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Volume 29 Number 1

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The Words of Truth

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

Liberty, Grace, Law, Love, Faith, and Works (No. 4)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Two vastly important questions will be the fundamental focus of this current study. They will serve as sectional titles.

Are We Under Grace Today?

The answer is an **ABOUNDING** affirmative. Paul affirms in Romans 3:24 that we are freely justified by his grace. We read in Romans 6:14, 15, "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid." We are not under a law system that demands sinless perfection as did Judaism. But we are under a system of grace that contains the law of Christ. Under it we can be saved without sinless perfection. Paul says in Ephesians 2:8, ". . . for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God . . ." We read in John 1:17, For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." We are under grace today. By grace coupled with faith are we saved. Such is the apostolic affirmation within Sacred Scripture.

IS THERE A CONFLICT BETWEEN THE GRACE OF GOD AND THE LAW OF CHRIST?

Since we are definitely

under the law of Christ and obedience is demanded thereunto, is there a conflict between the grace tendered by God's love and marvelous mercy and the law given by him who has all authority in heaven and on earth? (Cf. Ephesians 2:8; Matthew 28:18-20; Hebrews 5:8, 9). Toward this query many would answer with a prompt and ardent YES! "Nevertheless what saith the Scripture?" (Galatians 4:30). If there is helpless, hopeless and hapless conflict, Deity is at fault and not men. Note the derivation of both grace and law. God's amazing grace came from Deity; Christ's equitable law originated from Deity. Surely the Godhead would not originate concepts that would be in lethal conflict with each other. And there is NO conflict of interests in the two when we just accept what the Bible says relative to grace and law and leave man's irrational and foolish thinking totally out of the picture.

Grace derives from God and is unmerited favor; it is favor that is unearned and never can be earned. This stately subject has been defined in these words of weight worth and wisdom, "Grace means pure and unrecompensed kindness and favor." The law of Christ, quite obviously, came from the Son of God and is a rule of action. A definition of law in somewhat more detail follows.

A law in the most general

comprehensive acceptance in which the term is employed may be said to be a rule laid down for the guidance of an intelligent being by an intelligent being having a power over him.

Law, therefore, is a rule, a commandment, a regulation.

To suggest that there is a conflict between grace and law, as many currently do, is to say that Jehovah cannot be guided by a rule or regulation of action. Yet earthly parents do this with their children throughout the years of their childhood. They deal with them by grace and yet demand of them obedience to household regulations and family rules. Can parents do something in the family framework that the Almighty is impotent in doing in the realm of redemption?

Paul saw no conflict between grace and law. He affirmed in Romans 3:24 that saints were justified freely by the grace of God. Yet three verses later, in Romans 3:27, he referred to their being under the law of faith. Five chapters later, Romans 8:2, Paul affirmed that the law of the Spirit of life had made him free from the law of sin and death. Grace justified in Romans 3:24; the law of Spirit of life made free in Romans 8:2. Is not the justification of Romans 3:24 the same beautiful and bright blessing as being made free in

Romans 8:2? If not, NOT? But if so, then the rule applies of things that are equal to the same thing are equal to each other. In fact the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is Jehovah's glorious grace in admirable action. If not, WHY NOT?

Paul mentions grace some seven times in Galatians, according to my personal count, yet tells how to fulfill the law of Christ in this very same gallant epistle (Galatians 6:2). Will those who fulfill the law of Christ be the rich recipients of God's amazing grace concerning which we sing so frequently and preach so fervently? If they are, and most assuredly they ARE, then there is NO conflict between grace and law, between the grace of God and the law of God's Son.

Imagine, if you can, presenting a series of lessons on Galatians and saying initially that for the Christian there is NO law! That was actually done some years back by a man who professes to be a gospel preacher and who fills the pulpit of one of the largest congregations among us. Did the careless preacher forget about Galatians 6:2 and 6:16 when he made this foolish pronouncement? There is nothing but holy harmony between grace and law, countless preachers to the contrary notwithstanding.

John 1:17 connects grace

th. Truth is simply another synonym for law. The truth of the Lord cannot be separated from the law of the Lord. In fact they are one and the same. Psalm 119:142 affirms "thy law is truth." There is therefore no conflict between grace and law except among those who do not believe what the Bible says relative to grace and law. And disbelief in the Bible is a mounting malady among us and is now in epidemic stages with no brakes applied in the foreseeable future.

--P.O. Box 464, Ripley, TN 38063.

The Golden Rule

G. F. Raines

A survey conducted by the University of Chicago, the American Association for Adult Education, and the United Y.M.C.A. Schools revealed that the two things which adults are most concerned about are health and skill in human relationships.

The best of the techniques involved in getting along with people which are recommended in the books on social relationships may be briefly summed up in the Golden Rule enunciated by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, as follows:

"Therefore all things

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

The Authority Question, 1978

For years the annual lectureship from the Sixth Avenue Church in Jasper has been a strong source of encouragement to many. From the archives I recently was presented a recording dated May 5, 1978. Remembering the lectures from that time, I suspect the auditorium was full that night. --And why not? The speaker was Rubel Shelly, and all in attendance knew they would hear a great lesson. And great it was. The topic was "The Gospel versus Instrumental Music."

In this article I want to present some of Rubel's points presented that night. My primary purpose isn't to present a before/after picture of brother Shelly. That's been sufficiently done by others. I rather want to simply present portions of a marvelous lesson on why we don't use instrumental music in our worship. This recording, in my judgment, is a masterpiece. I wish I could print a manuscript, but for the sake of space I will simply note some strong points:

1. What's really at stake with regard to pianos and organs is the authority of the Bible. Once that point can be made clearly and effectively, it is an easy thing to lead that person to accept the truth about baptism, the unity of the church, or any number of other fundamental matters that are a part of one's coming to the saving truth of the Gospel.

2. A few elders and preachers have even gone on record to advocate that we ought to extend fellowship to the so-called instrumental churches of Christ, or as they are called in some parts of the country, "Conservative

Christian churches." They've indicated that they really don't feel instrumental music ought to be a test of fellowship among baptized believers in the restoration tradition. It seems evident then that we've allowed ourselves to get away from doing the fundamental, frequent teaching on this subject that we should be doing.

3. Colossians 3:17 teaches the authority principle. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." "In the name of Jesus Christ" is to do it upon His authority. It's to do it in light of an in harmony with the revelation that God has given to man through Christ, and through His delegated apostles and prophets of the early church. Everything that we do in word or in deed embraces the totality of our life -- not just in worship services, but in everything -- in our personal, private convictions; in our family life and activity; or in worship of the church. The full authority of God is inherent in the words of scripture. In Matthew 18:18, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. The original tenses indicate what the English does not. The passage actually says, "Whatever you bind or loose will have already been settled in heaven." You are simply announcing it on behalf of heaven. I Corinthians 14:37 -- "If any man is a prophet or spiritual among you, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."

4. Scripture is the means by which Jesus gives us His

authority for anything. This is the means of authorization, that we must look to for our beliefs and practices (II Timothy 3:16) (II Corinthians 5:7). Faithful followers of the Lord are the ones who walk by faith, not by sight. To walk by faith is to walk in the paths clearly marked and defined by scripture, because faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17).

5. "... Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). I would counsel you to study Romans 14:23. We often use that to talk about conscience; that whenever you're violating your conscience you're sinning. That isn't what Romans 14:23 is saying in context. In context what he's saying is, "anything that we do without the assurance that the word of God authorizes it is sinful." Conscience become involved, but conscience is never the ultimate standard. The ultimate standard is the word of God. So whenever we say whatever is not of faith is sin, we are saying that whenever we do a thing without the full assurance and confidence that the word of God authorizes this, we're sinning.

6. There have always been people who have felt that whatever God hasn't specifically forbidden is therefore authorized defacto in worship. The Bible records some sad stories of people who acted upon that premise. Saul, (I Samuel 13:11), King Uzziah, (II Chronicles 26), and Nadab and Abihu, (Leviticus 10). What had happened was that God had given authority for it to be done by other people, or by other means, and they presumed to change that and they sinned.

7. The issue really isn't the

presence of a piano or organ in the building. The issue is the authority of the Bible. If it is a correct principle of hermanutics that whatever isn't expressly forbidden is permitted, then there'll be no way to stop any number of apostacies from the truth. What is at stake is the authority of the Bible, not a piano or organ.

8. There is certainly no New Testament authority for instrumental music in the worship of God. There is no direct statement which authorizes it, neither is there any implication contained in the statements of scripture to authorize it. There is no precedent or example. There is no rule of expediency that can possibly justify the use of pianos and organs in the worship of God. The New Testament authority is for singing (Ephesians 5:18, 19; Colossians 3:16). In all eight verses which touch on this subject, all is singing.

9. We can teach, admonish, or speak in song (Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16). These actions are done by verbal communicating by intelligible sounds from the heart. This cannot be done instrumentally.

10. Hebrews 7:13-14 -- "For He of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance to the alter. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood." We didn't invent this argument in the restoration movement to justify our

position on instrumental music.

Note the same argument is used by the Hebrew writer. If the Old Testament was still binding, Jesus couldn't be our priest. Why? Does the Old Testament Law forbid a man of the tribe of Judah to be priest? No, not in so many words. But the Jews knew that they were bound to that which was authorized. What the law did say was specific. Not just someone who was a Jew, but a Jew who was of the tribe of Levi, from the sons of Aaron. You don't have to have an express prohibition before a thing is eliminated from possibility. You must operate within the realm of authority.

11. When my daughter was seven we played "Simon Says." I told her, "Simon says, sing Old Rugged Cross." Then I told her, "Simon says play your piano." We did it over and over. She never got them mixed up. She understood the authority principle. If the order was, "Simon says, Sing and make melody in your hearts to the Lord," an auditorium full of seven year olds could get it right. Not a one would ask, "where is the piano?"

12. Someone might object, "Worship is an emotion of the heart, and however you express that is irrelevant."

a. Question: Did Nadab and Abihu have bad attitudes, or did they perform a sinful deed? What does the text say?

b. Why did the Ethiopian Eunuch have to go to

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Improving Personal Bible Study

Allen Webster

"I would study the Bible more, but I don't get anything out of it. I just can't seem to understand what I read and what I do understand, I can't remember."

Sound familiar? We all want to learn the Bible and have all started to read through the Bible but have gotten bogged down and burned out. Since Bible study is the lifeblood of a Christian (II Timothy 2:15; Romans 10:17), it behooves

us to "pay the price" to learn how to make our Bible study time profitable and soul-strengthening.

TRY THESE GUIDELINES TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF YOUR TIME.

GET A GOOD BIBLE. It is better to spend a little extra to get a Bible that you can keep for a lifetime. Get one with easy-to-read print (your eyesight will not get any better), get a reliable translation (the King James

and American Standard [1901] are considered the most accurate), and one with adequate study helps (concordance, dictionary, maps). A good leather Bible will cost about \$50.

SET ASIDE A TIME FOR STUDY EACH DAY. Personalities differ; therefore, each has to choose his own best time. Some like to get up a little early and study before work; others like to study on their lunch hour; many choose to retire early at night to a quiet place for their study. The main thing is to study at the same time each day. Make DAILY Bible study a habit (cf. Acts 17:11). Do not let anything keep you from your Bible study on any day. Be jealous of it and selfish about it!

STUDY FOR A SET AMOUNT OF TIME. Study for as long as you can keep your mind on it. Many choose to study for thirty minutes at a time. Others enjoy a full hour each day. Some have found that fifteen minutes of concentrated study is best for them.

STUDY SITTING OR STANDING. Too many fall into the trap of reading while reclining in bed just before falling to sleep. This is a disadvantage to concentration and learning. It is better to study sitting at a desk or even standing beside a table or counter (it is hard to fall asleep while standing!).

STUDY IN THE SAME PLACE. Choose a quiet place away from the television, telephone, children, radio and all other distractions. It is best to study in the same place because familiar surroundings provide fewer distractions.

STUDY WITH A PLAN IN MIND. Too many skip around in study and have no real goal in mind. Choose a book and plan to learn that book before going to another. Choose a single subject and do not get sidetracked until you feel that you understand the Bible's teaching on it.

CONCENTRATE FULLY. This is the key to learning. It is better to study with full concentration for ten minutes than to put a half-hearted effort into thirty minutes. Do not allow your mind to drift.

MARK KEY VERSES. Do not be afraid to mark in your Bible. It is a tool to help you go from earth to heaven. By marking the verses that you want to remember, you have sharpened your tool. This will also help you find important verses faster later. Many use a yellow marker for this purpose. (Use one that does not bleed through).

TAKE NOTES AND WRITE DOWN QUES-

TIONS. It is easier to remember something if you write it down. Even if you never look at it again, by writing it down, you have written it more clearly in your memory. Any questions should be immediately written down. A good commentary can help with the answer. Your spouse, Bible class teacher, an elder or preacher would enjoy helping with the answers.

USE WHAT YOU LEARN. If you want to remember what you have learned, you must use it. If it is a fact, tell it to someone. If it is a precept to be obeyed, put it into practice and you will never forget it.

Test these guidelines for a week and see if you do not learn more and enjoy studying more than ever before!

The Authority Question, 1978

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Jerusalem for worship? Couldn't he have an emotion in Ethiopia? Or, was it impossible for him to perform a certain act that required a place, and particular circumstances? The temple, altar, priest, etc. was in Jerusalem.

c. (John 4:24) -- "God is spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." If worship were only an emotion, we should only be concerned with the spirit and not the truth. But if we also must worship in truth, we must be concerned not only with our hearts, but that our

worship is within the bounds of the authority of the word.

d. Paul's actions before becoming a Christian were emotionally right -- in all good conscience. After conversion, his emotions didn't change, but his actions did change.

13. The four original words translated "worship" all designate action, not just emotion.

It was a great speech. I grew from it. As for this editor, I'd pay money and drive a great distance to hear the 1978 Rubel debate the 1992 Rubel on current church issues.

"Most Of A Minute"

I know this may seem a little across the grain from what you usually hear today, but here goes. If we are going to be Christians and people of integrity, we are going to have to learn how to be negative. That's right, negative. Oh, not in our dispositions. Christians should work to maintain a positive outlook at all times. I'm talking about the necessity of our being able to say "no" to activities that are wrong, and then stand on our convictions. Integrity isn't a watered-down collection of values that flexes one way or the other depending on who you're with. Integrity doesn't exist in a person until they are able and willing to say "no."

Titus 2:12 of the Bible says that the grace of God teaches us that "... denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world."

Don't be ashamed of being negative regarding things that are wrong. Remember: We stand tallest when we stand on our convictions.

The Golden Rule

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whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

The law in the Old Testament to which our Lord referred says: "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Leviticus 19:18).

Near the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40).

Love is also the greatest of the obligations set forth in the gospel of Christ. The apostle Paul says: "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove

mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing" (I Corinthians 13:1-3, A.S.V.).

Peter says: "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" (I Peter 1:22).

John, who has been well described as "the apostle of love," says:

"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (I John 3:15).

"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (I John 4:8).

"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also" (I John 4:20, 21).

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"An Attitude Adjustment"

Winfred Clark

You have heard the statement, "he needs an attitude adjustment." That means one should alter his way of thinking. The attitude is not right. It needs to be changed.

It also means that there is a right attitude. That attitude can also be known. One can have that attitude. Did not the wise man say, "Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life" Proverbs 4:23? That means the attitude of the heart is to be kept in harmony with the right standard. It must be set properly, just as one would set a watch.

Paul wrote to those people at Philippi and dealt with the attitude problem. He will say, "if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8). This is guided and governed thinking. This will enable them to keep the heart properly tuned. He will enumerate a number of worthy things upon which to focus the mind. " whatsoever things are . . . true . . . honest . . . just . . . pure . . . lovely . . . good report" (Philippians 4:8). That sort of thinking will enable them to be the kind of people that they ought to be. It will help them to have the right and proper attitude.

The Lord dealt with the matter of "attitude" in the fifteenth chapter of the book of Luke. Here one will find the "elder brother" (Luke 15:25-32). He is the brother of the one we know as the "prodigal." As you read these verses you see him angry, filled with self-righteousness, self pity, and resentment. He is critical, and unloving. He did indeed need an attitude adjustment. He would consider himself to be morally clean but he surely had a mental problem. He could speak of lusts concerning his brother but he had a loveless heart.

Can you think of the effect of such an attitude? Remember when he came from the field and heard the rejoicing? He asked a servant what was meant. When he

learned that the younger brother was back from the far country, he was angry. Can you imagine the effect that sort of thing would have on the servant? What effect does it have on the family? How would it affect the father? What of the friends that had come to welcome him home? Surely this becomes a problem. It not only becomes a problem, it becomes a major problem. In fact, it was such a problem that it demanded the attention of the father. The father will make a "personal work" visit. He has to interrupt the occasion to try to deal with one who had "an attitude" problem. He had to let some other things go while he tried to adjust the problem. Yes, such an attitude does cause problems. How well do we know this in the church.

What was the result of this attitude problem? What affect did such have on the elder brother?

I. HE MISSED THE JOY OF SERVICE

Yes, you have to compliment the elder brother for having been in the field (Luke 15:25). Such was a needed work and someone needed to look after the fields. You have to admire the years that he served (Luke 15:29). One can be glad that one would be there year in and year out. Such is needed. But, there is another side to the matter. WHY, was he in the field, WHY, did he serve all those years? Was he grateful for the opportunity? What were his motives?

Was his attitude the same as that of Jacob? The record says, "and Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had for her" (Genesis 29:20). You would never hear Jacob saying what the elder brother had to say. Such a thought would never cross his mind. The love he had made his job easy and the years would flee away. They would not be counted grudgingly.

The brother's attitude would not be

like that of David when he said, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of the Lord" (Psalm 122:1). David did not see this as a burden but as a blessing. It was not merely an obligation but also a blessing.

Suppose you met the elder brother on his way to the field. What do you think his attitude would be? Would it be one of joy or sorrow? Yes, he needed an attitude adjustment.

II. HE MAGNIFIED HIS BROTHER'S SINS

Yes, it is true that his brother had sinned. Nobody knew this better than the brother. In fact nobody would regret it more than the brother. He admitted this to himself (Luke 15:18). He admitted it to his father (Luke 15:21). He never tried to cover it up, neither did he ever try to deny it.

This man would blow these up and make them as bad as possible. He described his brother as one "which hath devoured thy living with harlots" (Luke 15:30). Nobody said this was the case except the elder brother. But why would he do such a thing? Is it to make himself look as good as possible? Didn't he compare himself with the brother?

Usually you will find families trying to protect one another. They will not try to expose the weaknesses of those they love. It is truly the case that "love covers a multitude of sins" (I Peter 4:8). This is especially true when it comes to members of the family and those we love. So this would tell us something of the lack of brotherly love on the part of the elder brother.

III. HE MINIMIZED HIS REPENTANCE

The fact that he had repented had no effect on the elder brother. He looked at him as he had been rather than what he was trying to become.

This man would have a hard time dealing with those who put the Son of God to death

and then repented. They would always be seen as murderers, for at one time they were. But we have no record that any of the apostles ever accused those who repented of such again.

What about the apostle Paul? If he had to deal with one like the elder brother, he would never be allowed to forget the fact that he had persecuted the church. Yes, Paul will speak of that fact time and again. He was always aware of the damage that he had caused. But suppose he had an elder brother to forever remind him of that fact. I am sure Paul would think that such a person would need "an attitude adjustment."

IV. HE MAXIMIZED HIS OWN VIRTUES

One could think that the elder brother is like the man that went to a funeral and then after all the glowing things were said, he found himself dissatisfied because he was not the corpse.

He would speak in glowing terms of the many years he had served. You could imagine that he could tell you exactly how many years he had served. But when you find a person that keeps up with the service he renders, you will find that you are dealing with someone who is trying to put others in his debt. Such a thing cannot be done by those who are children of God. They know they cannot put God in their debt. When they have done all that is their duty to do, they are still unprofitable servants (Luke 17:10).

He speaks of having never transgressed one of the father's commandments. But what is he doing then? Such seems to have had no effect at all on his heart. Yes, he needed "an attitude adjustment."

V. HE MISREPRESENTS HIS FATHER

If one had been standing nearby listening; he might think the father endorsed the

sins of the prodigal. That was not the case. But that is the way the elder brother would represent the matter. He is saying, "you are rewarding him for his sin." He misrepresented his father's goodness as an endorsement of sin.

It is clear that his attitude and that of the father was not the same. There can be no doubt that there should be a change. We know it was not the father that needed "an attitude adjustment."

A Tale Of Two Brothers

Two brothers once lived this way:

One was Do, the other was Say.

If the streets were dirty, the taxes high,

Or the schools were crowded, Say would cry,

"My what a town." But brother Do

Would set to work and make things new.

And while Do worked, Say would cry:

"He does it wrong, I know that I

Could do it right!" So all the day

Was heard the clank of brother Say.

But this one fact was never hid:

Say always talked; Do always did!

(Author unknown)

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Volume 29 Number 2
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The Words of Truth

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

e

"Dear Father In Heaven, Give Me The Strength In The Coming Year":

Gary Colley

1. To remember that Thou knowest my thoughts, words, and deeds, no matter where I may be (Psalm 139:7-10).

2. To know that Thy eyes are upon and thy ears are always open to the prayers of Thy children (I Peter 3:12).

3. To carry out Thy will in my life, by seeking first Thy church and Thy righteousness (Matthew 6:33).

4. To study and work to show myself helpful to Thy cause and approved in Thy sight (II Timothy 2:15).

5. To show that I trust in Thy care, and that I am converted to Thee and not man, knowing that the arm of flesh will fail me (II Chornicles 32:7-8).

6. To love Thee with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength, giving Thee honor over my own selfish desires (Matthew 22:37).

7. To remember to rejoice in Thy blessings and to pray without ceasing (I Thessalonians 5:16-17).

8. To accept not an accusation against an elder, or any other, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses (I Timothy 5:19).

9. To pray for wisdom daily to use my knowledge and abilities correctly and to bear my burdens properly (James 1:5).

10. To be one who lifts up and encourages Thy work, not a discourager of good (Matthew 5:13-16).

11. To serve my fellowman who may be sick, sorrowful, or in need (Matthew 25:34-36; Romans 12:15).

12. To always keep in mind that I am responsible to others and to remember that someone is looking to me for strength and example (Matthew 18:6-7).

13. To judge others only after I am sure of the facts; and when I have been misjudged not to seek to pay evil for evil (Matthew 7:1-2; Romans 12:17).

14. To be sure that I do not sin against my own knowledge of Thy truth (James 4:17).

15. To not forsake the assembling with Thy people (Hebrews 10:23-25).

16. To love my mate more, and train my children to walk in Thy way (Ephesians 5:24-25; 6:1-4).

17. To be grateful for all of the bountiful blessings received from Thy hand daily (Ephesians 5:20).

18. To teach and preach better and to support the teaching and preaching of the true Gospel whether it is here or in other places (Matthew 28:19-20; I Timothy 3:15).

19. To know that without

Thy grace and mercy toward my sins when I repent, I would be without hope (Ephesians 2:8-10; Thessalonians 4:13).

20. To have an un-

quenchable hunger and thirst to act in harmony with Thy word of Grace, that when I come to cross the valley of the shadow of death, I may at last meet Thee in peace (Matthew 5:6; Acts 20:32; II Corinthians

6:1; I Corinthians 15:10).

For these and all other blessings in 1993, I pray in the name of our blessed Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, Amen."

Practical Christianity Only Kind To Save World

Elwood Holt

Too many have been preaching about the gospel all these years, but have not been preaching the gospel itself. When the beggar asks for bread, do we begin telling him about the different kinds of bread; analyzing each one, giving the constituent elements that go to make up the various kinds, while all this time hunger is gnawing at his vitals?

What the man needs is bread. That is what he wants. So the multitudes want the gospel that saves the soul, feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, visits the sick, wipes away sorrows and heals broken hearts. This is practical Christianity and the only kind, not kinds, that will save the world.

Though there are diverse kinds of gospels in this world, there is only one true gospel. The gospel of Christ is the only hope for this weary world. It, and it alone, is the

"power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). People in Paul's day were removed from the gospel of Christ by the theories and dogmas of men, and the apostle said he was amazed that they should so soon become removed "from the grace of Him who called you unto another gospel." But he went ahead to say "which is not another gospel; only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ" (Galatians 1:6, 8).

Preaching "another gospel" is the most vicious thing that a man can do. Establishing a plan of one's own nullifies, so far as he and his followers are concerned, the plan established as the result of the sacrifice of our Savior. Religion has thousands of enemies and its very worst parade under religious banners.

The world has become addicted to the philosophy, "It doesn't make any difference

what a man believes just so he thinks he is right." Now, whose standard is that? Is it the Lord's? If it is, why did Paul warn about preaching "another gospel?" If any gospel will do just so one is sincere, then why wouldn't "another gospel" do in Paul's day? If "another gospel" would not work then, why should we fool ourselves into thinking that any gospel will do now? Have times and the mind of God changed that much?

The crying need of this 20th century is a first century religion -- a first century gospel. Men have no right formulating new doctrines contrary to the old one. The Bible is not a book endorsing and encouraging the gigantic frauds that are perpetrated in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The gospel of Christ means "good news." That is the meaning of the word "gospel."

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Only When God Ties The Knot

The Bible is the word of God and is designed by Him to "Thoroughly furnish us unto every good work" (II Timothy 3:16). In it, He has given us "all things that pertain to life and godliness . . ." (II Peter 1:3). The critical subject of marriage is no exception, and aren't you glad! Pleasing God in regard to this relationship is something with which all Christians are concerned.

A great confusion has swirled around the question of marriages that follow my first marriage. I want to suggest a simple "rule of thumb." In Matthew 19:6 our Master said, "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Marriage is a melting together of two lives. Two become one. How does this

happen? GOD JOINS them together. The reality of marriage isn't just in the fact that the courthouse records the union, but more importantly, that God joins this couple in HIS record. That's the record that matters most to those who want to please God. He joins them!

There are various verses in the Holy Scriptures which mention marriages that are a sin to enter. For example, Matthew 19:9 says, "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." Now, since God cannot lie, (James 1:13), He CANNOT join two people of whom He has said it would be adultery to unite. To do so would be blatant

inconsistency. It would contradict His true nature. They may marry, in the civil sense, but God doesn't join them. The rule of thumb then, in regard to who can or cannot be scripturally married, is simply this: "Will God join us together?" With equal weight is the question, "DID God join us together?"

This is understandably one of the most emotionally charged subjects we discuss from the scriptures today. We grieve with those held in the painful grips of sin's consequence. I don't know of any sin which causes more internal struggle than adultery. Nevertheless, may we always make His word a "Lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path" (Psalm 119:105), for in this word are "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3).

Practical Christianity Only Kind To Save World

Good news about what? Why it is good news about the sacrifice Christ made for lost humanity, and how that sacrifice was accepted by the Father. It is good news about the way from earth to heaven - the way that sin had closed for thousands of years.

That way has been thrown open and any penitent, obedient sinner can pursue it until he stands in closest fellowship with the divine Father. Is that not good news? The gospel is good news about the Church purchased by the blood of Jesus. It is good news about the scheme of redemption, what man must do to be saved. Yes, it is the best news ever to come to lost man.

It is bread for the hungry, water for the thirsty, and rest

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for the weary. It has facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed, and promises to be enjoyed. In it we see the limitless love of the Father, the willful sacrifice of the Savior, the tender entreaties of the guiding Spirit, and the readiness to rejoice and

welcome on the part of the angels. What could we want better than these?

Let us rejoice that through the gospel we can have peace with God. We are told that he is the "Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9).



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David's Toe

Dale Jenkins

(Note: You don't have to be an art expert to appreciate this article).

According to the report the toe of the famous statue of David by Michelangelo has been repaired. This statue is phenomenal in it's fame. The toe had been knocked off with a hammer by a frustrated young artist who said simply that the statue was "too perfect"! While you won't see me in Rome with a hammer, I do tend to agree with the young artist.

There aren't many pieces of "work" that you can simply say the name and common folk know what you are talking about. Let's see, there's The Venus Di'Milo, Whistler's Mother, The Mona Lisa, Michelangelo's David. They are perfection in the art field. In fact, in the eyes of most artists they are too perfect. They have been set up as being so great that young artists believe they can never meet up to that perfection.

Now, I don't claim to be an art expert (Though I did get to take Art Appreciation two times in college), but I do claim a certain amount of interest in things spiritual and in perfection in the spiritual realm. And, let me say again, I agree with the young artist who said the "David" was to perfect.

The work of art is more perfect than the man himself. David was not a perfect man. He sinned, on one occasion, when with pride he numbered his fighting men. On another his lust turned to adultery, lying and finally murder. That sin brought a invariable sword into his family life. And while we may never gaze upon Michelangelo's "David," we just might look upon the one in the Bible with exasperation and conclude it's no use continuing for we can never be perfect like he was.

I beg to differ with you. We can be perfect. And the only way we can be perfect is like David was. His perfection was

not a self-contained perfection. It was not a self-righteousness but a mirror perfection as God shined through his life and "made him perfect."

Please, please, please take time to read all of the Psalm below. Note that it was written when Nathan came to David and uncovered David's sin with Bathsheba before him.

Psalm 51

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightiest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest . . . Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts . . . Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness . . . Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise . . ."

After reading that no

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Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works

(No. 5)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

We now continue with our studies of some of the great, key, kingly terms of the New Testament such as grace, law, love, liberty, faith, and works. In our challenging consideration of these highly important terms we are seeking to show the marvelous harmony that subsists among them. In previous studies mention was made of the fact that we are under law -- the law of Christ. We also are saved by the grace of God as Paul affirmed in Ephesians 2:8. Then I sought to show that there is no conflict or contradiction between the grace of God on the one hand and the law of Christ on the other hand. Both grace and law came from the mind of Deity. To conclude there is a jarring disharmony between the two is to place the fault at Deity's feet which would be a blasphemous charge indeed.

Affirmed earlier in this extended series was the observation that we are living in a time in which grace is greatly misunderstood, misapprehended and misapplied. Such is true relative to both

those in the church and those outside as well. It becomes a matter of great seriousness when an elder who also preaches will stand in a pulpit of one of our congregations and declare "That we are saved by grace plus nothing." To add insult to injury this man continues to be used on our prominent lectureships and is still in good standing where he serves as an elder!

At this time I wish to pursue some of these misunderstandings, misapprehensions and misapplications and do so in some detail. More than one article on this will be needed.

Cheap And Irresponsible Grace

Grace becomes cheap and irresponsible when men deal with it as they did in Paul's day and as they still do in our era of mass religious error. Paul had much to say relative to God's amazing grace in profound Romans. He affirmed in Romans 5:20, 21, "... but where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly; that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our

Lord." Paul had a marvelous insight into human nature. He knew that some of his Roman readers no doubt would reason very fallaciously by saying in essence,

Well, Paul, if in every case where sin abounds, then grace abounds all that much more to take care of that sin, then we should engage in all the more sin for then we give the grace of God unlimited opportunity to abound all the more. We can magnify grace all the more by committing more and more sin.

Paul anticipated just such sophistry on the part of some of his surface, spiritually inept readers and answers it before they can have time to develop it. He says in the opening verses of Romans 6, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?" (vs. 1, 2). Throughout Romans 6 Paul presents an unusually cogent argument in showing that grace does not allow for license to sin. Liberty in the Lord does not mean that one is free to commit sin with impunity and with the blessings of God's grace abounding. Such was cheap grace; it was irresponsible grace. But not any cheaper or more irresponsible than what the grace only proponents are teaching more and more and with greater and greater acceptance among our people. The Biblically illiterate easily swallow such hook, line and sinker and praise highly the men who are peddling this Satanic propaganda. This is sad; it is immeasurably sad. Yet it is a true reflection of what is happening surely among us. It does no argue well for our future.

Men have made the grace of God into a cheap, irresponsible thing when they suggest that a man can do anything in the catalogue of sin and still be saved by the grace of God without

repentance or change on his part. There are those who believe that they can die while drunk, while cursing, while stealing and while engaged in overt immorality and yet still be saved in heaven by God's grace. A religious leader recently took the position that a man can be wicked just like the man who had taken his father's wife in I Corinthians 5 and still be counted as righteous in the sight of God! One religious leader is reported recently to have said that he could die while in the arms of another man's wife and in the actual committing of fornication or adultery and still the grace of God would save him? Read it and weep! Can you believe such as this is coming actually and surely from the mouths of those claiming to be preachers of the gospel?

Such is nothing short of outright Satanic propaganda. I tell you quickly and emphatically that I do not believe a word of such an infamous, God-dishonoring and Christ-denying ism as this cheap grace theory that is gaining ground even among some of our own people in general and preachers in

particular. Some of our people are being gullible and misled; some of our preachers are feeding them such fodder and deliberately doing the misleading. Such is to make a mockery of the Bible Doctrine of God's amazing grace. It cheapens the grace of God and makes it totally irresponsible.

It is cheap and wreckless grace when two of our preachers in Nashville, Tennessee, say, "It is a scandalous and outrageous lie to teach that salvation arises from human activity of any sort. We do not contribute one whit to our salvation" (Shelly and Harris, The Second Incarnation, p. 207). Such a concept is not a forty-second cousin to Biblical grace!

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David's Toe

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wonder Paul, full of the Holy Spirit, said: "... He raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also He gave testimony, and said, I have found David ... a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will" (Acts 13:22).

Yet we can be so much like that "perfect hero" David. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him,

not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Philippians 3:8-9).

Yes, the toe of David is back on and he's perfect again. But for some reason, I wish they would have left it off, just to remind us that his perfection didn't come from outward appearance, but from within ... just like God saw him with Samuel the first time. I Samuel 16:7 "... for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

"Most Of A Minute"

It has been reported that a certain woman went to the doctor. Upon his examination, the doctor told the woman that she had rabies and that it was too late to help her. The doctor then advised her to make arrangements and to get her affairs in order. Immediately the woman sat down, took a piece of paper, and started to write very hurriedly. The doctor said, "I never saw anyone so anxious to make a will." The woman replied, "Oh, I'm not making a will. I am making a list of the people I'm going to bite!"

Aren't some people this way when it comes to pet grudges? Maybe we all are sometimes. We need to be careful though. The Lord condemns an unforgiving spirit in us. In Matthew 18:15 Jesus offers a revolutionary approach to the "He hurt my feelings" syndrome. Listen to the Lord: "... If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother."

Do you have an old grudge with which you'd like to do away? Why not try the Master's way? After all, who knows people better?

Who Is This Man Called Jesus?

Cecil Corkren

He was some kind of a man. When He saw His Father's house misused He was moved to say, "Ye have made it a den of thieves" (Matthew 21:13). He became outraged at the hypocrisy of the religious leaders who desecrated the place called "The house of prayer." He became unhappy with those who abused innocent people. He loved,

and touched, and hugged some people when no one else would. He defended the innocent, stood against the power of that time, and was crucified because He dared to be right in God's sight. Yes, He was different. No one spoke as He did, nor acted as He did (Matthew 7:28, 29; John 7:46). Many today have a preconceived idea of Jesus however, that He was soft and

gentle all the time. He was of gentle character, (Matthew 11:28), nevertheless some of the most scathing rebukes in God's word fell from the lips of Jesus. He had very little patience with the hypocrites mentioned in Matthew 23 because of their pretense of being righteous.

Many times we become unhappy when the preacher speaks out against our own "pet" sins. When he speaks out against abortion and sexual immorality, and dirty

movies, we remain silent. When God is maligned, we are uncomfortable. We invite immorality into our homes and our hearts through the television shows we watch, and the movies we rent.

What would Jesus say to those who give encouragement and endorse government officials, knowing they promise the homosexuals and the abortionists legal protection under the law to practice both, and call upon the God fearing people to endorse their life style? If

Jesus were here would He speak out against the evils of our day? Yes, He would, in terms I am sure we would understand. Concerning those in high places, consider that "While they promise you liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption" (II Peter 2:19). Don't be fooled and only follow these corrupt leaders for the loaves and the fishes!

Let's work to love the things Jesus loved, and to speak out against the things He hated.

Until They Know I Care

Cindy Colley

Did some friend cross my path today
Who doesn't know the Lord?
Someone who's never known the Way
Of Life and His reward?
Did I tell her of the Saviour?
Have I breathed her name in prayer?
Is there some way I could touch her?
Have I let her know I care?

Is there some friend who is growing old
Who seems to be forlorn?
For the simple tasks have now turned
Into burdens to be borne.
Could mine have been the helping hand
That pulled her from despair?
Did I take the time to lend it?
Did I let her know I care?

Have I looked into a lonely face
Whose eyes reflect the pain
Of a loss that leaves one helpless
To begin a life again?
As she searches for tomorrow
Some faint ray of hope to see;
She is reaching out for someone
Could it be that she needs me?

Is there someone who is hungry?
Are there children to be fed?
There's so much we take for granted.
Have I shared my daily bread?
In the faces of the hungry
Christ the Savior we must see.
For "If ye did it not to them . . .
You did it not to me . . ."

We have found the Great Physician
For the ills that plague our time.
We can teach the world transcendence
To a life that is sublime.
But for eyes that see and arms that reach;
This must be my prayer.
For they care not that I know
Until they know how much I care.

Christ And Cancer

B. J. Clarke

It is a six-letter word that begins with "C." It is one of the most terrifying words in the English language. Many lives have been shattered by this word. It has caused untold suffering, agony and pain. It is cancer. Who among us has not known of someone close to us who has sat in a Doctor's office anxiously awaiting test results only to hear the Doctor say, "I'm sorry, but you have cancer?" Then the battle begins. There are many anxious moments and sleepless nights . . . rivers of tears. There are often radiation and chemotherapy treatments with all of the attendant side effects. The full head of hair begins to vanish. Facial hair is also soon gone. Sores develop. Itching aggravates the patient to virtually want to scream out. Nausea sets in. Pain shots are given. The medicine given in these shots sometimes causes hallucination and disorientation. There is often the emotional rollercoaster of thinking that the treatments are doing their intended work only to be crushed by the reappearance of the tumor. This back and forth type of scenario takes its mental toll on both patient and loved ones. The most devastating type of rollercoaster ride is for a patient to be given a clean bill of health and to feel good for awhile only to be overtaken again by that six

letter word that begins with the letter "C" -- Cancer. The treatments start again and life is turned upside down for both patient and family. Either the patient will get better after much suffering or the patient will die after much suffering. The suffering is a constant in the malignant cancer equation. The patient suffers and the loved ones do too!

It is a six letter word that begins with "C." It is one of the most comforting words in the English language. Many shattered lives have been mended back together by this word. Suffering, agony and pain are not great enough to overcome the one these six letters point to -- Christ. Cancer is no match for Christ! Even if cancer physically destroys the body of a follower of Jesus, it cannot do anything to destroy the soul of that follower. Jesus said, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul . . ." (Matthew 10:28). Though cancer was not under consideration in the context of the aforementioned passage, the principle certainly applies. Cancer cannot conquer our souls! Cancer can take our physical lives away but it cannot rob us of the eternal life which has been promised unto us (I John 2:25). It is true that cancer can stop us from realizing earthly dreams, but it cannot stop us from realizing the dream of going to heaven to be with

God. Cancer can put our bodies of clay into the tomb, but it cannot keep them there. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26). Because Christ conquered the tomb and rose from the dead to die no more, so shall we who are in him (I Corinthians 15; I Corinthians 6:14; Romans 6:9; Revelation 1:18; I Thessalonians 4:13-18). The moment cancer wins the physical battle the Christian wins the spiritual battle. Simply put, CANCER DOESN'T WIN. THE CHRISTIAN DOES! Those who have died of cancer who are in Christ shall never suffer again. No more chemo. No more pain shots. No more awful side effects. No more tears. Just the beauty and bliss of being with Christ forevermore. The battle is done and the victory is won.

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Volume 29 Number 3
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The Words C Truth

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

Keep Up The Good Work!

Gary McDade

The Lord set the example for his disciples to follow concerning enthusiasm for performing the Father's will. Jesus said, *"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work"* (John 9:4). With this disposition even the most arduous task of going to the cross could be faced by him with joy. The Hebrew writer said, *"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God"* (Hebrews 12:3).

Some get tired just thinking about work. Others don't know how to accomplish anything of consequence when they are working. Brother J. D. Tant, Texas preacher of former years, told of a man bragging that he'd been in the Lord's harness forty years. But, Tant replied, "Yes, and all you ever wore out was the backing strap!" Few things compare with the sheer satisfaction of sitting down to rest after a really hard day's work. The

person who has never been so tired that he felt he couldn't put one foot in front of the other or raise his arm to drive one more nail or lift one more bale probably hasn't known the full pleasure of rest. However, rest in doing the Lord's work can be dangerous. Remember when the young prophet from Judah courageously prophesied against wicked Jeroboam's altar at Bethel in I Kings 13? The old lying prophet from Bethel caught up with him when he apparently thought the job was done and found him resting under an oak. True, his real mistake was in believing the old prophet's lie and returning to his house to eat and drink. That's where he disobeyed God's word, but were it not for his reclining beneath the shade of that oak, the story might have been different.

The Christian does not rest in his duty before God in this life. "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it . . . *There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God*" (Hebrews 4:1, 9). Elizabeth Mills wrote a song often sung when Christians gather for worship that says "O land of rest, for thee I sigh! When will the moment come, When I shall lay my armor by, and dwell in peace at home?" And, the refrain is the admonition to

"keep up the good work!" "We'll work til Jesus comes . . . And we'll be gathered home." The apostle John contrasted the fate of the wicked which is to be tormented forever *"and they have not rest day nor night"* with the reward of the redeemed who blessed by the

Confessions Of A World-Filled Church

Dalton Key

We read with avid interest, the funny page, the sports section, the advice columns, the financial, world, national and local news items, but can't seem to find the time to open the one book with all the answers for a problem-filled world -- the Bible.

We are news zombies. We sit glued to the six o'clock, ten o'clock, around the clock news reports on television, ingesting hungrily every particle of bad news the media has to offer, but we don't, because we won't take the time to read the good news, the gospel -- in the Bible.

Our families feed on filth. We love to watch filth on television, we pay to see filth in the movie theater or on rented videos, we listen and sing along to the filth in much of today's "top forty" hit parade, we read and drool over more filth in the form of

Lord *"may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them"* (Revelation 14:11-13). Enthusiasm in the work of the Lord makes heaven more attractive.

In summary, the Lord set the example to be followed of enthusiasm for doing the

Father's will. The temptation to rest from the Lord's work now must be avoided. Also, God has promised the satisfaction of rest when his work has been completed. So "keep up the good work!"

questionable magazines and dime-store novels, and then attend church services to sing "Nearer My God To Thee." We soil our minds from dawn to dusk, but never make time to cleanse our minds by applying God's spiritual detergent -- the Bible.

Our lives are hectic and schedule-driven. Our days are ruled by clocks and calendars, our joy hinges on time off and free time, yet we foolishly ignore the book of timeless treasure, the volume of divine truth which prepares souls to live beyond life and travel past time into the bliss of endless, heavenly eternity. We are too busy for -- the Bible.

Our children are important to us. We closely monitor their scholastic and athletic progress. Their knowledge of past events, current events, human events, and human psychology must not be hindered. Their sports

achievements must not be hampered. Yet we passively allow the next generation to grow up without the most important knowledge, the most valuable training information of all. Our children know books, but know little about the Book of Books -- the Bible.

Yes, these are the confessions of a world-filled church. Make application where you will, allow the shoe that fits to be worn, let the chips fall where they may.

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (Psalm 1:1, 2).

Let's start putting first things first.

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Kindness To The Dead

After widows Naomi and Ruth journeyed to Bethlehem and were first beginning to enjoy the benevolence of Boaz, Naomi praised his goodness with these words: "Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead" (Ruth 2:20). It is easy to see what is meant by "kindness to the living," but how was Boaz kind to the dead? The answer, of course, is that by seeing to the needs of Naomi and Ruth, Boaz was honoring the desires and memories of their deceased husbands, Elimelech and Mahlon. When caring for their wives, he was showing kindness posthumously to them. The thought of kindness to the dead becomes practical and even sweeter to us when we consider those Christians who will be tenderhearted to our mate, children, or parents we leave behind when we die. Our Lord spoke through the agony of the cross to ask John to care for sweet Mary after his death (John 19:26, 27). Few desires are deeper or more sentimental than this one.

The Holy Scriptures contain many commands regarding the care of widows, for our Lord is very

serious about how we treat those left behind when a husband or father dies. Even before the Law of Moses, a Hebrew widow who had no children by her husband was allowed (and assumed) to marry the brother of her deceased husband, in order to be cared for and to raise up children (Genesis 38:6-11). Deuteronomy 25:5-7 commanded this union, and called it the brother's duty.

Exodus 22:22-23 shows us the Fatherly eye from Zion guarding the interests of those left behind when a husband dies. God said, "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." Deuteronomy 10:17, 18 says, "For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward. He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment."

In our Lord's stinging rebuke of the wicked Jews He said, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye devour widows' houses, and for a

pretense make long prayer; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation" (Matthew 23:14). While it would have of course been wrong to "devour" the house of anyone, and perhaps they had defrauded others, Jesus specifically notes what they did to the widows.

How much less does God care for the widows in our dispensation? None less. Paul teaches us to honor widows, who are widows indeed, and desolate (I Timothy 5:3-5). There were widows in the church who, because of their poverty and need, were cared for at the expense of the Christians. This is proper and right today. We practice an impure religion without care for widows and orphans. "Pure religion and undefiled before God the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

Naomi, in praising the goodness of Boaz, taught us an added motivation and benefit for caring for widows: When we care for widows, we are caring for the living AND the dead.

Jesus, The Balanced Teacher

B. J. Clarke

Jesus was the greatest teacher to ever grace the face of the earth. He was always true to the word, never swerving from the pure truth. He was also the most compassionate and soul-conscious teacher to ever live. The earthly ministry of Jesus presents a vivid picture of how Jesus balanced uncompromising loyalty to the truth and a deep and abiding concern for the lost.

The one-on-one personal teaching done by our Lord is a good example of this balance. When Jesus dealt with the woman at the well in John 4, he displayed compassion. Many Jews bypassed Samaria to avoid being "defiled." Yet Jesus unabashedly marched right into Samaria to talk to a woman who was not even accepted by her own people. The fact that she came to the well alone is indicative of her being an outcast. Jesus realized that this Samaritan woman had a precious soul that needed the living water of salvation.

But notice that while Jesus showed his concern for this lost woman, he did not go so far as to compromise truth. He taught her the truth of God concerning her marital state (John 4:16-18). With reference to her ideas concerning the place of worship, Jesus very plainly told her that she was wrong and the Jews were right. He did not back away from speaking truth for fear of turning her away. He combined compassion and

loyalty to truth.

Two chapters later in John's gospel we find Jesus demonstrating his compassion by feeding the multitudes who were hungry. He saw their need and met their need. But he used this as an opportunity to teach the truth about himself. In fact he spoke the truth so clearly and uncompromisingly that many were offended and decided to quit following him (John 6:60). Please observe that Jesus didn't apologize for preaching the whole truth. He did not scurry after the departing disciples with the promise of toning down his message and making it more palatable. Rather he drove the nail in deeper in an attempt to prick the hearts of his auditors (John 6:61ff). He again combined compassion for souls and loyalty to truth.

Jesus is the best example of what it means to preach the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). We must use him as our role model as we preach and teach. There will be times when we will be called upon to speak to those who will not like or accept our message. We must not give in to the temptation to please the masses by "watering down" the message. On other occasions we will be faced with discussing salvation with those who have been entrenched in sin for longer than we have been preaching the gospel. We must remember to show them the same loving care and interest that we would display to someone who had a very

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Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works (No. 6)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

The grace of God needs to be understood and appropriated. When men misunderstand and abuse it, it is totally impossible for there to be a right appropriation of it.

How Grace Is Misunderstood

Grace is misunderstood when a man thinks it operates only up to the point of his conversion and then from that point to his death he earns or merits his salvation. Jesus told his disciples that when they had done everything commanded of them (and WHO of us has yet done this perfectly?) they were then to confess, "We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10). If my count is correct, in some sixteen of the epistles, written to either congregations of Christians or saved individuals, the writers referred to grace in the salutations. If people earn or merit their salvation, why write to them about grace? Why not just write about meritorious works and let that be the end of the matter? If they merit salvation, then they do not need the grace of God or even the God of grace. Then man becomes his own saviour from baptism to death. If not, WHY NOT???

Grace is misunderstood when some contend that all will be saved. It is true that the grace that saves has been made known and made available to all men but that does not mean that all will be saved regardless of whether they obey or disobey. The grace of God provides for the salvation of all, but man is not saved by provisions only. People who wish to be saved

MUST APPROPRIATE the provisions of God's grace to themselves. This is done by an obedient faith, a faith that takes God at his word and does what he says should be done, when he says it should be done and for what purpose it should be done. Satan's hell awaits all those who reject the grace of God and its powerful provisions for their salvation.

Grace is misunderstood when men say there is nothing for the seeker of salvation to do to be saved. James says in James 2:24 that we are justified by works and not by faith only. Paul says in Ephesians 2:9 that we are not saved by works that permit boasting or glorying. Hence, there are works which are INCLUDED; there are works which are EXCLUDED. Works which are excluded are works of the Mosaic Law, works that permit their doer to boast or glory in, works that man has devised, etc. Works that are included are works of obedience. Peter told the people at the household of Cornelius that "in every nation he that feareth him, and WORKETH righteousness is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:35). If all works are excluded, then even faith itself would be excluded for Jesus said faith or belief is the work of God. And this work of God is something which man MUST do -- not something which God does FOR him (John 6:28, 29). To make salvation unconditional, as Calvinists in general and Primitive Baptists in particular do, is to misunderstand the grace of God from beginning to end.

The grace of God is misunderstood when men contend that they can be saved

without gospel obedience. The writer of Hebrews 5:9 affirms that Jesus "became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation . . ." Paul teaches in II Thessalonians 1:7-9 that at final judgment the Lord will exercise vengeance upon them that "obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus." Whether men like it or not, the grace of God saves only those who obey the gospel of Christ. To contend otherwise is to cheapen grace and reduce it to the ridiculous. The Bible still says that repentance and baptism are essential for obtaining the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Jesus is still on record in the Bible as saying that belief and baptism are essential before salvation is achieved (Mark 16:16). At least he is on record in the Bibles that have not left out this inestimable portion of Sacred Scripture. (Some of us are not about to forget what the Revised Standard Version did to the last twelve verses of the sixteenth chapter of the book of Mark for which they have never made a world-wide apology or any word of sorrow to my knowledge. If any reader knows of where they have made such, I would be indebted to have the documentation).

The Ephesians were saved by the grace of God and yet Paul baptized a dozen of them in Acts 19:1-7. The remainder of the church received that one baptism also as per Ephesians 4:5 and 5:26. The Romans were saved by the grace of God as per Romans 3:24 and yet they were baptized into Christ and into his death (Romans 6:3). Paul was saved by the grace of God and yet he obeyed or did what was appointed him (Acts 9:6; 22:16; 9:18). In fact he told King Agrippa II in Acts 26:19, "Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision . . ." Acts 22:16 and 9:18 tell us in crystal clear language of his baptism.

Grace is misunderstood when men say we are under no law, under no rule and

under no regulation today. We have already dealt with that by suggesting that we are under the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus and are under the perfect law of liberty. When God's grace is understood correctly it means that we are under the law of Christ and must render obedience thereunto.

What The Grace Of God Does Not Mean

The grace of God does not mean that God will disregard his law in the day of judgment. Yet many seem to think they can ignore that law, trample underneath unholy feet its holy precepts and yet be saved by God's grace in judgment. Some are contending today that "grace extends law." Such contradicts the Bible. Where does the Bible say that God will respect his grace but will disallow his law pertaining to the scheme of human redemption? In fact his law is his grace. His law brings salvation; God's grace brings salvation as per Titus 2:11, 12. This theory that "grace extends law," and that is about the kindest thing to say of it, gives man an additional plan of salvation. It provides a second chance beyond death. It nullifies every solemn warning in the Bible that this

life and this life only is the time to prepare to meet God. Such a baseless theory makes a liar of God and the Bible. It robs the gospel of its current urgency. Because if man has a chance to be saved subsequent to physical death, why should he be urgent or hasty about obeying the gospel this side of death?

Reader friends, all the clemency in the world and all the grace heaven can muster will not nullify God's word with its conditions of pardon or make a liar of him. He cannot lie as per Hebrews 6:18 or Titus 1:2. The grace of God does not mean that man can die in disobedience and rebellion to God and still be saved in heaven. Such a concept cheapens grace and makes it irresponsible favor.

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Jesus, The Balanced Teacher

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religious upbringing. We must never regard someone as too sinful to waste our time on. Jesus loved sinners enough to take the time to care for their needs. He also loved sinners enough to tell them what they

needed to hear rather than what they wanted to hear. As preachers and teachers, let us combine a compassion and love for souls with an unswerving loyalty to truth and pure doctrine.

"Most Of A Minute"

Can you remember a time, maybe as a child, when you were accused of some wrong of which you were truly innocent? Imagine yourself taking a poly-graph (or lie detector) test and being told that you were not truthful . . . when you actually were! Can't you imagine the excited frustration that would pour out of your mouth as you tried to explain that some mistake had been made, and you really were innocent? Anyone, I think, would feel cheated and embarrassed. You would be carrying the shame of guilt unjustly.

Did you ever think that this is a verbal picture of what Jesus did toward giving you forgiveness of your sins? Listen to Hebrews 12:2 -- "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God."

Have you taken advantage of the redemption brought by the Prince of peace, who was willing to endure unjust shame for you? Mark 16:16 -- "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not will be damned."

What Is A Christian's Responsibility

W. A. Holley

The church to which we have reference is that church which is mentioned in the Bible (Matthew 16:18-19; Romans 16:16; Ephesians 1:20-23; 4:4-6; 5:23-33). We have no reference to any denominational church since these churches did not exist in apostolic times (See any reliable church history).

How does a sinner become a member of the New Testament church? The answer is quite simple: First, believe that Christ is the Son of God (Hebrews 11:6; John 8:23-24), second, one must repent of his sins (Luke 13:3, 5; II Peter 3:9; Acts 17:30-31), third, one must make a public confession of Jesus' name (Matthew 10:32-33; Mark 8:38; Acts 8:37), and fourth, one must be baptized in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38; 10:47-48; 19:5). Thus, when one from the heart obeys that form of doctrine, the Lord Jesus Christ adds that one to His church (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38-47; Romans 6:3-4, 16-18). Hence, one cannot join the Lord's church regardless of how sincere one may be. The Holy Bible says nothing about "joining the church of one's choice."

Do Christians have a responsibility toward the moral and spiritual growth of the local congregation? Indeed, we believe that the Bible teaches they do. Jesus said, ". . . Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). The church and the kingdom are one and the same institution (Matthew 16:18-19, Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 1:9).

Sadly, we have many brethren who manifest little responsibility toward their home congregation. They can offer the most frivolous and irresponsible excuses imaginable (Luke 14:15-24). The Lord's day belongs to the Lord (Revelation 1:10). It is a sin to steal the Lord's day for

our own selfish purposes (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 10:24-26). God never intended for Christians to use the Lord's day as a day of visitation among friends and relatives.

The Christian has the responsibility to set the finest example before others. The Christian is to set a good example for others, in attendance, in word, in manner of conduct, in love, in attitude, in obedient faith, in pureness of life (I Timothy 4:12; James 1:26-27). "Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals. Awake to soberness righteously, and sin not; for some have no knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame" (I Corinthians 15:33-34, ASV).

The Christian has a responsibility toward evangelizing the whole town or area where he lives (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:3-4). To engage in the work of evangelizing one need not go overseas. Just begin in your own home, on your own street, in your own city, in your own workplace. Opportunities are everywhere! God uses human instrumentality to win others to Christ. God sent men -- not angels -- preach the gospel to every creature. Think seriously, after many years as a Christian, how many others have you won to Christ? Many or none? We do not wish to weaken one's desire to preach the gospel in foreign lands, but one should begin at home. If one fails at home, likely one will fail overseas!

The Christian has a responsibility toward helping to maintain peace and harmony among the brethren. Jesus prayed for his followers to be one (John 17:20-23). "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1-6; Philippians 1:27; Acts 4:32). There are things that make for peace and there are things that cause trouble (Romans 14:19; Proverbs 6:16-19). Are you a

peacemaker or a peace-breaker? (Matthew 5:9). One grand way to keep peace is to learn to keep one's mouth (I Peter 3:8-12; II Peter 3:14-18). Talebearing, gossip, whispering, and rumor-mongering never help to calm troubled waters (Exodus 23:1-3; II Thessalonians 3:11; I Timothy 5:13, ASV).

The Christian has a responsibility to help defray the expenses in operating the local church. The church has no money of its own; all of its money comes from its members (Acts 11:29-30; I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:6-7). If its members do not support the church, who will? Should the church get a bad reputation because it refuses to pay its bills? Whose fault would it be? The church has bills to pay just like all other institutions: For example, the power bill, insurance, janitor, the minister, literature, repairs, and whatever items that fall into this class. Money given to other churches when you are visiting away, does not pay the bills at home.

The Christian has a responsibility to worship "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24). But worship includes more than simply praying, singing, giving, observing the Lord's Supper, and Bible study -- It includes being steadfast in our efforts, having the right spirit and attitude toward God. We must worship with grace in our hearts toward God (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19). FURTHERMORE, we must pray and sing with spiritual understanding (I Corinthians 14:15). Thus, true worship is not a mere formality, but must spring from deep within our hearts. Reverence and godly fear must characterize our efforts (Hebrews 12:28-29). Worship is not a three-ring circus where ecstasy and frenzy reigns supreme.

The Christian's responsibility to the local church is to follow the leadership of the elders. The duty of the elders

is to oversee the congregation and preserve it from error (Acts 20:28-30; Hebrews 13:17). In many instances the elders must stop the mouths of false teachers (Titus 1:5-16). All gainsayers need to be convicted (Titus 1:9).

Sometimes the elders need to be rebuked; the preacher should do it even if it costs him his job (Titus 2:15). Elders are not supermen, who are always right (I Timothy 5:17-22). According to Paul departure from the faith would begin with them (Acts 20:28-30). We here suggest that I Peter 5:1-4 be carefully read. Apostasy is always possible (II Thessalonians 2:3-12; I Timothy 4:1-4). Another gospel is not the Lord's gospel

(Galatians 1:6-10).

These remarks are stated in the light of more than 60 years of experience working with good elders by the author of these words. Christian elders should be open, approachable, possessed with vision, often in prayer, knowledgeable, never set in their ways, and have the ability to change where expediency is concerned and where no scriptural mandates are violated (John 16:7; I Corinthians 6:12; 10:23; II Corinthians 8:10).

These words of encouragement are written for those Christians who sincerely wish to go to heaven.

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

One Of Nature's Most Distinctive Designs . . .

Wayne Jackson

The hummingbird is the smallest bird on earth -- some species weigh no more than a dime. It has the highest rate of metabolism (at rest, about 50 times faster than man's) and thus must consume enormous amounts of nectar to avoid starvation. Not adapted for night feeding, it must stretch its food stores from dusk to dawn. To accomplish this, nature has equipped the hummingbird with a unique energy-saving design: the ability to hibernate overnight.

During the night, the hummingbird's metabolic rate is only one-fifteenth as rapid as in the daytime, and its body temperature drops to that of the surrounding air. The bird becomes torpid, scarcely able to move. When it does stir, it moves as though congealed. By daybreak, the hummingbird's body spontaneously resumes its normal temperature and high metabolic rate, ready once again to dart off in search of food.

Isn't it amazing how "nature" was able so mechanically and unintelligently to "design"

such wonderful and ingenious organisms in our world? Isn't it pathetic that men have to resort to the word "nature" because they are too embarrassed to say "God?" There is as much substance to the "Mother Nature" myth as there is to "Mother Goose" tales.

Too, if evolution occurred over millions of years, as we are constantly told, how did the hummingbird survive while its essential little metabolic regulator was gradually evolving?

--Stockton, CA.

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A Paper Worthy
Of Your Reading Time
- "Should All Religious
People Believe
The Same Thing?"
- "Most Of A Minute"
- Run With Patience

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The Words Of Truth

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

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Words Of Truth -- A Paper Worthy Of Your Reading Time

We are indebted to all our readers for their continued interest in our publication, Words of Truth. It is our hope that the number of our subscribers will grow and grow as we enter 1993. As the paper's editor, I am fully committed to making Words of Truth a paper worthy of your reading time. Our brotherhood contains many talented and sound Bible commentators who can, through publications like this one, help us to reach higher plateaus of spiritual thought and insight. I believe a home with good religious periodicals scattered around on coffee tables and night stands makes a "letting your light shine" statement to all the visitors who pass

through the door.

I want to give a sincere "thank-you" to all our wonderful and dedicated writers listed in this special edition. Most of them carry demanding full-time ministries, but still make time to write for us. They receive no money for submitting articles, only our appreciation and the satisfaction that they are contributing in yet another way to the growth and strengthening of the kingdom.

I hope to continue printing not only the work of people whose names you know, but also works of the young authors. Many of our young preachers are able writers and sound in the faith.

Perhaps someone reading this issue has considered submitting an article/articles to our office. Please do! My preference is for articles to be two pages, double-spaced, type-written. We do allow, however for some variance from that ideal. Furthermore, while there are exceptions to this, I prefer to run articles which have not appeared in other publications. This adds to the valuable freshness of Words of Truth.

May the Words of Truth publication continue to enjoy a healthy readership as long as it remains a courier of God's word, and as long as those who produce it give the glory of it's success to God.

"Should All Religious People Believe The Same Thing?"

Allen Webster

When this question is posed, the answer is often given: "It does not matter what you believe in religion, as long as your sincere." Or, "You interpret the Bible the way you want to, and I will interpret it the way I want to."

Paul wrote, "Now I beseech (beg) you, brethren, by the name (authority) of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Corinthians 1:10). Jesus prayed that His followers be "one" (John 17:20-21).

Since God is not the author of confusion (I Corinthians

14:34), it follows that the confused, divided, and arguing American religious community did not originate in the Divine mind. He had eternally purposed for there to be only one church

(Ephesians 3:11; 4:4 + 1:22-23) and for all men to follow only what He revealed (II Timothy 3:16-17) without adding or subtracting from it (Revelation 22:18-19).

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"Most Of A Minute"

Utopia is a wonderful concept. "Utopia" is the term that describes a perfect society. Haven't you ever seen serious social problems and wished for a purging of the wrongs?

In 1880 English author, Thomas Hughes had such a dream. He went to Tennessee, which he called "a lovely corner of God's earth," and "Rugby" was born. The idea caught on with many such dissatisfied Englishmen. Seventy buildings with inhabitants quickly shot up in this "dream" society. It wasn't long however until the monster of human frailty stepped in and virtually destroyed the utopic community.

So why not a utopian, "perfect," society? The answer of course, is sin. It has always been man's single greatest problem. It destroys lives and eventually souls. The only true utopia that will ever exist is heaven, because there is no sin there. If you are a faithful New Testament Christian, you're going there someday. Beware though of any religion that's less than that. Jesus said in Matthew 7:21 -- "Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven."

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"Should All Religious People Believe The Same Thing?"

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It makes sense that all men should believe the same thing. Notice these reasons:

ALL WANT TO GO TO THE SAME PLACE -- HEAVEN. All religious people want to go to be with God (John 14:2). Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Therefore, we must go to the words of Jesus (New Testament) to find the way to heaven (John 12:48).

ALL CLAIM TO FOLLOW THE SAME LORD -- JESUS. If everyone would practice what he professes, there would be no division. If all would walk in the steps of Jesus, without venturing into forbidden paths, allowing Jesus to be Lord (Ruler) in every way, all would be simply Christians. When all become members of His church (Matthew 16:18), obey His plan of salvation (Mark 16:16), and live His lifestyle (Matthew 5-7), the confusion will cease.

ALL HAVE THE SAME NEED -- FORGIVENESS. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Since God is the only one who can forgive sins (Mark 2:5, 7, 10), we must go to God's plan for forgiveness (Acts 2:38).

ALL USE THE SAME BOOK -- THE BIBLE. Did

God, the infinitely wise One, give a book that was so confusing that we cannot understand it alike? Was God not able to give us a book that we could all follow the same way? Of course He was able! When men divide, it is not God's fault. It is the devil's. If all men would just go back to the Bible for the pattern (Colossians 3:17), the divisions would cease and we would all believe the same things.

ALL WORSHIP THE SAME GOD -- JEHOVAH. Since we are to please God in worship (John 4:23-24), it makes sense that we should do what He wants in worship instead of what we enjoy. God said that he wanted the church to sing (Colossians 3:16), He said nothing about playing an instrument. He authorized congregational singing (Ephesians 5:19), but He left out solos and group singing. We must stay with God's plan of worship in order to please Him. When men "worship" in ways that please them, they displease and dishonor God (Matthew 15:9).

ALL MUST MEET THE SAME REQUIREMENTS -- OBEY THE GOSPEL. Since all need forgiveness, all must meet the conditions whereby it is obtained. God said that a man must hear (Romans 10:17), believe in Christ as His only begotten Son (John

3:16), repent of sins (Luke 13:3), confess their faith (Matthew 10:32), and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins (I Peter 3:21). Following this, each must live a godly life of service toward God and man. God never said that faith only would save a man, in fact, He said that it would not (John 2:24).

Should all men believe the same things in religion? According to the Scriptures, they must! We cannot forsake the Bible and expect to go to heaven. If you cannot find the practices of your church in the Bible, why not unite with Christ by obeying the gospel and becoming a member of His church?

Run With Patience

". . . let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1)

We've often heard it said that "Patience is a virtue." And so it is a part of being virtuous, or morally sound. Patience however is an attitude manifested in a virtuous action. As we saw in Hebrews chapter 12 we all need to run our race with patience.

This race is the race of life, and it includes all aspects of life. Hebrews 10:36 tells us that we all have need of patience. The Bible in I Timothy 3:2 tells us that elders must be patient and in II Timothy 2:24 that the servant of the Lord must be patient. From all this we see that we all need to work and strive for patience.

Here is a list of five things that will help us understand how we all can attain patience.

1. Wait upon the Lord (Psalm 37:7).
2. Patience shows that we love (I Corinthians 13:4).
3. Remember that we shall "Reap if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9).
4. Speak sound doctrine, patiently (Titus 2:1).
5. The trying of our faith worketh patience (James 1:3).

Let us strive to be patient in our race. Let us pray for patience and be prepared for the trying of our faith, (James 1:13). Patience is truly the mark of a virtuous Christian.

M. Floyd Bailey

January 29, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- Rethinking Repentance And Remarriage
- What One Thing?
- Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works No. 7
- The Christian Mother's Prayer For An Unborn Child
- A Tribute To George W. DeHoff, Sr.
- Noah -- A Righteous Man

Volume 29 Number 5
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The Words of Truth

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

he

"An Argument In Favor Of Atheism"

Bill Mayhall
& Dale Jenkins

When atheism comes under the severe scrutiny of the lens of science and reason it tumbles into the rubbish of all other human concepts of man "under the sun" (i.e. apart from God). Examine it on the table of reason and it fails to meet the challenge. Tear into the fiber of "unbelief" and one quickly sees it is unbelievable. Match the THEORIES of spontaneous generation, evolution and "the problem of evil" alongside the ontological, teleological and cosmological arguments and the theories of man must be amended.

But there are arguments in favor of atheism that tend to be more difficult. Let me tell you about one. Her name is Victoria. She is 25 and rather plain looking. She lives in Dnepropetrovsk in the former Soviet Union. Though I've never been to her flat, she describes it as a small place that is special to her only because she can now call it home. Before this she lived in a "hostel" or housing for the poor. Vickie is the strongest argument in favor of atheism that I have ever met. She is polite, happy, kind, considerate. She thinks of others before she thinks of herself. She constantly is going out of her way to do favors for her ever-expanding circle of friends. She smiles when she talks and never will

you hear her speak despairingly of friend or foe. I thought for several days after meeting Vickie that she was a Christian. I thought so until she said, "I'd like to believe in God; I just don't know how to make faith." We studied on for hours, I so wanted to see her embrace Christ. Maybe she will soon, but as of this day she is still an atheist.

I don't tell you about Victoria because I want you to embrace her atheism. In reality the goodness in her life is not inherent in atheism. It IS inherent in the eternal values system of Jehovah. Her attributes, however, while borrowed from Christianity, can only direct others to atheism. Until she confesses Christ, she will continue to be a pragmatic argument for atheism.

Here's the practical, simple question for your life; "Are you an argument in favor of Christianity?" If someone looked at your life under the microscope of Biblical imitation would they see a life that would make them want to be a Christian? You see, the strongest argument for Christianity is the pragmatic one. Your life for God is God's strongest proof that He is real. "By this shall all know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). The greatest evidence of who He is, is who we are. The presence of Christ and the changes He brings to the lives of His people are

God's most capable advocates.

Not everyone will be convinced by the scientific arguments of greatest importance to most people are not academic, but personal: How would faith change my life? Can God help me meet my problems and handle my frustrations? Can Christ meet the secret longings of the heart? Many

of us do not understand the scientific arguments, but all of us understand this language of the heart when we hear the strongest argument for faith: a person in whose life God has actually been proven to be who He is, not only a God of doctrine or a God of science, but a God who gives full life and so proves Himself more

real and powerful and lovable than the lesser god we often imagine Him to be. If each of us has faith in this great God, not reducing Him to the dimensions of our boxes, but allowing Him to fill us up to His measurements, those around us will see Him for who He really is, in all His glory, and will cast aside the trinkets of atheism and fall before His throne, saying, "The Lord, He is God."

Salvation

Guy F. Hester

A man who owned an elephant was talking to four blind men. In their conversation the blind men said that they would like to see the elephant. The owner led them one at a time to the elephant and allowed them to feel him. The first felt of the elephant's side and said, "An elephant looks like a big wall." The second man felt of a leg and said, "An elephant looks like a tree." The third felt an ear and said, "an elephant is like a large leaf." The fourth felt his tail and said, "An elephant is like a rope."

Just as it is a mistake to try to see an accurate picture of an elephant by looking at just one part, one cannot get a true concept of salvation without considering all the parts of salvation as they are given in the Bible.

Take for example the salvation of Noah. The Bible

says that he was saved by faith, by preparing an ark, and also that he was saved by water (Hebrews 11:7; I Peter 3:20). While it is clear that each of these were essential to his salvation it is equally clear that he was saved by a combination of the things mentioned and not by any one of them alone.

To further illustrate, suppose you see a man drowning in the river. You grab a rope and throw it to him. The man takes hold of the rope and you pull him safely to shore. Did you save him? Was he saved by the rope? Did he save himself by taking hold of the rope? It is easy to see that the answer to each of the above questions is yes. But let us rephrase the questions. Was he saved by you alone? No. Was he saved by the rope alone? No. Was he saved by his own work (taking hold of the rope) alone? No. All will agree that he was saved by a combination of

these things. Just so, in the salvation of the soul there are a combination of things by which the Bible says that we are saved. Too many people have "touched the elephant in just one spot" when it comes to their soul's salvation.

Saved by the Gospel

"The gospel . . . is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). The Corinthians were saved by the gospel (I Corinthians 15:1, 2). But the gospel alone without faith and obedience will not save.

Saved by Faith

It is not possible to please God without faith (Hebrews 11:6). The Corinthians were saved by the gospel (I Corinthians 15:1, 2). But the gospel alone without faith and obedience will not save.

Saved by Faith

It is not possible to please God without faith (Hebrews

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Salvation

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Rethinking Repentance And Remarriage

When considering a doctrine unfamiliar or "new," it seems to me that there are some warning signals that the doctrine is suspect. For example, a man explaining his position might say, "This isn't borne out in any translation, for all of them missed it . . ." or, "Several generations have failed to see the truth on this subject which I am now seeing . . ." For such to be true, either, 1. The new "scholar" is the brightest in all these noted years, or 2. All the wonderful and deep Bible students over the years were not honest enough to admit truth which they could easily see. This is not to suggest that we cannot all learn new things about the Bible -- we can of course. However, to suggest that major doctrines, like those, for example surrounding the Marriage/Divorce/Remarriage question, have been distorted and misunderstood by scholar and novice alike for centuries, is absurd. Furthermore, it suggests that the word of God (as the proponents of the "New" hermeneutic say), does not offer definitive truth for us today.

In reality, those teachers who are motivated by pressures of a society whose morals continue to weaken, have a desire to adapt the teachings and restrictions of the Bible to their wayward students. To do that, a great deal of redefinition is often required. Take for example, the principle of repentance.

If, 1. Jesus did teach that "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and marrieth another, committeth adultery . . ." and that, "Whoso marries her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matthew 19:9), and if

2. Paul taught that a woman married to another man while her husband lives shall be called an adulteress, (Romans 7:3), and if

3. Adultery is called a "work of the flesh," resulting in the loss of one's soul (Galatians 5:19-21),

then,

4. A person who has married himself/herself into the sin of adultery MUST repent of this sin to ever see heaven. An adulterous relationship cannot continue and be pleasing to God (Romans 6:1) -- "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid . . ."

Here's the rub: If you look at the preceding verses and still want to keep the adulterous relationship, what are you to do? For one thing, you could pervert the teaching of repentance. Some are doing just that today when they argue as did one author, "The verb 'repent' is from metanoeo and means 'to change the mind.' True repentance, therefore, is purely a mental act. That definition exhausts the meaning of the term as used in the scriptures." The point he is attempting to make is that repentance does not require a leaving of one's adulterous relationship. It only requires that the person says, "I'm sorry."

Consider other sins and apply this logic. Can a man repent of stealing, and then refuse (or even consider refusing) to return the stolen merchandise? No. Repentance has not taken place if he says "I'm sorry," and willfully keeps the merchandise. Can a man involved in a homosexual union repent by saying "I'm sorry," and then continue in that relationship? No.

When discussing the question of repentance, Wayne Jackson, in his booklet entitled "The teaching of Jesus Christ on Divorce and Remarriage, a Critical study of Matthew 19:9" offered these thoughts:

1. New Testament scholars are virtually of one voice in affirming that true repentance involves a change of conduct in addition to sorrow for sin . . . Goetzmann notes that in the New Testament usage of repentance, "the decision by the whole man to turn around is stressed."

Repentance entails a "turning away from evil" and a "turning towards God . . . embracing the demonstration of a changed manner of life." Thayer commented that repentance embraces a "recognition of sin and sorrow for it and hearty amendment." Krommings shows that the word requires sorrow for offenses committed against God which "results in an outward turning from sin."

2. John demanded that corresponding "fruit" be a part of Jewish repentance (Matthew 3:8).

3. When the men of Nineveh repented, God saw that "they turned from their evil way" (Matthew 12:41; Jonah 3:10).

4. When the Jews on the day of Pentecost were convicted of killing Christ, though "pricked in their heart," they were nevertheless instructed to "repent," thus revealing that more than emotion was demanded.

Is repentance difficult? We all know that it is. In fact, it is so difficult that most people in the world will not repent of their sins (Matthew 7:13-14). Admittedly, in the questions of divorce and remarriage, repentance sometimes becomes an emotional terror. We cannot however let ourselves become silent, or become perverters of the truth to avoid the pain.

May God bless us all as we strive to do His will.

11:6). Numerous are the passages which teach that salvation is by faith. But to say that one is saved by faith only is to "touch the elephant in one spot" and ignore all the other things by which the Bible says that we are saved. James declared, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:24).

Saved by Grace

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). But the same inspired man told the Ephesians that they were saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8). Grace is appropriated through obedient faith.

Saved by Baptism

The apostle Peter wrote, "Even baptism doth also now save us" (I Peter 3:21). It is the act of baptism that brings us into Christ. "For as many of you as were baptized into

Christ did put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). There is only one baptism (Ephesians 4:4). But baptism apart from the grace of God, faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, repentance and confession will not save. Christ is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him (Hebrews 5:8, 9).

Saved by Faithfulness

One may be scripturally baptized into Christ and receive the forgiveness of his sins and yet be lost because of unfaithfulness. Jesus promised, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

Let us carefully consider each part of God's plan for saving man and be careful that we ignore no single part. By doing this we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12). If we will do our part we can be sure that God will do his.

What One Thing?

Suppose a babe in Christ should ask you what one thing you would recommend he do to help him remain faithful. What would be your answer? Oh, I know that faithfulness involves more than one thing, but he has asked for just one.

I think I would tell him to attend every service it is possible for him to attend. True, just attending the services does not make one a Christian. But faithful attendance will help one grow and develop into the kind of person that will do the other things which Christians should do. If he will attend all the services he will learn about his duty with respect to prayer, or giving, or helping the needy, or teaching the lost. He will learn to avoid the things of the world and to keep his life pure. Through faithful attendance his faith will grow to help him overcome the

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Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works (No. 7)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

In our day grace is misunderstood. Religious law is denied. Proper concepts of love are lacking in many hearts. Liberty is a most abused word both in religious settings and irreligious settings. People want freedom or liberty with NO accompanying obligations. Faith is misrepresented, misapplied, and misconstrued. Works of all kinds are eliminated totally from the religious scene today in countless circles. These are some of the reasons why I am presenting this series of lessons on these six key terms of the New Testament. More needs to be said relative to grace and the abundance of errors that currently surrounds it. It is wise to keep in mind some things about the indestructibility of grace when it is properly understood.

The Indestructibility Of Grace

Grace is not destroyed when its availability is made known within the pages of Sacred Scripture. The Bible says in John 1:17, "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." Paul affirms in I Corinthians 15:10, "But by the grace of God I am what I am; and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not found vain . . ." Paul reveals the grace of God to his Ephesian readers by saying, ". . . for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God . . ." (Ephesians 2:8). The grace of God would have never been known by the sons and daughters of men if such had been concealed and left in the unrevealed counsels of Jehovah's infinite mind.

Grace is not destroyed when it is based upon stipulations. This is recognized in human relationships. A wealthy benefactor may leave a generous portion of his estate to a grandson or granddaughter and list some two or three stipulations they must

meet before the inheritance is theirs. Their compliance does not mean they have merited or earned what he gave them out of the grace of his benevolent heart. The same is true with the religion of Christ. While on the first missionary tour Paul and Barnabas urged their listeners "to continue in the grace of God" (Acts 13:43). Yet uniformly and consistently in all Paul's journeys he called upon people to meet the conditions of getting into the grace of God and continuing in Jehovah's amazing grace. Meeting the conditions of conversion or obeying the stipulations of salvation did not mean that they were earning or meriting their redemption. It was still a matter of God's grace though obedience to the heavenly will was required of them. Peter said at the Jerusalem Conference, "But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they" (Acts 15:11). He was speaking of the fact that both Jews and Gentiles were saved exactly alike. But each group was required to obey the gospel as a thorough study of Acts 2 and Acts 10 will establish. Peter informed those inquiring Jews in Acts 2 that they must repent and be baptized in order to receive the remission of their sins. Stipulations were required of them and yet they were saved by the grace of God. Peter commanded the household of Cornelius in Acts 10:48 "to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." Was this a stipulation? Indeed it was! Did it destroy the grace of God whereby they were saved? Indeed not! The grace of God would never have saved them had they refused to be baptized into Christ and into his glorious church. The "grace only" advocate may not like this kind of preaching and/or writing but this is still the way the Good Book teaches it. Reader friends, this is telling the matter the way it really is.

Grace is not destroyed when its terms are revealed. How else could man know of the grace of God than by its revelation? Paul writes, "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world . . ." Please note what is suggested in this passage. God's grace has appeared. It is a teaching or instructing grace. It is a revealed grace. It is a very comprehensive grace. It is a saving grace. It is a demanding grace. It is a grace with negatives; it is a grace with positives. It is responsible grace -- not a cheap or irresponsible type as set forth by many religious leaders today both IN and OUT of the church. It is a grace that is filled with hope. Acceptance of this grace permits the Christian to look "for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

Grace is not destroyed when its terms of salvation are accepted by the human recipient. The Bible says in Titus 3:5-7, "not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

Did you take special note of the intimate connection between the washing of regeneration (baptism) and the grace of God? The alien is saved by the grace of God "through the washing of regeneration (an obvious allusion to New Testament or Great Commission baptism) and renewing of the Holy

Spirit" (Titus 3:5). The Christian remains saved by God's grace in the living of the Christian life in loyal fashion. --P.O. Box 464, Ripley, TN 38063.

The Christian Mother's Prayer For An Unborn Child

Cindy Colley

O Lord may this child come into this world in a healthy body. Be with him while he is still too little to tell us what the matter and give us patience as he tells us unreservedly that something is the matter (especially in those early morning hours). And may the things that are the matter be just those every day baby illnesses and may his pains all be soothed. May he bring us much laughter and may we take the time to cherish every moment while he is our baby. We want him to grow, but still we will feel a pain, as we look away and when we look again, our baby is gone.

And when this, my child, is my little boy, I would ask for him lots of loving care -- that his bumps and bruises might be small -- especially the ones he gets on his little feelings. We want for him the

best, but we need help in knowing just what that is. Help us to open Thy Word to his tender heart and fill its vacant places with a thirst for its truths. Help him to find his heroes on its pages. Help us to make him know how important people, even little people like him, are to Thee.

And when this, my child, goes to school, calm his little fears -- and please, dry his mothers tears. We want for him the best teachers in the best schools and we want him to learn all the things he needs to know for successful living. But show us often what success really is. Let us go to school with him, with our direction, with our prayers and with our support. Let us be his head cheerleader in everything that's good and maybe help him to turn away from the

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"Most Of A Minute"

Very often when a controversial issue develops, the best arguments are the most simple ones, because they help us all to place the question in a proper light of right from wrong.

The issue is abortion. Today, Americans are divided. Someone however, drives to the very heart of the issue with four simple questions about the unborn that could have been written by a school child.

1. If he is not alive, why is he growing?
2. If he is not a human being, what kind of being is he?
3. If he is not a child, why is he sucking his thumb?
4. If he is a living, human child, why is it legal to kill him?

Let's unite to do all we can to stop America's abortions. Psalm 127:3 says, "Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is His reward."

A Tribute To

George W. DeHoff, Sr.,

September 20, 1913 - January 1, 1993:

Gary Colley

"Thine own friend and thy father's friend, forsake not" (Proverbs 27:10).

With the passing of some of our greatest preachers in the past two years, we must now add the name of our friend and brother George W. DeHoff, Sr. He began his work of Gospel preaching from the early age of 15, continuing his work of preaching for 64 years. He slipped from this life last Friday, January 1, after 79 very eventful and profitable years of life, most of which was given in the Lord's service.

Few people, especially among members of the church of Christ, have not known for many years the name of George W. DeHoff, Sr.

Thousands have studied from the many fine books he published. "Brother George," as he was affectionately known by his friends, began the DeHoff Publishing Co. in 1939, with the noble purpose in mind of publishing and distributing Bible literature all over the world. His 25 books, and more than 100 workbooks for Bible study, plus his commentary on the whole Bible have literally gone, as he planned, all over the world. They continue to be used, as they shall be for years to come, by thousands in their desire and interest to teach the Will of God to the world.

He preached the Gospel and debated in 35 of these United States and many foreign countries, baptizing more than 10,555 souls into Christ.

Since 1945, his radio sermons have been broadcast in Murfreesboro, TN, more than 5,000 times. His influence by these programs extended to not only the immediate area but to distant places as well.

His unusual talents, dedication, devotion, preparation for the work, interest in people, and ever expressed dependence on the help of God, brought his talents and opportunities great success in many fields. He served as Vice President of Freed-Hardeman College and President of Magic Valley Christian College. He was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of Tennessee both in 1971 and 1977, and a lifelong member of the Rotary Club in which he was the one time president and District

Governor.

His memorial services, with an overflow number present, were conducted at the building of the Bellwood church of Christ, built during his 23 years of work as preacher with this congregation. He had previously preached for the East Main church in

Murfreesboro, TN, for 14 years. Participating in the service were George W. DeHoff, Jr., Bonnie DeHoff Fakes, Paul Turner DeHoff, Jim Bill McInteer, Charles Gentry, Stanley J. A. McNery, Jim Creech, David McCain, and Gary Colley. Interment was at the Evergreen Cemetery, Murfreesboro, TN.

The Christian Mother's Prayer For An Unborn Child

Continued From Page 3

deceptive appeal that the world will offer him. We would ask for hands that know discipline, tempered by a heart that knows love.

And if on one triumphant day, we could sing with the angels in heaven as this our child names the precious name of a Savior, we are sure we would have then a foretaste of heaven; for it is only in this new birth, that we as parents, can see unfolding before us the joy of the life we have borne. Our family is vulnerable -- subject to separation or loss. God's family will always be together.

We know that we can't always choose our child's friends. But help us to give him Thy Standard of morality and then make us resourceful. Help us to find or even make if we have to, places in this

world where his values will be honored. We know it won't be easy. Sometimes we will cry out in despair. In a cruel world that reaches for his soul, help us to stay close to thee, and to be there for him.

And one day, when from this circle of friends he finds a lifetime companion, please give him one of thy children, so that their family, too, may always be together. And when I am letting go, help me to gently snip away at the ties of restriction and submission; but let me ever keep the tie of love intact.

And then, whatever the years may bring, watch over this my child. And bring us around Thy Throne one day where we can sing together the song of Moses and the Lamb in a place where I will be sure that this my child has "Arisen up and called me blessed."

What One Thing?

Continued From Page 2

difficulties he confronts, and to draw closer to Christ from day to day.

Certainly attendance at services is not to be equated to faithfulness, but perhaps more than any other one thing it is an index to one's faithfulness.

"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

See you in Bible Study Sunday morning!

Bob Duncan

Noah -- A Righteous Man

G. F. Raines

"Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God" (Genesis 6:9).

The fact that Noah was a righteous man notwithstanding the fact that he lived in the midst of exceedingly wicked people (Genesis 6:5, 11, 12) teaches us that we can serve God faithfully irrespective of the course followed by the majority of mankind.

The word of God says:

"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Exodus 23:2).

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in there at: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13, 14).

Although Noah was "a preacher of righteousness" (II

Peter 2:5) for many years, only eight souls were saved in the ark when God sent the great flood upon the world of the ungodly. Peter says: ". . . when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. 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" (I Peter 3:20, 21).

According to Babylonian tradition, Noah's home before the flood was at Fara on the Euphrates River, about seventy miles northwest of Eridu (Abu Sharem) -- the place in which the Garden of Eden supposedly flourished. Eridu is twelve miles south of Ur, the place where Abraham lived with his wife Sarah and his father Terah before they started for the land of Canaan. The ark floated about five

hundred miles from Fara and finally rested on Mount Ararat in Armenia, the plateau of western Asia. A town named Naxuana (or Nakhichevan) at the foot of Mount Ararat claims the tomb of Noah. The name of the town means "Here Noah settled."

Peter says: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34, 35). To work righteousness is to obey the commandments of God (Psalms 119:172); and, "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). But, "he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:4).

--P.O. Box 97, Newton, MS 39345.

February 5, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- Secrets To Healthy Worship
- Mechanical Music In Worship
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- Preaching: Has The Change Been For Better Or Worse?
 - "Most Of A Minute"
 - 'In Remembrance'
 - A Timely Challenge

Volume 29 Number 6
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Truth

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

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"Now It Is Different

W. A. Holley

"It is most likely that in the Apostolic age when there was but "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism," and no differing denominations existed, the baptism of a convert by that very act constituted him a member of the church, and at once endowed him with all the rights and privileges of full membership. In that sense, "baptism was the door into the church." Now it is different . . . " (The Standard Manual For Baptist Churches, p. 22, Edward T. Hiscox, D.D.).

