baptize you because God for Christ's sake has already pardoned your sins"). Then he comes up out of the water to teach others about salvation that comes without and before baptism. After all this, we are asked to believe that God responds by making that baptism for the remission of sins anyway. Who can believe it? Can a person who is baptized believing, stating, and teaching others, that his baptism has nothing to do with forgiveness of sins please God with his baptism? Is that really what Paul had in mind when he spoke of "one baptism" in Ephesians 4? Certainly not.

Baptism for the wrong reason is not God-approved, and must be repeated in a scriptural way. The example of this truth is in Acts 19:1-5. In this case, the people had been baptized with John's baptism after the introduction of Christ's baptism in Acts 2. When Paul learned this the text reads (vs. 4,5),

Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, one Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

It is noteworthy that these people had certainly been baptized with a motivation to please God. They were willing subjects of all they knew of God's will. In addition, the baptism in their case had, at one time, been God-approved. Yet, it was no longer a God-approved baptism, and the people had to be baptized again for the right reason.

Before we can warmly unite with the various denominations, they must begin practicing the plan of salvation, including scriptural baptism, by which they will be in a saved condition. To have fellowship with them while they reject scriptural baptism would imply that we believe one can be God-approved and saved with an improper and unapproved baptism. This is pretending, and is contrary to a Christian's purpose. We want to draw people out of religious error and sinful living into the wonderful truth of God's word. May God ever bless us with His grace as we strive to do just that.

# Sincerity

Johnny Ramsey

Lord, help me live in such a self-forgetful way  
That even when I kneel to pray  
My prayer may be for others!

Sometimes brilliant folk are so ego-centered they do not become good team members. Ask any coach about the difficulty of motivating five basketball stars to blend their efforts on the court. They all want to shoot and seldom pass the ball to others. Too many chiefs and not enough braves can ruin many plans in life. One of the best mottoes ever enunciated goes like this:

## "We Can If I Will"

In the Bible we thrill to the vibrant lessons drawn from dedicated men and women. Some of them are classic heroes while many of them labored behind the scenes and brought valiant leaders to God's cause. Jonathan and Caleb are grand examples of this commitment in the Old Testament while Andrew and Stephen shine in the shadows of the New Testament. Glowing examples of loyal devotees of heaven's plan would be men like Noah and Moses who "did according to that Jehovah commanded them" (Genesis 6; Exodus 40). Paul made it crystal clear that the one thing ever present in his life was to press on in the wonderful work of the Lord. When we are firmly dedicated to a cause we will not allow other things to intervene or mar our emphasis and desire. The goal set before us is all consuming (Corinthians 9:24-27). There is a hymn that challenges our attention on this point:

To follow truth as blind men long for light,  
To do my best from dawn of day till night,  
To keep my heart fit for His holy sight,  
And, answer when He calls—  
This is my task!

We miss the whole point when we claim dedication in order to be rewarded. Such an approach nullifies the sincerity one must possess in the realm of commitment. Preachers who will **only** preach **if** they are well repaid in financial support are not true gospel preachers. Climbing the brotherhood ladder might result in falling off the Lord's chart of successful evangelists. Members who attend regularly mainly to escape hell or to be socially acceptable overlook the joy of worship and exhortation now—even if there were no heaven or hell!! I read the other day of this rather humorous, yet sad incident:

"What do your parents do for you when you have been a good boy?  
They let me stay home from Bible School  
he replied!"

Mixed-up values ruin our perspective and rob us of that closer walk with God that enhances life. Notice the following illustration that is the opposite of the genuine faith of the two women who bless Timothy (2 Timothy 1:5)

One of two riding on a bus suddenly realized she hadn't paid her fare. "I'll go right up and pay it," she said. "Why bother?" her companion replied, "You got away with it—so what?" "I've found that honesty always pays," the other said virtuously, and went up to pay the driver. "See, I told you honesty pays!" she said when she returned. "I handed the driver a quarter and he gave me fifty cents change."

Nothing should be allowed to deter our zeal for Christianity and our loyal devotion to that sublime cause for which Jesus dies. Anything short of full allegiance will not get the job done.

## Most of a Minute ADULTERY IN AMERICA, 1996

Glenn Colley

Observing American's reactions to the revelations of adultery in Washington recently has been interesting and sometimes unsettling. Dick Morris, right hand man to the President of the United States, was living a sinful lifestyle with a woman called Sherry Rowlands. Polls conducted by Newsweek showed 70% of us believe adultery is always harmful to a marriage. 22% say it can sometimes be good for a marriage. When those who believe adultery is wrong were asked why it is wrong, only half said "because it is immoral." 25% said because it can break up a marriage. 17% said because you could catch a

disease doing that.

Look: Actions are not properly determined right or wrong based on whether they generally offer positive or negative experiences. In reality, actions are right or wrong based on what God says about the matter. And that's where people are losing. When they reject the Bible, they reject their moral compass, and are reduced to doing what feels good instead of what is right.

Galatians 5:19-21 says that adulterers will not get to go to heaven when they die.



## THE LESSONS FROM THE GREAT COMMISSION- *continued from last issue*

Jesus said, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them...". Infants cannot understand the Gospel and cannot be taught the Gospel. They are not candidates for baptism. (Remember too that sprinkling is not baptism, and is not Biblical).

3. "I am saved by faith alone. Nothing else. Baptism has nothing to do with salvation."

Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..."

4. "The Holy Spirit directly leads me personally to do what God wants me to do." This is sometimes referred to as the personal and direct operation of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said, "Go teach... Go preach the Gospel..." The Holy Spirit does guide us to day, but He does so through the Bible. If a man is saved today it will be because he obeyed the Gospel in his New Testament, and not because the Spirit guided him separate and apart from that divine word.

5. "One religion is as good as another. It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere and worship from the heart."

Jesus said, "...Preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..." Notice the little article "the". We aren't to preach any Gospel, but the Gospel! In fact, Paul warned strongly about those who would preach another Gospel. "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 (Gal. 1:8)."

The Bible is remarkable. Every line is important. It is not surprising that Jesus said, "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4)

Let's be students of God's word.

## "God Is Not The Author Of Confusion" — No. 3

"God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (1 Cor. 14:33). Despite the clarity of this statement, yet today there is "confusion" among religious people about the purpose for being baptized. But let no one blame God for the division or confusion on this [or any other] subject. His divine teaching is clear. And please remember: One cannot be taught wrong about why he should be baptized, and be baptized right!

God is Not the Author of Confusion About  
**Why** One Should Be Baptized

The divine purpose for being baptized is very clearly stated in God's word. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Yet most denominations deny that baptism is necessary to salvation. Many religious people suppose that baptism has absolutely nothing to do with one's salvation. Some Protestants teach that one is saved the very split-second he believes, without any act of obedience on his part. Some have affirmed that alien sinners are saved by faith, repentance and confession — but before and without

water baptism. What does the Bible say? Does God make clear His teaching on this question? Or does he straddle the fence, and contribute to the confusion?

Keep in mind, please, that baptism is a New Testament command. Before Christ came, the Old Testament was in force, but Christ "took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. 2:14). His "will" — the New Testament — went into effect, not at His birth, nor His baptism, nor when He chose the twelve apostles — but after he DIED (Heb. 9:15-17; 10:9-10). Therefore one cannot now be 'saved like the Thief on the Cross,' — for the will of Christ was not then in force.

*continued in next issue*

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# THE WORDS OF Truth

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

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How Can Parents Teach Convictions  
To Their Children?  
Bounds Of Our Habitation  
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## "God Is Not The Author Of Confusion" — No. 3

*Continued from last issue*

The kind of faith in Christ which the Thief on the Cross had, is not adequate to save anyone now. In order to be saved now, sinners must believe something about Jesus which that Thief could not possibly have believed! Now one must believe in the **resurrection** of Christ — which had not even **happened** when he was promised: "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). Jesus had not yet DIED, much less been raised! If (?) that Thief had any faith at all in the RESURRECTION of Christ, he believed that it was going to occur three days ahead! But that kind of faith — faith in some **future** resurrection of Jesus — will not save sinners now! Hear the apostle Paul on this matter: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God HATH RAISED him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9). that great apostle prefaced this statement by saying that this is what "we preach," and it is "the word of faith!" (verse 8). So, I say again: the kind of faith in Christ which the dying Thief had, will not save any man today. We must believe something about Christ — that He is risen! — which that famous Thief could not possibly have believed — for it had not even happened when Jesus promised him: "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). The "Will" or testament of Jesus did not go into effect until after he died (Heb. 10:9-10).

Furthermore, keep in mind that, at that time, Jesus never had given the Great Commission to the apostles. Not until after he was raised from the dead did he ever say: "Go ye unto all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. But he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16). But our Lord did say this after He was raised! (Mark 16:9-20). Let us inquire of Jesus just what He said.

"Jesus, did you say in this text: 'He that believeth shall be saved'?"

His answer would be: "No! I did not say that."

"Well, Lord, did you say in this text: 'He that is baptized shall be saved'?"

Jesus would reply: "No! I did not say that, either!"

"Well, Jesus, what did you say in that verse?"

His response: "I said, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved'."

He could reply: "The items and their sequence are simple and clear: No.1 Believe. No. 2 Be Baptized. No. 3 Shall be saved."

Before Jesus ascended, He instructed the apostles to "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Jesus "Said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ, to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-47). Note please that Jesus designated Jerusalem as the point for this preaching to begin. What they preached had never been preached before; hence this would be a "beginning." But what they began to preach in Jerusalem was later to "be preached among all nations."

The "power from on high" came upon the apostles on Pentecost day (Acts 2:1-4). That very day those who "were pricked in their heart" by their new faith — that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Christ — inquired: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). "Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38). Notice the sequence of the things these believers were told to do: (1) repent, (2) be baptized (3) remission of sins. He did not tell them to repent, and they would immediately obtain remission, and then could be baptized (if they wanted to)! It doesn't read that way in anybody's Bible!

God is not the author of confusion about the purpose of baptism!

Please remember: One cannot be taught wrong about the purpose of baptism, and be baptized right! (to be concluded).

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## "God Is Not The Author Of Confusion" — No. 4

"God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of saints" (I Cor. 14:33). Despite the clarity of this statement, yet today there IS "confusion" among religious people about the purpose of being baptized. But let no one blame God for the division or confusion on this

[or any other] subject. His divine teaching is clear. As we conclude this study, please remember: One cannot be TAUGHT WRONG about WHY he should be baptized, and BE BAPTIZED RIGHT!



# FROM THE EDITOR

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## HOW CAN PARENTS TEACH CONVICTIONS TO THEIR CHILDREN?

Teenagers and young adults often find themselves being tested by the Lord and the devil. Some such young person will be tempted today as Joseph was tempted by Potiphar's wife or as David was tempted by Bathsheba. Another will be tempted as Peter was tempted when he warmed by that fire on the night of denial. Another will be tempted like Ananias and Sapphira was tempted when they lied in order to have a heavier bank account. Another will be tempted like Demas was tempted before he decided to leave genuine Christianity to pursue a life free from such restrictions and requirements. Another will be tempted as Noah was tempted by the drink. There will be crucial moments in your son's or daughter's life when they face such tests.

The word conviction isn't in the Bible, but the principle is certainly there. It is inherent in the words "Stand fast, be like men, be strong..." (1 Cor. 16:13), and "Resist the devil and he will flee from you; draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you" (James 4:7), or "...stand against the wiles of the devil..." (Eph. 6:11).

Because being a faithful follower of Jesus means living righteously (Titus 2:12), the Christian must develop and sustain a strong determination to stand against the temptation which will come again and again in his life. How great must this determination be in the Christian? In Colossians 3 Paul penned these words of the Holy Spirit: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." (Colossians 3:5). To "mortify" means to put to death. A Christian's conviction to do right and not wrong is so real — so meaningful — that it is as if he has put to death the person in him who could comfortably commit sins of omission or commission. He now lives a different life, a life committed wholly to Christ. *Death* is sentence pronounced to the man of sin in us. Now that's strong conviction.

But how can we instill that kind of conviction in our children? How does one teach that? Only by example.

It requires a drastic reversal in the way people normally think. Normally when faced with temptation to lie, cheat, steal, forsake the assembly, commit fornication, or sin in another way, people may say to themselves, "This temptation is so strong. Too strong. I'll really struggle to fight this one. I'll just go ahead and sin." The reversal in thinking would have us saying this instead: "This is not an opportunity to give in to sin; this is a great opportunity to choose **not to sin** while facing a strong temptation. Here's a chance to show my Lord my commitment and my faith!"

Parents must make convictions practical for their children. It isn't always pleasant. In fact it is often rather unpleasant and places a strain on us. Standing for right has always exacted a price. Some Christians make little

effort at all. Without intending to, they show their children that Christianity is what we practice when it isn't too tough. They end up rearing children who have little or no interest in actually standing for the truth of the Bible in their lives.

People who really aren't fully determined to follow Christian principles, when faced with the hard decisions for Christ, will just rationalize the matter and say to themselves, "Look at all the times we did do the right thing. The occasional misstep won't make any difference to the Lord." But in such times we fail the Lord, AND we fail as parents to teach conviction to our children. Convictions really don't show until the going gets rough.

Consider these examples of reasoning parents sometimes use while *failing* to teach convictions to their children. We parents rob our children of convictions when we say,

1. "Normally, we encourage our teenagers not to attend the school dances because of the sins connected with dancing. However, this dance is different. This is the prom. Our kids can only attend one prom as a senior in High School. We've decided to let our kids go if they want."
2. "Normally, we attend the assemblies of the church, and normally our ball games don't conflict with the assemblies. However, during the Gospel meeting week we have a ball game scheduled for Thursday night. I've told my kids that it is our duty to go to the ball game instead of to the Gospel meeting, because they have made a commitment to their team."
3. "Normally, we give as we have been prospered to the Lord. However, this month is different because this is the month of our vacation, and we'll need the extra cash. It seems like the right thing to do because my family comes first, and this is the time we get to be together and relax."
4. "Normally, we bring our children and have them participate in the activities of the church. However, since they have passed 12 years old, there are so many school activities and time spent with friends that they just no longer have time to be involved in the activities of the church. I know our children are young, but they are very busy."
5. "Normally, we come to worship and Bible study on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights. However, my daughter has a big algebra test tomorrow, so we stayed at home so she could study."
6. "Normally, our worship assembly ends on time, and that makes us happy. However, whenever it runs over time we exercise our right to strongly object. (We don't apply this same principle to recreation which stretches overtime.)"

You get the point. If we want to rear children who will make the tough decisions necessary to be a faithful Christian when they are adults, we are going to have to

### God Is Not the Author of Confusion About Why One Should Be Baptized

Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). On Pentecost, Peter commanded those newly-made believers to “Repent and be baptized...for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). Ananias told Saul to “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins” (Acts 22:16). Paul later wrote that we “are baptized into Jesus Christ” (Rom. 6:3-5) and “into one body” (I Cor. 12:13). But “IN CHRIST” is where salvation (Acts 4:11-12)—and only in Christ may all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3) be obtained. So, these are not several different reasons to be baptized; they equal one and the same reason: to be saved (Mark 16:16). Many years after Pentecost the apostle Peter was inspired to write: “even baptism doth also now save us” (1 Pet. 3:21).

Some deny this, and teach that “baptism doth also NOT save us.” Don’t blame God for the confusion! He is not the author of confusion! (I Cor. 14:33).

Ananias was sent by Jesus to tell Saul of Tarsus “what thou must do” (Acts 9:6). Ananias did not tell Saul to “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ” — for Saul had done this on the Damascus road, when the Lord says, “I am Jesus” (Acts 9:5-6). Neither did Ananias demand that Saul “repent” — for three days ago, by his new faith, Saul had that change of heart from a persecutor to one who wants to become a disciple. Nor did Ananias instruct Saul

to “confess...the Lord Jesus” — for Saul did this outside the city. After Jesus identified Himself to Saul, the man from Tarsus exclaimed, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6).

What did the messenger sent by Jesus tell Saul — who now believes, has repented, and has confessed Jesus as “Lord” — to do? Read with me: “And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). It seems to me one would have to receive “expert” help to misunderstand this! God is not responsible for the confusion over the purpose of baptism in his plan of salvation.

“But,” someone protests, “I want to be saved BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH, as they were at Ephesus (Eph. 2:8-9) — and not by being baptized.” But, wait, Friend! Ephesians 2:8-9 is my text! That verse was written to people who **already had been baptized!** Remember: when Paul came to Ephesus — (that’s the city to which this letter was written!) — he found some people who had been improperly baptized, and baptized them correctly (Acts 19:1-7). They were among the charter members of the church at Ephesus. Later Paul wrote this epistle **to that church**, reminding them that they were the ones who had been saved “by grace through faith” (Eph. 1:1-2; 2:4-5, 8-9). That’s my proof-text, not yours! You need to find a verse [which is NOT in the Bible!] — one since Pentecost (Acts 2), one written to UN-BAPTIZED people, which told them THEY had been

*continued on page 4*

## HOW CAN PARENTS TEACH CONVICTIONS TO THEIR CHILDREN? *continued from page 2*

show them conviction in a practical way in our home and family. Where will they find the strength to put the Lord and His church first ahead of other things which will one day pull at them with Herculean force? Will they be able to reach into their hearts and pull out the right decision? What does it take to raise children into adults who will stiffen their lips and say with resolve, “as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord?” It takes parents who make the decision to teach real conviction to their children by looking for opportunities to say to those kids, “This is not

going to be easy, but it’s a great opportunity to show the Lord just how much we want to serve Him. We’ll do the right thing.”

All young people make mistakes. Even David prayed, “Remember not the sins of my youth.” (Psalm 25:7). And yet, we as parents can instill in them the tools with which they can grow into oak trees of faith.

As the old country song says, “You can’t be a beacon if your light don’t shine.”

## MOST OF A MINUTE - BOUNDS OF OUR HABITATION

The most recent issue of Newsweek Magazine has an article about astronaut Shannon Lucid. The heading reads, “After a record 188 days in space, Shannon Lucid was still standing...” Aren’t you amazed at how far we’ve come? I am. Who would have thought it possible 100 years ago that a human could spend 6 months in space.

Now, however, take with me a dose of reality. People who spend even 5 minutes in space have to have a great deal of life-preserving equipment. We must breathe. We must have a way to get back to our atmosphere in short order. People who spend 6 months as did Mrs. Lucid are in danger of breaking bones when they return to Earth.

Extended weightlessness makes bones brittle.

With this in mind, consider Acts 17:26: “And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.” We truly do have bounds of our habitation. In the marvelous design of an almighty God humans were placed on a planet unlike the others, a planet made to satisfy our need for air, water, food, and a livable temperature. God made us, and gave us a place where we can live. And I hope we never forget it.



saved “by grace through faith” — But for such a text you will search in vain!

God is not the author of confusion about the purpose of baptism. It, coupled with faith and repentance, is “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38).