We sincerely ask, who, when, where and how was the difference made? The difference was not authorized by God's word, since it is a sin to add to or to take away from what is there recorded (Revelation 22:18-19).

Dear reader, the manuals, confessions of faith, disciplines, catechisms, plus all other doctrines and commandments of men are unscriptural and are to be rejected (Matthew 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13). According to Paul, "another gospel" is not the Apostolic gospel (Galatians 1:6-10).

Many people wish to enter the church in their own way. But man's ways are not God's ways (Isaiah 55:8-9; Proverbs 14:12; Jeremiah 10:23; John 14:1-6). There are but two ways one leads to heaven, the

other leads to hell (Matthew 7:13-14). The notion that one can have "an experience of grace and join the church of one's choice." is not taught in the Sacred Scriptures (Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-42, 47).

Indeed, it is by Scriptural baptism that one is baptized into Christ, into the one body which is the church (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27; I Corinthians 12:3, 12, 20, 27; Ephesians 5:22-33). The idea that one can "get saved" and later join the church of one's choice is never taught in your Bible. Baptism was so important in new Testament times that baptism was administered "the same hour of the night" (Acts 16:25-34).

Since God has not changed, since Jesus has not changed, since the Holy Spirit has not changed, and since the word of God has not changed, who are we to say, "Now it is different" (Hebrews 13:8; Psalm 139:5-6; Isaiah 40:27-30)?

Almighty God has but one way for sinners to enter the church, the body of Christ, that they might be saved. Denominational preachers and denominational creed-makers urge other ways of entering the church. For example, they sinners to get on their knees and pray through to salvation, but Jesus nor any gospel preacher in apostolic times ever taught such a doctrine. What these preachers have

done is to come up with a new way to be saved from sin. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Jesus did not say, "He that believeth and prayeth shall be saved." By what right does the denominational preacher take the word "baptism" out of the text and substitute the word "prayer" for it?

Again, Peter said, "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). But Peter did not say, "Repent and pray everyone of you . . . for the remissions of sins. . . ." We ask, who gave these preachers authority to remove "baptized" from the text and substitute "prayer?" Chapter and verse, please! "Now it is different," according to denominational preachers; but the Lord Jesus Christ did not make THE DIFFERENCE -- denominational preachers are the guilty parties! God's word is ever the same (Matthew 24:35; I Peter 1:22-25).

Did Paul become a Christian and a member of the church before he was baptized? Kindly and sincerely, he did not! If Paul was saved before he was baptized, he did not know about it. On the Damascus road he asked, "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts 22:10; 16:30). How did the Lord answer this question?

The Lord said, "Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told of all things which are appointed for thee to do" (Acts 22:10, ASV). Ananias, a special messenger was sent to tell Paul what to do. What did he tell Paul to do? He said, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16, ASV). Verily, if Paul was saved on the Damascus road, Jesus did not know it; if Paul was saved on the Damascus road, Ananias did not know it, because he commanded Paul "to be baptized, and wash away his sins." Hence, Paul was still in his sins until he was baptized.

Even Paul wrote of how he and others were "baptized into Christ." One is not "in" Christ until one has been "baptized into Christ." "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4, ASV).

As popular as the doctrine is and as sincere as many seem to be, the Holy Bible never teaches that "one can be saved out of the church, as well as in the church." The Bible never teaches that the Lord's church is a non-essential institution. In no instance does the Bible

teach that one should "join the church of one's choice."

Since there is but one body of Christ, and since that body is the church, and since Jesus Christ purchased the church with his own blood, the Lord's church cannot be a non-essential church (Ephesians 1:20-23; 4:4-6, 12, 15; Colossians 1:23-24; I Corinthians 12:3, 13, 20, 27; Acts 20:28). One denigrates Jesus Christ and his church when one argues that the church is a non-essential institution! It is a sin to belittle Christ and his church (Ephesians 5:22-31).

We raise some important questions: Can one be saved before he is born again? (John 3:5), before his sins are forgiven? (Acts 2:38), before one's sins are washed away? (Acts 22:16), before he is in Christ? (Romans 6:3-4), before he is a new creature? (II Corinthians 5:17), before he reaches the blood of Christ? (Colossians 1:13-14; John 19:33-34; Romans 6:3-4).

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Secrets To Healthy Worship

Glenn Colley

Have you ever noticed how some Christians seem to leave worship assemblies refreshed and enriched, while others leave with nothing but their coat? There are some "secrets" to strong, healthy worship which we all need.

God, from the beginning, has intended for His human creation to worship. Worship is a human expression of subordination and humility. The first murder occurred at the hands of Cain when his desires in worship, and God's desires in worship, clashed. Cain's humility was lacking. Jesus taught us that proper worship, like a house resting on two mighty pillars, is "In spirit, and in truth" (John 4:24). There have always been people bent on worshiping with emphasis on one of these while neglecting the other, but Jesus required both. To worship God in truth can only mean that we worship according to the pattern which He approved in the New Testament (Acts 20:7).

Consider Jesus' admonition to worship in "spirit." Surely this doesn't refer to the common practice today of "manufacturing spirituality" with the emotional fever of some current religions. Let's go back to the Bible to learn how to fashion our hearts for healthy worship.

The brother announces the song the church will sing, and we all lift our voices in vocal praise. But look into the hearts of the worshipers. What is there? The songs, some of which have been sung from our youth, are so familiar to us that we can mouth the words and never consider the thoughts contained in the hymn. Consider Colossians 3:16: "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 HEART TO THE LORD" (emphasis mine, GC). If I want my singing to be "In spirit," then let me start with a heart filled with thoughts of God's rich grace toward me. Let me remember the many sins He has thoroughly cleansed from my once spotted soul. Then let me sing.

Prayer is another avenue of worship needing our careful attention. If I pray the rushed, mindless, quoted prayer, the benefits seem small. But suppose rather, that before I pray I carefully meditate on how desperate I would be without His goodness toward me. Paul wrote, "Pray without ceasing. IN EVERYTHING GIVES THANKS." (I Thessalonians 1:17, 18) (emphasis mine, GC). It's that thanks -- beginning my petitions with a heart of genuine gratitude -- which makes for rich and healthy prayer.

Some would argue, in regard to the Lord's supper, that observing this part of worship EVERY first day of the week causes it to be trite, stale, and lifeless. If you subtract from the observance the proper condition of the heart, then they are right! However, when Christians precede the eating of the Lord's supper by filling their heart with the scenes of His life and death, and the effect His blood has on THEIR SINS, every observance of the supper is fresh and enriching. Paul wrote in I Corinthians 11:24, 25 that we are to obey the Master and partake while remembering His body and blood. Then in verse 28 Paul wrote, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."

Most of us are careful about spending our money. When we come to worship we

may have a hard time keeping a good heart -- "after all," we may reason, "that money is hard to earn, and maybe my giving to the work of the church could be smaller." How can I adjust my heart so that when I give I will really be cheerful? Here's the answer: "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, AS GOD HATH PROSPERED HIM . . ." (emphasis mine, GC) When a Christian gives, let him first ponder all the things with which the good Lord has prospered him. It is so easy to give liberally and cheerfully if I do my giving while meditating on all He had done for me.

And finally, the secret to good preaching is found in I Peter 4:11: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God . . ." Want the pulpit which you fill to be interesting, challenging, and worthy of the audience's time? Then fill your sermons with God's word! We make, I believe, a terrible statement about the value of God's word when our sermons contain no Bible, or are only seasoned with a smattering of the Bible here and there. Instead, our sermons should be filled with the Bible! Preaching our wisdom instead of God's is like the light of a candle compared with the light of the brilliant sun. People who love God are hungry for the word. May we never send them way without a hearty spiritual meal from the word of God.

There they are. These are the secrets to healthy worship. They rest in a simple understanding of who God is, and how small I am before Him. I need His grace and love, and He has poured out both in sending His Son. May we always worship in "spirit and in truth."

Mechanical Music In Worship

Allen Webster

Usually the first thing that one notices when visiting the church of Christ is that mechanical music is not used in worship. They are surprised and often inquire as to the reason behind this practice. Since Christians are to "be ready always to give an answer to every man" (I Peter 3:15), we gladly take this opportunity to explain what the Bible teaches regarding music in the worship of God.

Since there are only two kinds of music -- vocal and mechanical -- , we must determine which kind God wants, or if He wants a combination of the two. Since Christians do not live under the Old Testament law (Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 8:6, 7), we appeal to the New Testament for our answer (John 12:48).

In The New Testament We Find That . . . Christ Never Commanded Mechanical Music.

Jesus has all authority (Matthew 28:18), yet He never used instruments or commanded His followers to do so. We do have an example of Jesus singing (Matthew 26:30).

Since God speaks through His Son (Matthew 17:5; Hebrews 1:1-3), it follows that God also has given no authority for instruments in worship. But someone may ask, "Do we need authority from Christ to use them?"

Yes, because Paul wrote, "whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17). So all ("whatsoever") we do in worship must be done by the written authority ("name") of our Lord.

The Holy Spirit Never Sanctioned Mechanical Music

The known worship habits of the apostles show that they did not use instrumental music. If the apostle's doctrine included playing instruments in worship, would it not be reasonable to conclude that an example could be found in the New Testament? We have examples of them singing, (Acts 16:25), teaching, praying, partaking of the Lord's Supper, and giving (Acts 2:42; I Corinthians 16:1-2), but never playing.

Christians Must Never Add Mechanical Music

John wrote, ". . . if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18). He added, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God" (II John 9). To "transgress" is to "step out of bounds." One who steps out of the bounds of the Scriptures by adding mechanical music to singing is out of fellowship with God.

Paul warned that one who perverts the gospel of Christ

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Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith And Works

(No. 8)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

The previous article depicted some thoughts relative to the indestructibility of God's amazing grace. Two other ardent aspects of grace loom for our attention in this current essay.

What The Grace Of God Does Not Preclude

The grace of God does not preclude the impossibility of apostasy. Paul was saved by Jehovah's grace. Yet he wrote in I Corinthians 9:27, "... but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected." The Corinthians were saved by the grace of God. Yet Paul wrote to them these pointed and piercing words of warning in I Corinthians 10:12, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." The Galatians were saved by the grace of God and yet they stood upon the threatening threshold of severance from Christ. Paul told them, "Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace" (Galatians 5:4). Acceptance of grace at one period of life will not make impossible a man's falling from that grace at a later period of his life. Look at Demas for an individual example and the Laodicians with their lethal lukewarmness for a congregational example. Love for the world drove Demas to become a

forsaker of truth and lethal lukewarmness drove out or ousted the Christ from the congregational presence of the once faithful Laodiceans (II Timothy 4:10; Revelation 3:14-22). Apostasy is not impossible cold, cruel and calloused Calvinism to the contrary notwithstanding.

The grace of God does not preclude a life of loyalty to law and devotion to its demands. In fact, grace demands loyalty to the law of the Lord. It demands devotion to the commandments or laws of Jesus Christ. A grace that takes lightly the law of the Lord and ardent adherence thereunto is not the grace of God that saves; it surely is not his amazing grace about which we sing with those lovely lyrics. A grace that takes lightly the law of the Lord is cheap, irresponsible grace.

The grace of God does not preclude an eloquent expression of love which is active in obedience or obedience personified. It demands such. The grace of God does not preclude diligence in working and keeping God's laws. Look at Biblical emphasis upon the word DO. The final beatitude of the Bible 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).

Mechanical Music In Worship

Continued From Page 2

would be accursed (Galatians 1:6-9). Adding unauthorized practices to worship perverts it (Mark 7:7-9). When men teach things that are different from Christ, we must not put their opinions "above that which is written" (I Corinthians 4:6), knowing that men can be wrong (I John 4:1).

Music is important in worship and God is not

pleased if it is left out. But of the two kinds of music, vocal and mechanical, the Scriptures allow only vocal (specifically singing) to be used (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19). It is wrong to add mechanical music to singing because it is unauthorized by Christ, unsanctioned by the Holy Spirit, unused by the apostles, and unsafe for Christians to practice.

What Does The Grace Of God Really Mean?

It means that even though man had sinned yet God yearned for man's redemption. It means that God loved man in spite of his sin and transgression. God's amazing grace is really his amazing love and kindness for man in ardent action. When man sinned in Eden, God headed for Pentecost and the establishment of the church. It meant that God planned the sending of his only begotten Son to make such possible (John 3:16; Matthew 16:18). The grace of God is Jehovah's part in man's salvation. When we study about the grace of God, as we are doing in detail in this timely and needed series of important themes, we are meditating upon what God has done for the redemption of the race. If one were to leave out everything in the Bible that touches God's amazing grace and man's faithful response to that grace, very little of the Heavenly Book would be left. That is why I write in this great gospel medium and have for twenty-four years, WORDS OF TRUTH, about the grace of God. Every article either contains information about what God has done to make possible our salvation or what man must do to be a rich recipient of that grace that brings salvation to all mankind. We are saved by the grace of God. The Bible teaches this. We are not saved by grace alone or by any other ONLY ism. Were we saved by grace alone then there would be universal salvation for all due to the very obvious fact that God's grace has appeared to all according to the Paul in affirmation in Titus 2:11. When does the grace of God save? It saves when men obey the conditions or stipulations set forth within the system of God's grace, i.e., Christianity or the gospel of God. This is where faith comes in for its intense importance. It is man's response to the grace of God. But much more will be written

relative to faith somewhat later in this series.

Conclusion

Reader friend, have you heard the gospel of God's dear Son? Have you believed in Jesus as the only begotten Son of the living God? Have you repented of your sins? Have you confessed your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you been immersed in water for or unto the remission of your sins? Have you thus been added to the church that one can read about within the pages of Holy Writ and as they were in Acts 2:41-47? Have you continued to be faithful to the Lord from that

point onward? If not, then you are not now saved by the grace of God. As an erring child of God you need God's grace as exhibited in his second law of pardon. That demands repentance, confession of sins and prayer (Acts 8:22; James 5:16; I John 1:9). Remember beloved, grace saves the obedient. It does not save the rebellious or the disobedient. If any reader thinks it does, just what Scripture would be offered to substantiate such a contention?

--P.O. Box 464, Ripley, TN 38063.

Preaching: Has The Change Been For Better Or Worse?

Dennis Gullledge

Recently, I sent interviews to a number of gospel preachers who have been preaching the gospel for 30-50 years or longer. Some of these have been printed in "First Century Christian" in the past several months.

The purpose of the interview is to get these brethren to reminisce and instruct from their many years of experience in gospel preaching. One of the questions I asked is "How do you think the emphasis in preaching has changed since

you began? Has the change been for better or worse?" Mack Lyon, who has preached for 52 years, answered this way:

"With secularization of the church, there seems to have been a change toward professionalism in preaching in the last half century. I mean there's less emphasis on preaching, teaching, exhorting, evangelism from the word of God, with more emphasis on ministerial education, management skill, executive ability in the

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"Most Of A Minute"

My wife and I have some good friends whose dog only has three legs. It seems the old dog had a run-in with a car. At any rate, this family's little girl was looking through a book one day with her mother when they came across a picture of a complete dog. The little girl was amazed and said, "Mama, why does that dog have so many legs?" You know, there's a lesson in that girl's innocent attitude. It's that we should be aware that what our children think and the values they form will be based greatly on what they have seen at home. What will they learn from home? Will they learn from example that sins like adultery or drug abuse or lying or cursing are acceptable? Or will they learn that ultimately only one thing will really matter -- how faithful to our God are we? We cannot simply assume that they will develop good values while being raised with bad influences. Ephesians 6 says, "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

'In Remembrance'

Elwood Holt

"Without question, the most important passages of the WORD OF GOD are those passages of order and command. As well we know, in the body of Christ, the government thereof is of Christ Himself. Evidently our Lord thought that our remembrance of His death was an act of worship to be graced and honored and exalted with the force of a command. He said: 'This do in remembrance of me.' But the amazing thing is that in His ordaining of the remembrance, the most abhorred thing in human experience was made the center of an act of worship.

He literally asked men to remember His dying as an act of worship. And that seems to us to be strange, for death is what we want to get away from. We will spend every cent we have to put it off. When it does come, we try to cover it up. We speak of it in hushed tones. We express our sorrows in sincere tears.

When loved ones are taken from us, we count our greatest losses then! And even down to the funeral services, we still try to avoid the stern reality of that which has taken place. We embalm the dead, trying to make the body appear to be simply sleeping. We dress the body with more care than perhaps was ever given while the person was yet alive. We put the body in a casket, lined with satin and plush, even though the person never slept in so ornate a bed as that even in his cradle days. We provide the best funeral possible with the prettiest flowers and the deepest of reverence, and we say that we do it in respect for the dead. However, in reality, we do it more often for ourselves, trying to get away from the somber fact that someone has left us.

Now consider the startling thing that Jesus did when He instructed His followers to remember His death. He desired to bring to our remembrance every detail of what took place there at His place of execution. He did not

want us to forget that He died! Literally, John declared, "Behold the dying one" -- when he said, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." Thus, we consider that one of the most significant things that our Lord ever did in offering a command, was to turn the attention of all who were interested, to the supper which is the memorial of HIS OWN DEATH.

As Christians we are LINKED with the table of the Lord. Let us see to it that we "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11). We are told, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? In these words He shows us that the Lord's Supper, as we commonly call it, sets forth the very foundation principles of Christianity. It is a rallying center, as it were, where God's people come together to openly confess their adherence to these great fundamental truths. Notice the order given: the CUP first, the BREAD second. When our Lord instituted the Supper, and when we participate in it, thanksgiving for the bread is first, and then for the cup; but the apostle here mentions the cup first because it sets forth the precious poured-out blood of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and there can be no relationship with God for those who by nature and practice are lost sinners, until they have been cleansed by the precious BLOOD OF CHRIST. Every time the Communion feast is celebrated, the great fact is emphasized that it is the blood of Jesus alone, that cleanses from sin and gives access to the presence of God. In this we may see the reason for Satan's antagonism against the ordinance.

It suffers in two ways. On the one hand there are those who have added to it a great many UNSCRIPTURAL

superstitious practices that have made it a strange and weird mystery, so that many Christians are almost afraid to approach the table of the Lord. On the other hand there are those who pretend to have a deeper spirituality and a greater Bible knowledge than ordinary Christians, and so put the Lord's Supper to one side on the plea that we have no need of ordinances of any

kind in the Christian, which is a spiritual degeneration.

BAPTISM speaks of my death with Christ; the LORD'S SUPPER speaks of Christ's death for me as the only ground of approach to and fellowship with God. And so (I Corinthians 11-26) we read, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death 'till

he comes."

THERE IS ONLY ONE LORD'S TABLE IN ALL THE WORLD. Wherever bread and the fruit of the vine are placed on a table in commemoration of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, that is the Lord's Table, and Christians are responsible to behave themselves accordingly.

"He is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." - Heb. 8:6

A Timely Challenge

The Hebrew nation was dedicated to the discharge of religious service to Jehovah. The time given each year in concentrated *all-day* worship, plus that of each seventh year (*Sabbatical year*), plus the accumulation over *fifty* years is astounding:

1. TIME GIVEN IN ONE YEAR.

Sabbaths (Lev. 23:3)

52 days

Passover (Lev. 23:4-8)

6 days

Feast of Weeks (Lev. 23:15-21) 1 day

Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:22-23) 1 day

Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23:23-25) 1 day

Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:34-42) 6 days

Feast of New Moon (Num. 23:11-15) 11 days

2. TIME GIVEN IN SEVEN YEARS. Each seventh year was a *Sabbatical year* (Lev. 25:1-7) given completely to Jehovah. This year consisting of 360 days, plus an accumulation of 78 days per year for the previous 6 years (468 days) equals 828 days.

3. TIME GIVEN IN FIFTY YEARS. Simple addition and multiplication give a

total of 6,550 days. This is an average of 131 days per year. And these were *days*, not *hours*!

We live under "a better covenant which was established upon better promises," where we are to be "steadfast,

Preaching: Has The Change Been For Better Or Worse?

Continued From Page 3

development of 'programs' etc. that will draw the biggest numbers. There seems to be less interest in salvation for the lost and more focus on 'church growth,' less faith in the Divine power to achieve God's purpose in the church, and greater focus on human 'proven success formulas' to achieve 'church growth.' And much preaching seems to have lost its urgency. The professional preacher must have something to say once or twice a week, while in the past, the preacher had something he just had to say whenever and wherever he had or could make an opportunity. Today he draws on his education, puts together a sweet-spirited speech of some twelve to fifteen minutes that will leave everyone feeling good about themselves, dismisses them, then goes by the business office on his way to the lake or golf course and picks up his check, the amount of which determines the measure of his success."

immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," and have our "righteousness exceed" that of the Jews.

WHAT A CHALLENGE TO US!

--John Simpson

"And at least from my vantage point, it seems that fifty years ago he just had to say something! People looked to him and expected him to point them to Christ. He had no education and no library, so he went to his Bible to find his message. Well, some of the change has been for good, and some is obviously very negative. Certainly if a medical doctor must be educated and trained to perform intricate surgery on the physical body, the preacher should be educated and prepared to skillfully speak to the spiritual needs of people. There's nothing wrong with that unless it is used as a substitute for the urgent burning need to speak up for Christ. I don't want to leave the impression that I believe all preachers are 'professional' preachers as described above. But the emphasis seems to be in that direction. I'm encouraged by the number of young preachers among us who seem to be turning the situation around."

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February 12, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- The Disposition at Babel
- Christ Formed In You
- That Precious Institution Called Church of Christ
- May One Be Baptized For The Wrong Reason In The Right Way?
- A Great Gift
- The Man Who Had Everything

Volume 29 Number 7
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The Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak the
Words of Truth and soberness." -- Acts 26:24

Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, and Works

(No. 9)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

We now continue our studies into a very timely and truly needed theme dealing with some of the kingly terms of the New Testament. These terms are grace, law, love, liberty, faith, and works. Religiously, we are living in a time when grace is misunderstood; law is denied; love is abused; liberty is misused; faith is misappropriated and misapplied and works are eliminated in the realm of religion. These are sufficient reasons for our study of this timely theme.

IS THERE A CONFLICT BETWEEN GRACE AND FAITH?

Only in the minds of those who misunderstand either grace or faith or perhaps both grace and faith is there a conflict. Religious leaders often confuse people when they add the word ONLY by the side of grace or by the side of faith. Article 9 of the Disciple of the Methodist Church of 1948 says on page 27, "Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort." I deny both allegations. It is not wholesome due to its being unscriptural and anti-scriptural. It is void of comfort because the Bible says it is not by faith only

(James 2:24). If justification is by faith only, then grace has no part. Grace and faith are not the same at all. "Faith only" excludes anything else by which man is justified--even the amazing grace of God. If grace enters and plays a role, then justification is not by faith only, is it?

But consider the teaching of another popular and prominent creed book of our time. The Standard Manual for Baptist Churches, by Edward T. Hiscox, 1951, say on page 61, "We believe the Scriptures teach that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace. . ." Yet on the very next page of this creed book, page 62, it says that justification is "solely through faith in Christ. . ." Now which is it? How could salvation be wholly of grace and yet be solely through faith? Wholly and solely are exclusive terms. They will not permit anything else to exist by the side of that to which they are attached. Religious leaders have always gotten themselves into real trouble when they have begun to add to the word of the Lord.

Martin Luther, the great German reformer, found himself in trouble with James 2:24 when he added the lethal thought that one is saved by faith only to Romans 3:28. We are saved by faith but not

by faith only.

Religious leaders find themselves in much trouble today and confuse the people greatly when they add the word ONLY or ALONE to grace. If we are saved or justified wholly or solely by the grace of God, then faith has no part in the process at all. How could it? Yet Paul teaches that we are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" in Romans 3:24. Four verses later in the same chapter he says in Romans 3:28, "We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law." Did Paul contradict himself in the same chapter of the Bible and in the very same context of developing thought? He surely did if we are saved either by grace only or by faith only. The truth of the matter is that Paul did not teach that justification is solely through faith did he? If so, where, Where WHERE??? He taught that salvation comes by grace through faith as per Ephesians 2:8. Paul makes this point crystal clear in this precious passage by saying, ". . .for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. . ." Grace is God's part; faith is man's part in the scheme of human redemption. Grace richly includes all that

God has done to make possible the provisions for our salvation. Faith includes man's total response to the plan of pardon. God blesses with grace when faith obeys; he has never blessed with salvation the person who says he believes but refuses to obey.

Beloved reader, do you believe we are saved by grace only? If so, where does the Bible teach this doctrine? Do you believe that we are saved by faith only? If so, where is the scripture that sanctions such a belief? The Bible says in James 2:24 that we are justified by works and not by faith only. Now you may be

asking, "Preacher, what do you believe about the matter?" It really does not matter what I believe about the matter, does it? The important thing is what the Bible teaches. The word of God says we are saved by grace through faith. Incidentally, that is what I believe about it also. Why? Because that is what the Bible teaches in connection with it. I am very fond of a pronouncement that says, "The Bible says it; that settles it; I believe it." Should not this be your sentiment also? If not, WHY NOT?

- P. O. Box 464, Ripley, Tennessee 38063

I Have Sinned

Neal Pollard

Do not many in our society believe that "confessing, for the good of the soul" clears one of all the responsibility of their guilt? Yet, is it not true that mind of the sinner must also bring about a change? Many are engrossed in a sin today, feeling with great finality a sense of that guilt; however, they NEVER make things right. Sometimes Bible characters came face to face with their sin and react, but fail to act. Let us notice a few.

PHARAOH. Pharaoh represents those in the world who acknowledge their sin,

yet never intend to change. The powerful ruler of Egypt was experiencing the anger of God revealed in the plague of hail. He called for Moses and Aaron, at which time he confessed, "I have sinned this time. . ." (Exodus 9:27). After, the locust plague, wherein all the vegetation was consumed, Pharaoh called with haste for the brothers again. This time, his admission was, "I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you" (Exodus 10:16). If we isolated these

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

The Disposition At Babel

Glenn Colley

Those of us reared in Christian families were all taught the events surrounding the tower called Babel. (Genesis 11) Some speculated that the different colors of mankind began here. We were all intrigued at imagining workmen who suddenly lost the ability to communicate. Perhaps angers flared until they all realized that the gibberish coming from fellow workers was no joke.

God always does the right thing. He saw into the hearts of these people who wanted to make a name for themselves and bypass God. The irony is that today we see attitudes so similar to the ones at Babel. For example, consider these three mentalities which have sadly been handed down from generation to generation.

1. THE, "I DON'T NEED YOU. I CAN MAKE IT JUST FINE WITHOUT YOU" MENTALITY.

The people, acting like children who decide to run away from home, said, "Let us make brick. . . and they had brick for stone and slime they had for mortar." (vs. 3) Who made the mud with which to make brick? God did. A young child sees nothing illogical in saying to a parent, "I don't need you, so I'm running away. If you will just get me a suitcase for my clothes, and a lunch box, and give me some food, I'll be on my way." The people at Babel were no less dependent on God!

We act like these people when we fail to love and support the church of Christ. So many today are making their own way through life without recognizing and exalting God. They still eat His food and drink His rain (Matt.

4:44)! We do need Him (James 1:17). It is not only reasonable that we should be faithful to our Lord and to His church, it is the obvious reaction to all He does and has done for us.

2. THE "IF WE ARE BIG, OTHER THINGS DON'T MATTER" MENTALITY.

"... Let us make us a name. . ." (vs. 4) It didn't matter to them at this point that their action was opposed to God. They were fully willing to overlook that fact to accomplish their "big" plans.

The temptation exists today. How many churches today have grown to great numbers, while letting the heat of their mega-size fire melt away their concerns about God's demands on men and women and churches? We should grow in number. We should want more and more souls in the church of our Lord. But if my choice is between a church of 100 who bows head and heart to the teachings of Christ, or a church of 1000 who in pious pride has left the teachings in God's word, I'll not hesitate to unite with the 100. Remember that Jesus said, "Not everyone that saith unto Me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21)

3. THE "GOD DOESN'T NOTICE THE AFFAIRS OF MEN" MENTALITY.

Are His ears closed that they cannot hear? Are His eyes closed that He cannot see? Not in Genesis 11. Verse five says, "And the Lord came. . ." Verse eight says, "So the Lord scattered them. . ."

For this reason we must not teach people, as some do, that God cares little in

our time about the instructions in the Bible. As one woman in the church said, "I don't think God is concerned about things like qualifications of elders or divorce and remarriage -- He's only concerned that we love Him and love one another."

God is watching. He does take note of the affairs of men. He once and for all delivered His will in His word. (Jude 3) Hebrews 4:13 says, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." One day we will be judged according to our works. (Rev. 20:12) Some don't want to present God as watching because they believe people will be afraid of Him. To teach that God is watching us however, is only fearful to those living in conscious sin. To fallible but faithful Christians, it is a great comfort.

These early humans of Genesis 11 believed they were "big enough" to make their own decisions and control their own lives without God's consent. They were wrong, and all those who have come to that conclusion have also met failure. The closing verse of this historical episode is this: "Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth." (Gen. 11:9)

May we ever exalt our Savior as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords in our beliefs and practices. "And whatever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." (Col. 3:17)

Christ Formed In You

B. J. Clarke

"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. 4:19). The apostle Paul was determined to labor until Christ was formed in the Galatians. What did Paul mean by the expression, "until Christ be formed in you"?

One of the central themes of the apostolic writings is that of allowing Christ to live within us to guide us in our everyday lives. Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). Paul had crucified the lusts of his flesh in order that Christ might live within him and take control of his life (Gal. 5:24). He had denied self in order that he might take up his cross and follow Jesus (Matt. 16:24). Can we say that we have allowed Christ to reign within us? Is Christ on the throne of our hearts? Are we Christ-controlled? Our whole purpose as Christians is to form Christ within us to the extent that he is Lord and Master of our lives! This is no doubt why Paul used the expression, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" in his epistle to the Colossians (Col. 1:27). This is to be our focus: to develop and form Christ within us.

The general epistles give equal emphasis to this concept. John wrote, "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (I John 2:6). "For

even hereunto were ye called: because Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I Peter 2:21). These two passages of Scripture demonstrate clearly that one must seek to imitate Jesus if he would be pleasing to Jesus. It is simply impossible to be a faithful Christian without seeking to act as Christ would act. Nothing would revolutionize the church more than for its members to determine to form Christ within their hearts. To walk in the footsteps of Jesus is a challenging and yet rewarding walk.

What will happen if we allow Christ to be formed within us? Our hearts will be pure (Phil. 4:8). As a result, our lives will also be pure. Our language will be free from corrupt and foolish blemishes (Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6). Our eyes will avoid lust (Matt. 5:23, 24; 18:15-17; Gal. 5:15ff). Our capacity to demonstrate compassion and forgiveness will increase (Eph. 4:32-5:2). Our passion for souls will burn more fervently (Luke 19:10; Matt. 9:36f). Our thirst for opportunities to worship and serve will be enchanced (Luke 4:16; Acts 10:38). We will become better husbands and wives, sons and daughters and employers and employees (Col. 3:18-24). The list of improvements is endless.

Let us allow Christ to be formed within our hearts so that the beauty of Jesus may be reflected by each one of our lives to the world (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:15, 16). May we ever strive to have Christ formed within us!



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VISIT SOON THE SIXTH AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST - 1501 SIXTH AVENUE, JASPER, ALABAMA.

That Precious Institution Called The Church of Christ

Gary Colley

The beloved and divine institution called the church of Christ should be found and enjoyed by all the world! Many have found this treasured "pearl" of great price and are now enjoying its blessings (Matt. 13:44-46). That was the intention of its purchaser, founder, and builder. He gave His all that the Gospel might be delivered to the world and that the New Testament might be ratified with lost man (Matt. 26:28). He sent His chosen apostles to preach the terms of pardon to all men everywhere and invited all to come in order that they might accept His grace, mercy, and love (Matt. 28:18-20; Jn. 6:44-45). This body, the church, called out to live differently from the world, is the place in which Heaven has placed salvation (Eph. 5:23). Paul taught the Corinthians, and Christians today, *"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. . . What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? . . . 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"* (II Cor. 6:14-18).

Sadly, some have never found the New Testament church. What ever be the reason, they are the losers. We must strive to reach them with the Gospel. Prejudice, family raising, error, the desire for worldly pleasure, fame or money, etc., have caused many to never investigate the evidence of the Bible. They have no taste for spiritual things. These seem to believe that if they never get serious about future eternal matters, God will overlook them in judgment. Such is not the case (II Cor. 5:10-11).

Others have found the church revealed for the salvation of lost man, but

have not rendered obedience to the Gospel. Seemingly, they have decided that they want no part of Christianity and have rejected it. Their opinions and feelings are that one can be saved outside as well as in, if they just live a moral life and are "honest and sincere." When it comes to religion, they say they believe that one church or way is as good as another. These deceive themselves into believing that error is as good as Truth, that man's ways are equal to God's way,

and that "one church is as good as another". Of course Jesus said, *"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"* (Jn. 12:48).

Many have tasted the blessings in Christ and His church, by obedience, but after a while they quit studying, serving, and giving, and fall away. What a terrible waste it is for one to be sought and bought by a

loving, sacrificing, dying Saviour, and then to turn back from these blessed and honored positions to the dregs of the world! Thus many lose their souls, the souls of their families, and the friends who follow them. Paul teaches that those who were *"once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, (It is*

impossible) to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Heb. 6:4-6).

It is no small matter to reject Christ and His church! If you would have the Lord's blessings, enter His church! Give of your best to this precious institution. Live in hope of the eternal blessings (Rev. 2:10).

May One Be Baptized For The Wrong Reason In The Right Way?

Jerry Jenkins

For sometime (Since Campbell at least) the issue of how much one must know about baptism before his baptism is scriptural has been at issue. It has caused many to be baptized a second time for fear that their original baptism was invalid because they "did not know enough." Good Bible students know that at baptism a number of factors occur, i.e.,

(1) one is baptized into Christ,

(2) one is baptized into the death of Christ.

(3) one at baptism puts on Christ.

(4) one is saved from past sins at the point of baptism,

(5) one's sins are washed away by the blood of Christ at baptism,

(6) one receives remission of past sins at baptism,

(7) one begins his new life at the time of baptism,

(8) one is baptized to do the will of God.

These are but a few of the many reasons one should be baptized. At issue concerning how much one should know is, if one understands reason number two (cited above), but not numbers six, seven, and eight, does that lack of information negate his baptism.

To this writer, the issue is not only the amount of correct

information, but the concern regarding wrong or misinformation. One must (1) do what God says, (2) in the way God says, and (3) for the reason God says. To illustrate, consider the subject of prayer. We are to do what God says, namely, we are to pray; we are to pray in the way God commands, that is, to Him, through Jesus; and we are to pray in the proper manner, but also for the correct reason, to obey him, etc. There may be many reasons for one to pray and one may not even be aware of all the reasons and his prayer still be acceptable, however, one may not pray

properly and one of his reasons be wrong. Example: One may not pray to be seen of men, regardless of how many others motivations are correct.

Conclusion: One may be baptized scripturally and not know all the purposes, but he cannot be baptized scripturally when one of the purpose is out of harmony with the will of God. For example, one may not be baptized while believing that he is already saved and his baptism be acceptable to God any more than he could pray and his prayer be motivated for an unscriptural reason.

A Great Gift

David Courington

In the following texts-Matthew 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9, John 12:1-8, we read an account of Mary pouring a box of very valuable ointment on Jesus. The scriptures show that she did it to honor Christ, but there was unwarranted criticism of the generous act. Sometimes criticism can be good, but it is often a detriment to those who desire to do the Lord's will. It discourages and sometimes even causes men to fall away. We must

not allow this to happen to us, but in addition to that we must not let ourselves become critics like Judas was to Mary.

In this case, **money** was the problem, Judas looked upon it as an earthly treasure to be possessed rather than a means to do the work of heaven. Jesus said, "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."

Continued on page 4

"Most Of A Minute"

Clinton's Homosexual Plan

It's sometimes hard for me to believe that our country has come to the time where our media is filled with discussions of homosexuality, and the rights of those who practice it. -- and there's an element in the discussion which should offend every Christian, everyone who puts faith in the Word of God. A few days ago the President said, "People should be disqualified from serving in the military based on something they do, not based on who they are." You know, that's true, if you're talking about being black or Hispanic or short. But there is a clear difference between these things and being homosexual. It is this: Homosexuality is a sin against God. Being black, Hispanic, or short is not. People are homosexuals based on what they do. We need to get back to the Bible! Here's what Romans 1:26 says, "God gave them up to vile affections. For even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature; And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men. . ." **May Christians never hesitate to stand for the truths of God's word.**

I Have Sinned

Continued from page 1

two passages from their context, we might view Pharaoh differently. We might even admire him. Yet, we notice from Exodus that Pharaoh repeatedly confessed his sins, but never repented. Contrasted with David (II Samuel 12:13), Manasseh (II Chronicles 33), and the thief on the cross (Luke 23:41-43), Pharaoh never turned from his iniquity. Exodus 9:34 shows that Pharaoh's confessions were filled with conceit. He spoke of his wickedness only to end the wrath of God, being unaware that God is not mocked (cf. Galatians 6:7). As payment for his deceit, Pharaoh lost his dignity, his happiness, his son, and his control. Yet, he refused to let go of sin. If Pharaoh would have sworn to his own hurt without changing his mind (Psalm 15:4), asked for the good way and walked therein (Jeremiah 6:16), and spoken the truth to demonstrate righteousness (Proverbs 12:17), his record would read much differently.

BALAM. Balaam represents men today who wait for their sin to be discovered before they "repent". He was persuaded by Balak to undermine the Israelites. On his way to Moab, the treacherous man had his way blocked by the angel of the Lord. The events of the story are familiar. Balaam's donkey halts at the sight of the angel, Balaam smites the donkey thrice, the animal speaks, Balaam threatens it, and finally Balaam is made to see the angel. Then we notice Numbers 22:34. "And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, 'I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now, therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again.'" Obviously, Balaam felt no guilt for sin until it was found out. Although he was guilty of idolatry, man-pleasing, double-mindedness, and spiritual treason, Balaam was only sorry that he had to face God for his crimes.

ACHAN. Achan is an example of one who confesses his wrongs only as an attempt to save himself (Joshua 7:20). Achan was a covetous man. His greed led him to disobey a direct order of God. Perhaps, if Achan would have immediately gone to Joshua to make amends for his sin, he could have saved his physical life and certainly his soul. Achan was wholeheartedly sinful. He showed no remorse for hurting God or Israel. He was only sorry that his sin cost him his life.

SAUL. Saul represents those who believe that confession of fault frees one from the need to change. In I Samuel 15:24 and 26:21, Saul confessed, "I have sinned". What had Saul done? He had transgressed the commands of the Lord. He had ignored

Samuel's words of warning. He feared the people more than he feared the Lord. He obeyed the people (cf. Matthew 6:24). Saul was full of sinful pride (I Samuel 15:24; 31:4; 28:7ff). Saul's death was his ultimate humiliation. God had taken his throne and he took his own life. Saul's confessions were useless to him and to God.

JUDAS. Matthew 27:4 reads, ". . . I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood. . ." Judas Iscariot spoke these words moments before his guilt drove him to suicide. The apostle represents those whose guilt prevent their repenting. Judas did not consider the consequences of his sins. He had guided killers to God's Son, thus expediting His

death. He did such for blood money. He betrayed innocent blood. Then, he killed himself (Matthew 27:4-5; Acts 1:18-19). He opted for suicide over repentance. What consequences followed his sin!

These men could have been like the prodigal son of Luke 15. While sin had robbed him of his position (19), finances (14-16), self-respect (16), and self-control (13), the lost boy came to himself and said, "I have sinned" (18). The prodigal son not only reacted, but also acted. He left the sin in the pen, the practice with the pigs, the road of sin for the road back home, and pride in the peril wherein they had existed. Every man must have the humility of heart that characterized this young man.

Pharaoh confessed his fault, but was not healed of his spiritual wounds. Balaam feared only exposure of his sins and not his participation in them. Saul confessed his sins, then added sin upon sin thereafter. Judas died with his sin. The prodigal son left his sin. Truly, repentance must accompany confession of sin. Let us strive not only to admit our wrongs, but also clear ourselves of our wrongs.

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WORD of GOD

5th Commandment

Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. *Exodus 20:12*

A Great Gift

Continued from page 3

(Matthew 6:20). Is that where your treasures are?

Judas let mammon be his **master** instead of Christ. He was supposed to be a follower of Jesus, but he was really a follower of money. Just after this we read where he betrayed the Lord for thirty pieces silver. he is living proof of what Jesus said in Matthew 6:24, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

Judas had a sinful **motive** in criticizing.

Often, when one criticizes and complains, he has a hidden agenda. Judas motive was impure (John 12:6). If we complain or criticize we should ask ourselves why we are doing it and be honest enough to admit the truth to ourselves.

You see, Judas was **masquerading** as one who was concerned about the poor (John 12:6). It might be that he had deceived himself into thinking that the money was being used for the wrong reason, but this was not what was

really in his heart. We should constantly examine our own hearts to see if we are hypocrites.

What Judas and the other disciples did is called **murmuring** (Mark 14:5). A murmurer is one who complains and talks about what others are doing. This is a sinful act (Philippians

2:14). Before we complain about anything, we should make sure that it is something that is not just a matter of personal choice. It would not have been wrong to have sold the ointment and given it to the poor, but it was not Judas' box, or the other disciple's either. Besides that, what she did with it was

recognized by Jesus as a better choice.

The act of Mary is even today a **memorial** to her. She had honored Jesus Christ. When we honor Christ, we can be sure that it is no waste, but we will be remembered for it.

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The Man Who Had Everything

Dan Harless

Solomon had everything that most individuals seek after, and more. He was extremely wealthy, respected by all of the world leaders, unlimited in power and influence, and wisdom beyond comparison. He was the favored son of the well loved and highly respected King David.

He was a talented author of more than 1,000 songs and 3,000 wise sayings (I Kings 4:32). World leaders spoke often of his wisdom and insight.

His army was well equipped. He gathered 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen with imported horses from Egypt. He purchased weapons from the kings of the Hittites

and the kings of Syria (I Kings 10:26-29).

Solomon had a large household with 700 wives and 300 concubines. Thirty cattle, 100 sheep, 30 cors of fine flour, 60 cors of meal besides harts, gazelles, roebucks, and fatted fowl were required to feed his house for ONE DAY.

He spent \$24,200,000 (at today's market prices) to make 200 large shields with each shield having been made with 17.5 pounds of beaten gold. His annual income has been estimated to have been more than half a billion dollars. The queen of Sheba said, "The report was true which I heard in my own land of your affairs and of your wisdom, but I did not believe the report until I came and my own eyes had seen it; and,

behold, the half was not told me; your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report which I heard" (I Kings 10:6, 7). Solomon exceeded all other earthly kings in material prosperity and wisdom. He had it all! Or did he?

He married many foreign women, which was against God's command. His wives turned away his heart from God (I Kings 11:1ff). In late maturity Solomon wrote, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14).

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February 19, 1993

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Volume 29 Number 8
(USPS 691-760)

The Words of Truth

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

ne

"The Rat Race"

Dale Jenkins

The night ended with a series of phone calls and a rushed Bible reading and story with the kids (you don't have to wonder if they got anything out of the story, when they fell asleep during the reading). The next morning it was "up" before the sun and hit the ground running. The day had been like that. In fact the whole week had been that way. In fact, as I think about it now, all of life sometimes seems to "push in" on me and become like that. Perhaps one of the saddest things about it all is that when we do get a breath, when we do get a moment to relax, we feel guilty. That guilt is twofold:

One part of it comes from the endless lists of "To do's" that clutter our desks and pockets. If there's still more to do, isn't it lazy to stop?

The other part of it comes from the voices around us that constantly ask us why this or that project isn't being done. Why, it seems if all these things were done all the "problems" would be solved.

Wake up and smell the coffee.

First of all. It is not lazy to retreat. It is not sloven to relax. It is not stealing to release yourself from the rat race. In fact it is much more Christ like than carnal. ". . . He departed thence by ship into a desert place apart"

(Matthew 14:13). "And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone" (Matthew 14:23). "And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray" (Mark 6:46). "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12). "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone" (John 6:15). He left needy multitudes at the height of His ministry to be alone. Now when is the last time you saw a spiritual leader do that? But are not God's people to delight at this meditation? (Psalm 1:2).

Now let's answer the voices that give us guilt. The fact is that "all of the problems" will never be solved. All the needs will not be met and if you begin to fulfill one set of priorities another will go lacking. The early churches answer to problems was not perform better, but pray harder. "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). Now when is the last time you heard a minister or leader say that?

Somebody get me out of this

rat race. If we are to be like Jesus we will be more peaceful. Our blood pressure will be down more than it is up. Our passion will be people not programs. Then, and only then will people see Christ in us. It's not in the hurried lifestyle that Christ can grow, but in the one that takes time to know Him and be filled with His fullness. The first word He spoke to those assembled disciples was peace: "And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you" (John 20:26). Consider further that peace is the greeting in every new testament book following Acts with the exception of one. Five times the writer of Romans wished the recipients' peace in their lives.

Should we only remember in a discussion of order in worship that: ". . . God is not the author of confusion, but of peace . . ." (I Corinthians 14:33), or would this not apply to our personal lives as well. The same author later commanded ". . . be of good comfort, be of one mind, *live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you*" (II Corinthians 13:11).

And how can we get out of the rat race? Is God going to intervene in our lives and create it? Is the world going to slow down and allow it? Will

getting up earlier and going to bed later solve the problem? Are pressures in life going to get smaller? No. Peace will only come when we: "*Rejoice in the Lord* always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your *moderation* be known unto all men . . . *Be careful for nothing*; but in every thing by *prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God*. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:4-7). Did we get that? If you've read this far, no doubt you understand "to do" lists, so let me give you one more for your list:

1. Live a life of joy in the Lord. My spiritual outlook must not be negativism that constantly cuts and investigates others, looking for the chinks in their armor. It must be the joy that comes only from a relationship with the Lord.

2. Live a life of moderation. Learn to say no, avoid over scheduling. It may not get done, but that's not the end of the world.

3. Avoid worry. Don't waste time nursing a difficulty.

4. Pray. Jesus spent whole nights in prayer. If He needed it, boy do we ever.

5. Ask God for what you need. If you really believe He will supply your needs that'll slow the tread mill down.

6. Be thankful. Isn't there some contentment in that word? One of the reasons the race has become so dominant in our lives is that we are constantly wanting more and better possessions.

It's then that the peace of God from the God of peace will rule your life. It's a peace that the world won't know, or have, or even understand. They won't understand how you, while everyone else is hand wringing and frazzled, can be calm and at peace. They won't understand it because they don't know the author of it; God Himself.

And lest you think I'm setting myself up as some standard, this little clip is for my wall as much as it is for yours. I need and yearn for this time with God, and when it is there, I know it. I must have it, for those times when I neglect it, it shows then too. It shows in my actions and my attitudes. All of our lights will shine brighter if we will spend time with Him, for only then can we reflect His glory.

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

"The Lord Led Me To Do This"

Glenn Colley

All true Christians love the Bible. For Christians to separate themselves from God's word would be spiritual suicide. Most of us who preach or shepherd have seen many instances in which wayward Christians, who attend Bible classes and preaching seldom or none, are spiritually dwindling away from a lack of the milk and meat of God's word. This malnutrition shows up in their attitudes which become increasingly more like the world, and less like Jesus.

I hope we will always love the Book. It is God breathed, and brought about through the Holy Spirit (II Peter 2:21). It is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path (Psalm 119:105). It is the delight and meditation of the faithful (Psalm 1:2). It is our source of faith (Romans 10:17). We've simply got to have His word, the Bible, to guide us. It is that important.

Now, consider the title of

this article. Frequently I will hear folks say, "The Lord led me to do this," when speaking of some affair of life -- work, house buying, child raising, evangelism, etc. I think this phrasing is worthy of comment.

It is wholly true that Christians are led by the Lord in their daily decisions. Without His guidance, we would walk in darkness (I John 1:5-7). How does He lead us? By His word, the Bible. That's one thing that makes Bible study so exciting -- you see, it guides us unto EVERY good work. Why we believe God works providentially today, pinpointing that providential intervening is difficult and often inaccurate. For that reason, to speak with truth certainty of God's leading one would do well to look to His written word.

(II Timothy 3:16) -- "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man

of God might be complete, thoroughly furnished unto every good work."

If my goal is to please Him, I will not expect or imagine a direct, personal statement from on High. I will go to the Book.

(II Timothy 2:15) -- "Study to show thyself approved of God..."

The Lord doesn't speak to people personally and directly as He did before the New Testament was completed. He leads us through His written word. In His word we have "... all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue ..." (II Peter 1:3).

Is it wrong or improper to say, "The Lord led me to do this"? Not at all, in fact, it is a wonderful sentiment, provided we are demonstrating a deep gratitude for the Bible when we say it, and not a subjective feeling which we randomly attribute to God.

Christians love the Bible.

Shameful Giving

Jerri Manasco

Preachers are often afraid to preach or write about giving because of the attitudes many have about it. Preach a sermon on "Giving" and someone in the church is liable to say, "The preacher must be wanting a raise!" Speak about giving, and someone will probably say that it is not anyone's business what he gives or even if he gives at all! This is a potentially volatile topic -- BUT IT IS A BIBLE TOPIC!! I am amazed at the church members who almost cheer the preacher on when he preaches on denominationalism or the plan of salvation, but when he touches the pocketbook, he has become a meddler! But this article is about giving. Specifically I am talking about shameful giving!

The word "shameful" means disgraceful! It is truly disgraceful what attitudes some brethren have about their giving. It is shameful that a brotherhood that has long claimed to stand for the old paths will become suddenly defensive when the subject of the divine plan for church finance is discussed. Yes, God does say a great deal about giving, both in the Old and New Testaments. If we overlook those teachings, then we will have blood on our hands for not declaring the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:26-27).

What is shameful giving?

It is shameful when Christians will not give at all. God has given more than we

could ever pay back! We could not even make a fraction of a fraction of a down payment for what God has done. It is a shame, though, when Christians fail to understand that what God has given is designed in part as an incentive for our own giving. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (II Corinthians 8:9). It is not merely the grace of Christ that Paul is discussing here. Have you noticed that this statement is made in the midst of a discussion on liberality of giving?

Many hide behind the worn out excuse, "Well, you don't have to give money! You can give your time, your talents, etc., etc." But people who say this generally do not give their time or talents! It is true that God wants our whole self in his service (Matthew 16:24; Galatians 2:20; 5:24), but it is also true that he gives instructions about the use of our MONEY (I Corinthians 16:2; I Timothy 6:17-19). It is a shame when a congregation has to flounder on the waves of uncertainty because Christians will not give!

It is shameful when Christians give less than they could be giving. The Lord does not impose a percentage tax on his kingdom. The tithe is an Old Testament order, though it has been pointed out by good men that the tithe is a

Continued On Page 3

The Substance Of Things Hoped For

Dalton Key

What is your definition of religious faith? And perhaps of even greater importance -- what is your attitude concerning faith?

An anonymous English schoolboy once defined faith as "the power of believing what you know ain't so." H. L. Mencken described it as "an illogical belief in the occurrence of the improbable." Ambrose Bierce opined, "Belief without

evidence, is what is told by one who speaks without knowledge, of things without parallel." One unknown writer called faith "the boast of a man who is too lazy to investigate." And G. B. Shaw once remarked, "People will believe anything that amuses them, gratifies them, or promises them some sort of profit."

Conversely, the Hebrew writer demonstrates a seasoned measure of respect for man's faith in God. By

inspiration, he laments the unbelief of the wandering Israelites, applauds the faith and faithfulness of the heroes of Old Testament times, and encourages his readers to develop and maintain a steadfast faith patterned after the example of Jesus (Hebrews 3, 4; 11; 13:1-4).

The author of Hebrews presents trusting, unwavering faith as the key which unleashes the gospel's power and assures one of entering

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The Words Of Truth

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Not Removing The Ancient Land Marks

Don Williams

"Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set" (Proverbs 22:28). A landmark served as a boundary that was placed at the end or beginning of someone's land. God did not allow man to tamper with these markers or boundaries. In Deuteronomy 27:17, he wrote "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark, and all the people shall say, 'Amen.'" This idea is also expressed in Deuteronomy 19:14.

Just as God did not want man tampering with these boundaries that had been set many years earlier by the particular family's forefathers, so spiritually God does not want us tampering with those boundaries he has set forth in his word. Today there are some who would want to change the boundaries

concerning a woman's role in the Church. They argue that the statements of I Corinthians 12 and 14 are cultural - that is, they apply only to the people of Corinth, in their time and situation. Some might say, "Just as we no longer wear the veil of their day, so also we can now take the veil off the lips of women!"

Although I agree that women now have a greater position of prominence within the American workplace, still that does not give her the privilege of exercising that dominion within the work of the church. (I agree with the assessment that Christian women are often the backbone of many good works within any congregation.) Woman is limited by God as to her public leadership in worship.

In I Timothy 2:11-14, Paul wrote "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor usurp (have) authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was not deceived, but the women being deceived was in the transgression."

God goes back to Creation to give reasons as to why women are limited in public worship. It is not cultural, but

it is tied to creation. Man was first made, then woman. Woman (Eve) sinned first, and therefore God told her in the garden, "and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Genesis 3:16).

Contrary to many man-made churches today, we must not remove these boundaries for women that God has set. Women can teach other ladies, as well as children. There are

any good works that she can participate in, under the leadership of godly Elders. She can and must participate in worship, but not in a position of leading or directing the service in any sort of public manner. We must respect the boundaries of God, and not remove these landmarks. I do not know of any Christian woman who would like to violate this principle. PRAISE GOD!

A Caring Cowboy

Mary Ellen Johnson

A family, nine of them, loaded all of their earthly possessions into a covered wagon pulled by a four-horse hitch and set out to join 14 other such families leaving Arkansas headed for Texas and the promise of new land.

Rolling through rainstorms, hail, blistering hot days fighting off insects at night, the wagons rolled across the plains of what today is Oklahoma.

One afternoon a cloud of dust appeared on the horizon behind the group and the wagonmaster halted the entourage drawing them closer together. As the men reached for rifles, the women quickly gathered children into the center of the wagons. In a few moments it became apparent the dust was from a lone rider carrying a parcel across his saddle.

Slowing his horse to a walking gait, the man called out that he meant no harm. The horse stopped, the man got down, reached for the bundle and unwrapped a small child no more than two years old.

A cry of recognition tore from the throat of the baby's mother when she saw her seventh child standing beside the strange man. He had not been missed, but he had fallen from the wagon and was found sitting in the dirt sifting it through his hands . . . just

waiting.

How many of us are on the 'wagon train' rolling towards the promised land never missing one of God's children who has fallen out of the wagon along the way?

Can you imagine the mother's joy? God shares that joy when one of his own is carried gently back to the fold.

One can only imagine the rejoicing heard in camp that night, just like the rejoicing in our hearts when we witness a Christian who has fallen by the wayside but returns.

Look around . . . are we missing a child of God? We can't depend on a stranger to pick up a child of God and

return him like the cowboy did the two-year-old. We have to seek him out and give him the encouragement and support he needs to walk back into the kind of life God requires him to live.

When supper time rolled around that day so many years ago and the little one was nowhere to be found the stricken group had to make the decision whether to turn around and search for the lost child or go on and hope someone else would find him.

There is but one choice for a Christian. Turn around and find the lost one. Let's do it today.

--P.O. Box 374, Johnson, AR 72741.

Shameful Giving

Continued From Page 2

good starting place for the Christian! The New Testament teaching is to give as we have prospered (I Corinthians 16:2). But there is also a teaching to the effect that liberality in giving is respected in heaven (II Corinthians 9:6-7). Don't forget the churches of Macedonia who, though in deep poverty, insisted that Paul take an abundant gift from their hands (II Corinthians 8:1-5).

It is shameful when Christians give in order to be seen. Jesus condemns any act of service if it is done in an attitude of public relations (Matthew 6:1-6). There is nothing inherently wrong with someone being aware that you have given "x" amount of dollars. The sin is making certain your contribution is reported! This is not the humble attitude characteristic of those who pattern themselves after Jesus.

It is shameful when Christians use their

contribution as a statement of protest. It is shameful when elders of a congregation allow a "big giver" to influence their decisions by the threat to remove his contribution and place it somewhere else. It is a shame when some members will refuse to give or decrease their giving because a certain preacher is hired or a certain program of work is being planned. How such an attitude is tolerated is hard to figure, but it does happen. One could see how a church member might refuse to support an unscriptural work or refuse to endorse the hiring of a known false teacher, but using one's contribution to throw his weight around is a sin. And it is a sin to be intimidated by such behavior!

Our giving ought to be a means of glorifying God. It is a way of showing that we are interested in the work of the Lord. We should give to please God not man.

--Rt. 7, 236 Stardust Drive, Boaz, AL 35957.

"Most Of A Minute"

Aren't some television commercials unbelievable? Have you seen the ones which advertise record albums and tapes? The other day one such commercial came across the screen professing to promote the "Worlds greatest piano player." "A man who had sold more albums than anyone else . . ." As I sat being fed these statistics about this remarkable man, I realized something sort of silly. I had never heard of him. I hadn't bought his albums, I didn't recognize his name. The world may have very well embraced him, but if so, they did it behind my back.

You know what? That doesn't really bother me. There are many, many other types of things that it sometimes seems the whole world is doing and believing that I don't. Sometimes it is because I'm a Christian. We sometimes do things against our conscience because so many other folks are doing it, but we need to guard against that.

Exodus 23:2 instructs, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil."

Let's never compromise right and trade it for wrong simply to be just like the person standing next to us.

Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works (No. 10)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

The fundamental focus of this article deals with the crucial connection between grace and obedience, a link that many, both in the church and out of the church, do not see or recognize as being Biblical. Expressed in a question it reads,

IS THERE A CONFLICT BETWEEN GRACE AND OBEDIENCE?

There is no conflict between grace and obedience in the writings of the apostle Paul. He affirmed in Ephesians 2:8 that we are saved by grace through faith. Two verses later he wrote, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them." Now it is true that he said in verse 9, "not of works, that no man should glory." But he was talking of the type of works that permit a man to boast of or discover glory therein. Relative to good works or the works of obedience that God has outlined for us, we are to walk in them. Thus Paul envisioned no conflict in stressing grace to the Ephesians and yet demanding works of obedience from them.

Paul mentions grace some seven times in the Galatian epistle according to my count.

Yet he stresses the works of obedience throughout. He wrote in Galatians 5:6, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love." A laboring faith is equated in the Bible with the stately spirit of obedience.

Paul surely teaches in the profound Roman epistle that we are justified freely by the amazing grace of Jehovah God (Romans 3:24). Yet at the beginning of this epistle, near the middle of this letter and right at the end of this treatise of truth he stressed obedience. He wrote in Romans 1:5, ". . . through whom we received grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all the nations, for his name's sake." Did you note that in the same passage he mentioned obedience of faith that he spoke of grace? There was no conflict in Paul's mind between the grace of God and the obedience of faith on man's part. In Romans 6:17, 18, the great apostle to the Gentiles wrote, "But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of

righteousness." Please note two striking truths from this good and great passage which have a direct bearing upon the point currently discussed. (1) They were obedient from the heart to that form, or mold, of teaching which had been delivered to them. (2) They were servants of righteousness. But righteousness is something we do. It is the keeping of Jehovah's commandments, for all his commandments are righteousness (Psalm 119:172). It is right doing; it is strict conformity to God's law. Again righteousness is something we work. Peter

says in Acts 10:35, ". . . in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him." John, the apostle of love, says righteousness is something we do. He wrote in I John 3:7, ". . . he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." Near the end of the Roman epistle Paul penned the thought, "For your obedience is come abroad unto all men" (Romans 16:19). Obedience permeates the grace-filled epistle to the saints of God at Rome.

IN CONCLUSION

When grace and obedience are properly understood there

will be no conflict, NOT as much as an iota, between the two of them. In fact the grace of God demands an obedient response from man. For man to think he can respond to the grace of God demands an obedient response from man. For man to think he can respond to the grace of God by ignoring God's will is to cheapen grace; it makes such into irresponsible grace. Grace is NOT an umbrella providing shade for the rebellious and the disobedient. The Bible does not teach that it will save the disobedient. If so, beloved reader, where is the scripture? --P.O. Box 464, Ripley, TN 38063.

Called To Be Saints

B. J. Clarke

We have been called to be saints. Paul addressed his Roman epistle "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, CALLED TO BE SAINTS . . . (Rom. 1:7). His first writing to the Corinthians employs almost identical terminology, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, CALLED TO BE SAINTS . . . (I Cor. 1:2).

Saints are not perfect, sinless creatures who have attained a spirituality that is almost divine. If that were the case we would have some trouble harmonizing Paul's reference to the Corinthians as saints in chapter 1 with his inspired indictment of their carnality in chapter 3. But, what does it mean to be a saint? This question can best be answered by understanding what it means to be sanctified.

After all, saints are those who have been sanctified.

The word sanctified simply means set apart for a holy service. W. E. Vine says that sanctification is used in the New Testament to refer to the separation of the believer from evil things and evil ways. Those who are sanctified are those who have come out from wickedness and uncleanness of the world to be separate and holy (II Corinthians 6:17-7:1). Holiness is a status we have been commanded to attain (I Peter 1:15, 16). "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness (ASV translates holiness as "sanctification") (I Thessalonians 4:7). Holiness is attained through obedience to the truth and continued faithfulness to it (I Peter 1:22, John 3:6, 9). If any man would see the Lord he must follow after holiness

or sanctification (Hebrews 12:14). A sanctified life is a consecrated life for God.

God's children are commonly referred to in the New Testament as saints, i.e., "sanctified" or "holy ones." The word is used 62 times in the New Testament. Saints are those who have been set apart by the Lord through the agency of the water and the word (Ephesians 5:26, John 3:3-5). Saints are those who have been set apart by the truth of God's word and their obedience to that truth (John 17:17). Saints are Christians and Christians are saints. So be careful when you tell people that you're not a saint. You are denying your Christianity at the same time. We have been called to be saints. Let us ever strive to walk worthy of the calling wherewith we've been called (Ephesians 4:1).

The Substance Of Things Hoped For

Continued From Page 2

into God's heavenly rest (4:1-3). Unlike the scoffers and skeptics which have long sought to demean Christian faith, the Spirit-led writer of Hebrews affirms such faith to be essential.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are

seen were not made of things which do appear . . . 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" (Hebrews 11:1-3, 6).

"Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

--801 NE 15th, Amarillo, TX 79107.

I'm a SITTER. I just want to sit and enjoy the service and do nothing.

I'm a QUITTER. I taught a class once, but I've served my time. I even visited for the church a time or two, but no one was home. If anything is done in this church, somebody else will have to do it.

I'm a GETTER. The more I think about God and His salvation, the more I want to do for Him. Even today He is preparing a place for me in eternity. He hasn't stopped working for me, so I will continue to work for him.

February 26, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- Which Way Does It Look?
- Who Are The Offenders?
 - Especially For Young People
- Commendation To The Faithful
- A Growing Tendency
- Salvation By Faith

Volume 29 Number 9
(USPS 691-760)

The Words C Truth

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

Special Edition: Voices From The 1 Pearls Of Truth

Editor's Note: I hope you enjoy this special edition as much as I do. These articles are all drawn from The Words Of Truth, 1964-1966. Gus Nichols was the Editor.

Glenn Colley

Glenn A. Posey

From a little tract entitled "Which Church Did Christ Build? is an excellent lesson which I desire to present to you in this article. Brother W. A. Bradfield, Public Relations Director for Freed-Hardeman College, Henderson, Tennessee is the author.

"That there are several hundred religious bodies each claiming to be the church of Christ, is a fact too plain to be denied. That these religious bodies disagree with each other in doctrine and practice is also plain to anyone that wants to see.

"DID CHRIST ESTABLISH ALL THESE BODIES? If so, why do they disagree, seeing they have the same Bible? DID HE ESTABLISH ANY OF THEM? If so, which one? If more than one, how many? "It makes no difference which church you join," say many. If this is true, does it make any difference how many churches you join?

"Men join various clubs to get the benefit of all of them. If it makes no difference which

church you join, what valid reason can you give for not joining several churches, so as to get the benefits of several?

"HOW MANY CHURCHES DID CHRIST ESTABLISH? What does the Bible say? Did Christ and his apostles mean what they said or were they simply joking? Christ said that whatsoever the apostles bound on earth should be bound in heaven (See Matthew 16:19; John 20:23). Paul says: "There is one body? (Ephesians 4:4). "But now are they many members, yet one body" (I Corinthians 12:20). What is the body? It is the church. "And gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body" (Ephesians 1:22, 23). "For his (Christ's) body's sake which is the church" (Colossians 1:24). The body is the church. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church" (Ephesians 5:23). "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ . . ." (Ephesians 5:24, 25, 29, 32).

Paul does not say "churches," but "the church." As Christ established but one church it makes a difference which one you become a member of, if you wish to be united with Christ for he is head of the one church.

"CAN ANY ONE SHOW THAT IT IS RIGHT FOR

FOUR DIFFERENT MEN TO TEACH AND PRACTICE DIFFERENT THINGS RELIGIOUSLY, AND AT THE SAME TIME IT BE WRONG FOR ONE MAN TO TEACH AND PRACTICE ALL OF THEM?

"To illustrate: Suppose it be right and pleasing to God for A to preach "once in grace always in grace," B to preach "you can fall from grace," C to preach that "immersion only is baptism," and D to preach that sprinkling or pouring will do as well." Would it also be right for A to preach all these doctrines? If not, why not? If four men preach four different doctrines, the people say God is pleased; if one man should preach them all, they would say the preacher was insane.

Consistency, did you say? If four men preach these doctrines, people say they are preaching the Bible; if one man should preach them all, they would call him a simpleton. IT IS NO WONDER WE HAVE INFIDELS.

"CAN TWO OR MORE BE RIGHT WHEN THEY DISAGREE? If one school teacher says 2 and 2 are 4, another 2 and 2 are 5, another 2 and 2 are 6, another 2 and 2 are 7, would you say all are right? How long would it take the directors to dismiss three

of them? Are all of them correct?

One church says do one thing; another says do something else. Are they both right? Not unless 2 and 2 are 4, 5, 6, and 7. If God accepts all denominations, and they disagree on what to do to be saved, then God is as well pleased with falsehoods as with truth, for when one man positively denies the statement of another, both cannot be right. The Bible says God cannot lie; Christ says the truth makes free (John 8:32).

"ARE DENOMINATIONS BRANCHES OF THE CHURCH? Paul says God has set the members in, and tempered the body together "that there should be no schism in the body" (I Corinthians 12:18, 24, 25). IS THERE SCHISM OR DIVISION AMONG DENOMINATIONS? Certainly. Then they are not pleasing to God. "God set the members every one of them in the body as it has pleased him" (I Corinthians 12:18). Did God set the various denominations in? If so, he failed to tell us about it. The Bible does not once name them. If God set in such churches it is strange that he never said anything about them. If he did mention them, will someone tell where?

"CAN A MAN BE SAVED AND GO TO HEAVEN OUT

OF CHRIST'S CHURCH? If so, what is the church good for? Can a man be saved and go to heaven without believing and obeying the gospel? No, for it is God's power unto salvation (Romans 1:16). Then, denomination- alism is not the gospel or any part of it, for God's power (gospel) gives us all things that pertain to "life and godliness"; in fact, they were never heard of for hundreds of years after the church was established and the gospel revealed.

"BUT SOME ONE INQUIRES IF CHRIST DID NOT SPEAK OF THE VINE AND ITS BRANCHES. Certainly he did, but who is the vine and who are the branches? Christ says: "I am the vine" (John 15:1). As Christ is the vine, who then can be the branches? Denominations? Let Christ answer: "I am the vine and ye are the branches" (John 15:5). Ye, who? "He that abideth in me, and I in him." Do we speak of denominations as "he?" No. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch" (John 15:6). This is the key; MEN, individuals, are the branches. Denominations are not hinted at in the passage.

"WHICH IS THE CHURCH CHRIST ESTABLISHED,

Continued on page 4

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

VISIT SOON
Sixth Avenue
Church of Christ
Jasper, Alabama

Which Way Does It Look?

Gus Nichols

Most of the denominations have invented somewhat of a dodge and scheme to get around the truth of the Bible which is against their misuse of the scriptures. For example, they say the preposition "for" in Acts 2:38 looks backward to remission of sins already received, and not forward to remission of sins already received, and not forward to remission to be obtained in obedience to the commands to repent and be baptized. They say to be baptized "For the remission of sins" means that one already has the remission and is to be baptized because he is already forgiven. But let us examine this dodge invented to get around the truth.

1. The passage says, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS**, and YE SHALL RECEIVE the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). Please note that both **REPENTANCE** and **BAPTISM** are tied together by the coordinate conjunction "AND" which makes them of equal rank in the sentence. This conjunction joins **REPENTANCE** and **BAPTISM** like coupling two box cars together on the railroad tracks. If one car goes east, the other one cannot go west, and the two remain joined together. It is trifling with the sentence to try to make the first command, the one to "REPENT" look backward to remission already received before and without baptism. Such a grammatical trick is comparable to trying to make the west car of the two joined together on the track move off eastward and the front car, the one east of the other, move off westward

and the two remain coupled together. Repentance cannot be made to be a condition looking forward to receiving the remission of sins in the passage while baptism is being made to look backward to remission of sins already received.

2. The Greek word eis from which we get our preposition "for" in the passage is often translated "unto" as in some of the modern translations including the American Standard Version. Thus repentance and baptism both look forward or "unto" as in some of the modern translations including the American Standard Version. Thus repentance and baptism both look forward or "unto" remission of sins to be received upon these conditions of salvation.

3. Christ said his blood was "Shed . . . for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). Here is the same Greek and English preposition as in Acts 2:38. We know the blood of Christ was not shed "for" the remission of sins, meaning because of His blood, for "Without the shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). When God wanted to inform us that the blood of Christ was shed in order to the remission of our sins he said it was shed "For the remission of sins." And when He wanted us to know that both repentance and baptism are in order to the remission of sins he simply said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS**" (Acts 2:38).

4. It will be remembered that before Peter told those people to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins they had asked what to do, meaning what to do to be saved. If in

the answer to their question the apostle had said no more than "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ" they would have understood that they were to repent and be baptized in order to be saved, or in order to obtain the remission of sins. But when he said both the repentance and baptism as verbs in the imperative were joined together by the conjunction "and" and therefore, both made to look in the same direction, and both are "For" or "unto" the remission of sins, it is nigh impossible for an honest person to misunderstand it without expert help on the part of false teachers.

5. As to the greek "eis" translated "for" or "unto" in the passage, this word is never translated, in the more than seventeen hundred times it is used in the New Testament, a single time "because of" in connection with baptism or any other new Testament word or words. Let us examine a few instances of its use.

Romans 15:4 "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written **FOR (eis)** our learning." Could that mean, "because we already had learned and did not need the writing, etc.?" NO!

Matthew 26:28 "Blood . . . shed . . . **For (eis)** the remission of sins." Of course, the blood was not shed because we already had remission without the blood (Hebrews 9:22). It was shed "FOR (eis) the remission of sins," meaning in order that we might receive the remission.

Romans 1-16 "The gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God **UNTO (eis)** salvation to every one that believeth." The preposition looks forward to salvation to be received

through the gospel.

Romans 10:10 "With the heart man believeth **UNTO (eis)** righteousness." Again, the preposition looks forward to righteousness to be received on the condition of believing.

Acts 11:18 "Repentance **UNTO (eis)** life." Again, Acts 3:19 "Repent ye therefore and be converted that your sins may be (eis) blotted out." Repentance looks forward to the blotting out of sins, and is joined to baptism in Acts 2:38 and both made to be "for" or "unto" or (eis) the remission of sins, and in order to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 6:3 "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized **INTO (eis)** Jesus Christ, were baptized **INTO (eis)** his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism **INTO (eis)** 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" (Verses 3-4). Here baptism puts us into Christ and into his death, and therefore, one is not in Christ so as to be saved in him before baptism (Acts 4:12; II Timothy 2:10; II Corinthians 5:17).

Galatians 3:26-27 "For ye

are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized **INTO (eis)** Christ have put on Christ." Here the members of the "Churches of Galatia," (Galatians 1:2), were at the time Paul wrote them "Children of God" for they had been baptized **INTO (eis)** Christ as moved to do so by their faith in Christ.

But why continue further? Christ said in the commission "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" (Mark 16:15-16). Again, he said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Peter said, "Even baptism doth also now save us" (I Peter 3:21). So baptism, with its prerequisites, looks forward to salvation or remission of sins to be received, for one is not saved before baptism so as to be baptized because he is already saved, etc.



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Who Are The Offenders?

Earl Barnett

The early church knew how to deal with unruly members and it did so. But the church today miserably fails both in knowing how and in actually dealing with its unruly members.

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (II Thessalonians 3:6). We stand long in the pulpit and cry loudly that every command is given to be obeyed, but do we believe it?

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law" (James 2:10-11).

The same God which gave the law of adultery also gave the law regarding murder; therefore, to keep one of these laws and break the other still makes one a transgressor.

The same principle holds true in regard to the "perfect law of liberty." For instance, we are commanded to contribute of our means upon the first day of the week and we are also commanded to withdraw from every member that walketh disorderly (II Thessalonians 3:6, I Corinthians 1:2).

Now which command is more important? May we break either of these commands and remain guiltless merely because we keep the other one faithfully? We consider it very important to exhort every member to contribute of his means but we sneeze at the remotest possibility of ever withdrawing fellowship from anyone.

Who has made the distinction as to the significance of these commands? And who is guilty of the greater sin; the one who walketh disorderly or the ones who flatly refuse to do

anything about the disorderly member's unholy and ungodly life?

Who is guilty of the greater condemnation, the one by which the offense came or the one who by his inaction and apathy allows the offender to go unchecked, dragging the good name of Christ and the church through the slime-pits of sin?

Who are the offenders? The answer is inevitable: Both are guilty before God.

Usually, if a brother ceases to walk uprightly and brings shame and reproach upon the church, all the action that is taken is that he is dropped from having an active part in the worship services and everyone starts a whisper campaign so that everyone knows what is happening except the one to whom it is happening!

We have the authority given in the scriptures as to how we are to conduct such matters and if we continue to fail we shall not be held blameless. For these instructions read: Matthew 18:15-19; I Corinthians 5:3:13; II Cor. 3:6.

Those who have the oversight must take the lead and with the help of the members and God, give the Household of God a thorough cleaning. It is a sad commentary of the church when it fails to do these things for fear of offending the offender. Every faithful member should not hesitate to back up the elders in each congregation when a decision is reached, but how many times have THE MEMBERS rebelled with the OFFENDERS in such matters?

Brethren, when we make up our minds to obey God's commands we will restore New Testament Christianity to perfection; however, if we continue our present course of apathy and follow the vain philosophy that if we ignore the problems they will finally disappear, the church will continue to suffer greatly for the sins of a few unholy and

ungodly members.

If, on the other hand, we return to God's way and love and obey his commands the

church will gain the respect of all and it will grow beyond our most cherished dreams. And let us guard against

becoming the offender by failing to deal scripturally with the brother "who walketh disorderly."

Especially For Young People

Bob Barnhill

We of this congregation are proud to see the news that Sister Gwen Sims was elected Homecoming Queen of Rio Linda High School. That which makes us pleased with Gwen was not so much that she was elected but the way in which she conducted herself while reigning as Queen.

For example, consider the speech she made before the assembly of some 1000 faculty and students. As Homecoming Queen she was supposed to reign over the "Camelot Ball," but she said, "I think the majority of the seniors know about my religious convictions. I do not

know about the faculty or under-classmen, but the religion I personally embrace does not permit dancing and therefore I'm not planning to attend the dance. I hope that you will understand my holding up for my belief."

Tremendous applause was given when Gwen was crowned Queen, but even much more was given after the speech she made. This is written to all the young people and to us parents, to point out that we should always stand up for what is right. -- (No. Sacramento Bulletin).

My comments: This little news item is printed in

'WORDS OF TRUTH' to encourage our young people in their firm stand for the truth against all forms of worldliness in the church, or out of it. It shows that even worldly and denominational people appreciate one who has convictions and stands for them. I am persuaded that we have hundreds and thousands of other young people who would have done what Miss Gwen Sims did. Thank God for them! They will be the worthy leaders of tomorrow! Conviction is better than convenience!

Gus Nichols

Commendation To The Faithful

Clifford Smith

One of the great characteristics which impresses the reader of an epistle of Paul, relative to his attitude and disposition of heart and life, is his cultivation of cheerfulness and thankfulness. Even while in the city of Philippi where Paul had experienced the discomfort and humiliation of being a prisoner with his beloved companion Silas, his mind was indelibly impressed with the blessings which came to him from the converts and fellow Christians of this principle city of Macedonia. In the very beginning of his letter to the church at Philippi, thanks are expressed to God by this humble servant for remembrance of these at Philippi who shared in the fellowship of preaching the gospel with Paul and his company.

Many of us would have continued to pity ourselves and recall the unpleasantness of the stifling dungeon, but

the beloved apostle Paul allowed the horror, the pain of the clamps on his legs, the intense and awful suffering to fade into insignificance with the recollection of a number of the more pleasant experiences. He above all things had been able to gain souls for Christ and this seemed to serve as ample reward for the tremendous hardships he incurred for Christ's sake. The fact that they had been cast into the inner prison and the memory of their lacerations from the brutal beating haunted them did not occupy first place in his great heart and life. Forgetting those things he sought to enumerate the blessings and to praise and compliment the Philippians who had ministered to him. It is obvious that Paul was not a "pessimist." He rejoiced in the fruits of his labors and in the noble privilege of following his Lord and Master. He failed not to commend effort and

cooperation on the part of congregations addressed in his epistles.

In this age when we all are striving to withstand the evils of a world filled with forces and powers which are battling for the minds of men, it becomes easier to pity ourselves as individuals and to fail to recognize the achievements and the devotion of our brethren. Every congregation of the Lord's people have some who are worthy of praise as faithful workers in the vineyard of the Lord. If the church meets two times or two dozen times a week they are always present regardless of the weather or other distractions. When these are absent we know that they are too sick to attend or else they have some other logical and legitimate reason for their absence. I'm thankful to God for those who can always be depended upon!

A Growing Tendency

James E. Huskey

The following quotations were taken from a report in the Birmingham Post-Herald under the title "37 Students Jailed After Orgy."

"Indianapolis, Indiana -- Thirty-seven college students, nearly half of them co-eds, were arrested early Sunday in a fraternity drinking party that ranged over nine floors of a downtown hotel.

"A vice squad patrolman said, "What they had was a regular orgy."

"Fifteen co-eds were charged with entering the bedrooms of a member of the opposite sex. Charges against the men included numerous counts of disorderly conduct, entering a bedroom and under-age drinking, plus larceny and public indecency.

"One student was arrested while chasing a co-ed down a hallway in his undershorts. Police said several co-eds were dressed in negligees or less. The police paddy wagon made nearly a dozen trips to the city jail over a two-hour span.

"One parent, bailing his tearful daughter out of jail Sunday, said he was alarmed when police called him in the early hours.

"I thought she had been in an accident," he said. "THANK GOD IT'S ONLY THIS."

The statement of the father

concerning the incident seems to reflect a growing tendency in America today. No longer do parents bring up young girls "to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:4-5). This tendency is further borne out by a recent article in the Saturday Evening Post by the wife of a high school principal. The following excerpts from that article should be carefully considered by all parents:

"Little girls are not little girls at all but full-fledged females, with no time for anything in life that is not oriented toward sex. Blind to consequences, mothers are rushing their daughters into sexuality at an even earlier age. Mothers allow and sometimes encourage the wearing of lipstick, heavy eye makeup and tight skirts in the grade school. It is a rare official who does not breathe a sigh of relief when he has managed to get through another school year without any pregnancies among his teenage pupils."

Quotations and reports such as these should help to wake people up to this growing tendency toward open immorality and decay in the nation which some call a

"Christian Nation." Parents can trace their family tree back hundreds of years, but cannot tell you where their children were the night before.

Too many people try to put all the blame on the young people, but better that much of the blame be placed where it rightfully belongs: On the parents, who brought the children up. Parents have too long shunned their responsibility to their children. They try to place all the responsibility on the church and Christian schools for their education and spiritual training. That is not where God placed the responsibility. Consider these passages:

"Hear, therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it: that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of our Fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel: The Lord Our God is One Lord; and thou shalt love the lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; AND THOU SHALT TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY UNTO THY CHILDREN, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:3-7).

"A wise son heareth his FATHER'S INSTRUCTION, but a scorner heareth not rebuke" (Proverbs 13:1).

"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Proverbs 29:15).

"And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

"Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged" (Colossians 3:21).

These scriptures, along with others, bear out the responsibility that parents have to their

children. To shun this responsibility is to bring down sorrow on their heads through the children, and is disobedience to God. Let us add that merely telling a child is not enough teaching; but set the proper example before them. Too many parents tell their children one thing and then practice another themselves. Children at a very young age can see that something is wrong with this.

Judge Liebowitz, judge of

Brooklyn's highest criminal courts, says nine words that can stop juvenile delinquency. These are, "PUT FATHER BACK AT THE HEAD OF THE HOUSE." One might give the same idea in different words. "Let parents assume the responsibility delegated to them by God." We then might see a break in the growing tendency toward indecency and gross immorality in the young people of this nation.

Salvation By Faith

W. Gaddys Roy

We are justified or saved by faith (Romans 5:1). This does not mean that we are justified by faith only. James said, By works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:24).

THE MEANING OF FAITH

Faith is simply believing what God says (Acts 27:25; Genesis 15:5-6). When one believes what God says, then his faith must be put into action before he receives God's blessing. Therefore, one is not saved by faith until that faith moves him to obey God (I Peter 1:22; Hebrews 5:9; Revelation 22:14; Galatians 5:6).

FAITH DOES NOT EXCLUDE OBEDIENCE

Faith which brings God's blessings never excludes obedience. Noah built the ark and was saved by faith, but not without works or obedience (Hebrews 11:7). Every step the children of Israel took in crossing the Red Sea was by faith (Hebrews 11:29). Moses forsook Egypt by faith (Hebrews 11:24-27).

FAITH WITHOUT OBEDIENCE IS VAIN

Faith which does not include obedience is vain. Faith must include its works (James 2:14-24). Many of the rulers of the Jews believed on Jesus but were not saved (John 12:42-43). There were many other Jews who believed on Jesus but were children of the devil (John 8:30-44).

If we should say that man is saved by faith only, that would exclude repentance (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30-31). It would also exclude the confession of one's faith in Christ (Romans 10:9-10; Matthew 10:32-33). In becoming a child of God by faith, one must do all that God has commanded him to do.

He must repent by faith (Hebrews 11:6). He must confess Christ by faith (Romans 10:9-10). He must be baptized by faith (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38; Galatians 3:26-27). All we do must be by faith which comes from the word of God (Romans 10:17). The obedience must be from the heart (Romans 6:17-18). Then, and not until then, is one justified or saved by faith (Romans 5:1).

Pearls Of Truth

Continued From Page 1

AND WHO COMPOSED IT? It is called the "church of God" (Acts 20:28). Christ says, "my church" (Matthew 16:18). Paul calls congregations "churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16). What about the expression "Christian Church"? The Bible does not use it; the Bible speaks of God's church. The church is composed of Christians, but it does not belong to them; they belong to it. Are men Christians outside of this church? No more than men are Masons outside of the Masonic Lodge. Reconciliation is in the one body which is the church (Ephesians 2:16;

1:22, 23).

"IN THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH NO PREACHER WAS EVER CALLED 'REVEREND' OR 'THE PASTOR.'" Every scholar who has carefully investigated knows that the words "elders," "pastors" and "bishops" all refer to the same class -- the overseers (elders of each congregation, Acts 20:17, 28) and not to preachers as a class. ("Rev. Paul," "Dr. James, the pastor of our church," is not the language of God's book. Peter says, "Speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11). Why disobey him?"

David Lipscomb Resists The Devil

Among the wonderful stories that have come down to us from the wonderful life of David Lipscomb who founded the college in Nashville that bears his name, we like this one: He told his students that once he was moved to give \$5.00 to the Lord on Sunday morning. The devil tempted him to cut it in half. He thought of the passage: "Resist the Devil and he will flee." He then doubled his contributions and gave \$10. After that, he reported, the devil didn't bother him when he was about to give. Maybe we ought to do some RESISTING.

March 5, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- Were The Days In Genesis One 24-Hour Periods?
- Mission Contributions Should Increase Too
- Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith And Works No. 11
- "Unavoidably Postponed"
- *Most Of A Minute
- For What Is Your Life

Volume 29 Number 10
(USPS 691-760)

The Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak the words of Truth and soberness." -- Luke 23:1

1e

Jesus Forgave Sins During His Personal Ministry

W. A. Holley

During Jesus' personal ministry, he forgave sins with or without conditions, according to his own will. This truth is clearly taught in Mark 2:5; 5:20, 23; 7:48; Matthew 9:2.

After Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, he forgives sins according to the terms of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:44-48).

Jesus lived and died under the Law of Moses. ". . . WHEN the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of woman, made under the law" (Galatians 4:4). Hence, as long as Jesus lived the law of Moses remained in effect. The new Covenant does not begin with the first chapters of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; rather, the New Covenant begins with Acts 2:1-47). This is what Peter taught (Acts 11:14-15). This was "the beginning."

The last will and testament remains in effect until after the death of the testator (Hebrews 9:15-17; 10:9-10). Since Jesus lived and died under the law, he taught all who lived under the law to obey its precepts, too. For example, when a certain lawyer asked, "Master, what shall I do to inherit life,?" Jesus told him to do "what is written in the law . . ." (Luke 10:25-29). Why did Jesus not require him to obey the Great Commission? Because the Great Commission did not then exist (II Timothy 2:15; John 14:23-26; 16:7-13; Luke

24:49; Acts 1:7-8; 2:1-4). It is a sin for denominational preachers to cite what they call instances of salvation during Jesus' personal ministry, as examples of conversion today, and to deliberately ignore Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47, and the fulfillment of these passages in the Book of Acts.

How long has it been since you heard a denominational preacher use Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27; I Peter 3:20-21, in their efforts to win lost souls to Christ? Actually, if they use them at all, they seek to explain them away!! One ignoramus (?) preached Mark 16:16 just as it reads. Another educated (?) preacher tried to educate the first preacher as to its true meaning. When he was through, he asked the first preacher, "Do you now understand Mark 16:16?" The first preacher replied, "I did before you explained it away." Jesus never taught those who lived under the law of Moses to keep New Testament commands.

Someone may wish to ask: What about John's baptism? What was its purpose? He was God's link that joined the Old Testament with the New Testament. For 400 years no living prophet had appeared in Israel. His mission was to prepare a people for the Lord (Isaiah 40:3; Matthew 3:1, 3; Luke 1:76; 3:3-4).