Another reader may protest: “But I was saved by the BLOOD of Christ, not by water!” Our Lord himself declared: “This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:28). And, “Without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:22). This is a precious truth: We are saved by His BLOOD! The Bible clearly teaches that we are saved by the precious blood of Christ! But many have never learned how to ‘contact’ that blood. Let us learn from the Bible where his blood was shed, and then we can see how we reach that blood. -

The apostle John wrote that Jesus was “DEAD already” (John 19:33) when the Roman soldier pierced His side with a spear, “and forthwith came there out BLOOD and water” (John 19:34). He was “dead already” when his BLOOD was shed. Hence, if I wish to contact his BLOOD, I must come to his DEATH. Nowhere in the New Testament do we read that (1) BELIEVING puts one “into His death,” nor (2) that REPENTING puts one “into His death,” nor (3) that PRAYING puts one “into His death.” (If you think so, write me the book, chapter, and verse where it is found!) But the Bible does say that we are “BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH” (Rom. 6:3-5).

With this in mind, think again of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, later known as the Apostle Paul. He believed on Jesus Christ on the Damascus road. Outside that city he also repented of his wicked intention to persecute Christians, and now wants to become one himself. On that road he confessed Jesus as “Lord,” and expressed a desire to obey him. He also prayed and had a vision (Acts 9:11-12). But all these things did not bring him into contact with the saving BLOOD of Jesus! The Lord sent Ananias to tell him how to reach that blood: “And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and BE BAPTIZED...”

[—that put him “into His DEATH” (Rom. 6:3) — where he reached the BLOOD which was shed in His death (John 19:33-34)] — “and WASH AWAY THY SINS, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). There is not a verse in anybody’s Bible that says you can believe “into His death,” nor “repent into His death,” nor “pray into His death!” But your Bible says BAPTISM puts a proper subject “INTO HIS DEATH” (Rom. 6:3-5). This is where we reach, or contact, the blood, which washes away our sins! This is not ‘water salvation,’ it is BLOOD salvation! And this is how penitent believers contact or reach that precious blood!

Truly, God is not responsible for the misunderstandings of men and women, for He has made his plan of salvation plain. He says believers must be baptized to “be saved” (Mark 16:16). He tells penitent believers to be baptized “for the remission of sins (Acts 2:28). He says baptism puts one “into Jesus Christ” (Rom. 6:3-4), where salvation is (Acts 4:11-12). He says, baptism puts one “into His death” (Rom. 6:3-4), where His blood was shed (John 19:33-34). He says, “Baptism doth also now save us” (1 Pet. 3:21). He says baptism puts one “into Jesus Christ” (Rom. 6:3-4), where all spiritual blessings are (Eph. 1:3). The Bible is very clear. Don’t blame God for the confusion about the purpose of baptism! Truly, “God is not the author of confusion” (1 Cor. 14:33).

Please remember: One cannot be TAUGHT WRONG about the purpose of baptism, and BE BAPTIZED RIGHT!

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Published weekly under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.  
**Congregational Rates:** Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. forty cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

**Individual rates are \$20.50 per year. All bills payable to Words of Truth, 3051 McQueen Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36107**



6th Avenue Church of Christ  
1501 6th Avenue  
Jasper, AL 35501

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Montgomery, AL

# THE 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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Vol. 33 No. 30

October 17, 1996

## The Kind Of Work Christians Do

Neal Pollard

There is an amazing emphasis upon works in the book of Titus. Usually, preachers fall back upon James, whose inspired writing destroys the idea of "faith only" (cf. 2:12-26). But, it is in Titus that one reads a condemnation of those who fail to maintain good works (1:16), the cross-generational need of doing good works (2:1-7), the proper response to grace by doing good works (2:12-15), the need to be eager for good works (3:1ff), and the necessity and practicality of doing good works (3:8-14)

Right at the closing of the short epistle, Paul admonishes, "And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful" (3:14, NKJ). Sadly, good Christians are often heard asking elders, "What can I *do*?" Christians have definite works to perform, generally divided into the categories of benevolence, evangelism, and edification. Yet, these abstract terms have concrete meaning. What works are included in Titus 3:14?

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This verse teaches that Christianity involves **maintenance work**. Everyone enjoys a finished product, few like putting it together, and fewer enjoy fixing it. In the same way, "maintaining good works" in the local church can be tedious business. Everyone likes receiving a visit, but who will see to it that folks are visited? Everyone enjoys a comfortable building, but who will help work on it? Everyone is concerned about the sick and hospitalized, but who will take the time to call, write, and visit them? The church must be filled with maintenance workers.

On the personal level, it is sad but true that some individual Christians just "fall away." Jesus once taught, "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away" (Luke 8:13). In this verse, Jesus laments the failure of some believers to do that necessary, personal "mainte-

nance work."

Preventatively, He teaches that one must maintain his joy of God's Word. Nothing does this like reading and studying the Bible. Only those who are daily involved in such come to truly appreciate the precious value of its truth. Christ teaches that one must maintain his faith in God's Word. It is hard to believe, but Jesus says that individuals can cease to believe in Him. This is dangerous, as Peter teaches one is better off never knowing Christ than rejecting Him (cf. 2 Peter 2:20-21). Christ also teaches that one must maintain his strength by God's Word. Otherwise, temptation will pull one away from Him.

Titus 3:14 teaches that Christianity involves **field work**. Specifically, Christians are warned against being "unfruitful." the allusion is made to laboring in the spiritual vineyard, an analogy often drawn by New Testament writers and by Jesus Himself.

Paul, in this verse, is encouraging Christians to "cultivate Christian graces in themselves by acts of Christian service" (Vincent 352). Thus, like those on the rocky soil, the true Christian must avoid being like those on the thorny ground. They become "unfruitful" (Matthew 13:22). In fact, the Christian is so repelled by the wastefulness of being spiritually barren that he fights against all "fruitful works of darkness" (Ephesians 5:11). Christ cursed a fig tree which was unfruitful (Matthew 21:19). He will do the same with unfruitful men (Matthew 25:30; John 15:2).

Like any spouse, the spiritual groom (Christ) does not want to hear any Christian say "I love you" unless he is showing that love by his actions. Truly, Jesus says profession without performance is profitless (cf. John 14:15). The anthem of the diligent Christian is, "I will work, I will pray, I will labor every day in the vineyard of the Lord." How natural! The fields are white unto harvest (John 4:35).

Then Thomas O. Davis accepted the presidency of a civic club, he unfacetiously prayed,

"Now I get me up to work, I pray the Lord I may not shirk.

and if I die before tonight, I pray my work will be all right."

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# FROM THE EDITOR

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## FRESHLY KILLED

Hebrews 10 compares the sacrifices and priesthood of the Old Testament and those of the New Testament. The study is rich and deep, and will accomplish its purpose in those who will take the time to read and meditate on its truth. Worship will be more meaningful, prayer more thoughtful, and appreciation for redemption keener when a Christian studies here. Since Christ is our High Priest today, we can draw near to God with a true heart in full assurance of faith. We can approach the Holy One in heaven in a direct way unavailable to those under the Law of Moses.

Let us spotlight a marvelous point in verses 19 and 20:

19 "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

The holiest of holies was a room in the tabernacle or temple into which only the High Priest could enter. Even he only entered briefly once each year in offering atonement for the people. That room contained the ark of the covenant on which was the Cherubim and the mercy seat. The ceremony attached to it, attentions to detail, and bloody sacrifices, were to make worshipers aware of how solemn it was to approach the presence of God Almighty. Under the New covenant we have one perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ, and the Vail which prevented access to the most holy place has been torn. Christians may freely enter into the presence of God. The blood of Jesus has made this possible.

## MOST OF A MINUTE - NATURAL AFFECTION

By now you've heard about the six year old blonde headed boy in Lexington, N.C. who was recently charged with sexual harassment for kissing a little girl on the cheek. And by now you've probably heard a number of people marvel at how ridiculous this whole thing is.

Have you recently stopped to consider just how twisted the entire question of showing affection has really become by many in our world? Think about it. Men live with men, and we are told "you must respect that." Women live with women — even want legal marriage together, and they say, "you must respect that!" Married people live

Now step aside from the text and consider the fact that from time to time Christians sin. We need not only a sacrifice to cleanse us from our past sins when we are baptized, (Rom. 6:1-6), but we also need forgiveness for the sins we commit through our lives as Christians. Thank God we have it! 1 John 1:7 says, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." But think: After all these years is it possible that the strength of that sacrifice might wane? Could that blood of Jesus, over the centuries, lose some of its power?

Hebrews 10:20 says that we have access to God by the blood of Jesus, which is a "new and living way..."

The word "new" is from the Greek word *Prosphatos* which means "lately slaughtered, freshly killed." (Enhanced Strong's Lexicon, 1992, #4372). Hebrews 10:20 is the only time the word is used in the New Testament. The word "living" means "to be fresh, strong, efficient." In other words, the blood of Jesus never grows stale in its forgiving power. It never becomes coagulated or cold in its effectiveness. This underscores the fact that the blood of our Lord gives us as much confidence that our sins are really forgiven as the Christians of the first century enjoyed. Freshly killed. The blood is, and will be, still warm.

We sometimes sing of heaven, "Never grow old..." Heaven is a place in which we never grow old. Earth is a place in which the live-giving blood of our Lord never grows old.

apart. Single people live together. The most popular box office hit right now is about ex-wives hurting their ex-husbands. People are swarming to see it. And then a little six year old gives his friend a peck on the cheek and is told "we can't respect that." Conservative preachers teach what Jesus said about Marriage, divorce and remarriage, and people say, "we can't respect that." Well folks, the backwards ideas about affection are perfectly summed up in the Bible, Romans 1:31, where we read that people who have gotten away from God are "without natural affection."

An old proverb goes, "God gives every bird its food, but he does not throw it into the nest." Too, God has given every man a Savior, but He will not just put salvation in man's lap without his doing anything. In both the case of the bird and the man, there is work to be done to obtain

what is needed. May every Christian do good works *eagerly* ("be ready," Titus 3:1), *thoroughly* ("to every good work," Titus 3:1), *blameless* ("speak evil of no man," Titus 3:2), *gently*, and *meekly* (Titus 3:2). With such, God is pleased!

## The Devil On The Roof (when we disagree)

Philip Davis

Gal. 5:14-21 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 15 But if you bit and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. 16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. 18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; ... hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Gal. 5:22-26 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 25 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

We will disagree. That is one hazard of human relationships. However how will we respond when differences come? Will we rise to the occasion or will we sink to the gutter? When we disagree, the way we disagree broadcasts loudest of all how real our faith controls our lives,

(James 2:14, 17). Do we believe what we say we believe? How do I react when someone "crosses" me? Do I —

Dredge up every hurt feeling from the past? (Heb. 8:12; 10:17).

Assign low and ulterior motives to others? (Romans 14:10);

Paint myself the martyr? (John 8:7);

Jump to extreme conclusions? (Matt. 7:1-2);

Yell and scream rather than calmly resolving our problems? (Matt. 5:23; Matt. 18:15-21; Mark 11:25);

Blame & condemn, not trying to see the other person's point of view? (Matt. 7:12);

Expect to have my way instead of "bending over backwards" trying to make sure I do not cause my brother or sister to fall? (James 3:2-18; 4:1-3).

Someone well said that when God's people do not find a way to get along with each other the old Devil sits on the roof of the church house dying laughing at us. Have we forgotten, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth," (Luke 11:17). It could happen here! My friend, how hard will the Devil be laughing when we disagree?

## Judging God

A recent statement from our erring brother Shelly (Wineskins, Vol. II, No. 11, P. 7) seems more arrogant than any other I have seen from one who believes the Bible.

"If God is not larger than the fellowship with which I commune on a given Lord's Day, he is too small to be worthy of worship."

It is no longer a matter of telling the brethren that we have no right to exclude from our fellowship those who have not obeyed the gospel of Christ; it has now come to the point that our brother dictates to God that he must also have fellowship with the disobedient. I wonder if God is intimidated by this threat?

In all this talk about the Lord's prayer for unity, and about how big God is, there are some very obvious facts that some seem to be overlooking. One of them is this: it is God, not some man, who has the right to dictate the terms upon which sinful human beings can be forgiven and be brought into fellowship with God. If God has chosen to forgive and receive into his fellowship only those who have genuinely repented and have been immersed in water for

the forgiveness of sins, that is God's sovereign right. If our brother pronounces such a God too small for him to worship, so be it.

A second very obvious fact is this: not only does God have the right to dictate the terms of pardon for sinners, but he has exercised that right, and he has promised to save only those who obey him.

In Matthew 7:21 Jesus said,

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

Question: Who shall enter into the kingdom of heaven? Answer: "He that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven?"

In Hebrews 5:9 the inspired writer wrote, "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Question: Unto whom is Jesus the author of eternal salvation? Answer: "All them that obey him."

*continued on page 4*



Second Thessalonians 1:7-9 says that Jesus will 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."

Question: Who is going to be punished with everlasting destruction? Answer: "Them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel."

If I cannot fully and confidently believe what the Bible says in these and other verses about the fact that one must do the will of the Father, must obey Christ, must obey the gospel, in order to be saved, then what reason would I have to believe what the Bible says about God's love, or his grace, or about heaven or hell?

Notice another statement by brother Shelly in the same article:

"While there can be no fellowship between belief and unbelief, there must be fellowship with other believers who see some issues of organization, policy, and doctrinal nuance differently).

Compare that statement to this one:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them (Romans 16:17)."

You see, what Paul refers to as being contrary to "the doctrine which ye have learned," brother Shelly refers to as "doctrine nuance." Paul knew that more than belief is necessary; he knew it must be a "faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6).

Notice First Peter 4:17:

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begins at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"

This passage divides all accountable beings into two categories, (1) the house of God, and (2) them that obey not the gospel of God. Notice the distinction is not between the house of God and unbelievers; it is between the house of God and those who obey not the gospel of God. The house of God is the church of the living God (I Timothy 3:15). Those who obey not the gospel, whether they believe or not, make up the other class. And, as noted already from First Thessalonians 1:7-9, these will be punished with everlasting destruction.

Suppose the "fellowship with which I commune on a given Lord's Day" just happens to be that church which is made up of those who have obeyed the gospel? Does God have a right to embrace that church and none other as his own? Since that church was purchased by his Son's blood (Acts 20:28), and since all are invited to become members of that church (Revelation 22:17), how could any man judge God as being too small to be worthy of worship, just because he will not embrace religious organizations set up without his authority by men who will not bow in humble submission to his will?

Dear brother, it is one thing to denigrate your brethren because we will not join you in spreading the umbrella of fellowship over every false religion that claims belief in Christ, but it is another to judge God unworthy of worship because He will not embrace all kinds of error.

Bobby Duncan  
Adamsville, Alabama

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Individual rates are \$20.50 per year. All bills payable to Words of Truth, 3051 McQueen Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36107

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# THE WORDS OF Truth

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

## SEE ARTICLES INSIDE:

Bible Baptism (No. 2)  
I Want To See My Jesus  
Legal Murder: Abortion  
Congratulations On Your Persecution

Vol. 33 No. 31

October 24, 1996

## Bible Baptism (No. 2): The Subject Thereof

Wendell Winkler

(1) *One who has been taught and has learned.* The disciples were to teach and then to baptize the taught, or those who had been discipled, or those who had learned (Matt. 28: 18-20, see the King James and American Standard versions). Preaching precedes baptism in Mk. 16; 15,16. Those who come to Christ have learned of the Father (Jn. 6:44-45).

(2) *One who gladly receives the word* (Acts 2:41). Also, those scripturally baptized rejoiced after their baptism (Acts 8:36-49; 16:30-34).

(3) *One who is a believer.* Philip told the eunuch he could be baptized if he believed (Acts 8:36-39), implying, if he did not believe, he was not a scriptural subject for baptism. The jailor was told to believe before he was baptized (Acts 16:30-34). Belief precedes baptism in Mk. 16:15-16. The Jews of Acts 2 gave evidence of their faith (verse 37) before being told to be baptized (verse 38).

(4) *One who has repented of his sins.* What good would it do to baptize one if he had no intent of living as he should? Paul gave evidence of his repentance (Acts 9:9-11) before he was told to be baptized (Acts 22:16). In Acts 2:38 the order is to repent first, then be baptized.

(5) *One who has confessed Christ.* No one has the right to be baptized who is not a believer; and, no one has the right to baptize another who is not a believer. Thus, before baptism, one confesses that he believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and, by such, gives evidence that he is a scriptural subject for this sacred act. The eunuch before his baptism said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). Concerning the confession, observe that the confession that is to be made is the fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Matt. 16:16;

Acts 8:37). Observe that no one ever made the confession, "I believe that God for Christ's sake has pardon my sins," before he was baptized. Furthermore, this confession cannot be made in the light of Mk. 16:16 which teaches that one's sins are not pardoned until he is baptized. The essentiality of the confession can be seen from a study of Matt. 10:32-33; Lk. 12:8,9; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rom. 10:8-10; 1 Jn. 4:15. We can read examples of the confession being made in Matt. 3:17; 16:16; 17:5; 26:63,64; 1 Tim. 6:12:13; Mk. 14:61,62, and Acts 8:37.

(6) *Deduction: thus, it can be readily seen that infants are not scriptural subjects for baptism.* Infants are safe, and are not in need of baptism for the remission of sins; for, they have no sins to remit. (Ezk. 18:20 teaches that they are not born with the sins of their parents.) However, in an effort to justify the practice of baptizing infants, the following arguments are presented (which we will now study with refutations being observed for each):

(a) *"When the Israelites were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, surely infants were also.* (1 Cor. 10:1-3; Ex. 14:29-30)." If this proves that infants should be baptized, then we should also baptize our cattle, bread trays, and all of our other possessions, since these, too, accompanied the Israelites as they passed through the sea! Israel was saved from bondage just as we are saved from sin; yet, infants have no sins from which to be saved!

(b) *"The Great Commission speaks of 'every creature' and surely this would include infants* (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16)." According to this reasoning, all animals would be included too, since they are creatures. Also, according to this reasoning, morons and imbeciles would be included. "Every creature" includes those capable of receiving instruction - those to whom preaching can be directed - as the context clearly shows

*continued on page 3*



# FROM THE EDITOR

*Glenn Colley*

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## I WANT TO SEE MY JESUS

All Christians have thought of what it will be like to one day be with Jesus. The beloved Apostle Paul wrote, "...to be with Christ which is far better..." (Phil. 1:23). Have you ever wondered how Paul felt not being able to spend the time with Christ on earth as did the other Apostles? He did see Jesus on the road to Damascus, ("And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." 1 Corinthians 15:8), but Paul had never gotten, as did the other apostles, to fall down at Jesus' feet and worship Him. We might say that Paul had a unique reason to want to be with Jesus. But aren't there others who also had a special reason?

Consider Mary, the mother of Jesus. When Christ was a babe He nursed at her breast. He was cradled in her gentle embrace. When He was four his skinned knees were doctored by her motherly kiss. Luke 2:34-35 says, "And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." One day a sword would pierce through this sweet mother's soul. She would see her son crucified above the jeers and blasphemy of the Jews. She would hear her son commit her keeping to John. When Mary would say, "I want to see my Jesus," she really meant in a special way, "My Jesus."

Or consider the apostle Peter who wanted to much to please Jesus and to do well. The bitter pill of misery was hard to swallow after Peter denied his dying Savior. Peter wept bitterly, (Matt. 26:75). Shame and embarrassment have never been keener than here in Peter's heart. How he must have replayed his words of denial over and over in his mind. Later, after Jesus rose from the dead, Peter wanted desperately to show the Lord his devotion and commitment. John 21:7 says, "Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat *unto him*, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. And

the other disciples came in a little ship..." He couldn't wait to get to the Lord on the bank. And we know that Peter's greatest days were still ahead. There would be Pentecost, Acts 2. There would be the conversion of Cornelius, Acts 10. Apparently, Peter one day died by crucifixion. Listen to the words of Jesus in John 21:18-19: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shall stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me." Peter would say, "I want to see my Jesus." Peter wanted desperately to hear, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter ye in to the joys of the Lord."

Lazarus had a special reason to want to go and be with Jesus. Lazarus was the man who woke from death twice to see Jesus. First when he died and was raised from the dead by Jesus in John 11, and next when he died the second time and went to glory. Perhaps Lazarus and Jesus conversed after Lazarus died the first time. Did Lazarus feel some regrets about being called back to this old world? Perhaps Jesus said, "Be patient my friend. Soon you will leave here again and we will be together forever in heaven." Lazarus would say, "I want to go back to the spirit realm. I want to see my Jesus."

You and I may not have the same reasons we want to see Jesus, but we have just as much desire! Christians have a great reason to want to be with Jesus. Philippians 2:1 says, "If there be any consolation in Christ..." Another word for consolation here is "Encouragement." Jesus has encouraged us all through life. We've spent years singing, studying, praying about Him. Now we long to see Him face to face.

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." (1 Peter 1:8-9).

## MOST OF A MINUTE - LEGAL MURDER: ABORTION

Once in a while, people who are in favor of legal abortion on demand give us a glimpse of their true heart. We may be giving these abortion advocates too much credit. We may say, "They hate murder as much as anyone. They just don't believe the unborn fetus is really a human baby. If they did they'd be against abortion."

A couple of years ago some folks began suggesting that the mother should be told that aesthetic can be administered to her unborn baby prior to the actual abortion to insure a non-agonizing death for the child. The pro-choice people hit the ceiling! To suggest that an unborn can feel pain makes that baby sound like a real-life person. That's the last thing they want. But is it the

truth?

Many of our lawmakers recently tried to overturn Mr. Clinton's support of partial-birth abortions—an abortion where the baby is born except his head, and then is killed with scissors. They failed, and the practice still continued in America because people like Mr. Clinton are for it.

Can we not apply the golden rule to this unborn or partially born baby? Matthew 7:12, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." None of us want to be treated the way aborted babies are treated.

(Mk. 16:15,16; Matt. 28:18-20). Also, "all creatures" includes those who are capable of believing as Mk. 16:16 teaches.

(c) "Infant baptism stands to its subjects and the church as circumcision did unto the Abrahamic covenant; thus, as infants were circumcised, so infants are to be baptized." If baptism has the relationship to the New Testament as circumcision did to the Old Testament, then why were Jesus and the Pentecostians baptized? They had been circumcised. Circumcision was a parental responsibility, whereas baptism is a personal responsibility (Acts 2:38). Furthermore, the males were circumcised, whereas baptism is to be submitted to by both males and females (Gal. 3:27,28).

(d) "We read of households being baptized in the

*early apostolic days. Surely, infants were in those households. Hence, we have an apostolic example of infants being baptized."* In every recorded case of a household being baptized, our Lord recorded something with relation to it that shows that infants were not included; yea, the text records something that the household did which infants are incapable of doing. (1) Corenilius *feared* God with all of his house, Acts 10:2. (2) Crispus *believed* with all of his house, Acts 18:8. (3) The word was *spoken* to the jailor's house, and he and his house *believed* in God, Acts 16:32-34. (4) Lydia's household was spoken of as *brethren*; and, they were also capable of being *comforted*, Acts 16:14, 15, 40. (5) The household of Stephanas had *addicted* themselves to the ministry of the saints, 1 Cor. 1:16; 16:15.

## Congratulations On Your Persecution!

*Allen Webster*

We may receive notes of congratulations for engagements, weddings, births, promotions, and school awards. But I can't remember ever hearing of someone being congratulated on being persecuted.

Imagine a Christian having a conversation with his Lord: "Jesus, Master, I am having a hard fight, I am meeting with strenuous opposition." How does He reply? He doesn't say, "I am sorry for you," or, "How I pity you!" He says, "Let me congratulate you!" "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Mt. 5:12). This is true, not because persecution is good in itself; but because of what persecution indicates. It is a moment in the drama of eternity.

### **CHRIST CONGRATULATES YOU BECAUSE...**

**YOU ARE LAYING UP GREAT REWARDS IN HEAVEN.** The Bible teaches that God sees what we have to take and will one day richly reward us (Rom. 8:17,18; 2 Cor. 4:17,18; Phil. 3:9-10; 2 Tim. 1:12; cf. Mt. 6:19-21). The cross is a golden ladder by which we climb up to heaven.

**YOU HAVE BECOME A MENACE TO THE KINGDOM OF DARKNESS.** The Devil is far too shrewd to turn his guns on a spineless foe who poses no threat. In the letters to the churches of Asia (Rev. 2,3), we find that every church mentioned that counted for anything was persecuted. Only dead or lukewarm churches were being left alone. If we are persecuted, that means we are doing something the devil dislikes. When we are hated, maligned, or afflicted as Christians, the real animosity is not against us, but against Christ. Satan's enemy is

Christ, and he opposes us because we belong to Christ, and because He is in us (Gal. 6:17; Col. 1:24).

### **YOU ARE HELPING OTHER CHRISTIANS.**

Your persecution helps those who come after you. Today we enjoy liberty because men bought it with blood, sweat, and tears. In building the great Boulder Dam men died to turn a dust-bowl into the bread basket. When it was completed, a tablet with their names was placed into the dam's great wall. On it was inscribed: "These died that the desert might rejoice and blossom as the rose."

Your persecution helps the church to grow. It has always grown fastest in times of severest persecution. Persecution tends to drive away triflers and cowards. Those who are unwilling to take it seriously and pay the price are repelled (Acts 5:11,13). These are stones about the necks of the church anyway. Also persecution tends to attract attention of those who are serious about religion.

Persecution is one of the most effective methods of broadcasting the truth. The moment when Christianity seems likely to cost us something is the moment when it is open to us to demonstrate our loyalty to Christ in a way that the world can see. Chappell gives a good illustration: When I was a small boy my brother and I set fire to an old dry stump that stood in the center of a grassy field. Father did not want this grass burned. But, by and by, a spark blew out and set it on fire. We organized ourselves into a fire department and began to fight the blaze. Each of us had the branch of a tree, and we fought with great zeal. We put out the fires at the spot we were fighting it, but every time we raised our weapons above our

*continued on page 4*



heads we scattered it to other parts of the field. The result was that all the grass was burned, to say nothing of the fence that shut it in.

Once in the city of Jerusalem there was a handful of saints who by God's grace incarnated these beatitudes. Suddenly persecution swept down upon them. The Jewish hierarchy, backed by the power of Rome, sent them flying from the city. "But they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word" (Acts 8:4). Instead of putting out the little blaze that had been started in Jerusalem by their persecution, they only helped them set the world on fire. And that conflagration is burning to this good hour.

**YOU ARE ON THE PATH OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH** (*"for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"*). A persecuted Christian is in line for blessings (Mk. 10:29,30; cf. Joseph, Daniel). It is not by difficulties dodged, but by difficulties met and overcome that we become strong (Jas. 1:2-4; cf. weight lifter). Opposition drives us to the Lord. A persecuted Christian grows to better usefulness. The surest way to do more is to be more. Nothing compels us to prove all things so much as contradiction of our faith (1 Pet. 3:15)

**YOU ARE IN GOOD COMPANY** (*"...for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."*) Persecution gives us an opportunity to walk the road the prophets, saints, and martyrs have trod. The

world was not worthy of their company, but every persecuted believer is (cf. Heb. 11:36-38). Moses was reviled (Ex. 5:21; Num. 12:1). Elijah was chased from his home by Jezebel (1 Kgs. 19; 18:17). Micaiah was hated (2 Chron. 18:7). Nehemiah was opposed (Neh.4). Zechariah was stoned (2 Chron. 24:21). Hanani was placed in a prison house (2 Chron. 16:10). Isaiah, according to Jewish tradition, was sawn asunder (cf. Heb. 11:36-38). Jeremiah was scourged (Jer. 20:2) and otherwise persecuted (Jer. 15:15; 20:7-9; 37:13-15). Daniel was thrown in the lion's den (Dan. 6:13-18). John the Baptist was imprisoned, and finally beheaded (Mk. 6:17-20). The Apostles were promised that they would suffer (Jn. 16:1-4; cf. Acts 12; Rev. 1). The apostle Paul was beaten, stoned, and lived in daily peril of his life (2 Cor. 11:23-28).

**YOU ARE DRAWN CLOSER TO HIS PEOPLE.** If the children of darkness cast you out in their rage, the children of light, who are seeking it with a sincere heart, come to you, attracted by the strength of your convictions (cf. Acts 28:15)

Christ needs those who are willing to die for Him. Perhaps even more He needs those who are willing to live for Him.

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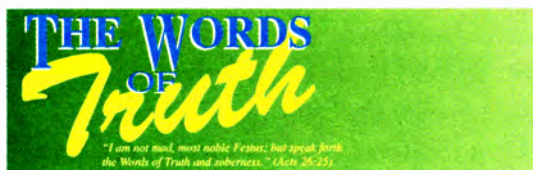
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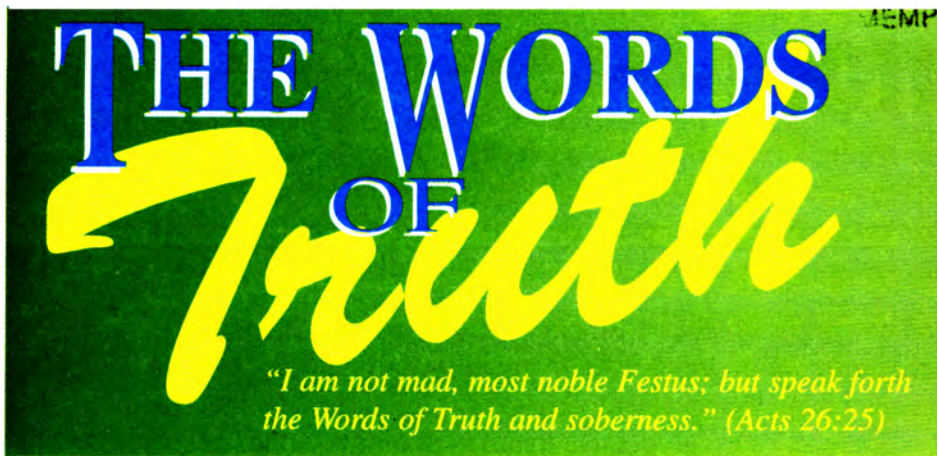
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**SEE ARTICLES  
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Hymenaeus Was A Low Man  
**GOD CALLED HIM HOME  
MOST OF A MINUTE - FEAR**  
Bible Baptize (no. 3):  
The Action Thereof

Vol. 33 No. 32

October 31, 1996

## Hymenaeus Was A Low Man

Neal Pollard

But two verses call his name, yet he is as infamous a Bible character as one can find. A school teacher once said, "If you cannot say something good about someone, do not say anything at all!" The Spirit gave Paul no congenial words to speak of Hymenaeus. The figurative cup of the man's life was so filled with wickedness that it toppled over and spilled its insidiousness all over Ephesus. He apparently was viewed by God as a hopeless, godless sinner. Why would God choose to include so stained a soul, if not to teach Bible readers key lessons on apostasy and ungodliness?

*Here Was a Man Who Ran With Wicked Companions.* He was a "co-worker" with one Alexander (cf. 2 Timothy 4:14, with which man he blasphemed God (1 Timothy 1:20). He left the faith with his cohort, Philetus (2 Timothy 2:17-18). Perhaps the downfall of Hymenaeus began with his indiscreet manner of choosing those with whom he associated himself. Undoubtedly, one must "be not deceived: evil communications corrupts good manners" (1 Corinthians 15:33).

*Here Was A Man With A Blatant Disregard For The Name Of God.* The scriptures mightily rebuke defaming the name of the Lord (2 Timothy 3:2; cf. Mark 3:28-29). How spiritually degenerate must one be to ridicule and slander the holy name of the Engineer of the universe? He had gone so low in sin that Paul, in resignation, "delivered" him over to Satan. It is interesting to note that Paul speaks of delivering unto Satan the corinthian man who was married to his father's wife in connection with church discipline (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:5). Likewise, the use of the phrase in 1 Timothy 1:20 seemingly refers to "training through discipline" and conveys "the idea of strong punishment..." (Rienecker 618). What would have happened to a congregation in which a couple of men were allowed to spread disrespect for God and fallacy without rebuke and discipline? The same devastation occurs with the presence of irreverent

and rebellious souls in the local church today!

*Here Was A Man Whose Teaching Was Compared To Gangrene.* Consider the graphic imagery employed by the apostle to the Gentiles in 2 Timothy 2:16-18. The word of Hymenaeus and Philetus, with others like them, would "eat as doth a canker" (17). Consider the comments of Thayer on this phrase, saying,

[It is] a disease by which any part of the body suffering from inflammation becomes so corrupted that, unless a remedy be seasonably applied, the evil continually spreads, attacks other parts, and at last eats away the bones (107).

As gangrenous infection makes amputation, in the threat of death to the entire body, a necessity. The poisonous false teaching of Hymenaeus and his partner therein would cause great harm to the body of Christ.

Notice that these men taught that the resurrection had already transpired (18). Advocates of the "A.D. 70 Theory," heretical to the core, say that the resurrection took place in Jerusalem about 1,900 years ago. One brother keenly notes of this false teaching in The A.D. 70 Theory,

The general thrust of the teaching is this: the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70 is the pivotal event of history. At that time *all Bible prophesy* was consummated, including the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the judgment day, and the end of the world! (Jackson 1).

Suffice it to say that Matthew 22, John 5:28-29, Acts 17:30-32, et al, thoroughly refute this "Hymenaeus Doctrine."

Only through intimate study of the scriptures can one guard against false *continued on page 3*



# FROM THE EDITOR

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## **GOD CALLED HIM HOME**

It is not uncommon for bewildered and grieving people to stand beside the casket of a loved one and say words like these: "The Lord just called him home." Sometimes well meaning friends will say to the grievers, "God just decided He needed him more in heaven than on earth."

Is that true? When a person dies is it because God decided this was the best time for him to die?

What determines when a person will die? There are only two possibilities: Either we die when our physical body is no longer a suitable house for our soul, or we die when God arbitrarily chooses for us to go.

There are cases in the Bible in which God decided for people to die at a particular time. Goliath died when God assisted David. The people of Jericho died when God guided and blessed the Israelite army. Ananias and Sapphira died as punishment for lying to the Holy Spirit in Acts 5. And then there was the unique case of Enoch in Genesis 5:24: "And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." Hebrews 11:5 adds, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." However, this was a unique case. This kind of occurrence is never said to be commonplace. It was a unique and unusual event. It has never been true on a wide-scale basis.

The answer to our major question is this: It cannot be the case that the time of people's death today is when God arbitrarily chooses, for these two reasons:

First, there are things we can do to prolong life. Ephesians 6:1-3 says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise). That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." As a whole, children who learn to obey and honor their parents, live longer.

Psalms 90:10 attributes long life to a man's strength: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

If we die based only on when God decides He wants us to die, why should we avoid things which harm our health and which are known to cut life

short? Smoking? Cholesterol? Obesity? We go to the doctor. Many of us can truly say that we wouldn't be alive today except for skilled doctors and nurses. The point is this: We can have some effect on the length of our days on earth.

Second, there are things we can do to end life. A father stood once beside the casket of his teenage son. After several friends gently said, "God just called him home," he shook his head and cried, "Stop saying that. It isn't true. My son isn't dead because God wanted him in heaven. He's dead because he was out in the middle of the night ripping through the countryside instead of being home in the bed where he belonged! If he had done right he would not be dead right now."

We know people sometimes choose to die and commit suicide, (Acts 1:18). A man sits with a gun to his head and you enter the room. He says he is planning to end his life in a few moments. Can he choose to pull the trigger or not? Of course he can. Your response to him would be to encourage him to put the gun down and get help. You would not walk away saying that if he dies it will be because God called him home.

Sometimes people choose to take the life of another. I John 3:15 says that murderers can't go to heaven.

If it is the case that when a person dies it is because God called him home, then isn't a murderer simply carrying out God's will for those whose time it is to die? And if that is true, then why is murder condemned in the Old and New Testaments?

The truth is that we will die when this earthly body is no longer a suitable house for our soul. This may occur because of old age, or perhaps a disease, or perhaps a terrible accident.

In the Bible texts in which we are permitted to listen to people talk after their death, not once do we read them fretting about how they died, nor about the young age at which they died. They have but one concern, and that centers on the relationship they have with God. Balaam had it right when he begged, "let me die the death of the righteous." (Num. 23:10). And remember, you cannot die the death of the righteous if you won't live the life of the righteous. Let us remember that life, at best, is brief, and that our chief concern must be in pleasing our God.

teaching (cf. 15). Like Hymenaeus, many have and will both personally err from the truth and overthrow the faith of others. The Christian's task is to fight, like Paul, the cancerous spread of "profane and worthless talk" (16). The inevitable result of disrespect for Bible truth is increasing ungodliness (16). How sad and tragic! God's children must stand against the Hymenaeus' of our day.

Hymenaeuses live and die, and they drag others

## Bible Baptism (no. 3): The Action Thereof

Wendell Winkler

(1) *Baptism is a burial* (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12). Even a child who has buried a dead pet understands that in a burial there is a complete covering.

(2) *Baptism is likened unto a planting* (Rom. 6:5). There is no idea of sprinkling or pouring here; but, in a planting, there is a complete covering of the seed.

(3) *A study of Acts 8:36-39 reveals that baptism requires:* (a) a coming to the water, (b) a going down into the water, (c) the baptism, and (d) a coming up out of the water. To these can be added the fact that Jn. 3:23 states that baptism requires "much water."

(4) *If baptism is sprinkling or pouring, we ought to be able to substitute these words in passages where the word "baptize" appears and still maintain the sense of the text.* Now, read Matt. 28:18-20 using the words "sprinkling" and "pouring" in the place of baptizing. It will not work! However, you can substitute the word "immersing" in the place of "baptizing" and you still have the sense of the text. Therefore, baptism is an immersion!

(5) *The baptism of Jesus teaches that when one is baptized he is immersed.* Jesus came straightway out of the water; hence, there was an immersion (Matt. 3:13-17). Mk. 1:9 states, concerning the baptism of Christ, that he was baptized *in* Jordan. The marginal rendering in the American Standard version for the word "in" is "into." Thus, Jesus was baptized *into* Jordan. He could not have been sprinkled or poured into Jordan; but, He could have been immersed *into* Jordan. Again, we can undeniably

down into the valley of wickedness with them. Their influence wanes, but the damage they do has an eternal impact on those duped by their doctrines. As we keep our focus on the cross and our fervor on converting the lost, may we keep up our fight against the cankered! Let us pray that modern Hymenaeuses will turn from error and come back home to a God who waits with His mighty arms outstretched.

conclude that when Jesus was baptized, He was immersed.