How did John the Baptist go about preparing a people for

the Lord? He did it preaching. What did he preach? We permit the Bible to answer: "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4). Luke 3:3 says, "And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Luke 3:3). Those who rejected the baptism of John rejected God Almighty. "And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him" (Luke 7:29-30). We are forced to the conclusion that all baptized by John the Baptist, and those baptized by the twelve, and the seventy, were all baptized for the remission of sins. The only exception was Jesus Christ. Jesus was not baptized "because of remission of sins," nor was he baptized "for, or in order to" remission of sins. He was baptized to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:13-17).

If the Apostles were not baptized for the remission of sins, then they were sinners when they were baptized with the Holy Spirit on the First Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection. If they had not been baptized for the remission of sins, they were guilty of rejecting the counsel of God against themselves

(Luke 7:29-30). On Pentecost those who had been prepared by being baptized for remission of sins became charter members of the Lord's church.

How do we reach this conclusion? Note: "They that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). Who are they? They are those who were prepared under John's baptism! One cannot add something to nothing. The three thousand were baptized according to the Great Commission -- Not John's baptism.

What about those whom Apollos had baptized "knowing only the baptism of John?" (Acts 19:1-7). Why did Paul baptize them again? Apollos had taught them a baptism which had already gone out of date -- an invalid baptism -- a defective faith -- a faith that looked toward the coming of the Savior. But hence, Paul taught them to look back to the cross where Jesus had already died, there shedding his precious blood, that all might be saved. "And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5). Apparently, Apollos had never heard of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47).

What about the thief who said, "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy

kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:42-43). Remember that Jesus was still alive when he talked with the thief; his last will and testament had not gone into effect (Hebrews 9:15-17; 10:9-10). Hence, Jesus could dispense his blessings with or without conditions as he saw fit.

The thief does not represent an instance of "death-bed repentance." The thief may have been baptized or he may not have been baptized with John's baptism. The thief never heard of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 10:9-10). He knew nothing of the demands of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47); but you do. You cannot be saved as the thief was saved because you cannot put yourself in the same position of the thief. Jesus is not now here on earth to dispense forgiveness of sins.

Why try to be saved like the thief was saved? Why wait till the last moment? (II Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7-19; Psalms 81:11). Today, with Heaven's demands, to seek to be saved in an irregular manner is folly of the first class. Believe and obey the gospel today.

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

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Were The Days In Genesis One 24-Hour Periods?

Glenn Colley

In an attempt to marry the beautiful account of creation to the sometimes blasphemous theories of evolution, some have argued that the days of creation in Genesis chapter one were not literal days (i.e., not 24-hour periods). The days, they affirm, were rather long and illusive periods of time. One brother recently pointed out, "With the Lord a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as a day," (II Peter 3:8) to demonstrate, I suppose, that the days of Genesis were AT LEAST 1000 years long each. I believe these ideas to be without Biblical merit.

Consider three reasons why I believe the days of Genesis chapter one were literal days, that is 24-hour periods.

1. Because other passages of scripture commonly compare obvious 24-hour days with the days of creation.

--Exodus 20:8-11 --
"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou,

nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."

--Exodus 31:16-17 --
"Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed.

If God were comparing "day" meaning a thousand or more years, with "day" meaning 24 hours, why is it that there is no mention of any distinction between the two?

2. Because the Bible defines the days of creation as 24-hour periods with the words. "The evening and the morning were the first day . . . (second day, third day, etc)" (Gen. 1:5, 8, 13).

The fact that the numeral

is used demonstrates that a literal day is meant. Brother Alan Highers, in the recent Freed-Hardeman lectures, made this point well when he illustrated, "We might say, 'In my grandfather's day . . . ' to mean the years when he was younger. But if we say, 'In my grandfather's FIRST day . . . ' or, 'In my grandfather's SECOND day . . . ,' we mean a literal 24-hour time.

The fact that the inspired Moses was so repetitive, (each of the six days are numbered and are accompanied by the words, "The evening and the morning were the . . . "), seems to indicate that the Lord expected this day-length question.

3. Because it is illogical for one to accept God's creative power when stretched over thousands of years, but deny that same miraculous power when creation was said to be accomplished in six days.

If He has strength to bring about our universe in ANY length of time, why can we not take Him at His word and accept that He did it in six 24-hour periods?

Let's be people of the Book.

Mission Contributions Should Increase Too

J. C. Choate

Over the past several years, or even during the past few months, living costs have continued to rise. Many employers watch these trends and increase the salaries of their employees accordingly. Even those on Social Security find their checks going up at regular intervals. The

minimum wage was recently raised to keep in step with the times. Certainly none would want to receive the same pay checks they were given ten or fifteen years ago. And neither would employers be able to survive if they froze the salaries of their workers.

But what about members of the church and the way they

give today? Does their giving properly reflect the increase of their salaries and their earnings? To give \$5.00 or \$10.00 may mean that they are staying with their old giving habits. This may be why the church today is doing no more than it is doing.

If that be true with local

Continued on page 4

Dear Mr. Clinton

David Courington

I am writing this letter on behalf of a class of people that did not get to vote in the presidential election of 1992. We plan to vote in future elections. We badly need your help. We have heard that you are an advocate of the underdog, and that fits us. We have no one to speak for us and we cannot speak for ourselves. In a country where there is to be equal opportunity and equal rights for all, we are being taken advantage of. There is no bill of rights for us and we are not even protected by the constitution. We desperately need your help.

We have heard that you are very concerned about the economy, but our concern is about being able to live. We are a group of disadvantaged people because we cannot even feed ourselves. Our lives are very dependent on others. Our families will not take care of us, due to other interests, so we are turning to you, Mr. President.

It has been said that you are interested in the common person and not just the privileged few. We hope this is the case, because we are scattered among every race, economic level, and come from every state, city, and neighborhood in America. Some of us are brilliant people, while others are not quite so bright. We plan to make a real difference in the world if you will just give us a chance. With a little help from you, we will become doctors, teachers, and such; and make the world a better place. Some

people say that the United States is not able to help us, but we thought since you were President you might still believe that it is the land of opportunity for people like us, as it has been for our ancestors.

Now don't get the idea that we are a bunch of trouble-makers for none of us have ever been imprisoned for a crime. We have never harmed anyone -- not even so much as had an unkind thought about another human being, but we are being harmed.

Things have not always been so bad for folks like us. Until a few years ago, we were loved and protected. We have taken a real beating in the last few years. Things have gotten so bad that a million and a half people like us died last year. We are wishing for better things from your administration.

All we want is a chance to develop and live. If only a law could just be passed that would stop people from killing us, like the laws that are already in place for protecting baby eagles. We just want a chance -- a chance to live. We hope you will indeed be a president for all of the people and take up our cause.

Thank you for taking the time to consider us.

The Unborn Class Of 2011

(Note -- It is not only Mr. Clinton that needs to take up the cause of the unborn. Every Christian should have already done so. Have you?)

--P.O. Box 160, Mulga, AL 35118.



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Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works

(No. 11)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Due to so many misunderstandings relative to these six kingly expressions found in the New Testament, I am devoting a lengthy series toward showing the holy harmony that subsists among these terms as they are set forth by the Spirit of truth. To date much has been said in regard to grace and law. There is absolutely no jarring disharmony between the grace of God and the law of Christ.

IS THERE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE LAW OF CHRIST AND THE LOVE OF GOD?

Here we are talking about the law Christ has given us to obey. We are talking about the love we are to have for God and the love he has for us. Just because God loves us he has not left us without rule or regulation, minus law or commandment.

Jesus saw no conflict between law and love. He loved the Father. Yet he kept the Father's will or law perfectly. He lived under the law of Moses all his personal ministry. He revered the law of God. He envisioned no conflict between loving him and the keeping of his law that soon would begin on the first Pentecost subsequent to his triumphant resurrection. In fact he equated love for him with becoming reverence for his commandments, his sayings, his words. John 14 is a dynamic portion of the great discourse he gave the apostles in the Upper Room shortly before his death on Calvary the following Friday. He had these things to say relative to the vital connection, the fundamental link between law and love, between real affection for him and becoming reverence for his chosen commandments. In John 14:15 he declared, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments. Be it remembered that a commandment is simply a law of God. In fact a definition of

law is that of a commandment. Again the Lord said in John 14:21-24,

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him. Judas (not Iscariot) saith unto him, Lord, what is come to pass that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my words: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.

It was the supreme attitude of our blessed Lord that love is commandment keeping and law honoring. Love is reverence for the wonderful words of Jesus. Love is respect and an obedient response to the sayings of Jesus. A man does not love the Lord Jesus Christ who despises his word. A man does not love God Almighty who would encourage others to disobey the law of God. A man does not love the Lord Jesus Christ who would encourage others to manifest nothing but disdain for the sayings of the Beautiful Book of God. Love either begins and continues or else ends with one's attitude and action toward the word of the living God, the commandments of Christ. Your love for the Lord Jesus Christ is established by your attitude and action toward the commandments of Christ, the laws of the Lord.

Law and love were not mutually exclusive in the mind of the apostle Paul. Paul spoke about the law of faith in Romans 3:27. In Romans 8:2 he referred to Christianity as the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." Yet it was in this same epistle that he spoke

so eloquently and comprehensively of love. In Romans 5:5 he spoke of the love of God as that which "hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us." In Romans 5:8 he penned the very beautiful thought, "But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." In Romans 13:8-10 he spoke of love as that which fulfilled the law or is the fulfillment of the law. Paul spoke in beautiful harmony about law and love in the Galatian epistle. He wrote in Galatians 5:6, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love." In the very next chapter, the last of the Galatian epistle, he wrote, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). One of the final utterances of the Galatian epistle is the strong exhortation of Galatians 6:16 which states, "And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." Remember that law is a rule of action. Paul thus intended for the Galatians to have a faith which worked by love and observe a law or rule with lovely steadfastness. To Paul the very love that God had for us called forth the necessity of our being under the law of Christ. And the very love that we have for God and Christ demands that we treat with the highest of respect the law of Christ.

John the apostle was that disciple whom Jesus loved. Bible students have frequently referred to him as the apostle of love. John observed no conflict between law and love. Let us keep prominently fixed in mind that law is a commandment; it is a rule; it is a regulation. When John came to give us the finest definition perhaps ever penned of love he connected

this tremendous emotion of the heart with commandment keeping, with law honoring. He wrote in I John 5:3, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." Since there are many in religious circles today who evidently find the keeping of Jehovah's commandments such a tedious or irksome thing, is not such traceable to their little love for the Lord?

Beloved readers, you may mark it down that the man who reflects on the commandments of God and seeks to minimize the respecting of those commandments is a man who

does not believe I John 5:3. If he really believed this marvelous message about what real love is all about, he would not disavow any and all links between love and law. In reality law and love are interdependent. Real love demands law. The best law is built upon the firm foundation of love. Parents who really care for their children place them under rules, under regulations. Such their immature nature imperatively requires. Our Heavenly Father does the same. Such our spiritual nature imperatively requires. Surely none will deny that!

--P.O. Box 464, Ripley, TN 38063.

"Unavoidably postponed"

Don Williams

While scanning a church bulletin recently, the two previous words jumped out at me. These words were used to announce the postponement of an upcoming wedding. No other information was given -- only that the wedding of the two people has been "unavoidably postponed."

As I thought about these words, I thought of other postponements in life. In our area recently, a "benefit dinner" for a children's shelter

was postponed for reasons "beyond the control" of those planning the event. Events or meetings are often put off due to the illness or sickness of those involved. The baseball season was postponed for several weeks due to financial differences between the players and owners.

In II Kings 20, one can read of the death of Hezekiah being postponed for fifteen years. Having a sickness that brought on certain death, he

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Most Of A Minute

I enjoyed a newspaper piece recently about the onions in Vidalia, GA. In Vidalia, they say that the onions are so sweet that you can eat them like apples. One questionable test showed that the sugar content of this onion is higher than that of a Coca-Cola. The interesting thing is that when you read about the Vidalia, you start to forget that it's still an onion. Not an apple or a Coke. An onion.

This is sometimes true about our perspective on our likes and dislikes in life. Sometimes people participate in an action that is sinful, and convince themselves that it's okay, because it's so "sweet." We need at those times, however, to remember that sin, no matter how pleasant to me, is still sin and against God. Jesus said, when making this point about sin that is precious to me, "If your right hand offend you, cut it off." He isn't talking about actually cutting off your hand, but rather about cutting away sin in your life . . . even if it is as important to you as your right hand.

Think about that, next time you enjoy an onion.

For What Is Your Life

Rick Kelley

Let us consider this thought; Life should be defined in terms of preparation and service rather than by the ticking of the clock.

I. LIFE IS A GIFT FROM GOD.

In Genesis 2:7, we read that God created man and gave him life. It is then reasonable that we are held responsible to God for the way we live life. If someone were to loan you his car, you would be responsible for it as long as it remained in your possession. It is the same with our lives. We are responsible, while life is ours, to obey his will. God desires that we live to His glory (Matthew 5:16).

II. LIFE IS A PREPARATION.

There is only one way to prepare to meet God, and that is through Jesus His Son (John 14:5; John 1:4; Philippians 1:21; Matthew 19:17).

III. LIFE IS A BUILDING PERIOD.

When one is building a house, the first thing that is laid is a firm foundation. It is the same with our lives. We need to build on a firm foundation, that foundation being Jesus Christ our Lord. I Corinthians 3:10 says, "every man is to take heed how he buildeth." We should be as the wise man and build upon the rock (Matthew 7:24; Luke 6:48; I Timothy 6:19).

IV. LIFE IS A MULTIPLICITY OF CHOICES.

When we get up every morning we make choices, what we will have for breakfast, what we will wear, and what we will do for the day. Our most important decisions in life, however, concern right and wrong, truth and error, God and Satan (Joshua 24:15). We are to forsake sin and follow righteousness, as Moses did in Hebrews 11:24-25. Matthew 6:33 should be that on which we base each choice.

V. LIFE IS A WAR.

Matthew 6:24 says, "No man can serve two masters." The Christian is to put on the whole armour of God (Ephesians 6:11-17). There is no gray area in God's power over Satan. We should as II

Timothy 2:3 says, "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ."

VI. LIFE IS A VAPOR.

"For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little while then vanisheth away" (James 4:14). We should thank the Lord each day when we wake up for a new day, and live that day to the fullest extent of our ability -- giving praise, honor, and glory to God. We know not what the morrow may bring (Proverbs 27:1). Psalms 90:10 tells us our life is quickly passing by.

Therefore, in view of the brevity of life, we should go to the book of Psalms chapter 90 verse 12 where it is written, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

--Rick Kelley, P.O. Box 3582, Jasper, AL 35502.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Although brother Kelley is not a preacher, he is a faithful and devoted member of the Sixth Avenue church. We appreciate his submission of this important and thought provoking article. G. C.)

Mission Contributions Should Increase Too

Continued From Page 2

contributions, take a look at what most congregations are doing with their mission contributions. Most of them begin by giving a set amount each month, and for some reason they see no need ever to increase that amount. We who are in the mission field are faced with the prices constantly going up on the costs of radio programs, the printing of literature, rent, food, clothes, travel, and all of the other costs that we face in the field, but back home our supporting brethren continue to send the same monthly contribution they began with years ago. Of course we are thankful for that, but to be honest with you, it is not enough. Many of our missionaries live in countries where month after month the dollar is going down in value. In other words, they get less local currency for their dollar. Now where is the make-up difference coming from in such a case? No wonder so many missionaries have been unable to continue on the field. They have been starved

out or they have been reduced to such a low work fund that they are unable to do the job they were sent to do.

It is true that some individuals and congregations periodically increase their support, and this is deeply appreciated, but the majority do not, and this hurts. In thinking of the financial needs of American churches, the necessity to have our salaries increased, the importance of raising our local contributions and budgets, do individuals and congregations think that just because their missionaries are out of the country they do not have similar needs? Some brethren reason that a missionary in a third world country should be able to live and work there on almost nothing, but they are mistaken. Actually, all in all, those who live in America live in the cheapest country in the world. If you don't believe it, move to one of these poor countries and see for yourself.

The missionary is not asking for a larger and larger salary, to live like a king. If money

was his goal, he certainly would not have gone to the mission field in the first place. But he does ask to be remembered and to be considered worthy of having his funds increased to keep in step with rising costs, both for his personal income and for the needs of the work.

The next time your salary is increased or you are blessed numerically in any way, please remember those in the mission field. As the contributions of the local congregation go up, and you have to add to the salaries of your workers and pay more for your local needs, please keep in mind that the missionary's expenses are usually increasing at a much faster pace, due to inflation plus eroding dollar value. If you will be aware of such problems, and act on them, your foreign workers will be able to do a much more effective job. Try it and see if it isn't so.

"Unavoidably Postponed"

Continued From Page 3

prayed to God, weeping greatly. God heard and answered his prayer, telling Isaiah to tell him, "I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years;" (verses 5 & 6). Today, through medically advanced procedures, doctors can delay and slow the process of eventual death, but they cannot postpone it.

Realizing that we cannot receive a new "lease on life" as Hezekiah did, and in light of the frailties of life, and the certainty of death, what decisions and/or actions should we not put off or postpone?

(1) Our decision to become a Christian. Every responsible person needs to heed the wisdom of Solomon as he wrote, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them:" (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

(2) Our decision to make our

lives right with others. A nurse recently recounted the story of a dying patient of hers in a nursing home, talking about her refusal of forgiveness for her brother. Words had been said years ago, and she still carried the grudge with her. "And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32).

(3) Our decision to live for Christ now. "No man, having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 10:62). The fields of Jesus will not be plowed with good intentions, or "someday" promises, but only as his laborers work and sweat and toil in the present sun. May we not avoid making that decision now to faithfully serve Jesus all of our lives. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21).

**VISIT SOON
Sixth Avenue
Church of Christ
Jasper, Alabama**

March 12, 1993

See Inside Articles:

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- "Take Heed To Your Spirit"
- Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works (No. 12)
- The Elder Brothers
- "Most Of A Minute"

Volume 29 Number 11

(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

The Holy Spirit: Is He Responsible?

William Woodson

Our generation is not the first to experience claims that the Holy Spirit directly enables people to become better Christians, understand God's will, etc. In fact, our heritage knows discussions concerning two central themes along these lines: (1) Does the Holy Spirit operate on the non-Christian and/or Christian apart from the word of God? and (2) Does the Holy Spirit empower individuals to perform miracles, wonders, and signs today?

Several works from our history address these topics: Campbell-Rice Debate; Moody-Harding Debate; Hardeman-Bogard Debate; H. Leo Boles, The Holy Spirit; Gus Nichols, Lectures on the Holy Spirit; etc. Whether considered in terms of controversy or for general information, these works are still of value to study carefully.

A new religious movement is shaping up, claiming the Holy Spirit has authored and is blessing it. Termed "The Vineyard Movement" or "The Third Wave" in religion in America, it began in California in 1982. By 1985 the Anaheim "mother church" had 5,000 members and claimed 120 or so congregations in this fellowship. Emphasis include such "Holy Spirit" works as signs, revelations, tongues, and especially "Power Evangelism" and "Power

Healing."

An especially revealing incident appears in a manual of the movement entitled Power Encounters (1986). A spokesman of the movement conducts a seminar on "Calling Down the Holy Spirit." As an entree, the speaker claims the following event occurred in his ministry and upon a woman with serious marriage difficulties.

After a brief argument in my head with God, I agreed to pray for her. But I realized with a shock that I hadn't the slightest concept of how to do it. I had been practicing Christ's presence visually, seeing Jesus on a throne wherever I went. So I looked at Jesus. He got off his throne, knelt down beside the woman, put his arm around her shoulders, and with his left hand reached right into where it shrank until it evaporated. Then he reached into his own heart and took out a glob of white jello which he carefully inserted into the woman's heart where the darkness had been. Finally he turned to me and said, 'Do that.' I felt rather foolish, but I described out loud in prayer what I had seen Jesus do, and the woman was rather gloriously and immediately healed" Power Encounters, pp. 139-140.

"Rather gloriously," indeed!

From those claiming immediate operation of the Holy Spirit today [some unfortunately within churches

of Christ], it would be interesting to learn: (1) Do you believe such miracles occur today? (2) If not, on

Jeff Jarrett

Nineteen years have passed since the United States Supreme Court made its tragic decision concerning the fate of literally millions of unborn human beings. Parents were given the legal option of abortion.

God's word clearly teaches life begins at conception. Life is God's creation (Genesis 1:27; 10:11; Isaiah 44:24). Job asked, "Did not one fashion us in the womb?" (Job 31:15). God told Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5). What if Jeremiah's mother had aborted him? What a heartbreaking disaster it would have been if Mary had "exercised her right to choose" by aborting the Son of God (Matthew 1:18-25)! It must be painful and evil for God to see millions of unborn human beings, created in his image, killed each year.

Something must be done. The heart of the issue is not "women's rights" but rather human life. How can we get our people to feel true anguish

your premises, why would you deny they so occur?

Strange, is it not, the Holy Spirit is claimed to be

responsible for such absurdities. No such thought was present in the New Testament.

If They Had Graves

for this national disgrace? What will cause us to yield to the will of God? How do we get the nation's attention?

Americans remember the brave soldiers who gave their lives on fields of battle. We erect monuments. We declare memorial days. We give their bodies special places of honor in national cemeteries. During America's 216-year history more than 1.25 million soldiers have been killed in wars. This pales in comparison to the war on the unborn! Since 1973, in the U.S. alone, over 28 million unborn babies have lost their lives to legalized abortion -- over twenty-two times as many as have been killed in our nation's wars!

The number of aborted babies staggers the mind. Start in the state of Texas and remove one individual for every baby that has been aborted in the past nineteen years. This would remove everyone from the state of Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana. If the same demonstration was performed on the East Coast, it would empty New York state, New Jersey, and

Connecticut. On the West Coast, it would completely evaluate all of California, Oregon, and the majority of Washington!

Most abortion clinics dispose of the lifeless bodies of the unborn by dumping them into trash cans or garbage incinerators. No memorial! No funeral! No gravestone! No national holiday! What if they all had graves? Let us give each aborted baby a small plot of ground for its dead body and a memorial stone. It's not a new or unreasonable suggestion. Minnesota passed a law requiring hospitals and clinics to arrange decent burials of these human remains.

Maybe if there were a national cemetery for these unborn victims of this immoral atrocity we would call attention to the magnitude of the tragedy. Such a cemetery and a grave plot for each of the more than 28 million children would be over 45 miles square. At 55 miles per hour it would take over 3.25 hours just to drive around the perimeters of this massive graveyard. If these graves were placed side-by-

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

The Meaning Of "Hearts Waxed Gross"

Glenn Colley

Jesus said, "Therefore speak I to them in parables, because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And unto them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which saith, 'By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand; And seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive; For this peoples heart is waxed gross, And their ears are dull of hearing.'"

Although the people of Jesus time had the capability of understanding His teachings, many of them had simply shut Him out. They could listen, they simply wouldn't listen. Jesus apparently spoke in parables, which He knew some folks wouldn't understand, so as to not cast more pearls before the swine. If they weren't going to listen anyway, why should He continue laying clear teachings before them for their contempt? As H. Leo Boles states in his commentary on Matthew, "They had heard the plainest offers of mercy, but were deaf to them; why then should the more secret truths of the gospel, which were yet incomplete, be exposed to the scorn of unbelievers?" (pg. 289)

Jesus describes their hearts in this terminology: "For this people's heart is waxed gross . . ." Consider the meaning of this interesting phrase.

--"Heart" --Thayer 1977, #2588, pg. 325 --" . . . of the understanding, the faculty and seat of intelligence." Specifically used here, "of the dullness of a mind incapable of perceiving and understanding divine things . . ."

--"Is waxed gross" -- "to make thick; to make fat, fatten . . ." Thayer pg. 497, #3975.

In other words, people can so fatten their hearts with the cares and lusts and dogmas of this world that they are no longer able to receive the teachings of Jesus. Could they

repent? Certainly. But not until their heart resumes a reasonable posture.

Actually, Jesus was quoting Isaiah 6:9, 10 which says, "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed."

Jesus was not the only one to quote Isaiah's words. Paul also finds occasion to quote this Isaiah-written heart problem in Acts 28:25-27: "For the heart of this people is waxed gross . . ." The Jewish leaders had formed iron-clad opinions about Christianity. They told Paul "But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest; for as concerning the sect (Christianity, GC), we know that everywhere it is spoken against." After hearing Paul preach they left disagreeing, many disbelieving. Before they left, however, they heard Paul quote from Isaiah 6 about their "fat" hearts.

People today are often so filled with worldliness that their hearts are "waxed gross." Our hearts are sadly fattened with materialism, so sacred to us that we forsake the Lord to retain it. When our hearts are fattened, we are subtly embarrassed by our Christianity. We have gradually derived these embarrassments from the popular disposition of the world which considers Christianity a thing to be disdained and not taken seriously. Our hearts are fattened and made complacent by false teachers who, by their doctrines, encourage people to continue to sin that grace may abound.

What's the answer? What will bring those individuals, whose hearts are waxed gross, back to spiritual health?

*Not time. It may be a great healer on some things, but it represents the ticking bomb for one living away from Christ with his heart waxed gross. All who die away from the Lord die "untimely deaths."

*Not "tickle your ears" pulpits. Face it -- they are more exhibitions of an orators silver tongue than a balm for the sin-sick soul (II Timothy 4:3, 4).

*Not irresponsible preachers and elders, who with twisted scriptures and doctrines of men, promise "peace, peace, when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14, 15).

The answer is meaty, Biblical preaching and teaching which rings out the clear teachings of our Lord -- teachings of the word which consistently come to listeners ears "in season and out of season."-- Teachings which "reprove, rebuke, and exhort" (II Timothy 4:2).

"Sir, we would see Jesus!" (John 12:21) Offering God's wisdom over man's wisdom will give the fat hearted the therapy they need to see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted and healed (Matthew 13:15).

Elders, be courageous enough to take a stand! A preacher who is preaching false doctrines, or who isn't giving the church sermons truly from the Bible doesn't deserve to be in the pulpit. Tell him to shape-up immediately or find other work. Irreparable damage is being done. Hearts are waxing gross. If you have a faithful preacher, support him well. Make him know you are part of a team. Compliment his sermons to the members publicly. God's word will make our hearts right again.

"My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God" (Psalm 84:2).

"Take Heed To Your Spirit"

Jimmy Clark

"And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth" (Malachi 2:15). The attitudes of the Jews in Malachi's day were very different from the attitudes of those Jews who first came back to the land after the captivity. For example, Nehemiah sought to correct the marriage problem of certain Jews who had married strange wives of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab (cf. Nehemiah 13:23-30). There was a period of time that had elapsed between the initial return from Babylonian captivity and the state of the nation as Malachi addresses it. The philosophy of the day was not unlike what can be seen among people today. The above passage speaks to the problem concerning their treatment of marriage. They were admonished to consider the spirit that would destroy the marriages unto which they had bound themselves early in life. All would do well to ponder some things that pertain to these proper attitudes concerning marriage.

Respect For God's Design
Malachi wrote of the fact that marriage involves making two people one unit, when he asked, "And did not he make one? . . ." (Malachi 2:15).

This goes back to the original instruction given by Moses. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). It was not God's design for people to enter into marriage with the disposition of mind that such could and would be destroyed later in life. Malachi goes on further in this section of his writing to say, "For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously" (Malachi 2:16). It is vital to the success of any marriage that both the man and the woman be mature enough to understand the nature of marriage as God designed it. Marriage is not just something devised by the civil authorities of the land. It is an arrangement formed by God, as Jesus said, "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6).

Responsible To
God's Directives

The fact that Malachi used the words "take heed" and "let none deal treacherously" shows that God expected these Israelites to be responsible in their attitudes and actions toward their

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The Words Of Truth

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Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works (No. 12)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Law and liberty, and responsibility and freedom, are incompatibles with the masses today. They want liberty and freedom all right but minus law and any obligations at all. The main focus of this article will seek to determine if these terms are incompatibles within Sacred Scripture. I discuss it under one heading in the form of a question.

IS THERE A CONFLICT BETWEEN LAW AND LIBERTY?

Is there any disharmony between our being under the law of Christ and our possessing freedom in the faith or liberty in the Lord? Many would answer in the affirmative. They seem to think that if we are free in Christ, then we are under no rules; we are under no regulations; we are under no laws of any kind. Paul witnessed no conflict between the concepts of law and liberty. It is a remarkable fact that in Romans 8:2 that he spoke of law and freedom in the very same expression. It is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus which made Paul free or extended to him liberty in the Lord. In the Galatian epistle Paul spoke of the "liberty which we have in Christ Jesus (Galatians 2:4). In Galatians 5:1 Paul penned the thought, "For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage." He affirmed in Galatians 5:13 that Christians "were called for freedom" and yet warned them not to allow their freedom in the faith or liberty in the Lord to be used as an occasion to the flesh or to become a license to sin. That is precisely the very thing that has been done so frequently in our day in the name of cheap grace, of abused love. Cheap grace and abused love have been made into an umbrella for any and all types of fleshly sins and immoral escapades. Paul saw no conflict in talking much about freedom in the faith and liberty in the Lord to the Galatians and yet calling

attention to the fundamental fact of their self-evident need to fulfill the law of Christ in Galatians 6:2 or honor the system of rule as set forth in Galatians 6:16.

James saw no conflict between liberty and law. Like Paul he used the two terms in the same verse. He wrote, "But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing (James 1:25). To James Christianity was the

PERFECT law. Yet it also was the LAW OF LIBERTY. There can only be real liberty where there is proper law and respect for the same. Remember that law is restraint. Where there is no restraint there is the most abject type of slavery. View the drug addict who operates without and beyond law or restraint. He is in one of the worst types of bondage of any living person today. So are all other addicts to sinful indulgences.

Jesus saw no conflict

between law and liberty, between truth and freedom. He said in John 8:32, ". . . and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The truth that sets men free is the same as the law of Christ. Remember that Paul affirmed in Romans 8:2 that it was the LAW of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus which had made him FREE. Jesus in John 8:32 and Paul in Romans 8:2 were speaking of the same freedom. Quite obviously, then, they were speaking of the same system that would tender to people

this freedom, this liberty. Jesus called it truth; Paul called it the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. In reality the truth is the Christian system of law. As such it makes men free; it produces liberty among the obedient.

There is beautiful harmony therefore between love and law, between law and liberty. This has been made crystal clear in the previous article and the present one.

--P.O. Box 464, Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

The Elder Brother

W. A. Holley

We are persuaded that there are many "elder brothers" still living today. They can be observed in the local church throughout the brotherhood. Selfishness, snobbiness, pride, and haughtiness are traits of character that reveal them (Luke 18:9-14; Romans 12:1-3; Proverbs 13:10; 16:18; 29:23).

The "holier-than-thou" attitude is a dead give-away (I Kings 8:46; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:23; 6:23; I John 1:6-10). (Isaiah 32:5; Matthew 23:28; I Timothy 4:2; James 3:17).

We need to understand that the story of the Prodigal Son is incomplete without the story of the elder brother. We suggest that the entire chapter of Luke 15 be read carefully.

The Prodigal son represents the sins of the body; the elder brother represents the sins of the disposition. The younger son was lost in a "far country," the older son was lost at home. The lesson is: One can be a member of the Lord's church and still be lost (Acts 5:1-11; Romans 16:17-18).

What were some of the sins of the elder brother? He represents those who are professedly religious, but whose religion is very superficial and without any real depth (Philippians 3:17-19). Some possess just enough religion to make them

miserable -- they cannot live without it and they cannot live with it. (See James 1:26-27). Another of his sins is anger (Luke 15:28). Anger distorts one's vision and understanding (Ephesians 4:24-27; Proverbs 26:17-28). The elder brother was unconcerned about his brother's moral and spiritual welfare (Luke 14:15-24). The faithful child of God must be deeply and constantly concerned about the salvation of his backsliding brothers and sisters (Luke 15:1-7; II Peter 20:20-22).

Another bad trait was his penchant for sulking, when he could not have his way. When invited, he "would not go in." Have you ever swelled up and refused to do your duty?

Self-righteousness reigned supreme in the elder brother's heart. He said, "I have never transgressed a commandment of thine" (Luke 15:29). A preacher in Walker County says that it has been 25 years since he has committed a single sin. He committed a sin the moment he opened his mouth (Romans 3:23; I John 1:6-10).

The sin of envy was another of his faults: "Thou killest for him the fatted calf," he remarked to his father.

What is envy? It is a painful or resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another joined with a desire to possess the same advantage. He

revealed his envy when he said, "this thy son," and not "this my brother." The elder brother made a confession of his brother's sins, not his own (James 5:16; Luke 17:1-4). As we read the story, we learn that the younger son had the ring and shoes and fellowship with his father, and the elder brother still possessed his inheritance. Truly, he had nothing to complain about!

The elder brother's conduct caused much harm. (1) He should have loved his brother and welcomed him home. Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By

this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another" (John 13:34-35; I Corinthians 13:1-8). Instead of loving his brother, the elder brother made himself unhappy. Doubtless, many prodigals are kept away from the Father's house, or made to regret their return because of an "elder brother." It is better not to have lived at all, than to have lived and not loved (Matthew 18:6; Romans 14:13; Hebrews 12:12).

(2) The elder brother offended and hurt his father. His father's rejoicing was interrupted and his love wounded. All merrymaking

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"Most Of A Minute"

Perhaps you've heard by now about a denomination's book which claims to be the "other words of Jesus," only this time on the American Continent. Well, think about this. If it is from the same God who brought us the Bible, then it won't contradict what the Bible says, right? Well, consider these facts: Jesus told His apostles that the Holy Spirit would guide them into ALL truth (John 16:13). Now, ponder that for a minute. If He did guide them into all truth, then that's it. No new revelations are needed. If He didn't guide them into all the truth like He said He would, and this so-called new revelation is the result, then He either didn't keep His word, or He didn't know what He was talking about.

It's not unusual for people to come up with what they say is a new bit of information from God. But remember, if it says more than the Bible, it says too much. If it says less than the Bible, it doesn't say enough. If it says the same thing, we don't need it anyway.

The Elder Brother

Continued From Page 3

was brought to a sudden conclusion. The sound of "music and dancing" was heard no more ("Music and dancing" has no reference to a church service. The church had not then been established. See Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-42, 47). When dark clouds of disagreement descend over an assembly there is little enjoyment present.

(3) The elder brother hurt himself. There are times when a person is his own worst enemy. An evil eye, a bad temper, an angry disposition, a general penchant to always be in "the objective case and the kickative mood," tends to destroy a person. Just here we suggest that I Peter 3:8-12 be read with great care. It will make a great change in your life. There is no sense in making yourself and everybody else miserable. Fault-finders find faults but that's just about all they do!

What about the father's entreaty? He went to the heart of his wayward son and spoke to him in tenderness. He addressed him as "Son," not as a servant; thus, he extended his love and compassion to him. What more could he have done?

If They Had Graves

Continued from page 1

side in a straight line from new York City to Los Angeles, the world would take notice. Such a line of graves would stretch between these two cities almost seven times! Would our society care if there was a line of graves 2500 miles long and seven graves wide?

The grave marker might read: "Baby Jane Doe -- Died: December 11, 1991. Would have been born July, 1991. Her mother wouldn't love her. Her country wouldn't love her. Her country wouldn't save her. Without seeing anything more of the outer world than the end of a suction tube and the sharp edge of a scraping

We have a Father in heaven. We were created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Man has sinned and was cast from the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:22-24; I Timothy 2:11-15). Sin separates man from God (Isaiah 59:1-2).

Man needs to be reconciled to God. Through Jesus Christ, God has a plan by which he can be just and the justifier of sinners (Romans 3:23-26). When Jesus Christ died on the cruel cross, he took your place bearing in his own body your sins. Does the Holy Bible so teach? Indeed it does: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (I Peter 2:24-25).

Your Bible clearly teaches that God reconciles man to God through Jesus Christ. We quote: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not

imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (II Corinthians 5:17-19). How does God reconcile us to himself?

He does it through the power of his word. When one believes (John 3:16), repents of his sins (Luke 13:3, 5), confesses the holy name of Jesus (Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 8:37), and is baptized into Christ, reconciliation takes place.

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

"Take Heed To Your Spirit"

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marriages. One of the first principles of marriage involves the responsibility that goes with being married. The single life becomes a thing of the past. Life is no longer viewed with the perspective of "me and my things." Marriage involves providing for the needs of all that are in that new home. Paul exhorted Timothy to instruct the brethren, "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). It should be obvious here that "the faith" is more than just what involves the work of the church as the church. It includes the work of the home. The husband must uphold the responsibility of being the leader in his home even as God gave the directive for the men to take the lead in the church (cf. I Timothy 2:8-15). Those men of Malachi's day had failed to apply the spiritual instructions concerning the role which they were required to uphold as husbands.

**Regard For
God's Description**
Malachi described the situation concerning the

homes of that day when he said, "And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand. Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant" (Malachi 2:13-14). The tears and weeping at the altar of the Lord reflect the sorrows of the broken homes. How could God accept the offerings of the people who were sacrificing their homes for their own selfish reasons? Worship apart from moral virtue has never been accepted of the Lord (cf. Isa. 1:10-17). Malachi reminded these men of the way they were to view their own wives. He used the terms "thy companion" and "the wife of thy covenant." The word translated "companion" comes from the root word that means "to bind together" (Gesenius, p. 258). This denotes the cleaving of a man to his wife. The word "covenant" denotes the promises which both were to

faithfully keep before God as their witness. These descriptive words were to remind them what marriage is all about. When men forget or are not taught the true picture of what God defines in marriage, then the consequence of broken homes naturally follows.

Marriage is more than just a physical union of two people. It is more than just the state recognizing two people as husband and wife. It involves the heart, mind, and soul of two people to live before God under the guidelines which he has provided for their good and for the good of that home. Since marriage involves the minds of people, then it is no wonder that God spoke through Malachi, and said, "Take heed to your spirit." Mankind must have the proper attitude toward marriage, not only before getting married, but also throughout the lifetime of happiness and sorrows that come to all marriages. Malachi's exhortation is timeless. Therefore, let all take heed to his own spirit!

--Bethel Church of Christ,
Rt. 3 Box 425, Athens, AL 35611.

Bud Wilkinson, great coach for years at the University of Oklahoma, was once asked: "What is the contribution of football to America's health?" "Absolutely none," said the coach. "Football is a game where twenty-two men on a field are badly in need of rest, and the 70,000 in the stands are badly in need of exercise." Perhaps this is like some of our churches. There may be ten percent working hard, and who could use a respite, while 90 percent are doing very little, if anything, and they are badly in need of spiritual exercise. The Lord intends for all to be busy in the church. Everyone has some contributions which he can make. The Bible tells us that we are "workers together with Him." The Bible also tells us that we should "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Plainly there is work for all of us.

By E. Clifford Payne

March 19, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- "Obey Them Which Have The Rule Over You"
- What About Your Pathway?
- The Preciousness Of Wives
 - Poor Moses
- What Is The Source Of Happiness?
- Attend-Extend-Defend-Commend The Church
 - "Most Of A Minute"
 - "Let Me Sell You Some Insurance"!

Volume 29 Number 12
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak the Words of Truth and soberness." -- Acts 26:24

Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, AND Works (No. 13)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

At this time I continue my studies with you in regard to six of the kingly expressions of the New Testament -- grace, law, love, liberty, faith, and works. Previous lessons have set forth a number of fundamental facets relative to the first four of these. This and two subsequent ones, final articles in this lengthy series, will deal with faith and works. What the masses teach, believe and practice relative to these two concepts adds up to a morass of confusion. An excellent sectional heading would be:

IS THERE A CONFLICT BETWEEN FAITH AND WORKS?

Thousands of preachers seemingly think so, and they have influenced millions of people to swallow hook, line and sinker their misapplications and misappropriations regarding these two kingly, key terms of New Testament teaching.

A great deal of the confusion lies in the fact that many people have been deceived and deluded into thinking that we are saved by faith only and therefore ALL works are eliminated without further consideration. Another major contributing factor lies in the fact that millions fail to understand that there are works which are EXCLUDED and there are works which are

INCLUDED. The word works, as it appears in the New Testament, does not always mean the same thing. Its use has to be determined by its particular employment and the context in which it occurs.

The Bible teaches conclusively that we are saved or justified by faith. The same Book teaches that we are not saved by faith only. Paul declared in Romans 3:28, "We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law." In his translation of this passage more than four centuries ago, the German reformer, Martin Luther, added the fatal or lethal word only or alone. That made an entirely different statement of the great Pauline affirmation. Luther committed the grievous folly of adding to God's word. He did the very thing that Moses in Deuteronomy 4:6 and 12:32, the inspired scribe in Proverbs 30:6 and the Banished Prophet on Patmos in Revelation 22:18, 19 warned against man's doing. Mr. Luther tampered with God's word in regard to faith. His descendants along this same line have been legion indeed.

Reader friends, does your preacher preach salvation or justification by faith alone or faith only? If so, he commits the same glaring sins as did

Luther in the sixteenth century. There is no more justification for your preacher who does it in the twentieth century than for the German reformer who did it in the sixteenth century. I believe and teach salvation or justification by faith. Why? Because the Bible teaches such. Paul said in Romans 5:1, "Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; . . ." Did Paul teach justification by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; . . ." Did Paul teach justification by faith in this great Roman affirmation? Indeed he did! Did he teach justification by faith alone? He did not, and I challenge any preacher anywhere to prove from the Bible that he did. Had Paul taught justification by faith only, he would have contradicted every passage he wrote that demanded an obedient faith. In Galatians 5:6 Paul demanded of the Galatians a faith which worked by love. Paul was not saved by faith only in his own conversion as per Acts 9, 22 and 26. He was saved by a faith that worked, by a faith that obeyed, by a faith that took the Lord at his word and did not quibble relative to its binding precepts. Paul did not live the Christian life by faith only. He lived the Christian

life by an obedient faith, a faith that worked and labored by or through love. Paul never counseled any alien sinner of his day to be saved by faith only. If so, where is the passage that warrants such a doctrine? Paul never told any of his converts that all that was required from baptism to their burial in Mother Earth was faith only. If he did, where is the supporting passage of Sacred Scripture? Beloved readers, I teach justification by faith just as Paul did. This I have done for forty-three years. I have no intention of changing this brand of preaching for such is Biblical preaching; it is gospel proclamation.

I do not teach justification by faith only because the Bible does not teach salvation by faith only. I am aware that a number of people teach and believe that "faith only is a

very wholesome doctrine and filled with comfort." I deny unequivocally both allegations of this fatal statement. Faith only is NOT a wholesome doctrine. It is not wholesome because it is not so. It is not filled with any crumbs of comfort because it opposes everything the Sacred Scriptures teach regarding justification by faith. The addition of that lethal word alone or only is the source of much of our trouble in regards to the exact point at which one is saved or justified. We are justified when our faith moves us to repent, confess faith in Christ as God's only begotten Son and be immerse in water for the remission of sins. We are saved or justified at this point and not one moment before this.

--P.O. Box 464, Ripley, TN 38063.

Jesus Wept

B. J. Clarke

The shortest verse in our English Bible affirms that Jesus wept. John 11:35 should be more to us than just the shortest verse in the Bible. This tiny passage reveals to us something about our Lord that is very comforting. OUR LORD CARES! OUR LORD HURTS WHEN WE HURT! There are three places in the

New Testament that record for us the fact that Jesus wept. 1. **John 11:35** -- The surrounding context of verse 35 is the death of Lazarus. One of the most touching verses in all of Scripture is John 11:33, "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

"Obey Them Which Have The Rule Over You"

Glenn Colley

There is an ongoing debate these days about the authority of the group of men holding the office of elder (or bishop) in the church. Some believe that the elders have no authority, and that their leadership applies only in the sense of maintaining a good example, and no more. Others believe that elders have authority to make judgments relative to the spiritual wellbeing of the members in the flock they oversee, and that the members have an obligation to follow their leadership unless it conflicts with God's word.

There are several interesting passages awaiting your consideration on this subject: I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-11, Acts 20:28, I Peter 5:1-4.

We would also do well to consider Hebrews 13:17 which reads, "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." Anyone can see from this verse that we are commanded to obey SOMEONE. If this passage teaches obedience to the elders of the church, then in

honest hearts the confusion over the authority of elders will be forever settled.

The word "Obey" here is from the Greek word *Peitho*. According to Thayer it comes from a root word meaning "To bind." Specifically in this passage it means, "To listen to, obey, yield to, comply with" (Thayer, 1977, pg. 497).

But who are we to obey according to this passage? Who is it who has the "rule over you," and watches "for your souls?" We find two other references in this chapter to the ones who have the rule over us: (vs. 7) -- "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (vs. 24). -- "Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints..."

In Acts 20:28, where Paul is instructing the elders of the church from Ephesus, we read, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over that which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." The elders can be correctly described as "overseers," from a Greek word meaning "A man charged with the

duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly." That describes elders in the New Testament church.

While it is true that elders lead by example, (I Peter 5:3), it is also true that elders lead as overseers, and we, as members of the flock which they are among, must obey them. The exception to this teaching would of course be the case of elders requiring that which contradicts the word of God (Acts 5:29). -- "We ought to obey God rather than men."

Hebrews 13:17 clearly has reference to the overseers of the flock, the elders of the church.

We should thank God for godly elders. May we be humble Christians who "remember them which have the rule" over us (Hebrews 13:7). May we obey them, and submit ourselves (vs. 17). Their responsibility is to "watch for" our souls (vs. 17). One day, after the trumpet sounds it's unmistakable blast, those elders will give account for the way they have overseen and cared for the flock which Christ, the Chief Shepherd, left in their care (I Peter 5:4). May we hold up their hands so they may do their work "with joy, and not with grief."

What About Your Pathway?

David Courington

There is a pathway that leads to life and one that leads to death and hell. Jesus spoke of them in this manner: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide [is] the gate, and broad [is] the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait [is] the gate, narrow [is] the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13-14). The writer of Proverbs said of the path of sinners: "My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path: For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood" (Proverbs 1:15-16). In a later chapter it is recorded, "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil [men]. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away" (Proverbs 4:14-15). Which path are you following? The one that leads to everlasting life or eternal punishment?

One can know on which path he is headed. The path of life is a way of peace (Romans 14:19), a way of that which is right and just. Proverbs 4:18 says, "But the path of the just [is] as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The one going down the right path is obedient to the commandments of God. We should pray the prayer of Psalms 119:35, "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for

therein do I delight."

The right path is the one that follows where Jesus led in mercy, truth, and love. Note I Peter 2:21, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." Are you really making an effort to follow the path of Christ?

Which way you go will not only determine your destiny, but the end of those who are influenced by you. Your children, grandchildren, spouse, co-workers, fellow Christians -- are being encouraged to go in some path by you. A few weeks ago I jogged down a path that was over 100 years old. Slaves went down it to work at a furnace. As I looked on the ground, there was not only rocks and dirt, but sparkles of coal that they had spilled, still there after all these years. You and I are making a trail for someone to follow, having an influence that may still affect lives one hundred years from now. Where is your path leading?

--P.O. Box 160, Mulga, AL 35118.

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WORD of GOD

New Testament

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then

shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he

shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

Matthew 25:31-32

The Precious Wives

Tom Childers

She was a Christian; he was not. But they loved each other. He went to church services with her before they were married, but he had already made up his mind that once they were married, he would quit going to church, and he would see to it that she quit also.

The first Sunday they were married, as she was getting ready for services, he tried to get her to stay home with him. But she went to services alone. This went on for several years.

Then came their first child.

She missed two Sundays when the child was born, but the next Sunday she and her baby went to church services, and he stayed home alone.

One Sunday while she was dressing, he went outside and disconnected the coil wire on the car. She and the baby got into the car but it would not start. She wrapped the baby up and started walking to the building which was about two miles away. Feeling like a heel, the husband called her back, told her what he had done, asked her to forgive him and took her to services. That night, he went with her, and

two weeks later, he was baptized into Christ. Sometime later, this man started preaching the Gospel and since has baptized over 3,000 people.

Question: What would have

happened if the wife had been given in the first Sunday and stayed home?

"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that if any obey not the word, they also may

without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear" (I Peter 3:1-2).

What Is The Source Of Happiness?

G. F. Raines

All of us desire to have as much happiness as this life can afford. But only a comparatively few people are really happy. Why are so many people unhappy? The great burden of unhappiness with which mankind is struggling is traceable to the fact that only a comparatively few people are familiar with the source of true happiness.

Pleasure is not the source of happiness. Dr. Viktor E. Frankl, president of the Austrian Medical Society of Psychotherapy, and professor of psychiatry and neurology at the University of Vienna, said: "When we set up pleasure as the whole meaning of life, we insure that in the final analysis

life shall inevitably seem meaningless" (The National Observer, July 12, 1965, p. 22).

Money is not the source of happiness. King Solomon, the son of David, said: "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity" (Ecclesiastes 5:10).

The source of happiness is peace of mind, and the source of peace is a clean conscience, which is the result of obedience to the commandments of God.

Isaiah, the prince of prophets, says: "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness

quietness and assurance forever" (32:17).

"But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (57:20, 21).

Peter says: "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile; Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (I Peter 3:10-12).

Poor Moses

Dalton Key

Moses, the valiant leader of millions, the man whom God chose to deliver and lead his people out of Egyptian slavery, the revered lawgiver, endured a life of rejection and heartache. His troubles began in Egypt and followed him for the whole of his 120 years.

He had just successfully led Israel in their escape from Pharaoh when the Amalekites attacked. It wasn't long before the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, Amorites, and Midianites all joined together in an attempt to block Israel's path to Canaan.

Moses' own people were no help to him either. Though God's chosen nation had been awed and sustained by miracle after miracle, they still wallowed in the mire of murmuring. They incessantly grumbled against God and his helper, Moses. They began complaining before they were out of Egypt and kept it up even when the promised land was in sight. To make matters worse, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram attempted to overthrow Moses. Marah, The Wilderness of Sins, Rephidim, Taborah, Hazeroth, Meribah, and Kadesh all found the children of Israel either complaining or trying to oust poor Moses. At one point the people were all ready to stone him to death!

His trusted leaders were many times untrustworthy and more of a hindrance than a help. Aaron made the golden calf at the foot of Sinai while Moses was up in the mount receiving the law from the Lord. Miriam and Aaron attempted to usurp the God-given authority of Moses at Hazeroth. And of the twelve spies sent into the land of Canaan, ten led the already rebellious nation in a flat refusal to enter. Yes, Moses had his share of troubles.

Yet through all of the muck of murmuring and insult of insurrection, Moses emerged a better man. Inspiration commends him as "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Numbers 12:3). He was meek, but by no means weak. He meekly stood his ground in the face of adversity. His life served to prove the yet-to-be written words of Paul, who wrote, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope" (Romans 5:3, 4).

The next time you are tempted to complain about your troubles, think of poor Moses. His troubles made him stronger and better. The same thing can happen to you.

Attend-Extend-Defend-Commend The Church

Elwood Holt

My duty is to ATTEND THE CHURCH -- Revelation 3:1 'thou livest and art dead.' Better be dead and know it, and wear no disguise, and practice no hypocrisy, than clothe the ghastly skeleton with the semblance of vitality, and be dead indeed while in name thou livest.

My duty is to EXTEND THE CHURCH -- by visitation and invitation, by friendliness, by caring for new converts, by cultivating a missionary vision both at home and abroad.

My duty is to DEFEND THE CHURCH -- Seven great dangers face the Church: The infiltration of error (II Timothy 4:3, 4); the danger of wrong leadership (II John 9); the snare of worldliness; the perils of complacency, (Revelation 1:18) the bane of cliquishness, (I Corinthians 3:4-8) the demon of disaffection.

My duty is to COMMEND

THE CHURCH -- we commend the Church by what we are, with consistent Christian lives; by what we say -- words that are gracious, loving, kind and hence glorifying to our Lord.

The Church stands with all mankind at a cross road,

sharing a common cause and concern. Which way do we go to make a new world? There are some who say "learn... education is the way." Some say, "earn... economic

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"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

A fascinating fact emerges from the study of the Old Testament -- that some things about people never change. Case in point: Joseph, in the book of Genesis. The wife of his boss very graphically asked him to commit adultery with her. Think of his choices.

Now, before I reveal his decision, consider the price tag:

--It would be a sin against the woman, because he would be helping destroy her marriage.

--It would be a sin against her husband.

--It would be a sin against God.

--It would be a sin against himself for he would never forget it.

Joseph told her, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9).

Listen. Let's be wise enough to learn the eternal lessons of God's word.

"Let Me Sell You Some Insurance!"

Allen Webster

They are sometimes annoying. They are sometimes persistent. They sometimes act as if they have all the answers. They are a necessary evil. They are insurance salesmen! Actually, they have a lot in common with preachers. By comparison, they ask for your short-term investments; we ask for long-term commitments!

LET ME SELL YOU SOME LIFE INSURANCE. When he says "life insurance," he means he will pay your beneficiaries in case you die. But Jesus offers a far better deal. He promises that you will never die! "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever . . ." (John 6:50-51). "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11:26).

Of course, this is spiritual life insurance. Physically, one will suffer and die in spite of his faith, and, sometimes, because of his faith (Matthew 10:28).

This is a great policy! The premiums never go up. Initially, one invests with faith, repentance, confession, and baptism (Acts 2:38; 8:35-38). Subsequently, Jesus requires one to "come after me . . . deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Nothing yields higher returns. "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom" (Luke 6:38).

You will never be cancelled,

unless you choose to discontinue. "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:29).

Do you have this insurance? You need it!

LET ME SELL YOU SOME HEALTH INSURANCE. When he says "health insurance," he means medical treatment will be covered if you get sick. God's Word has insurance against getting sick. "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones" (Proverbs 17:22).

Generally speaking, one who follows the principles of the Bible will suffer fewer sicknesses than others. God gives children the secret to a long life: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour 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*" (Ephesians 6:1-3).

Prayer can extend one's life (cf. II Kings 20:3-6). John prayed from Gaius: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (III John 2). "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

If one treats his body as the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19-20), he will live longer. He will not abuse it with alcohol, nicotine, over-eating, or senseless injuries.

Do you have good health insurance? You need it!

LET ME SELL YOU SOME

HOME INSURANCE. When he says he wants to insure your home, he means "house insurance." That is, if you are the victim of robbery or natural disaster, your personal belongings will be replaced. What the preacher means by "home insurance" is far better. The Bible gives the principles by which successful homes are run. When families use God's "marriage manual" they are virtually insured against serious problems.

There is more to the statement, "The family that prays together stays together," than just catchy wording. When two who have the right to marry (cf. Matthew 19:9), find each other (cf. Proverbs 18:22), fall in love, remain pure (Hebrews 13:4), and join in a sacred union (Matthew 19:6), they lay a strong foundation that will weather life's storms.

When he continues to love her as his own body (Ephesians 5:28) and she loves him as strongly (Titus 2:4), there will be no mistreatment. When he dwells with her according to knowledge (I Peter 3:7) and she submits to his God-given authority (Ephesians 5:22), there will be no thoughts of divorce (Malachi 2:16).

When God blesses this union with children, and they are wanted, welcomed, cherished, nourished, and nurtured by the "Good Book" (Ephesians 6:4), they will grow up healthy, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Do you have good home insurance? You need it!

LET ME SELL YOU SOME FIRE INSURANCE. He means your house is protected against fire. But one day the

whole world will be on fire (II Peter 3:10). Are you insured against the fire that will never

be quenched (Mark 9:44)?

You need fire insurance.

Get some insurance!

Jesus Wept

Continued From Page 1

spirit and was troubled." Jesus asked to view the body and wept as he did so (John 11:34, 35). The song, *Does Jesus Care?* is answered in this passage with a resounding yes! When the Jews saw Jesus weeping, they exclaimed, "See how he loved him!" The truth of this passage should motivate us to cast all our care upon Jesus, for he careth for us (I Peter 5:7).

2. Luke 19:41 -- "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it." The tears of our Master in this text are mingled with sorrow and righteous indignation. The original language shows a contrast between the weeping Jesus did in John 11 and Luke 19. The passage in John 11:35 indicates a tear or tears trickling down our Saviour's face. The passage from Luke 19 displays our Lord sobbing uncontrollably. It is not difficult to understand the reason for the difference. In John 11, Jesus knew that he

was going to raise Lazarus and that everything would be alright. In Luke 19, Jesus sobbed because he knew that the beloved city of Jerusalem was doomed with no hope of a reprieve. **IN LUKE 19:41, WE LEARN HOW MUCH JESUS LOVES SOULS!**

3. Hebrews 5:7 -- This portion of the sacred writings refers to the agony of our Redeemer in Gethsemane. The human side of Jesus is shown here. He did not want to experience the physical pain and torture of the cross. But once the will of his Father made it clear that there was no other way, he willingly died for you and me! (John 10:18). Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

Let us resolve to imitate our Master by being compassionate enough to weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15). Let us display the same hurt over lost souls that Jesus exhibited in Luke 19:41. And let us be willing to lay aside our own physical desires for that which will please God.

WORD of GOD

The Way of Love

But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

I Corinthians 13:10-13

Attend-Extend-Defend-Commend The Church

Continued From Page 3

crying, "burn society is so corrupt we must destroy it. There is some truth in all this. "But." -- JESUS CHRIST SAYS, "Turn"... be converted, put your trust in God. Seek first His Will. Obey His commandments. Then you can be a part of the new world

GOD is making. On your part it takes FAITH and a lot of it.

Over 2700 years ago the prophet Isaiah, speaking of the coming birth of Christ said, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulders: and his name shall

be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the PRINCE OF PEACE.

Let Christ make you and yours peacemakers.

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March 26, 1993

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- Most Of A Minute
- Concerning "Charismatic" Religious Leaders
- Wisdom And Success

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The Words Truth

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

the

Tax - Free

Allen Webster

Politicians are talking of raising our taxes again. While they search for ways to raise revenue, we search for loopholes and exemptions to keep it! We are all interested in things that are tax-free.

The Christian is so very rich--no matter what his bank statement says. It is possible to be poor and rich at the same time: "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" (Jas. 2:5). The wise man said, "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches" (Prov. 13:7).

Jesus said to the church at Smyrna: "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich). . ." They were rich without money! The man whose wealth overflowed his barns was on spiritual "welfare" because he laid up treasure for himself, and was not rich toward God (Lk. 12:21). Paul charged the wealthy to not forget true riches. "That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate" (1 Tim. 6:18).

Jesus knew what it was like to have to pay taxes (Mt. 17:24-27). Some of His most dedicated followers were tax-collectors (Mt. 9:9, Lk. 19:2). He commands us to pay our

taxes (Rm. 13:6, 7). Yet we do not have to pay taxes on our most valuable possessions. They are tax-free!

THEY CAN TAX OUR HOUSES, BUT NOT OUR MANSIONS. Christians are so wealthy that they have two homes! We stay in this one only temporarily while the other is being readied. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (Jn. 14:2, 3). "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5:1). It may not be very long before we get to move in (1 Thes. 4:17)!

THEY CAN TAX OUR SAVINGS, BUT NOT OUR TREASURES. Christians have a special "IRA" that is tax-free, pays high interest and matures in eternity. It is in a bank outside the country and cannot be touched until we pass "retirement" age (Heb. 9:27). "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth

nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Mt. 6:19-21).

Jesus encouraged one young man to take out such an account, but He was unsuccessful in convincing him of its value. "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions" (Mt. 19:21-22). He was more interested in the kind of income they do tax!

Jesus offers us the same deal: "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth" (Lk. 12:33). "Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6:19). "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1:4).

THEY CAN TAX OUR JEWELRY, BUT NOT OUR CROWNS. They assess the value of our rings, necklaces, watches and bracelets, but they cannot tax our most treasured piece of jewelry--

our crown of life. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (Jas. 1:12). "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 Tim. 4:8).

THEY CAN TAX OUR POSSESSIONS, BUT NOT OUR BLESSINGS. If forced

Watching Love Work

Neal Pollard

In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul describes love as if it were animate. In personifying its nature, Paul says love is patient, kind, joyous over truth, understanding, faithful, hopeful, persevering, and undying. He also tells us love is not jealous, boastful, puffed up, rude, selfish, irritable, a grudge-bearer, or joyous over evil. Love seems to characterize the pinnacle of character, strength, and integrity. Christ often spoke of the power of love as it involves our salvation, growth, and perseverance. Peter says that developing a mature love for the Lord casts out fear as a motivation to obey Him. John says to love others is to know God. Other scriptures describe the various actions personified by love.

LOVE IS A COVERING

to chose, we would forsake every earthly possession in order to keep our peace of mind. We have remission of sins (Acts 2:38), newness of life (Rm. 6:3, 4), hope of everlasting life (Mk. 10:29, 30; Jn. 3:16; Tit. 3:7; 1 Jn. 2:25), peace that passeth understanding (Phil. 4:7), joy unspeakable (1 Pet. 1:8) and songs in the night (Psa. 42:8). They cannot tax these riches!

Perhaps we should keep this to ourselves, or the politicians will try to find a way to tax them too!

(Proverbs 10:12). While it does not cover or hide the unfruitful works of darkness, habitual or deliberate sin, or Biblical truths, love does consider the humanity of others. Love looks for the best in others. When betrayed by others, love is resilient. Love seeks the erring and works to convert the lost to cover their multitudinous sins (James 5:19-20). Peter urges Christians to develop a fervent type of love (1 Peter 4:8). Our brethren need us to have a love within us that instructs as it reproves and encourages as it intercedes.

LOVE IS A SPEAKER (EPHESIANS 4:15). We should love those who point out our faults, but we seldom do. Henry Ward Beecher said, "It is one of the severest tests of friendship to tell your friend his faults. So to love a man that

Continued on page 2

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

The Lion At The Door (Genesis 4:6, 7)

I Peter 5:8 says, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist steadfast in the faith. . ."

There's something typically soothing about the quiet, gentle steps of a lion, but not when he is stalking his prey. Rather, the silent steps and slow movement puts our nerves on edge. We know the beast is calculating a rapid, precise, and devastating blow. Peter tells us that the devil is like that around us - - always interested in our weak moments when he might gain the advantage over us.

Have you ever considered that was a similar hellish lion described by God to Cain in Genesis 4:6, 7? After Cain had submitted an un-acceptable sacrifice to God and Abel a pleasing sacrifice, Cain's countenance (disposition/attitude) fell. Here's what the Almighty said: "And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if

thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him."

Now, note the phrase "sin lieth at the door". About this interesting phrase Barnes says,

"Now the warning becomes still more pointed, applying directly to Cain's case, showing what the situation is if a man does "not do right," or does not "cause his doing to be good". In that event, "sin" (*chatta'th*, here mentioned for the first time in Scripture, a word bearing the basic meaning of "missing the mark") has become a very definite possibility, even a menacing threat. It is to be likened to a wild beast (therefore *robhets*, masculine, not feminine agreeing with "win") crouching at the door. And as promptly as such a beast immediately at hand would seize a man going out at the door, so promptly will sin leap upon one and hurt him. This figure is appropriate also from this point of view: the hurt is inevitable, and the ultimate escape is possible,

but problematic. Completing the picture, there is the expression "striving to get at thee," which A. V. rendered: "Unto thee shall be its desire." Literally the preposition and the noun must be rendered: "toward thee it's striving." We believe we catch the meaning well in this connection by rendering: "striving to get at thee." The added thought is that this "crouching beast" is not a mild, passive thing, a tame leopard or some harmless pet. Rather, it thirsts after your blood."

It is for this reason that when the Lord speaks in His word about walking away from sin, He uses strong action terms. For example,

- - "Resist the devil, and he will flee from thee. . ." (James 4:7).

- - "Flee fornication". (I Cor. 6:18).

- - "Neither give place to the devil." (Eph. 4:27).

Don't trifle with sin. Don't play games with the lion. Remember Cain, for they who forget the past are doomed to repeat it.

Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith and Works

(No. 14)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

The final three articles in this stretched-out series deal with faith in the previous article. Much will be said about works in this current article. But again I ask:

IS THERE A CONFLICT BETWEEN FAITH AND WORKS?

That works of a definite kind have a part in our justification is made crystal clear by James' plain and decisive statement in James 2:24 wherein we read, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Could a pronouncement be any plainer than this? If so, how, How, HOW??? James says we are not justified by faith only. He affirms we are justified by works.

There is no contradiction between Paul and James. James was speaking of the works that are INCLUDED. Paul, when he said it was not by works, was speaking of the works that are EXCLUDED. What are the works that are excluded? In Galatians 5:19 Paul speaks of the "works of the flesh." They include such things as fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, murder, drunkenness, envying and "such like." Surely no one would suspect these are necessary for salvation or justification. Paul says that

those who practice these things will not go to heaven (Gal. 5:21). The Bible talks of the works of the devil. John says in 1 John 3:8 that the Son of God was "manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." Surely no one thinks he can be saved or justified by doing the works of the devil. If such works could save, then Satan would never spend a moment in Eternal Gehenna. In John 8:44 Jesus spoke of the Jews who did the lusts of their father the devil. This is the same as their doing the works of Satan. Surely these are the works that are excluded. Nobody can do them and be justified thereby. In Romans 3:28 Paul says we are not justified by the works of the law of Moses. Again the Bible teaches that one cannot be justified by the works of his own devising. Were he able to work out his own system of righteousness that would save him by its own merits, then he could boast of earning his salvation pure and simple. It would then not be a matter of God's grace but one of his own merit. This is the very type of works Paul spoke of in Romans 4 - works that will permit human boasting. It is the very type he spoke of in Ephesians 2:9 when he said, "...not of

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Watching Love Work

you cannot bear to see a stain upon him, and to speak painful truth through loving words, that is friendship." Love insists that we speak up for truth. Love urges us to preach, teach, and live out the truth. Love is the attitude which should carry God's message from our hearts to the ears of those who hear it. The mission of Christ, even from His stern rebuke of the Pharisees to the cleansing of the temple, was motivated by love. The same week He carried a whip to cleanse the temple from evil He carried a cross to Calvary to cleanse the

world from sin. An intense love for the good of others will prompt us to teach them right when they dwell in wrongdoing.

LOVE IS A PRESERVATIVE (Psalm 145:20). This, of course, assumes that the preserved are those who have a faith that works by love (Galatians 5:6). It is true that Christ-like love helps preserve unity, friendship, peace, and goodwill. Yes, true (agape) love preserves any kind of relationship. In the 145th Psalm, however, David refers to preservation as the end of

Continued from page 1

those who love the Lord. If we walk in the light, the blood of Christ (continually) cleanses us and keeps us from sin (1 John 1:7). Paul's assurance in prison was that the Lord would preserve him unto His heavenly kingdom (2 Timothy 4:18). When man possesses an active, working love of God, the love of God keeps him.

Love demands us to be active, to be obedient, to be strong, and to be alive. Heaven's love gives (John 3:16). Heaven's love promises (Revelation 2:10). Heaven's love delivers (cf. Psalm 37:25).

The Lord knows the power of love. We are the ones who must strive to obtain a fuller

understanding of love. It is no wonder heaven expects ours to be a working love.



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Great Chapters Of The Bible: Ephesians 2

B. J. Clarke

INTRODUCTION

The Bible is comprised of 1189 chapters. All of these chapters are great; for they originated in the mind of God. Yet, some of these chapters have found a special place in our hearts. Ephesians 2 is one such chapter. It is an inspired masterpiece on the subject of sinners and their reconciliation to God. If Acts 2 is the "hub" of the Bible, then Ephesians 2 is the "hub" of the epistles. Its' message truly glorifies God.

A proper understanding of Ephesians 2 hinges on the preceding context. Paul's desire was that the Ephesians might know "the exceeding greatness" of God's mighty power (Eph. 1:19-20). Paul told the Ephesians that God had demonstrated his mighty power in Christ "when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places" (Eph. 1:20). The beginning of chapter 2 is really a continuation of the thought in the closing verses in chapter 1. By ignoring the chapter divisions, we see that Paul gave a second example of God's mighty power in the opening stanza of Ephesians 2. "But God... even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:4-6). When God raised Christ from the dead and elevated him to heavenly places, he was demonstrating his mighty power. Likewise, when God raised the Ephesians from being spiritually dead to being alive in Christ he was giving another hope of salvation.

How is this power explained in Ephesians 2? The twenty two verses in this chapter can be exegeted by the use of five main points all beginning with the letter "G".

GUILTY THROUGH SIN

(Verses 1-3)

Please observe that we are

not affirming that we are guilty through birth. Multitudes have mutilated this portion of scripture, asserting that it teaches that we are all born with a sinful nature. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Bible defines sin as "the transgression of the law" (1 Jn. 3:4). What law of God does a baby transgress by being born into this world? Furthermore, the Scriptures abundantly teach that each individual is responsible for his/her own sins (Dt. 24:16; Ezek. 18:20; Rom. 14:12). The context of Ephesians 2:1-3 shows that Paul did not have infants in mind when he penned these words. Do little babies walk according to the course of this world? Do little babies concentrate on fulfilling the sinful desires of the flesh? No. These descriptions could only apply to those who are of an accountable age.

But what of the expression "and were by nature the children of wrath"? That word rendered "by nature" is from the Greek word "phusis", and is used here to refer to that which the Ephesians had done by custom or practice. Hence, there is no support whatsoever in this passage for the false doctrine of original sin. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God through transgression of God's law (Rom. 3:23; 1 Jn. 3:4).

GRACE THROUGH MERCY

(Verses 4-10)

Because the Ephesians were guilty of sin, they deserved to die the second death (Rom. 6:23; Rev. 21:8). But God, who is rich in mercy, had a great love for these Ephesian sinners and raised them from spiritual death to spiritual life, saving them by his grace (Eph. 2:4-6). Paul told the brethren at Ephesus that what God's grace had done for their sins would serve as an encouragement to sinners in all ages of the world (Eph. 2:7).

It is comforting to know that the same gracious God who saved the Ephesians from the penalty of sin, is ready and

willing to do the same for us. But how is this salvation realized? We know that the Ephesians had been saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8). We also know that their salvation was not something which they accomplished through works of human merit that they might boast of (Eph. 2:8-9). It was God's unmerited favor that saved them from sin. However, Paul told the brethren at Ephesus that what God's grace had done for their sins would serve as an encouragement to sinners in all ages of the world (Eph. 2:7).

It is comforting to know that the same gracious God who saved the Ephesians from the penalty of sin, is ready and willing to do the same for us. But how is this salvation realized? We know that the Ephesians had been saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8). We also know that their salvation was not something which they accomplished through works of human merit that they might boast of (Eph. 2:8-9). It was God's unmerited favor that saved them from sin. However, Paul did not tell them that they had been saved by grace alone. They had been saved by grace (God's part) through faith (their part). Everything that God does for us is an act of his grace. Everything which we do in obeying him is an act of our faith.

A brief examination of the conversion of the Ephesians will show us what is involved in salvation by grace through faith. (1) They heard the word of truth and believed it (Eph. 1:13). (2) They repented and were baptized (Acts 19:1-6, 17-19). They were not saved by faith alone as so many false teachers claim today. Nor does the expression "not of works" in verse 9 rule out baptism as a part of their salvation. The Scriptures speak of different types of works: (1) works of the Law (Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16), (2) works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21), (3) works of human merit (Eph. 2:8, 9) and (4) works of obedience (Jas. 2:24; Acts 10:34, 35; 1 Jn. 3:7). The alleged contradiction

between Ephesians 2:8,9 and James 2:24 is easily disposed of when one understands that Paul had in mind an entirely different kind of works than did James. Faith, repentance, confession and baptism are all works of obedience and do not nullify the grace of God at all. They are simply terms of obedience which God has set forth for all who would receive the free gift of salvation.

GUILTLESS THROUGH HIS BLOOD

(Verses 11 - 13)

Paul reminded the Gentile element of the church at Ephesus of their former condition. They were (1) without Christ, (2) alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, (3) strangers from the covenants of promise, (4) having no hope and (5) without God in the world. Paul proceeded to remind them of their present condition, "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off were made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13).

Paul was not ashamed of the blood atonement given by Christ for our sins. Even though the Ephesians were guilty through sin, God through his mercy and grace made them guiltless through his Son's blood, thus displaying his mighty power (Eph. 2:1-5, 13; 1:19). There is still power in the blood to make us guiltless.

GATHERED THROUGH HIM

(Verses 14 - 18)

Jesus had told the Jews of a

time when he would bring other sheep into his fold, thus making one fold and one shepherd (Jn. 10:16). Peter had prophesied of a time when the promise of salvation would be made available unto all that are afar off (Acts 2:39). Paul spoke to the Ephesians of how these predictions had come true. He pointed out that Jesus had made peace between the Jew and the Gentile, making them one by reconciling them into one body. The cross was the instrument that Christ used to reconcile the two. Today, there is no spiritual distinction between the Jew and the Gentile. The hearts of both are cleansed by an obedient faith (Acts 15:7-9). Paul told the Ephesians that it was through Christ that both Jew and Gentile were privileged to have access unto the Father (Eph. 2:18).

GROWTH THROUGH HIS TEMPLE

(Verses 19 - 22)

Paul encouraged the Gentiles by telling them that they did not have to consider themselves as strangers or foreigners any more. They were now members of the family of God. Whereas, the work of construction on the temple had begun before the Ephesians entered, they were now a vital part of the structure. They were now built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20). The

Continued on page 4

Most Of A Minute

Glenn Colley
Stretching My Soul

A man went to a blacksmith's shop one morning to pick up a hoe which the blacksmith had mended. When he started to pay for the work, he was told there would be no charge for the job. Insistently, he tried to force the money into the blacksmith's hand. The blacksmith's reply was worth remembering. Again refusing payment he said to the man, "Ed, can't you let a man do something now and then just to stretch his soul?"

Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). And He there gives us a secret to a major source of happiness for our lives.

Today, find someone who needs you, and "stretch your soul."

Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith and Works

Continued from page 2

works, that no man should glory." Beloved readers, these are the works that are excluded.

What works are INCLUDED? The type that Peter had in mind when he told the convicted auditors on Pentecost, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation" (Acts 2:40). Two verses earlier he had told them to repent and be baptized for, or unto, the remission of their sins. Hence, the works of repentance and baptism are included. The working of God's righteousness is included. Peter declared in Acts 10:35, "...but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him." Included is what Paul had in mind in Philippians 2:12 as he stated, "...work out your salvation with fear and trembling." In I Corinthians 15:58 Paul informed the Corinthians that they were to "be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord." Summing it up all works are included which are necessary for us to become the children of God; all works are necessary which are essential for our remaining God's children. The works of God or the works of obedience are INCLUDED: all other types of works are EXCLUDED.

If there is a conflict between faith and works, then faith itself is eliminated. The Bible teaches that faith is a work of God. The next time your preacher tells you that one is saved by faith and by works of no kind, I ask you to remember that the Bible teaches faith is a work. We read in John 6:28, 29, "They said therefore unto him, What must we do, that we may 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." The inquirers upon this occasion wanted to know something of the Lord. They desired information relative to something they were to do.

The certain something they were to do is expressed under the works of God. They did not have in mind the works that God did but the works he had outlined and delineated for them to do. They said, "WHAT MUST WE DO, THAT WE MAY WORK THE WORKS OF GOD?" Now if there is absolutely nothing in the way of works that man must do, this would have been a golden opportunity for the Lord Jesus Christ to have set the record

straight once and for all. Do you not agree? Yet Jesus did not say, "There are no works for you to do. It is all accomplished the very moment you extend intellectual assent of me that I am God's Son." This is not what the Lord said is it? That is not what the Lord meant either is it? Had that been what he meant that is what he would have stated in crystal clear language. The Lord said what he meant and meant what he said upon this

important occasion. Jesus said, "This is the WORK OF GOD." Well, what is that work? He said it is to believe "on him whom he hath sent." Believing a work? Yes! Faith a work? Yes! Jesus classed it the work of God. Now this is not something God does for us. God does not do the believing for us. He does not perform the faith operation in his heart and allow it to accrue to us as something credited to our account. We must do the believing. We must exercise

faith. Jehovah provides the basis for our faith. He makes faith a reasonable, rational process. Abundant evidence is presented for man's consideration. The testimony that Jesus is the Christ is fixed on a firm foundation. Yet God expects us to do the believing when the evidence for the Deity of Jesus has been examined and accepted.

-- P. O. Box 464, Ripley, Tennessee 38063

Concerning "Charismatic" Religious Leaders

William Woodson

During the past weeks the nation has been gripped by the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York and the standoff near Waco, Texas, between various law officers and a religious compound whose leader refused / refuses to respond to negotiations with the officers until God tells him what to do. These events have devastated many people, whole families and communities being shocked and alarmed.

In these events, as public media indicate, a major element producing them was an individual, leader or "hit man," who embraced and expressed strange and unusual religious beliefs. What is one to make of such bizarre happenings in the name of religion?

Since the first century AD, history has recorded many who claimed special guidance from God. Montanus (ca. 156 AD), self proclaimed prophet of God, informed Rome that the descent of the Heavenly Jerusalem was shortly to occur. Thomas Munzer (c. 1490-1525) claimed the Holy Spirit guided him to establish a "spiritual church" in Germany but was executed because of his rebellion against the state. In 1837 Joseph Smith claimed that God empowered him to discover and decipher, by golden spectacles, a new

revelation which supplements and replaces the Bible. In 1845-46, Ellen G. Harmon White claimed to be guided by the Holy Spirit to found a new religious order, one emphasizing the soon to arrive second "advent" of the Lord. In 1914-15 a group of charismatics claimed God had revealed to them that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not separate beings but really are Jesus only. Charles T. Russell claimed, by self proclaimed revelation, that the end of all things would come in 1914 and "Millions now living will never die," only to die himself in 1916. In the "Charismatic Movement" of the 1970s and following, some enthusiasts carefully recorded what they "spoke in tongues" and "interpreted" on the premise that God was giving additional portions of the Bible through them.

The record could go on. Reaction? (1) The Bible was and is not responsible for such claims of new found revelation and power. (2) One thinks of Simon who "used sorcery, and bewitched the people, giving out that himself was some great one," and to whom the people of Samaria gave regard (Acts 8:9-11). (3) Those who allow themselves to be swept into such false ideas of religious life soon find themselves exploited and used by the "great one" and become more

and more deceived. (4) The testing of those who say they are "prophets" must continue to be done, regardless of the

smooth and fair speeches by which they operate to win over the unsuspecting (1 John 4:1; Rom. 16:17).

Wisdom and Success

G. F. Raines

In The Knack of Judging Others (Employee Relations, Inc., New York 1, N. Y., p. 6). Charles B. Roth, sales adviser to Ford Motor, Sears-Roebuck, and many other large companies, refers to judgment as a "valuable but rare trait" and then says: "good judgment is really what is responsible for most success which comes to individuals."

Charles H. Spurgeon said: "Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. Many men know a great deal, and are all the greater fools for it."

Wisdom is obtained by association with good and wise people, experience, general reading of good books (especially the Bible), and fervent prayer. James says: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." (Jas. 1:5-7).

Solomon said: "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than

the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour." (Prov. 3:13-16).

Great Chapters

Continued from page 3
cornerstone was a stone of double size at the corner which became a part of both walls and joined them together. As the chief cornerstone, Christ has joined the Jews and Gentiles together into one temple in which God dwells. It is God's desire that his temple continue to grow and that living stones be constantly added to the structure (Eph. 2:21; 1 Pet. 2:5f).

CONCLUSION

Even though the Ephesians were guilty through sin, God was merciful and gracious, willing to make them guiltless through His Son's blood. Through the death of his Son on the cross he gathered both Jew and Gentile into one body. His eternal will is that those in this temple will continue to grow in him.

April 2, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- "A Sure Way To Avoid A Possible Disaster"
- Christianity: A Public And Private Life
- Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith And Works (No. 15)
- "Is Attendance Necessary?"
 - Most Of A Minute
 - How To Identify The New Testament Church
 - "Turn To The Lord?"

Volume 29 Number 14
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Truth

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

the

What Can I Do As A Young Person?

Allen Webster

The finest young people in the world are associated with churches of Christ. They are washed in the blood of the Lamb, zealous, dedicated, pure, strong, and faithful (I John 2:14). We want you to know that we love you and want you to "be all you can be" for Christ and His Cause.

God never intended for Christianity to be a "NO" religion. We hear a lot of sermons on what teenagers *cannot* do (which is good), but, "What *can* they do?"

Christianity is not a spectator sport, it demands involvement (I Corinthians 15:58; Matthew 25:24-26). If one is old enough to obey the Gospel, he is old enough to labor in the vineyard of Christ. There are no apprentices in the shop of salvation. No "try-it-before-you-buy-it" plans for Christianity. You do not have to be eighteen to be in the Lord's army. No visas are needed to enter His kingdom. Every worker is expected to use his talents, abilities and opportunities for the good of the group.

TEENAGERS CAN OBEY THE GOSPEL. God is against infant baptism, but He does want *every* sinner to come to Him. Too many think they will become Christians later in life, but then never do

(Ecclesiastes 12:1). They are interested in adolescence but disinterested as adults. Many will be eternally lost because they decided not to decide (II Thessalonians 1:8). Their tender hearts said, "Yes," Satan whispered, "Later." And they listened to the Serpent.

God wants you in the water (Acts 2:38)! That is, if you believe that Christ is His Son (John 3:16), are willing to repent (Luke 13:3), and confess His great name (Romans 10:9-10). This is where it all begins. You cannot serve Christ until you do.

TEENAGERS CAN WORSHIP GOD. Have you ever stood in the presence of the Governor of this state? Have you been in a room with the President? Few have, but each has a much greater privilege this Sunday. We stand in the presence of the Maker of heaven and earth! Teenage Christians are in that group! Do not ever miss an opportunity to worship God -- He deserves the praises of every voice in the world. Never deny Him His glory (Hebrews 10:25). Young men should be allowed (encouraged) to take leading roles in worship -- teach them to lead singing, preach, wait on the Lord's Table and lead prayers.

God expects teenagers (as well as others) to worship Him reverently (John 4:24). Worship is no time for talking, passing notes, sleeping or cutting up. It is a time when hearts are set on pleasing God and minds are filled with spiritual things (Matthew 5:6; Psalm 96:7).

TEENAGERS CAN LIVE RIGHT. Some adults see the years of youth as a time to sow wild oats, but sober-minded young people know better! These years belong to God (Ephesians 5:16; I Corinthians 6:19-20). God expects *every* one of His children to give Him a sanctified life (Titus 4:12, 15-16). At whatever age, it is time now to be adding the Christian virtues (II Peter 1:5-8) and to incorporate beautiful attitudes (Matthew 5:3-10). Sowing wild oats precipitates a harvest that no one wants (Galatians 6:7). Why have to pray for "crop failure" when there is a better way?

TEENAGERS CAN BE INVOLVED WITH THE LOCAL CHURCH. Obviously, teenagers are not qualified to do everything that others might do. Elders and deacons are not taken from teenage classes. But because one cannot do some things, does not mean that he cannot do

anything!

There are many things that young people can do. In fact, their energy, free time and zeal allows them to do more than many adults. Young people are terrific at door-knocking for meetings and Vacation Bible Schools. They meet people well, enjoy working with other teenagers, and especially like the opportunity to do something real for Christ. Young people are good at visiting -- especially with old people. It does them so much good to see a young person coming with a flower or hug. Young Christians, especially girls, are good about sending cards to the sick and delinquent.

Teenagers are better at

bringing their friends to meetings and regular services than almost all adults. They can be good soul winners. They have a wider circle of friends than most adults and find their friends have more open minds than many adults. For these reasons, young Christians lead many souls to Christ (Mark 16:15-16).

Young people, you have a bright future in the church. We treasure the opportunity to help you grow stronger. Listen closely, learn well, for in not so long, you will be where we are.

Not very exciting, you say? Try it. It just might be the most challenging thing you will ever do!

Teachers

One reason experience is such a good teacher is that she doesn't allow any dropouts.

The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.

It's not so much what is poured into the student, but what is planted, that really counts.

As a general rule, teachers teach more by what they are than by what they say.

We'll be in trouble as long as we pay the best professors less than the worst football coach.

Experience may be a thorough teacher, but no man lives long enough to graduate.

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

"A Sure Way To Avoid A Possible Disaster"

Glenn Colley

The following exchange came across a syndicated newspaper column in February, 1993:

Dear Abby: I must respond to all those holler-than-thou readers who regard unmarried couples who are living together with such contempt.

After dating for three years, Ryan and I moved in together to minimize living expenses. We planned to get married after I graduated from college.

Well, my family practically disowned me when we told them we were living together! (His folks were broad-minded about it).

After Ryan and I had lived together for a year, I found out he had a terrible temper. The day he grabbed me by my blouse and threw me against the wall so hard I thought my shoulder was broken, I walked out on him. I thank God I didn't marry Ryan. What a fix I'd have been in if, after we were married and had a child, I had learned that he was capable of physically abusing me!

Abby, the next man I fall in love with, I will make sure I live with, before making a lifetime commitment.

Living together before marriage may be a "sin," but it's the only way you can really get to know a person.

GLAD I DID IN ST. PAUL, MINN

(Abby's response) DEAR GLAD: I'm glad you did, too. I never thought I would reverse myself on this issue, but I now believe that couples who are serious about marriage should take a few weekend trips together to test their compatibility. (I can't believe I wrote that!)

But Wait!! I want to ask a question: The difference between dating over a period

of time and spending the weekend together is that one doesn't assume sexual intimacy and the other does. Except for sex, what would a few weekend trips show you about someone's personality and temperament that three years of dating would not?

Consider also a serious and common confusion in selection of dating companions. When you date someone enough to consider marriage you need to ask this important question and **BE ABLE TO ANSWER IT.** "What code of ethics governs this person?" Is it the teachings of Christ? Is it whatever achieves his self-pleasure at the time? Is it whatever the Civil law will allow without convicting him of crime? How does this person come to his/her conclusions that some things are right and some wrong? My point is this: Having pre-marital sex with a woman is immoral, and beating a woman is immoral. This woman is impressed with the fact that her fiance is immoral in one area, but devastated that he is immoral in another. She should ask, "What code of ethics governs this man who was raised to believe in at least one form of immoral practice between men and women?" She should also ask herself by what logic she can assume that he will consider other forms of immorality wrong after they are married. Will his code of ethics, which won't prevent him now from living with a woman unmarried, somehow prevent him from an adulterous relationship **AFTER** he's married?

The devil is so cunning. Imagine being able to take something as corrupt and immoral as pre-marital sex and make it look like the right and intelligent thing to

do! Abby, considered the common man's free advisor, now "stands in the way of sinners" (Psalm 1:1). God teaches and commands sexual abstinence before marriage (Galatians 5:19, Hebrews 13:4), and during marriage, marital monogamy until death (Romans 7:2, 3). There's no "hunting ground" in God's revealed will on this subject. God has spoken.

Romans 1:22 says of those like Abby and her 'client,' "Professing themselves to be wise they became fools." They place themselves in the terrifying position of the devil's advocate and spokesman. How many will be further persuaded to commit sin as a result of their encouragement?

It is ironic that this woman who wrote to Abby lives in the city named after the Apostle who by inspiration penned, "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body" (I Corinthians 6:18), and who wrote that those who engage in Lasciviousness, adultery, and fornication will not go to heaven (Galatians 5:19-21). (Thank God that they can repent of these sins, if they will, and be forgiven, Acts 2:38).

Hebrews 13:4 says, "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; But whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Parents, grandparents, and teachers, listen: we must teach our children the truth. If we don't teach them about these matters, we cannot assume that someone else won't teach them the wrong way. Our children are not in a vacuum. Someone will teach them.

Christianity: A Public And Private Life

B. J. Clarke

The life of each Christian is divided between public life and private life. Our goal, whether privately or publicly, ought to be to glorify God and not self. Jesus mandates that we render both public and private exhibitions of our dedication to him.

In Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus addresses our public life. He beckons us to be the salt of the earth. Salt has two basic features: it gives flavor and it preserves. In this sin-cursed world we must give off a flavor of righteousness and seek to preserve its existence as just ten righteous souls could have done for Sodom and Gomorrah. If we don't live the Christian life amidst this crooked and perverse generation then we are like salt that has lost its flavor. We are good for nothing.

Jesus further encourages us to publicly live as a light in the world. We are to provide the contrast to the darkness that already exists. Paul admonished the Philippians to "be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15). The Christian life cannot be lived in isolation or just inside the walls of a church meeting house. It must reach out so that God may be glorified.

Lest we get the idea that the sum total of our service is to be done in public, Jesus tells us later in the sermon on the mount that there must be a

private aspect of our lives as well. We are not to engage in actions of service for the purpose of drawing attention to ourselves. "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them . . . Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and the streets, that they may have glory of men" (Matthew 6:1, 2). The Saviour further notes that prayer should not be done for the purpose of public approval. The private aspect of prayer is dealt with in the words of Jesus in verse 6, "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy father which is in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:6). If one is truly interested in glorifying God and not self, then he will not care about getting personal credit for his actions. Rather he will say, "To God be the glory."

It has been well said that the true barometer of a person's spirituality is discovered, not by examining how he behaves in public when everyone is watching, but in how he behaves in secret when only God is looking. As children of God, let us so live both publicly and privately as to glorify God and praise his name.



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Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith And Works (No. 15)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

This will be our fifteenth and final article on these six strategic terms with which the Bible is so clear and yet are among the most misunderstood words of all Holy Writ.

FAITH AND WORKS:

PROPER PROSPECTIVE

Faith is a work even as set forth in our previous study. To eliminate all works would call for an elimination of faith itself. The right kind of works is demanded and minus such we cannot be saved for a surety.

The truth about the momentous matter is that God does not do for man what man can do for himself. The part of the redemptive plan that man was unable to perform God performed and with perfection and absolute precision. The part that man can do, he must do. God does not do the hearing for us. He provides what we are to hear but we are to do the hearing. He does not do the believing for us. He provides the testimony for our exercise of faith. But we must do our own believing. He does not do our confessing for us. He grants that it may be done. He provides various inducements to spur us on toward the performance of this difficult command, He does no do our confessing for us. He tells us about the One - his only begotten Son -- whom we are to confess before men and which is unto salvation. But we do our own confessing. He does not perform the act of baptizing for us. It is not the Father who goes down into the water in our stead and is immersed for us and for the crediting of such to our account. We are the ones who must be immersed. He does not do our Bible Study for us. He does not do our praying for us. He does not do our soul winning for us. He does not do our church attending for us. He does not add the Christian graces to our lives separate and apart from diligence on our part. He does not do our work, worship, watching and waiting for us. These are

works obligatory upon man. Are these works of the Mosaic Law? No! Are these works devised by man's righteousness? No! Are these works, the performance of which, enable man to boast that he is earning or meriting his own salvation? No!

What type of works are they then? They are THE WORKS OF GOD. They are the works devised in the mind of the infinite God on high and demanded of man on earth. The various commands we obey in our becoming a child of God are the works of God. When we do them we are still saved by the grace of God for a surety. We, in NO sense of the term, earn our remission of sins when we hear the gospel, believe on Christ, repent of our sins, confess fervent faith in God's Son and are immersed beneath the liquid wave into a relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In our worship as Christians in song, sermon, prayer and praise, partaking of the communion and the contribution, we are not earning or meriting our salvation. It is still a matter of God's grace. In our denial of worldly lusts and every vestige of ungodliness we are not meriting salvation. In our living a life of sobriety, righteousness and godliness we are not earning our salvation. It is still a matter of God's glorious grace and marvelous mercy which will save us in heaven at last. Yet his grace only extends spirituality to those who meet the stipulations he has revealed in his word.

That there is absolutely no conflict or disharmony between Biblical faith and the works of God is seen amply in a number of very impressive Scriptures. In Romans 3:27 Paul speaks of "the law of faith." Yet it is not faith only for he spoke of an obedient, availing, working faith in chapters one, six and sixteen of the same epistle. An obedient, availing faith is one that works. In Galatians 5:6 he wrote of the faith that works

by or through faith. In I Thessalonians 1:3 he links work and faith along with a laboring love and patient hope. In Ephesians 2:8 he spoke of their being saved by grace through faith and in the same context spoke of the good works which God hath ordained that we walk in them. If Paul be the author of Hebrews, as I have long believed he was, he gives us the finest picture of faith at work in Hebrews 11 of any place in the Bible. "By faith" and "through faith" occur a number of times. Without exception and uniformly in this great chapter on faith there is contained a verb of action linked loyally and lovingly with faith. By faith Abel offered; Enoch walked with God, Noah moved with fear and built the ark; Abraham obeyed and went out -- not knowing where he was going but he knew with whom he would be traveling; he looked for a city; he offered Isaac; Isaac blessed Esau and Jacob; Jacob blessed Joseph's two sons and worshipped; Moses led Israel out of Egyptian tyranny; they passed through the Red Sea; they compassed the city of Jericho some thirteen times. Each of the foregoing verbs of action is linked with faith. Thus, each "by faith" or "through faith" of this chapter is followed by a verb of action -- a verb indicative of the work they did.

In James 2 this inspired writer said that works of obedience perfect faith. A faith that refuses to work or obey is a dead, barren, fruitless faith. Such will not save trembling demons or passive men. John says in I John 5:4, 5 that faith is the victory that overcomes the world. And it is a working, availing, obedient faith -- not a dead, passive type. Biblical faith demands an obedient faith -- a faith that does what God says do without quibbling.

CONCLUSION

Grace is in harmony with law, love, liberty, faith and

works. Love is in harmony with grace, law, liberty, faith and works. Liberty is in harmony with grace, law, love, faith and works. Works are in harmony with grace, law, love, liberty and works.

Works are in harmony with grace, law, love, liberty and faith. Conflicts only emerge when men tamper with these six terms of Biblical clarity.

--P.O. Box 464, Ripley, TN 38063.

"Is Attendance Necessary?"

Mike Benson

Question:

"A friend of mine recently asked me if it was really necessary to attend church services. He said that he could be just as close to God in a boat on the lake as he could be sitting in a pew on Sunday. I didn't know how to answer him. Could you please comment on this?"

Answer:

While I do not deny the presence of God in nature, I have never met a person completely committed to Him who didn't want to attend all of the services of the church. Anyone who really wants to be close to God will want to assemble with, and be close to, His family.

Attendance is necessary for many reasons. Please consider the following:

1. It is necessary if we are to praise and honor God. Paul commanded, "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). See also Ephesians 5:19.

Our mutual praise is to be directed toward fellow-saints as well as to our heavenly Father. When one chooses not to assemble for worship, he not only fails to teach and encourage fellow saints, but he also fails to give God the proper honor and respect which He deserves.

2. It is necessary if we want to grow spiritually. Peter wrote, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen" (II Peter 3:18). Earlier he had said, "As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (I

Continued On Page 4

"Most Of A Minute"

The other day I got an envelope in the mail with no return address. I listened for ticking and then opened it. It was a single typed sheet that had been photo-copied so many times it was hardly legible. A chain letter. Maybe you've gotten one sometime. It listed what would typically happen to someone who mailed 20 copies to friends: hundreds of thousands of dollars unexpectedly would drop into your lap. If you trashed it, anything was possible from serious car repairs to the loss of your life. The word is "manipulation." It's people making me feel unreasonable pressure to do things I don't want to do. Sometimes what they want is sinful, and our teenagers face this often. Sins like drug abuse, or beverage alcohol consumption, or pre-marital sex, or dishonesty. What we must all remember is that no one can make us do wrong and that we are responsible for our actions. I Corinthians 16:13 says, "... stand fast in the faith, be like men of courage, be strong..."

How To Identify The New Testament Church

W.A. Holley

The New Testament church existed in Apostolic times. John the Baptist taught that it was "at hand" (Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 10:7). "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you," said Jesus (Luke 10:9).

To be "at hand" and to "come nigh" means to be near or close by. This is the way Paul used the expression. He said, "... The time of my departure is at hand" (II Timothy 4:6). Does Paul mean that he was already dead?

The New Testament church was not established during the personal ministry of Jesus Christ. How do we know? Well, Jesus said, "... Upon this rock I will build my church..." (Matthew 16:18-19). "Will build my church" is in the future tense, not the present tense. The New Testament church was established on the 1st Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-42, 47; 11:14-15).

The kingdom of God and the church of Christ are one (Matthew 16:13-19; Ephesians 5:5). In character, kingdom of God is spiritual. We read, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to

the Jews . . ." taught Jesus (John 18:36).

Isaiah 2:1-4 and Micah 4:1-8 are two prophecies of God designed to teach that His church or kingdom would be established in "the last days" (Cf. Hebrews 1:1-2; Acts 2:16-17). Peter says that these scriptures were fulfilled on the 1st Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection. These passages are now fulfilled in Christ and are not to be fulfilled at some future time. We can learn this fact from Hebrews 12:18-28. These Hebrew Christians had come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. Our citizenship is now in heaven, not here on earth (Philippians 3:30). Too, the Colossians, John the apostle, and those to whom he wrote were already in the kingdom (Colossians 1:13-14; Revelation 1:9).

Denominational churches cannot be the New Testament church. Why? Well, denominational churches have different creeds, different names, different plans of salvation, different systems of worship, different orders of government, and different definitions of what genuine Christianity is. In fact, denominationalism is a big bundle of contradictions, hardly agreeing on anything.

Jesus Christ prayed for the

unity of all true believers. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe me through their word; that they may all be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (John 17:20-23).

Friends, as long as denominationalism lives, so-called Christendom can never be united. Divisions and schisms reign supreme. Satan has never had a better tool to divide believers(?) into sects warring against each other. How would Ephesians 4:4-6 fit this scenario? "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all," wrote Paul.

From the foregoing quotation we learn that there are just as many bodies as there are Gods or Lords or Spirits. Your Bible identifies the "body" as the church -- one body, one church (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23; Colossians 1:18, 24).

What are God's criteria for determining the marks of identification with regard to His church? Well, there are four words -- origin, doctrine, practice and name-- which will reveal whether a church is Scriptural or not.

The New Testament church was established in the ancient city of Jerusalem, A.D. 33, on the 1st Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection, at about 9 o'clock, Sunday morning (Acts 2:1-4, 14-17, 22-35, 36-38, 41-42, 47; 11:14-15).

According to some records, we have about 300 different churches in existence today. All of these churches cannot

be scriptural in origin, doctrine, practice and name because they differ in hundreds of ways. Why? Because they wear human names, practice human activities, originated at different times in history, and teach many doctrines not taught in the Holy Bible.

In apostolic times denominational division was unknown. For proof, read any standard Church History.

The law of sowing and reaping can never be set aside (Genesis 1:11-12; Luke 6:44). Whatever a man sows that is what he reaps, physically or spiritually (Galatians 6:7-9; Hosea 8:7).

"The seed is the word of God," said Jesus (Luke 8:11). Jesus preached "the gospel of

the kingdom," and people heard "the word of the kingdom" (Matthew 4:23; 13:19). The pure word of God unmixed with the doctrines and commandments of men produces only Christians and Christians only. The preaching of the word of God only never can produce denominationalism!

The restoration of the New Testament Church requires three things: (1) The sower of God's seed, the word of God, (2) the gospel of Jesus Christ, (3) an honest and sincere hearer (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:36-38; Romans 1:16; Hebrews 5:8-9). These words are written in the interest of truth and righteousness.

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

"Turn To The Lord?"

Mike Benson

Question:

"My Bible class was recently studying Acts chapter 11 on Wednesday night . . . What does it mean to "turn to the Lord" (Acts 11:21)? Please explain."

Answer:

This is a good question. The passage reads, "And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord" (Acts 11:21). Consider:

1. Turning to the Lord is different from believing. Luke said, "a great number believed AND turned to the Lord" (emphasis mine).

2. Turning to the Lord follows repentance. Peter said, "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may

come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19 A.S.V.). See also Acts 9:35.

3. The reference in Acts 11:21 is to baptism. Luke well could have said, "a great number believed and were baptized," for baptism is the turning point at which a person comes to Christ (Galatians 3:27). A parallel passage reads, "The Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. Any many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized" (Acts 18:8). See also Acts 26:18-20.

Study the chart below. Note that the Bible order is 1) belief in Christ, 2) repentance toward Christ, 3) baptism into Christ, then salvation.

Passage	Commands		Promise
Mark 16:16	Believe	Baptism	Salvation
Acts 2:38	Repent	Baptism	Remission Of Sins
Acts 3:19	Repent	Turn	Sins Blotted Out
Acts 9:35	Implied	Turn	Salvation Implied
Acts 11:21	Believe	Turn	Salvation Implied
Acts 18:8	Believe	Baptism	Salvation Implied
Acts 26:18-20	Repent	Turn	Forgiveness Of Sins

"Is Attendance Necessary?"

Continued From Page 3

Peter 2:2). Jesus said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'" (Matthew 4:4). The assembly is a means by which God's children can mature in faith and love. When an individual opts for the lake (or the golf course, or the woods, or the mountains, etc.), rather than for the services of the church, he robs himself of needed spiritual nourishment. Study Matthew 5:6.

3. It is necessary if our brothers and sisters in Christ are to be edified and encouraged. The writer of Hebrews urged, "And let us

consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24-25).

One thing is for sure -- your friend can't edify and encourage members of his own spiritual family when he is absent from the assembly. He may, however, be one of the reasons they feel disheartened and discouraged due to the fact that he is not present when they gather to worship and fellowship.

April 9, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- A Transformation
- "Sleepy Confusion"
- 20/20 Evangelism
- "Somewhere A Child Is Crying" --Sexual Abuse --
 - Till Jesus
- "Most Of A Minute"
- We Are Standing On The Promises Of God
 - Times Change

Volume 29 Number 15
(USPS 691-760)

The Words of Truth

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

e

"A Controlled Temper

Dan Winkler

Will Rogers said, "People who fly into a rage always make a bad landing."

As Christians, we are to "provoke one another unto love and good works" (Hebrews 10:24). We should not be provoked by or stay provoked with one another.

"Where is my pencil?" shouted the executive to his secretary. "It's behind your ear," came her polite reply. Again the executive roared, "You know how busy I am -- which ear?" Sound ridiculous? Indeed, "*wrath is cruel and anger is outrageous*" (Proverbs 27:4).

Someone has suggested, "It is hard to save face when you lose your head!" So, how do we control our temper and keep our anger in check?

(1) First, to control our temper we must not allow that which angers us to consume and control our lives. Paul said, "*Be ye angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath*" (Ephesians 4:26).

(2) Second, to control our temper we must make sure that our attitudes do not open a door and invite the devil into our hearts. Paul continued his thoughts on anger by saying, "*Neither give place to the devil*" (Ephesians 4:27).

(3) Third, to control our temper we must replace bitterness with brotherly love. Again, Paul carried out the above mentioned context

with the words, "*Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger . . . be put away from you with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another*" (Ephesians 4:31, 32).

(4) Fourth, to control our

Betty Burton Choate

What does it really mean to be a wife? Young girls look toward the day of marriage with thrills and excitement. They have planned long toward that one particular day, with their parents. In many cases they have saved money and bought household things, carefully packing them away, waiting for that special day to come. All of the attention seems to be focused on that one day and that all-important word: marriage.

But what about "after the marriage"? What does it really mean to be a wife?

If the marriage is a "love marriage" it means the continuation of growing together, of developing a deeper love and a more complete knowledge of each other. Faults and weaknesses will be discovered that were not readily seen before.

In some cultures where there is an arranged marriage, the challenges are even greater because often the bride has suddenly become the wife of a stranger and member of a

temper we must work on imitating God in all things, even our anger. "*Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children*" (Ephesians 5:1). Note the pivot term "*therefore,*" joining this thought of following God to Paul's previous context of controlling one's anger. To

To Be A Wife

family entirely new to her. If she is happy about the marriage she will probably have a positive attitude and the couple will begin from the first day to build a good life together.

But for either type of bride, there are specific instructions in the scriptures for her guidance: The older women are encouraged to teach ". . . the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands . . ." (Titus 2:4, 5).

Ephesians 5:22, 23 gives instructions to wives: "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church . . ."

It is a wonderful thing that a woman is to be loved and protected and cared for by her husband. Verses 25-31 of Ephesians 5 teaches husbands to ". . . love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it . . . So husbands ought to love their

control our temper we should be angry only at that which angers God and only in the way God is angry.

The warning is clear: "*Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools*" (Ecclesiastes 7:9). Remember, "*He that hath no rule over*

his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls" (Proverbs 25:28). On the contrary, "*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city*" (Proverbs 16:32). Isn't that great?!

own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it. . . For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

If a woman truly loves her husband, or learns to love him, she will grow in all of the other areas of being a wife. In this scripture, the meaning of the word "love" is not the twittery excited feeling of emotional attraction, but rather it is the kind of love that seeks always what is best for the one who is loved. When a woman has this type of love, she will be conscientious about looking after her husband's needs. She will be aware of what makes him happy and she will try to please him. She will take the greatest care of his home, his children, his possessions, in order to show her love.

A woman who loves her husband will encourage him to talk of his work, his

associates, and his thoughts, so that she can share in all parts of his life. I Corinthians 7:3-5 says, "Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body but his wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self control."

So, it is the wife's privilege and responsibility to love her husband and, in loving him, to look after his physical, mental, and emotional needs. She no longer belongs to herself, or her family, but to her husband, and her husband belongs to her. Together they must work to develop the pure and beautiful and selfless oneness God planned in marriage.

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

A Transformation

Glenn Colley

Christians and suffering. One who thinks believers are somehow immune to suffering hasn't read the Bible and hasn't observed the lives of Christians. We aren't immune. We will all face times of crisis sometimes in our days. Some of you are in the grips of suffering right now.

Very often in my work I have observed an interesting transformation take place in Christians who suffer. It's an attitude. Here is a man who is a lukewarm Christian, who isn't too involved in the work of the church, who attends only one-half of our worship assemblies, and who spends little time in prayer or Bible study. One day he feels the chilly breath of death blow across his face, but he survives. See the change!

Now, he wouldn't think of forsaking the assembly. Worship is now a meaningful exercise of his faith, and he doesn't pay attention to his watch during the service. The Bible seems to be a magnet pulling him to study. His prayers become frequent and rich with deep petitions of the heart. His voice, once used for petty, private griping and complaining, is now used to encourage and exhort brothers and sisters. Suffering matured his heart.

When the apostle Peter wrote to early Christians in I Peter 1:6-7, he knew he was addressing people who suffered. Many of these folks suffered simply because they were Christians. Here's what he said, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in

heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

Peter, by inspiration, says that just as gold is purified by the heat of the fire, our souls can be purified by the heat of trials. Imagine what a wonderful challenge is before us who aren't facing a time of suffering, to have the kind of compelling thirst for righteousness as those who are. We don't have to face suffering to develop the same fervency of spirit. Let's all make the decision to be totally committed to Him for today and for all time. Let's love Him with all our heart, soul, strength and mind.

"Sleepy Confusion"

Dale Jenkins

Perhaps you heard the story a couple of weeks ago. It was one of those cute little stories they put on as trailers at the end of newscasts. Just about all the major news outlets picked it up. Vickie Childress of Florida was having an asthma attack in the middle of the night. She reached under her pillow to get her "breather" for some relief. The breather was not the only item under her pillow. For protection she also kept a gun there. You guessed it -- she got the wrong item, pulled the trigger and shot herself in the face. The commentator closed with the note that she was to be getting out of the hospital that day. And that her asthma problem was cured.

When the interview microphone finally found the embarrassed Ms. Childress she attributed the accidents to "sleepy confusion." I've kept that little story in the walls of my computer for several weeks now, knowing that there must be some spiritual lessons we can learn from it, so here they are.

Sometimes I view the "goings on" within some churches and shake my head

in disappointment or disgust. Churches who allow visitors to go unnoticed, and make void the opportunity to impact their souls. Churches who in their sleepiness allow false teaching to go unchecked. Churches who keep vain traditions and ignore the Word. Churches who in sleepy confusion are more interested in fighting each other and shooting their own faces off than in reaching the world with the gospel and in watching for the Lord's return.

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Romans 13:11). Churches who in sleepy confusion forfeit their ministry to a world hungering for Jesus, looking only inwardly, and become empty monuments to the sleep of death. "Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death" (Psalms 13:3).

Let us become increasingly mindful of Paul's warning: "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (I Thessalonians 5:6).

20/20 Evangelism

B. J. Clarke

In Acts 20:20, Paul gives a recipe for 20/20 evangelism. 20/20 vision is the best kind of vision one can have. Likewise, 20/20 evangelism is the best kind of evangelism for the Lord's church to practice. Hear the words of the apostle as they are recorded by Luke: "And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house." Let us briefly analyze this passage.

"And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you . . ."

Paul preached everything that pertained to life and godliness unto them. He wasn't afraid to teach them the truth, even if it might hurt

their feelings. Paul kept nothing back that was profitable for them to hear. Evangelism in the 20th century must follow this same pattern. Remember the words that Paul wrote to Timothy: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is PROFITABLE for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16, 17). If we are to follow the pattern set forth by Paul, we must preach all Scripture to all people, because all Scripture is profitable for the things that are listed in II Timothy 3:16, 17. If we preach just doctrine and no reproof or correction, we are holding back things

that are profitable, and we are failing to declare the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). This is sin and it is not 20/20 evangelism. We must preach the word in season, out of season; when they like it and when they don't. This involves reproof and exhortation with all longsuffering and doctrine (II Timothy 4:2). It is easy to contrast Paul with many men in the pulpit today who never rebuke sin except at a long distance. Modern preachers are holding back profitable words of exhortation for fear that they might not be popular with the members of the congregation. Preachers need to read Galatians 1:8-10 to set some priorities straight. Let us speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) and remember Galatians 4:16

when people frown at us for doing so.

"And taught you publicly and from house to house."

Paul's teaching fell into two categories: (1) public proclamation of the truth and

(2) evangelism from house to house. Paul pointed out that in the true apostolic method of evangelizing a community and edifying a congregation, diligent work from house to

Continued On Page 4



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"Somewhere A Child Is Crying" --Sexual Abuse--

Allen Webster

Children are to be cherished. Sons are to be treated with respect and daughters with dignity. What is happening to some children today, though, would be shameful treatment for animals. Although it is distasteful to discuss, Christians must not bury their heads and ignore what is happening. It is shocking, but one in every three girls and one of ten boys in Canada is sexually molested before age 18. Are we following our northern neighbor into perdition?

WHO MOLESTS? First, there are *outside molesters*. Parents must protect little ones (I Timothy 5:8), so they need to be observant. Nearly every community has such child abusers. These perverts may be male or female, homosexual or heterosexual. They often seek jobs that give them access to children in day care centers, schools and youth organizations.

We do not want to be paranoid and suspect everyone who fills these posts, nor can we be naive and allow children to be hurt. Talk to your children and make them aware that such can happen. Warn them to avoid such people, to reject their overtures and to report to you immediately when such happens (Waddey).

Second, there are *inside molesters*. More than 85 percent of abusers are known to their victims. Many are family members (which is incest). There were sixty-six thousand arrests for "offenses against family and children" in 1990 (FBI estimate). Nearly sixteen percent of child abuse cases are for "sexual maltreatment" (*National Study on Child Neglect and Abuse Reporting*). This only includes those which are reported; the greater number is not.

God laid a curse upon the man who engaged his near relatives (Deuteronomy 27:20, 22). Some offenders may be emotionally sick. Others are morally decadent and disgustingly evil. Every scripture that forbids

fornication condemns sexual abuse of children (Romans 13:9) (Waddey). "Ye shall not afflict any . . . fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless" (Exodus 22:22-24). Guard your heart, and guard your children.

WHAT CAUSES IT? First, child sexual abuse is attributed to a general decline of public morality. The boundaries of right and wrong have not only faded, but disappeared. Adultery long ago ceased to be wrong (cf. Hebrews 13:4). Modesty is old-fashioned (cf. I Timothy 2:9). Homosexuality is in vogue (cf. Romans 1:18-32). It is no longer wrong to kill a child (as long as it is in the womb), so why should it be wrong to abuse one?

Second, pornography attributes to sexual abuse. Police report that almost without exception pornography is found in the homes of molesters (much of it is child pornography). These go hand in hand. Desires aroused sinfully find expression in sinful behavior. It is a downward spiral. The Bible says to think pure thoughts (Philippians 4:8) and forbids looking on another to lust (Matthew 5:28).

Third, incest is more likely to occur with non-blood relatives living in a home. In many refuges, a large percentage of teenage girls have been raped by step-fathers or mothers' boyfriends. When one marries, bears children, then divorces, remarries (or moves in with another), there are those living under the same roof who are not blood relatives. Though a despicable crime, and incestuous, sexual abuse is more likely to happen than when families stay together.

Fourth, mothers leaving children for the work place has attributed to such cases. Soviet Albert Likhanov said that contributing to child

neglect are "spiraling divorce rates, young mothers abandoning their infants and a long-standing practice of giving higher priority to work than to the home" (Zhorne). Much abuse occurs in places where children would not be if mothers were with them.

The Bible still says, "That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:5). This does not mean that she must stay at home all the time, but it does mean that her first responsibility is to be a good mother and wife.

One must remember that our God-given duties as parents are not to be shirked. If a mother is secularly employed and feels that she is not fulfilling her duties at home, she should reconsider the decision to enter the marketplace. After all, two-income families often become so accustomed to the extra money that they become blind to the repercussions (Vega). If a child spends eight or nine hours a day in a day-care facility, for practical purposes parental responsibilities have been delegated to a stranger for most of the waking hours. God does not accept delegation (Ephesians 6:4).

RESULTS. Over half of young runaways are victims of sexual abuse. It may surprise them to find problems are not usually solved by fleeing home. Invariably, they exchange one set of difficulties for another, sometimes even making things worse. Usually the first to greet them at bus stations are not Christians, counselors or psychologists, but drug dealers, pimps and pornographers. One in three is lured into prostitution within 48 hours of leaving home.

Sexually abused children often have problems trusting others. Trust is not an innate characteristic of human beings, but must be learned.

An abused child does not learn to trust his parents and believes that people in general are not dependable. He learns to deal with his problems alone. The child does not learn to feel good about himself, establish strong relationships with others, develop a sense of humor, or learn how to play (North).

Victimized children need to be told that God is not angry with them (Matthew 18:10). He loves them (Mark 10:14).

He wants them to grow up to be His children and put the past behind them (Philippians 3:13). They need to break the cycle with their children (most abusers were abused as children), but they are not responsible for their father's sins (Ezekiel 18:4, 20).

Child abusers can be forgiven. They need to repent of their wickedness and be baptized to have their guilt removed (Luke 13:3; Acts 22:16). This abuse must stop!

Till Jesus

Cindy Colley

No offering for sin, no day at life's end,
No victory to win . . . till Jesus.
No light in the night, no strength for the fight,
No plan for my plight . . . till Jesus.
No redemption story, no Bethlehem glory,
No empty grave, no power to save,
No gospel for taking to all of the nations,
No people of God for sanctification,
No song for the angels, no purpose, no peace,
No rest for the soul . . . for its guilt, no release.
No Shepherd leading, no one interceding
No self sacrifice, no pearl of great price.
No Saviour slain, no blessing in pain,
No heaven to gain . . . till Jesus.
No crosses to bear, no comfort in prayer,
No crown to wear . . . till Jesus.

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

I heard of a family reunion recently that disturbed me. For the most part it was a pretty common affair -- a picnic in the park . . . potato salad . . . fried chicken . . . learning new baby's names . . . hugging and kissing and laughing at "do you remember when" stories.

The brothers and sisters in the family were in the golden years. One was 88, another 65, and the others fell in between. What saddened me was that one sister didn't show up. Oh, she wasn't dead . . . she wasn't even sick. She was home nursing an old grudge. Some year she felt wronged by the others, and now she sits in her living room with the invitation wadded up in the trash can.

Listen: A forgiving spirit is not only a good feeling. It's a necessary characteristic if you and I are going to please our God. Next time someone says to you, "I'm sorry," you quickly assure them that all is forgiven. Jesus said, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you . . ." (Matthew 6:14).

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We Are Standing On The Promises Of God

Elwood Holt

God will do what he said! This is a cardinal truth of the Bible. Men may deceive you, lie and break their word; but God will not. We are often disappointed when one we trust breaks his word. But God will do just as He has promised. Peter wrote in II Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise." In Hebrews 10:23, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; he is faithful that promised." Men may promise to pay a debt, then ignore it; wedding vows are often broken; solemn agreements are violated almost daily with some. But God is faithful. He keeps His promise.

Many of God's promises are unconditional: that is, there is no condition for man to meet in order for the promise to be kept. He promised a saviour would come (Jeremiah 23:6; Isaiah 19:20, etc.); and we read in Acts 12:23, "God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus." The dual promise of Hebrews 9:27 is unconditional: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this

the judgement." There are many other such promises of God. But many of His promises are conditional promises: that is, there are conditions man must meet in order to receive the promise. In Hebrews 3 the writer refers to the promise God made to the Israelites that they would be given the land of Canaan. But then is stated, "They were not able to enter in because of unbelief" (3:18). God made the promise the land would be theirs, but there were conditions they were to meet. The warning is then given us two verses later: "Let us fear, therefore, lest a promise being left of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." The fact that "the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men" does not mean all men will be saved. There are conditions stated that must be met (Titus 2:11, 12).

The blessings of the gospel are all based on learning the truth. In John 8:32 Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Ignorance of what is right will not excuse or save (Acts 17:30). Only the truth can

make men free, and then only if it is known and obeyed. This is why the Lord said, "and they shall all be taught of God. Everyone that hath heard from the Father and hath learned, cometh unto me" (John 6:45). Only by "hearing and learning" the truth is freedom possible. The known truth makes men free.

But what is truth? In His prayer John 17:17, Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them with the truth: thy word is truth." The tragedy of modern society is the cry for freedom, while the source of freedom is ignored. There are still those such as Peter discussed in II Peter 2:18, 19: "They allure through the lusts of the flesh . . . while they promise them liberty, they themselves are the bond servants of corruption." Anyone who leaves God out of his life is not really free. It is God's truth that makes us free. Nothing else can do it.

Another promise with conditions concerns our growth and strength in Christ. Paul exhorts us to be "strong in the Lord" (Ephesians 6:10). And his statement in Philippians 4:13 is this: "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." We are told in II Peter 3:18, "Grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." All Christians want to "grow up in all things into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Ephesians 4). But how do we grow? The answer is found in the passage of II Peter 3:18: we grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

There is no shortcut to spiritual maturity. If we would "grow up" in Him, it will not be with tongue-speaking or direct operation of the Holy Spirit. We will grow up as we study God's word; and our growth rate will closely parallel our rate of increase in Bible knowledge. "Study to

show thyself approved unto God . . . handling aright the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). Peter tells us "Long for the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby" (I Peter 2:2). Paul shows that the more knowledge of Christ we gain, the more like Him we become. He speaks of us looking into God's word as into a mirror (II Corinthians

3:18), then adds: "Beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, we are transformed into the same image from glory to glory." If you truly want to grow up in Christ, then study His word and become like Him.

"YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."

Times Change

Ron Stough

In 1787, Benjamin Franklin made a speech to the framers of the Constitution for the United States. Among other things he said: "In the beginning of the contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for the Divine protection. Our prayers, Sir, were heard, and they were graciously answered. And have we now forgotten this powerful Friend? Or do we imagine we no longer need his assistance? If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured, Sir, in the sacred writings, that 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.' I therefore beg leave to move that henceforth prayers, imploring the assistance of Heaven and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business. . ."

Compare that speech with

the present efforts to take away the words "under God," and "in God we trust." Compare Benjamin Franklin's thoughts with the removal of prayer from our schools and public assemblies.

The Bible speaks of several men who attempted to build without the Lord's help. The men in the plain of Shinar said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves" (Genesis 11:4). The Lord said, "Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other" (Genesis 11:7). The foolish builder who built his house on the ground without a foundation found it in ruins (Luke 6:46-49). The rich fool made great plans for bigger and better barns, but never lived to see them through (Luke 12:16-21).

Benjamin Franklin had the right idea. Let's pray that our present day leaders will arrive at the same conclusion.

--Duncan, OK.

20/20

Evangelism

Continued From Page 2

house was on a par with that in the pulpit. Such is not the case in many of our congregations today. People expect pulpit preaching to produce miracle growth. This is not 20/20 evangelism. Acts 5:42 tells us that first century Christians never ceased to teach and to preach Jesus Christ at the temple AND AT HOME. If we are to succeed at 20/20 evangelism we must work from house to house. If we are going to stress a

restoration of New Testament Christianity in the 20th century then we must restore the spirit of New Testament evangelism. Anything less is hypocritical, imperfect and not 20/20 evangelism. Brothers and sisters, spread the glad news. Don't hold back anything profitable and teach both publicly and privately. Let's practice 20/20 evangelism as Paul prescribes in Acts 20:20!!

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April 16, 1993

See Inside Articles:

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- "Providentially Hindered"
- Laboring Lessons From Life
 - The Secret To Church Growth
- "Most Of A Minute"
- Our Mutual Love
- Our Obligation To Truth
 - Mary

Volume 29 Number 16
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The Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak words of truth and soberness." -- Acts 16:18

"Words & Ideas"

Dan Jenkins

The results of the Bible claim that it is given by the inspiration of God (II Timothy 3:16, 17), are far reaching. It means that both the Old Testament and the New Testament are inspired. It means that every one of the sixty-six books is inspired. It means that every one of its 1189 chapters is inspired. It means that every one of its 31,173 verses is inspired. It means that every one of its words (over 700,000) is inspired of God. Paul says that the truth given to him was given in *words* taught by the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 2:13).

The fact that every word was specifically chosen by God is why Jesus could look at one *word* used in Psalm 82:6 to justify Himself being called the son of God (John 10:31-36). This is why Paul could argue that the *number* (whether singular or plural) used in one verse in the Old Testament, could prove Jesus was the very one God promised as the seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:16). The finest illustration of the importance of every word in the Bible is that Jesus affirmed that as a important doctrine as the resurrection of the dead can be decided upon whether the *tense* of one word in Exodus 3:6 was present or past (Matthew 22:31, 32).

Consider also that words are the symbols of ideas. It may

be possible for you to think without words (I'll leave that one up to the experts), but you cannot convey your ideas to me without words. When you conceive an idea and want me to understand your thoughts, you do so by carefully selecting the precise words, putting them together in the proper sequence, and giving them to me. The same is true inspiration and revelation. God's method of conveying His ideas to us was that He chose the exact words, put them together in the proper sequence, and gave them to us through inspired men.

This is why we must use Biblical words to describe God's will for us. Paul was not ashamed of the gospel. He understood that by preaching the Bible he was employing the power of God to save (Romans 1:14-16). The use of "book, chapter, and verse preaching" is God's way for us to use His power. Every preacher must remember he has no right to present sermon lessons filled with "I think" or "It seems to me," or "Leading authorities agree." Paul says, "Preach the word . . ." (II Timothy 4:2), and we have no right to do otherwise.

A matter which must be considered carefully is that an absence of Biblical words to describe a concept is good evidence that the idea itself is not Biblical. I can describe the Lord's Supper, baptism, elders, singing, teaching the

lost, withdrawing fellowship, etc. using Bible words. Biblical authority is given in Biblical words. If I cannot find Biblical words to describe what I am doing, I do not have a Biblical authority to do it. If I cannot find Bible

David Courington

An underlying thankful heart should be at the core of every person. It is sad that such is not the case. Paul said of the Romans, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified [him] not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened (Romans 1:21). This is a description of many today. They do not recognize God and what he has done for man. This is a description of the end of what might begin as a simple failure of men to count their blessings and thank God for them.

We need to have a heart filled with thanks to God for every blessing that we receive (See James 1:17, Ephesians 5:20). The thankful heart should be our motivation in worshiping and serving God.

Every gift that we give should have a thankful heart behind it. I Chronicles 29 shows the great generosity of the Israelites as they gave to build the temple. Verse 13

words to describe what I believe I do not have a Bible idea. A failure to understand this principle results in the denominational maze of our day and, in the Lord's church, division between brethren.

Words are wonderful. God's

words are even more wonderful for they are precisely chosen to express eternal truths. Do you have Bible words for all the ideas you believe or practice?

--1111 36th Street, West Palm Beach, FL 33407.

A Thankful Heart

says "Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name (I Chronicles 29:13).

Behind every song we sing there should be a thankful heart. Psalms 69:30 says, "I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving."

Every request made in prayer should be from a thankful heart. It is well stated in Philippians 4:6, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

When we partake of the Lord's supper upon the first day of the week, our hearts should overflow with a sincere thanks for what Christ

has provided for us (See I Corinthians 11:24-25).

Each sermon preached should find behind it a preacher with a thankful heart for the opportunity to share the gospel with others. Paul had such an attitude as shown in his letter to Timothy, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;" (I Timothy 1:12). There should also be those listening who are thankful for the opportunities provided by the gospel of Christ.

In fact, every hour of every day should find the heart of every man thankful to God for his numberless benefits.

--P.O. Box 160, Mulga, AL 35118.

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

I'm Just About Jesus

Glenn Colley

It is to me an unhappy circumstance when a brother or sister makes a statement with this sentiment: "I'm not concerned with doctrine, I'm just about Jesus." Hearing some people talk, you would think that Jesus tip-toed around every difficult issue of the day. They speak as if they know a Jesus not found in the Bible, but found only in their emotions -- one without laws, or backbone, or demands. They make other people think that if we have an emotional attachment to the Lord and to other people, then doctrine (teaching) is an irrelevancy reserved only for the "traditionalist/fundamentalist/legalist."

Don't leave the Jesus of the Bible!

Tradition means, "... some-thing handed down from the past; an inherited culture, attitude, etc. . . ." Sometimes people who hold a particular view about marriage, divorce, and remarriage are considered "traditionalists." Note how Jesus responded to questions on this doctrinal subject, which even in the first century was controversial: "Have ye not read, that he which made them male and female, and said, 'For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh?'. . . And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife except it be for fornication, and shall marry another,

committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matthew 19:4-9). Jesus taught in favor of the traditional home. Traditions dating back to the garden of Eden. What was Jesus, if not a "Traditionalist"?

Fundamental means, "of or relating to the foundation; basic; essential. A principle, law, or article, which serves as the ground work of a system; essential part." Sometimes those of us who maintain the inspiration and authority of the Bible are criticized by those who would call us "fundamentalists." Consider Jesus: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall never pass away." "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my word, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (Matthew 24:35, John 12:48) I submit to you that the Jesus of the Bible was a fundamentalist.

Legal means, "Of, relating to, or based on, law . . ." Sometimes Christians who believe we are under a spiritual law today, the "Law of Christ," and believe people ought to be taught right from wrong based on that law, are called "Legalists." But notice that Jesus said in Matthew 7:21-23, "Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?

And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Now, does that sound to you like someone who is not concerned with a law of right and wrong? Sometimes people who believe we should worship according to the New Testament pattern are called legalists. Consider Jesus: "God is spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit AND TRUTH." (John 4:24 emphasis mine, GC) If "Legalist" means "one who is concerned with things being done according to a law," then Jesus was a legalist.

None of these three terms, as defined by Webster, tarnish the shining reality of Christ's grace and mercy. They do represent a stinging rebuke to those who have manufactured an atmosphere of "Jesus without doctrine." To walk in His light I must walk the path He walks (I John 1:7). I must take His yoke upon me, and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly in heart, and I will find rest to my soul. His yoke is easy, His burden is light (Matthew 11:28, 29).

The next time someone tells you that Christians who discuss issues and are conservative just don't know Jesus, ask them to check and make sure they are talking about the Jesus of the New Testament.

"Providentially Hindered"

Tommy L. Blewett

On the morning of Sunday, March 14, the only sound heard in many church buildings was that of the heating system. The buildings were warm, clean, and ready to receive worshippers, but no one was there. The same was true on Sunday night. The blizzard of '93, reported as the worst to hit some areas in over 100 years, made it impossible for us to attend. For those who love the Lord it was a day of disappointment. For others, it was an excused absence. After all, what harm was done?

To begin with, we weren't able to assemble as the church is commanded to do (Hebrews 10:25). Praising God in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs was not done (Ephesians 5:19). We did not enjoy the blessing of praying together, giving thanks to God and making known our heartfelt needs and concerns as we cast our cares on Him (I Peter 5:7). We did not observe the memorial of the body and blood of Christ that was sacrificed on the cross (I Corinthians 11:23-30). And, we did not give as God had caused us to prosper (I Corinthians 16:1, 2).

In addition, we did not benefit from Bible class lessons and discussions. Memory verses were not quoted. Questions about the lesson text were not answered. Sermons were not preached.

Believers were not strengthened in faith. Sinners did not repent. Souls were not converted. We did not bring a visitor or share a ride with a member. We did not enjoy the fellowship of our brethren, nor did we learn of opportunities to help them with their needs and share their sorrows or joys (Galatians 6:2). We stayed home.

The laws of nature that resulted in the blizzard of '93 were established by God (Genesis 8:22). Did God desire that we not be able to assemble on March 14? No, not any more than He desired that many people would be killed as a result of it. Blizzards, hurricanes, earthquakes, and summer rains are part of life in God's creation. They serve as reminders that there are some things over which we have absolutely no control. Furthermore, we experience both good and bad circumstances as opportunities for us to show ourselves faithful.

Sometimes, God's blessings are allowed to control us and we begin to love and trust in them rather than the One who gave them to us. At other times, disappointment and heartache causes us to turn our back on God. But, in the heart of the faithful, blessings are enjoyed with proper stewardship and thanksgiving. Disappointment and heartache serve to make us more aware

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The Words Of Truth

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Laboring Lessons From Life

Neal Pollard

Writing from a prison cell from which he would never be freed, the great apostle Paul wrote young Timothy out of the vast background of his own experience. His incarceration was brought about because of his tireless efforts to preach Christ. Paul was a qualified preacher of the gospel because of his great knowledge of God's word. Paul was a qualified soul winner because he knew how to work for the Lord. Paul can be considered an expert on hard work and dedication, for he felt the cause of Christ to be one for which to live and to die. Notice the lessons from life Paul taught young Timothy.

THE SOLDIER MUST FOCUS ON HIS LABORS (II Timothy 2:3-4). Paul knew that he was serving as a soldier of Christ. In Ephesians 6, he mentioned all the spiritual equipment he utilized in fighting against the devil's worldliness and wiles. Paul was equipped for the battle! He knew that there was a difference between a soldier and a good soldier (2:3). The good soldier is distinguished for enduring hardship. He does not go AWOL. Paul told Timothy in II Timothy 4:5 that he would have to endure afflictions, as the battle in which the Christian is engaged is intense. So many

today, as ever, are taking the route of least resistance, and they are walking headfirst into the land-mine of spiritual death. Perhaps the apostate and alien sinner has a problem focusing on the reality of the battle. The soldier of Christ must labor to remain faithful (Revelation 2:10), win others (John 4:35), and uphold truth (cf. Ephesians 5:11). Paul emphasized the militancy involved in Christianity because the Christian soldier is enlisted in the most important war this side of eternity.

THE ATHLETE MUST ENDURE IN HIS LABORS (II Timothy 2:5). We cannot know whether or not Paul was an athlete, yet we find him referring to "the masteries" often in his writing. Paul lived in an era when endurance was the crowning quality of the competitor. However, Paul stresses an endurance which is complimented by fair-play. In fact, the endurance is not rewarded unless the rules are obeyed. The Christian strives for the prize under an unchanging gospel. Paul equates the Christian with the athlete because both must be temperate in all things to receive the incorruptible prize (I Corinthians 9:25-27), both must run with patience (Hebrews 12:1), and both have a joy and crown for their victory (Hebrews 12:2). The

athlete trains to get in the proper condition; the Christian prepares for his race through knowing the road map (Psalm 119:105) and following the prescribed regimen of our Lord (cf. Mark 16:15).

THE FARMER FINDS REWARD FOR HIS LABORS (II Timothy 2:6). Paul wanted Timothy to know that there was a reward for the faithful. Christ promised the reward. However, the reward comes to the one that labors.

There must be seed planted before the harvest. Sometimes, the growth is slow and undeterminable. Paul knew the Christian must first work, then partake of the spiritual benefits. The church cannot expect magical growth. Genuine growth without the toil of sowing and watering will not happen!

What were the lessons Paul taught Timothy? First, the distracted soldier does not live to see the end of the battle

Second, the rule-breaking runner has no prize to show for his entrance into the race. Third, the lazy farmer will yield a poor crop. The Christian must imitate the qualities Paul lifted up in the lives of the good soldier, the sound athlete, and the faithful farmer.

--P.O. Box 15, Livingston, AL 35470.

The Secret To Church Growth

B. J. Clarke

The secret to church growth is really no secret. It is plainly revealed within the pages of God's word. You don't have to travel hundreds of miles to a soul-winning workshop to unlock the secret of church growth. You don't have to travel to the bookstore to purchase the latest volume written to reveal the mystery of church growth. Just travel over to the bookcase, pull down your copy of the sacred writings, open it to the New Testament and start reading.

Read of the life and ministry of Jesus. Read of how Jesus preached peace and went about doing good (John 16:33; Acts 10:38). Read of how he demonstrated his love for the lost (Mark 10:21; John 15:13). Read of how he spoke the truth in love without ever compromising (Matthew 15:3-14). Read of the Jerusalem church and their common love for Christ and one another (Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-37). Read of how the first century Christians went everywhere preaching the word (Acts 8:4).

Read of the tremendous sacrifices endured by the Apostle Paul so that the cause of Christ might be advanced (II Corinthians 11:23-28). Note the duties and qualifications of elders and deacons (I Timothy 3:1-13). Read the epistles to understand God's will for each member of the Lord's body. After you've read and read and read some more, read

Revelation 1:3 to learn that just reading is not enough. We must read and then live out that which we have read.

What is the secret of church growth? When preachers speak the truth in love, (Ephesians 4:15) and reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long suffering, (II Timothy 4:2) the church will grow. When elders shepherd the flock properly under the direction of the Chief

Shepherd (I Peter 5:1-4), the church will grow. When deacons serve well, it will be well with them and the growth of the church (I Timothy 3:13; Acts 6:1-7). When each member seeks to live like Christ and to love like Christ, the church will grow. Simply put, the church will grow when every part of the body does its share (Ephesians 4:16). This is God's plan and it will not fail!

"Providentially Hindered"

Continued From Page 2

of the vanity of our earthly existence and our need to turn to Him. In both good and bad circumstances faith should increase and God should be glorified.

Many congregations across the country could not assemble on March 14. This provided us with an opportunity to test our faith. Did we go through the rest of the week thinking that

something was missing? Did this absence increase our appreciation of the blessings found in worship? Or, were we happy about being "providentially hindered?" If we find ourselves struggling with these questions there is a simple way to get at the truth. If it was possible for us to assemble and worship on March 21 was our seat still empty?

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

There are at least three things that are typical of every Spring that I can remember: fluctuating temperatures; an awakening plant life and -- yard sales.

This, friends, is plain ole Americana -- and what a great idea! You retrieve things that the years have made quite useless to your life. Many folks sell all of these things they can and simply dispose of the rest.

Now, here's a spiritual application. Often our lives need an attitude "yard sale." Are there things in your life that you'd like to get rid of? Philippians 4:13 says that through Christ you can do it! And in I Corinthians 6 folks who were guilty of fornication, adultery, stealing, drunkenness and unrighteousness were washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. You, too, can be baptized into Christ for the remission of your sins -- and get rid of some things.

**Great minds
discuss ideas.
Average minds
discuss events.
Small minds discuss
people.**

Our Mutual Love

[Editor's note: The late bro. Nichols wrote this beautiful piece and distributed it "to be read at weddings." This is a fine example of his poetic pen.]

Gus Nichols

I love you! I love you because your heart is so much like my own, that my greatest need and joy in life is to ever have you by my side.

I love you because your high ideals match, and even surpass my own; and you have been able to look down deep into my heart and discover lovely virtues which you have cultivated and strengthened.

I love you because you love me, and our mutual trust and admiration rests upon the sincerity and purity of our hearts, rather than upon some imaginary -- sinless perfection.

I love you because you are the inspiration which I need, and because your countenance drives away gloom and darkness, like the light of the morning sun.

I love you because your presence always makes me very happy, and your voice, to my ear, is sweeter than the melody of song.

I love you because your natural goodness, and lovely spirit are more than enough to enrich my life, and to make my days brighter, and burdens lighter, as we shall walk together toward that land of eternal day.

I love you because you have already made me very happy, and enriched my life with a joy which only you could impart. And you have done it without an effort, and without a word, by being your own lovely self.

In a word, I love you because you are YOU, and because God drew us to each other, and brought us to this hour, and to this altar, where we, like two rippling rivers, are to become united, each losing itself in the other, to ever afterward flow on together toward a silvery sea of a glorious eternity.

And I love you now, more

than ever before, because I am now to take you to be with me, and to be mine, to live in my heart, and in my life, to be a part of me, and of all that I am, or ever hope to become, as long as we both shall live in

this beautiful, wonderful world.

We are now to become one flesh, one heart and one soul; the stream of our life ever deepening and widening to the enrichment of that nobler life,

which we, together, are to make more abundant and sweet for ourselves.

Only God could know all the reasons why I love you; but since you are giving me the

rest of your life, may I just say now, WITH ALL MY HEART I LOVE YOU, AND THEN SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE PROVING I DO!

Our Obligation To Truth

James D. Burns

"... truth came by Jesus Christ... when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth... thy word is truth" (John 1:17; 16:13; 17:17).

Since there is such a thing as truth, and since spiritual truth has been revealed to us in the word of God, what is our obligation to it?

Love it. Paul speaks of some who "received not the love of the truth, and, as a consequence, believed a lie and will be damned (II Thessalonians 2:10-12).

Seek it. "Buy the truth and sell it not" says Proverbs 23:23. We are to "desire the sincere milk of the word" (I Peter 2:1).

Distinguish it from error. Not all things put forth are truth. We must "prove all things" (I Thessalonians 5:21). John urges, "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, for many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1).

Know it. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

Believe it. Truth is believable. "He that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). We believe it because it has been proven reliable and because it is from God.

Obey it. Truth includes commands to be obeyed. "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth" (I Peter 1:22). Vengeance awaits those who "obey not the gospel" (II Thessalonians 1:8).

Teach it. Truth spreads when it's taught. Paul told Timothy, "And the things that thou hast heard of me

among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2).

Winfred Clark

If you were to read the first chapter of the book of Luke you would find the name of Mary appearing eight times. You would recognize her as the woman who would become the mother of our Lord. That is a fact that would affect the lives of all of us. She becomes a central figure in God's effort to save the soul of men. She becomes the woman of Genesis 3:15. She is the virgin of Isaiah 7:13. She is the woman of which Paul would later speak (Galatians 4:4).

1. LOOK AT THE FACTS THAT WERE REVEALED TO HER. "And the angel said unto her, Fear not Mary; for thou hast found favor with God, Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus" (Luke 1:30-31). What a privilege this must have been for her to realize the tremendous thing that was about to occur. She is going to have a part in man's redemption. The name Jesus was given because he would save his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). She will thus first learn of his name and that name will be above every name (Philippians 2:5-8).

2. LOOK AT THE QUESTION RAISED BY HER. When she is told that she would bear a child, her thinking would be that such would be a usual birth of a child conceived of a man and

Defend it. The apostle Paul was "set for the defence of the gospel" (Philippians 1:17). Jude admonished his

readers to "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3).

Let us be fulfilling our obligation to the truth.

Mary

a woman. This would be the natural thing for such a person to think. Her question, within itself, would show that the birth of Jesus was not an ordinary birth. You will hear her saying, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke 1:34). She knew at the time that she had not conceived. She knew she was not with child.

Her question was treated as a legitimate question and an answer is given. This answer comes from an angel when he says, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

3. LOOK AT THE RESPONSE SHE GIVES. Be it

to her everlasting credit, she is not a skeptic. Listen to the language of Mary, "Behold the handmaiden of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38). Here is surely a case of total commitment. She will say, "I am the Lord's handmaiden." That is equal to saying, "I will serve him first and last, and always." Listen to her as she will say, "be it unto me according to thy word." That means the word of the Lord is her guide in all that she will do. That will become her chart and compass in life and for it there will be no substitute. That is total submission to the will of God. What more could be asked?

--Athens, AL.

Train your child in the way you now know you should have gone yourself.

April 23, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- Attainable Truth
- The Word Of Judgment
- The Question: Must I Be Baptized Into Christ?
- Crucified With Christ
- "Most Of A Minute"
- A Scientist Debunks Evolutionary Theory

Volume 29 Number 17
(USPS 691-760)

The Words C Truth

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

God's Amazing Grace

B. J. Clarke

I have transgressed the law of God and have failed to do what I should (I John 3:4; James 4:17). So have you. I deserve to die the second death and go to hell because of my sins (Romans 6:23, Revelation 21:8). So do you. I can never do enough to earn or merit salvation from sin (Ephesians 2:8, 9). Neither can you. My righteousness before God is as a filthy rag (Isaiah 64:6). So is yours.

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:4-6). Imagine it! Grasp it! The love of God has given us the hope of a reprieve from the second death. Even though we didn't deserve it, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Even when we were dead in our trespasses and sins, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

He who knew no sin was made to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (II Corinthians 5:21). Jesus did for me and you on

Calvary what you and I could never do. He paid our sin debt. He ransomed and redeemed us from sin (Matthew 20:28). He suffered the punishment that we deserved to suffer. It is difficult to fathom love so great and deep and wide. The love of God as shown in his grace is simply unsearchable. I am saved by grace. I am not saved because I deserve to be.

How can I enjoy this salvation by grace? My Bible says that it is by faith (Ephesians 2:8, 9). What kind of faith? An obedient and humble faith that willingly submits to the ordinances required of me by God. It is a faith that worketh by love (Galatians 5:6). Faith coupled with works of obedience is necessary for me to be justified by his grace (James

2:24). It is not by works of my own righteousness that I am saved (Titus 3:5) but I cannot be saved and accepted by God without working his righteousness (Acts 10:34, 35). Even after I have done all that God asked me to do, I still don't deserve to be saved (Luke 17:10). Yet, I cannot be saved without obedience (Hebrews 5:8, 9). I must

remind myself that my salvation is not deserved because I obey, yet my salvation is not possible if I do not obey. Let us show appreciation for God's amazing grace by submitting to his terms of obedience in hearing, believing, repenting, confessing, being baptized and living faithful lives.

No Place To Hide

David Wade

The President's effort to rescind the military's ban on gays is downright ridiculous! It creates more problems than you might imagine. For now, forget about fox holes, soldier morale, spousal support, survivors benefits, and the like. The biggest problem is that straight folks will be forced to shower, dress, sleep and live with those of the same sex who are sexually attracted to them.

Forget the notion that gays are not attracted to straight folks. That's a lie and every gay knows it. They're laughing up their sleeves at you if you are so stupid to believe it. It's the nature of gays to solicit sex with whomever, wherever, and whenever they can "discreetly" do so. To find a gay couple "married" and "faithful" to each other and forsaking all others, is as

scarce as hen's teeth.

And what about "solutions?" One proposal before the Senate Committee is to provide separate housing for homosexuals, the same as for males and females. That's the problem, it's not the "same." Imagine night life at the gay barracks, and that at government expense! That's as stupid as the government owning and operating Mustang Ranch!

The military is obligated to provide our sons and our daughters in service with living quarters free from sexual attraction and harassment. That's why we have men's barracks, women's barracks, men's restrooms and women's restrooms. With the homosexual present no such environment can exist! It is confusion and perversion. Is the military also ready to integrate all male and female

living quarters and restrooms? After all it's as "logical" as rescinding the gay ban. If not, why not?

There is no solution to the problem except the one already in place -- gays are

banned from the military. Rescinding the ban on gays leaves straight folks with no place to hide.

--P.O. Box 725, Kennett, MO 63857.

Abortion Myths

Richard Exley

The myth of the coat hanger. Used as a symbol to represent the dangers of illegal abortions, it is mostly myth. In 1972, the last year before *Roe v. Wade*, the Centers for Disease Control reported that the total number of deaths from illegal abortions was only 39, not the alleged 5,000 to 10,000.

The myth of "safe" abortions. Although the *Roe v. Wade* decision made abortions legal, it did not make them safe. Former abortion clinic operator Carol

Everett maintains gross malpractice occurs at many clinics. She said, "We were maiming or killing one woman in every 500."

The myth of reduced child abuse. Abortion does not reduce child abuse as abortion proponents claim. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported a 500 percent increase in cases of child abuse between 1973 and 1982.

The myth of unwanted children. Even if a child is

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Attainable Truth

Isaiah wrote. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever" (Isaiah 40:8).

Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Matthew 24:35). The passing away of heaven (the firmament) and earth won't occur until the judgment day, and Jesus looks past that to make this statement. We do have His words today.

Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Truth is therefore attainable. It must be, for without it we cannot be free.

Peter wrote. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness . . ." (II Peter 1:3). We have the word of God revealed to us, and it is complete to show us the mind of God in regard to how to live. The Bible is, among other things, a book on behavior.

Peter wrote, "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth

forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." We will die, but God's word will not. It endures and will always endure. It is preached in the gospel.

The faith of some are being melted away these days by false teachers who are teaching that we can't definitively know truth. They argue that since "scholars" don't ALL agree about what the word of God says, it is therefore absurd for anyone to say they know truth. While it is true that no human can know all truth, any human with a functioning mind can know truth enough to be saved, to be part of the Lord's church, to please God.

If we cannot truly know God's will today, many passages of scripture are worthless writ and impossible commands. For example,

--"Contend earnestly for the faith" (Jude 3).

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

--"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).

--"He that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock" (Matthew 7:24).

--"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" (Matthew 28:19).

Can we know truth today? Can we know that we know truth? The answer is "YES." If we cannot, as some claim today, then we must wonder about God. He is either not powerful enough to preserve His word through the generations. Jesus has promised that His truth will endure forever, and that we can know truth. Let's leave these false teachers behind as we hold to the unchanging hand (Hebrews 13:8).

The Word Of Judgment

Jerri Manasco

One of the most ear-catching statements of Jesus is to be found in John 12:48. In that text Jesus presents a grand ultimatum: "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." If there is a clear statement of deity and authority in the Bible, THIS IS IT! Jesus has made it as clear as it could be made: accept him or reject him, but be willing to face the consequences of either choice!

Jesus plainly says there is a "last day." How could you have made that any clearer? What shall those "scholars" do who shun the notion of a "last day?" They will have to do so in outright contradiction of what Jesus has said. This "last day" of the text is spoken of as "the day" in I Corinthians 3:13. It is "that day" (II Timothy 4:8). Paul anticipates a "day of wrath" (Romans 2:5). There is a "day of judgment" (Matthew 11:22) or the "day of the Lord" (I Thessalonians 5:2). One need not write reams of eloquent literature to analyze what the Bible says on this subject; the Bible has said it and that takes care of that! There is a last day in the which the dead shall be raised and we shall stand before the Majesty of the universe to receive the just sentence upon our lives (II

Corinthians 5:10-11; John 5:28-29; II Thessalonians 1:7-9). In that "last day" we shall face the law of the Lord.

Jesus indicates in his statement in John 12:48 that there is an objective standard for the judgment. To listen to some people and preachers today you would get the idea that everything and anything spiritual and religious is relative and there is no absolute upon which to hang your hat. Jesus proves that sort of thinking to be in error when he points to HIS WORD as the undeniable standard of judgment. It is "the word that I have spoken" which we shall face. Jesus says it is a timely word, for "the SAME shall judge . . ." Note that Jesus says "words . . . the word . . . the same." That clears the air on that!

There is the necessity of an objective quality to the word of God, otherwise we could not see any consistency in the life and purpose of Jesus. There would be no reason whatsoever to be a preacher or a Christian or to live a good life. There would be no way at all to define what a good life is if there is no objectivity in the Lord's way. Heaven has spoken to us through Jesus (Hebrews 1:1-2). Jesus said that his message is that which heaven has sent (John 12:49-50). Is that revelation merely a relative viewpoint among

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The Question: Must I Be Baptized Into Christ?

Elwood Holt

An inspired writer once said, "The whole world lieth in the evil one" (I John 5:19). There are only two kingdoms, God's kingdom and Satan's kingdom. The one who is not in Christ is in the evil one. This is equivalent to saying that he serves Satan's purpose and is a citizen of his kingdom although he may not be aware of it. But all who have been saved are "in Christ!"

To be in Christ is to be in His kingdom. "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7). And in that same chapter Paul said that God "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (verse 3). One might be in possession of many blessings outside of Christ but ALL SPIRITUAL blessings are IN Christ.

Now, let us notice two passages which tell us how to get into Christ. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" (Romans 6:3).

What do these two passages say? That we were baptized into Christ. The fact is not implied nor intimated but declared. And with these plain statements before us we should not be willing to accept any explanations of these or of any other passage that would place a person into Christ without baptism. Salvation by faith alone is a popular doctrine today. Many preachers are telling people they do not have to be baptized to get into Christ. But this doctrine cannot be propagated without a virtual denial of the passages cited above.

There are other passages that teach the same truth in different words. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for

the remission of your sins." "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16). These and many other passages all teach that baptism stands between the alien sinner and the spiritual blessings which are in Christ.

Do you know that you can be a Christian, a member of the Church of the Lord, forgiven of your sins, and assured of the promise of eternal life -- all without ever joining anything, being bound by any human creed, or submitting to any final human authority in religion?

No only can you be, the Lord wants you to be.

Throughout the world, many people are studying their New Testaments with the thrilling awareness that the way to Christ and the salvation He offers is clearly revealed. These people are learning that the WORD of God is the "SEED" (Luke 8:11).

And just as the seed produced Christians when preached and received into "honest hearts, good hearts" in the first century, so it will produce Christians in the twentieth century. They are seeing, too, that far from authorizing a great number of different competing groups the Lord established one Church and that he guides that church, even today by his own WORD.

When people hear the gospel, believe it, repent of their sins, confess Christ, and are baptized, the Lord forgives their sins (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Romans 10:10; Romans 6:3-4; Acts 22:16) and adds them to His Church (Acts 2:47; Ephesians 1:22-23; Ephesians 5:23). These "new creatures" are called Christians (Acts 11:26; I Peter 4:16). In all of their work and worship they are guided by the word of the Lord as revealed by the New Testament (II Timothy 3:16-17).

This message is presented by such people as you have been reading about. They have

obeyed from the heart the simple commands of the Lord as they are given in the gospel record, and they have the Lord's promise that He has added them to His Church.

Crucified With Christ

Gary C. Hampton

Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). His words help us to realize the Christian is one who has been crucified. Recently an article in a church bulletin related three observations A. W. Tozer had about one who is crucified.

First, Tozer said the crucified one faces in only one direction. As crucified ones, we should always be facing heaven. "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14). Our eyes must be set on the Master and the path he followed if we are to remain pointed toward our goal (Hebrews 12:1-2). The weights of worldly thinking and materialism must be taken off and old sinful habits set aside.

Of course, we first lay these things aside when we repent of our sins and put on Christ in baptism (Acts 17:30; Galatians 3:26-27). In so doing, the old man of sin dies and is laid to rest in a watery grave and a new man dedicated to walking in Christ's way is raised (Romans 6:3-4).

Second, Tozer said the one who is crucified never turns back. The entire book of Hebrews was written to show the brethren they could not go back to serving God under the

They have joined nothing, subscribed to no human creed, recognized no final human authority in religion.

They, along with millions of others, are pleading for the restoration of New Testament

Christianity. They urge you to obey the gospel of Christ revealed in the New Testament Luke 8:11: "Now the parable is this: The seed is the WORD OF GOD."

law of Moses. In fact, Christ served as the one great sacrifice for sins. To turn back to Judaism, one would have to reject Christ and leave himself with no other sacrifice for his sins (Hebrews 4:4-6; 10:26).

What could be said of those turning back to Moses' law could be said more emphatically about us. When we turn back, it is to the world with its short term rewards. Peter said we become like the dog who turns to his own vomit (II Peter 2:20-22). Jesus summed it up when he said, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62).

Finally, Tozer observed that

the one who is crucified no longer has any plans of his own. Like Paul, he should say, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). We should preface every action with the question, what would Jesus do? To answer it is to determine our course of action since we follow His steps (I Peter 2:21).

It is time for each of us to take a serious look in the mirror. Am I one who has truly been crucified with Christ? Do I face only toward heaven, never turning back and making Christ's plans my plans? To truthfully say it is not I but Christ living in me, I must be able to say yes.

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

If you happened to die tomorrow, to what degree would you be missed? Would there be tears, cheers, or yawns? That of course depends on how caring you have been during your life.

A person who is a Christian is a follower of Christ. Christ was compassionate, so His followers are naturally benevolent people.

In Acts 9 a Christian woman named Dorcas became very ill and died. We learn a great deal about her life by those who mourned her death. Acts 9:39 says "All the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them."

If you are a faithful Christian there naturally will be needy people mourn at your passing, because they will miss your kind voice, caring eyes, and helping hand.

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A Scientist Debunks Evolutionary Theory

Cecil Corkren

Since all young students in public school are subjected to the theory of evolution, we would do them a great service to let them know that not all scientist are evolutionists. You might expect a man who disagreed with Charles Darwin's theory of evolution to be an emotional Bible thumping shouter, or a hard liner member of the Church of Christ.

When I lived in Kalamazoo, Michigan, in the early sixties, and was a student at Western Michigan University, Dr. Gish,

was mentioned in the classroom.

All knew that he was a well known scientist. Dr. Gish, used the scientists' own terms to punch holes in the idea that man descended from an animal similar to apes. From reading the Kalamazoo Michigan Gazette we learn something of Mr. Duane T. Gish. He was at that time employed by the Upjohn Company, a drug manufacturing firm headquartered in Kalamazoo. Dr. Gish, is a biochemist.

Dr. Gish claims he has as much

scientific evidence that the evolutionists are as wrong as they have that they are right. He thinks Darwinian evolution is "scientific non-sense." Gish complains that evolution is taught in high school and colleges as fact, rather than theory. And he insists that theory has plenty of holes in it. The contrary evidence, he feels lies in fossils.

In any fossil remain ever found, Gish, says, there is very little evidence to support the evolutionary change of one basic kind to another basic kind of life.

He says that the processes of change which might have occurred through the so-called evolutionary process would have needed far more time than it had to progress from the lowest forms of man.

"It has been mathematically calculated," he contends, "that the origin of the human hemoglobin blood protein from a single ancestral protein, only one simple step in the evolutionary process of a man, would have required a billion times longer than the age of the earth." (The earth is believed by some scientists to be about three billion years old).

Gish reasons that evolution would have to occur by means of mutations (changes). Yet, he points out, there are in all probability no favorable mutations.

"All mutations seem to be harmful," he says, "They are found to occur in the laboratory or in the field, but we find that when mutations do occur, the basic power to live or the viability of an organism is reduced by this mutation. "Scientists are afraid of mutations. They fear radioactive fallout because it will cause mutations."

But Gish believes he has an even bigger scientific ace-in-hole which the evolutionists cannot trump.

Show him just one fossil that indicates a transition between invertebrates and vertebrates, fish and reptile and bird, he challenges.

"No one has ever found a single transitional form between the fish and the amphibians," he contends. "There has not been a single fossil ever found with a part-way fin and a part-way foot. No one has ever found a half-way feather, although the evolutionists say the feather may have developed from the scales of reptiles.

"Bats, birds and insects all fly. But there are no forms found in the fossil record to show that the ability to fly has evolved in any of these cases. When these creatures are first found in fossil

record, all have the ability to fly."

If Gish has made a strong case so far, he's only warming up to his subject.

He places a heavy line of logic on his knowledge of the cambrian rocks where, he says are found the first indisputable life forms on earth.

The rocks are dated by evolutionary geologists as 600 million years old.

The fossils found in the rocks include all the major invertebrate kinds of life. These were so highly developed and complex, it would have taken them 1.5 billion years to develop, according to evolutionists. Yet, no one has ever found a single indisputable fossil earlier than the cambrian.

Gish quotes George Gaylord Simpson, a famous evolutionist, as noting the absence of pre-Cambrian rocks that paleontologists believe were left by microscopic, single celled forms of life," Gish says. "Their identity as the remains of bacteria is questionable, however, and even if genuine, this would leave a tremendous gap between microscopic, single-celled forms of life and the highly developed invertebrates found in Cambrian."

It may be mystery to the evolutionist why pre-Cambrian animals have never been found, but it is no puzzle to Gish and the creationists. Their answer is that they haven't been found because they weren't there until God got around to creating them.

"What greater proof could the rocks give of creation than this sudden, great outburst of life on a highly complex and highly developed scale?" He asks.

Quoting the late Dr. Richard B.

Goldschmidt, also an evolutionist, Gish says:

"When a new phylum, class, or order appears there follows a quick, explosive (relative to geological time) diversification so that practically all orders or families known appear suddenly and without any apparent transitions."

"Is that the fossil record we expect on the basis of evolution, or creation?" Gish inquires of students.

He says he finds it difficult to trust the judgment of evolutionists.

For example, he calls attention to the discovery by Dubois of the Java men. Dubois consulted 19 other specialists and found that a third of them said the find was anthropoid ape, another third said human, and the rest theorized it was in-between.

Gish believes that prejudices and pre-conceived notions contaminate the science of the evolutionary theory.

He argues:

"Evolution is not accepted solely on the basis of scientific evidence, but because a majority of scientists prefer a naturalistic explanation for the origin of living things. Never in the history of science has dogma gripped science as strongly as it does today in relation to the evolutionary theory."

I trust this great source of information relative to the theory of evolution will help someone.

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

The Word Of Judgment

Continued From Page 2

other valid viewpoints? NO!

Paul declares the word of God to be inspired of God and as such is the "form of sound words" that we must be careful to adhere to in life and teaching (II Timothy 3:16-17; 1:13). Paul told Timothy to "preach the WORD" (II Timothy 4:2). That seems rather objective to me. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the TRUTH . . ." (John 8:32). That is clearly objective. The early church continued in the apostles' doctrine, or teaching (Acts 2:42). This is in perfect accord with other passages that uphold the oneness of the faith (Jude 3; Philippians 1:27; etc.). It is the justification for preaching plainly and specifically on such matters as divorce and remarriage, fornication, homosexuality, religious division, denominationalism, and scores of other topics. The fact is Jesus has already given us his judgments in his word! Our task is not to decide what we are free to erase and what we shall keep. Our task is to teach and learn to obey what our Lord has issued.

Jesus, in John 12:48, indicates a responsibility that rests upon us. There is a free choice Jesus gives us -- but that choice is to accept or reject his word. Rejection is fatal, acceptance is blessed. One cannot accept Jesus and treat as incidental his word.

Jesus reveals himself to us through his word. The word of Christ, that which he has revealed through his chosen apostles and other inspired men of the first century, is the only statement of what makes us acceptable to him; it is the only statement that shows us what he will accept and reject in our lives. We cannot deal loosely with such a profound reality. Jesus says it plainly enough: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him." It would be interesting to see how those who accuse us of being Bibliolaters would explain just how they have Jesus but reject his "pattern."

There is something so very final in the words of Jesus in John 12:48. "The word that I have spoken" eliminates all other words spoken by anyone else. "The word that I have spoken" eliminates the consensus of religious revolutionaries who would challenge the timeless and timely pattern of God. "The word that I have spoken" challenges the moral relativism of our times. You cannot go wrong if you stay with the word that Jesus has spoken, but how very tragic it will be if we face God having wandered from that heavenly truth.

--Rt. 7, 236 Stardust Drive, Boaz, AL 35957.

Abortion Myths

Continued From Page 1

unwanted by his birth mother, there are over 2 million couples in the U.S. alone waiting to adopt a baby.

The myth of the so-called "hard cases." "Hard cases" involving rape, incest, fetal deformity, or danger to the mother's life make up less than 3 percent of all abortions. Ninety-seven percent of abortions are done for convenience and birth control.

The myth that late-term abortions are illegal. For all practical purposes abortion is legal through the entire 9

months of pregnancy. About 13,000 viable babies die in late-term abortions every year.

The myth of Planned Parenthood. With over 53 abortions facilities nationwide, Planned Parenthood is the largest provider of abortions in America today.

The myth of choice. Abortion is not about choices; it is about money. The abortion industry is the largest unregulated business in the United States, grossing more than \$500 million a year.

April 30, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- What Does Sanctify Mean?
- Peace
- "Men And Brethren, What Shall We Do?"
- "Most Of A Minute"
- From The Mailbag
- Paul The Failure?
- A Vacation From Our Vocation

Volume 29 Number 18
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Truth

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

the

New Christians Need Your Help

Allen Webster

One is born into the kingdom of Christ by baptism (John 3:5), and at this time is a new creature (II Corinthians 5:17). He is just a baby (I Peter 2:2) and does not need to be treated as a full-grown spiritual man (Hebrews 5:12-14). How can we help one who is young in the faith?

NEW CHRISTIANS NEED TO BE FED THE RIGHT FOOD. Both physical and spiritual babies need to be fed milk and not meat. "For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age . . ." (Hebrews 5:13-14).

This means that Christians should be careful to teach them the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. They need to learn the basic facts of the church; the dangers of denominationalism, indifference, worldliness, false doctrines; how to teach others; how to study and worship; and about the nature of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit.

NEW CHRISTIANS NEED TO BE SHOWN LOVE. New babies need to be "mothered." Spiritual infants need to be shown that they are a part of an institution filled with the love of Christ (John 14:34, 35). It must be remembered that this love is not so permissive that it lets the new

babe do anything he wants, but that has the best interests of his soul in mind (John 14:15).

NEW CHRISTIANS NEED TO BE PROTECTED. Satan is going to try especially hard to steal the saved sheep during the first few months (I Peter

5:8). Thus, these need to be protected from false doctrine (Ephesians 4:14), false teachers (Matthew 7:15), and evil companions (I Corinthians 15:33).

NEW CHRISTIANS NEED TO BE TRAINED. A baby must learn to do everything:

so it is with a new convert. He needs to learn how to pray, study, behave, think (as a Christian), teach, participate in classes and worship. This training involves exercise.

Each Christian exercises by practicing good works (II Thessalonians 2:17) and

growing in godliness (II Peter 1:5-7). Physical and spiritual members lose strength if not used (Hebrews 5:14), so exercise!

We have an obligation to practice these four things so our "new born babes" will grow strong.

The Occult Of "New Age"

Gary Colley

Since the garden of Eden when Satan began his war of evil against good, the battle lines have been drawn between right and wrong, followers of God and followers of Satan. The righteous, since Christ revealed His system, have been in conflict with the unrighteous. The Lord forces no one into His service but tenderly appeals, invites, and offers the freedom to man that can come by truth (Romans 6:16-18; John 8:31-32; Ephesians 6:10).

Christ Is Lord

Jesus, the Son of God, warned often of those who would want to "exercise lordship over" others (Mark 10:42), but said that His servants would not be counted great by their lordship over people (Acts 2:36). Even elders are instructed, of their rule in the church, "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples of the flock" (Hebrews 13:17;

I Peter 5:3). James asked of the brethren who respected the rich, "Do not rich men oppress you" or lord it over you? (James 2:6). Jesus said false teachers would strive to appear as sheep though they were really wolves, who like the thief would "steal, kill, and destroy" (Matthew 7:15; John 10:10; Acts 20:28-32). But, as a good shepherd, our Saviour came that we might have life, and the blessings of that life would be given abundantly through the New Testament law (John 6:63; Romans 8:1-2).

How Cults Begin

While cults are religious organizations, they are pole apart from Christianity. Generally there is one strong personality who exercises a deep emotional and psychological control over others who have a deep need of acceptance by peers, an irrational desire to belong, and to have an extended part in some cause which they perceive as giving meaning to

life. The leaders are generally those who are experienced in mind-control, the misuse of others for their own goals, coupled with the desire to have riches and fame. These like to appear religious, devoted, knowledgeable and strong, though their ideas differ from the Bible. They are willing to go to great lengths to have their own language, interpretation, and of course literature explaining their doctrine, which changes often according to the whims of the leaders. Through a process of escalating pretended interest and indoctrination, the followers "find" what they think to be the great needs of life. But, as the trap is set and carefully calculated to spring

at the right moment, these unsuspecting souls are taken captive without opposition or reason! No one "understands" as they do the meaning of buzz words and catch actions that are boundaries to keep the influence of outsiders away. There is gross misuse of the Bible, ignoring the fact that each truth is to be consistent with every other part of revelation. As the deception takes its hold, so does the separation of the devotees from those who are concerned and desire to help. Loved ones in families are often the first to feel the strain in relationships as the leaders overcome and overpower their subjects.

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

What Does Sanctify Mean?

Glenn Colley

I want to suggest to our readers who are preachers or Bible class teachers that they do some teaching on the word "sanctification." The Old and New Testaments have many verses containing the word, and the concept will enrich the Christian life of your listeners and students.

Thayer says the word means, 1. To render or acknowledge, to be venerable, to hallow; 2. To separate from things profane and dedicate to God, to consecrate and so render safe from being corrupted; 3. To purify.

Here are a variety of observations about the concept:

1. MANY DIFFERENT THINGS WERE "SANCTIFIED" IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The first use of the word in the Bible is Genesis 2:3 -- "And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made." This means the day was set apart for service.

The Tabernacle was sanctified, (consecrated for service), (Exodus 29:43); Aaron and his sons were sanctified for service, (Leviticus 8:30); The priests had to sufficiently sanctify themselves, (II Chronicles 30:3); and Jeremiah was sanctified and ordained a prophet unto the nations before he was born, (Jeremiah 1:5).

2. JESUS PRAYED THAT DISCIPLES WOULD BE SANCTIFIED. "Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

This verse alone demonstrates the importance of the subject. Jesus intends that His followers be

separate from the world! In John 17 the word "world" is used 18 times. 11 of these times "world" refers to the masses of unbelievers who are without Christ. By being consecrated to Christ and part of His body, we are separate in lifestyle and in hope from the world.

3. WE ARE SANCTIFIED THROUGH THE TRUTH

John 17:19 -- "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

4. WE ARE SANCTIFIED BY FAITH

Acts 26:18 -- "... that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me."

5. WE ARE SANCTIFIED BY BIBLE BAPTISM

Ephesians 5:26 -- "That He might sanctify and cleanse it (the church, GC) with the washing of water by the word..."

6. WE ARE SANCTIFIED WITH THE BLOOD OF JESUS

Hebrews 13:12 -- "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate."

7. THE SANCTIFIED ONES WILL GO TO HEAVEN

Acts 20:32 -- "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."

8. BEING SANCTIFIED DEMANDS LEAVING SIN

Sadly, many people seeking religion/God's approval today are in reality looking for the church which demands the least sanctification. How many of our brothers and sisters

have left strong churches for weak churches recently because there they can, without the elders/preachers disapproval, drink socially, dress immodestly, remarry unscripturally, assemble irregularly, etc.? When a man or woman is sanctified in Christ, they are "set apart" from worldliness. If they are worldly, they are not sanctified.

I Corinthians 6:9-11 -- "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

I Thessalonians 4:3 -- "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication."

9. IF I AM WISE, LIVE RIGHT, AM SANCTIFIED AND SAVED, IT WILL BE BECAUSE I DECIDED TO BE IN CHRIST

Our lives are sustained in Christ. For us to live is Christ. As the song says, "He is my everything, He is my all . . ." I Corinthians 1:30 -- "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." I Peter 3:15 -- "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready also to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

Peace

There's a fungus on the bathtub toys
And handprints on the door.
I'm still in my old blue robe
And, my, it's almost four!

I can't find the other pink sneaker.
My new sweater faded and shrunk.
My yard sale was rained out last Friday;
And now, what to do with the junk?

My youngest can't sleep well at nighttime.
My oldest can sleep right through class.
I thought the teacherconference was this week,
But found out just now it was last.

There are holes in my oldest sons blue jeans;
And, what's worse, is that the likes them there.
I just spent forty bucks on my daughter's new perm,
And she "can't do a thing with her hair."

My deductible's met, for the most part;
And, of course, it's the "least part" who's sick.
The interest rate rose, the house payment went up,
And our budget took one more big lick.

"What else?" I said, grabbing the finger
That I smashed in the silverware drawer.
This stress is about to get to me.
I don't think I can take any more.

And then, as I called them for dinner,
Each hurriedly ran to his chair;
And tiny hands folded, our youngest
Talked to our Father in prayer.

"Thank you for Mommy and Daddy
And Brother and Sister and me.
Thank you for beans and corn and meat,"
He said, as he peeked out to see.

"And thank you for pie -- That's the best part!
Why, God, you just give us so much!
Help me to be good and happy."
And I whispered "Amen," my heart touched.

As I served this, my child's plate for dinner
I, too, offered my silent prayer;
A plea for forgiveness for failing
To remember his unfailing care.

A promise to understand stresses
As calls to a quiet place of prayer;
A pledge to remember that messes
Are leftovers from His blessings there.

Tomorrow the fungus will be there
And handprints will still show the grease.
But help me to look to you, Father,
And find that, within me, there's peace.

Cindy Colley



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"Men And Brethren, What Shall We Do?"

W. A. Holley

Substantially, this question was asked and answered long before Jesus Christ died upon the cruel cross. Jesus lived and died under the Mosaic law (Galatians 4:4). Jesus taught those Jews who lived at the same time He lived to obey the Law of Moses.

Those who lived under the Law of Moses were required to keep the sabbath, to observe certain feasts, to offer various animal sacrifices, to honor the law of tithing, *et al.* Those who now live under the commands of the New Testament do not keep Old Testament commands.

For example, a certain young person came to Jesus asking Him, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus told him to keep the ten commandments, naming six of them (Matthew 19:16-22). We suggest that Mark 10:17ff and Luke 18:18ff, be read. Question: Why did not Jesus order these people to believe on Jesus, to repent of their sins, to confess Jesus' name before men, and be baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit? The answer is: The Great Commission had not then been given (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47).

The New Covenant did not go into effect until the 1st Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection had come (Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-42, 47; 11:14-15). This event was "the beginning." The First Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection is the BIRTHDAY of the Lord's church or kingdom (Matthew 16:18-19; Romans 16:16; Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 1:9). To be in the church is to be in the kingdom! One cannot be in the church and out of the kingdom at the same time! The same conditions that make one a member of the church at the same time make one a citizen in the kingdom (John 3:3, 5; Hebrews 12:22-28; I Peter 1:22-23).

For one to have been saved

under the Law of Moses, one would have had to live a sinless and perfect life (Romans 10:5, quoted from Leviticus 18:5). Try as man might he could not render perfect obedience to the law. The blood of bulls and goats could take away sin (Hebrews 10:1-4). Under the Law all animal sacrifices looked to Jesus and the shedding of His precious blood, thus cleansing the guilty conscience.

Jesus died for the sins of those who lived under the "first testament" (Hebrews 9:15-17). Jesus "tasted death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). Hence, Jesus died for all who had ever been born, for all who were then living, and for all who should ever be born even to the end of the world (I John 2:1-2). Thus Jesus died for the "past sins" OF THE Jewish people (Romans 3:25, KJV), or "the passing over of the sins done aforetime," ASV).

Verily, the New Testament does not begin with the first chapters of Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. These books were written, perhaps, almost twenty years after the ascension of Christ, after the establishment of His Church. These books were written to give an accurate and authentic account of the history of Jesus and the events leading to His death, burial, resurrection, and the establishment of His church or kingdom (Hebrews 9:15-17; Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-42, 47; Romans 16:16). Hence, the New Testament began to be executed on the first Pentecost after Jesus' Resurrection. The first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection IS THE BIRTHDAY OF HIS CHURCH!

"Men and brethren, what shall we do?" There are nine instances of conversion in the book of Acts, the New Testament book of conversions. We cannot go to the Old Testament, or to the ministry of John the Baptist, nor to the personal ministry of John the Baptist, nor to the

personal ministry of Jesus Christ to find the answer of the question posed in this treatise. This is a part of "rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). To make scrambled eggs of the Holy Scriptures is to end up in religious confusion.

In each case of conversion in the Book of Acts, the inquirer is never told to do what he/she had already done. For example, if one has no faith, One is told to believe. If one believes but has not repented of his sins, one is told to repent, if one has already believed and repented, one is commanded to confess Jesus' holy name, if one has already believed, repented, confessed Jesus' name, one is commanded to be baptized (Acts 2:36-38; 8:26-38; 22:16). In this manner we arrive at the sum of God's truth (Psalm 139:17).

We sincerely urge our readers: ". . . Take heed that no man deceive you" (Matthew 24:4; Mark 13:5). Do not permit "strange doctrines" to lead you astray (Hebrews 13:9). For example:

(1) Many honest souls are determined to be saved at a mourners' bench. But, prayer as wonderful as it is, is not the Lord's way of saving alien sinners. Read Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16, if you want to know what the Lord Jesus Christ commanded. Someone may object, saying, "Does not Matthew 7:7-8, say something about Ask, Seek, and Find?" These words were addressed to Jesus' disciples . . . not alien sinners. We must distinguish between God's children and Satan's children (John 8:44; I John 3:10). Jesus never said, "He that prayeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

(2) Many use the language of Ashdod as they seek to explain how they were saved (?) (Nehemiah 13:23-24).

Some typical expressions reveal misguided teaching. We do not wish to be unkind. Rather we love these people, and we would like to teach them the truth of God (II

Thessalonians 2:10-12). Some of these expressions are: "Before I got religion," "when I got saved," "when I found the Lord," "when I took Jesus as my personal Saviour," and "to receive Jesus into your heart, just lay your hand on the TV or radio." We think the people here described are honest and sincere, but they are honestly and sincerely wrong. What does Jesus want you to do? Read Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:44-48; Acts 2:36-38; 16:16-34; 22:16).

The new birth is not a miracle. If Jesus worked a miracle to save one sinner, He would be under obligation to work a miracle to save all sinners. Why have we reached such a conclusion? Because God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35). Hence, if God saves one by miracle, God would saved all by miracle! These words were written by an old man who loves the souls of those who may read this article.

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

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

I think it would be quite a challenge to sit and talk with lexicographer Robert Chapman. Chapman is well known for his work in the area of slang. In fact, for the last six years he has been the editor of the "New Dictionary of American Slang," which contains about 20,000 slang phrases. When we might say, "I was on a late-night airline flight," he would say, "I took the red-eye flight." When we would say, "I'm going to take a nap," he would say, "I'm going to catch some z's." Can't you imagine how difficult it might be to understand everything this man would say to you?

Sometimes people argue that the Bible is too difficult to be understood. While some passages are more difficult than others, we can absolutely know what to do to be saved in heaven. For most folks the problem with the Bible isn't the verses they don't understand, but the ones they do understand. For example see if you have any trouble with this: "Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:38).

Let's all work to live the Bible truths we do understand, and ever be studying to learn more. John 8:32 says, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

From The Mailbag . . .