(6) *the original of the word "baptize" means immersion.* The word "baptizo" is a transliterated word; that is, it is a word from another language (the Greek language) which has been given an English spelling. The Greek word from whence it comes is *baptizo* and is defined as to dip, plunge, or immerse. The Greek words for sprinkling and pouring are altogether different words. Lev. 14:15,16 shows that there is a definite distinction between pouring, dipping and sprinkling. Furthermore, quotations can be readily obtained from scholars, encyclopedias, historians and lexicons showing that the word *baptize* means immersion.

(7) *The word "baptize" (immerse) is a specific verb, conveying only one action.* Such is also true of the word "sprinkle" and "pour." Too, this is true of such words as "run" and "sit." To illustrate, one cannot run by sitting. In like manner one cannot baptize by sprinkling.

(8) *We now notice some of the arguments presented in an effort to substantiate the practice of sprinkling and pouring, with a refutation of the same following each argument.*

(a) "A drop is just as good as an ocean." If God commanded only a drop this would be true; but, if God had commanded an ocean nothing but the ocean would do. And, it just so happens that in the

*continued on page 4*

### **MOST OF A MINUTE - FEAR**

Think hard for a moment. What is your greatest fear? Which one is number one? Maybe you've heard of some of these fears...

- ailurophobia - the fear of cats
  - phagophobia - the fear of eating
  - musophobia - the fear of mice
  - phonophobia - the fear of noise
- People can be afraid of anything.

Recently the TENNESSEAN ran an article about a rather bizarre fear...the fear of being struck by a mete-

orite. Researchers began calculating and decided that only one human will be hit by a meteorite in North America every 184 years. Of course, we have a lot of fears that are real don't we? Malignancies, heart attacks, traffic accidents, plane crashes, Nuclear war...all are fearful.

There is an interesting and meaningful verse on the subject of fear in Matthew 10:28 - "Fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Maybe we're fearing the wrong things.



Lord's word He teaches us that baptism is a burial; and, thus a drop will not do. Thus, "a drop is just as good as an ocean" is false.

(b) "*The twelve could not have immersed three thousand in one day (Acts 2:37-41).*" Allow one minute for each immersion and figure up and see how quickly the job really could have been done! Also, remember there were one hundred twenty other disciples who could have assisted in the work (Acts 1:15). Too, remember the ones who had just been baptized could turn around and start baptizing others.

(c) "*But Isa. 52:15 says, 'So shall he sprinkle many nations.'*" The word "sprinkle" in this text means "startle" and it is so rendered in the American Standard version.

(d) "*John could not have immersed in Jordan because the stream is so small that one could stop it with his foot.*" This is not true. Quotations from books on Bible geography prove otherwise. Also, the refutation of this given argument is seen by observing the marginal rendering in the American Standard version on Mk. 1:9 where we learn that Jesus was baptized "into" Jordan, such hardly being possible if the river could be stopped with one's foot.

(e) "*But does not the Bible say we are baptized 'with' water?*" Yes, but this does not imply that we are sprinkled. A woman dyes her garment *with* dye; but, she submerges the garment into the dye solution. In like manner, we are baptized with water. "With" suggests the element involved in the act; and, the word "baptize" suggests exactly what is done -

there is a dipping, plunging or immersion. (For this is the meaning of the word "baptize" in the original language, as we have just observed).

(f) "*Does not the word 'into' mean 'unto'?*" If "into" (Acts 8:36-38) means "unto," implying that the candidate for baptism never got into the water, then can we not just as consistently conclude that when Dan. 6:16 states that Daniel was cast "into" the den of lions that he never really was therein? Also, when we read of the lost being cast "into" the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15) are we to deduct that they will never really be in the lake of fire?

(g) "*The apostles were baptized with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. Yet, Acts 2:17 says the Holy Ghost was 'poured' out on them. Hence, baptism is a pouring.*" The word "pour" has reference to the coming or giving of the spirit rather than to the manner in which the apostles were baptized in the Spirit. Acts 2:4 says they were "filled" with the Spirit. Their spirits became overwhelmed (here is baptism) with the Holy Spirit. Thus the Holy Spirit was given (poured) and the apostles were baptized (their spirits were overwhelmed in the Holy Spirit) with the same. To illustrate, the lake is full of water with the rain poured out from heaven, in which water the sinner is immersed (overwhelmed) for the remission of sins.

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# THE WORDS OF Truth

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

## SEE ARTICLES INSIDE:

The Importance Of Just "One"  
WHAT ABORTIONISTS CALL  
"A SETBACK"

PUT YOUR HEART OVER  
Bible Baptism (No. 4):  
The Design Thereof

Vol. 33 No. 33

November 7, 1996

## The Importance Of Just "One"

*Flavil Nichols*

If one spark plug burns out on your engine, you don't say, "I'm glad the other three (or five, or seven) are still firing!" — and keep driving! If you have a flat tire, you don't say, "Oh, well, it's just ONE tire that is flat!" — and keep going. If cancer is discovered in only one member of your body, you don't say, "Well, 'Doc,' someday I may have something done about that —but not now: I'll just wait and see what develops. — You've just said it's confined to that one part of my body!" If you smell smoke, and discover a blaze in only one closet in your house, you don't sit back and say: "Maybe it soon will burn itself out! I'll just wait and see what happens! — After all, it's just in that one little closet!" No, my Friends: You take immediate action in each of these cases! ONE bad thing is important!

Similarly, ONE good thing is also important! The story you are about to read is true, and no names have been changed!! During the War Between The States [1861-1865] (no war ever had been "Civil!"), a young woman — whose name I have not learned — at Centerville, Tennessee, left denominationalism and became a simple New Testament Christian. [What other kind of "Christian" can there be?] Her sweetheart, a member of the same denomination she had left, was in the Confederate army. His name was J.H. Halbrook. Captured by the Union Army, he was held a 'Prisoner of War' in Michigan. At the end of hostilities, he was released, and was given a railroad ticket to Nashville, Tennessee, plus (as I recall) two dollars and a half (\$2.50) "mustering out" pay. I have not learned if he rode the stage-coach, or walked, or how he got from Nashville to his home. But he arrived, and found what was left of his family. And he found his girl friend. Their courtship soon blossomed into marriage.

His wife showed him from the Bible the differences between what he and she formerly had been taught, and what the word of God says. It was (and still is!) so simple and plain that he thought:

'Anybody ought to be able to see that!' He did see it, and "obeyed the gospel" (Rom. 10:16) of Christ. Soon he was sharing with his neighbors his new respect for the word of God, the gospel plan of salvation, the Bible church, what name we should wear in religion, how to worship, etc. He baptized one neighbor after another. Ere long he was preaching publicly!

After he preached for several months, he recognized that he needed to study the Bible systematically. So they sold out at Centerville, and moved to Florence, Alabama. He enrolled in Mars Hill Bible School to study under T.B. Larimore, a great gospel preacher. Upon completing his studies there, instead of going back to Tennessee, they moved farther south, coming into Walker, Marion, Fayette, and Lamar Counties in Alabama. I do not know how many hundreds (or thousands?) he converted to Christ. Neither do I know how many of those he converted began also to preach the gospel in its ancient simplicity and purity. But let me tell you about ONE who did!

Charley Alexander Wheeler, near Jasper, Alabama, learned to read after he married. His wife taught him to read — out of the Bible! It was his only textbook! I knew him when he was an old man. When he visited my father and wanted to know what was in the local newspaper, I read it to him — for those words were unfamiliar to him! But he could read the Bible! I was one of the six gospel preachers who served as his pall-bearers in 1937. He and his wife, both members of a denomination, heard brother J. H. Halbrook preach. Along with his wife, C.A. Wheeler obeyed the gospel, and soon began preaching it to others. His tombstone at the Dutton Cemetery (near the Midway Church of Christ, Jasper, Alabama) proclaims that this one man — C.A. Wheeler — started more than one hundred congregations, and baptized six thousand people!

Is ONE important??

*continued on page 3*



# FROM THE EDITOR

*Glenn Colley*

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Jasper, AL 35501*

## WHAT ABORTIONISTS CALL "A SETBACK"

A couple of weeks ago in Corpus Christi, Texas, a man helped an average court to make big news about a little baby.

Last June he got himself drunk and slammed his truck head-on into a car driven by a woman who was seven months pregnant. The baby was born by C-section in the emergency room, and 44 hours later died from the wreck. Here's the big news: Jurors convicted him of killing the woman's baby. His sentence read 16 years for manslaughter.

That should be no surprise, but in modern America it's a blockbuster. Some of our hedonistic, "me-first," sinful hearts have re-defined unborn babies as non-human, and not worthy of protection. The unborn babies have no idea that they live in the most potentially dangerous place they will ever inhabit, the womb. Even our president will support infanticide (partial-birth abortion) rather than forfeit one inch of ground in his determination to keep abortion perfectly legal and acceptable.

Do you know what Pauline Cashion, executive director of the Texas Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League said about the drunkard's conviction for killing the baby in Corpus Christi? She said, "It's too early to know whether or not it's a setback." (Associated Press). Think about it: A drunk driver hits a pregnant woman, killing her baby. The court calls it a crime and punishes him, and for the pro-choice folks this is a possible "setback." That is repul-

sive, but consistent. She knows that if the idea catches on in courts that the unborn babies are really human beings, the law won't just punish the drunk driver who kills with his car, but also the abortion doctor who kills with his scissors. After all, the end result from both is exactly the same. Both the drunk and the doctor have innocent blood on their hands.

The man's attorney in Corpus Christi, Anne Marshall, argued that his client never should have been charged because the baby was not born at the time of the accident. She cited the state's legal definition of a person as an individual "who has been born and is alive." Ms. Marshall then turned to the jury and affirmed, "the law says that there was no Krystal Zuniga (the baby's name)." At that moment the mother of the dead child, according to the report, began to sob loudly.

Right now in America, 1.5 million abortions are performed each year.

If Christians don't stand for right in the defense of these unborn babies, who will?

Exodus 22:22-24 — "Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; Any my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless."

Psalms 33:12 — "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD..."

## MOST OF A MINUTE - PUT YOUR HEART OVER

To a young man learning to perform on the flying trapeze, a veteran circus performer once said, "Throw your heart over the bars and your body will follow."

Here's the problem with so many folks when it comes to pleasing God. They simply don't have their heart in it. They could worship faithfully...but they don't. They could study and find the church that strictly follows the New Testament pattern for correct religion...but they don't. They could work every day to apply their religion and love for the Lord to their daily lives...but they don't. Their heart is the unavail-

able key.

Put your heart into pleasing God! Jesus reminds us in Luke 10:27, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself."

In every field of endeavor, the real successes come from those who put their hearts into their work.

Remember the chain of events: One girl in the 1860's became a Christian, and taught her husband (J.H. Halbrook) the gospel. J. H. Halbrook converted hundreds (maybe thousands) of others *beside* C.A. Wheeler! And many of them may (?) have become preachers. But that ONE baptized six thousand others, as we have seen.

—But wait! The story is not ended! ONE of those six thousand baptized by brother C.A. Wheeler was my father, the late Gus Nichols. and **twelve thousand people** were baptized under his preaching! — I ask again: Is ONE important???

Among those baptized by Gus Nichols, no one on earth knows how many began to preach "the glorious gospel of Christ" (2 Cor. 4:3-4); but I personally know several. I, Flavil Nichols, myself am ONE whom he baptized, and whom he encouraged to preach the truth. And under my preaching, about three thousand have been baptized. A few among

them preach the gospel also!

Only eternity can reveal the final results of the conversion of that one girl nearly one hundred fifty years ago. —The results are not all in yet! But this shows that TWENTY-ONE THOUSAND (21,000) people have become Christians through this single thread in the fabric of her influence.

"Go, and do thou likewise" (Luke 10:37). YOU are important, too! Dear reader, if you go to heaven, others probably will be saved by you! "What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" (1 Cor. 7:16). "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5:16). Each one is very important —including YOU!

The End

## Bible Baptism (No. 4): The Design Thereof

Wendell Winkler

(1) *We must be baptized to be saved* (Mk. 16:16). The "he" of this passage who "shall be saved" is not that he who "believeth," nor the he who is "baptized." Rather, it is the he who "believeth *and* is baptized." Belief and baptism are equally important. 1 Pet. 3:21 states, "baptism doth also now save us."

(2) *To be born again* (Jn. 3:5 Gal. 3:26, 27) teaches us that the new birth consists of belief and baptism. Also, by paralleling Jn. 3:3 and Mk. 16:16 one can see that being born again consists of believing and being baptized.

(3) *To have the remission of sins* (Acts 2:38). In this passage repentance and baptism are joined by the copulative conjunction "and." This means that these two sacred commands are joined inseparably. Consequently, whichever direction one of these commands goes the other must correspondingly follow. Thus, if one must repent to be saved, he must be baptized to be saved! And, such is the case! Also notice how Acts 3:19 parallels Acts 2:38.

(4) *To receive the gift of the Holy Spirit* (Acts 2:38). The gift of the Holy Spirit is for those who have received remission of sins; but, to receive remission of sins one must be a baptized penitent believer.

(5) *To rejoice*. The Ethiopian rejoiced after his baptism. (Acts 8:36-39). So did the Philippian jailor. (Acts 16:30-34).

(6) *To obey the commands of God*. "And He

commanded them to be baptized: (Acts 10:47, 48). We must obey the commands of the Lord to get to heaven (Rev. 22:14). There are no "non-essential" commands of God!

(7) *To have our sins washed away* (Acts 22:16).

(8) *To contact the blood of Christ*. Our Lord shed His blood in His death (Jn. 19:34). And, we are baptized into His death. (Rom. 6:3). Therefore, in being baptized, we come in contact with the blood of Christ and enjoy the benefits thereof.

(9) *To enter the body of Christ*. (1 Cor. 12:13). It is in the body that we are reconciled unto God (Eph. 2:16), and in which we are also called. (Col. 3:15).

(10) *To enter Christ* (Gal. 3:27, Rom. 6:3). In Christ we have the blessings of salvation (2 Tim. 2:10), all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3), redemption and forgiveness (Eph. 1:7), and all the promises of God. (2 Cor. 1:20).

(11) *To put on Christ* (Gal. 3:27).

(12) *To walk in newness of life*. Read and study carefully Rom. 6:1-4.

(13) *To become a New Testament Christian*. In 1 Cor. 1:11-13 Paul affirms that the Corinthians could not say, "I am of Paul" (that is, "I belong to Paul," as Moffatt's translation renders the text) unless (1) Paul had been crucified for them, and (2) they had been baptized in the name of Paul. Now, what was true of Paul was also true of



Apollos and Cephas. And, what was true of Paul, Apollos and Cephas is also true of Christ! One cannot say he belongs to Christ (but that is the definition of the word Christian, the suffix "ian" in the word Christian meaning "belong to") unless (1) Christ has been crucified for him, and (2) he had been baptized in the name of Christ! Yes, one must be baptized to be a New Testament Christian!

(14) *A number of affirmations are made in an effort to prove that baptism is not essential to salvation. Some of these we now note, along with the refutation of the same:*

(a) *"The thief on the cross was saved and he never was baptized."* No one can prove that the thief was never baptized. There is more probability that he was. (See Matt. 3:5-6 concerning the wide acceptance of John's baptism). Too, he knew something about the kingdom (Lk. 23:42). Is it not reasonable that he learned of such from the preaching of John? In addition to this we note that the thief was promised paradise before our Lord died, whereas we live since the Lord died! This makes a great difference (Heb. 9:16-17).

(b) *"In such passages as Jn. 3:16; Acts 16:30; Rom. 5:1 and others, faith is the only condition of salvation mentioned."* Repentance is the only condition mentioned in Lk. 13:3. Is this the only thing required? Confession is the only thing mentioned in Matt. 10:32, 33. Is this the only thing required? Faith alone will not justify (Jas. 2:24, 26). Faith to avail must work by love (Gal. 5:6). It is most

instructive to observe that the jailor is said to have believed after his baptism (Acts 16:34).

(c) *"But I thought we were saved by grace through faith."* We are saved by grace through faith, but only after faith has obeyed. The walls of Jericho fell by grace through faith, but only after the people had obeyed (Heb. 11:30). The Ephesians were told they were saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-10); but, the Ephesians heard (Eph. 1:13), believed (Eph. 1:13), and were baptized (Acts 19:1-7).

(d) *"But think of all of the good people who have never been baptized. Are they going to be lost?"* Are we to determine the truthfulness of a thing by whether or not someone will be lost if he does not obey? If so, we had better start preaching universalism. Think of the countless millions who will be lost because of unbelief. Should we start affirming that belief is unnecessary? conclusion

If you have never been baptized, will you not sincerely ask yourself the question, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36). We exhort all, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16).

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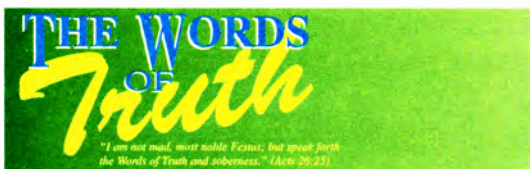
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# THE WORDS OF *Truth*

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

## SEE ARTICLES INSIDE:

How Would You Rather Die?  
Anecdotes, Incidents, and Facts  
Waxing In The Bible  
I Don't Know  
God Is My Father

Vol. 33 No. 34

November 14, 1996

## How Would You Rather Die?

*Dalton Key*

Robert Ingersoll, the widely-reported infidel of yesteryear, aggressive in his constant battles against God and the Bible, faced death with terror. He is purported to have exclaimed, while languishing on his death bed, "Oh God, if there be a God; save my soul, if I have a soul; from hell, if there be a hell!" Whether apocryphal or not, the words clearly mirror Ingersoll's dilemma. He had no hope in death.

Sometime before his own death, Ingersoll spoke over the grave of his brother. "Life," he said, "is narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no sound." His words reveal a haunting hollowness; they are devoid of any hope.

Another infidel of note, Voltaire, echoed a similar refrain of desperation from his death bed. Among his last word were these: "I am

abandoned by God and man! I will give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six month's life!" These words were spoken to a Dr. Frochin, who told him that his life could not be extended. The French skeptic then responded, "Then I shall go to hell; and you will go with me." Like Ingersoll, Voltaire could find no assurance, no hope, in death.

How different is the death of the saints?

Among the last words of the apostle Paul were these: "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, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7,8).

How would you rather die? - 801 N. E. 15th Street, Amarillo, Tx. 79107

## Anecdotes, Incidents, and Facts

*Mel Futrell*

Some time back in 1993 Shayna and I were quizzing our then 2 year old daughter Halle about what she had studied in her Wednesday night Bible class. She was having some difficulty remembering when Shayna asked, "Did you study about creation?" Halle quickly responded, "YEAH, IT WAS DARK AND THEN A LIGHT GOT TURNED ON". Brethren, it never ceases to amaze me how the mind of a child works. Moses' statement that, "The Earth was without form, and void;

and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light; and there was light (Genesis 1:2-3), becomes in her mind. It was dark and then a light got turned on. As paraphrastic as Halle's account of the first day of creation was, I truly wish more people had an appreciation of and for the Biblical account of creation, even if it were as simple as a child's.