" . . . I woke up this morning and after getting my four children off to school, I grabbed my coffee and my Words of Truth. This seems to be the only quiet time I have. I wanted to write to let you know how much I appreciate your paper. It is a welcome change to see those who are in the church bringing up topics that are things we need to hear today. We as members of Christ's church need to be taught not to compromise God's will for man's. . . . I am making a file in which all of your Words of Truth will be placed. I believe they will prove to be an excellent study tool for my children as well as ourselves.

Thanks again for your sincere and forthright publication -- keep up the good work."

Paul The Failure?

Jerri Manasco

We live in a success-oriented society. "Success" in the minds of many means that one must produce visible and abundant results! If there is no tangible, visible something that can be verified by the senses, then you are not considered a success and your ability is seriously questioned. This attitude has taken a mighty hold on the church in recent years. A numbers explosion has become the norm for measuring the success of preachers and congregations. The ability of a preacher to "move people down the aisle" has become the test of his potential. If he cannot do that, then he is not a "good preacher."

One should be able to quickly see the folly of such thinking in the church, but many do not take the time to reason through the deception of such a mentality. Have we taken time to consider that Noah would be considered a dismal failure and an inadequate preacher today -- even though Peter said Noah was a preacher of righteousness (II Peter 2:5)? Wouldn't Moses be considered a failure in our hyped-up generation? Remember that a whole generation of Israelites fell in the wilderness during this man's tenure! Jesus would not qualify as a potential candidate for many pulpits today because "many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6:66). While considering Jesus for the "job of preacher," the pulpit committee would surely have to discuss the fact that one of his disciples betrayed him, one denied him three times in a row, and all of them forsook him! That's not a very good record, is it?

Paul would not fare any better in a success-oriented brotherhood. After all, he didn't always manage to win over the people to whom he preached to (Acts 24:25; 26:26-29). At least once, some in his audience mocked his preaching (Acts 17:32). Who

wants a preacher like that? One must recall the rather undignified manner in which Paul left Damascus by being lowered from the wall in a basket (Acts 9:23-25). Many who read this will say, "We wouldn't turn down Paul if he wanted to preach." But the fact is **OURS HAS BECOME A SUCCESS-ORIENTED, NUMBERS CONSCIOUS, PEOPLE-MOVING BROTHERHOOD!** Produce or perish is the rule!

Noah preached God's word, but could not have reported some glowing news to a brotherhood paper about how many souls he converted. Only eight people were in the ark (I Peter 3:20). Why weren't others saved as a result of Noah's work? The answer is very simple: Noah sowed the seed, but the majority of the hearts in which the word came were not receptive to the message. Noah could not force a positive response. Noah preached to a generation of rebellious people.

Jesus certainly preached the truth. He loved the souls of people and came to seek the lost (Luke 19:10). Yet he would be considered a failure because he did not resort to the people-moving tactics employed by some today. When the rich young ruler turned away (Mark 10:17-27), Jesus did not go running after him to "persuade" him to come back! Jesus laid the message out as plain as it could be given and left it to the young man to do as he would with it. Jesus was not impressed by his disciples when they expressed concern over how he had offended the Pharisees (Matthew 15:12-15).

Paul loved souls. He longed to see men turn to the Lord and be saved (I Corinthians 9:19-23). He preached fervently the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:13-16). Yet when he saw the attitude of unbelieving Jews, he did not resort to some sort of oratorical ingenuity to gain responses; instead he charged

them with their own unbelief and got on with his work (Acts 18:6; 13:46).

What is real failure in the church? **REAL FAILURE IS WHEN THE GOSPEL IS NOT PREACHED!** When a man has preached fervently, labored hard, and sowed the seed, he has done all he can do; he cannot force people to come to worship or to rush down the aisle. The parable of the sower must indeed be understood in the proper light if we would be able to do our work! The seed is sown, the heart receives it, and then the individual must decide what to do with it (Luke 8:11-15). Yes, we should do all we can

to convince people of their need for the Lord. Yes, we must do all we can to show people why they need to obey the gospel. But we must also remember that it is the gospel and not the preacher who gets the job done (I Corinthians 3:6-8). God gives the increase.

Brethren, your preacher is a success if he is well prepared to stand in the pulpit. He is a success if he has studied his Bible class lesson. He is a success if he preaches the truth and does so in a spirit of love. He is a success if he lives a clean, industrious life, glorifying God thereby. Has your preacher been able to provide Bible answers to your

perplexing problems of life? Has he been able to provide Bible teaching to lift up the spirits of the despondent people in the congregation? Does he have a sense of compassion toward the widowed and bereaved in your congregation? Does he tell people what the Bible teaches them to do to be saved? Does he give you book, chapter, and verse for what he preaches and teaches? **THEN THANK GOD FOR YOUR SUCCESSFUL PREACHER AND BE GLAD YOU HAVE SUCH A MAN WORKING WITH YOU!**

--Rt. 7, 236 Stardust Drive, Boaz, Alabama 35957.

A Vacation From Our Vocation

B. J. Clarke

Paul exhorted the Ephesians to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Ephesians 4:1). Webster defines vocation to mean: "a divine call to the religious life . . . the work in which a person is regularly employed." As Christians we have been called by the gospel (II Thessalonians 2:14) to a new way of life (Romans 6:4-18). This vocation is to be practiced 7 days a week 24 hours a day, for 365 days of the year. We are to be "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58).

Many are more than willing to practice the vocation of Christianity during the cold, dreary days of winter. But as the warmer weather approaches and Summer finally arrives, many take a vacation from their vocation.

Instead of attending the services of the church regularly, these individuals head off to the lake, the golf course, the beach, etc. They turn Summertime into vacation time from God. With the daylight hours extending well past 8:00 p.m. they can be found in their gardens on Wednesday night instead of the services of the Lord's church.

Still others take a vacation from their spiritual vocation when they leave for the family summer vacation. They pack everything in the suitcase but a Bible. While traveling on Sunday they fail to take time out to find a place to worship God. They do not think to leave their contribution back home with the local church and they forget to make it up when they return. They are too busy thinking of how to gratify themselves to consider whether or not they are

pleasing God.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with enjoying the beautiful season known as summer. It is not wrong to go to the lake, the golf course or to take a family vacation. It is wrong to become so wrapped up in these things that we forget about God and take a vacation from our vocation of serving him!

Serving God is not a seasonal calling. It is a daily calling. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). This daily cross-bearing applies just as much to the hot and muggy days of summer as it does to the cold and blustery days of winter.

Let us make sure that the busy activities of summer do not lead us to take a vacation from our vocation.

"Slow Me Down Lord"

Slow me down, Lord.

Erase the pounding of my heart by the quieting of my mind.

Steady my hurried pace with a vision of the eternal reach of time.

Give me, amid the confusion of the day, the calmness of the everlasting hills.

Break the tensions of my nerves and muscles with the soothing music of the singing streams that live in my memory.

Teach me the art of taking minute vacations -- of slowing down to look at a flower, to chat with a friend, to pat a dog, to smile at a child, to read a few lines from a good book.

Slow me down, Lord, and inspire me to send my roots deep into the soil of life's enduring values, that I may grow toward my greater destiny.

Remind me each day that the race is not always to the swift: that there is more to life than increasing its speed.

Let me look upward to the towering oak and know that it grew great and strong because it grew slowly and well.

Orin L. Crain

May 7, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- "When I See The Blood"
- Let's Build A New Church!
- America's Number One Drug Problem
- Accepting Drinking By Not Rejecting It!
- "Most Of A Minute"
- It's Time To Return To The Nest

Volume 29 Number 19
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The Words of Truth

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

Christian Certainties

Elwood Holt

Man fears the unknown. He fears it more than perhaps anything else in his experience. Often the greatest element in any fearful situation is the unknown. We can often endure with ease situations that we face suddenly that would terrify us into immobility if we knew they were to happen. Some people go to other extremes on this. They seek to know the unknown and become involved with the occult and all sorts of mysticism and superstition. In the concluding chapter of his first letter the Apostle John points out some things of which the Christian is certain.

The word John uses to identify this knowledge or certainty is one closely related to our idea of knowledge by experience. These are the things the Christian knows because he has experienced them. Firstly, we know we have eternal life (vs. 13). We have experienced that death to sin and resurrection to a newness of life over which death no longer has power. We are going to live forever if we keep this certainty. Secondly, we have experienced the fact that He hears us (vs. 15). It is a poor Christian life wherein the individual has never prayed and experienced God's answer to prayer. Thirdly, we know one born of God does not continue in sin. Sin is alien to and contradictory to the sort of life we

are now living as "new creatures in Christ (vs. 18). Fourthly, we know we are of God and the world lies in the power of the evil one. We have contrasted our life as Christians with what we see of the life of the world and with the character of God and we have come to know by our experience to whom we belong (vs. 19). Fifthly, we know the Son of God has come and has given us

understanding. How does one account for that which we experience in the possession of the world of God, of the fellowship of the Church, as well as a hundred other experiences of God's love and care, if the Christ has not come to be our explanation (vs. 20)?

All of this experience is for a purpose. Here John changes his word for knowledge in the

20th verse when he says "in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ." "Know," in this case, carries the idea of "perceive" or "have a mental image of." What John calls for here is a conclusion . . . a judgment . . . a decision . . . a commitment. We have a commitment based on knowledge grounded in

experience of the Apostle and the believer. The Apostle knew Jesus face to face. That takes away all the terror of the unknown and makes superstition and the occult the self-deception of the ignorant.

God has demonstrated His love for us in Christ. Why not respond by gratefully trusting Christ as your Saviour?

Heart Disease

Barry Gilreath

Some weeks ago, I had an interesting conversation with a denominational preacher over various items of interest. In the process of our conversation he expressed a great concern for the future of his denomination in the years to come. He was very disturbed over the trend he saw in their membership as they were becoming more and more lax in their church attendance. He revealed that it wasn't uncommon for there to be 200 people present on Sunday morning, but only 40-50 present on Sunday and Wednesday night. He said, "I just don't understand why the members are so carnal minded. They just don't seek first the kingdom of God. They go to the lake, to the ballgame or sit home in their easy chair when they ought to be at church as the Bible instructs." And then with a

slight pause, he asked a question I really didn't want to answer. "How about in the church of Christ? . . . "Do you all have a problem with attendance?"

Up to this point I had been trying to emphasize the fact that the church of Christ was striving to organize, worship and proclaim the whole counsel of the Lord as revealed in God's word. And now this man had asked me a question I really was embarrassed to answer. For it is one thing to advocate the whole counsel of God and another thing to practice it. "Well, . . . the local church of Christ I'm associated with does a fairly good job in their attendance, although I am unfortunately aware of places that struggle to get folks back," I responded. And then he gave his stinging response. "So in other words you all are just like our denomination in

putting your faith into practice."

Brother, that hurt. The bride of Christ, the church, was being called, in a round about way, an unfaithful spouse. And the worst part about it was that even though the indictment was a general one in that there are numerous servants of God who do put their faith into practice, the truth still remains -- There are too many unfaithful servants who at least in their attendance aren't any different than the denominations around them.

We must change this for the sake of ourselves and those in the world who are watching us as an example of what Christian living is all about. And the key to achieving this needful change is spelled L-O-V-E. Sermon after sermon can be and must be preached on the need for attending the assembling of

the saints. But until the hearers plant deep within their hearts a love for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; until a deep appreciation is felt for the sacrifice on Calvary that was made for each and every one, the pews will continue to be vacant as carnal minded "Christians" seek everything under the sun.

When I look out across an auditorium and notice that there are people who are not present who could and should be there, I don't classify them as folks with attendance problems. Rather, I view these tragic souls as having heart problems. Their lack of attendance is merely a symptom of a deeper rooted infection centering in their hearts.

It was Jesus who said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

"When I See The Blood"

Glenn Colley

The Old Testament is so valuable to Bible students. As Romans 15:4 says, "These things were written for our learning..."

Pretend for a moment that you were living in Old Testament times. Put yourself in their shoes. Particularly this time, picture yourself as an Israelite in the 12th chapter of Exodus. God was about to bring the last of the plagues on people who had rebelled against Him. This final plague involved the sudden death of the first born in each house . . . except for those houses whose inhabitants had obeyed God. Here was the command:

"Then Moses called for the elders of Israel and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.

For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you" (Exodus 12:21-23).

What would you have done? Perhaps some of the excuses you could have made would be these:

1. "My parents won't do it. If I do, I'll be admitting their guilt."

2. "It doesn't make any logical sense to me. I can't see any connection between this act and the desired result."

3. "I'm not convinced it will happen . . . and anyway . . . I'm really busy right now."

4. "I know a scholar who says it isn't necessary . . . and I go along with him."

Of course, you know what happened to those who were outside of obedience to God when the Lord passed over the houses with the hand of death.

Does this apply to me? If you aren't a Christian, it does. You see, the New

Testament requires that we make contact with the blood of the Lamb of God (Jesus), just as the people in Exodus made contact with the blood of the literal lambs to obey God. How important is it? Listen to Hebrews 9:22: "... without the shedding of blood is no remission." As in the time of Exodus 12, the blood makes the difference between life and death. How can you make contact with the blood which brings remission of sins? Read Acts 2:38: "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..."

While the aforementioned excuses are still often used today to avoid contact with the sin-forgiving blood, they still leave folks lost. Aren't you ready to obey the gospel today?

"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:14).

Let's Build A New Church!

Allen Webster

We need to build a new church! Let the elders meet and make plans. The preacher needs to get everybody excited about it. The deacons need to begin collecting the materials. Each family needs to bring their tools and do the work. Contact the contractors. Hire the helpers. Let's get busy!

During this planning stage we need to lay out some feasible blueprints and make sure we do not leave anything out that we want in the new church. It will be much easier to put it in now than to add it later.

WE NEED TO BE SURE TO INCLUDE . . .

"PRAYER-CONDITIONING." Who wants to sit in a church with an uncomfortable temperature each service? If we lack "prayer-conditioning" our spiritual temperature is too low and we are preparing to go to a place where there is no air-conditioning! No church can have a healthy temperature which does not express its deep reliance upon God. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6).

GOOD LIGHTING. Who wants to sit in the dark every service? We need to be able to see what God has written. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"

(Psalm 119:105; cf. Proverbs 6:23). "O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles" (Psalm 43:3). How can we "walk in the light" (I John 1:7), be "children of light" (Ephesians 4:8), let our "lights shine" (Matthew 5:16), and inherit the city of light (Revelation 21:23-24), if we sit in a dark church? Let the preacher and teachers see to it that the light of the Word shines brightly each service.

A WATER FOUNTAIN. We are bound to have thirsty people at our services. "As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God" (Psalm 42:1). We need to provide for their needs. "Jesus stood . . . saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37). "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). Let us build a church where the water of life is easily accessible and all are encouraged to deeply drink.

PLENTY OF SPACE FOR ADDITIONS. Too many churches have outgrown their facilities and faced expensive decisions because they did not so construct as to be able to add on easily. We want to be

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America's Number One Drug Problem

What drug is associated with . . .

67 percent of all drownings?

70 percent of fire deaths?

67 percent of murders?

35 percent of suicides?

Contributes to 40-50 percent of all fatal car crashes? and,

25 to 35 percent of all non-fatal auto crashes?

If you answered "alcohol" you answered correctly, according to an official of the

Tuscaloosa-based Alabama Poison Center.

"Alcohol affects the lives of Americans more than any other drug in use today," says John Fisher, Pharm. D. associate director of the center.

Fisher continued, "Alcohol is the most widely abused drug on the market. It can begin its effect on a child's life in utero with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome,

associated with the mother's consumption of as few as four drinks during pregnancy."

Adolescence brings new potential problems with alcohol because often teenagers drink away from home. Fisher added, "Teen parties where a lot of alcohol is rapidly consumed can result

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The Words Of Truth

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Accepting Drinking By Not Rejecting It!

Dale Jenkins

Johnny Carson said the first clue that something was wrong on Northwest Airlines Flight 650 was when the pilot (Captain Norman Prouse) boarded the 727 jet wearing a lampshade. That's incorrect!

The first clue was when about six hours before the flight he fell off his bar stools at the Minnesota bar he had been drinking at since 5:30 the evening before he was to pilot the ill-fated flight. Alcohol causes over 100,000 deaths each year in drinking-related incidents. It's use causes many more disasters than that of all other drugs combined. It doesn't take much to alarm one about the potential dangers of alcoholism. None of us wants a drunk piloting any vehicle in which we are passengers. We have seen the affects of beer and other alcohol upon citizens of our area. While not having all the answers there are some things we might do:

1. Be consistent: Those who drink socially can't consistently tell their children not to drink. Statistics have shown that one in three social drinkers becomes an alcoholic. A recent study chaired by Dr. Robert Sparks revealed that "more problems are created by moderate drinkers than by heavy boozers." It said that only 11 percent of all drinkers consume more than two drinks daily. Social drinking is harmful and wrong. If my children do not know my strong convictions against drinking, even a little they may think "just a little won't hurt." To buddy with and teach children to respect those who drink publicly seems to me to say that you approve of that action. As Christians we are to "... have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11).

2. Stop throwing up "red-herrings." A "red-herring" is a smoke screen to take the light off the true issue. While I know that Jesus turned water into wine in John 2, I also

know he is not making a blanket statement in favor of drinking. And if there is anyone out there that seriously thinks he is, maybe social drinking is not the place to begin with them. The wine he made would not cause an individual to become drunken. I know this because if it would have, he would have caused an individual to stumble (sin), (Hab. 2:15, Romans 13:13, Galatians 5:21), and that is a sin. "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way (Romans 4:13). Our Lord never sinned (Hebrews 9:14; I Peter 1:19).

Another red-herring heard often by this pudgy scribe suggests that gluttony is as much a sin as drunkenness. We preachers don't like to admit it, but God does classify sin! He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. He said, "And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea (Mark 9:42). Inspiration lists six abominations in Proverbs 16:16-18. The effects of gluttony are very limited when compared to the scope of desecration of alcohol. Alcoholism affects every individual close to the situation and thousands of others who never even meet the drunkard who kills them. It is a massive red-herring to try and compare the two.

3. We must teach: I know the TV tunes are catchy and I like the N.B.A. and Superbowl as much as the next guy, but have you noticed how many of the ads are wrapped up in alcohol and drinking? They spent over two billion dollars last year producing and airing those catchy tunes. Why? ... To break down negative feelings and to make us see

beer and the such like in a comfortable spot. They put our "favorite actors and actresses" on to endorse

alcohol. They are there to make us believe that it must not be that bad. They cast a positive light on drinking! Listen brethren, flip that channel during the drinking ad. Spend that time discussing the "problems" with your child. When one gets by and you watch the ad, talk to your children about it's merits. Does it present a true picture of happiness brought on by drinking? What does the ad

not tell and show us?

4. We must love the alcoholic with a God-like love. If our children hear us wish them all dead, yet some of their friends, whom they love are drinkers, we are wishing their friends dead!

5. Finally we must present Christianity in a positive light! When your child sees a fun loving ole' chap living it up with a Bud in his hand and sees you as an ole' prune

soured on life ... which type of life he is going to want to have? Which one would you choose? If he hears church members and leaders bad-mouthed constantly, isn't he going to want to be a part of that life-style where there is total acceptance, like that at a bar?

Brethren, let us wake up to these serious facts and be prepared.

What Can I Do About Abortion?

B. J. Clarke

Sermon after sermon has been preached on the evils of abortion. Yet, this practice continues to blight our nation. What can I do to help eliminate this infant holocaust?

1. **BE INFORMED** - My firm conviction is that abortion continues in our society because the largest number of people are not really aware of what takes place in the abortion process. Abortion is the termination of innocent human life. One of the biggest lies told in this whole controversy is that all that is aborted is a blob of fetal tissue. We are told that there are no human characteristics present in what is aborted. The evidence says otherwise. Anyone who will take the time to look at the pictorial evidence will clearly see that it is human life that is being snuffed out. These pictures are often times graphic and difficult to look at. However, they are just what is needed to jolt some people into awareness of what is really going on in our neighborhood abortion clinics. Pamphlets are available to show the pictures of babies before and after abortion. These pamphlets also document the medical evidence which demonstrates the development of the unborn child.

2. **TELL OTHERS THE FACTS** - It is not enough for you to be informed and to privately grieve over the tragedy of abortion. Tell good friends, neighbors and

relatives what you have learned. Give them brochures and pamphlets that show the real truth. Don't underestimate the power of truth. Years ago, I preached a sermon on abortion. One of our members obtained a copy of the tape and gave it to a pregnant teenage girl who was contemplating abortion. Upon listening to the tape, she made the firm decision to have her baby and to tell others what she had learned. She had been duped into believing that all the doctor was going to do was remove some tissue from her womb. In a similar occurrence our own Jodi Gilreath gave a speech in one of her classes recently about this subject. The girl who was supposed to give the opposite view followed and said that

she couldn't bring herself to endorse abortion after hearing the facts. Spread the word. It does make a difference.

3. **PRAY** - "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). God is still on the throne and the "most high ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (Daniel 4:32). Ask God to work through his providence to bring about a reversal of the present laws in our land. There is not an organization or group of activists on earth who can combat the power of prayer. Be active in prayer.

4. **WRITE YOUR LAW-MAKERS** - Politicians listen to large blocks of their

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"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

Once in a dense forest a big bear broke into a cabin of some hunters. They were out at the time, but had left a fire in the pot-bellied stove. The bear saw the red-hot stove, thought it was an enemy and put a bear hug on it. Naturally he was severely burned, but Mr. Bear thought the enemy was trying to fight back, so he squeezed harder and was burned even more. What a vicious circle for a bear to be in! Some people are like that. They hug immorality and worldliness to their own hurt and refuse to let go! In Acts 16 of the Bible, a man prepared to do himself the ultimate harm. He was just about to commit suicide, and he was without Jesus. Listen to what the two Christians near him shouted: "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here."

Maybe you've come to the place where you're ready to quit hugging the "hot stove" of life in sin and to start a life of faithfulness to your God. If so, we're here. Give us a call.

It's Time To Return To The Nest

Don Williams

As I was out walking the other night, I was listening to an a.m. Radio "call-in" show. The lady who was being interviewed was talking about the tremendous number of "nesters" being found in American homes today.

What are "nesters?" No, we are not being bombarded in any special way by the hundred million birds that are found in the world. "Nesters" are adult children who live back at home for a short period of time. Financial problems are often the reason for children to continue to "nest" in their parents home. It is estimated that there are over twelve million adult children between the ages of 30-39 who are living in their parents home. Although

sometimes complications exist when two families (Dad and Mom and a child and their child/children) live under the same roof, parents are more than willing to provide a temporary place for their children going through hard times.

In Luke 15, a story is told of a father who wanted the younger son to return home to the "nest." Notice that the father did not go where the younger son had been. Instead, he remained at home, eagerly watching and waiting for the son's return (Luke 15:20). When the son began the journey back home to the "nest," the father ran and "fell on his neck, and kissed him" (verse 20). His forgiveness of the son is seen in the gifts given to him - the best robe,

shoes on his feet (a free man wore shoes), a ring, and a celebration with the best fatted calf. The reason: "my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found" (verse 24).

Within this beautiful story, the Father represents Almighty God. The younger son represents sinners who have wandered away from God, due to sin. The home or "nest" can easily represent the Church. God cannot be where sin exists (Isaiah 59:1, 2), but He can and does actively desire for His wayward children to return home. We

as the Church should do all are lost to return to the "nest" within our power to seek, -- the Lord's Church. Ye who pray, and plead for those who are weary-come home!

Let's Build A New Church!

Continued From Page 2

constantly adding on to the church. As new people learn and obey the Truth, the Master Carpenter adds them to the building (Acts 2:38, 47), and they are added to our roll. "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:21-22).

A NARROW ENTRANCE DOOR. To have a scriptural church, we must have only one door. "Then said Jesus verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep" (John 10:7) and "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Our door must be narrow. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

FIVE FRONT STEPS. We must have the right steps leading into the church. The first step is labeled "learn." "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take

my yoke upon you, and *learn of me*; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:28-30; cf. John 6:44, 45; Romans 10:17).

The second step Jesus labeled "believe." He said, ". . . I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).

The third step is "repent." ". . . Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . ." (Acts 2:38).

The fourth step is "confess." "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10).

The fifth step is "baptism." It puts one through the door of the church. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27).

Here are the plans. We need to build the kind of church that pleases the Lord in our community. Let's get busy!

What Can I Do About Abortion?

Continued From Page 3

constituency because they know that the voters have the final say as to whether or not they are elected again. Obtain the addresses of your congressmen and representatives and write them a letter expressing your wish that abortion be outlawed in this country. Share with them the facts and material you have at your disposal. Be kind in your letter and yet firm. Let them know that you expect some kind of reply and defense of their position if it is pro-abortion. Write the Supreme Court Justices and seek to influence them as well. Let your voice be heard.

5. SUPPORT DOCTORS WHO REFUSE TO DO ABORTIONS - Money talks. Imagine a pro-abortion gynecologist being told by dozens and dozens of patients that they could not in good conscience continue to support a doctor who helped to kill babies. What an impact that could have! This is something that could cause other doctors to think twice about being in the abortion industry. Let us bond together and fight against this menace to our society. Together we can make the world a safer place for children.

America's Number One Drug Problem

Continued From Page 3

in coma and death. But, the major health problems come with driving while intoxicated . . . In addition to traffic injuries, unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases can also result."

"Unfortunately, we live in a society that glamorizes alcohol use. The young, rich, famous, and beautiful often send messages that it's "in" to drink.

". . . it is so important that parents realize they are the child's number one role model. If parents "party hard," children most likely will, too. But if parents can model desired behaviour, set limits, enforce consequences for inappropriate choices, build self-esteem, and teach good decision-making skills, our children have a chance to grow into healthy adults."

(Adapted from a news article in the *NORTHWEST ALABAMIAN* of July 2, 1992).

Heart Disease

Continued From Page 1

mind. This is the first and great commandment" (Matthew 22:37-38). When a person's heart possesses the degree of love that our Lord speaks of in this passage, then the healing process has taken place, and every symptom of their heart disease, including poor attendance, will vanish away, leaving a strong,

healthy heart and a Christian who puts his faith into practice.

So what about your heart? What do your symptoms tell you about your spiritual condition? Maybe it's time you checked yourself for heart disease. It's a matter of (eternal) life and (eternal) death.

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May 14, 1993

See Inside Articles:

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- Divine "Censureship"
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 Lives Of Distinction
- "Most Of A Minute"

Volume 29 Number 20
(USPS 691-760)

The Words of Truth

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

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The history of the church at Ephesus : Time-Lapse Photograph

Allen Webster

Modern photography is amazing. With one lens, a photographer can zoom in on an object far away and make it seem near. Then he can put on a wide-angle lens and get the big picture from close-up.

One of the most interesting methods is time-lapse photography. Every night, the weatherman shows how clouds have advanced over our area with satellite pictures. Though these seem to be continual motion, they are actually taken by time-lapse -- every half-hour or so and placed in sequence. You may have seen a flower photographed in this way "sprout before your very eyes." If we had been watching constantly, the changes would have been impossible to see because they were happening so slowly, but they were there nonetheless.

What about applying time-lapse to history? Let's look at the church of Christ at Ephesus during the first two centuries.

Picture #1:

Sprouting - A.D. 52

On Paul's second mission tour, he visited Ephesus after leaving Corinth, and evidently planted the church there (Acts 18:19). This first glimpse is of sprouts just cracking open the ground.

Picture #2:

Weeding - A.D. 54-56

On the third preaching

journey, Paul spent between two and three years teaching in the city (Acts 19:8-10). He was weeding out false doctrines and pagan practices.

This teaching in the school of Tyrannus was so successful that those who practiced magical arts brought their books and burned them (valued at 50,000 pieces of silver) (Acts 19:18-20). The sale of silver shrines began to fall off, and the silversmiths caused an uproar (19:26-41).

After this was settled Paul left for Macedonia. It was during this stay in Ephesus that he wrote his first letter to the church at Corinth. It is now a well-groomed garden -- they even have elders.

Picture #3:

Nurturing - A.D. 57

Paul stopped on nearby Miletus to make his farewell address to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20). Their mutual love is evident as these tender-hearted men weep because they will see Paul's face no more. Their spirituality is seen in their parting prayer. The picture now is a carefully nurtured, healthy church.

Picture #4:

Watering - A.D. 62

About 35 years after the church was planted, Paul wrote a letter to the Ephesians commending their faith and love. A careful reading of this epistle shows that they had done well during this time. They appeared well-organized and busy. During these early

years they had been growing, expanding and doing the will of God. He commends their sincerity (6:24).

Teaching is to Christians what watering is to plants -- both necessary and strengthening (I Corinthians 3:6). Timothy (I Timothy 1:3, 4), Aquila, Priscilla (Acts 18:25) and Apollos had all spent time watering this "Ephesian garden." It was one of the most thoroughly instructed of all the first century congregations. The picture now is a well-watered and self-sufficient flower bed.

Picture #5:

Producing - A.D. 66

A few years later, in all probability very soon after the beginning of the Jewish war, tradition says that the city became the home of John. This may or may not be true, but circumstances make it possible, if not probable. He was supposed to have taken Mary, the mother of Jesus, there to live (cf. John 19:26, 27).

This picture is of a church faithfully serving their Lord and producing the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:21-23; John 15:1-3).

Picture #6:

Wilting - A.D. 96

It was probably during the reign of Domitian (81-96 A.D.) that John was banished to Patmos. He was released and died during the reign of Trajan (who followed Domitian) according to

Ireneus (an early church historian). Tradition relates that at a very old age John, too feeble to walk, was carried into this church's assembly to admonish the members, "Little children, love one another."

During this period the Lord gives his assessment of the church (Revelation 2:1-7). He compliments their works, but has found a disease in the plant. They have left their first love (2:4). He commands immediate action -- repent, remember, repeat (the first works) (2:5).

Picture #7:

Decaying - A.D. 200

We have no way of knowing whether they corrected their problem and later were poisoned by some false

doctrine, or never rekindled the flame, but, sadly, the church died sometime during the second century. It passed into apostasy and was known in later centuries as a leading city for the "councils" of the early Roman church.

The picture now is of a dead plant, brown and dried up.

Time lapse photography is interesting. What if the church where you attend had been historically photographed? At which stage would it now be? The ending does not have to be a sad one, as the Lord's vineyard need never die. He will come one day and transplant His faithful branches over in the land where the tree of life and the Rose of Sharon continually bloom.

The Source Of Faith

Tommy Blewett

Horoscopes, fortune-tellers, psychics, family members, friends, and personal feelings are just some of the sources of faith to which many people turn. However, the Bible teaches that faith and all other spiritual blessings are found in Christ, Ephesians 1:3. Paul develops that teaching for us in I Corinthians 1:1-10. The conclusion he draws in verse 10 is devastating to most religious groups today. In each paragraph below verse numbers refer to I Corinthians chapter 1, unless otherwise stated.

In verse one Paul describes himself as an apostle of Christ. He was sent by Christ, to preach the gospel of Christ, which was revealed to him through the Holy Spirit of Christ, (Galatians 1:12 and Acts 9:15). He was not, as many are today, a self-proclaimed prophet with a man-made doctrine.

As a result of his Christ-ordained apostleship those at Corinth who believed his preaching were sanctified in Christ, verse 2. By sanctified I

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Divine "Censureship"

Neal Pollard

Observe the following definitions from Webster's New World Dictionary:

editor - "An official with the power to examine literature, mail, etc. and remove or prohibit anything considered obscene, objectionable, etc."
censure - "strong disapproval, condemnation"

One of the loudest complaints the free world hurled at communism was its unbending censorship of its countries' literature, media, and mail. The complaint centered around the "restriction of basic human rights." During the "social revolution" ignited a generation ago, the "establishment" of this country was charged with "censorship." Even today, one of the most bitter, ongoing battles within the media is to eliminate certain first amendment restrictions on the part of our nation's officials. Advocating unrestricted right to express one's beliefs and orientations, many are outraged at attempts made to suppress the advocacy of such things as homosexuality, immoral sex education, fornication, sundry social orientations until opponents of anything unorthodox are deemed bigoted censors. The "politically incorrect," peace officers, the military, and especially religionists are depicted as narrow-minded prudes with multifarious, repressed inhibitions. It is no wonder that the Bible is thus being blamed for, of all

things, "social evil!"

Please notice the following observations:

I. The Bible And Censureship. On indisputable fact that can be gleaned from careful Bible study is that man is created a "free moral agent." In fact, the first lie recorded in the Bible came when the subtle serpent said to Eve, "Ye shall not surely die (if you eat of the fruit of the tree of good and evil, GNP): for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4-5). That wily adversary knew that the best way into Eve's heart was to plant the seed of doubt concerning her ability to choose. Yet, the fact that she was there in the position to choose demonstrated that God had made mankind with the freedom of choice. The devil did not say outright that God was a dictator and that Eve was without the power to choose. Eve would not have believed that. He merely suggested that the way to greater freedom was to disobey God's command. From cover to cover, the Bible reveals that man is endowed with freedom to think, choose, and live as he desires. Before Cain made the choice to kill his brother, God said to him, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door . . ." (Genesis 4:7). God did not tell Cain how to act; contrariwise, he lovingly pointed out the blessings of "right-doing" and the danger

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The Doctrine Of Christ, II John 9

Glenn Colley

As a very young preacher I remember memorizing the ninth verse in II John. "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." From that I believed and taught what seemed obvious from the passage, that is, that we were obligated to walk the way Jesus told us -- that "His doctrine," in which we must abide, referred to what Jesus taught.

Sometime later I heard that interpretation criticized. The writer/speaker was saying that "doctrine of Christ" here meant, the "doctrine ABOUT Christ." With this interpretation, the circle of fellowship got much wider. It teaches that a person doesn't have to be living according to the teachings of Jesus to be approved, but rather simply believe in the deity of Jesus to have "both the Father and the Son."

In this article I don't want to discuss all the implications of this second interpretation of the passage, (I'll leave that to our readers), but rather to put the interpretation to the test. Will it stand fair and thoughtful examination?

The word "doctrine" in II John 9 comes from the Greek word, "Didakee," which according to Thayer means, "Teaching; that

which is taught . . . the doctrine which has God, Christ, the Lord, for its author and supporter."

The words "Doctrine of Christ," and similar phraseology, are found in other parts of God's word. For example, Consider Hebrews 6:1, 2 -- "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment . . ." Now, according to this passage, what do you know about the "doctrine of Christ?" You know that it refers not just to the deity of Christ, but also to things like repentance, faith, baptisms, laying on of hands, the resurrection, and eternal judgment. It refers to what Jesus taught, and not simply the doctrine of His deity!

Consider also other verses with similar phrasing. I am capitalizing the key phrase for emphasis:

"So hast thou also them that hold the DOCTRINE OF THE NICOLAITANS, which thing I hate" (Revelation 2:15).

"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the DOCTRINE OF BALAAM, who taught

Balaam to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols and to commit fornication" (Revelation 2:14).

"Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the DOCTRINE OF THE LORD" (Acts 13:12). (Note Acts 13:7)

"Then understood they how that He bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the DOCTRINE OF THE PHARISEES AND OF THE SADDUCEES" (Matthew 16:12).

"And they continued stedfastly in the APOSTLES DOCTRINE and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

Examine these verses, and then ask: "Does this speak of the doctrine ABOUT these individuals, or the doctrine which they believed and taught?" The answer is obvious. This was the doctrine which they believed and taught.

The same is true about II John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God . . ." The "Doctrine of Christ" used in this verse is for us the standard of living. May we all encourage our brothers, sisters and friends to "abide in the doctrine of Christ," and let Him decide how big or small to make His circles of fellowship.

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Keepers At Home Lives Of Distinction

Cindy Colley

The phrase "keepers at home" is found in the middle of a list of descriptive phrases. Titus 2:4, 5 lists it as one of eight foundational characteristics of Christian living for young women. These attributes are among the things which become sound doctrine (vs. 1). This tells us that while the gospel that is within us as Christian women is a mental submission to the teachings of Christ, that it is also characterized by some very overt qualities. These traits listed by Paul are the outward expressions of the sound teachings within the heart of the Christian woman. They are the dressings of Christianity, if you will.

In this description of the spiritually groomed Christian woman, there are two characteristics that, when applied to our lives as Christian women in the late twentieth century, would give us true distinction. In our society it is simply not fashionable to be either a "keeper at home," or "obedient to [my] own husband." The feminist movement in our society has indeed left behind a very bitter aftertaste. Even Christian women, many times, feel out of touch with these teachings of the scripture. When such "outdated" notions are mentioned in public discussions today, the world sneers and the very idea of such an antique philosophy is dismissed with a chuckle. What is unbecoming to the world is described by the Holy Spirit as "becoming sound doctrine." Perhaps the Christian woman's attempt to conform to current standards in these areas of living is her most prevalent form of worldliness.

During the past several years there has been some controversy over the meaning of the phrase "keepers at home." Often when the mores of society conflict with the

teachings of God's Word, we begin to reevaluate the meaning or significance of the scriptures. It seems, though, that the simplicity of the phrase "keepers at home" continues to demand our understanding of it. Just as a zookeeper runs or works in a zoo, so a "home keeper" runs or works in the home. Zookeeping is the practice or occupation of working in the home. When our purpose is to conform our lives to the passage rather than the passage to our lives, how difficult can this phrase really be? It's significance for our lives becomes obvious.

In our materialistic society, women who find the occupational benefits and challenges of keeping the home to be fulfilling and rewarding are living lives of **DISTINCTION**. They have rejected the world's mentality of material success and are able to look beyond the tangibles of this world to the true wealth of things eternal.

Lives of Devotion

The keeper at home in our society often lives a life of sacrifice from several perspectives. Often the very nature of the occupation demands that other jobs and careers must be sacrificed, at least temporarily. This is especially true for women who are mothers of young children. To the woman who places the ultimate premium on the tender souls within her keeping, however, these financial sacrifices, seem a small price to pay. Again, she is able to look beyond the temporal to the eternal.

In many instances today, women find themselves in situations where they are forced to have jobs outside the home while their children are still very young. In these cases, the challenges of filling this dual role are tremendous, if not impossible. The important thing for these and all mothers to remember is that God's calling for young

women is to place the home in a position of priority. If my heart is in the home, then my decisions about whether or not I need to work outside my home will be in accordance with His will.

Keepers at home give sacrificially of their time. This occupation has no "off duty" hours, for even when I may be physically away from the job site, the well being, both physically and spiritually of those within my home is still my first concern. I am "on call" and answerable to those precious souls twenty-four hours each day, seven days each week.

Having said that keepers at home often sacrifice materially and always sacrifice of their time, it must be said that keeping the home requires a self sacrifice. Just as Christianity requires a denial of self (Matthew 16:24), so this occupation of Christianity becomes more important to me than any other labor of life. Just as putting my will down to pick up the cross of Christ is not a drudgery, but rather a joyful exchange because of my love for Christ, so it is with joy each day that I seek the comfort and best interests of those within my home. The word "keepers" of Titus 2:5 in the American Standard Version is rendered "workers." Truly the home's occupation is work. To those of the world, the tedium of cooking and cleaning and laundry and diapers may seem unrewarding and pointless, but for the young woman with the perspective of God, the challenge is eternal, the goals are well defined, and the workday is deeply fulfilling.

Lives of Direction

Goal setting and evaluation are important parts of the success formula in any career. In all of our endeavors it is important that we have goals to which we are moving and that we periodically stop and evaluate our progress toward

these goals. For the Christian homemaker, these times of evaluation should be faith building experiences. In defining our goals, though there may be a thousand short term goals on the day's agenda, we realize that the ultimate goal is heaven . . . to guide the precious souls in our home to that forever home where we'll no longer have to ease fears or dry tears.

Checking progress toward that ultimate goal and asking ourselves how we may more effectively move toward heaven is the challenging part of this evaluation. Our children live in a society in which Satan is alive and well. He is working through their peers, the media and often even through the role models that are set before them at school. He is working to rob them of their faith before it has had a chance to mature in their young lives. Our efforts, then, to guard their souls must be just as calculated, just as concerted, and just as determined as those that would pull them away. It is vital that, in our hectic and tightly scheduled lives, we spend time with our children. In Deuteronomy 6, God gave his people of old the secret to imparting faith to the next

generation. A reading of verses 2-7 shows us that the secret of "passing down" our faith lies in the time we are able to spend daily in conversation with our children about God and His will. Keepers at home find direction in a chaotic world as they center their goals on the promises of God and seek to daily secure the faith of the precious souls within their care.

Lives of Divine Approval

All too often, keepers at home become discouraged because the demands of home are so great that they feel limited in their service to God. Perhaps they are unable to participate in every program of the local church or evangelize in the community, or visit the hospitals as much as they once could prior to the responsibilities of home and children. Feelings of guilt can result. This is due to a misconception regarding the nature of the Lord's work.

God's work involves taking whatever resources he has given, and doing whatever can be done with them to his glory. For the keeper at home the souls within that home are the primary resource. What a blessing I can be for His

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"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

Have you ever heard anyone say, "It takes money to make money?" Many men and women in our country, called Financial Advisors, make their living on simply trying to make folks' money make more. 5-1/4% interest is alright, 9% is good, and if you can make 12% interest or more, you feel like you've realized a pretty good gain.

Want to hear a hot tip on a plan to get great gain? I have it and there isn't any risk involved to you. How's this for valuable advice?

I Timothy 6:6 -- "Godliness with contentment is great gain."

This verse could say that this is the greatest gain. Some people who have found themselves sacrificed on the old altar of fatter bank accounts and "keeping up with the Joneses" have realized that the best things in life have very little to do with money. They have to do with satisfying a need to draw nigh unto God, and the contentment therein.

The Source Of Faith

Continued From Page 1

mean separated or set aside for a divine purpose. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10). Please notice that both passages teach that this blessing is "in Christ Jesus." No man, board of directors, denominational president or anyone else other than Christ can sanctify us. Christ sanctifies only those who hear and obey his apostles who preach his gospel; those who are in Him. Furthermore the only way to be in Christ is to be baptized into Christ, Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:27. Yes, baptism is a part of the gospel, (Matthew 28:28ff and Mark 16:15ff).

Saints, who are all faithful Christians, enjoy the blessing of calling upon the name of Jesus Christ, (verse 2). When we seek the Lord's help and blessing we call upon his name. We recognize his role as "... mediator between God and men . . .," (I Timothy 2:5). We believe his promises, (II Peter 1:4). We know that he cares for us, (I Peter 5:7).

God's grace and peace is given by Christ, (verses 3 and 4). John tells us that "... grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:16). "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). Jesus is able to give peace to his saints because he has overcome the world, (John 16:33).

Enrichment in utterance and knowledge is by Christ, (verse 5). Any word of salvation, any increase of faith, any direction in righteousness is given by Christ. In addition, the only testimony which makes one spiritually rich is the testimony of Christ, (verse 6). Mere human testimony, no matter how sincere, won't bring about an increase of faith, only the gospel of Christ can do that.

Christians are waiting for the second coming of Christ, (verse 7). His return is certain, (I Peter 3:1-10), but when he

will come is unknown to men, (Matthew 24:36). Further, his coming will be for judgment, but the faithful will be found blameless in the day of Christ, (verse 8).

In verse 9 we find that the faithful are in the fellowship of Christ. Therefore, we have fellowship with each other and with God, (I John 1:3). Christian fellowship is founded upon righteousness, (II Corinthians 6:14). And, others enter into this fellowship in the same way as we, by the gospel of Christ, (Philippians 1:5).

After reading this one might ask, what is so devastating

about that? There isn't anyone living today who is an apostle of Christ in the same sense that Paul was. Anyone who claims such is preaching his own doctrine, with no exceptions. As noted above we are "baptized into Christ" where we find sanctification. There is no other way into Christ, yet many proclaim a doctrine of salvation that ignores baptism. The blessing of calling upon the name of Christ, in other words prayer to God through Christ is one that only the faithful enjoy, "... his ears are open unto their prayers . . ." I Peter 3:12. If one is not in Christ

their prayers fall on deaf ears. Without grace no one is saved, yet God's grace came by Christ. When we follow the religious leadership of another we "... are fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4). Faith begins and increases with the gospel, yet the religious world wants to tell us that it doesn't really matter what you believe, just as long as you are sincere. Likewise, we are told that everyone who names the name of Jesus is in Christian fellowship. But Jesus said, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of

my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

Having said all that we get to the conclusion that Paul made in verse 10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

If everyone accepted the teachings of I Corinthians 1:1-9 and believed Christ to be the only source of faith, then obedience to verse 10 would be the simple application.

Divine "Censureship"

Continued From Page 2

of "wrong-doing."

Discipleship is a choice. Jesus said in Matthew 16:24, "IF any man will come after me . . ." Christ never physically makes one become his disciple. Paul, on the road to Damascus, was not forced into conversion. When presented with the overwhelming glory and power of God, he made up his mind to follow Jesus. We are given no less a demonstration of God's power when we read the flawless, God-breathed Word. We, like Paul, can choose either direction. Revelation 22:17 reads, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." One is not required to be a disciple in order to be a person. One is required to be a disciple to have eternal life. God lets man decide.

Concerning God's power to prohibit, that cannot be contradicted, either. The Genesis account of creation presents God as the force behind life. He has every right to govern and command us by His Word just because of His

omnipotence. Beyond that, however, the "do's" and "do not's" of the scriptures are written and immutably correct for our benefit -- socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

II. The Bible And Censureship. Knowing the sovereign nature of God as creator, sustainer, and Saviour reveals His "right" to express divine approval concerning human behavior. God censures; that is, he disapproves of anything sinful. Paul tells us in Romans 1:18-32 that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness . . . who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (18, 32).

Why does God get angry at the sinner? What kind of reaction would a child get from his parents if that mother and father clearly forbade his running out into the street during rush hour traffic, only to see him dart out for the highway? **Outrage!!** So is God's disapproval of His children who know the damning

effects of sin, but who sprint toward it deliberately without concern for the consequences. God says that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). To take care of sin, the profound love of God prompted Him to provide His Son as sin for us (II Corinthians 5:21). What right has God to tell us to abstain from the very appearance of evil (I Thessalonians 5:22)? The right as giver of life (John 3:16). The right as judge (II Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 9:27). Paul says, "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But

he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons" (Colossians 3:23-25).

Yes, God censures sin. He condemns it wholesale, over and over again. He strongly disapproves of the life which places my Lord back up on the cross afresh (Hebrews 6:6). His just nature will cause Him to send the disobedient into a never-ending hell (Matthew 25:46). So, while life and opportunity prevail for man, he must recognize the "divine censureship" as the product of a being whose thoughts and ways are above ours (Isaiah 55:8, 9). Thanks be unto God for His "divine censureship."

Keepers At Home

Lives Of Distinction

Continued From Page 3

purposes if I am successful in molding the souls within my home for His cause.

Someone has described the woman of today's world as a juggler. She attempts to juggle many balls including husband, home, family, career, friends, and recreation. Some of the balls are rubber. If these rubber balls are accidentally

dropped, they bounce back and are easily retrieved. What she may fail to realize is that other balls are glass. When these precious glass balls are dropped, they are shattered and are forever lost. God's keepers at home are aware of the fragility of glass balls and of the eternal danger of juggling with them.

May 21, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- The Myth Of The "Gay" Movement
- Workers Desperately Needed In Sarawak (East Malaysia)
- She Shall Be Called Woman
- "Most Of A Minute"
- The Bible Must Be Exposed To Our Lives
- The Church - Perfect Or Not?

Volume 29 Number 21
(USPS 691-760)

The Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak words of truth and soberness." -- Acts 26:24

A Father

Dale Jenkins

It's 2:35 a.m. Friday morning and I'm wide awake. The only sound is the click of the keyboard, the only light is the street light out the window, the moon is hidden tonight. I'm not usually up this time of the morning, but tonight is different.

I sit here all ajolt, wide awake, a tear in my eye. Moments ago my boy woke up screaming. It'd been a big day for a little boy who had just turned four today. He had a nightmare, his first as far as I remember, nothing spectacular, he said he felt like something was biting him. He was back asleep in no time flat, but I lay there holding him, sorry he had even had to hurt a little. Holding him tight, reassuring him (or is it me) that nothing would bite him this night.

What is God like? Well, if I understand Jesus words; "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (Matthew 7:11). "And he said, A certain man had two sons" (Luke 15). He's like a father. Tonight . . . this moment, that means more to me than ever before.

If God is a father. How many nights has He stayed up with me on his mind? How often he must have wanted to assure me "it'll be alright, nothing can separate you from me" or, "Go on to sleep, I'll be right here?" Has he shivered when I hurt, has he shed a tear over my fear?

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us" (Ephesians 2:4). The psalmist must have felt this. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art

with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Psalms 23:4). When Jesus spoke of not worrying, it was from a knowledge of this compassion (Matthew 5:25-34). Peter indeed had experienced this

total concern when he penned, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (I Peter 5:7). So did Paul: ". . . I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Philippians 4:11). I sit here all ajolt, wide awake,

a tear in my eye, but a deeper understanding of the Father in my heart and a prayer on my lips. "Thank you dear God for 'so' loving me. Help me to never again quake for Thou art in control." Hamilton, AL.

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"Don't Keep The Faith!"

Allen Webster

Preachers are always telling us to keep the faith. They warn of false teachers and harp about heresies and heretics. They talk about living the faith we profess and exhort us to be vigilant lest we backslide. We are grateful for their persistence. At the same time, there is a sense in which we cannot "keep the faith" unless we "don't keep the faith" (Mark 16:15).

From prison, nearing death, Paul said, "I have kept the faith" (II Timothy 4:7). He was able to say he had kept the faith only because he had given the faith away. He had preached it to pagans and kings, Jews and Greeks, barbarians and scholars (Romans 1:14; Romans 9:1; Acts 17:18; 24:24).

Christians want to save souls, but most need instruction and encouragement. We put it off because we do not know what to say or how to approach them. We make excuses and find alibis. We hope someone else will convert our loved ones. Since it is a fact that in order to share something, we must first have it ourselves, we must first have the right kind of faith before we can share it. What

does God want us to believe?

IN ORDER TO "NOT KEEP THE FAITH . . ."

(1) *WE MUST REALLY BELIEVE WE ARE SAVED.* Until we are absolutely convinced that we are saved, we cannot hope to convince others to want what we have. A "hope so -- maybe so" religion is not worth sharing. Paul had confidence in his salvation, ". . . I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Timothy 1:12).

He knew that it was possible to become a castaway (I Corinthians 9:27), but also knew that he had not shipwrecked. He believed that God had forgiven him in baptism (Acts 22:16) and was continually cleansing him as he walked the lighted pathway (I John 1:7). Thus, he was able to confidently affirm: "For I am now ready to be offered . . . I have finished my course . . . 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" (II Timothy 4:6-8; I John 5:13).

David said, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee" (Psalm 51:12-13).

(2) *WE MUST REALLY BELIEVE THAT OTHERS ARE LOST.* Paul was convinced enough that sinners were lost to travel the world in deprivation to save a few (Acts 13-28; Romans 10:1). Many are not truly convinced that those who have not obeyed the Gospel are LOST (II Thessalonians 1:8)! They will not be in heaven (Revelation 21:27). They will not sneak in the back door or beg entrance at the pearly gate. Angels will take no bribes that day. Only those whose tickets have been punched can enter (Galatians 3:27). The wide road they are traveling ends in hell (Matthew 7:13).

This is not a pleasant thought, but it does no good to ignore it. Each of us and every one of our friends and relatives will be judged on the last great day (Hebrews 9:27). If they are

unprepared, they will be separated from us (Matthew 25:46), cast in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15), and tormented in the flames (Luke 16:24). Their eyes will weep, their teeth will gnash (Matthew 8:12), and their parched lips will beg (Luke 16:24). But it will be too late. Do we believe it!?

(3) *WE MUST REALLY BELIEVE THAT WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.* Somebody cared enough to teach us the truth, that makes us debtors to others (Romans 1:14). Love constrains us to do something (II Corinthians 5:14). But, ever so softly, we hear, "They won't change; there is nothing we can do."

A scientist once conducted an interesting experiment by hanging a huge iron ball beside a small cork ball. He used an electric motor to keep the cork ball swinging against it. After many days of being constantly hit, the 2,000 pound ball began to move. It was soon swinging back and forth. The persistence of the little cork finally paid off.

Continued On Page 4

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

All the good from the Saviour of the world
is communicated through this Book;
but for the Book we could not know right
from wrong. All the things desirable to
man are contained in it.
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The Myth Of The "Gay" Movement

Glenn Colley

On April 25, 1993, 300,000 supporters of homosexual rights marched in Washington, D.C. According to Associated Press, "They marched and chanted and kissed and stretched out on the grass together on a sunny, summery day." What do they want? They call it equality. Eustacia Smith, 25, of New York, who hopes one day to marry her lesbian partner legally said, "The only thing we're asking for is the same thing everyone else wants. Nothing more, nothing less."

Observers said the demonstration signaled a new era for the gay movement. Ron Matson, assistant professor of sociology at Wichita University said, "Now that this is in front of the public, there is no way to put gays back in the closet. It has to be dealt with."

What we read and see today may create a heart of defeat within Christians. We may wave the white flag of surrender in our communities, workplaces, schools, or even pulpits, because we believe America has overwhelmingly gone the wrong way. WELL, I DON'T BELIEVE IT! I am convinced that they want us to believe that a great majority of Americans follow their ungodly message. In this article I want to offer evidence to the contrary.

Consider some recent inconsistencies in the sinful movement called "Gay."

•THE MARCH IN WASHINGTON

U.S. Park Police, the government's official crowd estimator, using aerial photographs and guidelines established in the Federal Register, put the count at the afore-mentioned march at

300,000. Organizers of the homosexual-rights march argued that the number was 1.1 million. They want people to believe they are stronger than they really are.

We may wave the white flag of surrender in our communities, workplaces, schools, or even pulpits, because we believe America has overwhelmingly gone the wrong way. WELL, I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

•THE EXAGGERATED NUMBERS

Homosexuals for years have quoted the landmark Kinsey report from 1948 which said that 10 percent of our population is homosexual. The results of a study this year by the Battelle Human Affairs Research Centers in Seattle, funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, revealed that only 2.3 percent of the men surveyed reported ANY homosexual activity in the past 10 years, and just 1.1 percent said they had engaged in exclusively homosexual sex. The homosexual activists want people to believe they are stronger than they really are.

•THE SLANTED MEDIA

The Readers Digest, May 1993 issue, includes an article entitled "The Real Risk of AIDS." In it the author makes the point that Americans have been subtly deceived by gay activists in regard to the AIDS epidemic.

He writes, "After more than a decade of some of the most intensive reporting ever lavished on any human ailment, the public remains stunningly misinformed about the relative risk of AIDS." When a Gallup poll asked, "What is the most urgent health problem facing this country?", respondents by an eight-to-one margin identified AIDS as a greater threat than cancer. They believed AIDS to be a greater threat than heart disease 20 to one. IN REALITY, among the leading causes of death in America, AIDS ranks ninth. Yet we spend more than twice as much to fight the No. 9 killer as we do to fight the No. 1 killer.

We hear today the "Safe Sex" message, and that "AIDS can happen to anyone." In reality, male victims, such as Magic Johnson, who say they became infected as a result of heterosexual sex, represent but three percent of the total number of persons with AIDS. Almost all people in the U.S. with AIDs, 85%, got the disease from homosexual practices or intravenous drug usage.

For every AIDS victim, there are 16 who die of cancer. For every AIDS victim, there are more than one who die in a car accident, more than two who die of pneumonia or commits suicide. For every AIDS victim, there are more than 28 who die of cardiovascular disease. It is my conviction that the gay myth was created to soften public opinion about the sin of homosexuality. They want people to believe they are stronger than they really are.

My point in this article is this: Preach the Word! Don't

allow yourself to become discouraged into avoiding the moral issues of our day for fear that it's simply a losing battle. Sins, like the various types of fornication (illicit sexual relationships), do have consequences -- and one day we will be judged for the things done in our bodies (II Corinthians 5:10). Keep voicing the truth to our government leaders! Many of them, including our president, fail to realize that unlike race or gender, the practice of homosexuality is a sin.

"For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections; for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature. And likewise also the men,

leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet" (Romans 1:27).

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexual, nor thieves, nor covetous nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:9-11).

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Workers Desperately Needed In Sarawak (East Malaysia)

"A small congregation of the Lord's church in Kuching, Sarawak (East Malaysia) is in desperate need of mission workers," says J. C. Choate, publisher and veteran missionary. "A family or even a team of families is needed to live in Kuching, but also to serve as roving evangelists for the Lord, planting the church in various places throughout Sarawak and surrounding areas, and to continue to visit the newly-formed congregations, encouraging them and helping them to grow."

Workers heeding this call will find that a lot of seeds have already been planted in the area, according to Choate. "Bro. Andrew Ng of Singapore has been helping with the work in Sarawak the past few years, going to Kuching every few weeks to spend some time helping the small church there to grow. He has also encouraged other brethren to come to conduct gospel meetings and schools."

Brother Choate has also been working with Bro. Ng, particularly in the area of literature. "We have printed a monthly magazine, *THE EVANGELIST*, to send all contacts, including Bible correspondence students," explains Choate. "Ads were placed in local papers for Bible correspondence students with some results. To increase this work, we arranged for weekly teaching articles in two of the local newspapers, *The Borneo Post*, printed also in Sibü and Miri, and *The Sarawak Tribune*.

"The ads were designed to do at least three things: to teach a Bible truth each week, to offer a free Bible correspondence course, and to invite readers to attend the services of the church in Kuching. Continuing for one year, they resulted in requests for the Bible course from the major cities of the country: Kuching, Sibü, and Miri, with letters even coming from the neighboring states of Brunei, and Sabah. A few students have obeyed the gospel and others

are still in the process of going through their courses."

Choate also reports that as of the first of the year, Bro. Ng's support was down to the point that he has taken a secular job in Singapore. "This means that he now is unable to make regular trips to Kuching," explains Choate. "Although the Bible correspondence work will continue from the church in Kuching, and the monthly

magazine will still be published and sent out to all contacts, *the fact is someone is desperately needed to give full time to the teaching in Sarawak.*"

According to Choate, the workers can be Chinese or American. But what about visas? "We are told that some of the denominational missionaries have gone in on business visas," says Choate. "Such a business would not have to be big or complicated, only adequate to

satisfy the local authorities. Or, if one did not prefer to do that, it would be possible to live in Singapore and then go on month-long trips to Sarawak to work in Kuching, Sibü, and Miri. Although the church does not yet exist in Sibü and Miri, with the Bible-student contacts already there, surely with a little effort some of these could be converted and congregations could be established."

If you and your family want to

serve God in a very special way and in this very special place, please contact: J. C. Choate, World Evangelism, P.O. Box 72, Winona, MS 38967. The phone and fax number is (601) 283-1192.

For further information, contact: J. C. and Betty Choate, or Connie Lee Krute, World Evangelism, Post Office Box 72, Winona, MS 38967, Phone & Fax: (601) 283-1192.

She Shall Be Called Woman

Betty Burton Choate

[Note: These lessons were written as a series called "She Shall Be Called Woman." However, each article may be used independently.]

Lesson Four:

To Be a Mother-in-Law

The whole world seems to share jokes about terrible mother-in-laws. In many cases the jokes would be untrue or at least an exaggeration. But the old saying, "Where there's smoke, there's fire," is reliable. There would not be universal jokes about bad mother-in-laws unless many were guilty of fitting the description.

Sometimes parents, especially mothers, have problems adjusting to the fact that their children are growing up. Even though they want this, mentally, they are not emotionally ready to accept a role of lesser importance in the lives of their children. Particularly does this tend to be true of mothers with their sons when they marry and either bring home a bride or when they go out to establish their own home. The mother may see the loved son showing attention and preference to his new wife and, as a result, she may feel rejected. Jealousy can develop and lead finally to bitterness and enmity. This causes quarrels and continual problems between the husband and wife as well as between the son and his family.

An unwise mother-in-law may belittle the new bride for shortcomings in her household

work or in her cooking. She may misuse the daughter-in-law, making her nothing more than a servant. The unfairness of such treatment will cause resentment and hatred if it is continued.

But how will the Christian mother-in-law behave? Being a mature woman, she should be well practiced in obeying Christ's command, "And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise" (Luke 6:31). Every problem in every human relationship could easily be solved if all people would obey these directions. What mother-in-law would have wanted to have been ill-treated as a bride? Or what mother would want to see her own daughter belittled and abused? Of course, no woman would choose such treatment for herself or her daughter, so the Christian mother-in-law will not mistreat her son's new wife either.

When a mother-in-law understands God's plan in marriage, she won't feel competition with her daughter-in-law for her son's love. She will realize that there are many kinds of love and that the love of a son for his mother is different and separate from his love for his wife. A new love is developed for each person in one's life, so there is no competition.

But, at the same time, God's plan for marriage is that the husband and wife become one - one flesh, one in purpose, one

in heart. If the mother truly loves her son, she will realize that his wife is now a part of him and she will extend her love for the son to include the bride as well. She should understand that to belittle or abuse the daughter-in-law is actually to do the same thing to the son she loves. And how could there be true happiness between the mother and the son unless the daughter-in-law is included in the love? Of course, it would not be possible.

It is wonderful that even in our human relationships, God's rules provide perfect guidance. "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth . . . let us love one another, for love is of God . . ." (1 John 3:18; 1 John 4:7). When Christian mother-in-laws have God's love in their hearts, they will behave like loving mothers to cherished daughters when their sons bring home brides.

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

I guess you could accurately say that stress is the most common malady of the 1990's man or woman. Sometimes, we are stressed about the future. Forethoughts become fearthoughts, and we lose sleep. Sometimes we are stressed about how the people around us are acting, or about our jobs, or our schooling, or our kids.

Jesus, when talking with people who were apparently filled with anxiety, asked a very relevant question about what causes my stress. It's a question regarding the stress I feel about situations over which I have no control. There's nothing else I can do. Here's the question: "Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature?" (Matthew 6) In other words, we may be putting our foot on the gas and the brake at the same time. Stressed, but not accomplishing anything.

Hopefully, today we will do all we can about the things that eat at us, and then take the edge off the awful stress.

**Be A
Words Of Truth
Subscriber**

The Bible Must Be Exposed To Our Lives

Elwood Holt

The story is told of some savages, to whom was given a sun-dial. So desirous were they to honor and keep it sacred that they housed it in, and built a roof over it. Of course in doing so they defeated the purpose of it.

I often wonder if we have done our BIBLE this way? Do we treat the word of God in like manner? Is it too sacred for us to use daily? Have we built a house around it because we know it is a sacred volume, so that we have shut it off from ourselves? If so, then we are like the savages. We have the wrong attitude toward it.

It is surprising just how many people look upon the Bible as being a book so Holy, physically, that they defame it by merely touching it. I have seen many pick it up with such reverence that one would get the idea that they felt that it should not be touched at all. This is not true of this book. It is not the material book that is sacred; it is the glorious contents of it.

I would not purposely abuse a Bible. I saw a man beat one once, over a period of time, until he tore it up. He didn't mean any harm. He was a good man, but his rough use of the physical book did not leave a good impression upon the hearts of his hearers.

Some few have been known to risk their lives to keep the book from burning when their houses went up in smoke. This is the wrong attitude toward the

Bible. A greater misuse of this sacred volume is the non-use to which the average person puts it.

How long has it been since you read a chapter in the Bible? A few months ago, in our mid-week service, five different men read a chapter from James. James, you know, has but five chapters. It is one of the most wonderful books in the Bible. It is a spiritual tonic for the soul. Between each chapter we had a song and a prayer. Do you have any idea how long it took us to read the book? We didn't read fast. It took less than thirty minutes to read it, including the songs and prayers between chapters. I know because I checked the time when we began and when we ended. Everyone enjoyed the service to the fullest. We were together longer than the 30 minutes but that was all the time required to read an entire book in the Bible. Why, that's not even as long as your favorite television program, is it? And then we say we do not have time to study the word of our Redeemer? Humanity ought to be ashamed for its terrible neglect of this all-important duty. Don't be afraid to read and study your Bibles. When you wear one out, buy another one.

If you want to write in your Bible, do so. Make notes -- write down your favorite passages. I wouldn't have a Bible I couldn't write in. That is

not desecrating the Book. The thing that is Holy is not the paper, ink, and thread -- the thing that is Holy is the divine message contained therein.

A young man committed suicide one time. He placed the Bible over the heart and fired through it. His mother had the preacher to read from the blood-stained book at the funeral service. Did she think that some merit would come from his reading from the particular copy? Did she think her son received special merit

because he held the book over his heart as he took his life? That is a sad story, and shows a perverted way of thinking.

When people show me their new Bibles I tell them to study them now. READ THEM. Meditate upon the eternal words. A close investigation of the great Book will always lead the student to well apply truths. If infidels would only read with open minds, the crop of unbelievers would rapidly diminish. The black flag --

cannot wave where the Bible has a chance, even a small chance. Great minds accept the inspiration of the Bible. Little minds attempt to disprove and belittle the Book.

A sun-dial has to be exposed to the sun to do its work. The Bible must be similarly exposed to our minds and souls to effect in our lives what it can do. GOD GAVE US THE GREATEST BOOK IN THE WORLD. LET US ALL USE IT.

The Church-Perfect Or Not?

Dalton Key

Questions simple to pose are not always simple to answer. Consider the question, "Is the church of Christ a perfect institution?" The answer could be "yes," or it could be "no," depending upon perspective.

The church described in the New Testament is both divine and human-built and bought, cleansed and sanctified of heaven; yet made up of people. The church's divine side has always reflected the majestic wisdom and absolute perfection of God (Ephesians 3:10). The human element, however, has been -- from the beginning -- anything but perfect.

Why were the epistles penned? Were they not written, at least in part, in order to correct the errors, difficulties and people-problems of the first century church? Look again at the Corinthian and Thessalonian letters. These were churches built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ, perfect in purpose and divine design, yet fraught with grievous imperfections, many of which make our more modern-day problems look wonderfully benign by comparison.

The church of our day is both perfect and imperfect -- perfect in divine purpose and doctrine, imperfect in human performance. As we come to acknowledge and embrace this dual nature for the Lord's body we will be in better position to understand one another. Some of us, who see only the divine

side of the church, refuse to admit the possibility of an "imperfect church," and label as heresy and suggestions at change. Yet we must admit that, while the church needs no structural or doctrinal improvements, she is ever in need of betterment in the areas of people and performance. Others among us, who choose to see the church only from the human perspective, the people perspective, scoff at the very mention of a "perfect church," and seem content to allow us to join ranks with the man-made denominational bodies from which the scriptures teach we must remain distinct. And again, while it is true that as

fallible people we need improvement in areas of means and methods, plans and projections, we must not forget that the church is already perfect as designed by New Testament scripture and doctrine. We should not, we must not, we will not go beyond what is written.

In short, God is perfect; we are not. The church as purposed, planned and presented, by God is perfect. It requires no restructuring, no improvements. But from the perspective of frail and fallible humanity, the church will ever be, as all of us are, far from perfection's ideal.

"Don't Keep The Faith!"

Continued From Page 1

Its tapping, over and over again, ever so gently, made that ton of iron move.

Christian, just keep tapping! Rome was not built in a day and souls are not usually won with one invitation or sermon. We may just get through yet -- if we do not give up. How many wives have quit when they were about to get the attention of non-Christian husbands? How many parents gave up just when they were about to get through? Paul said, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9).

A sub went down in World War II. When the frogman finally found them, he tapped in Morse code, "Are you there?"

"We are here."

"Help is on the way," he tapped back.

After a pause, profoundly, he decoded, "How long will it be?" They knew their time was limited and their sub would soon become their tomb. *How long will it be . . .* before we rescue those within a few steps of eternity?

God will bless our efforts (I Corinthians 3:6)! "Keep the faith, but not to yourself!"

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I reveal the Saviour of the World.

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Via Rivergate Messenger
Madison, TN

May 28, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- Should We Offer An Invitation In Our Assemblies?
- Some Thoughts Concerning Unity
- Modesty: Outdated Opinion Or Eternal Truth?
- "Who's In Control?"
- "Most Of A Minute"
- Can Adults Learn From Little Children ?

Volume 29 Number 22
(USPS 691-760)

The Words (Truth

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

Thoughts On Gardening

(From A Non-Participant)

Dale Jenkins

I love fresh vegetables, but my success at growing a garden has been non-existent! I suppose I get it honest, only dad's closest friends have heard about the tomato plants he planted in our backyard when I was growing up (And if I told the story he might write me out of his will). My first attempt at a garden was in 1985. The fellow who had preceded me in my work with the church where I was had a green thumb. He seemingly could toss a few ole' grains out his back door and up would spring a garden that Luther Burbank would be proud of. Now, I must have some kind of green thumb DISEASE! My every attempt was futile. I spend a good part of two day plowing ground that would house a garden that would feed China. It was a relief to plant the thing! I almost lost it when my neighbor told me the rows were to close together and I would have to go through the whole process again (He must have been a relative of Cain.)

The next day found me again tilling, hoeing, planting. Mister Raincloud showed up (unannounced and uninvited) minutes after I dropped the last grain into mother earth. I know I heard my ole' friend (neighbor Cain) chuckle when he told me the torrid of rain we received had washed the seed away (I still don't fully understand that; the seed was in the ground, not on it!). But, as the persistent young preacher I was (in those

days I thought I should do everything that anyone thought I had time to do whether I wanted to or had time to, just to make them accept me), I planted again. All was bliss! About three weeks later, father earth (Also known as Cain) showed up to instruct me that the beautiful corn stalks I thought I had growing were in fact weeds. His instruction caused me to know that gardens had to be weeded a couple of times a week. That a good garden took at least two hours of work a day to maintain. I remain thankful to this day for farmer's markets.

All that is said (in fun) to make a point. When Christ speaks of a man going out to sow (Luke 8:5-ff) he's not talking about an overnight simplistic process. When Paul says, "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase" (I Corinthians 3:6), he's talking about a diligence that many today don't want to foster and a dedication that many today won't partake of.

Let us never be so bold as to think the credit is ours. Such words as those in Psalms 62:9-11 ring out to us "And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing. They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes. But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped." We could

also mention Matthew 15:13 "But he answered and said, 'Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.' Gardening out in the backyard is hard work, but the reward is sweet. Being a husbandman in the Garden of God requires diligence, but the reward is grand. In Acts 18 we read of Paul's work in Corinth, much

more than tossing seeds in the backyard. He labored there over a year (Acts 18:11). Mere men would have believed the opposition was so bad that he should flee for his life (18:9-10). His labors included going onto hostile territory every week (18:4). Growing fruitful vineyards for God is not overnight work. But rest assured, if done faithfully, this garden

will not fail. For we have his assurance of presence (Matthew 28:19-20) and the promise of help from the Master Gardener. "For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, [ye are] God's building" (I Corinthians 3:9).

Called Out Of Darkness Into His Marvelous Light

B. J. Clarke

Have you ever considered what it would be like to be completely blind? Can you imagine living in total darkness? It is unfortunate that many in our world are afflicted with this impairment. They have never seen the beautiful sunrise and sunset. They have never witnessed the colors of God's creation; the bright red cardinal, green meadows, deep blue skies, bright yellow sunshine, rainbows, autumn leaves, etc.,. They have never beheld the rolling hills and majestic mountains that adorn God's splendid creation. They have never shared in the warmth of a human smile, an expressive gleam in one's eye or the beauty of a wedding bride. How blessed we are to have our sight! Our gratitude should be expressed to God daily!

On at least five specific occasions in the New Testament, our Lord Jesus healed the physically blind and called them out of a world of darkness into a marvelous world of light, (Matthew 9:27-31, 12:22, 20:29-34, Mark 8:22f, John 9:1-41). Can you imagine being in a state of total darkness and suddenly having your eyes opened to a flood of light? What immense joy those whom Jesus healed must have felt! We pray that all who are bound in a world of darkness might someday be loosed from this bondage to enjoy the world of light. Physical blindness is indeed a tragedy.

Although difficult to imagine, the Bible speaks of a type of blindness far more tragic than physical blindness. It is spiritual blindness. Paul, Peter and John referred to it as a serious malady. Paul said that Satan had

blinded the minds of the lost so that the glorious light of the gospel would not shine through unto them (II Corinthians 4:4). Peter said that Christians who lacked the "christian graces" were blind (II Peter 1:9). John said that he who hates his brother is in darkness that hath blinded his eyes (I John 2:11). The Scriptures equate sinfulness with living in darkness. God's word often depicts those in spiritual darkness as stumbling and groping for direction (Proverbs 4:19, Jeremiah 23:12, Isaiah 59:10, John 11:10, 12:35f). At one time or another all of us have been spiritually blinded and living in darkness. Those who are in darkness need a source of light. The Scriptures reveal at least three sources of light available to us in this dark

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Should We Offer An Invitation In Our Assemblies?

Glenn Colley

Recently a brother visited our worship and intently wanted to speak with me after the assembly was dismissed. Referring to my sermon, and the fact that I closed by explaining how a person becomes a Christian and offering an invitation to whoever wanted to be baptized that night, he said, "I haven't heard the invitation offered in several months."

In the last couple of years I have been questioned more than once about "offering the invitation" at every worship assembly. Apparently some preachers feel it is more "in vogue" with the modern liberal movement to set aside any traditions without serious concern for their validity and usefulness. The "invitation song" is a case in point.

During their assemblies, Christians for many years have had the practice (tradition if you please), of offering assistance to anyone who wants to obey the Gospel or who wants the prayers of brothers and sisters. Typically this is done with a verbal encouragement and a thoughtful song that is sung while standing to make

acceptance of the offer as comfortable as possible. Is this a practice which has seen it's time and needs removing? I believe not.

Consider the fact that a person CANNOT be baptized without the assistance of another (Acts 8:38). At some point the person desiring to obey Christ MUST ask for assistance.

Consider the fact that a person CANNOT be baptized into Christ without hearing the plan of salvation (Acts 11:48).

Consider that Christians are eager for others to come to Christ, and therefore eager to offer whatever assistance is needed -- anytime (Matthew 28:18 - James 5:19, 20).

Consider that very often something will be said in the sermon which triggers serious contemplation in the heart of the lost individual. That person may never be closer to making things right with God than they are right now.

Consider that in some churches (perhaps most), non-Christian visitors are present for every worship assembly.

Consider that encouragement to obey is often necessary for a person to

make the needed decision. When better to encourage this lost soul than when all the Christians are together in one assembly singing, praying, and studying? By failing to encourage we run the serious risk that the individual in question may die that very night. If they do, the missed opportunity to encourage and offer assistance will forever linger as a "what if."

Consider how many, through the years, and even today, are responding to such invitations.

Consider that all Christians need to be evangelistic and "soul-conscious" about converting the lost. The repetition of the plan of salvation will help keep them familiar with the passages of scripture relative to teaching a sinner how to be in Christ.

Now, consider the possible reasons why men should cease this good practice. I frankly can't think of one -- and until I do, I intend to continue concluding my sermons with a Biblical explanation of how a person obtains forgiveness, whether in Christ or out, and offer the assistance and love of all the Christians in the assembly.

Some Thoughts Concerning Unity

G. F. Raines

The fact that Christianity is exhibited to the world as a system of "conflicting creeds and discordant sects" is extremely lamentable.

As Carlyle said: "Men's hearts ought not to be set against one another, but set with one another, and all against evil only."

The only basis of genuine Christian unity is wholehearted acceptance of and adherence to the teaching of the Bible, which was "given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16, 17).

Paul said to the church at Ephesus: "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 groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:19-22).

"All, both Catholic and Protestant, agree that the church had no rules of faith or practice, at the beginning, nor for many long years after, but the writings or teachings of the apostles and prophets of God" (Elijah Goodwin).

On May 23, 1871, Isaac Errett pointed out that many human creeds "embodying much more philosophy than faith, and substituting metaphysical speculations for the simplicity of the gospel of Christ" had been "erected into standards of orthodoxy and tests of fellowship, so that believers who ought to have been one in Christ were alienated and divided by rival systems of theology, and ruled by party watchwords, such as the Bible knows nothing of, to the great scandal of the cause of Christ." He added: "Authoritative human creeds should be abandoned, and nothing be required as a term of membership in the church, or as a bond of fellowship, for which there cannot be produced a 'Thus saith the Lord,' in express precept or approved precedent."

John Wesley said: "Would God that all party names and unscriptural phrases and forms which have divided the Christian world were forgotten, and that we, as humble, loving disciples, might sit down at the Master's feet, read His Holy Word, imbibe His Spirit and transcribe His life into our own."

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What The Blind Man Saw

(John 9:1-7)

Neal Pollard

In John eight, Jesus had communicated to the unbelieving Jews that he was greater than Abraham and the prophets (8:53-58). The hardness of their hearts caused them to be blinded by the truth of God. The blight of their spiritual sight was so terrible that those Jews sought to stone our Lord. In John 9:13ff, the Pharisees were presented with the man whose sight had been miraculously restored. Even with the overwhelming evidence there before them, they chose to keep the blinders on their calloused hearts. Even the parents of the healed man suffered from spiritual sightlessness. Their lack of vision prompted them to overlook the undeniable miracle because they wanted to look good before their synagogean peers (John 9:18-23). The one least likely to have a clear-sighted view of things was a man blind from his birth. In John 9:1-7, we come to learn of his keen awareness about the diety of Christ. Look at everything the blind man saw.

HE SAW THE LIMITED VISION OF THE DISCIPLES WITH REGARD TO SIN AND SUFFERING (John 9:2). The disciples thought this man's blindness was intrinsically connected to either his or his parents' sinfulness. The followers of Christ speaking in this verse were not the first people to think that way. Neither were they the last. Human weakness often will find one struggling with some malady, disease, or death blaming God, themselves, or someone else. The athiests have always used "sin and suffering" to attempt to disprove the existence of the benevolent God. And, while the text does not give us insight into his thoughts on this matter, the blind man apparently did not share the disciples' theory. Perhaps, while in the synagogue he had heard the divine record of Job's suffering. The friends of Job had postulated that his suffering was the direct result of his transgressions (Job 8, 15,

20, 22, 25). By the end of this Old Testament book, Job sees the end of the Lord and learns the reward of patience (cf. James 5:11). He learns to trust God more than he had. He understands that suffering is an outgrowth of the presence of sin, but not his sin specifically. Perhaps the blind man near the Pool of Siloam had reached the same conclusion. That he maintained faith amidst his affliction is apparent.

HE SAW AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE WORKS OF GOD TO BE SHOWN IN HIM (John 9:3). After nullifying the disciples' theory, Jesus answered, "but [he is blind] that the works of God should be made manifest in him." Despite having grown to adulthood without ever seeing, the blind man is shown to be blessed. He was in a position to be used for God's glory. What higher achievements can we produce than things done by us for God's pleasure? Saul of Tarsus was misguided and blindly zealous in his attempt to destroy the early church. His encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus made him see the glory of God. Ananias, who baptized Saul in Damascus, was told, "Go thy way: for he [Saul] is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:15-16). Saul, later called Paul, was one of the greatest examples of how God works through man. This Christian-killer became a church planter, and all he did was for God's glory (cf. Colossians 3:17; II Corinthians 12:1-7).

HE SAW THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD (John 9:5). He didn't see it literally, of course. But, he would soon be aware that the giver of all things was the one who offered him sight. The light which Christ was shining for this blind man was a light that transcended his senses. The light of kindness, goodness, grace, and love without parallel reached out to restore this man. This miracle

of Christ represented the mission of the Lord. Jesus declared later in this chapter, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which are blind might see; and that they which see might be made blind" (John 9:39). Many centuries after Christ, John Newton penned the penetrating words, "Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost but now I'm found, was blind but now I see." The Great Physician, Jesus Christ, came into this world to heal the disease of the heart and to restore sight to the soul. Sadly, the Light of the world could not cure the blindness of the Pharisees, whose confidence in the flesh disregarded the law of Christ.

"Who's In Control?"

Mike Benson

Question:

"... I have to admit that with the recent turn of events in our nation, I'm not only afraid of the immediate future, but I'm especially afraid for the future of my children. How can anything good come out of a nation whose president supports things like abortion on demand and same sex marriages? And how can I as a Christian give my allegiance to a government that supports such evil? This really concerns me..."

Answer:

These are important questions. Since God has provided us with "ALL things that pertain to life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3), let's go to His word for some answers. Please note:

1. Civil government is ordained by God. Paul wrote, "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God" (Romans 13:1). Does this mean that God approves of every law that our senators and congressmen have sought to establish? No. Does this mean that God endorsed every bill that George Bush may have attempted to enact during his term in office? No. Does this

HE SAW THE LOGIC OF FAITH AND WORKS (John 9:7). He saw an opportunity to be made whole. When Jesus had annointed the blind man's eyes with clay, He told him to "Go, wash . . ." The clay and the water were the means Jesus chose to restore the man's eyesight. Neither the clay nor the water was supernatural. The power was in the authority of Jesus. Apparently, the blind man never stopped to question the logic of Jesus. Rather, "he went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing." Far too many are blinded by human creeds and substitutions which undermine the authority of Christ. Even though the Word of God tells us that baptism is where we contact the blood of

Christ (which cleanses us from all sin), so many are content to be blindly led by the blind. The blind man of John 9 acted on his faith in Christ's power. The result was blessing and wholeness.

The "seeing man" concluded, "Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence He is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes" (John 9:30). Spiritually wretched and blind, the Pharisees closed their eyes and minds to the truth and, instead, cast out the man whom Jesus healed. In verse thirty-five, Jesus tested the man's sight by checking his faith. The healed man replied, "Lord, I believe" (John 9:38)! Never saw a man more clearly than this blind man of John 9.

mean that God will sanction every piece of legislation that Bill Clinton may hope to ratify during his next four years? No. What then does it mean? Simply that our government exists with God's permission and appointment, and therefore, so long as the laws of our government are not in conflict with the will of God (Acts

5:32), we are obligated to comply with them (Romans 13:5-7; Titus 3:1).

2. God is in control of the affairs of our nation, regardless of who IS, or WILL BE, president. In about 603 B.C., the prophet Daniel told a certain Babylonian king that "the Most High rules in the kingdom of

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"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

Is it true that there are few things "so sweet as revenge?" Perhaps one of the most common temptations that plague man is the "get even" temptation. If I believe you have verbally stabbed me in the back, I can't wait to find the perfect chance to insert my verbal blade into your back.

One problem with this philosophy in dealing with these would-be enemies is that if we aren't careful, they will possess us. Think about it; seeking revenge is time consuming, and mind consuming. That person will dominate your thoughts even when they are no where in sight. Seeking revenge will always do you more harm than good.

A young girl ran up to her mother one day all out of breath, and said, "Mother, Susan has done me wrong, and I'm going to get even with her if it's the last thing I do." The mother thought a minute and said, "Honey, when you start out to 'get even,' why not 'get even' with someone who has done you a favor?"

Listen to Jesus on this point: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).

Can Adults Learn From Little Children?

Dempsey Jones

Christ took a little child in the midst of his disciples and said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14). Also in Mark 10:15 Jesus said, "whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

What are some of the examples of children from which adults need to observe and profit? Little children are loveable, friendly, humble, and forgiving. They hold no lengthy grudges toward each other. They forgive almost immediately after having run-ins and disagreements.

There are many good examples of little children that we as adults need to observe, and have observed in bringing up our children.

I could give many examples, but one I remember well. When our son, Bill was about 3 years old, we lived across the street from a good Christian woman, who had a son the same age as

Bill. His name was Tim.

Bill and Tim were the very best of friends. They played together almost every day. One day as they were playing together in Bill's yard, they got into a fussing and fighting situation. Bill said to Tim, "You get off my property and don't ever come back." Tim started running across the road to his house. He started to open the door and go inside, but turned and walked back to where Bill was playing. They immediately started playing together again as if nothing had happened between them. That "mad situation" was never mentioned again and they remained close friends through high school. They held no grudges toward each other. They not only forgave but they forgot.

What tremendous living examples we as adults experience in rearing our children and grandchildren, that should have a bearing on the way we live and how we should conduct our lives as adults. Remember Christ said, "unless we become as little children we

cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

--405 Glenview Drive, Jasper,

AL 35501.

[Editor's note: Brother Jones

is one of our five fine elders in the 6th Avenue Church].

Called Out Of Darkness Into His Marvelous Light

Continued From Page 1

world.

(1) **God Is Light** - Several scriptures attest to this fact. David said, "For thou art my lamp, O Lord: and the Lord will lighten my darkness" (II Samuel 22:29). David restated this idea in several of his psalms (Psalm 18:28, 27:1, 36:9, 118:27). The beloved disciple of the Lord Jesus stated the idea quite clearly when he wrote, "God is light and in him is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5b). The greek language in this passage is quote dogmatic. John uses two negatives to signify that not even one tiny particle, not one speck or spot of darkness can be found in the pure light which flows from the character of God. The sum total of God's divine character is seen in the word light. Christians have been called out of darkness to walk in his marvelous light (I Peter 2:9). Once we come into fellowship with God we can no longer walk in darkness (I John 1:6). To maintain our fellowship with God we must continue to walk in the light (I John 1:7f).

(2) **Jesus Is Light** - The same John who wrote that God is light, affirmed the same thing about the Son of God, Jesus Christ. In the first chapter of

his gospel he noted that John the Baptizer bore witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe (John 1:5-9). Later in this same book, Jesus proclaims that he is the Light of which John wrote. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). A short time later he stated, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (John 9:5). Jesus came into this world to provide a source of light to those who were groping in spiritual darkness. Those who would accept the Light and follow it's guidance would be delivered out of darkness into the kingdom of light (Colossians 1:13, I Peter 2:9).

(3) **The Words Of The Holy Spirit Are Light** - "The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Psalm 19:8B). "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path . . ." "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple" (Psalm 119:105, 130). "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:" (Proverbs 6:23).

These passages plainly show that the words of the Holy Spirit, recorded by men of God, provide guidance and light to the sinner lost in darkness and to the child of God wishing to maintain fellowship with God. This is precisely why Satan, the god of this world, works so hard to blind the minds of unbelievers. Paul said that Satan blinds minds "lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them (II Corinthians 4:4). Satan is well aware of the power that resides within the words of the Bible. He understands that the words of the Holy Spirit more than enough light to dispel the gloomy darkness of his domain. He knows that the words of the Spirit light the pathway to an eternal home with God in heaven. His mission is to keep people in darkness and thus, eternally lost. However, that mission has been thwarted by the providence of the three sources of light we have already discussed. God, Christ and the Spirit's words have made it possible for all to be called out of darkness into marvelous light.

"Who's In Control?"

Continued From Page 3

men, and gives it to whomever He chooses" (Daniel 4:32b). Earlier he had said, "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings. . . ." (Daniel 2:20b-21b). If God could control the mighty Nebuchadnezzar and his empire six centuries before Christ (Daniel 5:18-21), I have no doubt but that He will remain in control during our current president's administration. As Goebel Music aptly points out, "We are living in a time when there is a mighty struggle at the top levels of governmental authority. Men are seeking supremacy over other men and doing their utmost to have dominion over them. It is very clear from sacred Scripture that regardless of his position, power, prestige or popularity, that man is still subject to the

reign and dominion of God."¹ Likewise, Jim McGuiggan suggests, "Long before representative democracy came along, God was getting his way among the nations. Daniel 4; Isaiah 10; Romans 9:17. *Jehovah isn't tied to a ballot box to get His way.*"²

3. Our lives will be much more effective when we recognize that God is in control and we seek to cooperate with His will. Paul wrote, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). See also I Timothy 2:1-2.