# FROM THE EDITOR

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## WAXING IN THE BIBLE

The Bible teaches that sin, gone unchecked, has a progressive nature. The Greek word "Prokopto," translated "wax" or "increase" is used to teach us this fact. Thayer says the word means, "To lengthen out by hammering (as a smith forges metals); to promote, forward, further, go forward, advance, proceed..."(Thayer, 4298). Consider what Paul writes, using this word:

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived"(II Timothy 3:12,13).

"During the month of September, 1993, there were at least two separate news stories carried over Cable News Network which pertained to homosexual couples adopting children. Both stories were about actual cases, one with two lesbians, the other with two "gay" men, and their attempts to be legal, child-rearing, families.

A recent Newsweek magazine, dated November 4, 1996, has a cover photo of two young lesbians hugged together and a head line which reads, "We're having a Baby". The reading will reveal to the careful reader that opposition to homosexuality is a type of national disease in need of remedy. Statistics are given to show that Americans are coming around to the acceptance of homosexual marriages. A U.S. map is color-coded to show varying degrees of tolerance in the different states ranging from highly tolerant of homosexual parents to highly intolerant.

This sad state of affairs didn't happen overnight. It was gradual. It illustrates the fact that when people break through commonly accepted moral barriers, a chain reaction will gradually occur in society. The "domino effect" can clearly be seen. In the gradual acceptance of homosexuality. Consider the perversion progression. In this generation, and how the normalization of homosexuality has moved forward:

First, "Gay is OK."

Then, "It isn't fair to discriminate against gays just because of their sexual preference."

Then, "Homosexual doesn't describe what a person does, it describes what a person is."

Then, "Gays must be considered equal in all

ways."

Then, "We don't mind if our president supports homosexuality as being as normal as a husband-wife relationship. The economy is a much more important issue."

Then, "Gay couples should be legally recognized as parents."

Then, "We must teach in public schools that homosexuality is normal."

Where does it go from here?

Dr. Harold M. Voth, diplomat of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology has authored a book entitled, "Real Men Don't Abandon Their Responsibilities." He states: "The basic fabric of our society is changing. The trend is toward disintegration; a devitalizing process is at work, involving individual and social factors in a vicious and downhill cycle. One can only hope that there will be enough people of strength, vision, and the capacity to take responsibility to intervene decisively before it is too late. The crucial question is whether or not the present trend in America is reversible."

Reverse the trend? That's too big a proposition for me. If I view the possibility as "me against the trend," I may cower back and do nothing. That's too much for one man, I must view the solutions on a smaller scale. What is clearly reversible, is the life of every sinner I meet who will listen to God's word. WE can do our part to change our country, one person at a time. People who fill their lives with Christ will leave sin. (I Corinthians 6:9-11). Are you involved in studying the Bible with any non-Christians right now? Are you setting up Bible studies? Do you talk to people about the solutions to sin? Do you introduce spiritual topics into your conversations? (i.e."How are things between you and the Lord lately?") "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14).

May we all remember that "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (I John 4:4), and then may we all react with the bold conviction, "I'm not ashamed to own my Lord, nor to defend His cause..."

# I Don't Know

Jerri Manasco

I have always been quite skeptical of anyone who had a convenient answer for every question! I know that we can know the truth (John 8:32, I John 2:3; Ephesians 3:1-6). Those things God has revealed are things that we can answer, after careful Bible study, with supreme confidence (1 Peter 3:15). Some things cannot be answered simply because no basis for an answer is provided! Other things may be difficult to answer simply because we have not yet discovered what the Bible says about it. On the other hand, I have found that there is no shame in saying, "I don't know! There are some questions that are asked that simply cannot be answered because we don't have the answer! Faith is the best accessory in such cases.

## SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD!

"How can God be eternal?" That is a great question and my answer is: I DON'T KNOW! The human mind cannot comprehend eternity. I cannot comprehend Him who has always been, always shall be, and always is! But I can comprehend what God reveals about himself! That is, our human frailty in this department does not erase God from existence. Some folks have the idea that if God can't be "proven" by "scientific verification," then he must be discarded as myth or the product of fable. Finite minds are foolish minds when they try to out-think God! God is eternal. "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God" (Psalm 90:2). "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deuteronomy 33:27). God shall outlast any prob-

lem I may have. I do not have to know how God can be to know that God is.

"How could God create all things?" I don't know, but I am thoroughly convinced that he did! "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made: and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Psalm 33:6). The heavens stand as profound witness to the creative and sustaining power of God (Psalm 19:1-3). There are only two alternatives: God did or God didn't. The only logical one of these is that God did it. I do not have to be able to explain HOW God could create all things to be assured that he did. Must I examine your brain to be convinced that you have intelligence?

"How can God read all the hearts of everyone and know what all of us have on our mind?" I am astounded by God's power to know every imagination of the thoughts (I Chronicles 28:9). Peter learned the hard way that the Lord can read hearts (Luke 22:34)! Jesus knows what is in man (John 2:25). How is God able to do this? BECAUSE HE IS GOD! The Lord knows who are his (2 Timothy 2:19). How is God able to sort us out in the judgement (Matthew 25:31-46)? HE IS GOD. We do not need to spend our time trying to determine how God can know all this; we must spend our time doing what he tells us to do so that we might be known by him (Matthew 7:21-23). Ours should be time spent in preparing for the piercing eyes of God.

*continued on page 4*

## **MOST OF A MINUTE - GOD IS MY FATHER**

In John 17 of the Bible, the chapter in which Jesus prays to God, six different times He refers to God as "Father." He calls Him "Holy Father", and "Righteous Father".

We make a serious mistake to underestimate the significance of being able to call God "Father." Think about it--out of all the possible relationships you could have with God, which would be the best one? Master/slave? Employer/employee? Friend to friend? None of them really suit what I need to feel secure and confident as I walk through this life. But think of

what it means to a child to have a good father! Words come to mind like trust, safety, wisdom, compassion, and loving discipline. The best relationship a man can have with God is to be His child, and for God to be his Father.

Galatians 3:26-28--"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, There is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."



## SOME QUESTIONS CONCERNING SALVATION

“How does the blood of Jesus, with his one sacrifice for sin, reach to every sin of man and cleanse it?” It isn't the how of this marvelous thing that impresses me; it is the WHY of it that is so urgent. The blood of Jesus provides for the remission of our sins (Matthew 26:28). That blood washes away sin (Revelation 1:7). His blood justifies and purges us (Romans 3:23-27; Hebrews 9:12-15). When I stand amazed at the marvelous grace of God that reaches to you and me to save us, I am thankful that God did it and do not have to analyze the details! The pseudo-intellectuals may want to peer into “scholarly dissertation” on this matter, but people who are interested in God's word are content to obey and accept by faith the wonderful pardon brought to us by Jesus. Our task is to believe, repent, and be baptized into Christ and then live for the Lord who gave his blood (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:1-6; Philippians 2:12; Hebrews 3:14).

“How does Baptism save us?” I don't know, but the Bible says, “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us” (1 Peter 3:21). Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). Further, “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). I do not know the divine association between baptism and

salvation, but God put it there! It is God who says that baptism precedes salvation. The quibbles and denials that are heard so frequently concerning this are not going to remove what the Bible says about it.

## SOME FINAL QUESTIONS

There are so many objections to the Bible and the plan of salvation from those who suppose we must be able to answer every question that is asked. What is needed is to accept what the Bible says and only what the Bible says and not inquire into matters unrelated to it.

I have a few questions to ask: How can people have in their possession a Book so beautiful, so powerful, so meaningful, so full of hope as is the Bible and treat what is written therein with disrespect while they seek to be justified on the ground of things not revealed? My answer would have to be: I DON'T KNOW.

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# THE WORDS OF *Truth*

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

Vol. 33 No. 35

November 21, 1996

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NEVER TAKE ME BACK THERE  
MOST OF A MINUTE -  
TREATMENT OF ENEMIES  
Go On To Greater Things  
Dear Tina

## WHO'S THE WINNER

*Phil Davis*

2 Corinthians 10:12,17,18 (NKJV) For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. But "he who glories, let him glory in the LORD." For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

Our society prides itself on its competitive approach to the market place. Sometimes it sinks to a cutthroat spirit. In the struggle to succeed winning seems to be made sweeter when we can say, "I'm better than he is!" We have football polls, political polls, and an overload of statistics. When it comes to the Church sometimes we decide to compare ourselves with the "success" of others: the denominations around us, other congregations of the Lord's church, our successes of the past, other individuals (Christians) with whom we come in contact and some ideal we have fabricated in our imaginations.

Much of what passes for the stereotypical male personality relies upon vanquishing a foe and intimidation a competitor. The mind-set of the conquering warrior has its place, but its place is often inflated and distorted. How can we tell when our drive has gone too far? One easy test is to determine whether our quest for success is causing us to plan and to carry out actions which are ruthless or unprincipled. In other words, is there anything which would cause me to choose to win instead of choosing to be righteous?

What is true success? What ever happened to co-operation and compassion? Does the Bible not teach us to bring under control the unloving characteristics of our selfish and worldly nature? Can we only feel successful when someone else fails or we can make it appear that they have failed?

(We seem never to be willing to entertain the notion that "I have failed.") Look at the attitudes of true success in these verses:

Romans 12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

Philippians 2:3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

Romans 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

1 Corinthians 12:15,26 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

The very nature of the church is to be co-operative, not jealous and competitive. Paul said, "...be at peace among yourselves," (1 Thessalonians 5:13, and compare Galatians and Ephesians). The Christian race can have as many winners as it has participants. No one need be considered a loser (Hebrews 12:1-15; 2 Peter 1:8-11; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27). Paul reminds us, I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only **but also to all who**

*continued on page 3*



# FROM THE EDITOR

Glenn Colley

Sixth Avenue Church of Christ  
1501 6th Avenue  
Jasper, AL 35501

## NEVER TAKE ME BACK THERE

The Apostle Paul wrote to the "churches of Galatia," (Galatians 1:2). His heart was firmly set on defending the liberty in Jesus, that no one would bring Christians into bondage (2:4). The specific bondage threatening was from those who persuaded the disciples to go back into the law of Moses and adopt circumcision as part of their service to God. Because the law of Christ contained no such instruction, and because binding one part of Moses law obligated the individual to all of Moses law, Paul fought against these Jewish enemies.

How dangerous was this "religion" which included circumcision? "After all," some might argue, "the participants were devoutly religious." Here is Paul's answer:

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing...Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:1-4).

Even Peter was influenced by these Jewish friends who sought to pull people away from the simple law of Jesus (Galatians 2). Paul "withstood him to the face" when Peter showed the Jews favor over the Gentile Christians. Paul's frustration peaked. He couldn't believe that even Peter, a "pillar of the church" (Galatians 2:9), would be slipping from the truth of Jesus under the pressure of these religionists.

Now consider what Paul wrote: "For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor" (2:18). Paul is saying, I don't want to live like that. I've destroyed the things in my life which are against Christ and true service to Him. I will not give in to this false teaching with it's offensive practiced!"

I suggest that we would all do well to adopt the same attitudes toward false doctrines and worship practices today. When an individual becomes a Christian, though he is at that time a "babe" in Christ (Hebrews 5:12-14), he has made a commitment to Christ which has a definite bearing on ALL sin. In that sense he has "destroyed" or "put to death" (Colossians 3:4-6) all attitudes and actions which he knows, or will learn, are against Jesus.

Don't try to bring me down with denominationalism, for I want to know only Christ's church (Matthew 16:18). Don't try to bring me down with women leaders in worship, for I want only to worship according to God's will (I Timothy 2:12). Don't try to bring me down with clergy/laity class divisions, for Jesus taught us to all be brethren (Matthew 23:1-12). Don't try to bring me down with teaching on marriage and remarriage which ignores simple teachings of the Lord, for Jesus said what He meant and meant what He said (Matthew 19:9). Don't try to bring me down with a new hermeneutic which leaves men without solid truth, for I want the illuminated path the scriptures offer. (II Timothy 3:16, I Timothy 2:15). Don't try to bring me down with pleas to unify with religions which teach baptism is irrelevant and unnecessary to a persons' salvation, for I want to trust Jesus for my salvation (Mark 16:16). I'm a Christian; a simple follower of Jesus. I do not want to build again the things which I destroyed.

Stand tall. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. Don't let others pull you down into ideas contrary to God's book. Jesus told the Devil himself, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

## MOST OF A MINUTE - TREATMENT OF ENEMIES

Jesus gave revolutionary teaching regarding how we treat our enemies. In Matthew 5 He said, Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." In Romans 12, the Apostle Paul repeats this idea and then says, "If your enemy hungers, feed him. If he thirsts, give him a drink; for in so doing, you will heap coals of fire on his head." Coals of fire on his head! The idea here isn't

that I want to revengefully hurt him any way I can, but rather, that when I return good for evil, I make my enemy suffer through remembering the good and noble characteristics that he or she COULD have. I make them see a contrast between living to hurt people and in living to be at peace with all men. It's one of the greatest, most graphic ways that we can show people that living the life of a Christian is superior to other lifestyles.

**have loved his appearing,** (2 Timothy 4:7,8, Emph. added).

When individuals allow their own competitive and territorial natures to be projected onto their vision of success for the Church then troubles are sure to follow. I would be much better to follow the inspired instruction of the apostle Peter when he said,

Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tender hearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing, For "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayer; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil," (1 Peter 3:8-12).

When we let our own baser elements, our own drive to succeed, overcome our spirituality then all people are the losers. We personally lose the compassionate human touch taught us by the

good Shepherd, and those whom we injure may be lost to the Lord, or at least discouraged from trying to please Him (or us) for fear of failure. Friend, listen to the Spirit Who penned these lines:

Romans 14:13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.

Galatians 5:26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

1 John 3:18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

When we learn the lesson that Jesus, the most capable of all who ever walked the mortal plane, history's top "winner", stooped down to help the most pitiable of creatures, then we must do the same (Phillipians 2:5-8). God help us to be more loving.

## GO ON TO GREATER THINGS

*Johnny Ramsey*

Since there is no area of the Lord's work that should concern us more than the conversion of the sinner and his subsequent spiritual advancement let us notice a few points calculated to make us think.

First, lest there be any misunderstanding let us compliment all who are striving to indoctrinate, nurture and encourage young Christians. This task demands mature Christianity. It is a most necessary yet rewarding work. Just to see the spiritual infant grow into manhood in the Lord is indeed one of this life's richest thrills.

The New Testament affirms that the new birth is essential to entrance into God's family. Old things must pass away; all things must become new. Such a one must be a new creation; he must walk in newness of life (John 3, II Corinthians 5, Galatians 6, Romans 6). So far we have pretty well gone along with the usual approach, haven't we? But have you ever pondered the question: Why do so many "babes in Christ" die in their infancy? What makes the difference in the ones who grow and the ones who go? Is it not true that we have far the best program ever - in most congregations - to teach these new members? Do we not have excellent books, tracts, film strips, cottage meetings, etc. all geared to this phase of work? To make a

long story short, the church is more conscious now about such needs than ever before. Yet, the Lord is losing multiplied thousands of potential laborers who turn back to Sodom. Why is it so? Does such tragedy have to occur?

In the physical realm we cannot eat, walk, work or grow for someone else. One cannot become or be a Christian by proxy. In our haste to have a well organized program for "the new converts' class" let us never overlook their individual needs for personal development. After all the material available on the market is purchased nothing will work so well as constant Bible study, a sincere desire to humbly serve the Saviour and much time spent in prayer. God will bless such devotion. This food for the soul is available for every new Christian. He has a responsibility to partake of it. We dare not cram it down his throat.

Can we not see the herein is the major difference between those "who grow by leaps and bounds" and the others who lag behind? A man needs to know before he ever enters Christ that there will be times when he must walk alone with God. Mature Christians will come to cherish such moments in the Divine presence. Have we failed to convey this view of the kingdom of God.



# “Dear Tina”

Mrs. Tina Smith • Parsons Elementary School  
182 W. Fourth Street • Parsons, TN 38363

Dear Tina,

I'm guessing that you're accustomed to sending notes home to parents, but you probably aren't used to receiving them in return. I hope that it's alright that we communicate through this means.

Lanore and I want to tell you how much we appreciate what you are doing with Bethany. The two of us have not said that enough, if at all, but we are thankful for the time and individual effort that you give to her. It's obvious that she is learning and maturing as a student. Her homework and test scores are testimony to that. At the supper table her mother and I always ask her about what she's doing that day in school. Her response is always positive. She enjoys school, she seems to be doing well in school, and we know that you've had a great deal to do with that. Please accept our heartfelt thanks for the attention that you have given, and continue to give our daughter.

With your kind indulgence, we would like to mention one thing from Bethany's class that has come to our attention. This past Tuesday evening we were going over vocabulary words with Bethany, when we noticed the definition to dinosaur - reptiles that lived millions of years ago. This definition causes us concern. Yes, we do believe and teach in our home that dinosaurs existed; the fossil evidence is undeniable. We believe that the Bible mentions dinosaurs (behemoth - Job 40:15-24; leviathan -Job 41:1ff; Psalm 104:26), but we do not ascribe to the idea that these

creatures somehow came into being over millions of years. Our family believes that God created all life forms—including the dinosaurs—in six days (Exodus 20:11; Genesis 1-2) just as the Bible teaches (Romans 1:20).

When Bethany takes her vocabulary test this week, we have encouraged her to mark out the word “millions,” and to write under it the word “thousands.” We have explained to her that while dinosaurs indeed lived long ago, it is incorrect to say that they existed millions of years before man (Mark 10:6; cf. Matthew 19:4) or that they evolved over great stretches of time. We hope that this does not reflect unfavorably on her test score. We only wish to teach Bethany the creationist view in this regard.

We deeply appreciate your interest in Bethany as a person as well as a student. Please understand, we are not angry, nor are we upset. Our praise for your efforts is genuine.

If you would like to talk to either of us personally about this matter, we would be glad to come visit at a time convenient to you. Thanks again.

Sincerely

Mike Benson

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# THE WORDS OF Truth

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A Parable Jesus Never Told  
In the Name of the Lord  
What Can We Do When the Storms  
Come?

Vol. 33 No.36

November 28, 1996

## “A PARABLE JESUS NEVER TOLD”

*Allen Webster*

Once upon a time there was a church looking toward the future. Some were concerned for the spiritual welfare of the youth growing up in an immoral, decadent age. They began to plan how they might create a thirst for righteousness among the young (Mt.5:6) and fortify their faith to be able to withstand the onslaught of the devil (Eph. 6:13-18, I Pet 5:8).

First, they determined that they needed a strong Bible teaching program. The Scriptures produce faith (Rm. 10:17), cleanse a young man's way (Psa.119:9,11), defeat the devil's temptations (Mt. 4:1-11), and provide answers to life's big questions (2 Pet. 1:3). The church would need knowledgeable, capable, caring teachers for youth classes (Rm. 10:14; Tim. 2:2). So they began to look around for some good teachers.

One said, "I don't want to leave the fellowship of my adult class to teach kids."

- \* But the drug pusher said, "not even the threat of jail will keep me from working with your children" (cf. Rm. 6:13).

Another responded, "I'm unable to teach children or even preschoolers about God."

- \* But the evolutionist went to college to learn how to teach children that there is no god (cf. Psa. 14:1).