¹Goebel Music, "Is It True That God Has The World In His Hands," The Providence of God, p. 471.

²Jim McGuiggan, "The Christian and the government: 13:1-7," The Book of Romans, p. 379.

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ANDREW JACKSON

June 4, 1993

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- "Most Of A Minute"
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- "One For The Road"

Volume 29 Number 23
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The Words of Truth

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

His Yoke Is Easy, His Burden Is Light

B. J. Clarke

It is ironic to consider that Jesus required more than the legalistic Pharisees and yet his way was easier. How could this be? The Pharisees required the performance of certain things without giving consideration to whether these external actions were motivated by hearts given over to God. They were more concerned with external actions than they were with the inner attitude of the heart.

Jesus required more than external actions. He required that these external actions be motivated by changed hearts. Paradoxically, this requires more, but is easier. It is not an oppressive and burdensome thing. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments and his commandments are not burdensome" (I John 5:3). Why are his commandments not burdensome? Because we obey them in love. A song from a few years ago entitled "He Ain't Heavy; He's My Brother," comes near to expressing the thought. I've got to carry my fallen brother, but it doesn't seem like such a burden because of the relationship we have. If I were given the choice of carrying around a 10 pound sack of potatoes or my 35 pound son through an amusement park for 6 hours, I would surely choose my son. Although he is heavier and demands more care and attention, he seems lighter because of my love and

affection for him.

When we serve Christ out of a sense of legalistic duty, we torment our consciences. But when we serve him out of a "faith that worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6), we enjoy the service. The problem of the Pharisees was that they trusted

Allen Webster

There were many false ideas floating about in Jesus' day. Many thought the earth was flat. Jesus, as far as is recorded, never said otherwise. Others thought the sun revolved around the earth. He smiled to Himself. Their medical practices were woefully insufficient. He held His peace. Their geography maps were altogether wrong. He made no waves. They taught false ideas about religion. *He began to preach!*

Is it not interesting that He did not just go along with false religion to get along with His contemporaries? He confronted spiritual error because it was dangerous. One could go to heaven thinking the world was flat or ignorant of the western hemisphere, but could not go disbelieving He was the Christ or practicing immorality.

Jesus went up into a mountain one day, sat down, and began to preach (Matthew 5-7). It could be called the "It-Hath-Been-

Said" Sermon for, in this lesson, He systematically stated false religious positions and corrected them. He was a man of love, but He did not find this inconsistent with refuting error. Actually, it was love for souls and truth that motivated such action. Let's study an "It-hath-been-said" lesson for today.

"It Hath Been Said"

It hath been said that "it does not matter what one believes as long as he is sincere." Many today feel that all that really matters is being a good moral person. We do not, they affirm, have to dot all the "i's" and cross all the "t's" in religion to be accepted by Jesus.

SINCERITY IS NECESSARY. One must be sincere about his service to Christ. If insincere, no matter how much truth he practices, one is unacceptable to God (II Chronicles 25:2). Jesus condemned the hypocritical Pharisees, saying, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with

their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Matthew 15:8). He complimented Nathaniel as being a man "in whom is no guile" (John 1:47). He practiced what He preached (I Peter 2:22). Paul wrote, "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (I Timothy 1:5). Paul was sincere (I Thessalonians 2:3-5). He asked the Corinthians to prove their sincerity (II Corinthians 8:8, 24). He hoped the Philippians would be "sincere and without offense" (1:10). God expects sincerity to characterize young men (Titus 2:6, 7), worship (John 4:23, 24), preaching (II Corinthians 2:17), the Christian life (II Corinthians 1:12) and public relationships (Jude 9:16, 17).

RIGHT DOCTRINE IS NECESSARY. The next question is, "Is sincerity enough?" Centuries ago, Christopher Columbus was

God requires service out of faith and heartfelt motivation and not out of meritorious works alone (Deuteronomy 30:12-14; Matthew 22:37; Luke 11:39-52). The Jews had perverted faith and served the law out of works only. Not only will "faith only" not save; neither will works only. Micah

11:28-30).

demonstrates that God requires more than external works of obedience. A "works only" mindset brings death (Galatians 3:12). To live by faith, obedient faith, brings rest and life. Truly, his yoke is easy and his burden is light because we love him so (Matthew

11:28-30).

warned of sailing off the earth's edge by those who honestly believed it was flat. It is believed that George Washington's life was ended prematurely by sincere doctors who thought bloodletting would help. John Wilkes Booth thought he was doing the country a favor by assassinating Lincoln. Hitler had similar feelings about ridding the world of Jews (Cox). Sincere? Yes. Wrong? Absolutely!

Does the same reasoning apply to religion? Most, when pressed, would admit that at least some tenants of truth are necessary for salvation. For instance, neither a sincere atheist (Psalm 14:1) nor a sincere Hindu or Muslim could be saved (John 8:24).

What does the Bible say? The man who picked up sticks on the Sabbath was sincere, but still displeased God (Numbers 15:32-36). Uzzah was sincere when he steadied the ark of the

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Checklists For The Christian Life

Glenn Colley

Need a spiritual check-up? We sometimes visit our doctor for a physical examination at which time he or she goes down a list of things needing to be checked. The Bible offers several such lists for spiritual examinations.

Considering the Lord's supper, Paul wrote, "But let each man examine himself . . ." (I Corinthians 11:28). Later he wrote, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves . . ." (II Corinthians 13:5).

The following lists are taken from II Peter 1:5-7, Philippians 4:8, and Galatians 5:22-23. Go ahead - take the exam -- see how you do:

AS A CHRISTIAN, I HAVE ADDED TO MY FAITH:

- Virtue (moral courage)
- Knowledge (Knowing more of the scriptures)

- Temperance (self-control)

- Patience (steady faithfulness)

- Godliness (reverence toward God)

- Brotherly kindness (kindness as among family)

- Charity (Love)

AS A CHRISTIAN, I DAILY THINK ON THESE THINGS:

- Things which are true

- Things which are honest

- Things which are just

- Things which are pure

- Things which are lovely,

- Things which are of good report

AS A CHRISTIAN, I BEAR THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:

- Love (A loving person)

- Joy (A happy person)

- Peace (A contented person)

- Long-suffering (Patient with people and problems)

- Meekness (Having a cause bigger than yourself)

- Temperance (Self-control)

These are such good qualities. Of course, we develop them in degrees, ever growing more and more like our Master. Going through these lists has a way of making me see my strengths and weaknesses -- and it makes me realize that molding my character to be like Jesus will sometimes take **HARD WORK.**



Don't be fooled by any imitation descriptions of Christian characteristics. Let's make the concerted effort necessary to build the shining Christian character described in the New Testament.

Judging Others

Marlin Kilpatrick

During the earthly ministry of our Lord, he experienced the afflictions that are common to man (Hebrews 4:15). One such affliction was that His words were sometimes misunderstood. This affliction continues, inasmuch as today Jesus' words are often misunderstood. The passing of judgment on the deeds of another is a good illustration.

Jesus said, "Judge not that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1). It is claimed by some well-meaning brethren that Jesus forbids our judging the actions of another individual, and Matthew 7:1 is often cited as proof of such reasoning. In their effort to sustain such a contention the claim is usually made, "You don't know all of the circumstances." Therefore, supposedly, it is wrong to make a judgmental decision concerning the deeds of another person. But, does the evidence presented in the scriptures warrant such a conclusion? If not, what is wrong with such "reasoning?"

Brethren, a reading of the context in which Matthew 7:1 appears will reveal that Jesus was speaking of judging the motives of others. The kind of judging involved here is of a hypocritical nature (See Matthew 7:1-5). Jesus forbids my judging of another's motives. Motives originate in man's heart (cf. Matthew 12:34-37) and only God is qualified to make such judgments (cf. I Samuel 16:7). However, Jesus is not forbidding every kind of judging. We judge our brethren daily! This is precisely what we do when we speak of a brother

as being "sound in the faith." How can I know another brother is "sound in the faith?" Such knowledge comes by my observation of the other brother's deeds. One is only "sound in the faith" so long as he lives in harmony with God's word. The fine art of judging is practiced by all, including those brethren who misunderstand Matthew 7:1.

The proper interpretation of Matthew 7:1, as with any passage of scripture, will take into consideration the total teaching of God's word on the subject of judging. This is the case because (1) there are DIFFERENT kinds of judging mentioned in the scriptures, and (2) we are, by implication, actually commanded to make certain judgments. Jesus said, "If a man on the sabbath day receives circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:23, 24). This passage demonstrates the two (2) above mentioned situations concerning the making of judgments. There is a "righteous judgment" our Lord commands; hence, a different KIND of judging than of which he spoke in Matthew 7:1. Too, since Jesus actually commands that this kind of judgment be made, it follows that not ALL judging is sinful.

The claim, "You don't know all of the circumstances," is worthy of consideration. This

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Should Christians Support The Salvation Army?

Wayne Jackson

Street bands, trucks collecting items for repair, pleasant looking elderly ladies ringing bells at Christmas time, soup lines -- all of these are identifying marks of the highly publicized Salvation Army, an organization hailed as a veritable paragon of virtue by most religious people. The S.A. is acclaimed for its significant charitable thrust. It operates hotels for the homeless, employment bureaus, hospitals, clinics, leprosaria, homes for unwed mothers, orphan homes and boarding schools. Many

would conclude that such an institution is worthy of highest praise. Admittedly such a benevolent *disposition* is commendable. It is a fact, however, that the Salvation Army is a religious organization unauthorized by the teaching of the Bible, and many of its doctrines are contrary to plain New Testament teaching. There is no virtue in filling a man's belly with food *while filling his soul with error!* Let us briefly consider the S.A. movement.

Origin -- The founder of the

S.A. was William Booth. Booth was born in Nottingham, England in 1829. As a young man he joined the Methodist Church and shortly thereafter, around 1844, he allegedly had some sort of "conversion experience" which led to his becoming a revivalist preacher about two years later. In 1862 he left the Methodists to evangelize among the poor. Booth started the East London Christian Mission in 1865, the name being changed to the Salvation Army in 1878. According to its charter, issued

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Should Christians Support The Salvation Army?

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in New York State in 1899, the S.A. is an organization "designed to operate as a religious and charitable corporation" whose paramount purpose "is to lead men and women into a proper relationship with God" (*What is the Salvation Army?*, pp. 8, 9).

Organization -- The structure of the S.A. bears not the slightest resemblance to that of the church revealed in the N.T. Rather, it is more akin to the hierarchical system of Roman Catholicism. The headquarters of this international system is in London and is under authority of the "General." The General operates through a "Chief of Staff" into various overseas departments where limited administrative decisions are made. "In the United States, The Army is divided into four Territories, with headquarters in New York, Chicago, Atlanta and San Francisco. Each has its own commander with rank of Commissioner or Lieutenant-Commissioner. There is also a National Commander with headquarters in New York . . . (*Ibid.*, p. 10).

Doctrine -- The official creed book of the S.A. is *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine* published by the International Headquarters in London. The "General Order" which prefaces the book states: "This volume contains an exposition of the principle Doctrines of The Salvation Army as set forth in its Deed Poll in 1878. These Doctrines are to be taught in connection with all Salvation Army officers' training operations, both preparatory and institutional. It is required of officers of all ranks that their teaching, in public and private, shall conform to these eleven Articles of Faith." Their claim that the Scriptures constitute the only "divine rule of Christian faith and practice" is completely misleading in light of these articles of faith. The doctrine and practice of the S.A. reveals a dramatic lack of regard for the authority of the Bible. The good deeds of the organization are thus not to the

glory of God: Jehovah is to be glorified only through the church for which Christ died (Ephesians 3:21).

Some of the doctrinal errors of this movement are outlined as follows:

(1) The S.A. teaches that in consequence of our first parents sin, we are born sinners, totally depraved, having inherited a disposition to self-pleasing. (*Handbook*, pp. 85, 86). The Bible does not teach such a notion. Sin is not inherited (Ezekiel 18:20), and "little ones" know neither good nor evil (Deuteronomy 1:29). God is the Father of our spirits (Hebrews 12:9), hence, when they come from Him (Ecclesiastes 12:7), they are as pure as the Source. Man begins to practice evil in his youth (Genesis 8:21). Jesus had a human mother. Was He at least half depraved?!

(2) S.A. doctrine contends that man has no way to be saved simply through the Gospel message of salvation: rather, he must receive a special "illumination of the Holy Spirit" so that he may personally know that Word is true (*Handbook*, pp. 89, 133). This, of course, is in direct contradiction with Romans 1:16 which shows that the Gospel is "the power of God" to save.

(3) The S.A. administers no baptism. They assert that it is not necessary "in order to receive salvation." They reason that there are climates and circumstances which would make immersion impractical, hence only repentance and faith are required (*Handbook*, pp. 185, 186). But, Christ taught otherwise. He commanded that the Gospel be preached throughout the whole world and "he that believes and is baptized shall be saved" (Matthew 16:16). The S.A. has no authority to change this divine ordinance.

(4) The S.A. makes no provision for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Though Jesus plainly said of the memorial supper, "This do in remembrance of me," (I Corinthians 11:24), the S.A.

excludes it, amazingly, that they might testify to themselves and others "against the danger of trusting to any external rite as though it has virtue in itself" (*Handbook*, p. 188). One wonders why the Lord did not think of that! The S.A. "testimony" is that of unbelief!

(5) The use of mechanical instruments of music for Christian worship is not authorized by the N.T. It is an addition to the specific N.T. command to sing (Ephesians 5:19), and it is well-known that it was a human introduction of the 7th century A.D. But "music plays an important part in Salvation Army religious work . . . it is symbolic of the cheerful quality of Salvation Army religion" (*What Is The Salvation Army?*, p. 25). It is further symbolic of the Salvation Army's disregard of sacred truth!

(6) The Army also uses women preachers in its teaching system. Catherine Booth (the founder's wife) was a woman preacher who addressed great audiences. She wrote a vigorous defense of the "female ministry." The Bible prohibits a woman functioning in such a capacity (I Timothy 1:12ff); she cannot be a public preacher to sexually integrated audiences.

(7) In the N.T., the work of the church was supported strictly by freewill contributions from

Personnel Changes In Austin, Texas

The elders of the Southwest Church of Christ in Austin, Texas are very pleased to announce that Gary G. Colley, Sr., has accepted the position of preacher for the Southwest congregation and Joseph D. Meador has been named as the academic director of the Southwest School of Biblical Studies.

Brother Colley and his wife Maggie are moving from Tupelo, Mississippi, where they have enjoyed a very successful work with the East Main Church of Christ.

Brother Meador and his wife Karen are moving to Southwest from their successful work with the Boulevard Church of Christ and the Southwestern School of Religion in Las Vegas, Nevada. There he has preached for the church and served as academic dean in the school.

Gary Colley is the father of Glenn Colley, who edits this paper.

its members (Acts 11:29; I must even "look to the public Corinthians 16:2). The S.A. is for some of its financial involved in various enterprises support" (*Ibid.*, p. 26). No for the raising of money and, Christian should support this according to one of their books, sect.

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

Some people -- even some preachers -- have the mistaken idea that being a Christian will free you from problems and heartaches. "Got financial problems?" they say. "Those will leave you."

"Facing a terminal illness? It's now gone!"

Deep down inside we know it doesn't really work that way. Oh, prayer is powerful, and God listens, but we don't control Him like a light switch. In fact, it may surprise you to know that the Bible doesn't actually promise people freedom from problems if they obey the gospel of Christ. To those disciples closest to Him Jesus said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33).

So, what is the advantage of being a faithful Christian? Listen to the rest of the verse: "But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." As one man put it, "Jesus never promises smooth sailing, but a safe landing."

Sounds Of God

Cindy Colley

A basketball bouncing on my drive;
A soft little song from a girl of five;
The buzz of bees, a whistling breeze;
The splash of the shower, the crash of a tower.

Disposal trashing, compactor smashing;
Clocks dinging, doorbell ringing;
Rain falling, children calling;
Vacuum roaring, someone snoring.

CNN bringing the voice of our nation
While Mama is chatting in phone conversation;
A guitar strumming, a dryer humming;
A microwave zapping, a Collie pup yapping.

Piano scales practiced on old worn out keys;
Fireside conversations of old memories;
The squeaking of rockers on tired rocking chairs;
The patter of feet going up and down stairs.

The laughter at dinner, the jokes of a child;
The living room wrestling when everyone's wild;
The squibbles and squabbles of small girls and boys;
My! How God blessed us with all of this noise!

A Father's voice telling the story of old;
A hymn in the night when the story is told;
The children petition their Father in prayer.
Sweet sounds of our home, for He lives with us there.

Do you ever take time at your house to be still
And listen with ears that are tuned to His will?
To sounds of His blessings . . . to voices that pray?
Does God live at your house? Have you heard him today?

May, 93

"One For The Road"

Dale Jenkins

He was about sixteen years old. His earring, pack of cigarettes and clip-on tie gave him away, but not before his obvious nervousness about being here did. "Here," was the local funeral home. I'd been called by a Brother in Christ to say a few words at the funeral of a family member. Though he was fairly distant kin to the deceased, he was the closet family member who had any connections to a preacher. None of the family had been church goers for many years. It was quickly obvious that most all of them were living pretty rough lives. But back to the sixteen year old.

I first saw him sitting on the curb of the parking lot, smoking. Even his walk had an attitude. I was waiting for a few more family members to arrive so the funeral could begin. He walked into the room where I was. "Are you the owner?" he began.

"No." "Are you the Father or Priest?"

"I'm the minister."

The deceased was his uncle and it was obvious the young man didn't want to be there. "I've never been in a place like this," he continued as he fiddled with his cigarette box. "I mean a funeral home, or a church or nothin. All this cry'n and stuff. It's not my kinda' show. And I

won't be coming back," he concluded emphatically.

"Yes you will, someday." I challenged. "You'll be right where that fellow is," as I pointed in the direction of the casket.

"If I die, I want a wake and I want to be cremated. I want my best friends to have a party and the urn that my ashes are in to be sitting in the room with them. I want one of them to open the lid and pour a bottle of whiskey in and say, 'One for the road buddy.'" Then, he put a cigarette in his mouth, turned quickly and walked away before I could respond.

I have to admit that I was stunned. Never had I seen such

brashness in a boy. "Why, he's only a handful of years away from my little boy's age," I thought. May I suggest to you two thoughts:

1. What is it that made this young boy so calloused? May I suggest to you it was that he had no God in his life but his own thoughts. He is part of a growing number in our once Christian nation who are receiving no training at home or at school and who are being bombarded by an anti-God, anti-religion, anti-Scripture media and educational system. Where is the joy in life if our only goal is self-fulfillment, need gratification and pragmatism? Where is the purpose in life if there are no answers to our basic questions? Parents, you had better be training your children.

2. God's love can penetrate even the coldest heart. It didn't take long for me to realize that I would in a matter of moments be speaking to the roomful of people who had shaped this young man's world view. No, Lazarus and three points on grieving would not fully minister to this family. "Have you ever stopped to think, what

if there is a God?" I began. I planted a couple of ideas that should make people think that there must be a God. "And what if there is a God and He chooses to communicate with us through the Bible? What if there is a God that loving? Shouldn't it affect us? If there is no God there is no eternal loss for those of us who spend our lives in service, but if there is a God..."

I wish I could tell you that the boy ran me down after the service to tell me he wanted to know more. That would make for a much more exciting close, but he didn't. I wish I could tell you I saw a tear roll down his cheek as I spoke of the God who loves us, but I didn't. I just hope he was listening and maybe someday, some place, some way he will be receptive to the message of God's love. I just hope it's before he comes back to the funeral home.

"It Hath Been Said"

Continued From Page 1

covenant, but was still punished (II Samuel 6:6-7). Saul of Tarsus was sincere when he persecuted Christians (Acts 23:1), but was wrong (Acts 9:4).

The Bible shows great concern for right doctrine. Jesus said, "Take heed that no man deceive you" (Matthew 24:4). Paul told Timothy to "charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (I Timothy 1:3). Jesus said, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:3).

OBEDIENCE IS NECESSARY. One might have the right doctrine, sincerely believe it, and still be lost. Obedience is necessary for salvation. Some Christians have the idea that attending a few services will save them. Sitting in a church building does not make one a Christian any more than sitting in a henhouse makes one a chicken! Obedience to God's truth and appropriating His grace saves!

Without obedience, one cannot enter the kingdom. Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). There will be sincere people surprised by their verdict on Judgment Day (Matthew

7:22-23). Sadly, they will face flaming fire at Christ's second coming (II Thessalonians 1:7-9; John 12:48). Jesus asked a question that needs to be repeated to many religious people today, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46; cf. 19:19-22). Some, by their actions, ask Pharaoh's question, "Who is the Lord that I should obey him" (Exodus 5:2). "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22).

Without obedience, one cannot be made free from sin. Paul said, "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" (Romans 6:17). Note carefully that the Roman Christians were no longer sinners (servants of sin), because of two things. First, they obeyed from the heart -- sincerity. Second, they obeyed God's "form of doctrine" -- obedience to truth. In this context, the form of doctrine refers to Jesus being killed, buried and resurrected. They had crucified the old person (lifestyle), been buried in water (baptism) and resurrected (from the water) to walk a new life (6:3, 4).

Without obedience, one cannot

have a purified soul. Peter taught that sincerity, "rightness" in doctrine and obedience are required. "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" (I Peter 1:22). Notice salvation (purified souls) is attributed to *obeying the truth* (conformity to New Testament teaching). Further, Christians must practice unfeigned (unpretended) love and possess pure (sincere) hearts.

Without obedience, one cannot show his love for Christ (John 14:15). John said, "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:3, 4; cf. 5:3). Truth sets men free (John 8:32); but only after it is obeyed (Hebrews 5:8, 9).

Watch out for "It hath been said." Trust in the words of Christ, "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).

claim involves at least two (2) implications. One, it is implied that only one who possesses "total knowledge" is qualified to make a judgment of another's deeds. This is a false conclusion. The only man who ever walked this earth possessing "total knowledge" is our omniscient Savior, Jesus Christ. If such a requirement (possession of "total knowledge") exists, then no person now living can obey Jesus' words in John 7:23, 24. A second implication is that "circumstances" determines the sinfulness of one's conduct. This, too, is a false conclusion. Brethren, this is nothing but the false philosophy known as "situation ethics," gone to seed! One may allow his "circumstances" to affect his conduct, but the sinfulness/righteousness of his conduct is

Judging Others

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determined by his transgression of, or, his obedience to God's word (cf. I John 3:4; Romans 6:16-18). David allowed his "circumstances" to lead him into sin with Bathsheba, but he was still guilty of adultery!

Brethren, our judging of others should always be tempered with meekness (Galatians 6:1). The harsh, unkind, hypocritical manner of judging, Jesus forbids. Too, the judging of another's motives must be left to God for He alone knows the heart of man. But, we should also remember Jesus said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits . . ." (Matthew 7:16). The judging of another's "fruit" (his deeds) is not sinful. What think ye?

--802 Kingsland Drive, Folkston, GA 31537.

June 11, 1993

See Inside Articles:

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- The Beautiful Eyes Of Jesus
- Can A Faithful Christian Be A Member Of The Masonic Lodge?
- 7 Things Wrong With "Masonic" Doctrine
- Most Of A Minute
- Can A Mason Go To Heaven?
- "Will The Earth Remain Forever?"

Volume 29 Number 24
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The Words (Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak the Words of Truth and soberness." -- Acts 26:24

Nothing But The Blood

Neal Pollard

The entire circulatory system of the human body works on a red, fluid fuel which God, as the great designer, placed within us to sustain life. In a profound statement of truth, Moses leaps centuries ahead of scientists everywhere by declaring through inspiration that "the life of the body is in the blood. . . ." (Leviticus 17:11). Yet, here, Moses is telling the Levitical priesthood, the Israelites, and mankind of all ages that because the experience of physical life without death was forfeited by sin, eternal life can be imparted only by an atonement, or pardon. Paul calls this pardon "peace" in Colossians 1:20 by stating, "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, all things-- earthly or heavenly-- are reconciled." Only through the sinless Savior's blood sacrifice could we have eternal life! The Hebrew writer reveals the following divine truth: "And without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). As all men have sinned (Romans 3:23), as all men need God's grace to be redeemed (Romans 3:24), and as the blood of the incarnate Christ Jesus was the fulfillment of grace (Romans 3:25), man learns that nothing but the blood of Christ can give him a hope which transcends the grave! Notice the following.

Nothing But The Blood Will Justify (Romans 5:9). Sin not

only separates man from God, it also separates him from his better self. Through the plan of redemption, the sinless Messiah takes us, as enemies of God, and reconciles us to God. Justify literally means to "make righteous." II Corinthians 5:21 says, "God made him who had no sin so that we become his righteousness." Peter says that the "JUST died for the UNJUST . . ." (I Peter 3:18). The result of the blood of Christ is that obedient man 1) is brought to God, 2) crucifies self, and 3) lives by the Spirit. It took the blood of Christ to make us righteous!

Nothing But The Blood Will Redeem (Ephesians 1:7; I Peter 1:18-19). The idea that God does not want us to perish (II Peter 3:9) is proven by His attempt to get us back!!! What immeasurable love God possesses that he would want back sinful, wretched man! According to Paul, the way God "buys us back" is through Christ's blood. The buying back is called the forgiveness of sins in Ephesians 1:7. In I Peter 1:18-19 we learn that we could not have been purchased with any vile, earthly thing. It took the precious blood of one (Christ) who was perfect and sinless. Lost soul and erring Christian, is it not a beautiful thought to know God wants you? It took the blood of Christ to buy us back!

Nothing But The Blood Of Christ Will Release (Revelation 1:5). "And from Jesus Christ, the trustworthy witness, the

firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the Kings of the earth. To him who loves us, and released (loosed) us from our sins by his blood . . ." Through baptism (where we contact the blood), we are released from past sins, from eternal chains, from the guilt of sin, and from the old man. The truest of liberations comes in putting ourselves on the cross of self-denial (cf. Matthew 16:2

Nothing is more constricting and enslaving than SIN. It took the blood of Christ to release us!

The Bible places so much significance on the blood as heaven's means of saving us. The blood of Christ can and will justify, redeem, and release us. That is the definition of grace. We are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8). If

we view the grace of God as a costly gift, how can we not but respond to that grace by being and doing what God requires of us?

NOT MONEY. NOT LOOKS. NOT BRAINS. NO! NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD OF JESUS!!!

--P.O. Box 15, Livingston, AL 35470.

Secret Fraternal Orders

Johnny Ramsey

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

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

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

Members of the church in such orders need to be taught, warned and then withdrawn

from if they persist in such arrangements.

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

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

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

I'm In The Club

Glenn Colley

It is not uncommon for Christian men and women to enjoy membership in social or civic organizations known as "clubs." A club is "a group of persons associated for some common purpose." (Webster) Many communities enjoy the benefits derived from organizing civic organizations and providing needed services which couldn't be achieved individually. These clubs can be good, and Christians can enjoy membership.

Occasionally however, a question will arise regarding possible conflicts between a person being a member of Christ's church, and being a member of a particular club. For example, a Christian would naturally be concerned about being in fellowship with a group which advocates the sins of dancing, gambling, consumption of beverage alcohol, or false worship to God. The concern wouldn't simply be with whether the Christian would PARTICIPATE in these sins, (we assume he/she wouldn't), but also the question of being in FELLOWSHIP with a group supporting these wrongs. It is interesting that the word "fellowship" is often used as a title for various clubs. We are warned in God's word, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11). Therefore the Christian must ask, "Does this club publicly endorse/ participate

in ungodly practices or beliefs?" If the answer is yes, the Christian should remember his/her greater commitment to Christ, and either change the club or leave the club.

Some organizations present serious spiritual problems to the devoted Christian considering membership into their ranks. The Masons are such a group. I have never been a Mason, but it takes little effort to find abundant evidence to warn Christians against joining. I realize that some Christians are members, and that they would argue that I don't have a clear picture, and that I couldn't have without being a member myself. After reading material on Freemasonry however, I believe it is the Christian/Mason's picture which needs focusing. The evidence discouraging Masonic membership is very strong.

In the book CAN A CHRISTIAN BE A MASON¹, a debate on Freemasonry held in 1952, we find these enlightening words:

"Masonry teaches that unless a man is a Mason he is in darkness, helplessness, and ignorance. One of the most prominent authorities in Masonry has the following to say about the candidate who is about to become a Mason: 'There he stands, without our portals, on the threshold of his new Masonic life, in darkness, helplessness, and ignorance. Having been wandering amid the errors,

and covered with the pollutions of the outer and profane world, he comes to our doors SEEKING THE NEW BIRTH, and asking a withdrawal of the veil which conceals divine truth from his uninitiated sight.'"²

Yes, Masonry has the audacity to proclaim that a man is in 'darkness, helplessness, and ignorance' if he is not a Mason. If not a Mason a man is a wanderer 'amid the errors' and is 'covered with the pollutions of the outer and profane world.' Does any brother in Christ believe this? If this doctrine is true, what virtue is there in simply following the Bible and being a Christian? According to Masonry, a man could be a saint of God, a member of the blood purchased church of the Lord, and still be in darkness, helplessness and ignorance; and even without the NEW BIRTH, and know nothing about 'divine truth!'"

In this special issue of WORDS OF TRUTH, I offer for our readers several excellent articles on this interesting subject. I hope you find the issue helpful for yourself, or for a friend.

Footnotes: ¹"Can a Christian be a Mason?" by Pat Hardeman, Temple Publishers, Tampa 4, Florida, copyright 1953, pg. 103.

²Manual of the Lodge, by A. G. Mackey, p. 20, and quoted in The Master's Carpet, by E. Ronayne, p. 85.

The Beautiful Eyes Of Jesus

But when He saw the multitude, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

Matthew 9:36

Could It Be That I Don't Care?

I went to a neighbor's house yesterday.
We're as close as we can be.
We talked about our children
And ate cookies with our tea.

I looked at her and saw a friend
My thoughts with whom I share.
I didn't see the starving soul.
Could it be that I don't care?

I watched the news last night at ten.
They pictured a young ragged man.
He'd entered and robbed a liquor store
With a rifle in his hand.

I watched as they gave his sentence --
"He got what's only fair."
I didn't think about the state of his soul.
Could it be that I don't care?

I saw the copy of the death rate today.
Every second there's two or so
Sixty million every year
"I'm glad it's no one I know."

"Can you imagine that someone so often
Is losing His life somewhere?"
I didn't think of the loss of his soul.
Could it be that I don't care?

Then I thought of the eyes of Jesus
When he looked over Jerusalem and cried.
He cared enough for the state of those souls
That in agony he bled and died.

The love of Christ constrains me.
But by his mercy, I could be there.
Let me look through the eyes of Jesus
And show I really care.

Sami Nicholas



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Can A Faithful Christian Be A Member Of The Masonic Lodge?

Gary Workman

No, a man cannot be a true Christian and a Mason at the same time any more than he could be a Christian and a Moslem at the same time. Here are only a few of the reasons why:

(1) Christianity and Masonry are both *religious institutions!* Notice the following quotations from Masonic sources:

"There has been a needless expenditure of ingenuity and talent, by a large number of Masonic orators and essayists, in the endeavor to prove that Masonry is not religion . . . On the contrary, I contend, without any sort of hesitation, that Masonry is, in every sense of the word, except one, . . . an eminently religious institution - that it is indebted solely to the religious element which it contains for its origin and for its continued existence, and that without this religious element, it would scarcely be worthy of cultivation by the wise and the good" (*Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, revised edition, II, pp. 617-618).

"The tendency of all true Masonry is toward religion . . . Look at its ancient landmarks, its sublime ceremonies, its profound symbols and allegories -- all indicating religious doctrine, commanding religious observance, and teaching religious truth, and who can deny that it is eminently a religious institution?" (*E of FM*, II, p. 618). "Masonry, then, is, indeed, a religious institution; and on this ground mainly, if not alone, should the religious Mason defend it" (*E of FM*, II, p. 619).

(2) Masonry is a *false* religion, claiming to have arisen from primitive paganism through inspiration of God, and to have filtered through various world religions including Judaism and Christianity.

"Masonry is ordained of God (*Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*, p. 25).

"Masonry is identical with the Ancient Mysteries" (*M & D*, p. 625).

"The Holy Kahalah, or tradition of the children of Seth, was carried from Chaldea by Abraham, taught to the Egyptian priesthood by Joseph, recovered and purified by Moses, concealed under symbols in the Bible, revealed by the Saviour to St. John, and contained, entire, . . . in the Apocalypse of the Apostle" (*M & D*, 97).

(3) Masonry is a system of religious *error*, teaching that which is contrary to Christianity and truth. Notice the following quotes from Masonic doctrine along with scriptures that show them to be error.

"Every Masonic Lodge is a temple of religion and its teachings are instruction in religion. . . This is the true religion" (*M & D*, pp. 213-214).

But God "dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 17:24), and only the church is his temple (II Corinthians 6:16).

"Masonry alone preaches toleration, the right of man to abide by his own faith" (*M & D*, p. 74).

Jesus said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

"The Mason's creed" is that "no man . . . has any right in any way to interfere with the religious belief of another" (*M & D*, p. 167).

Jesus said, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20).

"It is an imperative law of God's economy, unyielding and inflexible as Himself, that man shall accept without question the belief of those among whom he is born and reared" (*M & D*, p. 165).

Jesus said, "I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matthew 10:35-36).

"We do not tell the Hebrew

that the Messiah whom he expects was born in Bethlehem nearly two thousand years ago, and that he is a heretic because he will not so believe" (*M & D*, p. 524).

Jesus said, "Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).

"The doctrines of Zoroaster were the best which the ancient Persians were fitted to receive; those of Confucius were fitted for the Chinese; those of Mohammed for the idolatrous Arabs of his age. Each was a truth, for the time. Each was a gospel preached by a reformer" (*M & D*, p. 38).

Paul said, "But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8).

"Freemasonry . . . incessantly tends toward spiritual perfection, and the fusion of the creeds and Nationalities of Mankind" (*M & D*, p. 625).

Jesus said, "Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not shall be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13).

Masonry's "religion is that general one of nature and primitive revelation -- handed down to us from ancient and patriarchal priesthood -- in which all men may agree and in which no men can differ" (*M & D*, p. 619).

The Gospel was given "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name" (John 20:31).

(4) A man can profess to be a Christian and still be a Mason,

but a man cannot be a Mason and still be a true Christian. Christianity is exclusive of any rival religious system or philosophy: "There is one body,

and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all" (Ephesians 4:4-6).

7 Things Wrong With "Masonic" Doctrine

A Religion

Perhaps we should begin by showing that Masonry is a religion. To do so, we quote from an authorized Masonic publication, "*All the ceremonies of our order are prefaced and terminated with prayer because Masonry is a religious institution*" (*Mackey's Lexicon, Art, Prayer, Standard Freemasonry Illustrated*, p. 35). Again, "*I contend, without any sort of hesitation, that Masonry is . . . an eminently religious institution*" (*Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, p. 727). "*Masonry, then, is indeed, a religious institution; and on this ground mainly, if not alone, should the religious Mason defend it*" (*Ibid.* p. 729). "*Every Masonic Lodge is a Temple of religion and its teachings are instruction in religion*" (*Morals*

and Dogma, p. 213). Succeeding thoughts will show why Christians cannot be connected with such religious bodies.

Bible False

The Masonic work, *Morals and Dogma*, declares, "*The doctrines of the Bible are often not clothed in the language of strict truth*" (p. 224). How could a Christian be connected with any religion that thinks the word of God is not strict truth. Jesus claimed to be the truth (John 14:6), and he said the word of God is truth (John 17:17). He further said we are saved by the truth (John 8:32). If the word of God is not truth, we cannot be saved by the word, yet read Romans 1:16. Beloved, **the Bible is truth. Masonry is false.**

Continued On Page 4

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

When was the last time you heard someone discuss some part of an automobile and say, "they sure don't make them like they used to." This same reasoning applies to so many things around us. Somehow we often have a broad, sweeping view that older things were certainly put together better than now.

It's true, of course, that some things will be hurt if any change is ever made to them. Like God's plan of salvation. It cannot be improved, because the One who invented it is absolutely perfect. Men may seek to alter or change it, but they only end up abandoning it -- because in reality, it cannot be changed.

Jesus said in Mark 16:15 "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."

Aren't you glad that, in a world where things are being constantly changed, sometimes for the worse, that Christians are still made the same old way?

Be A
Words Of
Truth
Subscriber

7 Things Wrong With "Masonic" Doctrine

Continued From Page 3

Fellowship With Evil

"Masonry, around whose altars the Christian, the Hebrew, the Moslem, the Brahmin, the followers of Confucius and Zoroaster, can assemble as brethren and unite in prayer to the God who is above all the Baalim, must needs leave it to teach of its Initiates to look for the foundation of his faith and hope to the written scriptures of his own religion" (Morals and Dogma, p. 226). The religions above named are false religions. How can Christians unite with them in prayer and/or allow each to follow his/her own way, yet agree to walk together (cf. II John 9-11; II Corinthians 6:14-18)? Only those who do Jesus' will are his disciples (John 15:14). Non-believers in Jesus are condemned (John 8:24). Such are all groups above, except Christians.

Hell To End

"It is the fine dream of the greatest of the Poets, that Hell, becoming useless is to be closed at length, by the aggrandizement of heaven; that the problem of Evil is to receive its final solution, and Good alone, necessary and triumphant, is to reign in eternity" (Morals and Dogma, p. 847). This is a clear denial of Bible teaching. For example, "everlasting fire . . . punishment" (Matthew 25:41, 46); "eternal damnation" (Mark 3:29). How dare anyone contradict these inspired statements? How could any God-fearing person be joined to that which contradicts inspiration?

Many Redeemers

The Kentucky Monitor thinks there are many saviors or redeemers. For example, they say Jesus is the Christian's savior, Krishna the Hindu's, Kioun-tse the mediator of the Chinese, and Hiram Abiff the redeemer of Masons (pp. 26, 27). Yet, the Bible says Jesus is the savior of all (Matthew 1:21; Acts 4:10-12; John 14:6). Masons, therefore, contradict the Lord's word. Question: Can a Christian be joined to that which makes a liar out of the Lord? Indeed, will a Christian

want to be a part of such an organization, even though it does much good (cf. Ezekiel 18:24)?

Titles

Masons call fellow Masons "Worshipful Master," "Most Worshipful Master," and "Right Worshipful Master." This is similar to the Catholics calling their head the Pope, Holy Pontiff. Beloved, read your Bible and you will reject

such folly. For example, read Matthew 23:5-12. Let all titles belonging to deity (God) be reserved for deity (God). Let not man desire to wear titles belonging to deity. Let no person call others by titles belonging to deity. The choice is yours -- God or Satan (Matthew 6:24).

Promotes Sin

Masonry sponsors dancing, promotes oaths that are so

ridiculous that they are absurd (e.g. Swearing to perform duties without any mental reservation or have their throat cut, tongue torn out by the roots, etc.), favor other Masons, shield other Masons in everything except murder and treason, resist immorality with other Mason's wives, but not necessarily with other men's wives, etc. Beloved, read Galatians 5:19-21; 6:10;

Matthew 5:34; I Corinthians 7:1-2.

Conclusion

Some Masons may not believe and/or go along with the foregoing. If you do not, you need to get out of it. If you do, you need to get out of it. Nothing can be right that contradicts the Bible, either in principle or practice. No one can be right and be a part of that which is wrong, that which violates the word of God.

Can A Mason Go To Heaven?

David P. Brown

YES . . .

1. IF God will accept mere men being addressed as "Worshipful Master," "Most Worshipful Master," and "Right Worshipful Master," or in the case of the Eastern Star, "Worthy High Priestess," or "Royal Matron," etc.

2. IF God will accept Christians who have been blind-folded, kneeled, and with hands on the Bible have taken as a solemn oath "in the presence of Almighty God and this Worshipful Lodge erected to Him and dedicated to the holy Saint John, do hereby and hereupon most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear . . ." and have been made a "Master Mason" (3rd degree); a "Mark Mason" (4th degree); a "Past Master" (5th degree); and then a "Most Excellent Master" upon taking the sixth degree.

3. IF God will accept prayers worded in the following manner from Christians and non-Christians. "And when we shall have ended our labors on earth, may we forever sing songs of deliverance and joy in that Heavenly Lodge where love is supreme and the ties of fraternity and friendship are never to be broken. Amen." (Masonic Manuel, Grand Lodge, A. F. and A. M. of Alabama, Compiled under Authority of the Grand Lodge by Oliver Day Street, 1940, Reprint 1943, Premier Printing Company, Birmingham, Alabama, p. 145).

4. IF God will save other religious institutions other than

the church of Christ. "Masonry, then, is, indeed, a religious institution; and on this ground mainly, if not alone, should the religious Mason defend it." (Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, McClure Publishing Co., Philadelphia, 1917, p. 729).

5. IF, along with the church of Christ, God will accept Masonry as a divine institution. "That the institution is of Divine origin, leaves not a shadow of doubt of my humble mind." (The Freemason's Monitor, Z. A. Davis, Late Past

Master of Lafayette Lodge, No. 71, p. 4 of the preface).

6. IF God will accept the following statement about the deceased Mason made at Masonic funerals. "As a reminder to the living of that rectitude of conduct which should characterize man in this life, we deposit this apron with the body of our deceased brother with the hope that the virtues symbolized by it will gain ready passage for him from our imperfect lodge here

to that all-perfect, celestial lodge above where there is a higher, a wider and a brighter realm of life and labor" (Masonic Manuel, p. 84).

7. IF God will accept the doctrine that whatever a man believes to be the truth is the truth to him (Morals and Dogma, Albert Pike, p. 160).

8. IF God accepts people into heaven contrary to His will (Matthew 7:21; II John 6-11).

"Will The Earth Remain Forever?"

Mike Benson

Question:

"Some people recently came to my door to discuss religion. They said that the earth will not be destroyed, but that it will remain forever. I didn't know how to answer them. Will it remain forever, or will it cease to exist? What do you think?"

Answer:

Thank you for your inquiry. Let's examine what the Bible says:

1. The Bible actually says that the earth will abide forever. "And He built His sanctuary like the heights, like the earth He has established forever" (Psalm 78:69). "You who laid the foundations of the earth, so that it should not be moved forever" (Psalm 104:5). See also Psalm 148:3-6.

2. However, the word "forever" as it is used in these passages does not refer to limitless, endless time. In the Old Testament the word

"forever" comes from the Hebrew word Olam, Olam is defined as "forever, everlasting, perpetual, old, ancient."¹ Notice carefully that the word does not always refer to limitless, never-ending time. It can, and often does refer to a long, yet limited period of time. This is the case with the aforementioned passages.

There are numerous examples of where "forever" does not mean limitless, endless time. Note:

Genesis 17:7ff says that circumcision was to be an "everlasting covenant" between God and Abraham's descendants. However, students of the New Testament know that circumcision as a religious rite was abolished. See Acts 15:1-2, 10-11; Ephesians 2:15. Thus, circumcision was not "forever."

Leviticus 16:31, 34 says that the Day of Atonement was to be kept "forever." But students of

New Testament know that the Day of Atonement was ended and that Christ became our atoning sacrifice (Hebrews 9:25). Thus, the Day of Atonement was not "forever."

The Bible does not always use the word "forever" as we do in our modern language. If one does not understand this, he will be confused on this point as he studies the scriptures.

3. The earth will be destroyed at the second coming of Christ. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up" (II Peter 3:10). Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matthew 25:35).

¹Theological Workbook of the Old Testament, Vol. II, p. 672.

June 18, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- Three Easy Arguments To Prove The Necessity Of Water Baptism
 - "Did God Approve Of Rahab's Lie?"
 - God Has A Pattern In The New Testament
 - The Other Mission Field In Personal Evangelism
 - "Most Of A Minute"
 - From The Editor

Volume 29 Number 25
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The Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak I words of truth and soberness." -- Acts 26

Shall We Decide!

Jerri Manasco

These are remarkable times. It is remarkable that so many people are so determined to do so much that is so contrary to the will of God! The Bible has not changed, but men have changed in their attitude toward the Bible. The scriptures are still the inspired word of God, and as such are still the absolute standard for all who want to learn what is right (II Timothy 3:16-17). God simply has not removed the emphasis upon His Holy Word. Today, however, we see more and more a move toward arbitrary compliance to the Bible. By this I mean that what used to be accepted without question as the divine will is now being questioned as perhaps not universally or eternally binding. Conventions are held by different religious groups to decide if this or that passage is "relevant" any longer. Has God changed? NO!

God gave instructions to Noah to build that famous ark. "Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the

ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it" (Genesis 6:14-16). What decisions did Noah have to make?

If Noah had lived today, would he call a convention of delegates to determine just how much of this had to be done as God said? Would he call a convention or conference to decide if it was really relevant to the times or sophisticated enough to appeal to the people? Would he have to have a vote of learned Bible scholars to see if the majority of them understood God to say what he said! The fact is GOD HAD ALREADY MADE THE DECISION! Noah's choice was simple: obey or disobey. Noah chose to obey. "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Genesis 6:22). Noah by faith brought his thinking into line with God's revelation (Hebrews 11:7).

God instructed Israel to escape the death of their firstborn in Egypt by placing the blood of a lamb on the doorposts of their houses (Exodus 12). That was plain enough to understand. Moses and Aaron had no right to clear this instruction with the elders of Israel before implementing the divine orders. They had but one decision to make: obey or disobey. No convention or

conference was in the plan! They knew what to do and did it.

Moses was instructed to build a tabernacle. As a matter of fact God saw to it that Moses understood that it was not up to a convention or conference or "church council" to vote on the matter! God said, "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount" (Exodus 25:40). This is quoted in Hebrews 8:5 in order to impress upon the New Testament saints the importance of doing it God's way. Any other construction project would have defeated the whole purpose. What decision did Moses have to make? Very simple: obey or disobey. Notice, too, that God's way was the way God told him to do it! It was the only way it could be done and be blessed.

Israel was told to march around the walls of Jericho a set number of times. Then there was to be a shout and the blast of the rams' horn. The result would be that the walls would fall and Jericho would be the prize (Joshua 6). Did Israel hold a conference to decide if that was really necessary? Did Joshua call together the Israelite scholars to determine the real import of the instructions? NO! The orders were plain enough. All that remained was the decision of Israel: obey or

disobey! Hebrews 11:30 tells us that by faith they did what God said and got the results God promised. God had already made the decision of what to do and why to do it. That settled the matter.

Should we teach people today to repent of sin and obey the gospel? Shall we call together the "scholars" to let us know the "real meaning" of the New Testament instruction? What decision do we have to make? WE DECIDE TO OBEY OR DISOBEY GOD! Shall we teach people that they must be baptized to have their sins washed away in the blood of Jesus? WE MUST TEACH THAT SINCE THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS TO DO (Acts 22:16). Shall we teach people that it is a sin to live with a man or woman in an adulterous relationship? Shall we decide that it is right or wrong to live in sin? GOD

HAS ALREADY MADE THAT DECISION FOR US! Adultery is a sin (I Corinthians 6:9). Must we insist that the adulterer get out of that relationship to be saved? Does baptism sanctify adultery? The adulterer must be taught to give up the sinful relationship just as the thief and liar must be taught that baptism does not sanctify their sins!

It seems rather foolish to spend time discussing whether or not we need to be doing exactly what the Bible teaches us to do, when God has already made that decision for us! YES WE MUST DO WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS. No convention, council, conference, or synod, not to mention lectureships and Bible classes, can change what God has said in his word. It still stands. Our only decision is to obey or disobey! --Route 7 236 Stardust Drive, Boaz, AL 35957.

Think About This:



A wild goose never reared a tame gosling

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Three Easy Arguments To Prove The Necessity Of Water Baptism

Glenn Colley

Most Gospel preachers have been asked for advice from Christians studying with those who deny the necessity of baptism in salvation. Many arguments -- perhaps some even more obvious than these -- could be given, but these three are powerful. How powerful? Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek . . ." (Romans 1:16). The Gospel of Christ will ALWAYS be powerful in drawing sincere seekers of truth to His saving blood.

1. (Revelation 1:5) -- "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood."

How are we "cleansed" from our sins? By being washed in His blood. Of course this is figurative. We don't have His literal blood here today. So just how are we cleansed by His blood? How can I have that blood applied to my sins?

(Acts 22:16) -- "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Do you see? When I am baptized my sins are washed away. I am "washed from my sins in His own blood when I am "baptized and wash away my sins."

2. (Galatians 3:26-27) -- "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. 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."

People who are saved by the blood of Jesus are part of His body, the church (Acts 2:38, 47). They are "In Christ." No one who claims to believe the New Testament could consistently argue that people can be saved OUTSIDE of Christ Jesus. Jesus Himself said, "I am the way, the truth, the life, and no man cometh to the Father buy by Me" (John 14:6).

How does a person get INTO CHRIST? Galatians 3:26 says that we are "baptized into Christ." According to the New Testament, this is the ONLY way to get into Christ.

3. (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."

Most denominational preachers will not preach what this verse says. Instead, they brazenly contradict it's plain teachings before their audiences. They say, "This does not mean that baptism is really FOR the remission of sins. Baptism is actually BECAUSE OF the remission of sins." They believe an individual is saved and then baptized. I suppose they believe Jesus was confused or out of order when He taught, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16). They prefer it this way: "He that believeth and is saved shall be baptized."

So did Peter really mean that baptism is FOR the

remission of sins? Yes. Jesus used the exact same phraseology in Matthew 26:28 when He said, "For this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Do you think Jesus meant His blood was to be shed BECAUSE of the remission of sins, or so that the people could obtain remission of sins? The verse means what it says. His blood was shed FOR the remission of sins. By the same language, baptism is FOR the remission of sins.

You can teach people how to obey the Gospel -- even those who have been taught the false doctrine that baptism is not essential to salvation. When honest people see the facts, you won't have to persuade them, the Gospel will...

Remember what Paul taught us in Ephesians 4:5 -- "... There is one baptism . . ." A person who was formally baptized to join a particular denomination, or baptized with the belief that it had nothing to do with salvation, or any other reasons besides the ones taught in the scriptures, needs to be scripturally baptized. Because there is but one baptism taught for us, then being baptized for unscriptural reasons will not offer us safety.

"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" (Matthew 28:19, 20).

"Did God Approve Of Rahab's Lie?"

Allen Webster

Joshua sent two spies into Jericho before he launched an offensive against Canaan and this first walled city. The men lodged in a harlot's house named Rahab, and their presence was made known to the king. He sent men to Rahab to take them. In the meantime, she hid them on the roof under some stalks of flax. She lied to the king's men saying that they had left already. The soldiers went on a wild goose chase.

Some see this as a Bible example of an acceptable lie. The situationalists (those who believe that morality is dictated by circumstances) often point to Joshua 2 as a proof-text. Is it ever right to tell a lie? What about lying to a criminal in order to lift their spirits? What of a reporter uncovering an important story? What about ambassadors and presidential press secretaries trying to keep something from reaching public (and thus potentially, enemy) ears? Do these people have the right to lie?

First, one who believes the Bible must admit that it teaches that it is always wrong to lie (Ephesians 4:25; Colossians 3:9). Just as there are not exceptions to the adultery commandment, there are none for the Ninth Commandment (Exodus 20:14, 16).

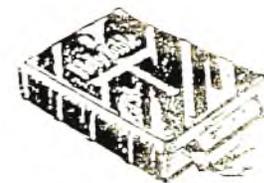
Second, Rahab lied, true, but God never complimented this action. She was a heathen, not yet even converted to Judaism, though indications

are that she later was. She had faith in God because of what she had heard about Israel's victories, but it was an imperfect faith. She evidently had no access to God's law. She was saved *in spite* of her lying, and not *because* of it. She was also a prostitute, but this text does not authorize such activity.

Third, each of the aforementioned situations has an alternative (cf. I Corinthians 10:13). In the case of an attacker, we can protect ourselves without lying. A physician has no right to withhold from a patient the truth about his condition. He needs to be able to make his own decisions in light of the truth. Even if it is a terminal illness, he needs to be able to dispose of his properties, write a will, and settle his affairs with man and God. Truthfulness must never be a mask for cruelty and used to deny hope (cf. Ephesians 4:15); yet hope built on lies is no hope at all. There may be a period of time when all the truth is not revealed, but that is not lying. Lying may be easier than telling the truth, but it is not right.

A government employee does not have to reveal everything he knows to the public. He should explain that certain questions can only be answered after a crisis is over. Mature citizens understand. A nation whose leaders want to keep its citizens' confidence

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The Words Of Truth

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God Has A Pattern In The New Testament

(Excerpt from "Behold The Pattern" by Goebel Music. Used by permission.)

As we began our study of the first section, "God Had A Pattern In The Old Testament," we now proceed with the thought, "God Has A Pattern In The New Testament." We also noticed a certain type language used, a vocabulary, a wording and a phraseology as to that pattern. I believe, and for many reasons, this can also be said of the New Testament. Therefore, we begin "now" where we began "then" with the Old Testament.

1. **"According To" Was The Pattern.** I have found this to be utilized all the way through the New Testament. In fact, it is listed about 127 times. Too, I found such an expression used in all of the New Testament books with the exception of I Thessalonians. I now repeat that perhaps I have missed some or even miscounted, but I do know that I have found it throughout the New Testament. Plus, it is interesting to observe that in the New Testament we find various references of "that" wording as found in the Old Testament. I deem it wise that we take note of the following:

a. "According to" the law of Moses (Luke 2:22; Leviticus 12:2-6).

b. "According to" the law of the Lord (Luke 2:39).

c. "According to" the commandment (Luke 23:56).

d. "According to" your law (John 18:31).

e. "According to" the fashion that he had seen (Acts 7:44; ASV has "figure," it is the Greek *tupos*, regular word for "pattern." The statement here refers to the "tabernacle," that is, the "pattern" that Moses had seen).

f. "According to" the strict manner of the law (Acts 22:3).

g. "According to" the law (Acts 22:12, referring to the devout man, Ananias).

h. "According to" our law (Acts 24:5; read footnote in ASV).

i. "According to" the commandment of the eternal God (Romans 16:26;

statement prior to this said, ". . . by the scriptures of the prophets . . .").

j. "According to" that which is written (II Corinthians 4:13; he then quotes Psalm 116:10).

k. "According to" the will of God (Galatians 1:4, a statement referring to Christ "giving himself for our sins").

l. "According to" the law (Hebrews 7:5; 8:4; 9:19).

m. "According to" the pattern (Hebrews 8:5).

It seems self-evident, doesn't it, that the New Testament men, the writers, inspired by the Holy Spirit of God (cf. I Corinthians 2:9-13; II Peter 1:19-21; II Timothy 3:16-17) understood and appreciated the location, the expression, choice of words, the language as well as the deep and established reason for its use. They very well knew the law, its promised blessings, as well as its serious warnings. When God spoke and said, ". . . according to," . . . then that settled any and every question, for "the pattern" was given.

2. **"According to" Is Still The Pattern.** Following the same line of study and meditation, I now want us to concentrate, hub our attention, on how this wording also penetrates the pages of the New Testament.

a. "According to" all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you (Acts 3:22; referring to Moses and his statement about God raising up a prophet to whom every soul is to hearken or be destroyed, Deuteronomy 18:15; *Englishman's Greek Concordance And Lexicon*, p. 467).

b. "According to" his promise God brought forth a Saviour in Jesus (Acts 13:23; I Kings 8:56; Joshua 23:14).

c. "According to" the spirit of holiness Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power (Romans 1:1-4, Paul speaks about the gospel of Christ promised afore through the prophets, etc.).

d. "According to" truth the judgment of God is declared to be (Romans 2:2).

e. "According to" my

gospel in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men (Romans 2:16).

f. "According to" the will of God intercession is made for the saints (Romans 8:27).

g. "According to" God's purpose to them that are called, all things work together for good, if they love the Lord (Romans 8:28).

h. "According to" a lack of knowledge, even though they have a zeal for God, many are ignorant of God's righteousness" (Romans 10:2).

i. "According to" my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ (Romans 16:25; II Timothy 2:8).

j. "According to" my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ (Romans 16:25; II Timothy 2:8).

k. "According to" the revelation of the mystery . . . kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested . . . (Romans 16:25).

l. "According to" the commandment of the eternal God is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith (Romans 16:26; footnote in the ASV, obedience of "the faith").

m. "According to" the grace of God (I Corinthians 3:19; II Thessalonians 1:12).

n. "According to" the scriptures, said Paul, Christ died for our sins, was buried and was raised "according to" the gospel he preached, the word he preached (I Corinthians 15:3-4).

o. "According to" the authority the Lord gave me, said Paul (II Corinthians 13:10).

p. "According to" whether or not we are Christ's, but if so, we are Abraham's seed, and heirs to the promise (Galatians 3:29).

q. "According to" God's eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ, his manifold wisdom was made known through the church (Ephesians 3:10-11).

r. "According to" the power that worketh in us, God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think (Ephesians 3:20).

s. "According to" the

dispensation of God Paul was made a minister to fulfill the word of God (Colossians 1:25).

t. "According to" the gospel of the glory of the blessed God (I Timothy 1:11).

u. "According to" sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine . . . if man consents not to such the great apostle Paul says he is puffed up (I Timothy 6:3).

v. "According to" the power of God (II Timothy 1:8).

w. "According to" the commandment of God our Saviour, Paul was intrusted wit God's word in the message (Titus 1:1-3).

x. "According to" the scripture there is a royal law which says to love thy neighbor as thyself (James 2:8).

y. "According to" his own works, every man is to be judged (I Peter 1:17; Revelation 2:23; 18:6; 20:12-13).

z. "According to" his will, if we so ask, God heareth us, and we know that he heareth us (I John 5:14-15).

If these were the only ones found in the New Testament, we would need no others to prove our point. If the Old Testament (cf. Romans 15:4) instructs us, then we need to learn that God means what he says and his authority is always found in the "according to." Here in these few listings from the New Testament, we can learn:

1. We must obey Jesus or be destroyed.

2. The judgment will be according to the gospel, His truth.

3. Christ is, indeed, the Son of God and with power.

4. Men are to submit to sound words, the doctrine, the words of Jesus Christ.

5. Paul's gospel was by the commandment of God.

6. If men are ignorant, have not knowledge of God's will, they will seek to establish a righteousness of their own.

7. If intercession is made for us, it will be by the will of God.

8. It is essential that a man

love God if he is to be blessed by all things working for his good.

9. The gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ are the same and this is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of the faith.

10. God's dispensation of the mystery, from times eternal, has now been made known.

11. It was according to the scriptures that Christ died, was buried and rose on the third day.

12. The authority by which Paul spoke was given unto him by the Lord.

13. If a man has been baptized into Christ, has put on Christ, is Christ's, then he is Abraham's seed and heir of the promise.

14. God made known through the church his manifold wisdom.

15. The power of God, the word of power, works in the believer.

16. The gospel is of and to the glory of our blessed God.

17. The words of Christ are sound words, doctrine, and to these men are to consent.

18. The gospel is the power of God.

19. God's word is the message that is for today.

20. Every man will be judged by his works and according to what is written.

21. If any man wants God to her his petitions, that man must ask according to God's will.

"How many prodigals are kept out of the Kingdom of God by the unlovely characters of those who profess to be inside?"

Henry Drummond

The Other Mission Field In Personal Evangelism

Neal Pollard

The side of the Great Commission with which we are most familiar is the command Christ gives His disciples to teach the lost and make disciples. These disciples share with others the good news of Christ and, in one sense, are evangelists (as messengers of good). Thus, personal workers are often said to be involved in "personal evangelism." The Christian who closely studies evangelism in the New Testament will see that every Christian must be involved in winning others by using whatever ability God has given him. The Christian who becomes involved in personal evangelism will experience the greatest joy possible in this life (cf. Philippians 4:1). Elders, preachers, and teachers are challenged with the great task of continually impressing the local congregation with both the joy and necessity of teaching the lost.

There exists another mission field whose leader attempts to offset and undermine the Biblical instruction to fulfill the Great Commission. This leader possesses a deep zeal in working to fulfill his ignominious task, whereas so many in the universal priesthood of all believers (that is, the church) never engage themselves in the most glorious endeavor of all. Notice the individuals whom Satan counts as prospects in his mission field.

First, There Are The Lost. Satan employs humanity to damn the lost (Galatians 1:8), as the Lord employs humanity to save the lost (I Corinthians 1:21). Satan will use the alien sinner's family to discourage him from obeying the divine command to become a baptized believer. Satan will tell the lost person not to admit that the New Testament pattern is correct, because that will imply that a deceased relative (perhaps even mother or father) who did not follow the New Testament pattern, is eternally lost. The candidate becomes trapped between two decisions, unhappy with either conclusion. Either the Bible is wrong (and he knows that to be incorrect) or everyone (including his loved one) who fails to submit to God's scheme of redemption is lost. Satan uses family pressures like this to fulfill his mission. He also uses the lost person's co-workers to ridicule his decision to follow Christ. A little name-calling and laughter at "the holier-than-thou, good-two-shoed prude" has often kept the lost from obeying God. Satan will also endeavor to plant the seed of doubt in the heart of the lost one. When faced with the self-control, sacrifice, and repentance involved in conversion, the lost (persuaded by the evil missionary) will refuse to come after Christ. In the parable of Luke 8:11 and verses following, Jesus speaks of this segment of the devil's

mission field. "Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. 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. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to perfection." The individuals Christ here speaks of are those "won" by Satan. Only those lost who have "an honest and good heart, having heard the word, **keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.**" Satan will first use the lost to fulfill his mission in personal evangelism.

THEN, THERE ARE THE ONES WHO REACH OUT TO THE LOST. Satan is working as hard to defeat these as he is to undermine the faith of the lost. He wants to so disappoint personal workers that they throw up their hands in resignation. He wants to belittle their own estimation of their ability to teach the gospel. But, as Edmund Burke once said, "nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little." Satan wants the personal worker to feel like a grasshopper in the world of giants like humanism, denominationalism, hedonism, sensationalism, and atheism. The devil knows that, if the Christian is actively proclaiming the Gospel, hell's mission is being thwarted. Satan knows better than anyone that "the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). Thus, he must strive to keep the mouth of the teacher shut. That is yet another facet of the devil's mission with

regard to personal evangelism. **NEXT, THERE IS THE LOCAL CONGREGATION.** The Adversary knows he can undermine scores of good if he can gain a foothold here. The character of the local church is shaped by the color of their thoughts. If they possess a zeal for and constant concern about the lost, they will be spreading valuable light in places of darkness. Therefore, the devil must set about to fill the hearts of members with discouragement. When only two percent of the church attend the special classes on evangelism, the devil has convinced the congregation that "we tried that before and it did not work" or "we are not able" or "we have not the time." When some are working at fulfilling the Great Commission, the devil must convince inactive members to question their motives, be suspicious, spread negativism, or criticize. Satan must supply the congregation with "reasons" (poor excuses) not to be involved, such as "they

will not listen, they might ask something I do not know, I do not know enough, and I am afraid!" The devil has convinced entire congregations to roll over and die by killing personal evangelism in those places. Some of Satan's best converts are lethargic churches whose self-satisfaction and comfort zones are impenetrable.

The devil knows he cannot convert God (cf. James 1:13). He knows that he cannot claim faithful Christians who are set to receive the crown of life at the threshold of eternity (cf. Revelation 2:10; I Peter 5:4). He realizes that he is powerless against zealous disciples whose overwhelming desire is to seek the lost and show them the way. His mission fields consists of the lost, the leading, and the lambs. Because of his past determination and success, we cannot be fooled into thinking that he is not at work on our community, our congregation, and our own commitment.

"Did God Approve Of Rahab's Lie?"

Continued From Page 2

must tell the truth.

A Bulgarian proverb states: "You are permitted in time of great danger to walk with the devil until you have crossed the bridge." Some are Bulgarians when it comes to telling the truth. When a lie is

more convenient, they "walk with the devil." And that is just what they are doing, for one cannot walk with God and lie at the same time. Rahab is a good example for us, but not because of her lie.

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

The other day I mixed a bag of cement to do some work on my house. When I finished my job, I had a good bit of the wet, mud-like mortar left over. You can pour it or shovel it easily, but -- if you let it stay unused overnight, things change.

It's a rock, and you can't change its shape without a sledge hammer.

You know, bad habits are that way. In their infancy, you can control them easily. But let them become full grown, and you're faced with breaking something as hard as rock.

Here's the way the Bible describes habits that are sinful: "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins" (Proverbs 5:22).

Let's daily re-examine our lives and make sure we've uprooted the saplings of sinful habits.

From The Editor

The Words of Truth has enjoyed years of success due to the great number of faithful subscribers, and to the strong quality of our Christian writers. I have never seen a week when good material for the paper was unavailable. For this I am thankful. I am however, always interested in adding people to the list of our regular writers. If you would like to submit articles to the Words of Truth, address the envelope to:

Words of Truth
Glenn Colley, editor
1501 Sixth Avenue
Jasper, AL 35501

We prefer that the articles be type-written, double-spaced, and about two pages in length. We publish only those articles which we feel serve our readers well, and we reserve the rights of editing.

I hope to hear from you!

June 25, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- One Baptism
- 'In Remembrance'
- There Is A Generation
- When Calamity Comes
- "Most Of A Minute"

Volume 29 Number 26
(USPS 691-760)

The Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak the
Words of Truth and soberness." -- Acts 26:24

God Bidden Preaching

B. J. Clarke

When God recommissioned Jonah, he said, "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee" (Jonah 3:2). The message Jonah wanted to preach and the message God had bidden him to preach were poles apart. Jonah's message was condemnation and no grace. God's message was that by his grace the Assyrians could escape condemnation through their repentance. Jonah had already tried to evade the responsibility of preaching God's message. Having been educated in the belly of a great fish, he was then ready to comply with the command to preach the message God had bidden him to preach.

God's message to modern preachers is still the same. "Arise, go into all the world and preach the preaching that I bid unto thee." Unfortunately, there are a number of preachers today, who like Jonah, have their own message to preach. They are more concerned about their agenda than God's agenda. To them, God bidden preaching is forbidden preaching. They are evidently more concerned with pleasing the person in the pew than they are with pleasing the Lord of those in the pew. Their preaching is not God bidden -- it is popularity bidden. They have fallen prey to the request, "Prophesy not unto us right things, speak

unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits" (Isaiah 30:10). An astonishing and horrible thing is happening in our brotherhood; many preachers are preaching falsely and the people love to have it so (Jeremiah 5:30, 31). Oh how we need more proclaimers of the God bidden Message! Oh how we need more messengers who can say like Paul, "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27)! Paul's preaching was God bidden.

Balance is so sorely needed. God bidden preaching is preaching that is both positive and negative. A car battery has both a positive pole and a negative pole. Both are important. Likewise, God bidden preaching will not be lopsided. There are times when the sermon must be designed to rebuke, reprove and admonish (Matthew 23; II Timothy 4:2). We must unashamedly preach the word, without regard for the cries of those who wish to have their ears tickled and their backs scratched (II Timothy 4:2-4). These admonitions are to be given with a spirit that is longsuffering, meek and gentle and yet unwilling to compromise the gospel one iota (II Timothy 4:2; 2:24-26). On the other hand, we must present lessons that will encourage faithful brethren, reminding them of the precious promises that we enjoy in Christ (II Peter 1:4;

Romans 8:1). We mustn't be afraid to preach on grace simply because we are afraid someone will think that we are soft on obedience. If we preach on grace properly, there will be no doubt left in people's minds as to where we stand. We should preach a

gospel that "comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable." God bidden preaching doesn't avoid controversy and brotherhood issues. Neither does it focus so much on these issues that it ignores other issues of equal

importance. In short, God bidden preaching is balanced preaching, preaching that points out both the goodness and severity of God (Romans 11:22). May we ever strive to preach a God bidden message!

"The Kingdom Established?"

Mike Benson

Question:

"When do you think Christ will come to establish His kingdom on earth? Will it be soon?"

Answer:

Since what I think is unimportant, let's see what the Bible says:

1. Christ's kingdom was established nearly 2,000 years ago. In about A.D. 32 Jesus promised, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1). Two important observations need to be made concerning this passage: 1) either the kingdom has come; or there are people living today, who heard the Lord on this occasion in Mark 9:1, who have never died and who are nearly 2,000 years old! 2) notice that Jesus said the kingdom would come with "power." Following His resurrection, He told the apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they received power from on high (Luke 24:49).

He added that they would receive that power when the Holy Spirit came (Acts 1:8). In Acts 2 we learn that the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). The Holy Spirit came on Pentecost. Therefore the promised power came on Pentecost. Therefore The Kingdom (Daniel 2:44; Matthew 16:18, 19), came with power on Pentecost.

2. Christ now reigns over His kingdom. "These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings . . ." (Revelation 17:14). " . . . He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords" (I Timothy 6:15). See also I Corinthians 15:25. If the kingdom is still in the future and has yet to be established, how can Christ now be reigning as King of kings as the Bible teaches? Can a king reign/rule without a kingdom?

3. Christians are citizens of the kingdom. In A.D. 62 Paul wrote, "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the

kingdom of the Son of His love" (Colossians 1:13). People cannot be translated into that which does not exist. Paul and the Colossians were in the kingdom! In A.D. 96 John wrote, "I, John, both your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom . . . of Jesus Christ . . ." (Revelation 1:9). People cannot be in something that does not exist. John and his brethren from Asia Minor were in the kingdom! Study also Hebrews 12:28. Today, men and women who have been born again (John 3:5) constitute that same divine kingdom (Revelation 5:10).

When the Lord appears next, it will not be to establish an earthly kingdom, but rather to deliver the existing spiritual kingdom to God. "Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death" (I Corinthians 15:24-26).

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

'In Remembrance'

Elwood Holt

"Without question, the most important passages of the WORD OF GOD are those passages of order and

command. As well we know, in the body of Christ, the government is of Christ Himself. Evidently our Lord thought that our remembrance of His death was an act of worship to be graced and honored and exalted. With the force of a command, he said: 'This do in remembrance of me.' But the amazing thing is that in His ordaining of the remembrance, the most abhorred thing in human experience was made the center of an act of worship.

He literally asked men to remember His dying as an act of worship. That seems to us to be strange, for death is what we want to escape. We will spend every cent we have to put it off. When it does come, we try to cover it up. We speak of it in hushed tones. We express our sorrows in sincere tears.

When loved ones are taken from us, we count our greatest losses! And even down to the funeral services, we still try to avoid the stern reality of that which has taken place. We embalm the dead, trying to make the body appear to be simply sleeping. We dress the body with more care than perhaps was ever given while the person was yet alive. We put the body in a casket, lined with satin and plush, even though the person never slept in so ornate a bed as that even in his cradle days. We provide the best funeral possible with the prettiest flowers and the deepest of reverence, and we say that we do it in respect for

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One Baptism

Glenn Colley

On many occasions I have studied in the homes of individuals who have already been baptized. These people are often bewildered when they hear that they must be baptized again because their first baptism was not "scriptural."

This is an unsettling subject. A person's baptism, however it is performed, is considered a sacred, sanctified time of sincere commitment. Therefore to question the validity of someone's baptism shouldn't be done lightly. There are times however, when questions must be asked to prevent an individual from believing they have obeyed the Lord, when in reality, they have not.

In listing the seven "ones" on which we find unity in the body of Christ, (Ephesians 4:1-6), Paul writes that there is only "one baptism"... Only one. I know that is not the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was very unique and rare. In Acts 2 the Apostles received that baptism. Then in Acts 10 the house of Cornelius apparently received a similar baptism. When Peter realized what had happened he said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (Acts 10:47). It is interesting that Peter had to go all the way back to Pentecost to find a case similar to this one with the Holy Spirit. After Acts 10 there is no other case of anyone receiving the

baptism of the Holy Spirit. All of the religions which claim to have the baptism of the Holy Spirit today, of which I am aware, ALSO practice water baptism in some form. They actually have TWO baptisms instead of just one which Ephesians 4 teaches.

Furthermore, I know that while the Bible speaks of the baptism of John, the "one baptism" is not that baptism. When people were baptized with John's baptism after Pentecost, they had to be baptized AGAIN. They did not have the "one baptism" (Acts 19:1-6).

The "one baptism" of which Paul speaks in Ephesians 4 is water baptism, into Christ, by a penitent believer, for the remission of sins. Consider these verses:

--(Mark 16:16) -- "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned."

--(Acts 2:38) -- "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins..."

--(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) -- "We 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. There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, we are all one in Christ Jesus."

--(I Peter 3:21) -- "The like figure whereunto 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."

Now that we have established which baptism is the "One baptism," let us consider this question: What would constitute a DIFFERENT baptism?

Firstly, a "baptism" which was carried out without immersion in water would be a different baptism. It's true that many churches today are taught that baptism is equally as valid if it is sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. That contradicts the Bible. The word "baptism" comes from a Greek word "Baptizo" which means, "to dip, immerge, submerge..." (Thayers Greek Lexicon, reference #907).

Secondly, a different baptism from the "one baptism" would be one which was carried out for the wrong reason. Acts 19 proves this clearly (Acts 19:1-6). When certain disciples encountered Paul at Ephesus they told him that they had been baptized with John's baptism. The text indicates they received this baptism AFTER Christ's baptism came into effect in Acts 2. Were they baptized? Yes. Were they baptized in an effort to please God? Yes. Was it backed by the right reason? No. Was it valid? Absolutely not. This simply proves that regardless of my sincerity in wanting to please God, my baptism must be the "one baptism."

People are baptized today for a variety of unscriptural reasons. For example, some are baptized simply because they want the approval of a

close friend or spouse. Is that valid? Others are baptized because the denomination they want to join teaches them that they are baptized in order to join. Is that valid? Still others are taught that they are baptized "as an outward sign of inward grace." In other words, they are taught that the baptism they are receiving has NOTHING to do with salvation. They are taught that they are already in a saved condition, and now are baptized for a different reason. Is that valid? At this point some will argue that if the person had in his/her heart the desire to please God, then that's all that matters. That is a false view. If on the lips of the minister, and in the heart of the one being baptized, is the notion that this baptism has nothing to do with salvation, how can it be the "one baptism" which is FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS? (Acts 2:38). It cannot.

Obey Jesus (Mark 16:16). Be baptized with the "one baptism" taught by Paul in Ephesians 4:1-6. Only then can you rightfully claim the blessings that are promised as a result.



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There Is A Generation

Allen Webster

How will history color this class of seniors? The "Pepsi Generation?" The "computer age?" "Latch-key kids?" The "Michael Jordan Years?" These oft-heard descriptions leave out the most important aspect of any graduating class -- its spirituality. God looks at a group not according to what it accomplished athletically, scholastically, socially, or technologically, but according to how they treated Him and their fellow man.

How would God describe the present generation? How would He view today's teenagers? He knows (Hebrews 4:13); His judgment is right (Genesis 18:25). Here is how He described one generation through Agur, one of the Proverb writers.

THERE IS A GENERATION THAT . . .

"CURSETH THEIR FATHER, AND DOTHT NOT BLESS THEIR MOTHER" (Proverbs 30:11). These had no respect for parents. They thought that they were old-fashioned, obsolete, and intent on making their children's lives miserable.

Generations preceding Agur had known "parent abuse." Esau was a grief to his father (Genesis 26:34, 35; Hebrews 12:16). Absalom was a shame to David (II Samuel 15:1-6, 14, 30; 16:11; 18:32, 33). Rehoboam was a disgrace to Solomon (I Kings 12:1-8).

This is not unlike some who will walk across the stage this year. They make their parents cringe in public because of the way they dress, talk, and act. Some smart off at them often and even strike them on occasion. We can either make our parents proud or ashamed of us (cf. Proverbs 10:1; 17:25). God demands that children obey parents (Ephesians 6:1-3). He classifies disobedience to parents with the worst of sins (Romans 1:29-32). Under the Old Testament, disobedient sons were stoned (Deuteronomy 21:18-21; Exodus 20:12; Leviticus 19:32).

Kids that go out and get

drunk, become pregnant, wreck their cars (or their parents'), have run-ins with the law, and fall away from God, cause many sleepless nights and tear-stained pillows. Children that work hard, make good grades, show respect to their elders, help around the house, obey God, and are active with the church, make them smile themselves to sleep.

"ARE PURE IN THEIR OWN EYES, AND YET ARE NOT WASHED FROM THEIR FILTHINESS (30:12). They did not need religion. They thought that God did not mind them "kicking up their heels" and "sowing a few wild oats" after all, "everybody does it." They probably went to temple services once in a while and figured that would appease God. God said, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord" (Proverbs 17:15).

"Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" (Proverbs 20:9). Those who have been washed in the Lamb's blood (Acts 22:16). Many of these seniors have refused to retain God in their knowledge and have not obeyed the Gospel (Romans 1:28; Acts 2:38). They have not picked up a Bible in a long time, and don't really have any plans to. They get away with as much as the Law allows (or does not find out about). Yet they acknowledge no evil.

By contrast, there are some who will step out of the high school ranks pure in God's eyes. They have kept themselves from the ranks of fornicators, drunkards, and liars. They read the Bible, and obey it to. Perfect? No, but trying. God smiles on those who think on Him, in spite of the ridicule of some of their peers (Romans 8:31).

"O HOW LOFTY ARE THEIR EYES! AND THEIR EYELIDS ARE LIFTED UP" (30:13). They were proud of their strength and their good looks and their intelligence

and their money and their chariot. They looked down on others not in their group -- those who were poorer, less intelligent, not quite as quick-witted, not as pretty or handsome, and not as athletically inclined.

Pride has been the downfall of nations (cf. Edom, Obadiah 1-10; Babylon, Daniel 4:30) and individuals (Proverbs 6:17; 11:2; Matthew 23:12; I Peter 5:5, 6). The Pharisee and the Publican prayed at the same time, but only one was heard (Luke 18:9-14). Why? The Pharisee was proud. A "peacock generation" is useless to God.

Some in this class have "a proud look." They may learn the hard way the "pride goeth before destruction" (Proverbs 16:18). Others will succeed because they humbled themselves, and the Lord will lift them up (James 4:10; Matthew 23:12).

"WHOSE TEETH ARE AS SWORDS, AND THEIR JAW TEETH AS KNIVES, TO DEVOUR THE POOR FROM OFF THE EARTH, AND THE NEEDY FROM AMONG MEN" (30:14). These folks were a "me-generation" too. Selfishness has always been abominable to God (Proverbs 14:31; 19:1, 17, 22; 21:13). He told the Israelites, "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exodus 22:21).

God keeps a record of how the unfortunate are treated: "If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they" (Ecclesiastes 5:8). "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).

Jesus described those of His day as "an evil generation" (Luke 11:29). Peter described those a little

later as "a crooked generation" (Acts 2:40) and then said that Christians are to shine as lights in a dark world (I Peter 2:9). Christian teens are the salt of this class (Matthew 5:14). They are

preserving it, just as ten righteous souls would have saved Sodom, Gomorrah and the cities of the plain (Genesis 18:32). We love you and know that you are making a difference.

When Calamity Comes

Winfred Clark

There are times in life when tragedy strikes. It may seem that "when it rains, it pours." We are all aware that great troubles are suffered on a worldwide basis everyday. But many of these events are unknown to us. They happen in some far off place to people we do not know.

But there are times when these things strike close to home. They come to people we know; people that we have seen. We know the members of the family. They live in our community. Then, out of the blue, calamity comes. Suddenly one we know is killed in a crash because someone could not resist the bottle. Another is killed because he rushed for a ball into oncoming traffic; another, because he lost control of a vehicle. On and on we could go. But what I have just described, has happened to people I know. All of these

events have taken place within the last seven days.

What is there to say when such things occur? We can be assured that we will hear some questions. For some of these questions we will not find ready answers. But this might be a good time to stop and look at some questions that are asked.

ONE QUESTION IS "WHY?"

There are times when this question comes from hearts that do not understand. We need not be disturbed by such questions for others have asked them. There was a time when Gideon did. When told that the Lord was with him, he said, "Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, *why* then is all this befallen us . . . ?" (Judges 6:13). Gideon had difficulty reconciling what he could see with what he had been told.

Listen to Job's plaintive cry, "Why died I not from the womb?" (Job 3:11). He was

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"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

A story is told of a young man in the mud and blood of a fox hole in a foreign war. The battle raged all around him. At home are a wife and two small children. He thinks of them and remembers a letter he got a few days ago, but never opened. He reaches in his coat pocket, gets it, and begins to read. It is a bill for \$5.39. The accompanying note says, "If you do not pay this bill by the 15th of the month you will be in serious trouble!"

The point I want to make is this: He would obviously trade the present trouble in battle for a \$5.39 trouble at home. The truth is, we all face \$5.39 problems everyday. These problems are meaningless though when compared to our eternity. Let's realize that the things we get so wrapped up in today, will soon fade into proper insignificance. Let's remember that of absolute greatest importance to us must be our faithfulness to God and His word.

Jesus said, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell" (Matthew 10:28).

When Calamity Comes

Continued From Page 3

having difficulty seeing how life could be worth all the suffering he was enduring. He had a problem understanding life's purpose. One thing we can be assured of is: God did not cast him off because he asked "Why?"

There was a time when our Lord asked, "Why?" He said, ". . . My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). I do not know all that is in that statement but I know that our Lord came mighty close to where I live when He said, "Why?" Such gives me reason to see that my faith is not totally gone in the midst of some great trial when, and if, I ask, "Why?"

Time after time we hear "Why?" from those we love. Often the question comes from the hearts and lips of some of the greatest saints that have ever graced the earth.

ANOTHER QUESTION,
"WHAT IF?"

This needs to be asked for it is a question of alternative. It says that I need to look at some things that I might be overlooking when asking, "Why?"

Paul placed before the Corinthians the "what if" question when some were moving away from the resurrection. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (I Corinthians

15:19). Paul wanted them to see their real condition "if" there is no resurrection.

Do we not need to stop and ask, "What if?" when we face calamity? Suppose we ask, "What if there is no God?" What is the alternative? We are left without divine help when tragedy comes. We could not say with David, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:1, 2).

"What if the Bible is not true?" What is the alternative? Where is the lamp for our feet and the light for our pathway (Psalm 119:105)? We are left to grope through this godless

world's maze of darkness. What of all those comforting passages that lift our spirits when sorely distressed?

"What if Jesus had not come?" We would not have an Advocate with the Father (I John 2:1) or a High Priest that could be touched with the feelings of our infirmities (Hebrews 4:15, 16). He would not have been resurrected and the grave would still be victorious.

ANOTHER QUESTION,
"ARE WE NOT
THANKFUL?"

Paul said, "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (I Thessalonians 5:18). We may find this difficult to do on occasion, but there is the need to do so anyway. Even in the midst of calamity there are things for which one can be thankful.

"Are we not thankful" for friends who are closer than

brothers? Where would we be without those who come to comfort us? Once David found himself hiding in the wilderness a refugee from Saul. "And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the woods, and strengthened his hand in God" (I Samuel 15:23). There can be no doubt of David's gratitude for such a friend. Jonathan's visit did not remove him from danger but surely helped him endure the hardship a little better.

"Are we not thankful" for the hope of heaven? This kept Abraham on the path that leads upward. He "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10).

Yes, we will ask, "Why?" But we also need to ask, "What if?" and, "Are we not thankful?" The second and third will help us to live with the first.

'In Remembrance'

Continued From Page 2

the dead. However, in reality, we do it more often for ourselves, trying to get away from the somber fact that someone has left us.

Now consider the startling thing that Jesus did when He instructed His followers to remember His death. He desired to bring to our remembrance every detail of what took place there at His place of execution. He did not want us to forget that He died! Literally, John declared, "Behold the dying one" -- when he said, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." Thus, we consider that one of the most significant things that our Lord ever did in offering a command, was to turn the attention of all who were interested, to the supper which is the memorial of HIS OWN DEATH.

As Christians we are LINKED with the table of the Lord. Let us see to it that we "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11). We are told, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? In these words He shows us that the

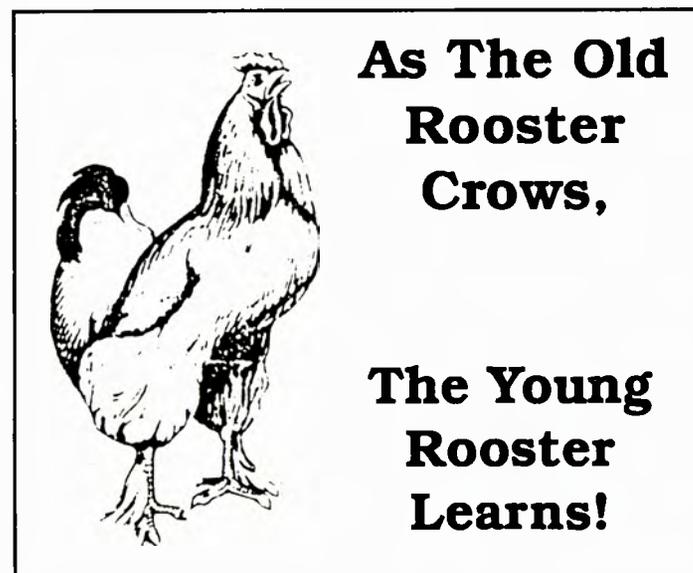
Lord's Supper, as we commonly call it, sets forth the very foundational principles of Christianity. It is a rallying center, as it were, where God's people come together to openly confess their adherence to these great fundamental truths. Notice the order given: the CUP first, the BREAD second. When our Lord instituted the Supper, and when we participate in it, thanksgiving for the bread is first, and then for the cup. But the apostle here mentions the cup first, because it sets forth the precious poured-out blood of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and there can be no relationship with God for those who by nature and practice are lost sinners, until they have been cleansed by the precious BLOOD OF CHRIST. Every time the Communion feast is celebrated, the great fact is emphasized that it is the blood of Jesus alone, that cleanses from sin and gives access to the presence of God. In this we may see the reason for Satan's antagonism against the ordinance.

This communion is broken in two ways. On the one hand there are those who have added to it a great many UNSCRIPTURAL superstitious practices that

have made it a strange and weird mystery, so that many Christians are almost afraid to approach the table of the Lord. On the other hand there are those who pretend to have a deeper spirituality and a greater Bible knowledge than ordinary Christians, and so put the Lord's Supper to one side on the plea that we have no need of ordinances of any kind in the Christian age, which is a spiritual dispensation.

BAPTISM speaks of my death with Christ; the LORD'S SUPPER speaks of Christ's death for me as the only ground of approach to and fellowship with God. And so (I Corinthians 11-26) we read, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death 'til he come."

THERE IS ONLY ONE LORD'S TABLE IN ALL THE WORLD. Where ever bread and the fruit of the vine are placed on a table in commemoration of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, that is the Lord's Table, and Christians are responsible to behave themselves accordingly.



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Crows,**

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- The First Missionary
- Singing During The Lord's Supper
- Why Is The Bible Thought Dangerous
- "Most Of A Minute"
- Baptism In 3-D
- Eternal Beauty Secrets

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(USPS 691-760)

The Words Truth

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

the

Do We Need Change?

J. C. Choate

During the past few years there have been some major changes in the world. One of the most far reaching has been the fall of Communism. This has drastically affected many countries, but has had at least an indirect influence on every nation around the globe.