Another replied, "Kids today are so different. I could never keep their attention."

- \* But movie producers said, "We'll study, survey, and spend millions to produce whatever turns kids on" (cf. Psa. 101:3).

Second, the planners recognized that teachers cannot educate if children vacate. So they deter-

mined to talk with parents about committing to have their children in every Bible class. After all, a PARENT'S greatest responsibility is to a child's spiritual welfare (Eph. 6:4; Deut. 6:7; Prov. 22:6; Gen 18:19). Surely, this part would be easier.

Some parents excused themselves saying, "We're out of town too often on weekends and everybody's tired on Wednesdays."

- \* But the porno book dealer said, "We're willing to stay in town weekends and stay open late every night to accommodate your children" (Mt. 5:28; Phil. 4:8).

Another said, "Two classes a week are too big a commitment." (The same parents were committed to having the same children in public school five days a week.)

- \* But fashion designers and cosmetics companies committed millions to teach children to emphasize the outward man and dress in worldly fashion (cf. I Tim. 2:9,10).

Third, the planners decided that they would need to have devotionals, youth meetings, Bible bowls, retreats and other outings for the youth. This would require adults to volunteer their homes, to drive from place to place, fix snacks, and give of themselves. But, it's for a good cause, they thought. Young people are important.

Church leaders said, "It is expensive to invite speakers, provide Bibles, literature, and food for so many. It cost too much."

- \* But beer and cigarette companies said, "We'll advertise on every radio and TV station. We'll entice from billboards and magazines.

*continued on page 3*



# FROM THE EDITOR

Glenn Colley

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## FITLY FRAMED TOGETHER

Consider Ephesians 2:19-22:

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God: And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together growth unto a holy temple in the Lord; In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit."

The "holy temple" described here is the church of Jesus Christ. I Corinthians 3:16-17 says, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." Jesus is the "chief corner stone" in this temple.

It is interesting to ponder the phrase, "fitly framed together." It teaches us that the components of this temple, the church, slide perfectly into place. This brings to mind the beautiful and intricate craftsmanship David and Solomon devoted to the Temple. All who enjoy construction of any kind will be amazed to view Solomon's temple:

"And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither; so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building" (I Kings 6:7).

What were the perfectly prepared components of the church which were "fitly framed together".

I suggest that there were three.

The first component was the Jews. When Jesus sent the twelve to prepare people for the upcoming creation of the church, He instructed them, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:5,6). The Jews had been taught through inspiration (Isaiah 7:14) that the

Messiah would come. It was only reasonable that they would be eager to follow the Christ, and the doors of the church were opened to them first.

The second component, worthy of consideration, was made up of those righteous people who were baptized with John's baptism. On Pentecost the Holy Spirit confirmed not only that these apostles were ambassadors from God, but also that this day was the fulfillment of prophesy! (Acts 2:16-47). According to the text, about 3,000 souls were "ADDED unto them" that day (Acts 2:47). To whom were they added? To those faithful souls who had submitted to John's baptism. Apparently, those who received John's baptism AFTER Acts 2, had to be baptized again. By that time John's baptism was invalid (Acts 19:1-5). Note, however, that in Acts 18:24-28 there is no mention of Apotlos being baptized again, even though he had also been baptized with John's baptism. Why? Because he received John's baptism BEFORE Pentecost when it was still valid, and before the baptism into Christ came into effect.

The third component was the Gentiles.

Although it took an outstanding act of the Holy Spirit to get the Jews to accept it, the Gospel was for ALL men, even the Gentiles. With humble submission to the Spirit, Peter taught Cornelius and his household, and they were baptized (Acts 10,11).

Thus, three components. At Pentecost in Acts 2, those penitent confessors were "fitly framed together" with those who had received John's baptism. At that time they all realized forgiveness of sins, and admittance into the kingdom of Christ. Later, in the home of a Caesarean called Cornelius, the Gentiles made their "debut", and made up the third and final component.

It must have taken diligent planning to "fitly frame together". Solomon's temple without even the sound of a hammer. It took Divine planning so the house of God would "fitly frame together".

## MOST OF A MINUTE - OUR PULPIT IS VACANT

Bobby Key from Miami, Oklahoma recently remembered an elder who once said to a congregation, "Our minister has resigned, and our pulpit is vacant." Bobby said, "Now that's an interesting statement...perhaps several pulpits are vacant even when there is a full-time preacher. Gospel preaching has fallen on hard times. In more than one congregation, the people listen for half an hour to a display of babbling nothingness. If the truth were told as the members leave the building, they would have to say, "the pulpit was vacant today!"

Listen: when a man stands to preach he should know that God has already decided the source of his lesson. It is the word of God. II Timothy 4:2 says, "Preach the word..." May we preachers never forget that Jesus told the devil, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, (Matt.4:4)." A sermon is only valuable to people when it differs from a P.T.O. Speech, or a Civitan club speech in that the Bible is what's being preached.

No price is too great to get the word out.”

Some complained, “Youth activities are not important. Let them find their own things to do. We have more important works.”

- \* But the school organized and promoted dances for the children (cf. Gal. 5:19-21).

Others said, “I can’t be depended on to drive to youth meetings. Gas is expensive, plus the wear on my vehicle. It would take a lot of time.”

- \* But the casino operators promised to shuttle the youth from convenient locations all over the city so they can have the opportunity to gamble (cf. Rm. 12:17).

Another told them, “I couldn’t host a devotional at my house. Those little monsters might break something. Plus, it would be a lot of trouble to clean up when it was over.”

- \* But the city let a popular rock band come into the civic center to “entertain the youth” and provided city clean-up crews when it was over (cf. Prov. 4:23,26)

So the adults stayed in their adult classes, kids slept in, parents stayed busy until their children got grown, families went out of town on weekends, and the youth group was inactive.

- \* But the drug dealers, porn salesmen, movie producers, gamblers, schools, tobacco and liquor manufacturers worked hard, spent money, and did what was necessary to win the impressionable minds of the kids. They all claimed great success.

The planners were reminded of Jesus’ parable of the Unjust Steward. In it He said, “...the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light” (Lk. 16:8).

When Sunday came, the adults wondered why the youth classes were empty. Some complained, “This church sure is dead.” Parents wondered why they could not get their children to go to worship. What has happened to this generation of children? They seem so disinterested and worldly.

## IN THE NAME OF THE LORD

*Jeri Manasco*

Christians know that whatever they do, they are to do it in the name of the Lord (Colossians 3:17). The phrase “in the name of the Lord” or “in Christ’s name” is used rather freely by believers. Sometimes it is an abused phrase.

### NOT A RITUAL FORMULA

“In the name of the Lord” is not merely a ritual formula that adds legitimacy to one’s actions. It is not a phrase to be used merely to give the appearance of piety in worship or service. When we say “in the name of the Lord” we mean that what we do we are doing by his authority and approval. Obviously, therefore, if we are doing an unscriptural thing, it cannot be “in the name of the Lord.”

The Crusades of the Middle Ages were carried on as holy vendettas against the “infidels” of the East. Blood flowed and widows were made by pious men “in the name of the Lord.” Crimes in recent years have been committed “in the name of the lord.” But surely none would seriously and sanely claim that the crime was justified because that sacred phrase was used. Religious errors are invented and zealously propagated “in the name of the Lord.” If it is error, though, it cannot be in the name of the Lord, for he speaks with the Spirit of Truth (John 16:13; I John 4:1-6).

It is wrong and inexcusable to do things that are religiously and morally wrong and attach the phrase “in the name of the lord” as a cover-all for sin. The homosexual community is essentially making their appeal to the Bible (of all things!) to justify their sinful and perverse lifestyle! Jesus, they say, is gracious to all men. Religious leaders, church “bishops”, and religious synods are more attaching legitimacy to gay sinfulness “in the name of the Lord.” The Bible forbids that lifestyle and claiming Christ as an advocate and defender of such a thing will not legitimize or justify the sin!

### WRONG CANNOT BE MADE RIGHT

Everyone who has a smattering of respect left for the Bible acknowledges the truth of what has just been said in the moral realm. But doesn’t the same thing hold true in religious matters? One must carefully examine his religious “heritage” in the light of the Bible! Denominational traditions is not justified on any ground; adding “in the name of the Lord” will not make more than one body acceptable to God. When Jesus has said he built his church (Matthew 16:18), the phrase “in the name of the Lord” will not justify the establishment of another or membership in a human church acceptable (Matthew 15:13-14).

*continued on page 4*



Religious practices cannot be made right by saying, "I am doing this in the name of the Lord." Infant baptism is not scriptural because it simply has no Bible authority. Believers were the subjects of baptism in the New Testament (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12,13; 18:8). Sprinkling water on an infant and accompanying it with "in the name of the Lord" will not make that practice acceptable in the court of heaven. The use of an instrument of music in the worship of the church cannot be justified on any scriptural grounds! The zealous playing of an instrument in worship and saying one is doing so "in the name of the Lord" simply will not make it legitimate. The use of "interpretive religious dance" is not made right because it is done "in the name of the Lord." If it is not in the Bible it is not "in the name of the Lord"!!

#### PROPER USE OF THE PHRASE

On the positive side, much can be seen as legitimate use of "in the name of the Lord." People were healed miraculously in the name of the Lord. The feeble man at the temple was healed in that name by Peter and John (Acts 3:1-12; 4:9,10). Even so, the phrase was not a religious charm or a magical formula. It simply meant that the power and authority by which the man was healed was that of the Lord, not that of the apostles (Mark 16:17-20; Acts 16:18; Luke 10:17). It is a statement of authority, not of formula.

Remissions of sins was and is granted in the name of the Lord. It is "through his name" that remission of sins is granted (Acts 10:43). "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). So when we preach that men should repent before they receive remis-

sion of sins we are doing so by the authority of Jesus, or "in the name of the Lord." Remission of sins was given "in the name of Jesus Christ" to those who repented and were baptized (Acts 2:38). To promise remission of sins on any other grounds for the alien sinner is to offer a remission of sins that Jesus neither offers nor endorses.

We can plead for religious unity in the name of the Lord! "I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10). Can one defend division by the name of Jesus Christ? If one cannot defend division by the name of Christ, **then one cannot defend in the name of Christ the doctrines and traditions that create the division!**

#### CONCLUSION

We can perform acts of service in his name (Mark 9:41). We can praise God in the name of the Lord (Ephesians 5:20). There can be assemblies in his name (Matthew 18:20). Church discipline is administered in his name (1 Corinthians 5:4; 2 Thessalonians 3:6). We pray in his name (John 14:13, 14; 15:16; etc.) It must be remembered, though, that this does not mean that the mere use of the phrase "in his name" or "in the name of the Lord" is what makes these practices right. They are right when done by his authority and approval. Only when are they "in the name of the Lord."

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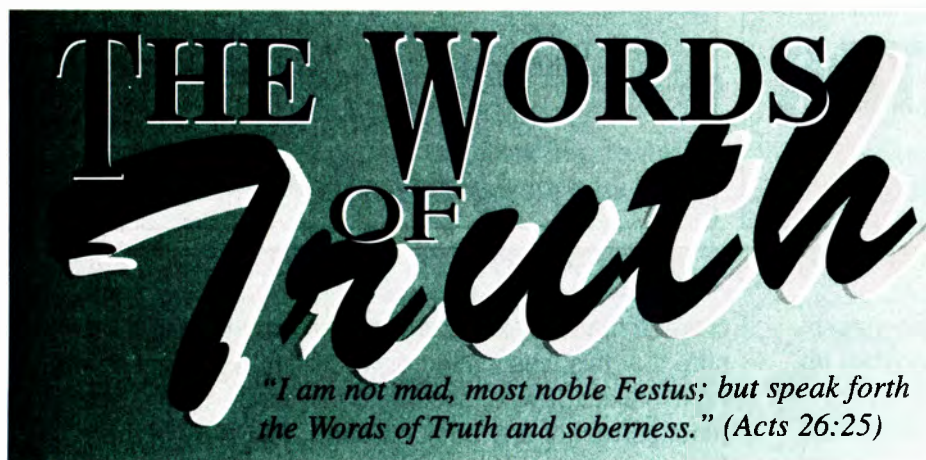
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Let Us Rise Up And Build!  
The Book Of Mormon  
Fun With Children's Answers  
What Can We Do When The Storms  
Come?

Vol. 33 No.37

December 5, 1996

## ONE OF A KIND

Johnny Ramsey

It often has been stated the Creator of the world is "a God of definite order." In 1 Cor. 14:40, Christians are told to do things "*decently and in order.*" Jehovah demands that we follow the heavenly pattern, as Heb. 8:5 shows: "*See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee in the mount.*" It is significant that Phil. 1:1 tells of the simplicity of the New Testament church in vivid terms: "*To the elders and deacons with all the saints.*" Today, in modern denominational structure, one can find elaborate hierarchy arrangements unknown to the Bible. We are warned against "*going beyond*" the doctrine of Christ (2 Jno. 9). Actually, each member of the church of the Lord is a priest in the royal priesthood over which Jesus rules as the only High Priest (1 Pet. 2:9; Heb. 7:26; Rev. 1:6-9).

There is no earthly headquarters for Christ's church. Each congregation belonging to Him is self-governing and follows the Bible as the sole guide for authority (Matt. 28:18; Jno. 12:48). Elders, as overseers and shepherds, watch for the souls of the saints in each congregation of the "*flock of God which is among you*" (Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:1-3). The qualifications of elders (also called, bishops), and deacons who serve under the elders' guidance, are found in 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1. The work of elders is powerfully set forth in Acts 20:28-32, 1 Pet. 5:1-4. We have Christ as our creed and the New Testament as our guide in all matters of a divine nature. No decree by any council, synod, seminary or catechism ever dictates to a congregation belonging to the Lord.

There is no complex structure in the Lord's work. The work of the kingdom is stressed instead of "holding office" for the sake of prestige. New Testament Christianity recognizes the fact that the Redeemer has all the pre-eminence (Col. 1:18). Therefore, elders, deacons, evangelists and other faithful members exist only to promulgate the gospel in a practical way. It is the power of God's work that wins the battle over Satan (Judg. 7:2; 2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10-17), and not some superbureaucracy!

One of the great illustrations of this arrangement is found in 1 Cor. 12, where the church is compared to the human body. Every member of the body is needed for proper functioning in the physical realm. Just so is the parallel in the spiritual body of the Lord. The emphasis of heaven is not on cliques and committees, but on compassion and commitment of devotees of Christ. Those who are called out of sin into Jesus Christ (Col. 1:13), have work to do for the Master, and not a position to covet.

In the church of the Lord, the elders see that members are fed the word of God (Acts 20:28). Deacons serve under their leadership, and all the members strive to glorify the Father in the church by Christ Jesus (Eph. 3:21). We need to return to the ideal position of letting the church be the church! The province of Christ's church is to save souls that are perishing in sin. Educators and politicians can run the schools and government. Let us begin now to honor and appreciate God's plan for the ages -- the distinctive church of the Lord.

## LET US RISE UP AND BUILD!

Allen Webster

What does this upcoming new year hold for this church? How many people will be baptized in this baptistery this year? How many will walk down this aisle to re-dedicate their lives to God and to confess fault? How many will be worshipping God faithfully here one year from now?

The answers to these questions depend, in large

measure, to how hard we are willing to work. If we want to see God's church grow and souls saved, we must be willing to roll up our sleeves and apply some "elbow grease."

Nehemiah led the most successful re-building effort recorded in the Bible. He was cup-bearer for King Artaxerxes of the Persian

*continued on page 3*



# FROM THE EDITOR

Glenn Colley

Sixth Avenue Church of Christ  
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## THE BOOK OF MORMON

The occasional Mormon knock at the door makes some Christians nervous. Many simply and politely tell the youthful, clean-dressed Mormon elders that they aren't interested. Others enter a discussion with them trying to show them the all sufficiency of the Bible. We write this article with the latter group in mind.

In studying with Mormons it is wise at first to resist the temptation to discuss the oddities of the Mormon practices such as youthful "elders," baptism for the dead, polygamy, the details of Jesus' death, etc. While these issues are important, they are secondary to the greater reality. It is this: The major source for Mormon doctrine, the book of Mormon, is not from heaven, is not inspired, and should never be placed alongside the Bible as a "companion" to holy writ.

Soon after one enters a study with Mormons he or she should ask this question: "Can a man today study and obey the King James Bible, and it only, and go to heaven?" The answer will usually be "Yes." "Then," you ask, "Why do we really need the book of Mormon?"

But now to the deeper issue.

Joseph Smith in 1830 wrote the book of Mormon. Since then almost 4000 changes have been made to the book. They had to be made. The grammar and spelling in the original document were so poor as to draw jeers when anyone claimed it was from heaven. Yet the grammar wasn't the only thing changed. They inserted words into sentences which completely changed the thought. On page 87 this statement appears: "...the mean man boweth down...". The 1964 edition of the book of Mormon reads, "...the mean man boweth NOT down...".

"But," someone might ask, "other than showing inconsistency, do the changes prove that the book of Mormon is bogus?" By itself it may not. But when you read the claims on which the book of Mormon was originally presented to the world in 1830, "bogus" is certainly an appealing word. Joseph Smith didn't just claim that an angel gave him the book of Mormon, but also

claimed that Heaven waited around to make absolutely sure that this was written down perfectly in English with no mistakes. It was, according to Joseph Smith, "the most correct of any book on earth..." (History of the Church, vol. 4, p. 461).

According to Joseph Smith's testimony, there should not have been any reason to make changes in the Book of Mormon. He stated that when he and the witnesses went out to pray concerning it, a voice spoke from heaven telling them that the translation of the book of Mormon was correct: "...we heard a voice from out of the bright light above us, saying, "These plates have been revealed by the power of God, and they have been translated by the power of God. The translation of them which you have seen is correct, and I command you to bear record of what you now see and hear." (History of the church, by Joseph Smith, Vol. 1, pp. 54-55).

Simply stated, around 4000 changes have been made to the book of Mormon since it was written by Joseph Smith in 1830. No one, even among the Mormons, deny that. However, in making those changes they have made Joseph out to be a liar. He said God translated it, and then declared that English translation be perfect. It was not perfect. It was grossly flawed in 4000 instances. If Joseph had actually declared truth, there should not have been even one mistake.

Young Mormon elders should be shown this and encouraged to deeply consider it's significance. Then they should be taught the truth of the Bible and the simplicity and beauty of New Testament Christianity.

(Anyone wanting to order a photo copy of the 1830 book of Mormon with the changes marked may do so by sending \$9.95 and postage to Utah Lighthouse Ministry, P.O. Box 1884, Salt Lake City, UT 84110. The introduction to the book includes quotes from Joseph Smith and others regarding the accuracy and inspiration of the book of Mormon.)

## MOST OF A MINUTE - FUN WITH CHILDREN'S ANSWERS

Aren't children wonderful when they're learning the Word of God? The old saying "you must crawl before you can walk" is certainly applicable. When some British children were asked some questions about the Bible recently the answers turned up very interesting:

- Noah's wife was called Joah of Ark
- The fifth commandment is Humor thy father and mother
- Lot's wife was a pillar of salt by day, and a ball of fire at night
- When Mary heard she was to the mother of Jesus,

- she went off and sang the Magna Carta
- a Republican is a sinner mentioned in the Bible
- The first commandment was when Eve told Adam to eat the apple
- It is sometimes difficult to hear what is being said in church because the agnostics are so terrible

In all this fun humor, godly parents will still take very soberly the command in Ephesians 6:4, "...bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Empire, but gave up his position to lead God's people in rebuilding the wall around the ancient city of Jerusalem. His people finished the work in a remarkable time of only fifty-two days! Why were they successful?

**THEY WERE EAGER TO BE INVOLVED (2:18).**

When Nehemiah presented the task to them, they immediately responded, "Let us rise up and build." They did not complain about being too busy, make excuses about their lack of ability, or cower in fear of their enemies. They were eager to get started.

We need a church full of folks with the Let-us-rise-up-and-build attitude. People whose enthusiasm knows no bounds, who zeal eats them up (Jn. 2:17), and whose bones are on fire (Jer. 20:9).

We cannot expect to kindle a fire in another heart until one is burning in our own. Emerson said, "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."

*Enthusiasm* comes to us from the Greek *enthousiasmos* which meant "to be possessed of God" or "God in us." Those whom God possesses and who have God in them cannot help but be zealous for His cause. Christians are, by nature, people who are "zealous of good works" (Tit. 2:14). Paul's zeal was so noticeable that the Jews accused him of having turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6). The Jerusalem church was steadfast, daily teaching from house to house (Acts 2:42,46). The Corinthian church's zeal provoked very many (2 Cor 9:2). The Laodicean church was admonished to "be zealous, therefore..." (Rev. 3:19).

We must be "...fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" (Rm. 12:11). Fervent (zero) here literally means "to be hot (boil, of liquids; or glow, of solids)" (Strong). We need to be "boiling over" with enthusiasm for Christ and "glowing" with love for His church. The lukewarm will be spewed out (Rev. 3:15,16). As Jehu, let each say, "come with me and see my zeal for the Lord" (2 Kgs. 10:16).

**THEY ENCOURAGED EACH OTHER.** "So they strengthened their hands for this good work." (2:18). There is not a single person who does not do a better job when he knows he is appreciated. This year, let's notice the good works of others and give them a pat on the back. "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Rm. 14:19; cf. 1 Cor. 10:33).

**THEY COOPERATED.** Chapter three records the phrase "next to him builded" repeated over and over. This insignificant phrase holds a key to why they built a city wall in fifty-two days. Cooperation! Again, when enemies threatened to shut down the re-building operation, the people defended each other (4:13-16). Half did mason work; the other half took up defensive positions. Cooperation!

We, too, must find our place in the wall, take up

some mortar and bricks, and help the fellow next to us. In the church, we do not all have the same abilities, therefore we cannot all do the same things. The church is body (Rm. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:12-25), and bodies have different parts to perform different functions. In order to have a healthy church, we must have members functioning in different capacities, *and all cooperating together*. The early church cooperated despite different cultural barriers (Acts 6). Paul, as a master builder, left this formula for church carpentry: "We are laborers *together* with God..." (1 Cor. 3:9).

**THEY WORKED HARD.** The people "had a mind to work" (4:6). Baruch *earnestly* repaired (3:20). Eagerness, encouragement, and cooperation will not build the church unless we follow through with plain old-fashioned work. "Plan the work, and work the plan." The Lord's vineyard is no place for lazy people (1 Cor. 15:58).

We need to ask ourselves, "What am I doing to build up this congregation? When has sweat poured from my forehead in spiritual labor? When did I lose sleep or sacrifice free time in the interest of God's church." If we can't remember, it's time to make some changes and get to work. Let's all resolve now that we are going to make ourselves available and accessible. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might..." (Ecc. 9:10).

**THEY TRUSTED IN GOD (4:20).** Their battle cry was, "...our God shall fight for us." God was on their side. The king knew it (2:7,8). The people of Judah knew it (2:18). Even the enemies knew it (4:14,15; 6:16). Later, in Haggai's day, God stirred up Zerubbabel and the Jews to work in the house of the Lord of hosts (1:14).

Today, God is on our side too! We cannot build God's church without God's help (Mt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5). Without recognizing this, we will fail miserably as a church, but by recognizing God, and trusting His way, we cannot fail (Phil. 4:13; Heb. 13:5; Isa. 55:11). "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God" (2 Cor 3:5; cf. Phil. 2:5). "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil 2:13).

Conclusion: They were successful (6:15)! God will bless our work this year if we will follow His plan, do His work, His way, and give Him the glory. *Let us rise up and build!*



# WHAT CAN WE DO WHEN THE STORMS COME?

*Elbert Henry*

In an article written by Margaret Johnstone in 1962, she told of a horrifying experience several year earlier while living in Massachusetts. Radio stations were giving warnings of a hurricane that was approaching the town in which they lived. They became very uneasy as the sky darkened and the winds rose. This was especially true with their young son, Blair. After a loud crash the electric power failed, plunging them into darkness.

As she heard Blair's muffled sobs and trying to sound matter-of-fact, she said, "You might just as well calm down. After all, there's nothing we can do about it." He said, "Mother, I know there's nothing we can do about it, BUT ISN'T THERE SOMETHING WE CAN DO ABOUT US?"

In Matthew 8 the disciples were with Jesus in a ship on the Sea of Galilee. While Jesus slept a storm arose and the waves covered the ship. His disciples came to Him and awoke Him saying, "Lord, save us, we perish." Jesus rebuked them for their lack of faith. He rebuked the winds and the sea. The storm ceased.

When the storms of life come we can, as the disciples, approach One who has the power to deliver. But we must have enough faith as we pray to trust the wisdom of Him who knows what is best for us.

Paul had a storm to come into his own life- a "thorn in the flesh." He prayed three times that it be removed. The Lord revealed to him that it was best that the difficulty remain with him, "Lest because of the abundance of revelation...he should be exalted above measure." When the Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness," he concluded that if he could do nothing about the storm he could do something about himself. He said, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:7-10).

He had learned the great lesson seven years earlier while in a prison at Philippi. He and Silas had been beaten and placed in the inner prison with their feet fast in the stocks. What could they do? They prayed and sang praises to God at midnight. The prisoners and God heard them that night.

After we have tried and learned that we can do little or nothing about the storms of life, THERE'S SOMETHING WE CAN DO ABOUT US. When troubles come we can, with a manifestation of joy, show the world how to live a victorious life.

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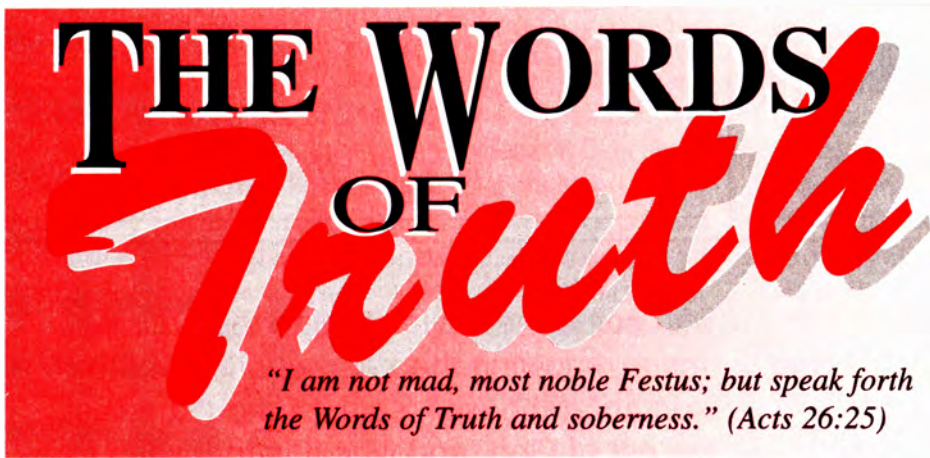
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The Greatest Gift Of All  
Real Maturity

Vol. 33 No.38

December 12, 1996

## ADAPTING SOME MISUSED TERMINOLOGY

Neal Pollard

Well-meaning, but biblically ignorant, people use some odd terms in speaking of religious matters. People also hold strange views, articulated by misnomers and misused phrases. And, yes, members of the Lord's church are as guilty as anyone in this pitiable realm. When Christians return to being people of "The Book", they will dispense with the use of unbiblical, denominational terms.

Having observed this, let it be noted that some terms, though used improperly or to convey false religious concepts, can, through adaptation, be used correctly. Consider the following examples.

**"The Spirit Leads Me."** How? Directly? Does He personally indwell and influence an individual? Sometimes people seek to validate spending their money in a certain way, holding a particular view, or leading a congregation in a certain direction based on God telling or showing them that way. Besides being a very self-serving, convenient excuse for practically any behavior, the idea that one is miraculously, directly led by God's Holy Spirit today is utterly *false*!

But, the spirit does lead mankind today! He does so only through the inspired Word of God, which He moved forty men to write over two thousand years ago. Biblical revelation came by the Spirit (Ephesians 3:5). The word of God is termed the "Sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17). When Biblical issues are addressed (*in the Bible*), the verse often reveals that the Spirit is doing the speaking (cf. 1 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 14:13; Revelation 22:17). The Holy Spirit once operated miraculously. This was done to confirm the word true disciples spoke was in the name of Christ. The church predated the written New Testament, and thus no written standard from God was available, at first, to find the truth on matters relative to God's command for Christians. But, no one can produce one passage that says the Spirit ever led any individual to do anything or supplied the Christian with anything that the Bible does not lead or supply an individual with today. The Bible does claim to be "all-sufficient" and to completely supply everything anyone spiritually needs (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3; Jude 3). The spirit leads all people through the written work of God, and He does so in no way apart from those life-giving words!

**"Join the church."** When one is baptized into Christ according to the instructions of the Bible, God adds that one

to His Son's body, the church (Acts 2:47+ Colossians 1:18). No New Testament Christian ever joined the Lord's church. No member of Christ's church was ever voted in by any man or men! Such a concept is fallacious!

But, the Christian is called to join the church! An individual is to join with other saints in attending all the worship assemblies and periods of Bible study (Hebrews 10:25; 1 Timothy 4:13). One is to join the church in giving liberally on the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:1-2 Corinthians 9:7). One must join the church in teaching, admonishing, and praising God through congregational singing in worship (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16-17). In fact, in every good work, let the individual Christian be found joining with the church to accomplish the task to God's glory (Colossians 3:17)! Christians are to be joined together "in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10). A spiritually healthy individual is joined together with other spiritually healthy Christians to cause the spiritual body to flourish (Ephesians 4:16). In that way, join the church!

**"Let Jesus Come Into Your Heart."** Unfortunately, Calvinists use that phrase to teach that one, by doing this, is saved at the point of belief. This is contrary to the Bible! The phrase cannot be found anywhere in the Bible. Unwisely, some brethren, in offering the invitation, speak very vaguely and talk in terms of accepting Jesus to be saved and offer no further explanation as to how one accepts Jesus! This is very misleading.

But, a sinner must let Jesus come into his heart. The word let means allow. The process of Jesus coming into one's heart is a very tangible, identifiable one. Paul teaches it. He says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). No mysticism or romanticism. This is an emotional process, but not one devoid of rational choice.

Jesus also calls a sinner to come to Him, to obey Him, and follow Him (Matthew 11:28; Hebrews 5:9; John 6:45). If Jesus is in one's heart (by faith), that one will obey the gospel. Then, Christ will reign within and, through the word, will tell the Christian how to live (Galatians 2:20). How foolish not to have that work of faith, of which Christ is central theme, in the heart (cf. Romans 10:8)!

**"I'm Saved Like The Criminal On The Cross!"** Some

continued on page 3



# FROM THE EDITOR

*Glenn Colley*

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## THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL

He's called the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is the Messiah, the Bright and Morning Star, the Mighty Counselor, the Prince of Peace, and the Savior of the world. There are so many names and titles for the Anointed One, Jesus Christ. Isn't it profoundly amazing that He is also called, "the Gift"?

In this season of giving and receiving gifts our minds are on a good course to ponder the "unspeakable" Gift (II Corinthians 9:15).

This gift is needed. John 3:16, the golden text of the Bible, offers to us a Creator full of love for the inhabitants of His world. Love has never been expressed this way before, nor will it be again. The God, whose justice must be appeased, knew we didn't have the ability to pay the needed price. He paid the price for us. He gave His sinless Son. Thank God for His unspeakable Gift!

This gift is practical. It fits perfectly. "Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (Romans 5:18). Through Jesus our daily needs are met (Matthew 6:33). Thank God for His unspeakable gift!

This gift will last. It must feel odd to talk

with someone while reading their mind. Jesus, knowing the heart and life of the woman at the well, said, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water" (John 4:10). Because of sin, and the burden borne with it, our spiritual thirst would forever go unquenched without this Gift. In Christ we drink from the fount of grace that will never run dry. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life" (John 4:16). Thank God for His unspeakable Gift!

As we begin the new year, it is my prayer that from our appreciation of the greatest Gift will spring a refreshed urgency to share this precious gift with others (Matthew 28:18-20). Sadly, many Christians have subconsciously given up on personal evangelism. They never speak of their King except to other Christians. Don't let that happen to you! Let's work together to be "soul conscious" -- ever conscious of the need in each individual life for the greatest Gift of all -- Jesus the Christ.

## MOST OF A MINUTE - REAL MATURITY

Not long ago Dear Abby ran a piece entitled, "Maturity is:", and listed these four important truths:

-- The ability to do a job without being supervised.

-- The ability to carry money without spending it.

--The ability to bear an injustice without wanting to get even.

I like that, and I'd like to add one of my own: Real Maturity lives in people who recognize how dependent we are on God, and who live their lives in appreciation to Him. The truth is, God owns us. I Cor. 6:19 says, "...for ye are not your own...therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

say this to justify their failure to fully obey the gospel, saying mere belief suffices. But, such a position is unmerited. The criminal lived and died during the time when the Old Law was in force. Christ had not yet died, thus the New Law had not yet been established. Too, the criminal was in a position to do what no one today can do (have a conversation with the Lord). Finally, the terms for pardon given to the criminal are different from those given to man today. He was not told to be immersed for forgiveness, but every individual on earth today is bound to follow that command to be saved (Mark 16:16).

But, one is saved like the criminal on the cross. One must come to the Savior for salvation (Acts 4:12). Remember that one criminal mocked Jesus. The other recognized the sinfulness of his deeds and desired to go to heaven. He asked for forgiveness. Like him, one must be sorry for his sins, want to go to heaven, and seek forgive-

ness if he will attempt to have his sins forgiven. This does not mean that one does not have to repent, confess, and be baptized. Those are the things one does, along with and by faith, in order to be saved. No one can side step the commands of God and be saved. But, like the criminal was saved by God's grace, so is one today (Ephesians 2:8). As the criminal was saved by faith, so is one today (Ephesians 2:8; John 8:24). The criminal was unworthy of God's mercy, and so is everyone today. There are likenesses in a man's salvation today to the criminal's on the cross. There are also dissimilarities.

There is some jargon that religious people (especially New Testament Christians) need to eliminate. There are others that need clarification, like those discussed above. May great care be taken to be clear and correct when speaking!

## SING GOD A SWEET SONG

*Allen Webster*

God is music lover. In fact, he wants us all to "sing Him a song," thought with the life instead of the lips. He commands us, "*And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (2 Pet 1:5-8).

The word add (*epichoregeo*) in this text has an interesting background. It means "supply or equip" and refers back to the days of old Athens when it was considered a great honor to be a citizen who was asked to help defray the expenses of a public ceremony or entertainment. It originally referred to citizens who financed a theatrical performance or fit out a worship for the state they loved. It had a special reference to the abundant supplies provided for a chorus, which is derived from this Greek work (as is *choreographer*) (Coffman). The graces which adorn the Christian's character are to be chorused into a grand symphony to the delight and pleasure of Him who fashioned and made us for His own pleasure. There are eight graces, and they thus form an octave of soul tones, the first being faith, the last love, an octave higher. When these are harmonized and played on by the divine Spirit, disharmony disappears and life's discords vanish. How we should rejoice that we have been privileged to provide such an instrument in the hand of God! (Woods).

**FAITH** is the foundation (Phil. 4:13). By it we have been justified (Rm. 5:1); by it we walk (2 Cor. 5:7); by it we please God (Heb. 11:6); and by it we overcome the world (1 Jn. 5:4,5). Faith that does not add the graces is dead (Jas. 2:17-26; 1 Pet. 2:1,2; 2 Pet. 3:18). The new Birth is not the end, it is the beginning. Spiritual growth is

not automatic. It requires cooperation with God and the application of spiritual diligence and discipline (Phil. 2:12,13).

**VIRTUE** (*areta*) denotes courage. Our English work *virtue* is derived from the Latin work *vir*, meaning "man." But it describes only a certain kind of man. *Homo* also meant "man" but applied to any man of the human species. *Vir* denoted a man of strength, courage, and good character. It included moral strength. This is one reason our work *virtue* is used as a synonym for purity, as in *virgin*. We were called a virtue ("excellence") (1:3). It basically means the manliness and determination to do that which is right. It is used in four verses in the New Testament; once by Paul (Phil. 4:8) and three times by Peter (1 Pet. 2:9; 2 Pet. 1:3,5). A virtuous person has the fortitude to stand for Christ no matter what the odds, to speak out for Him no matter what the costs, even to die for Him if necessary.

**KNOWLEDGE** (*gnosis*) is gained by the faithful continuation of studies in the Scriptures. Knowledge helps us to see things as they really are. Zeal without knowledge, like a ship without a rudder, becomes fanaticism. Saul of Tarsus was willing to kill for in his ignorant zeal (1 Tim. 1:13), but in his knowledgeable zeal he was willing to die for Christ (Acts 21:13). Spiritual ignorance has been the cause of people being destroyed (Hos. 4:6); being alienated from God (Eph. 4:18); crucifying the Lord (Acts 3:14-17); and be eternally lost (2 Pet. 3:18), to the point where we can even be teachers (Heb. 5:14). Are we "diligent to add this virtue day by day? How often do you study?

**TEMPERANCE** is only found two other times in the NT (Acts 24:25; Gal. 5:22). It refers to self-control or "keeping oneself in check" (*engrateia*, from *en* and *krates*, "one who holds himself in" or "getting a grip on oneself"). Temperance is the discipline of an athlete (1 Cor. 9:24-27;



Phil 3:12-16; 1 Tim. 4:7,8). It is "reasons girdle as well as passions bridle" (Taylor). Chrysostom said it meant "mastering passion of tongue, hand and unbridled eyes." The saint is not the man who gets away from the world, but one who stays in the world but never lets it master him. Temperance is the iron side of the silver coin of patience. It means to totally abstain from those things that are wrong and to be balanced in those things that are right. It is not a problem for a Christian to avoid drunkenness. But it takes good judgment to know limits of eating, exercise, recreation, and sleep. We need to know where self control ends and over-indulgence begins. Fishing, ball playing, and other sports are not sinful because they are pleasurable. Eating is not wrong because it is tasteful. However, if these get out of balance, they become sinful (Mt. 6:33).