The computer is another factor which has had a revolutionary impact on all of mankind, but its full potential is yet to be realized. Certainly, the list of changes and resulting influences could be named one after the other, on and on. All of us are twisted and turned and molded, to some extent, by these changes that come on the world scene.

Here in our country the politicians have placed a lot of emphasis on the idea of change, the need for change, the time for change, and why there must be change. They stress a change in our way of thinking, a change in our way doing things, and of course to have these changes they tell us that we must have a change in leadership. They are not at all sure how to bring about these changes, and what they will do for us and for the world, but these politicians have sold the majority of the people on the need.

Even the religious world has not been spared. We are told that we must accept the homosexuals and lesbians, that we must make way for women leaders in the church, and who knows of all the

other things that human minds are thinking up.

Even within the church we are told that it is time to re-think some of these issues, that maybe we have been holding the women back, that perhaps we have been unfair to our young people in not allowing the use of mechanical music in worship, that there may be Christians out there in all of the churches, and that regardless who we are or what we do or what we become, surely the grace of God will cover every believer and that in the end all that will matter is that we tried.

And so, the chant that we need change can be heard in many quarters. For sure, I can think of changes we do need to make, but evidently the changes that are being demanded are not the ones I have in mind. For instance, we need to change our assemblies from being a gathering of spectators to being a group which fully participates in worship. We need to quit thinking primarily about ourselves and begin trying to reach a lost world with the gospel. We need to stop entertaining our children and begin to teach them the gospel and train them in the Lord's work. We need to quit putting our money on projects that benefit ourselves and put it on spreading the Lord's kingdom. We need to quit finding fault with the church and begin to tell of its worth, of its beauty,

and why we must be a part of it to go to heaven. We must stop reading and studying denominational literature and begin to read and study the Bible and preach it to ourselves and to the world. We need to end the preaching of flowery sermons that teach nothing and say nothing, and begin preaching the truth on sin, marriage, divorce, and remarriage, on what to do to be saved, the one church of the Bible, worship, salvation, grace, heaven, hell, and the many other truths in God's word that are essential to salvation. We need to change from being weaklings that stand for nothing and take our position on God's word and stay with it regardless of what man says. Yes, we need a lot of changes, but changes that will bring us to God, not cause us to be lost.

While some changes are desirable, and are needed, there are other things that never change and we must not be guilty of trying to change them. For instance, God never changes, and neither does Christ. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. God's word never changes, and neither does the gospel, and our need for it. The truths about the church, or the way to enter it never change. The worship of the church has been established from its beginning by the guidance of the Holy Spirit through the written word and will continue to be the same as

long as the world stands. The requirements of the Christian life are the same as they were during the days of the early church. Heaven and hell, and the judgment of God which will determine who goes to what reward remains the same. God's love, mercy, and forgiveness, and the terms on which they are given remain unchanged.

If I believed and obeyed the truth when I was a young man, and was thus saved and added to the church, will the same submission to God not do the same thing for young people of our day? If it was the truth then, is it not the truth today? If the preaching of the gospel then had the power to save, and if that same gospel is preached today, will it not save today as it did at the beginning? Why do we need changes just for the sake of change? It is true that God has left many peripheral things to our

judgment, but none of the basic truths have been committed to our discretion to retain or discard. Such things are unchangeable and non-negotiable. God is still God and the truth is still the truth. Likewise, man is still man and sin is still sin. Only God can save people and He saves only those who obey His teaching, and He adds to the church only those He saves.

May God help us to change what we can change and what we need to change for the better, but may we never change just for the sake of change. Above all, let us realize that God and His will do not change and cannot be changed by us or by anyone else. We, however, are the ones who can change and we must make whatever changes are required to conform to His will. These are the changes -- and the only changes -- needed today and forever more.

The First Missionary

"So you are going to leave?"

"Yes, Father. I've got to preach to them. They need the good news so badly, I have to go."

"It will be so different for you, Son. You may not like it. They are not like us."

"I know, Father."

"You know you will have to live with them. You will have to eat their food. You will have to speak their language. You will have to share their joys and sorrows, their problems and their pains."

"I know that, Father, and I'm prepared for it."

"And the situation there is not good. There is a lot of political turmoil, the economy is bad, and the people are restless. They won't be receptive to spiritual things. They won't listen."

"But some will, Father, and if I do not go, what will happen to them?"

"I know how you feel, Son. I do not want any of them to be lost either. I want them all to know the truth and be saved. I want you

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

**Be A
Words Of Truth
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Happy, Productive, God-Pleasing Homes

Glenn Colley

Some of the strongest cautions in the Bible surround a subject that may shock you. The language is a warning of consequences if we fail in basic, fundamental duties within our homes. We are told that we must listen to this teaching so we will "Give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully," and so that "the word of God be not blasphemed." If we knew only these warnings we would know that God is serious about the subject.

These strong words, demanding our attention and captivating our thoughts, are written in regard to the role of women in their homes. Here is the text:

"I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproach-fully" (I Timothy 5:14). The context pertains to young widows, and the temptations which they might face living after the loss of their husband. The adversary could be the devil, or the infidel who scoffs at God-fearing people.

"The aged women . . . that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." To "blaspheme" literally means, "to speak against."

Of late we are hearing more "experts" who are discovering the instinctive value of home-makers/mothers. For

example, consider the following syndicated editorial appearing in newspapers across the United States on March 18, 1993. The author is John Rosemond, a family psychologist in private practice in North Carolina. The title of the article is, "Parental Changes Cause Demise of Family."

"For the past 30 years, the American family has been 'changing,' or so the media informs us. The subliminal impression created is that some natural, inexorable evolutionary process is behind the steady increase in single-parent and two income-earner families. Further, that the only problem is the failure of society and government to make sufficiently rapid and effective adjustments to this new set of circumstances.

Here's the truth: For more than a generation, the American family has been in a steady state of decline, precipitated by social experiments and forces which are fundamentally at odds with a general state of family health.

Here's another undeniable truth: The American family worked better when there was a parent in the home during the day. In past generations, that parent was almost always female, but gender is irrelevant to the purpose of our discussion. That all-but-constant adult presence provided for greater family stability, smoother internal transitions, more effective overall time-management, better supervision and care of children, and more efficient delegation of responsibilities, not to mention a lower lever of stress.

The comfortable division of labor between homemaker and bread-winner was more conducive to a sense of partnership and, therefore, tended to support marriage-centeredness. For all these reasons, the American family of previous generations was a more psychologically secure place in which to live. This despite the efforts of a significant number of 'helping professionals' to convince us that most of us were raised in 'dysfunctional' families lorded over by parents who were abusive in one way or another.

The neo-feminist movement, one of the social experiments in question, has succeeded at convincing significant numbers of women (and men) that there is no incompatibility whatsoever between career pursuit and childrearing.

Reading a recent interview with a married professional woman who has two children, ages 3 and 7 months, I came across the following statement: "I took eight weeks maternity leave with my first child, six with my second. I could have taken longer, but in my profession, that's not looked upon favorably."

Excuse me? You have children and you put them in day care as quickly as you can (six weeks!) because you might be put on the "mommy track" if you don't? What are children, anyway? Hobbies?

This woman was actually presented as a role model -- living proof that it matters not whether children are taken care of during the day by parents or total strangers. What matters is that women do it all!

The "superwoman" of that interview represents a society that's had the wool pulled over its eyes. She embodies the myth that there are no consequences to a child who has parents who try to have their cake and eat it, too. In part because personal sacrifice has come to be viewed as just shy or degrading, we have become a nation of families in various states of fragmentation, families in which priorities have been inverted. Everyone's in a hurry, and psychological resources are stretched to the limit. Families that don't fit this description are regarded almost suspiciously.

The American family is changing? That's a nice way of putting it."

To my knowledge, Dr. Rosemond is not a Christian -- And he's not a "narrow-minded fundamentalist" pushing a conservative agenda. He's a psychologist,

observing people. What's fascinating is that the answers he has found for the prevention of many current family upheavals, have been in the Bible for centuries!

We must never consider societal forces too strong for us to defy. Too many women, even Christians, are melting into the mold cast by feminism. They do it with sad, poignant, and lasting damage to their homes.

Are there exceptions to the Bible teachings regarding mothers in their homes? I think we can assume that in desperate cases there are. There's a great difference, however, between those and many cases in vogue of the day. We do not want to "give occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully," or act so that the "Word of God be blasphemed." Let's get back to our roots. Let's get back to the Bible.

The First Missionary

Continued From Page 1

to go. But you are my son, and I want to be sure that you know what you are doing; that you know the sacrifice you will have to make, the risks you will be taking, the danger involved. If you leave me, you will be leaving home, comfort and safety. It's your life I am talking about. Are you willing to give all that up?"

"I am willing, Father."

"Then go, Son, and my love goes with you."

And Jesus went.



The Words Of Truth

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Singing During The Lord's Supper

Flavil H. Nichols

The night before Jesus died for my sins, he and the apostles ate the Old Testament Passover Supper. "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. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Matthew 26:26-30; cf. Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:19-20).

The New Testament church with apostolic approval ate the Lord's Supper "upon the first day of the week" (Acts 20:7). There is not a shred of Bible authority to eat it any other day of the week! Although the apostle Paul was a stranger, and was at Troas for only seven days, he learned when and where the saints would meet -- and assembled with the church to worship. He and his traveling companions (there were at least nine of them, including Paul and Luke, Acts 20:4-5) did not conduct their own private service! They did not ignore the Lord's church at Troas, nor act as if there were no congregation in town, nor treat that congregation as if it were the Devil's church! What an example for all travelers today!

I have been present twice where some persons in the assembly sang during the Lord's Supper. I do not believe this is scriptural -- for the following reasons:

1. The Bible teaches only by (A) explicit statement or direct command; (B) by approved apostolic example; or (C) by implication, from which it is necessary to draw a conclusion. Notice carefully:

(A) There is no New

Testament command [direct statement] to sing while eating the Lord's Supper.

(B) There is no New Testament example of any congregation's singing during the communion.

(C) There is no New Testament implication -- from which a necessary inference must be drawn -- which demands that we sing during the Lord's Supper.

Therefore the conclusion is irrefutable: There is absolutely no Bible authority for singing while the Lord's Supper is being eaten.

2. The 'Law of Exclusion' prohibits singing during the Lord's Supper. When God told Noah to build an ark "of gopher wood" (Genesis 6:14), he did not have to say: "Thou shalt not build it of hickory," ". . . cedar," ". . . oak," or ". . . pine," etc. To specify "gopher" wood authorized the use of that wood, and of that only. It excluded all other kinds of wood. Similarly, when Jesus said, "Take, eat; this is my body" (Matthew 26:26), and: "Drink ye all of it" (v. 27), he did not have to say: 'Thou shalt NOT sing during the Communion.' He told us what to do, and this excludes doing anything else at this time. The Son of God himself authorized eating the bread and drinking the cup in communion, and thereby he excludes SINGING during that item of our worship. To sing during the Lord's Supper violates the law of exclusion.

3. The silence of the Scriptures [on singing during communion] does not give us the right to sing during the Lord's Supper. God did not have to say, "Thou shalt not sing during the communion." The Holy Spirit makes this clear in Hebrews 7:14. God had never said, "No man of the tribe of Judah may be a priest." He simply authorized (Exodus 29; Leviticus 8; Numbers 18) priests from the family of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi. The Holy Spirit used the "silence of the scriptures" to show that while Jesus

himself was on earth, he could not be a priest -- for he was of the tribe of Judah -- "of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (Hebrews 7:14). Likewise, all can see that 'of singing during Communion, the Holy Spirit spake nothing!'

4. The night Jesus instituted his Supper, he and the apostles "sang an hymn" AFTER -- not during! -- the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26).

5. The Holy Spirit revealed that one eats and drinks "unworthily" if he does not "discern the Lord's body" while doing so (I Corinthians 11:27-29). Conversely, to eat and drink "worthily" is to "discern" his body and blood as we eat and drink at the Lord's table. Jesus did not say that -- in this part of the worship -- we should "discern the Lord's body" (and blood) through a song. No one has divine authority to add a song (or two) to the bread and cup which Jesus authorized in the Lord's Supper.

6. To sing while communing violates the divine injunction to "Let all things be done decently and in order" (I Corinthians 14:40). Here is why: [A] Singing necessitates thought: "Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16). This cannot be done without concentration or thinking. "Speaking to yourselves [A.S.V.: "one to another"] in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19). It is a violation of this text to sing without accompanying the words with "melody in your heart to the Lord." This necessitates meditation or thought.

[B] But the communion also requires thought: Jesus directed his apostles to eat the communion bread, saying: "This do in remembrance of

me" (I Corinthians 11:24).

I cannot do two things at the same time if each of them requires concentration. Hence I cannot sing while communing with Christ in the Lord's Supper.

--And for anyone else to sing while I am remembering my Savior's precious body, and his saving blood in the communion, intrudes upon my meditation and my communion with Christ -- for he promised to eat this Supper "with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25).

7. Although such "communion hymns" are right at other times in the worship, at this particular time -- during

the communion -- Jesus said of the bread: "T-H-I-S do in remembrance of me" (Matthew 26:24). He did not say "SING" -- at this particular time -- "in remembrance of me." Of the cup he said: "T-H-I-S do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me" (v. 25). He did not say at this point in worship -- "Sing in remembrance of me."

8. It is no more scriptural to sing during the communion, than it would be to sing during Bible reading, prayer, or during a sermon -- for each of these requires meditation, thought, or concentration.

--100 13th Street N.E. (Route 9, Box 541), Jasper, AL 35501.

Why Is The Bible Thought Dangerous?

The following appeared in the TENNESSEAN Letters to the Editor on January 19, 1993. The author is Michael Greene who preaches in Columbia, Tennessee. We can only wish the TENNESSEAN employed such capable editors.

We learn that an Appeals Court has ruled it unconstitutional for Gideon International to hand out Bibles in public schools in Indianapolis.

It is alright to hand out condoms to 13-year-olds in

our schools. It is alright to graphically instruct junior high kids on how to have safe sex. It is alright to give out free abortion counseling to children as young as 14 without parental consent -- but wrong to give them a Bible in America. However, you can give them out in Russia.

Now to an extent I can understand why our children need to be protected from the dangerous doctrines contained in the Bible. Have you looked in it lately? It has such

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"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

A few weeks ago a kindergartener in Hollywood, Florida stood in front of a moving train because she wanted to "become an angel" and be with her terminally ill mother. Gloria Wright, a relative of the child says the mother is dying of AIDS.

No one with a heart can read the recent story without feeling sadness and compassion.

There is an obvious lesson here. If the mother contracted AIDS in a sinful way, as did 90% or more of existing cases, then she stands as yet another example of how none of us are islands. Our behavior almost always has an impact on someone else.

Jesus said, "Woe unto the world because of offences! For it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" (Matthew 18:7).

Baptism In 3-D

Allen Webster

Baptism is a controversial subject. There is great diversity of opinion among religious groups about what baptism is, who is to be baptized, and why one should be baptized. Sometimes it helps in a disagreement to start over. Erase the memory banks. Look at the facts again. Examine all the evidence.

Truth is never hurt by investigation. If one is right, then further study will bring him back to his first conclusion and fortify his faith. If he is wrong, then he needs to know so he can change and believe as God wants him to.

Please examine these three "Ds" of baptism and see if this is not what the Bible teaches about baptism (from Romans 6).

BAPTISM IS FOR THE DEAD. Baptism is for dead people, though not those in cemeteries. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1, 2). In the context, Paul is exhorting Christians to put away sin. His first argument is that baptized people are "dead to sin."

Baptism is for those who are dead IN sin (Isaiah 59:1, 2; Ephesians 2:1; John 5:24, 25). The invitation to be baptized was issued only to sinners in the New Testament (Acts 2:38; 22:16). Those who are not guilty of sin are not to be baptized. The Bible teaches that all mature people are sinners (Romans 3:23), but there are some who are not mature. Children and the mentally imbalanced are not sinners. None are accountable until they are old enough to know the difference between right and wrong.

Children may inherit houses, lands, genes, looks, and money from parents, but they cannot inherit sin. "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). Souls come from God, not parents, so they are as pure as their Sender (Hebrews 12:9).

Furthermore, a person must know that he is a sinner before he can be baptized. New Testament examples of conversion show that they knew they were lost and in need of a Savior (Read the book of Acts). A person is not qualified to be baptized who does not understand that baptism forgives his sins (Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21).

Baptism is for those who are dead TO sin (Romans 6:2) -- that is, dead to the love and practice of sin. This happens when one is touched by the story of God's love and Christ's sacrifice (I John 4:19; 4:9; Romans 5:8, 9; John 3:16). Men who are dead to sin want to live righteously (I Peter 2:24). Breaking the hold of sin is done in three steps: (1) The love of sin is severed by faith in Christ; (2) The practice of sin is discontinued in repentance; and, (3) The guilty state of sin is removed in baptism.

Not just anyone is a candidate for baptism -- Only a dead person can be baptized!

BAPTISM IS A DOOR. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3). We are baptized into the body of Christ (cf. I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:26, 27). The Bible never says that we believe "into" Christ, repent "into" Christ, or confess "into" Christ. It does say we believe, repent, and confess "unto" Christ. They bring us nearer to Him, but only baptism is a door through which we may pass "into" His body (or church, Ephesians 1:22, 23). It is important to enter here for every spiritual blessing is in Christ (Ephesians 1:3, 4; I John 5:11; Colossians 1:14), including salvation (II Timothy 2:10).

We are baptized into Christ's blood. Our text says that we

are baptized "into his death" which means we are baptized into the benefits of His death - primarily the blood which was shed in His death (John 19:34, 35). Blood washes away sins (Revelation 1:5) and sins are washed away in baptism. "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Therefore, it follows that the blood is contacted by baptism. It is the door into God's blessings.

BAPTISM IS BY CAREFUL DESIGN. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection . . . But God

Why Is The Bible Thought Dangerous?

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dangerous concepts as "love thy neighbor as thyself," and "do not covet your neighbor's wife." And, of course, young ears should never hear such words as "do not commit adultery," or "flee fornication." Oh, no we cannot, even under the principle of academic freedom which says that all competing ideas have a right to be heard, allow someone access to the Bible. Why they might read and believe, and live by some of those "dangerous" concepts.

If that were to happen, the world as we know it would come to an end. Parents would be respected and obeyed, as would teachers. We wouldn't need policemen in every school. Hatred and bigotry would soon die. Teenage pregnancy and the perceived need to hand out safe-sex materials would soon be gone.

By all means protect us from such a fate.

be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you" (Romans 6:4, 5, 17). There is a clear design built into baptism which shows God's wisdom (I Corinthians 1:25).

Jesus died. Sinners die (discussed above). Jesus was buried. Sinners are buried. When the old person of sin dies, he must be put out of sight. Instead of a burial in the earth, he is covered with water. Sprinkling and pouring (as practiced by some religious groups) does not fit the design of baptism. These are not burials. Christ was not sprinkled with dirt. He was encased in a tomb.

Jesus was raised from the dead. Christians are raised.

This occurs when they come forth out of the waters of the waters of baptism (II Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 3:10-16), and begin a new life. They are new creatures (II Corinthians 5:17).

Baptism is a beautiful operation of God (Colossians 2:12). The Bible helps us to clearly see it in "3-D." Why not die to sin, pass through the door, and comply with the design?

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Eternal Beauty Secrets

Sami Nicholas

When I read how you fell in the garden in agony of the soul,

"Not my will but Thine be done," you pled,
Let my posture reflect your control.

When you said I should walk in the light and not in the darkness hide,

"I am the light of the world," you said.
Keep me walking at your stride.

When I'm tempted to toy with worldly things that make my safety unsure,

Let me think of the lamb without blemish.
Like you Lord, make me pure.

When I think of the way you looked at the man who wanted eternal life.

Although he was lost you "loved him,"
Lord, please give me your eyes.

When I ponder how they spat on you and yet you did not speak,

"Turn the other," you had taught us,
Lord, please give me your cheek.

When you laid your hands on the sick and weak and showed them your compassion,

You created the pattern for my hands;
Shape them in your fashion.

And when I've tried to make your beauty the object of my goal,

Let me groom myself as you did
Using the mirror of the soul.

July 9, 1993

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- 'Tis The Season
- Don't Let Satan "Whoo" It Out
- Most Of A Minute

Volume 29 Number 28
(USPS 691-760)

The Words of Truth

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

Storerooms

Allen Webster

We all have them. A spare bedroom. An attic. A basement. A closet. A rented mini-warehouse room. A safe deposit box. A bank account. The place we keep valuables we can't seem to part with.

Christians have another storeroom where their best

treasures are kept out of sight. As Jesus commanded, "... lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matthew 6:20).

IT HAS A GOOD LOCATION -- IN HEAVEN. It's on "gold street"

(Revelation 21:18), near the fountain of life (21:6). This storehouse is in a good section, where the beautiful mansions are (John 14:2). The neighbors are fine folk, all washed in the Lamb's blood and retired from their tribulations (Revelation 7:14).

Since we will soon be moving there, it is smart to

use it for storage. Most people work very hard to fill storerooms down here. They will soon be forced to evacuate this world and embark on the journey from which they will not return (Hebrews 9:27). Every penny invested in this world will be lost. Highwayman Death will at last wrench it from their fingers and fling

them empty-handed and poverty-stricken out into the night. "There are no pockets in a shroud."

This world is only temporary (II Corinthians 4:18; Philippians 3:13, 14; Colossians 3:2). A man may be a millionaire one day, and a pauper the next. He may own much of the earth today and be buried in it tomorrow. It is the height of folly to devote the strength of life to the gathering of treasures which cannot be converted into the currency of the country to which we are going (Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 11:10).

IT IS FREE FROM CORRUPTION -- NEITHER MOTH NOR RUST DOTHS CORRUPT. Treasures stored in heaven's storehouse never mildew, rot, spoil, or rust. No mothballs are needed. *Rust* (brosis) is used elsewhere in the New Testament for eating food (physical and spiritual), but here alone it means corrosion which eats metal (Earle).

Here our clothes become tattered and threadbare. In heaven, our white robes will not become worn or out-of-style (cf. Revelation 3:5). Israel got a little taste of this as their clothes lasted for forty years (Deuteronomy 8:4). Here lawn mowers, patio furniture, tools and even pickup trucks rust, but no corrosion will be found in heaven.

IT IS SECURE -- THIEVES



This photograph of the Sixth Avenue elders and preacher was taken in 1968. Pictured is (left to right, back row) Fletcher Wade, E. R. Tarence, Wayne Primm, C. M. Karrh, Gus Nichols, Dempsey Jones, Sam Evans. (Front, left to right) H. G. Dill, A. C. McGloun. I'm retrieving this photograph from the past in memory of E. R. Tarence, born July 2, 1905, who passed to his reward on June 20 of this year. He leaves his dear wife Berniece, son Paul, and daughters Laura Gaut and Carolyn Sanford. To him the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ owes a great debt for his years of faithful shepherding, deep convictions, and loving guidance. We loved him, and will miss him.

Glenn Colley

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Watching The Pendulum

Glenn Colley

People used to say that society's views, like a pendulum, swing back and forth between conservative and liberal, from right to left and then back again. In many frightening ways, the pendulum seems to swing farther to the left than we've ever seen in our time. In politics, and in religion, baby-boomers in large numbers have made themselves heard in their stand for the left.

This article is to suggest to you a perspective. While we are seeing a great amount of division in the church today brought on by an onslaught of liberalism, I think it is valuable to consider that society around us is facing similar problems. This fact demonstrates that in the church, our problems don't really originate with a bad hermeneutic, or poor traditionalism, etc., as some suggest, but rather with the age-old tragedy of the world elbowing it's way into the church (Revelation 2:12-17, 18-29).

Consider the direction of our government. The people from the left now have the White House, and fight vigorously to introduce an unquestioning tolerance

toward homosexuality, abortion, and feminism. They seek to dismiss God-designed and history-proven family values as too intolerant and unrealistic. They pay only faint, casual attention to the Bible. They are more concerned with people seeing the cover on which they place their hand, than they are with contents they boldly reject from their hearts.

Now compare this with the liberal voices speaking in religion, quoted in The Birmingham News on June 19, 1993: "They want to peruse avenues unavailable to them . . . They oppose views which undergird opposition to women as ordained preachers and homosexuality . . . They say that an individual empowered by the Holy Spirit can interpret Scriptures for himself or herself . . . The buzz word . . . is 'freedom.' Freedom to decide God's call on one's life without having leadership saying what is right or wrong . . . We say women ought to have equal place . . ."

Perhaps you recognize these sentiments from an article entitled, "Baptists find they can't walk

together."

Again, the point is this: Society is evolving to the left. Today in virtually all walks of life people are finding liberal views and agendas more to their tastes than the long-taught conservative principles of the past. The fact that this societal movement is seen in many places demonstrates to us that the division many churches of Christ are facing is simply another sad result of Christians being "conformed to this world" instead of being "transformed by the renewing of their minds" (Romans 12:2).

Don't be overcome by the heart-breaking divisions in the body today. Recognize them for what they really are, and tenaciously hold to the unchanging hand of God. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words will never pass away" (Matthew 24:35). The one-hundredth Psalm ends with these prophetic words: ". . . and His truth endureth to all generations." Let them do what they will and then boldly say, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

When We Miss Wednesday Nights

Gary Colley

It is common to look at the attendance figures of most congregations and find the Wednesday night attendance figures to be greatly below those for the worship hour on Sunday morning. Sometimes the total attending on Wednesday night is one-half the Sunday morning figure.

Those who cause this difference by deliberately forsaking the Wednesday evening Bible classes are sounding forth a message to God and to others. Let us look at some of the things we proclaim when we forsake the Wednesday night Bible study.

FIRSTLY, one is saying that he does not need spiritual food. The Bible contains the necessary ingredients for one's spiritual growth (I Peter 2:2). Every Wednesday night, some of those spiritual delicacies are set forth for those who are hungering and thirsting for righteousness. Those who remain at home during this spiritual feast act as though they do not need this nutrition for their souls. At the present, these individuals may not be aware of it, but they are dying spiritually. One who does not eat in the physical realm will soon cease to be. This is also true in the realm of spiritual things.

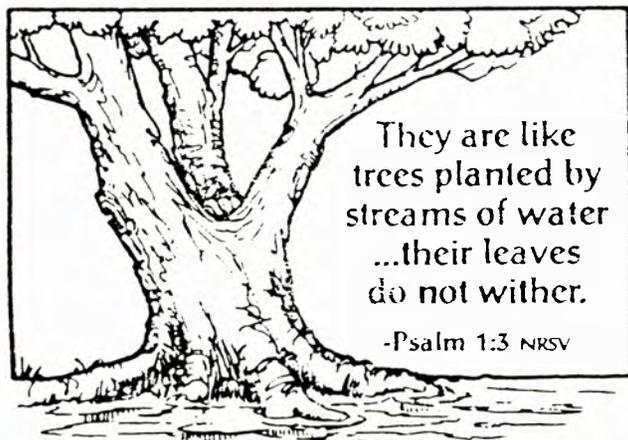
SECONDLY, those who forsake the Wednesday night services are saying with clarity that there are some things more important than gathering with God's people for study and

meditation upon God's Word. Some of the "more important" things are television programs, the newspaper, homework and the garden. A continuation in such a course will cause many people, even your brothers and sisters in Christ, to wonder whether you have been raised with Christ. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1-2).

THIRDLY, those who remain at home on Wednesday nights are also stating that Bible study is boring and dull. It is amazing that one could call something that is more precious than gold (Psalm 19:10) dull and boring. It is beyond comprehension that the Book containing God's mind (I Corinthians 2:9-13) could be thought of as dry and uninteresting. It is astounding that the map which will direct us to the Heavenly abode with the Almighty and His Son (Matthew 7:21) can be said to be stale and humdrum. Yet, that is what those who forsake Wednesday night services are saying.

FINALLY, those who forsake Wednesday night Bible study are saying with certainty that obeying God's commands is not important. Hebrews 10:25 commands that one not forsake the assemblies of the saints. Those who forsake the midweek assembly undoubtedly

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They are like
trees planted by
streams of water
...their leaves
do not wither.

-Psalm 1:3 NRSV

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Back To The Bible

Joe E. Galloway

To go *back to the Bible* is to go back to God, because the Bible is God's will revealed to man by which we can know how to be accepted of him.

Man needs to return to God because man has sinned, resulting in a separation from God (Isaiah 59:1-2; Romans 5:12). Man can neither save himself, nor can he devise a plan by which God becomes obligated to save him. The only way forgiveness could be obtained was for God to provide a means of for it. God did just that in sending his Son to die for our sins. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" and "he made him to be sin for us . . . that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:19, 21).

Following his death and resurrection, God gave all authority to Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18). He "became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9). He has told us in his New Testament what we must do to receive the salvation which he has provided. What he has revealed is both unalterable and complete (see Revelation 22:18-19; II Timothy 3:16-17). Just as Jesus did not have to offer himself more than "once" as sacrifice for our sins (Hebrews 9:25-28), his testament was "once for all" delivered to us (Jude 3, ASV).

Instead of being completely guided by the Bible, many today are depending on various doctrines based on human preference, tradition, and the written rules of their particular religious denominations. While they may follow the Bible in some teachings and practices, they ignore clear Bible instruction on others. Each denomination ends up having its own peculiar doctrines which keep it from uniting with others which, themselves, have their distinctive doctrines and practices. More importantly, these teachings and practices

keep them separated from God according to II John 9.

As long as people continue to teach and practice that which has no higher authority than men, there is a need for

them to go *back to the Bible!*

This is our plea to all people today. It is not that people become a part of our church, for we have no church. It is not that others agree with us,

for we are also fallible human beings. Our plea is that we all go back to the Bible! To the extent that this plea is accepted and practiced we will be able to have unity with

others in religion. More importantly, going back to the Bible will bring all of lost humanity back to God!

--218 Pinecrest Drive, Greeneville, TN 37743.

God, Christ, And The Spirit Dwells In The Children Of God

W. A. Holley

Your Bible teaches that God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are one, in purpose, in plan, and in unity (I John 5:7; John 1:1-5; 10:30).

Your Bible teaches that there is but one God -- not three Gods. The one God is deity -- the essential nature of God -- Divinity. There are three persons in the Godhead: God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Ghost). (Romans 1:20 and Acts 17:29)

Your Bible teaches that these three, God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit make their abode with all those who become children of God (John 17:9-10; 15:1-12).

It is unreasonable to think that God would dwell in Christians, and, at the same time both Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit would be absent. Thus, where one dwells, all dwell!

God dwells in those who keep His word. ". . . If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23). "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (II John 9).

"And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (I John 4:13-15).

When does this indwelling

begin? It begins when one becomes a child of God. When does one become a child of God? When one believes that Jesus is the Son of God, and repents of all his sins, confesses Jesus' holy name before men, and is baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:36-38; Galatians 3:26-27; Acts 8:37; Matthew 10:32-33).

God can dwell in millions of His children at the same time, because of His omnipresence.

(2) Jesus Christ dwells in the children of God.

And this is the commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us" (I John 3:23-24).

Another passage of Scripture of great importance is Galatians 2:20. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

To those who believe the Holy Scriptures there can be no doubt that Christ dwells in the children of God. Ephesians 3:17, states, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and the length, and the depth and height; which

passes knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God" (See vs. 18-19).

The Holy Spirit dwells in Christians. "Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (II Corinthians 1:22). Other passages that might be read are, Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; II Timothy 2:19; Revelation 2:17.

"And because ye are sons (not to make sons), God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:6).

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye were bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:19-20).

Thus, the Holy Spirit is given to all who obey Him (Acts 2:38; 5:32). To obey Christ is to obey His commands: To believe, to repent, to confess Jesus' name, and to be baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of sins (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:44-48; Acts 8:37; 22:16). One must also be faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10). Hence, Deity, in three persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit dwells in His children.

A note of caution should be observed here: No child of God can perform miracles today. Miracles were for the purpose of revealing and confirming the truth of God's revelation. Since all truth

concerning salvation has been revealed, no further miracles are needed (Jude 3). All miracles, as defined by the Holy Scripture, have "ceased," "vanished away," and have been "done away" (I Corinthians 13:8-13). Many charlatans and quacks claim miraculous powers, but they cannot demonstrate them (I Corinthians 2:4). Miracle-workers should demonstrate their power freely.

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

'Tis The Season

Bob Duncan

This may look like an article about Christmas, but it is not that season to which I refer in the title. I refer rather to that season of the year when the weather warms, and when many people begin to wear far too little clothing. It is unfortunate that some members of the church of Christ will allow the world to cut the pattern by which they dress -- so many members, in fact, that a large number of gospel preachers no longer speak out against the sin of immodest dress. What is worse is that some preachers and their families have even adopted the practices of the world with reference to the matter of dress.

In efforts to intimidate those

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Don't Let Satan "Whoo" It Out

B. J. Clarke

Several years ago I shared a birthday cake with another preacher whose birthday was in the same month as mine. Our wives watched in sheer delight as we preachers did our best to blow out the candles. **BUT THEY WOULDN'T GO OUT!** We blew and blew just when we thought we had blown them all out, the flame would revive and burn just as brightly as before. Our wives had decorated the cake with "trick" candles, the kind that keep on burning no matter how hard you blow on them.

As most preachers do, I looked for the Biblical lesson that this incident could teach, and I think I found one. Wouldn't it be marvelous if our Christian lights were like

the candles on that birthday cake? Wouldn't it be wonderful if no matter how hard old Satan tried to blow out our Christian lights, they just kept on shining? Don't doubt it for a moment. Satan is doing his best to extinguish the flame on your Christian candle! But as the song says, "Don't let Satan "whoo" it out"! Call it a children's song if you like; it teaches a valuable lesson for all ages. Satan is going to blow the icy winds of despair, doubt and distress in the direction of your Christian light. Don't let your light go out! Your light may flicker momentarily and Satan may think he is going to come out victorious. He may think he has blown your light out for good. Frustrate him by

reviving yourself and burning brightly again for God.

Satan is devoted to the task of blinding mankind to the light of the gospel (II Corinthians 4:4). Thus, we see more clearly the importance of heeding the words of Jesus, "Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under a bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16). We can generate enough light as Christians to dispel the darkness of Satan and his Kingdom. We not only can;

We must! It is a divine mandate from heaven.

Years ago the Olympic torch travelled across our country towards Los Angeles. Much emphasis was given to keeping the torch burning at all times. The flame of that torch was not to be extinguished! Oh that Christians would be as concerned about keeping their lights burning. "Let the lower lights be burning! Send a gleam across the wave. Some poor, fainting, struggling seaman, you may rescue, you may save."

Among the ancient Greeks, the runner who won the race was not the first man to cross the finish line, but the first man to cross the finish line

with his torch still burning! May we so run the Christian race (I Corinthians 9:24-26) as to cross the line with our lights still burning, so that we may receive our incorruptible crown and hear those precious words, "well done thou good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matthew 25:21).

Storerooms

Continued From Page 1

DO NOT BREAK THROUGH AND STEAL. Here we are forced to padlock, bolt, alarm, and guard our possessions. There are no thieves in heaven (I Corinthians 6:10), so there have never been any burglaries. It is the only absolutely safe place to store treasures. Fort Knox has nothing on heaven.

One out of six verses in the Gospel records and sixteen of the Lord's thirty-eight parables is said to deal with money. Faith and prayer are mentioned some 500 times each in the Bible, but possessions are considered 1,000 times. With all this attention we should be one up on the Wall Street Investors! Let's put our treasures in a place where we can enjoy them forever.

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

I understand that inside the CIA building there's a place where secret documents are properly processed. You might have simply assumed that they are just thrown away. Not so. First, they are soaked with a chemical which actually obliterates the words. But they don't stop there. Then they are fed into a shredder which makes them look like dry oatmeal. THEN, they are carted off to the trash, never to be read again.

So, don't you have memories in your past you'd like to completely obliterate? Something you wish you hadn't said -- something you wish you hadn't done. What Jesus Christ offers us is encompassed in the word "forgiveness." Acts 2:38 says, "Repent and be baptized every one of you . . . for the remission of your sins . . ." Hebrews 8 says of God, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Are you enjoying the "forget-ability" of the Lord's "forgiveness"?

When We Miss Wednesday Nights

Continued From Page 2

edly think the command is not important. Could they be mistaken? "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).

We urge all of those who forsake the Wednesday night

gathering of the saints to change their ways. Make sure to attend in order to receive the spiritual food which is offered. There is nothing more important. Upon attending regularly, you will find that it is refreshing and enjoyable; and you will obey God in the process.

'Tis The Season

Continued From Page 3

of us who still preach and write against immodesty, some would say we are behind the times; others would say we are evil-minded. But Jesus was not behind the times, nor was he evil-minded when he warned against the lustful look (Matthew 5:28). Adam and Eve were not behind the times, nor were they evil-minded simply because they recognized their nakedness and clothed themselves with fig leaves (Genesis 3:7). Certainly God was not behind the times nor evil-minded when he replaced those fig leaf aprons with coats he made of skins (verse 21).

Perhaps David would have committed adultery anyway, but the record clearly states that he "saw a woman bathing" (II Samuel 11:2). It was with that woman that he committed adultery. Question: If a woman wanted to cause a man to lust, can you think of a better way to do so than by dressing in provocative clothing?

What about the men? Is there a double standard? While there is some evidence to indicate that women are not as

easily incited to lust as men, I doubt it is any more proper for men to wear shorts in public than it is for women. To say the danger is not as great is not to say there is no danger. Besides this, what about the matter of common decency? What about the power of example? What about the matter of influence?

In I Timothy 2:9 Paul wrote: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array." To any right-thinking and honest person this verse clearly teaches it is wrong for women to wear scanty clothing. But should there be any doubt, look at the next verse: "But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." Can one really think the short outfits or bathing suits women of the world wear become women professing godliness?

If you have worn immodest clothing in the past, why not let this be the season when you decide once for all to dress in a manner which becomes godliness?

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July 16, 1993

See Inside Articles:

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- A Doctor And A Preacher
- "Soft" And "Hard" Preachers - What Is The Difference?
- Living Stones
- Most Of A Minute

Volume 29 Number 29
(USPS 691-760)

The Words (Truth

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

Carl Sagan Uses The Design Argument

B. J. Clarke

Ah, consistency thou art a jewel. Carl Sagan, noted atheist and Professor of Astronomy at Cornell University, recently authored an article for Parade magazine, Sunday, June 6, 1993. The article is entitled, "Is There Intelligent Life On Earth?" The subheading of the article reads: "What an alien spaceship might reveal about our planet -- and ourselves."

In the article, Mr. Sagan takes the reader on an imaginary trip through space while looking down on the earth from a spaceship. The entire article is, amazingly, devoted to proving that the design and structure of the earth is evidence of life upon the earth. Sagan imagines looking upon the oceans with infrared technology and discovering that there is "sufficient water vapor in the air to account for the clouds and just the amount that must exist because of evaporation if the oceans are in fact made of liquid water." You then discover that the air on this world is almost 1/5th oxygen. According to Sagan, "No other planet in the Solar System has anything close to so much oxygen." Sagan grants that "the oxygen would not be proof of life but rather the merest hint of life." As you continue your travel you discover that methane and oxygen are together in the same atmosphere. To quote Sagan, "In an oxygen

atmosphere, methane is a sign of life."

Perhaps the most telling section of Sagan's article is found in the evidence of technology discovered on earth from the spacecraft. From the craft you are able to detect radio transmission from the earth. Sagan writes, "So, as an alien explorer, you would know that at least one of the species on earth has achieved radio technology." To search for the species behind this technology, Sagan hypothesizes looking at the earth with a telescope at about 100 meter resolution. His next statement is absolutely correct and yet absolutely contradictory of his own philosophy. Sagan writes, "The planet is revealed to be covered with straight lines, squares, rectangles, circles, *of regularity and complexity that would be hard to explain except by life and intelligence* (Emphasis mine, BJC). He then adds that if you take pictures at a few meters resolution, "you find that the criss-crossing straight lines of the cities and the long straight lines that connect the cities seem to be filled with streamlined, multicolored beings a few meters in length, politely running, one behind the other. At night they turn on two bright lights in front so that they can see where they're going. The streets of the cities and the roadways of the countryside are clearly built for their benefit. Some of

them, when their workday is done, go to little houses to retire for the night. At last you have detected *the source of all the technology*, (Emphasis is mine - BJC) the dominant life form on the planet."

So what's the point of all this? Carl Sagan looks at the complexity of the makeup of the earth and its physical infrastructure and deduces that this just didn't happen by accident. In the magazine, Sagan inserted a satellite photo of the heart of Washington D.C. The caption reads: "The regular geometry of Washington, D.C. -- including the Capitol, the Pentagon and bridges over the Potomac -- *provide presumptive evidence of intelligent life on earth* (Emphasis mine - BJC).

Mr. Sagan, if the intricacy of one small section of Washington D.C. is evidence of intelligent life then would it not also follow that the more complex intricacies of the human body also point to an intelligent designer and architect? Mr. Sagan is in the unsavory position of believing that the roadways of Washington D.C. required intelligent beings to construct them, but the ones who built these roadways did not come from an intelligent source. They just accidentally got here. Mr. Sagan admits that technology has a source from which it was created or invented but according to

Sagan the source of this technology, mankind, has no source from which he was specially created. You could never convince Mr. Sagan that the sophisticated high-powered telescopes taking these photographs from outer space just exploded into existence and yet Mr. Sagan believes that the planets in outer space did come from a big explosion. You could never convince Mr. Sagan that a spaceship could just create itself given enough time and yet Mr. Sagan believes that

the ones who built the spacecraft just evolved by accidental happenstance.

Come on Mr. Sagan -- be consistent! If you're going to use the design argument some of the time then be honest enough to accept its weight all of the time. "For every house is builded by some man: but he that built all things is God" (Hebrews 3:4). Mr. Sagan accepts the truth of the first part of this verse. To be consistent, he must accept the last phrase in the passage as well.

Dying In Sins!

Jerri Manasco

Jesus said it clearly: "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:21-24). Three times in these verses Jesus said, "Ye shall die in your sins." That doesn't say much for the doctrine of universalism, does it?

To die in sins means to die without hope and to be lost forever. It means one's eternal destiny is sealed once for all. It is eternal punishment from which none can escape (Matthew 25:46; Luke 16:26).

The sad truth is that many are dying in their sins when they think they are dying in the Lord. One is not going to be saved because he or she is a "good" person. One is not saved merely by his being a good moral person, or a part of a respectable family. Many will die in sin!

Truly God desires for no one to perish in sin. Such a thing does not give God pleasure (Ezekiel 18:32). However, if one lives a wicked life and dies in the process he or she will face God unsaved. Solomon observed, "I saw the WICKED buried" (Ecclesiastes 8:10). Death does not change one's spiritual condition. The trip to the cemetery does not transform one from a sinner into a saint.

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Paul's Defiance Of The Gods

(Acts 17:22-31)

Glenn Colley

According to J. B. Coffman, Mars' Hill was named after the mythical god of war who was tried there for murdering the son of Poseidon (Neptune) the sea-god, in one of the many squabbles of the gods. A temple dedicated to Mars had been on this hill in very ancient times. It is strange that the prince of Peace should have been proclaimed on that ancient hill of the war god.

Paul stood with courage surging through his veins and declared, "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious." He was personal. He was pointed. McGarvey objects to the phrase "too superstitious." He writes that the Greek wording instead strongly suggests this translation: "demon-fearing." You can be sure that Paul had their attention. The Roman satirist, Petronius, said that it was easier to find a god than a man in Athens. I know some preachers who would have avoided the subject of idol worship whenever in Athens. I know others who would preach about idol worship when there, but would twist the scriptures to teach that God didn't mind. Paul calls their idol worship ignorant.

The apostle then introduces them to Jehovah,

the Living God. Did you ever consider how you would teach someone who knew nothing about God? Here is your lesson text. Note the series of statements describing God, each one drawing a striking contrast between Jehovah and the Athenian idols:

"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us. For in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring..."

Now, this key verse: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." Did God overlook idolatry? Not in the sense that He condoned idolatry. To do so would contradict His words

and His character. God always notices sin. He overlooked their ignorance in the sense that He "suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways" (Acts 14:16). Perhaps God "winked" at these times to let all see the depths to which man will fall when he leaves Jehovah out of his heart generation after generation.

The contrast in this verse is unavoidable. Paul is saying, "That was then, this is now." But what is different about now? Firstly, there is a Savior whose authority stretches over the whole world, and to all nationalities. Secondly, there was a more complete revelation of God to man, including the introduction of the universal kingdom, the church.

From this remarkable text, the following observations should be made:

1. Repentance is a command. Those who teach that we wait for some sort of miraculous adjustment of our hearts, are false teachers.

2. All men every where are to repent. Therefore all men every where are capable of repentance.

3. If a man does not repent, he will be lost eternally.

4. We must be busy teaching the Gospel of repentance!

A Doctor And A Preacher

Neal Pollard

A three year old boy was riding with his parents through town one afternoon. During the course of their travel they came upon a cemetery. The little boy looked at it, then told his mother, "When I grow up I want to be a doctor and a preacher." When his mother asked why, he responded, "There is no telling how many of those people's lives and souls I could have saved." What depth of compassion and wisdom filled the heart of that lad! He possessed a love for individuals who had already passed from this life, so much so that he wanted to reach the living around him.

Should we not cultivate a heart like that little boy's? Certainly, his disposition characterized the kind of heart Jesus wants his disciples to have. Such thinking will make one great in Christ's kingdom. In Matthew 18:1-4, Jesus tells his followers that the greatest in the kingdom of heaven are those who are "converted, and become as little children." The boy who saw the graves knew that the task of reaching souls was an important one. He realized that one cannot be successful in that endeavor without having his heart involved. Jesus often held up children as an example of how our hearts should be (cf. Matthew 18:1-4; 19:14). Notice a few things about the character of children which demands imitation.

A CHILD IS HUMBLE

(Matthew 18:4). Jesus preached humility (Luke 18:9-14; Matthew 5:5). More importantly, he lived humility (John 13:13-17; Philippians 2:7-8). Gospel writers often spoke of the need for Christians to be humble (James 4:6-10; I Peter 5:5, 6). In the Old Testament, we find individuals like Manasseh (II Chronicles 33:12), Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:37), and the Ninevehite king (Jonah 3:5-9) whose humility brought them close to God. Someone once said, "The man who bows humbly before God is sure to walk uprightly before men."

Isaiah transmitted God's thoughts on this matter, "For thus saith the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isaiah 57:15). Nicolas Boileau-Despreaux once wrote, "There is but one road to lead us to God -- humility; all other ways would only lead astray, even were they fenced in with all virtues." A child is not wrapped up in riches. He is not propped by vast education. He is not worried about his clout and social importance. He is dependent upon parents and others for his survival. Ripping off the tattered rags of self-worth and adorning the pure robe of

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The Words Of Truth

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"Soft" And "Hard" Preachers - What Is The Difference?

(Excerpt from a sermon preached by N. B. Hardeman, 1943)

"Then came his disciples, and said, Master knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?" Now stop and analyze conditions. The Jews in the lifetime of Christ were divided into three denominations: Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes. Of the three, the Pharisees were far the more prominent. They were the elite, the bon tons, the upper tens of their day, and for Christ to speak against them was to them abusive and ridiculous as well as preposterous. After they had spoken these things, the disciples came and said, "Lord, you gave offense to the Pharisees. You have actually offended the leading sect of the day. And they are up in arms against you." Now I want you to note Christ's answer: "Every plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." That's the answer that Christ made when the disciples told him that the Pharisees were offended at the doctrine he had thus spoken.

Brethren, I have often wondered what on earth I might say that would not be of offense to someone. If I preach Christ as the son of God, the Unitarian is offended. If I preach he was born of a virgin, all modernists are offended. If I preach baptism for the remission of sins, the sectarian world takes offense. If I preach again that there is one church, all denominations become offended. If I preach against apostasy, our Baptist friends are offended. If I preach that immersion is God-ordained, our Methodist and Presbyterian and Lutheran and Congregational friends are offended. If I preach against the popular sins of the day, the socialites and the clubs are offended. Well, again, if I preach about giving, all the

old stingy tightwads in the church are offended. Brethren, what on God's earth can I preach without offending? You must name it, and I will obligate myself to say that somebody will be offended at the thing thus said.

... Now let me mention some characteristics of a soft preacher.

1. He preaches the truth but has it mixed with error to such an extent that it is impossible to tell where he stands.

2. He preaches the truth in an

apologetic manner. He is ever fearful of offending some dear friend and thus he carries no conviction. He is like the chief rulers who loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. They have never learned what Paul said, "If I seek to please men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

3. He preaches the truth in a general way so that he gets exactly nowhere. They are preachers who have a multiplicity of words and they are

not intentionally unsound, but they never get to the point. They can "pace all day in the shade of a tree."

The man who is considered hard preaches the truth unmixed with error, in a firm and positive manner. He cares not for the person of any man. Having convictions, he contends earnestly for the right and exposes error regardless of friendly ties. He gets to the point and the audience knows what he said and where he stands. These

are times when a preacher is known not only for what he stands by, but also by what he stands against.

I have often said that I would be ashamed of myself, if I could not make clear my attitude toward any matter affecting the peace and happiness of the church on a post card. I pray that our attitude toward all affairs may ever be such as will cause his smiles to be upon us.

Living Stones

Bill Jackson
(deceased)

The church of the Lord is pictured as a body, as a kingdom, as a family or household, etc., but also as a temple (I Corinthians 3:16). The apostle Peter later uses this last idea, in making some points on what we are and how we are to serve. The verse is I Peter 2:5.

Peter had already stressed that we, as people born of the Word of God, are to manifest a change in our lives, laying aside filthy and sinful things (1:23;2:1). We are to feed upon the milk of the word, and we are to grow (v. 2). We, through obedience, have been brought to God and to Christ, and then in verse 5, is the point on our being a part of God's temple.

The points are these (1) We are living stones, and the emphasis is on the living, since stones we see day by day are lifeless. (2) We are formed into a spiritual house. The emphasis here is on the spiritual, since, we all live in temporal houses day by day. We look upon earthly and temporal houses day by day. We are a spiritual house. (3) We are a holy priesthood, taking us now into the temple of God to look, not at the structure, but at the people. The people -

saints of God - are priests, who work in the business of serving God. (4) We, then are to offer up spiritual sacrifices. A priest sacrifices, and there have been idolatrous priests and sacrifices offered contrary to God's will. We, the people of God, are those authorized by God to offer up the sacrifices, and at that, those of a spiritual quality pleasing to God. That has to do with obedience to the will of God, and sacrifices offered through the Christ, our High Priest.

It is important for the Christian to know that he is a living stone, and a part of a temple of God, with spiritual work and sacrifices to offer, as one of God's priests! Awesome thought! Grave responsibility!

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MAYBE...

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STUDY

IS FOR YOU,



ARE YOU COMING?

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

Have you ever wondered about those folks who continually tell people that the end of time is right on top of us? They claim to be able to see the scriptures unfolding into today's six o'clock news, and feel quite certain that the end is near. Many even narrow down a certain date of the Lord's return.

The truth is, we don't know when the Lord will return. He didn't tell us. It's a good thing, too. People who figured out the date might be tempted to live like the devil until the last week or so and then just follow the right way at the end. No, we don't know when He will come. Here's how Jesus describes the date: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matthew 24:36).

So, why did He keep the time of His coming a secret? He wanted us to live prepared. In His own words, "Therefore, be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 24:44).

Dying In Sins!

Continued From Page 1

Repentance on **THIS SIDE OF THE GRAVE** is essential (II Peter 3:9). God's desire that none perish does not prevent many from being lost, and it does not erase the need for repentance.

Many will die in sin **IN SPITE OF THE LOVE OF GOD**. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Through love Jesus gave himself to deliver us from sin (Galatians 1:4; Romans 5:6-10; 8:31-32). Preachers must proclaim the love of God as a supreme motive for becoming a Christian! What a powerful force God's love is -- yet refusal of that love leaves one in his sins.

Many will die in sin **IN SPITE OF THE CROSS OF JESUS**. In his cross Jesus draws all men unto himself (John 12:32). The cross of Jesus is a marvelous reality. Christ and him crucified is the central message of the faithful preacher (I Corinthians 2:1-3). Nevertheless, "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness" (I Corinthians 1:18). Many refuse the Lord's teaching on the essentiality of baptism; yet one cannot preach the cross without preaching baptism for the remission of sins (Romans 6:1-6).

Many will die in sins **IN SPITE OF GRACE**. "For by grace are ye saved . . ." (Ephesians 2:5, 8). By the grace of God our Lord tasted death for every man (Hebrews 2:9). The riches of grace makes possible our redemption and forgiveness (Ephesians 1:7). However, grace is not license to sin (Romans 6:1-2).

Many will die in sin **IN SPITE OF A SAVIOUR!** In the words of Jesus which opened this article, we learn that Jesus is the Saviour -- the only Saviour! Those to whom he spoke would not be saved by him because they would not obey his will. Jesus may be the Saviour of all men (I Timothy 4:10), but not all men

will be saved! This is not a contradiction, nor is it a "textual problem" that defies analysis! Simply stated, Jesus is the only Saviour we have and if we reject him and his plan, there is no other available (John 14:6; Hebrews 7:25; I Timothy 2:4-6).

Many will die in sin **IN SPITE OF THE PROPITIATION FOR SINS**. Jesus paid the debt for us (I John 4:8-10). He bears our sins in his own body (I Peter 2:24). The debt is paid! Yet many folks go to the banker and say, "Send back the money! I insist on paying the debt myself!" Could you imagine being so ungrateful in material things? Yet so many carry a sin load unnecessarily for failure to accept in faith and obedience the Lord's propitiatory death.

Many will die in sin **IN SPITE OF THE LORD'S CONCERN FOR SINNERS**. Jesus loves the souls of men. He came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). He calls sinners to repentance (Luke 5:31-32). How sad it is when he who can call sinners from the deadness of their sins (Ephesians 2:1-3) is rejected and refused in human stubbornness.

Many will die in sin **IN SPITE OF THE DELIVERANCE PROVIDED**. Jesus offered the Jews freedom from their sins (John 8:30-34). Like so many today, they could not see their need for this! How deception has worked its way so deeply into the hearts of people! Multitudes are bound in the chains of slavery and choose to stay there!

Many will die in sin **IN SPITE OF THE WORD OF SALVATION**. Paul said, "To you is the word of this salvation sent" (Acts 13:26). Later, however, Paul said to those same people, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46). Like some in the parable of

the sower (Luke 8:12), these did not allow the word of God to work in their hearts to produce faith. The word of salvation must be preached, but the preaching **OF** it without obedience **TO** it cannot save. In the Book of Acts it is clear that people heard the word, believed it, and obeyed it in being baptized into Christ (Acts 2:37-47; 8:35-37; 22:16; etc.). There is absolutely no salvation apart from the word of God.

Many will die in sin **IN SPITE OF APPEALS MADE**

BY CONCERNED PEOPLE. I am constantly puzzled why people think you are interfering in their lives when you talk to them about getting sin out of their hearts, but they can be so full of gratitude when you point out to them that worms are eating their tomatoes! Friend, people are not trying to "run your life" when they plead with you to be a Christian. Paul loved souls and saw every reason to plead with them (II Corinthians 5:10-11; Acts 24:25; Romans 1:14-16). Turning you away from sin is

a blessing to you (James 5:19-20). People who love your soul are simply trying to rescue the backslider and the alien sinner. Do you not want to be rescued?

Those who die in sin cannot blame God, Christ, the church, the cross, or faithful brethren. They cannot blame even the devil because they are free agents who can resist (James 4:7). In spite of all that can be done, many will die in sin. How tragic!

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A Doctor And A Preacher

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humility, the follower of God is exalted by Him (Proverbs 3:34).

A CHILD IS INNOCENT (I Corinthians 14:20). Perhaps the most refreshing conversations a person can have is with a young person. Their minds are not overcome with evil, they do not thrive on vulgarity, nor do they fill their sentences with expletives. How much we could learn about purity of heart from a child. Paul instructs us to be children in wrong-doing (or, malice - KJV). Too many people think they have to be "worldly-wise" to get ahead in this life when such is far from the truth. Paul shows us the depravity of one whose heart is filled with wickedness. They have a worthless mind, they are senseless, disloyal, inhuman, lustful and shameful in passions, and perverted (Romans 1:24-31). The Christian needs the innocence of a child.

Have you ever watched two small children when they get into a fight? One minute, they may be clawing and scratching, but by the time their mother gets from the kitchen window to the backyard they are arm in arm. They are children in malice. Vitally necessary to the growth and development of Christian love is such a forgiving spirit.

Grudge-holding damages the container. Let us never bury the hatchet with the handle sticking up. God wants his children to forgive and forget (cf. James 5:9).

A CHILD IS RECEPTIVE (Mark 10:15). While we must realize by rereading I Corinthians 14:20 that we are not to be children in understanding and that we are to search the scriptures to verify what we are taught (Acts 17:11) and to try the spirits (I John 4:1ff), we must be receptive to the will of God. When we read God's word and see the need to change, let us possess the heart of a child and accept what our Father tells us. Jesus said, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." We need to have great faith in the God of truth.

A man once questioned Martin Luther's faith in a God he had never seen. To illustrate his belief in God, Luther took his young daughter into his arms and carried her to his deep cellar. He set her on the ground and he made his descent. Although she could see nothing but pitch darkness, she heard her father call out, "jump into my arms." Without stopping to think, the trusting girl leaped toward the voice. Luther climbed up and out of the

cellar with his young daughter in his arms and said, "That, sir, is faith." While Christianity is not merely a leap of faith, it involves "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Christ offers salvation in His church, and a man must be receptive to God's plan of redemption.

The little three-year-old is neither a doctor nor a preacher today. However, he is a young man who loves souls and is acting out his desire to reach the lost. He never lost that humility, that innocence of heart, or that driving faith which makes him such an encouragement and example to his friends and co-workers. Let us never forget that, "Souls are crying! Men are dying! Win the lost at any cost!"

**Be A
Words
Of
Truth
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July 23, 1993

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- A Word To Preachers - And Those Who Hear Them
- "Most Of A Minute"

Volume 29 Number 30
(USPS 691-760)

The Words C Truth

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

It Isn't Enough To Say 'Be Good'

Elwood Holt

A young man was soon to be hanged and his mother came to pay the last visit. She went in where he was, and, throwing her arms around him, she said, "O God, my God! My boy, my little boy! Little did I think I was raising you to go to the gallows. Oh, if you had only died in your infancy!" As she wept upon the shoulder of her boy, he stood there as heartless as he could be, never moving a muscle.

At last he pushed his mother from him with the contemptuous statement, "Go away from me. If it had not been for you I would not be here."

The woman, nearly fainting, screamed, "My poor boy, I never told you to do wrong."

"No," replied the lad, "but you never told me to do right."

Friends, it isn't enough to tell your children to not do wrong. We must be actively engaged in telling them to do right. "A child left to himself bringeth his mother shame," the wise man states. We must teach our children what right is, then encourage them to walk in it. The ancients taught their sons and daughters the statutes of the Lord, and that constantly. They taught them in early morning, during the day, and when they came to pillow their eyes at night in sleep.

Our young people are faced with a multiplicity of problems on all hands. They who live the proper life do so

at a great cost. Many times they sacrifice the attention they would otherwise receive from those of similar ages and interests. When your boys and girls are stigmatized because they choose to walk in the path of righteousness instead of that of dissipation, they deserve encouragement from us. Let us never neglect them. State reformatories are filled with boys and girls who were not properly encouraged in the right ways . . . People thought they would just naturally grow up and be all right, but they were left to themselves and soon forsook the right paths.

The most ungodly parents in the world can tell their children to "be good," but such words will become but empty echoes if not backed up by parental goodness. The Mother with a beer mug in one hand, unfit language upon her tongue, and dressed about like Mother Hubbard's cupboard, can't have much of an influence for right over her daughter. Do you think she can? The father who swears, curses, gambles, drinks, and carouses can't expect his son to rise above the same kind of conduct, do you think? He must walk in the straight and narrow way if he would have his son to walk in that way.

In teaching our children we must be explicit. They do not get the teaching we try to put across "speaking in generalities." They want to hear it as it is, and, that is the way we should teach them.

They should not be left in the dark about sin, dissipation, the proper use of their bodies, the relationships of the two sexes, and all other matters that are pertinent to their growing up and forming proper conceptions toward life and each other.

"Stay out of trouble." This statement has been made too many times to count, but, our children often ask, "What is trouble?" What is that out of which we must stay? We must be explicit in our teaching. We must do more than say "Don't get into anything that I wouldn't," -- "keep your shirt clean," -- "don't do anything you will be sorry of later."

How much instruction can a friend get from such statements? He recognizes them as warnings, but he doesn't know what to do in order to stay out of trouble, to keep from being sorry later. Don't you get the point?

Yes, we must do more than to teach our children not to do wrong. We must tell them to be good, and tell them what constitutes goodness. In contempt the boy that was to be hanged said, "Mother, you never taught me to be good, or do good."

The story is told of the rabbit that was being chased by the dog. The people followed and cheered the rabbit on, telling

him to run hard and escape. "Thank you for your encouragement," said the rabbit, "but for goodness' sake, somebody please shoot the dog!"

We think we can stand by in this world of sinful things and discharge our duty by telling our young folks, "Don't do wrong . . . Remember your good parents." But, they need help. They need to be taught how to do right, and what comprises good. **YOU SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE.** (John 8:32).

"Another Testament?"

Mike Benson

Question:

"Lately I've noticed several advertisements on television about a book referred to as 'Another Testament of Jesus Christ.' I didn't know that Jesus had two testaments. Should we also use this other book in religion today?"

Answer:

Several scriptures and thoughts come to mind with reference to your questions. Please note the following:

1. Peter wrote, "As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue" (II Peter 1:3).

•Since "all" that we require for life and godliness has been provided, what need do we have for additional information other than the Bible?

•If "all" has been provided, what more can there be?

2. Paul wrote, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (II Timothy 3:16, 17).

•Since the Bible furnishes us with all that we need to be complete spiritually, what need does a person have for "another" revelation?

3. John wrote, "For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18, 19).

•Would not "another" testament constitute an addition?

•Does the Lord approve of such additions to His word? What does the Bible say? See Galatians 1:6-9.

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Make His Paths Straight

Glenn Colley

His name was John. This older cousin of Jesus was commissioned with the responsibility of making the way easier for the King of Kings. The thrust of his preaching is summed up in Matthew 3:2 -- "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." His mission was mapped out long before his birth, for Isaiah said:

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain" (Isaiah 40:3-4).

Understanding this reading ought to deepen your appreciation for John. This description of his work comes from a well-known practice among the oriental monarchs of that time. Before they traveled, they sent heralds to announce their arrival, and servants to repair and improve the road ways. Trees or rocks were removed from the road way. Holes were patched. Ruts were filled and smoothed. If there was no road to where the monarch wished to travel, one had to

be made -- involving cutting down hills and filling in valleys.

That's John. John the baptizer was, in a spiritual sense, the one sent to prepare the roads for Jesus. His humility before Jesus is seen in his simple description to the Jews who demanded to know who and what he was: "I am not the Christ . . . I am the voice. . ." (John 1:20, 23). No spotlights for him, no name on the marquis, no fanfare. He was simply a voice -- an impersonal medium -- to prepare the way for the Messiah.

Jesus came, and walked the path which the pathmaker had blazed. John opened the doors so Jesus could make the most efficient use of His time on earth.

How many doors have been left ajar for our entry today? How many paths smoothed for our walk to God? There are many. For example, the price has once and for all been paid for sin (Hebrews 9:26-28). I do not have to be concerned with climbing the steep and unscalable mountain of meriting my salvation. Jesus shed His blood and made the path straight.

Secondly, the will of Christ has been revealed in the

New Testament, I do not have to search from one end of the earth to the other to learn the secrets of pleasing Him. I have simply to read the inspired text and follow the pattern for worship, teaching, beliefs, and practice. I don't have to search through the hunting grounds of human wisdom for truth. (John 17:17) -- "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth."

Thirdly, there are Christians in all nations of the world, so that I do not have to travel the path to God without the encouragement and exhortation of loving brethren (Hebrews 10:24, 25). They line the pathway with hopes and prayers and love as I press toward my ultimate arrival on the sunny banks of heaven.

As the old saying goes, "We warm by the fire which others have kindled." Let's not take for granted the wonderful straight and level road which others have smoothed for us.

"Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist; yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matthew 11:11).

Baptism For "A Scriptural Reason"

Joe E. Galloway

Some are saying that a person may have been acceptably baptized, even if he was not baptized "for the remission of sins," as long as he did it "for a scriptural reason." So, supposedly, there are many more who can be accepted as God's children than most of us realize and acknowledge as being in our

fellowship. There are many in various denominations who believed themselves to have been already saved before baptism, but who have sincerely been baptized "to obey God." It is being claimed that it is sufficient that they have sincerely been "baptized," even though they did not have a correct understanding of when forgiveness

was received, because in their minds they wanted to obey God.

Are There A Plurality Of Reasons?

The argument is made further by some that there are a number of reasons for baptism. For example: to be saved, to wash away our sins, to enter into Christ -- as well

Continued on page 4

Do You Fear The Lord?

B. J. Clarke

I am not asking you if you are terrified of God. There is a tremendous misunderstanding in the minds of most people concerning what is truly involved in fearing Jehovah. The Bible speaks of two types of fear. First, there is the fear forbidden (Genesis 15:1; Exodus 14:13; Matthew 10:28; Luke 12:32). In all of these passages and hundreds more, individuals are instructed to refrain from fearing certain men or afflictions brought on by men. These are comforting assurances of God's protective watchcare over his faithful followers.

Second, there is the fear commanded. "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). This verse does not demand that we be filled with a dread and fright of God. It rather speaks of fear in the sense of deep-seated reverence and respect for the authority of God as the rightful ruler of the Universe. It was this kind of godly fear that moved Noah to prepare an ark for the saving of his household (Hebrews 11:7). His example is worthy!

But, how can I know if I fear the Lord? Am I supposed to build an ark like Noah? While we are not obligated to do specifically what Noah did, we are required to imitate his general attitude towards God's wishes (Genesis 6:22). The Proverbs reveal that fear of the Lord must involve several things. IF I WOULD TRULY FEAR THE LORD I MUST: (1) *Seek Wisdom and Knowledge* (Proverbs 1:7; 2:1-5; 9:10). The humanist doesn't seek Divine wisdom and knowledge because he has no respect for God. He doesn't even believe in God! He considers the wisdom of man to be supreme and sufficient to handle all of life's problems. Contrariwise, the man who fears Jehovah realizes that he needs the wisdom from above to live a

well-balanced and fulfilling life. His respect for God leads him to turn to God for wisdom just as our respect for certain individuals leads us to ask them for advice and wisdom. (2) *Hate Evil and Depart From It* (Proverbs 3:7; 8:13; 23:17). If we respect God we will believe that he knows what is best for us. Thus, if God has classified certain activities as evil, we will consider them evil also. Fear of Jehovah is essential in overcoming temptations of this life. We cannot say that we fear the Lord while openly rebelling against him and participating in evil (Jonah 1:9; I John 2:3-5). Doing that which God hates is not fear!

The man who fears God in the aforementioned manner will be blessed (Proverbs 10:27; 14:26, 27; 19:23; 22:4; 29:25). On the other hand, the man who does not fear the Lord has much to fear (Proverbs 1:29-32; 10:24). "Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure with trouble" (15:16).

Watch For Snakes

Allen Webster

This time of year snakes find their way out of holes and into our way. Children going out to play are reminded, "Watch for snakes." Most adults have a horror of unexpectedly stepping on a snake. We watch with horror as the news tells of some unsuspecting resident finding a huge boa constrictor living under his house.

The U.S. Government Peace Corps Volunteers Manual for workers in the Amazon jungle tells what to do in case of attack by an anaconda, the world's largest snake. A relative of the boa constrictor, it grows to be 35 feet long and weighs up to 400 pounds.

The manual says: (1) If you are attacked by an anaconda, do not run. The snake is faster

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The Glory Of The Christian

Charles Crump

There is a part of man that cannot be explained by man himself, this being his soul. Man, being tangible, seeks information in a tangible manner (I Corinthians 2:11-14). God revealed unto man this invisible part. Otherwise he would never know things concerning his soul (Genesis 2:7, Deuteronomy 29:29).

God is a supernatural being (John 4:24, Psalms 138:7-10) and the Bible is a supernatural book (II Timothy 3:16). They must be proven in a supernatural manner.

This is the reason for miracles in Bible times. Only God has this power and those to whom he gave it (Acts 2:1-4, 19:11, 8:17, II Timothy 1:6, Mark 16:20, Daniel chapter 2). When God sent his Son to earth he also was proven by miracles, and wonders (Acts 2:22). Man within himself has no other possible way to know of the supernatural or the secrets of God. For man to receive God's grace, mercy and love, he must look to God's confirmed word, the Bible.

Christ left his riches and former glory to reveal unto mankind the Father's glory (John 17:5, 3:16, 17:13, II Corinthians 8:9, Philippians 2:5-8). Note the following, "... God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:" (Romans 8:3). "Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people (Hebrews 2:17). "For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Christ tasted the depth of human shame, weakness and woes that he might be our perfect salvation, that he might bring many sons unto glory (Hebrews 2:10).

The glory of the Christian came by the word of God (John 17:22), being proven,

confirmed, without any room for the slightest error. To pin point the glory in the Christian, note what Jesus said in his priestly prayer to his Father: "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; (Apostles) that they may be one, even as we are one" (John 17:22). The word glory in this verse means "honor, worship and praise to be expressed inwardly, outwardly and literally." Note the result of this glory, "And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy" (John 17:13). The glory of God to man came in the form of his word spoken by the Lord. Jesus set the example in keeping his Father's will (John 17:4) as did Christ's special messengers, his apostles (John 17:6). This is why we read, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

The glory of the Christian (expressed by his joy) comes only through the keeping of the Father's will, and there's no other way possible. Christ is our example. (I Peter 2:21-22) He has already fulfilled God's will, and this he expects of all his people as well (John 17:4, Matthew 7:21-21). "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:8-9).

Therefore, God gave his glory to his Son (in the form of his word) and his Son gave it unto his special men, his apostles, and they, in turn, handed it down to others.

The joy this glory brings to the Christian must be shared with all others. This is what Paul expressed to Timothy, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2).

The eunuch is a prime example of receiving God's glory in joy. Philip, being

summoned to the eunuch by the Holy Spirit, (Acts 8:29), gave him inspired understanding as to what the eunuch was reading. Philip "preached unto him Jesus," (Acts 8:35), because God's glory cannot come any other way (John 12:32, 14:6). One must understand what Christ has done for him before he can truly see the glory of God and receive his joy. Philip taught him this glory from the

Old Testament wherein the eunuch was reading (Isaiah 53). It was after his baptism that he went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:38-39). No wonder Paul told the Thessalonians, "rejoice evermore" (I Thessalonians 5:16).

Peter said, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after ye have suffered a while, make you

perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (I Peter 5:10). At the birth of Jesus the angel that spoke to the shepherds expressed exactly what was in store for mankind, "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10). Remember, when we lose our joy as Christians, God loses our glory.

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A Word To Preachers - And Those Who Hear Them

Dalton Key

In commenting on a book he had read, Abraham Lincoln remarked, "For people who like that kind of book, that is the kind of book they will like." Which brings to mind Calvin Coolidge's dry observation: "When more and more people are thrown out of work, unemployment results."

These benignly ambiguous remarks sound hauntingly similar to some of the speech-making-passed-off-as-preaching, which oozes from many of our pulpits today. We're hearing of many lessons which are well constructed, cleverly developed, eloquently presented, yet which say absolutely nothing! Preaching which neither convinces nor convicts will never convert.

Perhaps we have spent too much time grazing in the locoweed of secular and denominational material, and too little time ingesting the

milk and meat of God's word.

Controversial topics are being swept under the rug of detente and replaced with matters agreed upon by all; saint and sinner alike. Preachers who are bold to speak out in favor of the family, mental health, or developing friendships (subjects upon which most everyone agrees) are too often timid and strangely silent concerning the one church of the New Testament, marriage and divorce, social drinking, singing - and only singing - as acceptable music in Christian worship, and a host of other "touchy" concerns.

It is disconcerting to hear many of the denominational pulpiteers taking a bolder, less

compromising stand with regard to their dogmas than some of our preachers do with respect to the clear teachings of scripture.

Preacher friend, root yourself firmly in the truth of God's word. Take a firm stand with the inspired penmen of the New Testament. Never be afraid or ashamed to preach truth -- on any Biblical theme. *Paul charged Timothy to "preach the word," not to beat around the bush," or "tell a few jokes."* (II Timothy 4:2).

And dear elder, member, hearer - demand no less from the one who stands before you to preach. Remember, souls are at stake.

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**Be A
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"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

As you probably know by now, in the church of Christ, we place a great emphasis upon the Bible. We are constantly encouraging people to read and study God's word to enrich their lives, and so their beliefs won't be second-hand.

For example, consider the subject of baptism. Would it surprise you to know that the practice of baptizing babies is no where in the Bible?! That's right. There's no command or example, or even mention of infant baptism in God's word.

The Bible does say a great deal about baptism, but it always has to be preceded by things a baby couldn't do -- like belief in Jesus as the Son of God and repentance of past sins.

Acts 2:38 says, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins." Doesn't it just make good sense to let God decide how we practice our religion?

Watch For Snakes

Continued From Page 2

than you are. (2) Lie flat on the ground. Put your arms tight against your sides, your legs tight together. (3) Tuck in your chin. (4) The snake will come and begin to nudge and climb over your body. (5) Do not panic (No problem, right?!). (6) After the snake has examined you, it will begin to swallow you from the feet end -- always from the feet end. Permit the snake to swallow your feet and ankles. *Do not panic.* (7) The snake will now begin to suck your legs into its body. You must lie perfectly still. This will take a long time. (8) When the snake has reached your knees, slowly and with as little movement as possible, reach down, take your knife and very gently slide it between the edge of the snake's mouth and your leg. Then suddenly rip upwards, severing the snake's head. (9) Be sure to have your knife. (10) Be sure your knife is sharp (Author unknown).

Volunteers, anyone??!

As bad as it would be to meet an anaconda in the Amazon, it is worse to tangle with a snake we have "round these parts." No, not a cottonmouth or rattler, but a serpent called *Satan*. This was the only evil beast in God's Garden (Genesis 3:1; cf/Luke 10:18; Revelation 20:2). His poison is worse than the rattler and his grip tighter than the constrictor. His poison is deceit (John 8:44; II Corinthians 11:3, 14, 15; Revelation 20:7, 8). His grip is sin's addictiveness (II Timothy 2:26).

AN ANACONDA CAN OUTFRAN YOU, BUT SATAN CANNOT. There are times to run from the Serpent. "*Flee fornication*" (I Corinthians 6:18). Joseph ran from Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:12). Singles must be careful not to date those with bad reputations (Proverbs 2:16-19) and the married should keep their distance from the flirtatious (I Corinthians 15:33).

"Wherefore, my dearly

beloved, *flee from idolatry*" (I Corinthians 10:14). An idol is anything put first in life. Pleasure, jobs, spouses, vices or even false religions can be idols. Covetousness is idol worship (Colossians 3:5), so fleeing idolatry can mean forsaking a love for money and the things it buys. "But thou, O man of God, *flee these things*; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (I Timothy 6:11; cf. 6:6-10).

"*Flee also youthful lusts*: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (II Timothy 2:22). Fleeing from the serpent in youth includes avoiding dirty movies, not reading suggestive romance novels and magazines, not watching dirty soap operas and many other indecent TV shows. Dating singles must avoid places that give opportunity for lusting (such as dances, beaches, and pools). It also applies to excessive kissing and petting on dates. Satan is not as fast as an anaconda. You can outrun him. But don't give him a head start!

AN ANACONDA WILL NOT RUN FROM YOU, BUT SATAN WILL. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). After Jesus resisted Satan in the wilderness, ". . . *the devil leaveth him*, and . . . angels . . . ministered unto him" (Matthew 4:11). Jesus put Satan's ministers to flight in the temple (John 2:15, 16). Daniel purposed in his heart not to defile himself (Daniel 1:8), and soon the temptation to eat the king's meat was removed (cf. I Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 4:13). We are to "resist steadfast in the faith" the roaring lion (I Peter 5:9). Though a temptation will return, if resisted most will not last very long.

AN ANACONDA WILL SWALLOW YOU, AND SO WILL SATAN. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about,

seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8). The great red dragon (Satan) waited to devour the woman's child as soon as it was born (Revelation 12:4). Though it may work with anacondas, it is not wise to let the devil swallow you half way before beginning to fight back. There is some difference between a lion's bite and a snake's.

AN ANACONDA IS DESTROYED WITH A KNIFE, AND SO IS SATAN. God's word is the Spirit's sword (Ephesians 6:17). "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword,

as to obey God and to receive remission of sins.

Such "reasoning" is fallacious because these are simply different ways of expressing the same reason. There is only one main purpose for the penitent believer to obey the Lord in baptism: to change from a lost to a saved relationship with God. True, this purpose may be stated in different ways, but they all equal this one reason. One is baptized "to be saved" (Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21), which suggests the purpose of changing from the lost to the saved relationship. It is for (unto) the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38), suggesting this identical idea. It is to "wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16), for baptism is the act in which we contact the blood of Christ which removes our sins, but this again is to put us into the saved relationship with God. It puts one "into Christ," or "into the one body" (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27; I Corinthians 12:13). Is this a separate purpose from the above? No! To enter into Christ is the same as to change from a lost to a saved relationship with God, for "there is . . . no condemnation to them which are in Christ (Romans 8:1). All spiritual blessings are in Christ (Ephesians 1:3), and one of these spiritual blessings in Christ is salvation (II Timothy 2:10).

Although the New Testament never says in so many words

piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). How was it that the devil came to flee from Jesus? Christ hit him with the two-edged sword (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10).

We are successful against anacondas and temptations only if we are packing our weapons. All the government's instructions are useless if the volunteers are not following the "Boy Scout's rule" (Be prepared). How would one with a snake up to his knees feel if he

reached down for his Swiss Army knife and found that it was in his tent? How successfully will we defeat Satan without the Word in our hearts? David promised, "The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide" (Psalm 37:31). Another Psalmist (Ezra?) wrote, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11). A man who meditates day and night in the law of the Lord is planted by rivers of waters (Psalm 1:2, 3).

Watch for snakes (Mark 13:37)!

Baptism For "A Scriptural Reason"

Continued From Page 2

that one is to be baptized "to obey God" we would agree that one, indeed, does do such because God requires it. But, when God requires something for us for a stated reason we must not only do it, but we must do it for the reason he gave for doing it if we would really obeyed him. When our understanding of a command is opposite of the Lord's stated reason for it, how could such be considered obedience at all? For example: even if one ate the Lord's supper because he knew God said do it, would anyone claim that it would be acceptable if he ate it for the purpose of changing from the lost to the saved state? Surely we would agree that this wrong purpose for eating it would invalidate the eating! Is it not the same with one being baptized, knowing the Lord commands it, but thinking that he has already been saved before baptism?

What About The Purpose Of Christ's Baptism?

Someone may ask, "What about Christ's baptism? Was it not simply done to obey God, without being for the remission of sins? Christ was baptized "to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). He was not baptized to receive salvation, nor was he baptized because he had already been saved. As to its purpose, Jesus' baptism of necessity was different from ours because Jesus was sinless (I Peter 2:22). We all sin (Romans 3:23), so we do not obey God in baptism with the

same need and for the same purpose as did he.

Both Act and Purpose Must Be Right

If being baptized simply "to obey God" is sufficient even when we do not know the correct purpose, why would it not also be acceptable if we are sprinkled for baptism if we intend in this "to obey God"? In both instances one would be sincere, although lacking in knowledge of what the Bible teaches? In the first we mistake the purpose; in the other we mistake the act.

One obeys God when he does what God says do, the way that God says do it, for the purpose for which God says do it. How could we claim obedience while any of this is lacking?

We encourage all penitent believers to be baptized in order to be saved -- to be accepted of God. Those who have been buried in baptism, knowing that God requires baptism, but thinking themselves to have already been in a saved condition, have not been baptized for the purpose for which God says to do it. Consequently, they need to be immersed again, this time for the right purpose. A right action done for the wrong purpose does not constitute the obedience from the heart that is essential to being made free from sins and becoming God's servant (Romans 6:17-18).

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July 30, 1993

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The Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak the words of truth and soberness." -- Acts 26:24

"New, In Relation To What?"

Winfred Clark

Those who read religious journals and listen to religious discussions, have heard of that which is called "The New Hermeneutic." This movement is calling for a new approach to Bible interpretation. It is saying that the old and tested methods are out of date. It is saying that such was used by Campbell and others, and even then, these were borrowed from Calvinists and others.

One needs to keep in mind the fact that Bible interpretation is a very important thing. It is something that is not to be taken lightly. After all, we are dealing with God's word. Remember that Paul would say to Timothy, "Handling aright the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). But again we need to remember that we have examples of the Lord and the apostles handling the word of God. We know without a doubt that they did not make a mistake concerning Bible interpretation. They knew how it was to be handled and handled it properly. If we follow their examples we have to take care that we handle the word of God correctly.

But what do these folks have in mind when they speak of a NEW hermeneutic? What has been the result of the application of the new hermeneutic. When they say "new," we are prone to ask "new in relation to what?" If you use the word new, you are saying something is old. If there is a need for a new

hermeneutic, then you have to conclude that the old is not valid. This would imply that the old would not work. This would mean that we need something to take the place of the old.

If we take what is being said as evidence, we can know what they mean.

I. THEY MEAN IN RELATION TO THAT WHICH RESPECTS THE SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES.

It is a well known fact of the Restoration movement that men would say, "speak where the Bible speaks, and remain silent where the Bible is silent." This is a valid plea and can be proven by the scriptures.

There is such a thing as the silence of the scriptures. Time and again one could cite passages that deal with the fact. Take for example a few such as "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish aught from it," (Deuteronomy 4:2). Now if they are going to add, in what area would the addition come? Would it not be in the area where God had not spoken? Would such not invade the realm of God's silence? Does not the very fact that they are told not to add carry with it the necessity to respect the silence of the scriptures? It it does not, what would this have to say to make it necessary? One could also move to the New Testament and find such passages as (Revelation 22:18). Here again, one is forbidden to add to the word of the Lord. Addition would have to move

into the area of silence and God is saying "respect my silence."

This is exactly the kind of interpretation the Hebrew writer would place on the silence of the scriptures. Listen to what he has to say about the position of angels. He said, "For unto which of the angels said he at any time," (Hebrews 1:5); Or, "But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?" (Hebrews 1:13). The Hebrew writer is surely respecting the silence of God. He would not dare think of trying to place an angel in a position for which he had no authority. He points out that God had spoken of his Son being in such a position as being on his right hand. He never said, or he was silent about an angel being in such position. But, the Hebrew writer would conclude that such would exclude an angel from such a position. Now suppose you have a "new hermeneutic" that would place an angel in a position that the Hebrew writer would not. What would your attitude be toward such? Would you say, "well he did not say they are not to be placed in that position"? Absolutely not. You would know better. We would know they are excluded by the silence of God.

II. THEY MEAN IN RELATION TO THAT WHICH WILL RESTRICT WOMEN.

As we face the pressures of the feminist movement we have seen and are seeing more and more its effect on the church. It

is an established fact that more and more people are ignoring God's restrictions concerning woman's role in the church. Ladies are being placed in positions where they are "over the man." Mixed classes, with both men and women, are being advocated. Ladies are being called upon to serve at the Lord's table. That is a part of the fruit of the new hermeneutic.

There is absolutely no doubt that God place restrictions on ladies in the worship assembly. Listen to Paul, "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (I Timothy 2:11-12). In simple terms, Paul is saying, a woman cannot teach over the man, nor usurp authority over the man. "Over the man," is the qualifying term. Now why would Paul make such a statement? Was it because he was a male chauvinist? Was it because he was anti-women? Was it because that was the cultural thing to do at the moment? Was this something that would be in vogue in Ephesus but different elsewhere? Let him tell us why he said what he said. If he gives the reason for the statement that ought to satisfy. Notice what he will have to say, "For," means "for these reasons." He says, "FOR Adam was first formed, then Eve" (I Timothy 2:13). That is God's order in creation. That is the way God did it. That is God's arrange-

ment. Then he moves on to say, "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (I Timothy 2:14). There is no way a person could say this was merely a cultural thing. To suggest such would be to deny Paul's real reasons.

Any hermeneutic that will seek to set these restrictions aside must be avoided. These restrictions will not allow a woman to teach a mixed class of both men and women. Such would place her in a position to teach over the man. This is clearly forbidden. It is contrary to God's arrangement. It cannot be justified, unless your interpretation sets aside what Paul had to say. But the new hermeneutic would do this. That is the reason that some see for the need of a new hermeneutic.

One could go on to show that they mean in relation to that which shows that fellowship is limited, in relation to that which shows that instrumental music is not authorized, in relation to that which says there is a pattern, and on and on one could go. But these will suffice to let us know why some are saying we need a new hermeneutic.

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Matthew's Feast For Jesus

Glenn Colley

I never grow tired of reading about the people who followed Jesus in the New Testament. Although many rejected our Prince of Peace, very often people embraced Jesus and His teaching quickly. In the conversion examples of the Acts of the Apostles, people apparently became Christians after hearing the Gospel only once (Acts 2, 8, 9, 16, etc.). They were ready for the Savior.

Matthew was that kind of man. It was ironic too. -- A man who because of his profession, would seem to some as the least likely to follow Jesus, was eagerly receptive. Only occasionally today do we see people this ready for the Master.

"And after these things He went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He said unto him, 'Follow Me.' And he left all, rose up, and followed Him."

Simple obedience. No land to survey, no oxen to prove, no wife to comfort, no excuses to concoct. Matthew just followed.

After this, Levi (Matthew) made a great feast for Jesus in his home, and apparently invited associates who, he knew, needed Jesus: Publicans and sinners with tarnished reputations. Jesus, no doubt, had considered the risk He was taking by attending such a feast in His honor. After all, onlookers would probably assume that if He was with them, He must be like them, and condone their sinful lifestyles. Some would even sling mud: "Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." (Matthew 11:19) But His

motives were pure, and attending the feast was well worth the risks.

As Jesus sat in the house eating, many tax collectors and sinners gathered around Him to talk, (Matthew 9:10). Matthew does not reveal their questions or Jesus answers, but rather pulls our attention outside to the Pharisees. "Why eateth your Master with Publicans and sinners?" they asked. They spoke so loudly that Jesus overheard them. In their self-righteous hearts was little room for being quietly discreet about the matter. Jesus said.

"They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I WILL HAVE MERCY AND NOT SACRIFICE: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matthew 9:12, 13). (Emphasis mine, GC)

What does this mean, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice?" The statement is a quote from Hosea 6:6. A similar idea is expressed in Proverbs 21:3; "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice." The Jews were very familiar with sacrifice of animals, and this, being a focal point of their religion, symbolized external worship in general. In this statement Jesus isn't criticizing the quality of their worship, (even though at other times He did), but rather that they had left undone some other meaty matters; namely, mercy. The heart of worship must precede the act of worship. The heart of worship would be one filled with thankfulness to God for all His mercies and

kindnesses, and in turn, compassion and hope for others. Jesus said, "Woe unto scribes, and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Matthew 23:23).