We should be as Christ who yielded Himself to God (Jn. 8:29; cf. Rm. 6:13). Temperance is the opposite of the "let go" philosophy of the wild world around us. Those who have not mastered themselves are at the mercy and control of others. They move at the whims of their peers and are under majority rule. The wise man discussed the value to this ability (Prov. 16:32; 25:28). This surrender produces self-control of:

- \*Our *temper* (Eph. 4:26), "And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on *bread*" (Gen. 43:31)
- \*Our *tongue* (Jas. 3:1-12; Psa. 39:1,2)
- \*Our *thoughts* (Mt. 15:19) or *passions* (Phil. 3:12-16; Tit. 2:12).
- \*Our *tendencies* (1 Cor. 6:12). Paul discussed self-control with Felix and he "trembled" (Acts 24:25). It is no wonder that Felix was terrified. He was a stranger to righteousness,

knew no self-control, and was unprepared for the judgment. According to Tacitus, this man was guilty of "every kind of cruelty, and lust, he exercised the authority of a king with the tempter of a slave." In his *Annals* (11:54), Tacitus further represents Felix as considering himself licensed to commit any crime with impunity. The last of his three wives, the beautiful Drusilla, young daughter of Herod Agrippa I, was wooed away from her husband Azizus, king of Amesa. Thus Felix had been married three times and Drusilla twice (Prov. 6:32).

PATIENCE (*hupomone*, literally "abiding or remaining under") is the ability to resist evil and bear up (endure) when circumstances are difficult (Jas. 1:3; 5:7-11; Rm. 2:7; 5:3-5). It means to "remain when others have departed; to remain; not to flee" (Oberst). Thayer says "...unswerved from his deliberate purpose...by even the greatest of trials and sufferings." No race was ever won by a runner that failed to finish the course (2 Tim. 4:7,8). Self-control has to do with handling the *pleasures* of life, while patience relates primarily to the *pressures* and *problems* of life. (The ability to endure problems is "long-suffering.") Often, the person who "gives in" to pleasures is not disciplined enough to handle pressures either, so he "gives up." Jesus said, "In your patience possess ye your souls" (Lk. 21:19). Patience is not something that develops automatically; we must work at it. James 1:2-8 gives us the right approach. We must, by faith, let our trials work *for* us and *not* against us. If we need wisdom in making decisions, God will grant that wisdom if we ask Him.

*Continued in next issue*

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# THE WORDS OF *Truth*

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

**SEE ARTICLES  
INSIDE:  
ALLERGIC TO CHURCH?  
SING GOD A SWEET SONG  
PEARLS FROM ACTS 8  
"IT IS HARD"**

Vol. 33 No. 39

December 19, 1996

## "ALLERGIC TO CHURCH?"

Neal Pollard

Solomon wrote, "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9). There is nothing new, but there are definitely interesting twists on the old.

A Christian lady asked her neighbor to attend a gospel meeting with her. The neighbor said neither "yes" nor "no". He said that he and his wife could not attend church because of her allergies! Apparently, the perfumes of those attending so bothered her that she could not go to a house of worship. He conceded the awfulness of her situation, but was confident God would overlook their lack of attendance.

The same sister, who knows and loves this couple, had bumped into her sneezy neighbor countless times in the grocery and department stores. The couple celebrated their fiftieth anniversary with a party they hosted in their home. Many guests attended, most of whom also "attended church" somewhere. The sister attended, too, and sorrowfully reported that almost every guest wore perfume. Fortunately, the neighbor survived the party.

Few excuses will outdo getting sick from church. Yet, some of the excuses Christians give are more trite, but equally flimsy. Truly, God will judge each individual for only He knows the heart and the circumstances (cf. Romans 8:33-34; Hebrews 4:12). As that is so, often is He snubbed and insulted by Christians who *willfully* intend to miss the assemblies (cf. Hebrews 10:25)? What does He think of the chronic excuser, who attempts to justify skipping worship assemblies with horribly poor rationale?

True Christians truly seek the Kingdom of God first (Matthew 6:33)! Spiritually living Christians hunger for each opportunity to worship God and fellowship with other Christians (cf. Psalm 95:6; Matthew 5:6; Acts 12:12; etc.). Cross-centered saints do not look for "reasons" to miss worship and Bible study with other saints! It is incongruous to think of a spiritual-minded person (cf. 1 Peter 2:5) battling with the decision (?) of whether or not to attend. May every child of God develop the yearning of David and say, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD" (Psalm 122:1).



# FROM THE EDITOR

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## PEARLS FROM ACTS 8

It is a sad mistake for preachers to stop preaching from some chapters because they feel the passages have in the past been overworked and are now too familiar. The danger in that lies in the youth who may miss valuable underpinning in his faith because he wasn't old enough to understand the preaching of the passage when it was done.

One such familiar passage is Acts eight. Let's revisit this wonderful and important text from verses 26 thru 39, and find some pearls for consideration.

The work of the Holy Spirit is interesting in the conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch. After preaching to the people of Samaria and viewing their baptisms, Philip returned to Jerusalem. There the angel told Philip to go South toward Gaza, and he quickly complied, "Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot (vs. 29)."

I Timothy 4:1 says, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly..." In the case of the Ethiopian, that is clearly demonstrated.

Now consider this: After the Spirit directed Philip to the Ethiopian, He backed off. There was no more intervention. His work involved getting the preacher of God's word to the student. After that, the power of God in the conversion process rested solely in the Gospel and the human teacher of that Gospel.

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth..." (Romans 1:16).

I Corinthians 1:21 says, "...It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

I am impressed with Philip. Selected as one of the seven deacons in Acts 6, Philip

was always eager to do more in service to his Lord. After the death of Stephen, and the increasing power and fury of Saul, the Christians in Jerusalem were scattered (Acts 8:4). The penman of Luke focuses his sights on Philip and notes, "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them (Acts 8:5)." This chapter is Philip's crowning tribute. His name is used fourteen times. After the conversion of the Ethiopian, we only read of Philip once more, in Acts 21:8; "...and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. The same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophecy." His work began with serving tables. In Philip we see a fine example of a man willing to work in any capacity presented to him. Whatever the job, he wanted to serve Jesus! Philip preached Jesus. That is simple, all-encompassing description. He preached Jesus. Let all the world learn from this deacon a mammoth truth: To preach includes preaching obedience to the Gospel! When we preach Jesus and leave out the necessity of baptism, we have broken ranks with men like Philip. Jesus taught, "...go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo I am with you always..." (Matthew 28:19).

Now consider the Ethiopian. Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, had placed this man in charge of her treasure. She trusted him. When men set their hearts on pleasing God, it has always made them more honest with their fellow man. (The converse is also true). The trip from Ethiopia to Jerusalem,

*continued on page 4*

# SING GOD A SWEET SONG

*Continued from last issue*

**GODLINESS** (*eusebeia*) simply means "God-like-ness" or "manifesting God in the flesh." Tracing the stem root (*seb*), back it meant to "fall back before," thus came to mean "to worship well." Perhaps the words reverence and piety come closer to defining the term. It is found in the Septuagint translation of Proverbs 1:7, "...the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Paul uses the word ten times in the letters to Timothy and Titus (1 Tim. 2:2; 3:16; 4:7,8; 6:3-5,6,11; 2 Tim. 3:12). The godly person lives above the petty things of life, the passions and pressures that control the lives of others. The first and great commandment was to love God (Mt. 22:37). Too often in our world religious duties are relegated to a secondary status, and humanitarian duties have been elevated to the status that really belongs to religious duties. Some maintain an outward form and deny the inner power of godliness (2 Tim. 3:5). Christians are practical enough to realize that the Bible governs their everyday lives.

**BROTHERLY KINDNESS** is the love of tender affection and attachment (*philadelphia*, which comes from *philo*, meaning the love of brothers, or, even, the affection that an animal has for its young). As God is our Father, His children are our brethren, and we must have love for the family. When reverence for God overflows our hearts, love toward God's people follows. If we love Jesus, we must also love the brethren (1 Pet. 1:22; 4:17; Heb. 13:1; Rm. 12:10; 1 Jn.

5:1,2). On occasion it seems that members of the church are harsher in their dealings with one another than the children of the world. Brotherly kindness is the opposite of being judgmental, censorious disagreeable, partial, political, and unkind (1 Cor. 13:7). When we continually point out the faults of loved ones but never compliment them when they do well, we are "watering the weeds" and letting the flowers die.

**LOVE** (*agape*) is the crowning virtue. "And the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:13). "And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness" (Col. 3:14). This is the highest type of love, the kind that God shows toward sinful, unworthy men. It is described in 1 Corinthians 13, the love that the Holy Spirit produces in our hearts as we walk in the Spirit (Rm. 5:5; Gal. 5:22). When we have brotherly love, we love because of our likeness to others; but with *agape* love, we love in spite of the differences we have. Paul began his list of the fruit of the Spirit with love (Gal. 5:22); Peter ends his list with love. It is like a chain; each link holds fast to its fellow and is a part of the whole.

This great list of virtues is one of the most beautiful and comprehensive passages in the New Testament, reminding one of the procession of the seven deadly sins (by contrast) in Proverbs 6:16-18. If we will add these notes to our soul's song God will like the tune we sing.

*Allen Webster*

## **MOST OF A MINUTE - "IT IS HARD"**

...To convince your children that the church is the most important thing in the world when you are negligent about attending its services and supporting its work.

...To convince your children that the church is the greatest institution in the world when you permit them to miss services to go elsewhere.

...To convince your children that the church is to be held higher than anything when you insist that they do their homework for public

school but permit them to neglect their Bible study.

...To convince your children that the church is the most important institution when you give little to help finance its work and encourage them to do likewise.

...To convince your children that they should respect the church when you continually criticize the leadership, belittle the teacher's work, and appear a habitual faultfinder.



## PEARLS FROM ACTS 8, *continued from page 2*

where this man wanted to worship, was between 1000 and 1200 miles. A man who would make sacrifices like that to worship the true God, and study His will, would make the perfect treasurer.

Because he was a Eunuch, he faced restrictions from God. Deuteronomy 23:1 says plainly, he "shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord." However, from Acts 8 we learn that the eunuchs could be proselytes, or converts to the Jewish law.

When Philip joined the Ethiopian's chariot, he heard him reading from Isaiah 53 about the suffering Christ. From this passage he "preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35). But have you considered that only three chapters later, in Isaiah 56, we read these words, "Neither let the eunuch say, "Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep My sabbaths, and choose the things that please Me, and take hold of My covenant; Even unto them will I give in Mine house and within My walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off."

Had the Ethiopian read this? Was he combing through Isaiah to learn more about this closer relationship to His God? We are not told. What we do know, however; is that this good man from Ethiopia heard the Gospel of Christ that day, and was baptized into his Lord. When the Ethiopian said good-bye to his beloved teacher, "he went on his way rejoicing." For now, you see, he is privileged to wear that everlasting name. Now he has a place in the house of the Most High! He wears the name of Christ. He is a Christian.

May the word of God be planted in the hearts of people like the Ethiopian until the Lord comes again! May conversions like the one from Acts 8:38 happen over and over again. And may we who wear Christ's name remember that conversions come when we like Philip, open our mouth, begin with the scriptures, and preach Jesus.

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# THE WORDS OF Truth

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

**SEE ARTICLES  
INSIDE:  
THE TRUTH IS THE TRUTH  
TAKING A BROTHER TO COURT  
A DOLLAR BILL**

Vol. 33 No. 40

December 26, 1996

## THE TRUTH IS THE TRUTH

J.C. Choate

What is truth? There are those who would ask this question to suggest there is no such thing as truth, that there is no absolute, that the answer depends on the values of the one who is giving it, and that "Truth" varies from culture to culture and from country to country.

Is it really left up to each individual to decide what the truth is, what is right and what is wrong, what he will accept and what he will reject, what is good for him and what is bad for him?

Surely if we believe there is a God in heaven, that there is a creator, that he is all powerful, knows all, sees all, hears all, and loves all, then we would have to conclude that he knows the facts, knows our needs, and knows what to tell us so that we may be saved and have the hope of eternal life. He would therefore not lie to us, deceive us, or mislead us. Neither would he tell one to do one thing and another to do something else. He would not have one message for one culture and another message for another culture. He created all of us, and He knows we are all in sin. Because of that, He sent his Son, Jesus, to die for the sins of the whole world. Jesus himself said, "I am the way, the truth, and life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6).

There is one God, one Lord, one Spirit, one faith, one baptism, one church, and

one hope. (Ephesians 4:4-6). We are also told that there is one way, one door, one gospel, one foundation, one name, one worship, one day of worship, one heaven, and one hell. In all these things, and others that could be added, there is ONLY ONE and all of us know that ONE means ONE, not TWO or THREE or MORE. Someone can explain truth away, misinterpret it, or reject it, but it remains, in spite of all, ONLY ONE. Fact is fact and truth is truth, and it does not change.

The Lord has revealed his will to us through the pages of the Bible. It is inspired of God (2 Timothy 3:16,17), it is Spirit and life (John 5:39), and is therefore from God and is God's word. It should not be added to, subtracted from, or changed, but left as it is. (Revelation 22:18,19). God knew man's needs, and in response to those needs He told man what he must do. With all people having the disease of sin, God prescribed the same remedy for all. (Mark 16:15,16).

The Lord knows what he wants us to do. He has told all of us to do the same thing, and when we do that, he saves all of us the same way, and adds all of us to his one church. (Acts 2:38,47).

God has spoken. (Hebrews 1:1,2). He has spoken the truth (John 8:32). We are then to live by it, preach it, and take it to every creature under heaven.



# FROM THE EDITOR

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## TAKING A BROTHER TO COURT

The first few verses of I Corinthians 6 may make most Christians shrug their shoulders with a bit of indifference. It is the passage in which the apostle Paul prohibits Christians from settling their internal disputes in a court of law before non-Christian judges. A Christian however who faces such a dispute will find this passage to be monumental. It is not wrong to go to the court to get a marriage license, or to get a license tag for a car, or even to settle a dispute between a Christian and an unbeliever. But there is litigation which is forbidden to the Christian. Here is how Paul presents his point:

1. The saints (Christians) will one day judge the sinful world. This is not explained in detail, it is simply affirmed. If Christians will judge the world over eternal matters, it does not seem appropriate for Christians to seek out judges of the world to settle their disputes over earthly matters (I Cor. 6:1-3).

2. There are wise men in the church who could and should be selected to be a go-between, a mediator, between the two Christians who are in the dispute. He can do basically what the judge would do--listen to both sides and render a decision. (Vs. 4-5)

3. It is better for a Christian to suffer himself to be "defrauded" than to take his brother to court to settle a dispute between them. (Vs. 7)

Some brethren attempt to soften this passage by suggesting that Paul is only forbidding a brother taking another brother to court in small, relatively important

matters. But who would decide? Who would decide whether a matter was big enough to warrant taking a brother to court? Furthermore, what man is there who would desire to take his brother to court if he did not consider the matter to be important? That argument reduces Paul's teaching to useless writ. Paul says it is wrong for a Christian to settle a dispute with another Christian before a non-Christian judge. Big or little, it is better for one to permit himself to be defrauded than to take his brother to court.

Paul teaches that it is illogical for Christians to go before sinners to settle their disputes. In addition, though not stated, Paul obviously is considering the impact such law suits would have on the reputation of the Lord's church. Such cases would be fodder for scoffers. Wouldn't the enemies of the church love to hear of Christians who needed help from the world to get along? And who would be drawn closer to Christianity when they heard of such a court case?

The apostle is not trying, as some religions of men today, to cover up on-going corruption in the church. He is not soft on sin. In chapter five he commands withdrawal of fellowship from Christians who persist in sin. He is rather teaching a better way to solve and correct the wrongs committed by some brethren.

The principle of being cautious about the reputation of the Lord's church in a given community is an important one. An elder, to be scripturally qualified, "...must have a good report of them which are without (I Tim. 3:7)." He will be considered a representative of the church of

*continued on page 4*

Christ tells us that God is a Spirit and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in truth. (John 4:24). As the Lord's people, we are to direct our worship to God, in all sincerity and humility, and to worship him as he has directed or commanded. Anything less than that, or more than that, will not be accepted.

The Lord's word, the truth, is said to be the perfect law of liberty. (James 1:25). We are exhorted to be doers of the word, not hearers only, deceiving ourselves. (James 1:22). Christ says, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Revelation 22:14). His word will never pass away (Matthew 24:35) and in the last day all will be judged by his word. (John 12:48).

God does not lie and cannot lie. (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18). He has always spoken

the truth and will always speak the truth through his word. The gospel preached by the apostles in the first century is the same gospel that is to be preached today. It saved then and it saves now. It is just as modern and up-to-date as the times. Why should man change it? Woe be to those who do. We can see in the inspired record what has happened with those who have departed from God's truth. To change truth turns it into a lie, and a lie will damn all who follow it.

The truth, then is the truth, based on facts, true information, and commands, whether we like it or we don't like it, whether we accept it or we reject it. May God help us to believe the truth, to obey it, to live by it, to preach it, never to depart from it or be ashamed of it, so that in the last day we will be judged by the word to be faithful to God, and to be worthy of eternal life.

## **MOST OF A MINUTE A DOLLAR BILL**

Have you ever stopped to consider a well-worn one dollar bill? Look at the date and consider the years. What have all the men and women done to possess it? Most have worked to get it, others stole it in one way or another. And how did they view it? Some saw it as half of a tip, and nothing more. Others counted it carefully to see if they'd have enough this month. People say money talks. I sort of wish it could. I'd like to hear what it had to say.

I work every day to live by my standard which is the Bible, and the Bible has much to say about money--mostly

cautions--about the way I earn it, spend it, and view it. "Let him that stole steal no more, but let him work with his hands that thing which is good", (Ephesians 4:28). "Beware of covetousness. A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." (Luke 12:15) "The love of money is the root of all evil, which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows," (1 Timothy 6:10).

I'd better put this back in my pocket.



## TAKING A BROTHER TO COURT, *continued from page 2*

Christ. The name of the church could be hurt if the elders are not respectable men. The same applies to the deacons (I Tim. 3:8-13).

All Christians should consider this teaching, and avoid practices which could tarnish the name of the Lord's church in their community. We should be cautious about speaking ill of the preacher, or the elders, or the other members, when we talk to our unbelieving friends. This is particularly true when the congregation is in a time of turmoil. That is when we are most tempted. Various ones in the church, though well-meaning, may speak of these things to non-Christians and in the process, poison the minds of those friends. We should never speak or act in such a way as to make people afraid of the church or leery about its mem-

bers or preacher or elders. We want them to be saved, and salvation is only in Christ's church (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 5:25). Whenever we speak of the church in their presence, let our words be of encouragement. Should those friends speak of negative things they have observed in some member of the church, let us note with them what is good about Christ's church. We would not lie and deny truth about a matter, but neither would we let the discussion end on a negative note about the church of our Lord. We love His church, and want to make it our business to help others to love it as well.

Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, seeks to warn us about how we make the church look in the eyes of unbelievers. Let us heed that caution brethren.

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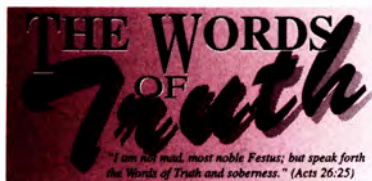
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Individual rates are \$20.50 per year. All bills payable to Words of Truth, 3051 McQueen Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36107



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