Today Christians sometimes are finding themselves among brethren, even preachers, who are hostile to the idea of following the pattern of worship and beliefs in the New Testament. Nevertheless, we MUST remain steadfast (I Peter 3:18), and keep worshiping "In spirit AND in truth" (John 4:24).

At the same time however, let us remember the lesson from Matthew's feast. While I do the right things in worship to my Father, I cannot afford to sustain a wrong heart, coolly calloused toward the lost souls of the world around me. May we never shake our heads with reluctant acceptance of the fact that Jesus came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. May we rather rejoice in the fact that ANYONE can come to Him and have part in the tree of life.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Have You Placed Membership?

Gary Colley

Where ever a Christian lives, his "membership" in the Lord's church (or responsibility to Christ) goes with him. Some honestly question whether it is needful, necessary, and scriptural for Christians to make known where they intend to worship and work in the locality where they live. Some drift in and out of various congregations and feel no obligation to God's order, thereby spurning responsibility and reward. This type of irresponsible action nullifies the God-given order of elders overseeing the flock among them (I Peter 5:1-2).

By the examples of the New Testament, we realize that it is scriptural and therefore in harmony with God's desire and order for each Christian to be identified with a local congregation (Acts 9:6; 18:27; Romans 16:1-2). Some have never been made aware of this and therefore have not "placed their membership" or been "identified" with any local body. A few facts to study will no doubt help those who have been hesitant along this line. We are sure that with understanding will come the correct result. We are sure that with understanding will come the desire to meet with God's approval.

1. The local congregation (flock together) is the only unit of organization known in the New Testament for carrying forth God's work (I Corinthians 1:2; Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14).

2. God has ordained that qualified men (elders) should

oversee, feed, and protect this flock from error (Acts 20:28-31; I Peter 5:1-4).

3. Since there are to be overseers, it is necessary that the flock submit to and make known their submission to this oversight (Hebrews 13:15-17).

4. In respect for God's order or will, the overseen submit or make known their willingness to be under the oversight, discipline, and watch-care of the elders. There could be no divine organization otherwise (I Timothy 5:17, 19).

5. There are no such people found in the New Testament as "members at large" or "floaters" who do not want to be responsible in a locality.

6. Therefore it is necessary IN SOME WAY when we move into a community and decide where we will worship, to make known to all that our "membership" is with a certain local congregation.

7. To make known that desire to be identified as a part of the chosen congregation, you may choose to go forward at the appropriate time of response, by speaking to an elder or the preacher so that it can be announced, or by indicating your desire on a registration form or program of worship.

There is no doubt that for our safety and strength, the full use of our talents, the provoking of others to "love and good works" (Hebrews 10:23-25), as well as the spread of the Kingdom, God desires that we make known our intentions to be a part of one of the local congregations of His people.

Have you placed membership?

Faithful In Little

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." (Luke 16:10).

This text teaches a very simple truth, but one that many of us find difficult to embrace. Parents try to rear their children by such principles as be fair, honest and dependable with life's nickels and dimes and then when they are adults they will be able to handle dollars the same way.

But what we fail to recognize is that as adults most of our lives are also made up of nickels and dimes -- small things. Not many of us will write a book, be appointed to a president's cabinet, dine with a queen, or be burned at the stake. Likely, we are going to have only small

The Divine Pattern In Worship

W. A. Holley

"Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount" (Hebrews 8:5).

Throughout man's long and checkered history, God has never left man to find his own way through this world. That was true with Adam and Eve in the garden (Genesis 2:15-17; 3:16-19). God laid down strict rules designed for their guidance and instruction. Noah was given special instruction for the purpose of building the ark (Genesis 6:14-16; cf. II Peter 2:5; Matthew 24:36-39; Luke 17:26-27; I Peter 3:20-21). Incidentally, we suggest to our modernist friends that if Noah and the flood are no more than a hoax, Jesus is found to be a false witness.

When we come to the days of Moses, God orders that there be but one altar and one tabernacle for the worship of God. The Israelites did not have a multiplicity of altars and tabernacles. All heathen altars were to be torn down so that God's true worship should not become contaminated by the addition of idolatrous practices and concepts. God is a jealous God who will not permit His worship to be changed. This fact is shown by God's refusal to allow additions to or subtractions from His law (Deuteronomy 4:2, 32). Thus, the only true standard of ethics and godly service is the revealed will of God -- no less, no more. Will worship, (Colossians 2:20-23) and ignorant worship, (Acts 17:23) are completely beyond the bounds of Scriptural worship. Vain worship can never please God (Matthew 15:1-9).

"Make all things according to the pattern," says God. We must worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). To worship God in spirit is to worship honestly, sincerely, truly, conscientiously, carefully. To worship God in truth is to worship according to the teaching, instruction, and guidance of the Spirit's word.

We must put our whole heart and soul into our effort to worship God . . . no half-hearted efforts can be acceptable to Him.

No matter how honest, sincere, and conscientious we may be, all is to no avail unless we worship according to the divine pattern (John 4:23-24). We are not at liberty to add anything to it, nor are we at liberty to subtract any thing from it (Deuteronomy 4:4; 12:32; Revelation 22:18-19). As strange as it may seem, entertainment is not the object of Christian worship. Many churches are into the entertainment business in a humongous way. They have their choirs, quartets, dancing acts, stage productions, sensational healing services, and almost any other activity if it can bring great crowds. Sadly, we have to report that some of our back-sliding churches are following in their same tracks. They are determined to have huge crowds no matter what the cost. Crowds mean more to them than the truth of God! Loyal Christians have news for them - their practices will not pass unchallenged!

To worship God "in spirit and in truth" involves a special day, the first day of the week, the Lord's day (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Revelation 1:10). We should observe that Jesus arose from the dead on the first day of the week (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1-2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1), the New Testament church was established on the first day of the week (Leviticus 23:15-16; Acts 2:1-4), the saved under the New Testament system were added to the church on the first day of the week (Acts 2:36-38, 41, 47), and the worship of God "in spirit and in truth" began on the first day of the week (Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

The Lord's day is not a "Christian Sabbath," since the Bible never so designates it. The first day of the week represents its beginning; that Sabbath day represents its ending.

The items of worship are five in number. These items constitute the whole worship

service as authorized by Almighty God. To subtract even one item of worship is to make the entire service null and void. What are these items of divine worship? We shall number them:

(1) Singing spiritual songs; songs that teach and admonish one another. Songs that speak to the heart and soul of the singers are what God demands (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). We must not add mechanical instruments to the song service because God never commanded it, no inspired man ever authorized it, and no New Testament church ever practiced it. We realize that these words may seem rigid and inflexible, but that is exactly what we intended!

(2) Continuing in the apostles doctrine is the Lord's requirement (Acts 2:42). Some assert their distaste for Bible study in worship, saying that they want something more exciting and more stimulating, which shows just how far they have removed themselves from the Lord's way (II Timothy 2:15; I Peter 2:2; II Peter 3:18; Hebrews 5:11-14). We live by the word of God and the more we know of its teaching, the better we can live (Matthew 4:4, cf. Deuteronomy 8:3).

(3) Prayer is of great importance in the worship of God (Acts 2:42). The only way we can address God is through warm and sincere prayers. In your prayer ask God, through the name of Jesus, for food, clothing, health, and for peace and quietness in your family, in the church, and in your personal relationships with all others (Matthew 6:9-14; I Timothy 2:1-8; I John 3:22; 5:14; Colossians 3:17). Remember to thank God for all of His blessings which you have received (James 1:17).

(4) Terms such as "The Lord's Supper" (I Corinthians 11:20); "the breaking of bread" (Acts 2:42) and "the communion" (I Corinthians 10:16) are Biblical expressions designating an act of worship. Such terms as "eucharist," "sacrament" and "church ordinance" are the inventions of men, but never used in the Bible. Jesus instituted the Lord's supper in

an upper room of a house in Jerusalem on the night before his crucifixion (Matthew 26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20; I Corinthians 11:23-26).

The Lord's Supper is a memorial service (I Corinthians 11:24-26). Jesus used, not marble, silver or gold, but two of the most common ingredients known to man to erect His memorial -- unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. Men build memorials that eventually fade away, but Jesus instituted a memorial that is now almost 2,000 years tall, and growing taller with each passing day of the Lord. Saints gather each Lord's day to partake of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Revelation 1:10).

(5) Giving is an act of worship. To give acceptably, one must purpose to give (II

Corinthians 9:7), as one has been prospered (I Corinthians 16:2), and one must give cheerfully (II Corinthians 9:7). In one's giving one must not give to be seen by men (Matthew 6:19-21). We must NOT lie about our giving (Acts 5:1-11). The word "fellowship" (Gr. KOINONIA) in Acts 2:42 is translated "contribution" in Romans 15:26. To reap bountifully, we must give bountifully (II Corinthians 9:6; Luke 6:38; Matthew 6:33). To fail to give as the Lord has prospered you is to fail to worship God Scripturally.

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Faithful In Little

Continued From Page 2

opportunities like giving a cup of cold water, visiting a nursing home, writing a note to a lonely person, or speaking a kind word to a distressed and burdened soul. We may only render such service as kissing a child's skinned elbow or feeding the neighbor's cat.

Don't overlook the small things while waiting for some big thing that would prompt historians to style you as a great Christian. Don't be guilty of waiting to be faithful in much, while spurning opportunities to be faithful in small things.

Leon Cole

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

In his autobiography, General Chuck Yeager reflects on a test pilots greatest challenge -- minimizing risk:

"You learn all about the plane and its systems, practice flying it and plan for any contingency, until the odds against you seem more friendly. You sense when you're in sync with the machine -- so plugged in to it's instruments and controls that your mind and your hand become the heart of it's operating system. You know what you can get away with. You know, too, that you can be wrong only once."

When I read that, I couldn't help applying it to the struggles of the Christian. We study and work to be more like Christ, and we grow. We come to the place where when we face temptation, we automatically think of what the Bible says forbidding the action. The difference between General Yeager and us, however, is that we fail more than once. We fail often. While General Yeager's test planes aren't forgiving when it comes to pilot error, our God is forgiving to Christian error . . . so long as we work to be faithful to Him.

I John 1:7 -- "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 cleanses us from all sin."

Leprosy, A Type Of Sin

W. Gaddys Roy

Leprosy does to the body what sin does to the soul. One living in sin should take a close look at the disease of leprosy in order that he might understand his spiritual condition. Therefore, we shall study the analogy between leprosy and sin.

Leprosy was treated not only as a disease but as an uncleanness (Leviticus 13). A person with leprosy would let the hair of his head go loose, he would cover his upper lip, and cry, "Unclean." He could not live with the people, but he would dwell alone outside the camp (Leviticus 13:45, 46). Sin is a disease and uncleanness of the soul (II Corinthians 7:1; I Peter 1:22). Sin is of the devil, and without forgiveness one cannot enter into heaven (I John 3:8; Revelation 21:27).

Leprosy dwells in the corruption and impurity of the blood. It is of a spreading nature, contagious, and it is a disease for which there is no human cure (II Kings 5:7). All of this is characteristic of sin. Sin dwells in the moral defilement of the nature of man. Sin is of a spreading nature. The Apostle Paul said, "Evil men and imposters shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (II Timothy 3:13). Sin affects the body, soul, and spirit. Sin is indeed contagious. The Apostle said, "Evil companionships corrupt good morals" (I Corinthians 15:33). Sin has no human cure (Mark 1:40-45). The only cure for sin is through Christ (Ephesians 1:7; 2:8, 9; Hebrews 9:15).

Leprosy is exceedingly painful and loathsome. A leper might live many years, and be so afflicted that his fingers and other members of his body would drop off, one by one, at the joint. Sin is a hard master (Proverbs 13:15; Romans 6:23). One who lives in sin will reap what he sows (Numbers 32:23; Galatians 6:7). "Some men's sins are evident, going before unto judgment; and some men also they follow after" (I Timothy 5:24). One thing is certain, and that is that sin will find the sinner out one way or another.

Lepers were excluded from the society of the healthy (Leviticus 13:45, 46). Sinners are excluded from the communion of God and His saints (Exodus 32:33; I Corinthians 5:1-11; Hebrews 3:13). God will not hear a willful sinner's prayer (Psalm 66:18; Isaiah 59:2; John 9:31). Sin caused our first parents to be cast out of Paradise, and all now must bear the yoke of death because of their sin (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12; I Corinthians 15:22). Sin caused the wicked angels to be cast out of heaven (II Peter 2:4). Sin makes it necessary for the church to withdraw fellowship from its ungodly members (I Corinthians 5; II Thessalonians 3:6). Sin will keep many out of heaven (Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:8, 27).

Leprosy, uncured, terminates in death. Sin, when finished, terminates in spiritual death (James 1:13-15). God had power to heal leprosy. God healed Naaman through the prophet Elisha (II Kings 5:7-14). Jesus healed those with leprosy who came to Him to be healed (Matthew 8:1-4; Luke 17:11-19). Jesus will save all sinners who come to Him in humble obedience (Matthew 7:21; Mark 16:16; John 5:40; 6:37). All who fail to obey Him will be lost (Acts 3:22, 23; II Thessalonians 1:6-9).

One cleansed of leprosy had to go show himself to the priest and offer for his cleansing that which was commanded by Moses. The priest had the authority to pronounce a leper clean (Leviticus 14:1-22; Mark 1:44). The law of God had to be obeyed. To be saved or cleansed from sin, one must obey the law of Christ (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Man is saved by grace through faith, but grace does not dispense of all law (Ephesians 2:8, 9; Galatians 6:2; Romans 8:2-4). Jesus is our high priest and He has power to forgive sins when we obey Him (Mark 2:10; 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Hebrews 4:15; 10:19-22). Jesus is our mediator, and He has given the word of reconciliation

(II Corinthians 5:17-21). It is now our responsibility to obey the word, be cleansed from sin, and thereby be reconciled to God.

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"Live On Earth Forever?"

Mike Benson

Question:

"Recently some people came to my house to discuss religion. They told me that they had no plans to go to heaven, but were going to live on a 'remade' earth forever. What do you think about this? Will we live on earth or go to heaven?"

Answer:

What Mike Benson may or may not believe about the Christian's eternal abode is unimportant. However, what Jesus Christ and His word says concerning this matter is very important, since the Christian's hope hinges on His teaching. "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matthew 24:35). Please study the following:

1. There will be no earth on which to live. Peter says, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements

will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up . . . looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat" (II Peter 3:10, 12). The phrase, "pass away" means "to come to an end, to disappear." Whereas the phrase, "melt away" means "to depart, to be gone, to leave." It will be impossible to live in or on a place that does not exist.

2. Jesus promised to take all the faithful to heaven. "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2-3).

3. The Christian's eternal home will be in heaven, not on the earth. Jesus said our reward

is in heaven (Matthew 5:12). Paul said our hope is laid up in heaven (Colossians 1:5). Peter described our hope as "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" (I Peter 1:4).

What is the new heavens and new earth (II Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1)? It is a glorious creation, better suited for our newly changed bodies (I Corinthians 15:42-44; 52-53; Philippians 3:20-21).

Some people hope to live on earth forever. Other folks intend to remain for 1,000 years. In both cases their mind and affection is focused on the wrong place. Paul wrote, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1-2).

A State Of Continual Becoming

G. F. Raines

There is no truth that has been more convincingly verified than the fact that constructive work is one of the keys to a happy life.

Our aim in life should be so big that we will continue working toward the accomplishment of it throughout our lives. To be genuinely happy, we must be able to look back with satisfaction and ahead with anticipation.

George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), the famous self-educated Irish playwright, said: "I dread success. To have succeeded is to have finished one's business on earth, like the male spider, who is killed by the female the moment he has succeeded in his courtship. I like a state of continual becoming, with a goal in front and not behind."

Dr. William C. Menninger, one of the world's most highly esteemed psychiatrists, said: "For the best mental health, for

the greatest emotional maturity, the individual should have a cause, a mission, an aim in life that is constructive and that is so big he has to keep working on it."

Someone has said that the best way to avoid worry is: "Mind your own business -- and have plenty of it."

Dr. Viktor E. Frankl, president of the Austrian Medical Society of Psychotherapy and professor of psychiatry and neurology at the University of Vienna, wrote: "The conviction that one has a task before him has enormous psychotherapeutic and psycho-hygienic value. We venture to say that nothing is more likely to help a person overcome or endure objective difficulties or subjective troubles than the consciousness of having a task in life."

The apostle Paul says: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that

I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:12-14).

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1, 2).

August 6, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- Three Usages For The Word "Church"
- Growing Up In Christ
- From The Inside Out
 - "Born A Sinner?"
 - Things Related To Remission
- Scriptural Conditions Of Salvation
- "Most Of A Minute"

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The Words (Truth

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

Violation Of Autonomy

Tim Rice

It is wrong for a church to violate the autonomy of another church. Having said this, I should explain what it is to violate the autonomy of other churches. Such a discussion is needed and relevant, since people have said it is a violation of other churches' autonomy for me to refute some practice in which they are engaged. Some brethren have told me it is a violation of a church's autonomy for me to write an article questioning the use of certain speakers at one of their functions. Since we are hearing such charges, we feel it is good to respond.

First, let us define autonomy. The term autonomy is not found in the pages of the Bible. Autonomy simply means "the quality or state of being self-governing." The Bible points out that churches are to govern themselves and not to be ruled by other churches or a central earthly headquarters. The only central government for the church is in heaven (Ephesians 1:22, 23). Elders are to oversee the local church of which they are members (Acts 20:28; I Timothy 3:5), and their standard of shepherding is to be God's word (Titus 1:9). Hence, God's plan is that each church be self-governing and that the elders use his word as the standard of that government, giving God the central authority.

Now let us consider the following questions. If I discover that a church of Christ

of which I am not a member is beginning to practice error, is it a violation of their autonomy for me to try to influence them to do right? If a church publishes error in a bulletin or periodical, am I violating their autonomy when I publish an article in a periodical to refute that error? If I try to encourage someone not to participate in error at a church practicing error, am I violating the church's autonomy? The answer to all these questions is an emphatic no! When we fight error which originates in another church, we are actually trying to get that church to exercise its autonomy in quitting their error. Since I am not in a position of authority over the other church, I can only hope they stop practicing their error. If I were actually in authority over them, they would quit in subjection to my decision. It has long been the practice of churches going off into error to say about the churches that point out that error, "They're violating our autonomy." Not only does this show a misunderstanding of autonomy, but also, it fails to address the questions raised about the error.

Did Paul, James, and Peter violate the autonomy of the churches they wrote when they told them to correct error? Not at all. They used inspiration to warn them to obey God. Then why would it be a violation of others' autonomy today for us to use the New Testament to try to get people and churches to do

right? If those churches had not obeyed the truth, at some point God would have removed their candlestick (Cf. Revelation 1-3). At some point, Paul, James, and Peter would have severed relationships with those to whom they wrote if they continued in error. We might have to do the same today with some churches. But first we say to them "repent, and do thy first works" (Revelation 2:5).

In all cases this writer could imagine, when a church's autonomy is violated, that church shares in the sin. A church can govern itself if it will! If it won't, it sins as much as the outside individual or church that governs it. For example, a church in Alabama cannot be governed by a man or a church in Boston without its doing wrong itself. This is ecclesiasticism, and a faithful church should have no part of it. Suppose it tells the southern church when to appoint elders and who they shall be. Suppose the large church tells it satellite when to build a building or whether to rent. Suppose it tells the small church to disband and move to Atlanta. Such a situation, is violation of autonomy. In this arrangement, both parties are in error.

History shows that real violation of autonomy has always resulted in wholesale introduction of error. Early in the history of the Christian religion, leadership became centralized and error originating with the leadership blanketed

the entire church. It is ironic that today those who are fighting error are being accused of violating autonomy. Indeed, if today leadership were centralized, we as churches could not warn one another

Who Said So?

Tommy J. Hicks

A few congregations have already initiated plans for their public worship services to include women waiting on the Lord's Table, women song leaders, women leading prayers, and, even women preachers. When confronted with the fact that the Bible expressly prohibits women assuming such roles, they answer that the Bible was written in compliance with the customs of its times. According to them, in Bible times, women were not allowed to do much of anything. But, they assure us, with women's lib today, it's okay to have women taking roles of leadership in the worship and work of the church.

Who said so? Did you know that in Bible times the pagans had female deities? One among the Babylonians, Ashtoreth, stood on an equal footing with male divinities. "The chief seat of the worship of Istar in Babylonia was Erech, where prostitution was practiced in her name, and she was served with immortal rites by bands of men and women (emp. mine, TJH). In Assyria . . . prophetesses were attached to her temples to

against error! Whatever error existed would be a universal fixture.

Adamsville, Alabama.

whom she delivered oracles" (I.S.B.E., Vol. 1, p. 271).

In Ephesus, there was the Temple of Diana, where the priestesses were divided into three different classes with each class having its own special duties. Corinth had a temple with over 1,000 priestesses. In an article on "Woman" the I.S.B.E. (Vol. 5, p. 3101) says: "That she everywhere participated freely in the religious rites and customs of her people is evident from the fact that women were often priestesses, and were often deified."

No! It was the custom of women in Bible times to take an active role in leadership and service in the pagan religions. Contrary to the customs of the times, the Bible says: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (I Corinthians 14:34-35). "I will therefore that men pray every

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Three Usages For The Word "Church"

Glenn Colley

Value is often determined, not just by the quality of a particular product, but also by the price someone is willing to pay for that product. If one applies that system of measurement to determine the value of the church, the amount becomes almost unthinkable:

"... to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." (Acts 20:28) "... as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25).

The word "church" is found 76 times in the Bible. However, the Greek word "Ekklesia" (1577), translated "Church," is used in at least three different ways.

I. THE CHURCH: LOCAL CONGREGATIONS OF CHRISTIANS

a. Colossians 4:15 -- "Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house."

b. I Corinthians 4:17 -- "For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my

ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church."

c. I Corinthians 16:19 -- "The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house."

d. Acts 11:22 -- "Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem; and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch."

II. THE CHURCH: THE WORLDWIDE BODY OF CHRIST

a. Matthew 16:18 -- "Upon this rock I will build my church..."

b. I Timothy 3:15 -- "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

c. Ephesians 5:25 -- "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it. (29) -- "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church."

d. Colossians 1:18 -- "And He is the head of the body,

the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence."

III. THE CHURCH: AN ASSEMBLY OF CHRISTIANS

a. I Corinthians 14:19 -- "Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue."

(vs. 28) -- "But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God."

(vs. 35) -- "And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

In a study of the word church in the Bible, you will not find these other common usages:

1. "I'm a church of Christ, or 'He's a church of Christ.'"

2. "Let's go to church."

3. "All of us are part of the invisible church, but not all the saved are part of the visible church."

4. "We are seeking a carpenter to build a nice church for us."

Growing Up In Christ

In Elmer Town's book, The Ten Largest Sunday Schools And What Makes Them Grow, there is set forth some practical ways in which growth may be accomplished.

Evangelistic Emphasis -- One preacher said, "I believe every man and woman without Jesus Christ is

going to hell . . . and I believe hell will last forever."

Organized Visitation Program -- They visit non-members and Bible Study absentees weekly.

Strong Pulpit Ministry -- They emphasize Biblical doctrine and morality. "They stand

for something instead of giving a 'wishy-washy' message.

Emphasis on Bible School -- They have a strong centered curriculum utilizing exciting presentations to encourage knowledge and build attendance.

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From The Inside Out

Dalton Key

I read a few words from the pen of Henry Weiman some time ago which are hauntingly applicable to many of us. In describing a college roommate who desired to increase his capacity for learning, Weiman wrote, "He procured a large, comfortable chair that was thought to be good for study. He got slippers and a lounging jacket. A book rest was fastened to the arm of the chair to hold the book at the right angle before the eyes. A special lamp was installed and an eyeshade, pencils, paper, and a revolving bookcase were provided. He would come into the room after the evening meal, take off his shoes and slip into the slippers, adjust the study lamp, put his book on the book rest, recline in the comfortable chair with his eyeshade over his eyes and, when everything was perfectly adjusted, he would go to sleep."

Here was a student who prepared everything but himself. He failed to realize that atmosphere, in and of itself, guarantees nothing. Genuine growth has always come from the inside out, not from the outside in.

Elaborate and expensive church buildings don't always assure the presence of faithful, consecrated believers. We may invest millions in steeples, in neon signs, in beautiful song books; in padded pews, temperature controlled auditoriums, and state-of-the-art sound systems, yet those disciples of the first century, huddled together in cramped rooms and stench-filled catacombs, may well have outdone us in their depth of worship.

We have the inside track on "atmosphere." In fact, we've made ourselves so comfortable, many of us have to fight to stay awake through a one hour service.

Jesus taught, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth:

for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23, 24).

Worship improves when the worshipper puts more of self into the worship. In the absence of a sincere, reverent, and worship-ready heart, "atmosphere" contributes nothing to meaningful worship.

Let's go to work at improving our worship from the inside out.

"Born A Sinner?"

Mike Benson

Question:

"Is a child born a sinner or is he pure and clean until he comes to know right from wrong?"

I appreciate this good question. Many people today believe that babies are born in sin. Carefully study the following:

1. Sin is a violation of God's will. John wrote, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness" (I John 3:4). James wrote, "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown, brings forth death" (James 1:14, 15). Finally, Paul wrote, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). See also Psalm 14:3; I John 5:17; Romans 14:23.

How could a child violate/transgress God's will when he/she has no awareness of, nor understanding of His will?

2. Sin cannot be inherited from one's parents. "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself" (Ezekiel

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Things Related To Remission

Winfred Clark

You will find that there are ten occasions in the New Testament where this word appears. It is found in relation to several very important things. If we take the time to look we can gain some additional insights about this very vital topic. One can often learn some very good lessons by looking at a thing and then seeing the kind of things that are closely related to it. After all, we can learn many things about someone by the company he keeps.

One of the first things we need to have in mind is a good clear picture of the meaning of remission. What does the Bible mean in the use of the word? W. E. Vine would say, "a dismissal, release, or, the forgiveness of sins." Thayer says, "release, as from bondage or imprisonment: Forgiveness, pardon, of sins, the letting them go as if they had not been committed, the remission of their penalty." So we know that the use of the word will have to do with the forgiveness of sins, the full and complete pardon. That is what we are talking about when we talk about "things that are related to remission."

1. THE CROSS OF CHRIST IS RELATED TO REMISSION

Take the time to notice the conversation our Lord had with his disciples on the night he instituted the Lord's supper. It was then that he said, "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). None of us would doubt the fact that Jesus had in mind the cross. In fact this was the night before he faced the cross the next day. Jesus saw his blood being shed. We know that Paul said at a later time, "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross . . ." (Colossians 1:20). Notice that we are looking at "the blood of his cross." So we know there is a connection between the blood and the cross. He also saw that blood being shed for many. He saw that blood being shed for the remission of sins.

The Hebrew writer would tell

us, ". . . and without the shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). So we would come to the conclusion that the cross of Christ is necessary and essential to the remission of sins. Jesus had to die on the cross and that is the only means by which we can obtain the remission of sins. This is what Paul had in mind when he said, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:14). So the remission of sins, or the forgiveness of sins, is available only through the blood that was shed on the old rugged cross. No wonder the apostle Peter would refer to "the precious blood of Christ" (I Peter 1:19). What could be more valuable and precious than that which makes possible the forgiveness of sins.

2. THE NEW COVENANT IS RELATED TO REMISSION

When you return to the Lord's own words, as recorded by Matthew, you will see that there is a very definite relationship between the new testament and the remission of sins. Listen to these words, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). The Hebrew writer refers to it as the "blood of the everlasting covenant" (Hebrews 13:20). You will find that the apostle Paul would repeat the words of the Lord to the church at Corinth (I Corinthians 11:23-26). So we have no doubt that we can expect to find the remission of sins related to the new testament and to the blood that sealed the new testament (Hebrews 9:15-28). One who ignores that covenant which bears a direct relationship to the remission of sins, cannot expect to obtain that remission.

3. THERE ARE CONDITIONS RELATED TO REMISSION.

It would not be right for man to set conditions if there were no conditions. On the other hand, it would be folly to ignore such where they have been prescribed. One would need to take into account a statement

that Jesus made to his apostles. He said, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they shall be remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20:23). So we can see the apostles were to have something to do with the remission of sins. But take another look at something else Jesus said to these same men. ". . . Thus it is written, and thus it behooved the Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins would be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-47). So we know that the apostles were to remit sins, but we also know they were to preach remission of sins and such preaching was to begin at Jerusalem. So we should have no trouble understanding how those apostles would remit sins. Such would be by their preaching as they were guided by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13). They were not given the right to say just anything they had decided about this matter. That is the reason they were not to depart from Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high (Luke 24:49). This would insure that they would say only what they had the right to say. It would mean that they would say what the Holy Spirit inspired them to say. It would mean they would say what the Lord would have them say. In so doing they could be assured that those to whom they spoke would be doing the only kind of preaching the Lord would have done.

But when you move to the preaching that began in Jerusalem you will find them preaching the remission of sins and salvation (Acts 2:21, 38, 40). But there is something else that you will also find. You will find that this remission was not an unconditional matter. It was not an unconditional matter when Peter went to the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:43); "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."

So the condition of faith or belief is clearly spelled out by the apostle Peter. But remember that Jesus had said, "whosoever sins ye remit, they shall be remitted." But here is the condition of faith. So the remission of sins is not without conditions. But what of those to whom the apostles preached in Jerusalem? After they had heard them preach it is said, "Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Now listen to these men who were to remit sins. What will they say? Notice, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). Would you conclude that one could obtain the remission of sins without

doing what the apostles said they were to do? Were not these men doing what Jesus had told them to do when he said, "repentance and remission of sins was to be preached in his name?" Did they not require those to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ? Is that not preaching in the name of Christ or the kind of preaching that Jesus would authorize? Now is such with or without condition? One has only to ask that question. The answer is very, very obvious. All would reply with a resounding yes. We have no problem at all understanding who would receive the remission of sins. It would be those folks who did what the apostles told them to do. In fact, some three thousand people did just that and they were added to the church (Acts 2:47).

These are related to remission.

Growing Up In Christ

Continued From Page 2

Goal setting -- We all tend to get lazy if we don't have a goal to reach. Some of these churches have two attendance drives per year (Philippians 4:14).

Train members -- Instead of the preacher, or elders, doing all the evangelistic work, the members were trained and active. A gospel preacher once said, "Its better to get 10 men to do the work than one man doing the work of 10 men."

Busing -- Each church had a bus ministry, but surprisingly it was not the main thrust.

Promotion -- One preacher said, "We should be more proud of Jesus than Madison Avenue is of its latest commercial" (Romans 1:16).

The average stay for these preachers was 22 years.

Hard work -- There is no substitute for hard work. There is not an easy way to accomplish anything that is worth while (John 9:4).

Every church, every Christian home, every individual must grow. Just as the physical part cannot grow up into physical maturity unless one is born, the spiritual man cannot grow unless he is first "born again" (John 3:3-5). Then he must read, study, pray and work in such a way that he will increase, and become greater in the Lord's work.

--edited by Max Patterson

Neosho, MO

Preachers stayed --

Scriptural Conditions Of Salvation

W. A. Holley

"Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be completely furnished unto every good work" (II Timothy 3:16-17, ASV).

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God. . ." (I Peter 4:11).

God's word is true, if everyone believes it; but His word is true if no one believes it (Romans 3:3-4, cf. John 3:33).

It is possible for one to become blinded to the truth of God by the doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 13:13-15). Some set up "idols in their heart," thus blinding them to the truth of God (Ezekiel 14:3). "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God; for to draw nigh to hear is better than to give the sacrifice of fools" (Ecclesiastes 5:1).

In the midst of thousands of conflicting voices, truth of God can be heard and understood (Ephesians 3:3-4; 5:17). We humbly ask, Would God be so unkind, unloving, and unjust as to give man a Divine Revelation by which he is to be judged, yet beyond man's comprehension?? (John 12:48; Luke 10:16).

(1) Hearing the Gospel is one condition of salvation (John 6:44-45; Hebrews 8:11). One must hear the Gospel because this is the means by which faith is generated (Romans 10:17; Acts 15:7). To understand implies an honest heart (Matthew 13:10-16). Work at understanding the Scriptures as you would sincerely try to understand mathematics or any other branch of science.

(2) One must believe that Jesus is the Son of God if one would be saved from one's sins (Hebrews 11:6). Without faith it is impossible to please God. The sinner is justified by faith but not by "faith alone" (James 2:21-24). The sinner cannot be saved by "works of merit," but by "works of faith" (John 6:28-29); I John 3:23). To try to be saved by "faith alone" is to try

to be saved by a dead faith. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:26). That settles it!

Faith is not a miraculous gift of God; one is not saved in answer to prayer. Prayer is wonderful in its place, it cannot be substituted for other commands of God. For example, Jesus did not say, "He that believeth is saved and may be baptized, if he wishes." Now, will you read Mark 16:15-16?

(3) Repentance Is One Condition of salvation which the Lord Jesus Christ demands. He said, "I tell you nay, but except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish" (Luke 13:3, 5). What is repentance? Repentance is a change of mind with regard to all misdeeds and moral shortcomings (Acts 2:38; II Peter 3:9). A fine example of Bible repentance is found in the ancient city of Nineveh. . . . God saw their works, that they turned from their evil ways. . . . (Jonah 3:10). Centuries later Jesus referred to this incident in Matthew 12:41, thus giving his endorsement to that historical fact, although many Modernist scholars now refuse to do so. Dear reader, it is repent or perish. What will you do about repentance?

(4) The confessing of Christ as the Son of God is another condition of salvation. On the banks of the Jordan, after Jesus' baptism, God confessed Him, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:13-17).

Later, on the Mount of Transfiguration, in the presence of Moses, Elijah, Peter, James, and John, God again confessed His Son, saying, "This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matthew 17:8; Luke 9:28-36). There was a time when people should have heard Moses and Elijah, but that time is now gone. The apostles were to carry the gospel of Christ to the ends of the world (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Colossians 1:6, 23; Romans 10:18). If we want Jesus to confess us, we must confess Him (Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 12:8-9). We must

confess with our mouths the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 10:10; Acts 8:37). To say, "I feel that God for Christ's sake has saved my soul" is not confessing Jesus, but one's feelings.

(5) Baptism is one of the conditions of salvation from past sins. One must be baptized to follow Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:13-15; 16:24; I Peter 2:21). Jesus was not baptized because of remission of sins, nor was Jesus baptized in order to have remission of sins, because Jesus had no sins to be forgiven (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus was baptized "to fulfill all righteousness." If Jesus had rejected John's baptism, He would have "rejected the counsel of God" (Luke 7:29-30).

The command of baptism is addressed to the alien sinner and not to the Christian (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38; 10:48; 22:16; 8:11-25; I Peter 3:20-21). Baptism is a test of one's love for God (John 14:15, 23). Do you love Jesus enough to be baptized? Although, it may be contrary to one's thinking, one is baptized into Christ, where salvation is located (Romans 6:3-4; II Timothy 2:10).

Eternal life is in Christ (I John 5:11), but one is baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26-27). There is but one baptism in force today and that baptism is water baptism (John 3:3, 5; Acts 10:47-48; Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5).

There is but one baptism (Ephesians 4:4-6, just as there is but one Lord, one God, et al). There had been two baptisms; Holy Spirit baptism and water baptism. But by A.D. 64, Holy Spirit baptism had ceased (I Corinthians 13:8-13).

Those who contend that I Corinthians 12:13 teaches that Holy Spirit baptism initiates one into Christ are in error. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" means by the guidance, direction, instruction of the Holy Spirit through the word of God. Just here I Corinthians 12:3, should be considered. ". . . no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the

Holy Ghost." The meaning is: But for the fact that the Holy Ghost revealed it through His word or divine revelation, no man could have known that Jesus is the Son of God.

Does the Holy Ghost speak directly, separately, apart from the word of God, to the human family today? No, indeed! The

Holy Ghost speaks, guides, instructs, and directs men and women through His word (II Timothy 3:15-17; II Peter 1:20-21; I Peter 1:10-12).

Man is lost and needs to be saved. This is the right way of the Lord. Do not resist Him. Obey Him today.

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

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

I recently visited the site of an historical Shaker village in Kentucky. You may be familiar with the fine Shaker furniture they made. The religious, communistic cult flourished in the early 1800's and is now history.

They got the Shaker name from their belief that in their worship dances they could actually "shake" their sins right out the ends of their fingertips. Now, before you start thinking of adopting this wonderful procedure to get rid of your own sins, let me warn you -- it won't work. The fact is that only God can forgive sins since He is the One we sin against. And furthermore, the Bible is His word to tell us how to obtain that forgiveness.

Acts 2:38 says, "Repent, and be baptized, everyone of you, for the remission of your sins."

"Born A Sinner?"

Continued From Page 2

18:20).

If a husband runs a red light HE has transgressed the law, but NEITHER HIS WIFE, NOR HIS CHILDREN WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE for his crime. Sin is an act of an individual and the individual is held accountable (II Corinthians 5:10).

3. A child is sinless and therefore "safe". He is safe

because he has no sins from which to be saved. If children were born in sin Jesus would have never held them up as examples of purity and humility. He said, ". . . Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

Was Jesus telling us to become like sinners?

Who Said So?

Continued From Page 1

where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp

authority over the man, but to be in silence" (I Timothy 2:8, 11-12).

--Gainesville, TX.

Visit Soon
6th Avenue
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Jasper, AL

August 13, 1993

See Inside Articles:

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Volume 29 Number 33
(USPS 691-760)

The Words (Truth

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

The Willow Creek Church

Winfred Clark

If we read much today, or listen to some of the spokesmen, we would think that the answer to about all that we face today could be solved by a visit to the Willow Creek Community church of South Barrington, IL. This group is being touted as something to be extolled in the area of church growth. If we read the first issue of a paper called *Wineskins* we will find this church touted as one that is growing at record rates. If we listen to the review of a preacher of one of the large churches in the state of Alabama we will see such to be the case. These would have us believe that these people have found the secret. We are hearing more and more of the Willow Creek church. It has become the norm and model for those who seem set to change the church of our Lord to fit the fancies of the day. But, we are also hearing from this same camp, some slanted questions that would reflect disparagingly upon those who are still interested in the "Restoration Plea." They ask, "Which church would you restore?" They ask, "Will it be the one in Corinth or some other?" These questions are supposed to cast the "restoration plea" in an unfavorable light. This is a calculated effort to say that if you go back to the New Testament for a model that such is so flawed by the

human element that you necessarily fail. So what is the answer of those who are committed to "change" and "the new hermeneutic?" They have found the model just south of Chicago. In fact, it is the Willow Creek Community church. What is the nature of the Willow Creek church? Has anybody taken the time to stop to ask?

Their Growth

We are told that this church began in 1975 with less than 100 members and today has some 17,000 attending. The preacher for the large Alabama church says, "That is pretty good growth." These numbers are seen to be impressive. But suppose it grew to be 500,000. What would that prove? Does it prove that they are doing the right thing?

This might come as a surprise to some but Billy Graham had these kinds of crowds long before this church came into being. He was able to attract his crowds in the very same way this group is doing. He would become all things to all people. He would give people what they wanted in religion. This church has done the same thing. If they taught the truth concerning the plan of salvation or worshipped according to the New Testament order they would not have this same group. Now, in case you think they do, let me pass on some information that may be of

interest.

I called the Willow Creek community church on July 12, 1993. There were some things I wanted to know first hand. I related that I was seeking information concerning their teaching. I was allowed to talk to a spokesman, in this case a woman. I guess that would be permissible since four of their twelve elders are women. *When asked what would be told to one who wanted to know what to do to be saved, the answer was, "Confess your sins and ask for forgiveness."* There you have the answer to how the people are being taught. How in the world can any man in good conscience give any degree of credibility, to that sort of thing? How could an increase in numbers from less than 100 to 17,000 justify that sort of thing? What you have is 17,000 people who are being deceived. Is that to be a model for church growth? Is this what my brethren are more interested in than our lectureships, which they say, are issue oriented?

When asked about the observance of the Lord's supper, the answer was that such is observed on a monthly basis and this occurs on Wednesday and Thursday evenings. This is being done in spite of the example of the early church meeting for such on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). But since the "new hermeneutic" would find a problem with the use of an

example to establish authority; then, they would have a difficult time trying to convince the Willow Creek church of change. By the way, do you reckon what the Willow Creek church is doing may be what we can expect in the calls for change? Who among us would be willing to change the time for the observance of the Lord's supper to be like the Willow Creek Community church? What is so impressive about that growth?

When asked about baptism, the answer was "We practice adult baptism." *But when asked if one could be saved without being baptized the answer was, "Definitely so."* That should come as no surprise since we had already been told that for one to be saved they were to "confess sins and ask for forgiveness." Now, who would dare think of trying to build a church on the basis of such teaching? Yet, this church is spoken of as a church that is growing. I deny with every fiber of my being that this growth is the growth of the church of the Lord.

We are not surprised to learn of their bands and vocal groups that render special contemporary music. One who attended a seminary there said, "tears ran down my cheek because my heart was touched and I thought of how dry and dull so many of our services are." He spoke disparagingly of the songs that we sing which are 300 years

old. But we are reading Bibles that are much older. The music of the Willow Creek church is said to be relevant. I wonder if one should not ask "is in scriptural? Does that not matter anymore?"

Their Enthusiasm

We are told just how excited the people are about being there. But again, we need to stop and ask what is it that excites them? It surely is not the fact that they are telling people how to be saved. We have already seen that. It is not due to the fact that they are pleasing God in their worship. It is not in the fact that the organization of that church is correct. It is not in the fact that they will tell you what the Bible has to say about baptism. Yes, they are excited but it will take more than misguided zeal to change the situation. Paul knew of some that were zealous, but for the wrong things (Romans 10:1-4). Their excitement does not justify them and the man does not live that can prove that it does.

Let those who would try to change the church of my Lord into a Willow Creek Community church take notice. **The line is drawn in the sand. You will not do it as long as some of our voices can be heard, so help us God.**

-- Athens, AL

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Focusing On Grace

Glenn Colley

The word "grace" can be found 159 times in the Bible. The subject of grace in the lives of people is wonderful and worthy of our diligent study. There is however, a huge difference in the way some are teaching grace, and what God says on the subject.

None would be saved without grace. Ephesians 2:8 says, "For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast." Praise God for His marvelous grace!

What we need to remember, teach, and warn, is that the grace of God is not unconditional. It's only too easy to preach to people

in sin and leave with them the impression that because of God's grace they can relax their attitude toward their sin. It is easy to preach about grace to care-free, live-like-the-world Christians and leave the impression that they don't need to worry about the necessity of dedicated service. Let's preach about God's grace! But let's teach the whole truth.

1. The grace of God doesn't mean we can be any less serious about avoiding sin in our lives. Romans 6:1 says, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we who are dead to sin live any longer therein?" Romans 12:9 says, "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that

which is good."

2. The grace of God doesn't mean we can be passive about living righteous lives. In fact, His grace is intended to teach us to live in faithful service! Titus 2:11, 12 says, "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." Fellow preachers, when you preach on the grace of God, do you remember to teach that we must live soberly, righteously, and godly?

Let's all rejoice in the abundant blessings of God given by His grace, and let us make certain we never misrepresent Him.

What's "That" In Ephesians 2:8?

Glenn Colley

It's amazing how much difference one word can make in the meaning of a sentence. One day a person asked me what "that" referred to in Ephesians 2:8. The verse says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast."

What is the "that" in "That not of yourselves?" There are two possibilities: The first one is a false idea because it conflicts with other clear teachings in the Bible. It is the idea that the word refers to our faith. This would make the verse say that our faith, which is necessary for our salvation (Hebrews 11:1), is not something we derive from our study of God's word,

but rather something God simply gives directly to us. Does God miraculously, directly, and randomly put faith in the hearts of unbelievers so they will have salvation? Some believe an individual can't be saved until such a phenomenon occurs. But the apostle taught us, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

Additionally, the word rendered "that" is in the neuter gender, and the word "faith" is in the feminine. The word "that," therefore, doesn't refer to our faith as the gift of God. It is of course true that we could not have faith without God, any more than we could have repentance, confession, or baptism without Him. But this verse shouldn't be

used to teach that a person's faith comes by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit.

The second possibility is that the word "that" in Ephesians 2:8 refers to our salvation. This is correct and true. Our salvation is truly a gift from God, the great expression of His wonderful mercy and grace. That is the thrust of the verse. Let's spend our lives showing people His great mercy and pointing them to the Gospel which expresses that mercy!

Romans 1:16 teaches, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to all them that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." May we live, and teach the reality that the Gospel is the power!

Ineffective

Neal Pollard

God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1). He sent His Son to this world through the miraculous process of incarnation (cf. Galatians 4:4). He sustains us with His divine providence (cf. Psalm 3:5). The Spirit of God moved men to write the inspired word of God over the span of many centuries (cf. II Peter 1:21). By the cross, man had the hope of eternal life restored (John 3:16). The events described above detail the power of God, whose ability far surpasses the greatest feats of man's feeble hands. Philippians 2:10-11 tells us that the day will come when every man who has entered into life will submit to the mighty Son of God. Every image of God revealed in the Bible shows His great effect on the world and on mankind. However, the New Testament reveals some who, in spite of God's overwhelming power, have made the salvation extended by heaven of no effect. HOW IS SUCH POSSIBLE!?

CAN GOD'S FAITHFULNESS BE MADE INEFFECTIVE? Romans 3:3 plainly teaches that God's faithfulness is not changed despite man's disbelief. Paul tells us that "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (I Corinthians 1:9). The Israelites were told to "know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations" (Deuteronomy 7:9). God's fidelity to His word and His nature, His love for man, and His flawless character effectuate the salvation He offers. Yet God's faithfulness is useless to those who have no faith in Him. Jesus said, ". . . if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). The Hebrew writer warns, "without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews 11:6). John adds, "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that

God Gave of his Son" (I John 5:10). God's faithfulness is made ineffective by man's failure to believe.

CAN GOD'S WORD BE MADE MORE INEFFECTIVE (Mark 7:13)? Oh, let us not believe that God's word is without power and authority. And, if man allows his heart to be softened by the power of that written word, he will know its effectiveness. Hebrews 4:12 describes the word of God as "living and active, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart." Jeremiah reported the question of God, saying, "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces" (Jeremiah 23:29). The effective word can transform hardened, habitual, and stubborn sinners into submissive, obedient, and sweet children of God. However, Jesus spoke of some who made the word of God of none effect through their tradition. The word of God is ineffective if it is not studied (I Timothy 4:13). The word of God is ineffective if it is not practiced (Matthew 7:21). The word of God is ineffective if it is taught falsely (Galatians 1:6-7).

CAN THE CROSS BE MADE INEFFECTIVE (I Corinthians 1:17)? The centerpiece of time and hope, the symbol of regeneration, and the seal of pardon, the cross, held the world's only Savior. The cross' effect was felt from the Garden of Eden and will be felt by all the faithful children of God who stand justified before the King at the judgment. Without the cross, these faithful would stand condemned with the reprobates and infidels. Christ made peace through the blood of His cross (Colossians 1:20). Yet, the cross is ineffective for the enemies of the cross (Philippians 3:18). For those who can, in their mind's eye, sit around Golgotha and watch the cross wring the life-blood from the perfect man and still reject God's grace, what Continued On Page 4

"We're Not All Like That"

Michael Gifford

It's one of the more unsettling experiences that a Christian must bear. I was talking with a non-Christian friend when he began to relate some immoral activities engaged in by another member of the Lord's church. My friend had had the dishonesty and ungodliness of this member of the church proven to him time and again. What's more, I had as well. Consequently, I could not defend my brother. All I could do was listen and then, with a confident yet apologetic look into the eyes of my friend, say, "Not all members of the church of Christ are like that, you know."

This really hurts, brethren. Here's an individual of the world we are trying to win to Christ and, in spite of all of our efforts, he has this one horrible example sticking out in his memory like a sore thumb. We have on occasion heard the phrase, "I'm already as good as Mr. (or Miss) So and so in the church of Christ, so why should I bother becoming a member?" Then there's: "I don't want any part of a church that has members like that."

To be sure, we could say quite a bit about the need for people to not judge the entire church based on one person or the ways in which we could answer such statements, but that's not the purpose of this brief treatise. Instead, I want us to think for a moment about what kind of impression we as members of the Lord's church are making on the world.

We cannot live perfect lives. Jesus said, *"It is impossible but that offences will come"* (Luke 17:1). But now hear the rest of His statement: *"But woe unto him, through whom they come!"* We have heard it said that our lives are the only Bibles some people read. Fair or unfair, it is nonetheless true. People praise or blame the entire church often because of only one member. Again, it is indeed unfair, but we can't change it. We can,

however, change ourselves so as to bring honor rather than dishonor to the Lord and His spiritual body.

Each child of God needs to engage in daily self-examination (II Corinthians 13:5). We need to consider our ways (Haggai 1:5, 7). We need to be sure that we are conducting ourselves in a manner that is befitting the name we wear. Why? For one, because we want to go to heaven. Secondly, because we want to lead others there as well. But how successful will

we be in either case if our lives are stained with dirty dealing, inconsistent assembling with the saints, unholy language, etc., etc., etc.?

They who have ears to hear, let them hear. The world is looking at us. They hear us saying that we are Christians. They want to see what a Christian looks like. If we conduct ourselves no better than they, we will surely turn them away from God (cf. Matthew 5:20).

We are salt of the earth, the

light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16). We are to be the resounding influence for truth and godliness in this life. We are to walk in the pristine steps of Jesus (I Peter 2:21). Dear brethren and sisters in the Lord, what have you given the world to think about you as a child of God? And what will they think of the church of Christ as a result of their analysis of your life?

Yes, it is an awesome responsibility we have. Perhaps some have never thought of it. Perhaps others

want nothing to do with being placed under the scrutinous eyes of the masses. But if we are true Christians, we are in that position already. And rather than cower or run from the viewing eyes of the world, let us study God's Word and pray so that our examples of Christian living will outshine the sun for brightness. May no one ever have to say apologetically about your life or mine as a Christian, "Not all members of the church of Christ are like that."

"Just Why Are You A Christian?"

Peggy T. Crump

Being in mission work for so many years as I have, I have been asked the question many times, "Just why are you a Christian?" My first thought is because I was taught to love God and the Bible by my parents and grandparents. But this is not the answer for which they are searching. Thus I did some research several years ago and found the following reasons.

(1) I am a Christian because I was taught to love God. I have faith in God. Since God loved me (John 3:16) that he gave his only Son for me and since this Son shed his blood for the remission of my sins, I love him because he first loved me (I John 4:19).

(2) I am a Christian because my faith in Jesus Christ tells me to do what he says. It was this faith that led me to be baptized thus becoming a member of his church (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:47).

(3) I am a Christian because the Bible tells me "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23; I John 1:10). I did not want to remain in sin because there would be no escape of eternal damnation if I neglect this great salvation offered to me (Hebrews 2:3).

(4) I am a Christian because it makes me a better person. It keeps me away from the world and sin (Romans 1:11; James 1:21; John 6:44-45).

The way of the sinner is hard (Proverbs 13:15). But Christ tells me to seek FIRST the kingdom of God and I will be in His care (Matthew 6:33; Galatians 6:7-10; Matthew 13:23; Mark 10:29-30).

(5) I am a Christian because God wants me to be his child. He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance and be his child (II Peter 3:9).

(6) I am a Christian because of the assurance Christ gives me through his word (Hebrews 10:22; Romans 10:17). I know I can have eternal life waiting for me because I am saved by the blood of Christ (I John 1:7; 2:2). This blood has redeemed me from my past sins (Ephesians 1:7) and will be there in the future if I walk in Christ and do as he commands (I John 2:3). I know I am in Christ because I have been baptized into him (Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 6:3-4). I do not have to depend on seeing or feeling to "know" (Hebrews 11:1; John 20:30-31; II Thessalonians 1:10; I Corinthians 1:6).

John uses the word "know" twenty-four times in the book of I John, thus assuring me that I can know. Peter stood on Pentecost and said, "Let all the house of Israel KNOW assuredly . . ." (Acts 2:36). Paul wrote, "I KNOW him whom I have believed" (II Timothy 1:12). These men

saw evidences of his existence. There are no miracles today but on the basic of their testimony the Bible says we can know just as they knew (John 20:30-31).

(7) I am a Christian because this assurance gives me joy unspeakable. Real happiness is the fruit of Christian living (I Peter 1:8). I have peace with God made by the cross (Colossians 1:20). No sweeter verse can be found than Psalm 103:11-12 which says, "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy

toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."

(8) I am a Christian for many, many reasons but most of all because I want to go to heaven and be with my Lord throughout eternity. "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusteth in him and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song I will praise him" (Psalms 28:7).

--P.O. Box 176, Hackleburg, AL 35564.

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

Sometimes through our lives we have the pleasant experience of seeing a hard heart softened. Here's a man of wealth who never cares about anything but himself and his money who becomes very ill and contemplates the way his life is spent. He vows to himself that should his health return, he will seek out and help those in need. His heart's been opened.

Picture a quiet, simple, big man of brawny physique and calloused hands -- a man used to hard living -- as the nurse gently lays his newborn baby girl into those big hands. His heart melts.

In Acts 16 of the Bible, we read of a woman named Lydia who, like thousands since, heard of the man from Galilee, Jesus Christ -- how He lived, and how He died, so she could have hope. It says of her, "whose heart the Lord opened." Is your heart too hard for Jesus to melt?

**Visit Soon
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Standing Firm Against The Winds Of Change

Tom Holland

Recently I received a form letter from Dr. James Dobson's Focus on the Family. The outside of the envelope carried the above caption. The inside forcefully explains the efforts now being made to change our culture. Dobson discusses the price he is paying for his convictions about what some would label as "old fashioned" family values.

Guinness and Seel in a book, No god But God, discuss the prevalent problem of idolatry in America. They state, "The idols we are challenging in this book are largely from the dominant myths and images of modernity -- Progress, Change, Technique, Relevance, Need, and so on" (p. 40).

There are many changes that represent improvements for life. Laser surgery seems to be an improvement in medical practice. I prefer a new type automobile instead of my first car, a Model A Ford. I appreciate the convenience of fast foods. I enjoy thermo-statically controlled

temperature in my house.

But change for the sake of change is lacking a valid reason. Change to become like others may mean disaster. This was true of God's chosen people, Israel, when they wanted a change so they could be like the nations around them (I Samuel 8:19, 20).

In the day when the god of change is so strong, God's people need to examine two things: one, what we have and, two, what we are asked to change.

For example, God's people are committed to the necessity of Biblical authority in faith and practice. Should this be changed by a so-called "new hermeneutic?" LaGard Smith states, "As a fellowship, we've already got more going for us than most fellowships ever had, which is a determined commitment to Biblical authority." (The Cultural Church, p. 216).

Should we change a structured worship with a commitment to decency and order (I Corinthians 14:40) to a tradition of spontaneous, unplanned activity?

Should the pulpit message be changed to appeal to the desire of people to be entertained? (Galatians 1:6-

10). hope remains? As far as their eternal destiny is concerned, Christ's death was of no effect. Surely a long look at Calvary will cure attendance problems, divisive spirits, filthy hearts, and hypocritical lives. As Paul suggests in I Corinthians 1:17, we should throw aside the philosophy, wisdom of words, and human creeds for the preaching of the cross. Unless the cross provides one with that living hope (I Peter 1:3) which causes one to conform to the image of Him who hung upon that tree (cf. Romans 8:29), the cross serves no purpose for the individual.

God's power cannot be limited. His plans are infallible. His word will never fail. His scheme of redemption is perfect. It is when man chooses not to have faith that the faithfulness of God is ineffective. When man decides to reject God's word, it will not be effective for him. It is when man turns his back on the cross of Christ that the blood shed there becomes of no effect in his life! Isaiah wrote, "And the work of righteousness shall be peace: and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever" (Isaiah

10).

In a day when it seems change has become a type of god, we need to take seriously,

"Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58).

Ineffective

Continued From Page 2

32:17). Let us guard our minds from anything that would alter

the effectiveness of God in our lives.

Here And There

From Gospel Advocate, 1957

SLIPS THAT PASS. It is next to impossible to print anything that will be absolutely free of imperfections. Remember the man who said "I do not make any *mistakes*." Typographical errors, as well as other kinds, will occasionally appear in the most carefully edited publications. Sometimes these are embarrassing. A country newspaper editor wrote a glowing notice of the death of

a certain deacon in a prominent church. He intended that the caption read: "DEACON JONES HAS GONE TO REST"; but when it appeared it read: "DEACON JONES HAS GONE TO ROOST." The indignant widow promptly and furiously asked for an immediate apology and correction. The editor came up with this: "DEACON JONES HAS GONE TO ROAST."

10 Ways To Find Time To Read Your Bible

1. Wake up ten minutes earlier each morning and read.
2. Put a Bible portion under your pillow to read each night before sleep.
3. Talk less and you will find a few more minutes to read.
4. Keep a copy of the Bible in the kitchen, or at the telephone to "read while you wait."
5. Carry a copy of the Bible in your purse or pocket to read while waiting for doctors, unpunctual people, etc.
6. Never go on a trip without your Bible.
7. Keep a copy of the Bible in your car.
8. Remember, a Bible in your hand is worth two on the table.
9. Turn off the TV!
10. Read a verse or two at meal time when all the family is together.

--From Graymere Bulletin, Columbia, TN

You, And Preaching

There isn't a word that a preacher can say,
No matter how lovely or true,
Nor a prayer that his eager lips may pray
That can preach a sermon as you.

You vowed to serve Christ, And men know that you did.
They're watching the things that you do.
There isn't one action of yours that is hid,
Men are watching and studying you.

You say You're no preacher?
Yes, but you preach a powerful sermon each day.
The acts of your life are the things that you teach.
It isn't the things that you say.

So Christians, remember you bear His name.
You are living examples, men praise you or blame,
And measure all Christians by you.

--Author Unknown

**Be A
Words
Of Truth
Subscriber**

August 20, 1993

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 - Because Of Love
- The 24-Hour Creation Days
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 - Starving To Death

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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

What Makes The Church Of Christ Different?

Billy Moore

The church of Christ is different from the Protestant denominations in several points.

(1) We have no organization larger than the local church. This in itself sets us apart from most Protestant churches, who have district, state, national and international organizations. In the New Testament there was no organization larger than the local church, with bishops, deacons, and saints (Philippians 1:1).

(2) We have no creed but Christ and His word -- the New Testament. There is no manual, discipline, catechism, etc. as is found in Protestant Churches. The early disciples were taught not to add to or take from the inspired scriptures (Revelation 22:18-19), or teach any other gospel (Galatians 1:6-9). We still follow this charge and have no other creed.

(3) The name that we wear makes us different. Look at the Protestant churches and see what they call themselves. They wear names that give honor to the men who started them, or to some particular practice. By what names were the early disciples called? They were called Christians (Acts 11:26), and were not to be ashamed to suffer as Christians (I Peter 4:16). That is the name we use today. As a collectivity, the early disciples were called the church (group of people), "church of God" (group of people that belongs to God). There was no specific name for

the local church. Today we refer to the church in the same manner. We do not wear names that give honor to men or practices.

(4) The worship we render to God is different. We eat the Lord's Supper "upon the first day of the week" (Acts 20:7), which necessarily infers a weekly observance. Most Protestant churches do not have the Lord's Supper weekly. Our music in worship is acapella, just as it was in the New Testament (Colossians 3:16, Ephesians 5:19). Most Protestant churches use instrumental music in worship.

(5) We teach the plan of salvation just as the apostles taught it; belief in Christ as the Son of God, repentance of sins, and baptism for remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 8:36, 37; Mark 16:16). Most Protestant churches teach that one is saved by faith only, before and without being baptized.

(6) The concept we have of the church makes us different, for we believe that the church consists of those souls who have been saved (Acts 2:47; Ephesians 1:22, 23). Protestant churches teach that the church consists of all Protestant churches, and that each is a part (denomination) of the body of Christ.

There are some things that make us different from Protestant churches. The differences have to do with faith in Christ Jesus. We plead for "speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where

the Bible is silent." The church of Christ of the New Testament was not a Protestant

There Must Be Water

Mike Benson

Weather seems to be the predominant theme in our news lately. Understandably so, since much of the mid-section of our nation has been floundering under a deluge of water from the swelling Mississippi, while simultaneously, much of the eastern portion of the United States has been sweltering under an oppressive heat wave.

Because of the extreme heat and lack of water where I live, I have neglected to mow the grass in my yard for nearly a month. My motivation for such disregard has been fueled by a concern that after cutting an already parched lawn, in combination with the scorching heat, my yard would soon die.

Recently I was walking around my house surveying the damage that the heat and lack of moisture had visited on my flowers and lawn. As I turned one corner of my house, I noticed that the grass nearest the air conditioner was green, lush, and healthy (in contrast to the rest of my yard which was yellow, dry, and withered). The difference between the two was striking. As it turns out, the water dripping from the air conditioner had sustained a small two-foot section of grass, while the remainder of the yard

denomination. You do have a church.

choice. You can be just a Christian, a member of Christ's

minus the same moisture, was virtually barren.

As I stood there studying the phenomenon, a simple and yet profound thought occurred to me, "Where there is water, there is life." This is not only true in the physical realm, but it is also true of the spiritual. Just as the grass in my yard must have water in order to live, a penitent believer must come in contact with the water of baptism in order to be saved. The Bible teaches:

•"He who believes and IS BAPTIZED (WATER) will be saved (LIFE). . . ." (Mark 16:16).

•". . . Repent, and let every one of you BE BAPTIZED (WATER) in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (LIFE) . . ." (Acts 2:38).

•"And now why are you waiting? Arise and BE BAPTIZED, (WATER) and wash away your sins (LIFE) . . ." (Acts 22:16).

•"For as many of you as were BAPTIZED (WATER) into Christ have put on Christ (LIFE)" (Galatians 3:27).

•"There is also an antitype which now saves us, (LIFE) namely BAPTISM (WATER) (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God),

through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 3:21).

Oftentimes my denominational friends will read such statements and incorrectly accuse me of teaching "water salvation." Their assertions are simply without merit. The Scriptures do not teach, nor do I affirm that it is water which saves. Certainly water plays a role in salvation, just as it did in the saving of Noah and his family during the flood (Genesis 7; I Peter 3:20, 21) and as it did in the saving of the Israelites during their Red Sea crossing (Exodus 14), but it does not save. Instead, the water of "baptism is the last act before salvation. It is the borderline to the kingdom of God. It is the last step before entrance into Christ (Galatians 3:27). Before one is baptized, he is out of Christ. After one is baptized, he is in Christ. Faith in God moves one to be baptized. This is not water salvation. The water in baptism has no power to cleanse from sin. The blood of Jesus is the only power to remove sin (Revelation 1:5).

Baptism is the TIME that the blood of Jesus washes away the sins of man (Romans 6:3).

Water baptism is the PLACE

Continued On Page 4

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

The Sin Of Denominationalism

Glenn Colley

Recently this antidote appeared in one Birmingham newspaper: Several cotton farmers were whiling away a winter afternoon around the cannonball stove when they became entangled in a heated discussion on the merits of their respective religions. One of the farmers had been sitting quietly, just listening, and the group turned on him and demanded, "Who's right, old Jim? Which one of these three religions is the right one?"

"Well," said Jim, thoughtfully, "You know there are three ways to get from here to the cotton gin. You can go over the big hill; that's shorter, but it's a powerful climb. You can go around the east side of the hill; that's not too far. Then, you can go around the west side of the hill, which is the longest way, but the easiest. But, you know, "He said looking them squarely in the eyes, "When you get there, the gin man don't ask you how you come. He just asks you, "Man, how good is your cotton?"

This amusing story is designed to illustrate a popular and damnable false doctrine which is, "We religious people are all going to heaven, just different ways."

Billy Graham was asked recently to list by name the denominations he would suggest, and those he wouldn't. This, in part, was his response: "It has never been my policy to recommend or criticize specific churches or denominations. Churches of almost every denomination have supported our ministry of evangelism across the years, and I've found that there are excellent congregations in every Christian denomination or fellowship. Instead, I have always encouraged people to

pray for God to guide them as they seek a church home, asking Him to lead them to a place where they (and their whole family) can grow spiritually through the preaching and teaching of God's word . . ."

There was a time when those who preached for the church of Christ stood united against the sin of denominationalism. (The practice of denominationalism is based on the idea that all the different faiths and churches which claim some tie to Jesus, however corrupted in doctrine, are in their magnificent diversity united in the one great church of Jesus Christ). Now things are different. Many among us have become more comfortable with the ideals behind denominationalism. To some among us, criticizing the concept and those who practice denominationalism would be unthinkable. These brethren:

1. Have decided that the church of Christ is itself a denomination. (This doesn't make it so).

2. Ignore the fact that **ALMOST ALL** denominations practice a baptism different from the one taught in the New Testament. (Acts 2:38, Mark 16:15, 16, Ephesians 4:5).

3. Seem to believe the preachers of the churches of Christ owe an apology to the preachers of denominations for not admitting God's grace over the last many years.

4. Have decided that worship according to man's liking is just as pleasing to God as worshiping according to the pattern of the New Testament.

5. Have decided that great Gospel preachers of the past were widely misunderstood, and that if those dead soldiers of the cross were alive today, they would surely be sympathetic to the preachers

of denominationalism, and to the new liberal movement among us.

Brethren, the word of God guides us to oppose denominationalism (Matthew 16:18)! Those who preach the concept are false teachers, and should be warned, not fellowshiped. II John 9-10 says, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

Are you willing to refer to the teaching of false doctrines as "evil deeds"? Is your preacher?

If someone who is in a denomination, with it's false teaching on baptism and worship, attends for 3 months where you worship, would they be shown the right and warned against the wrong?

After asking similar questions to a brother recently, I was given this response: "Brother, we've got to start loving one another more."

I believe in love. I believe in a loving attitude. But I suggest that the love Jesus teaches us doesn't rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth. (I Corinthians 13:6) Jude 3 says, ". . . that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once (and for all, GC) delivered unto the saints."

The Lord's church will never be a denomination. (John 17:17-23) (I Corinthians 1:10-13). Let's vow to stop trying to pull the New Testament down to us, and start working to pull ourselves and others up to the New Testament. Now, that's love. (Matthew 7:21).

Because Of Love

Louis Mahaffey

In a small classroom sat a teacher and a dozen students. The teacher's name was Joyce Berry. We had no class textbooks, only our Bibles. Together we read about the crucifixion of our Lord. Mrs. Berry had to stop many times to wipe her tears. As we continued reading each student had eyes beginning to water. We classmates found it uncomfortable at the foot of the cross. No one had ever taken us there before. Years have passed, but no one can compare with my sixth grade Bible Class teacher.

The churches of Christ are now facing an "academic frenzy." Bachelor degrees, masters and doctorates are the rule of the day. Please understand, it is great that so many are pursuing greater academic learning (I am myself), but the problem is too many are in search of a little piece of paper, the degree, and not knowledge. The result is childish vanity in an individual who doesn't know his left hand from his right.

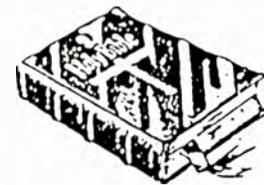
Many will never attempt to teach a Bible class, because they feel too limited in knowledge. Many preachers will never publicly defend the faith, since they don't have the appropriate degrees. The fact is most NEVER reach this so-called "golden" level of knowledge needed to teach, and thus never teach. Many preachers receive their higher degrees and then cease to

perform evangelism.

It is true that to teach you need knowledge, especially knowledge of the Bible. However, you could know the Bible from cover to cover, and without love, you would be a terrible teacher. There would be too much bragging in your lessons. You would be unable to step aside and let Jesus Christ take center stage. We need teachers with the Word in their minds, and love in their hearts. Perhaps no one will congratulate you on your mind-boggling lesson. Maybe someone else in the congregation will be known as the "seat of all knowledge." No, not a word will be spoken about your lessons until years later -- when a young preacher will sit at his desk and remember how you took a group of children to the cross of our Lord -- because of love.

--108 Meade, Lincoln, ARK 72744.

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The 24-Hour Creation Days

Brad T. Bromling

There is much confusion over the length of the creation days. Some people, intimidated by the pronouncements of evolutionary scientists, feel compelled to squeeze evolution's millions of years into the creation week. By doing so, they think they can accept both Genesis and evolution. This position is simply a compromise which will not work.

All available evidence shows that the days of creation were not long periods of time, but regular days of approximately 24 hours. First, whenever the Hebrew word for "day" (yom) is modified by a numeral (in non-prophetic verses) it always

means a literal day. The same is true when the word occurs in the plural (e.g., Exodus 20:11).

Second, when God commanded His people to observe the Sabbath Day, He gave this reason: "*For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day . . .*" (Exodus 20:11). The Hebrews were to pattern their week after the creation week.

The same terminology is used for both weeks. Did the Jews think they were to work for six "vast eons of time" and then rest one "vast eon of time?" Obviously not. Why should it be assumed that God did so?

Third, if the days of creation were long periods of time, how

would the plants that depend upon insects for pollination have survived those vast epochs between "day" three and "day" five (when the insects were created?) They wouldn't; but they are here.

Fourth, if the day were vast periods of time, then man is a very recent newcomer to this planet. But Jesus and Paul indicate that man has been here "*from the beginning*" (cf. Mark 10:6; Romans 1:21). In reality,

mankind is only about ninety-six hours younger than the Earth.

Enough with this compromise -- we should simply take God at His Word!

Disasters As A Means Of God's Warning

Joe E. Galloway

Record-breaking floods have occurred, flooding areas which experts had confidently said would not be flooded due to the present system of flood control dams, floodwalls, and levees. It was not thought that this quantity of water could possibly fall for so long over the watershed of these rivers. Other sections of our nation have endured record heat waves with accompanying drought. One of the most destructive hurricanes in memory shocked our nation just months earlier.

No, these are not signs that the world will soon end! Jesus clearly taught that no one can know when he will come and time shall end. Although Jesus gave signs by which his disciples could know that Jerusalem was about to be destroyed (Matthew 24:1-34), there are no signs promised by which we can know that the end of the world is near. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matthew 24:36).

Some Serious Questions Posed

Yet, should our nation not learn a lesson from these recent natural catastrophes? Can we not see that there is a powerful God who is alive and in control? Do we not see how puny we humans are in God's universe? Should we not conclude that if we cannot even begin to control a small portion of these natural forces that it is absolutely impossible, apart from God, to control our eternal well-being? Above all, should this not warn us that the same God who has power to bring such devastation in this physical world "is able to

destroy both soul and body in hell"? (Matthew 10:28).

A Bible Illustration

God spoke to Israel through His prophet, Amos, at a time when most had forgotten Him. In many ways Israel was similar to today's society. It was a time of luxury and prosperity for many (6:4-6). Wickedness was rampant, and the last thing most wanted was a word from God (7:16). God told them, "Ye put far away the evil day" (6:3). They did not wish to consider the possibility that a day of reckoning was coming.

The message of the book is that God had given them ample warnings and time to repent, but they had ignored such. God had caused them to experience a time of famine, "yet, have ye not returned to me, saith the Lord" (4:6). Next God had withheld rain from certain of their cities during the critical three months before harvest. The result? "Yet have ye not

returned unto me, said the Lord" (4:7-8). Again God caused blasting, mildew, and the palmerworm to smite their crops (4:9). This was followed by pestilence, their young men being slain, and their horses stolen. They remained unmoved, not returning to God (4:10, 11). Since they remained unmoved by God's warnings, God's message was: "*Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel*" (4:12). God would cause them to now go into captivity beyond Damascus (5:27).

Not An Isolated Case

All through the Bible God used similar calamities to warn the disobedient, showing them the urgency of repentance. The plagues of Egypt should have brought Pharaoh to his knees in submission to God. The cycles during the time of the Judges (of national sin, then calamity

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The Virgin Birth

Stephen Wiggins

By the phrase "virgin birth," I refer to the miraculous manner in which Jesus Christ came into the world as a human. The virgin Mary conceived the promised child, not by the ordinary procreative power of a human, but by the miraculous agency of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:34-35). Thus, the expression "virgin birth" is an adequate designation with reference to this profound and prominent teaching of the Bible.

The beginning chapters of Matthew and Luke are the two accounts of Christ's birth within the Bible. Luke records the angel Gabriel's appearance to Mary announcing her conception. Matthew relates how an angel presented himself to Joseph in a dream to quieten his confused anxieties concerning Mary's pregnancy. Both of these Biblical narratives relate the purpose of the approaching birth and are in complete harmony with one another.

The Old Testament had foretold the virgin birth some 700 years before its fulfillment. When rebellious Ahaz, king of Judah, refused to ask a sign of the Lord concerning his enemies, Isaiah announced that the Lord himself would give a

sign to the house of David. Read it: "*Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel*" (Isaiah 7:14).

The Holy Spirit then later guided the hand of Matthew as he wrote that this Old Testament prediction was fulfilled in the virgin birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. "*Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us*" (Matthew 1:22-23).

As faithful Christians we accept without hesitancy the virgin birth of Christ as fact and truth. This is why: To deny or belittle this basic teaching of the Bible in any way whatsoever is to sacrifice the integrity of the Gospel authors. The virgin birth is a part of the New Testament scriptures. It is a part of God's inspired and authoritative word. Two inspired writers give crystal clear accounts of the record.

Thus, to reject the virgin birth

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"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

There are a few words in our vocabulary which when spoken, immediately touch sensitive nerves. One such word is "hypocrite." A hypocrite is one who is inwardly the way he sees fit, and outwardly the way he thinks others will see fit. It is one of the most serious cancers of the character. It is the way by which a man can lie to others without ever uttering a word.

One of the most infamous hypocrites of history is discussed in the Bible. His name was Judas Iscariot. You can read about him in Matthew 26. Verse 48 says "Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he. Hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus and said, Hail master, and kissed Him." A murderer kissed his victim.

Could anyone believe that the religion of a hypocritical Christian could ever be acceptable? Let's all strive to be Christians.; genuine Christians.

Disasters As A Means Of God's Warning

Continued From Page 3

from God, followed by their repentance, and finally God-provided deliverance) are well-known to Bible students. This same cycle was often repeated during the kingdom of Israel, and then of Judah by itself. When God finally caused Israel to be taken into Assyrian captivity, God even used their calamity to warn Judah of what would happen to them, too, unless they repented. Chapter 9 of the book of Revelation stresses the same principle: both verses 20 and 21 show that the preceding hardships that resulted from the "woe" trumpets were intended to bring those surviving to repentance. Whenever misfortunes come to one he should give careful attention to doing God's will "lest a worse thing come unto thee" (John 5:14).

Our Nation Needs To Take Warning!

"Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). Our nation became great, not because every citizen was righteous, but because its founding principles were chiefly those taught in the Bible. Its founders, while not New Testament Christians, generally believed in and respected God's influence in world affairs. They understood the importance of the Bible and the importance of its righteous principles for both homes and nations to stand.

But, those principles have been under serious attack, and are being more and more trampled under foot. Not only do many in high places not wish

There Must Be Water

Continued From Page 1

God has appointed where man shall be saved.

It is the POINT at which man is cleansed of his sins.

This is WHEN faith saves. There is no inherent good or evil in the water of baptism. God uses the water of baptism to test the faith of man. It is merely an instrument and not a power in itself.¹

Friends, without water the yard is dry and lifeless -- dead. Likewise, a penitent believer

to entertain the thought of a just God, they reject the Bible as an objective standard to live by and deny that there is such a thing as absolute truth. The sanctity of human life is no longer upheld by many, as abortion has become not only popular, but a litmus test for one's being acceptable as a leader. Homosexual conduct has been elevated from its proper place of shame and degradation to a position of honor. (Who would have ever imagined that an American president would actually salute a band in his inaugural parade which flaunted the fact that it was composed entirely of homosexuals?) To be socially accepted one is now expected to give those of this perverted life-style equal consideration with all others. The lawbreaker's "rights" are defended, often even above those wronged. Human intellectualism and science are trumpeted as the cure for all, while reliance on the Bible is considered antiquated superstition.

Providential Warnings?

I certainly do not suggest that God is giving miraculous warnings through the many recent national catastrophes. But, does not God still work in the area we call "providence" as he continues to control the universe, affecting the things necessary to carry out his overall plan? Daniel said that God "changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings" (Daniel 2:21). In Daniel 4:25 and 21 God showed Nebuchadnezzar

without coming in contact with the water of baptism is without life -- dead in his trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1, 5; Colossians 2:13).

Please don't leave water out of God's plan for you. There must be water (John 3:5; Romans 6:17, 18; 3, 4).

¹Mac Layton, "And Baptism," A Snake, A Captain, A Blind Man, And Baptism, pp. 5-6.

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30159.

that he could even control his kingdom. Romans 13:1-4 shows God still maintains the same power in governments today. We have pointed out earlier that one means God used to affect this control was natural calamity to motivate proper change. Regardless of being able to prove that God providentially sent some calamity to bring us to our senses, should we not use such things as reminders that we need to return to God!

Our Responsibility

Those of us who are God's people certainly need to "stand

up and be counted" as we both teach, practice, and contend for the truths of God's word (both moral and doctrinal). Just ten righteous souls in Sodom could have saved those cities from destruction! Although many who are "on the rolls" of churches of Christ may go along with the liberal, ungodly thinking and practices of our society we certainly still have many godly people who will stand firm for truth and right!

Those among us who have "conformed to the world" (Romans 12:2) need to take

warning, also, that God is still in power and at the end "shall bring every work unto judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

When natural inconveniences and disasters come we tend to complain. The ungodly are even heard to curse. Instead, we must learn to use such as warnings that we need to yield ourselves to God's will.

--218 Pincrest Drive, Greenville, TN 37743.

The Virgin Birth

Continued From Page 3

is to repudiate and discard God's word, the Bible. The authority of God's word is involved here. One cannot consistently accept the Bible as God's inspired word and at the same time reject its revelations to be false and spurious. Those who accept the scriptures as the authoritative word of God will in no way disclaim any of its teaching, the virgin birth included.

The deity of Christ is also involved in the virgin birth. Here's how. Be it remembered that Jesus was not just a mere man. He was not solely and only a human as you and I are only humans. Jesus was both God and man. He was God in the flesh. "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth*" (John 1:1, 14). Then the apostle Paul expresses the incarnation like this: "*God was manifest in the flesh*" (I Timothy 3:16). And again, "*But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law*" (Galatians 4:4).

If Jesus was not virgin born by miraculous conception of the Holy Spirit as the Bible affirms, then he must have had a human father. But if he had a human

father then he was not divine. Thus, his deity is excluded and Jesus is reduced to the level of an ordinary man. And no man can save himself from sin, much less anyone else. This should make it clear to the average reader that to deny the virgin birth not only is a denial and rejection of God's word as being an inspired and true account, but such veto also robs

Jesus of his divinity, reduces him to the level of an ordinary man, and implies he can no longer be the Savior of the world. In essence, to deny the virgin birth is to flat out deny Christ. All should know that for one to downplay or repudiate this fundamental doctrine of the Bible is to surely make a serious, soul-damning mistake.

Starving To Death

We are told that a bird can go nine days without food, a dog 20 days, a turtle 500 days, a snake 800 days, a fish 1,000 days and some insects 12,000 days. For man, however, two weeks is about the limit. Sooner or later nourishment is necessary for all God's creatures.

Have you ever noticed that we are not asked to "read" the Word of God? Rather we are urged to "study" it, "meditate" upon it and "compare" spiritual things with spiritual. In other words, the Bible is too holy and sacred to "toy with." God wants us to put in some real consecrated effort when we approach the Scriptures, for in this way we will more readily assimilate its sweet nourishment and good doctrine.

But the sad fact is that many Christians are starving to death, not because food is unavailable but simply because they will not eat of it. What home does not have a Bible or opportunity to attend the services of worship? A Bible on the shelf is of no more value than food in the refrigerator. Don't starve your soul! Feed on the Word of God and grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior.

(Author Unknown)

August 27, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- The Best Commentary
- "Get Lost!"
- Did Christ Die Spiritually For Us?
- Did Christ Go To Hell For Us?
- New Creatures Must Exhibit New Features
- Must A Congregation Have Elders In Order To Render Corrective Discipline?
- "Most Of A Minute"
- Is A Youth Program Really Important?

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The Words Truth

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

The Year Of Jubilee And The Gospel Era

W. Gaddys Roy

Every fiftieth year with Israel was called the year of jubilee. The year of jubilee was a period of mercy. Slaves were set free, and land outside walled cities was returned to the original owners (Leviticus 25).

When Jesus "came to Nazareth . . . he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:16-19). If this does not mean that the year of jubilee is typical of the gospel era, there are certainly some striking similarities.

The year of jubilee was a fixed period appointed by God (Leviticus 25:9, 10). It was a period of mercy to the poor and afflicted of Israel. Slaves were freed, and the land outside the walled cities was restored to the original owners. When one sold his land, he would sell only the number of crops until the year of jubilee (Leviticus 25). Likewise, the gospel era is a fixed period by God for the salvation of sinners and the reign of Christ (Matthew 28:18-20; II Corinthians 6:2; Galatians 3:22-29). In this period God's love and mercy

are extended to all men (Acts 10:34, 35; Romans 2:11). Sinners are released from the slavery of sin and are set free through the blood of Christ. Through this freedom we are restored again to the tree of life which was lost through the sin of Adam (Romans 6:16;18; Galatians 5:1; Revelation 22:14).

The year of jubilee was ushered in on the great day of atonement, and it was announced by the joyful sound of trumpets (Leviticus 25:9; Psalm 89:15). This was the most sacred day of the Jewish calendar. On this day a bullock was slain for a sin offering, a ram was slain for a burnt offering, and the scape-goat was released into the wilderness, symbolically bearing away the sins of the people (Leviticus 16:9-16). On this day blood was sprinkled on the mercy-seat. The high priest would intercede for the people in the Most Holy Place and then come forth and bless them in the name of the Lord. The whole service had a distinct reference symbolically to the sacrificial death of Christ.

The atonement of Christ is the basis of the gospel dispensation. The gospel era was ushered in by the sacrifice of Christ and His atoning blood (Luke 24:46, 47; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 5:11). The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ was indeed a joyous occasion. Angels sang with joy at His birth (Luke 2:8-14). The gospel of Christ whereby the atoning blood of Christ is applied to the heart has been, and must

continue to be, sounded to the whole world (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:46-48;; Colossians 1:23).

The year of jubilee was associated with abundance, and the people could dwell in safety (Leviticus 25:18-22). This was a year in which liberty was proclaimed to the captive. The bond servants were freed. Remission of debts was extended to those who could not pay, and forfeited possessions were restored (Leviticus 25:23-41). Likewise, the gospel is an era overflowing with spiritual blessings. It is compared to a royal feast (Matthew 22:1-4). The gospel

sets free those who are bond servants of sin and enables them to inherit eternal salvation (Romans 2:7-11; 6:16-23; Hebrews 5:9; Revelation 22:14). Man cannot pay his sin debt, but the gospel of Christ offers forgiveness of this sin debt through Christ (Luke 24:46, 47; Acts 2:38; 13:38). The gospel restores all that was lost through the introduction of sin into the world by Adam (Genesis 3; Revelation 22:14).

The year of jubilee was a period of festivity and rest (Leviticus 25:11, 12). This period with all its ceremonies belonged to the Mosaic

dispensation and, of course, ended with the law of Moses (John 1:17; Colossians 2:14-16). The gospel of Christ overflows with God's great love and His abundant grace, with no heavy yokes or expensive sacrifices to be observed. All the institutions of the gospel are easy, simple, and gracious (Matthew 11:28-30). The grace and truth of the gospel with all its blessings came as the result of the vicarious suffering and the atoning blood of Christ.

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"Describe The Bible"

Neal Pollard

If given the task of doing the above, how would you respond? Would you mention size, kind of paper, name of translators, or condition of your copy? Would you describe it as a book of facts, the preacher's and elders' book, the guide of your life, the guide of mom's life, or a combination of those answers? How would you relate the Bible to God? Or you world? Your country? Your family? Yourself?

Have you ever had the occasion to describe the Bible to a friend or family member? I am not particularly thinking of descriptions like those just mentioned. Rather, have you discussed the contents of The Book of books with them? One brother correctly stated that

only by "translating its truths into life" can the full penetrable power of the Bible be known. Sometimes, men and women who were baptized twenty or more years ago attend the services monthly, drink, dress, and live like the world, know the name of an apostle, and can find Romans with the aid of an index. Such individuals virtually scream their irreligious descriptions of the scriptures to those around them. However, so many other Christians tell the world wonderful things about the Bible.

Somewhat akin to the hypocrite is a seemingly different breed of Christian. What of those who seem to be very religious and have good,

clean reputations, but who are seemingly oblivious to the needs of the lost of the world? These typically are unafraid to approach a denominational or atheistic friend to discuss "religion," but do so in an acidulous and obnoxious way. Or, perhaps these, in a dangerous sense of their own importance, rest comfortably in the knowledge that they and their children attend every service and know a lot about the Bible and so they refuse to inconvenience themselves with compassion or sacrifice. These tell the world that religion is artificial, repugnant, and haughty. By their example, these tell the lost to "save themselves." The world will

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

The Best Commentary

Glenn Colley

Is it improper to say, "The Bible is it's own best commentary?" Would one be using weak reasoning to put an explanation of a verse to the test by comparing other verses from the Bible? Of course not. In fact, when you use this method of coming to truth, you put yourself in good company! Jesus Himself used just such reasoning to resist the temptation of the devil.

After Satan had heard Jesus quote scripture from Deuteronomy to resist the dark prince, Satan himself plucked from the sacred page to "prove" that Jesus should bend under temptation's strong arm.

"Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone" (Matthew 4:5, 6).

Satan is quoting from Psalms 91, which COULD be applied to Jesus without doing injustice to the text. However, Jesus demonstrates that in this case, the text is being perverted. It doesn't apply in this situation. We might ask why?

Notice the words of our

Lord: "It is written AGAIN, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." (emphasis mine, GC) Note please, that Jesus demonstrates the old adage, "The Bible is it's own best commentary." He implies that Satan's usage of Psalms 91 was incorrect because in this setting, it would contradict another passage, Deuteronomy 6:16.

We need to appreciate, as Jesus taught, "Every word which proceedeth of the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4) Think of the many passages which would likely be misunderstood if taken by themselves, without sufficient consideration to other passages on the same subject.

Greater Things Of God

Winfred Clark

As you read your Bible from time to time you will come in contact with certain words or phrases that will create some special interest. You will want to give special time and study to these. That is the case in this study. You will find three times in I John the word "greater". This is a comparative word of degree. Each time it has reference to something that is greater about God. This surely ought to cause the child of God to want to stop and study this word more closely as it relates to our Father. Such a study will help us appreciate our God even more.

Take a moment to look at those three references in I John where we learn of "The Greater Things of God". You will find these in I John 3:20, 4:4, 5:9. What can we learn by a study of these passages?

1. THERE IS GREATER ASSURANCE

Notice, "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things" (I John (3:20). Take a look at the verse and you will find that this passage speaks of something God knows that our hearts do not know.

Our hearts know that there are times when we condemn ourselves. Every honest child of God will have to admit that there are times when he considers himself as one who falls far short of what he ought to be. There are times when he will surely feel condemned. How many of us would not have some questions as to whether we could go as far as verse 16 demands? In raising such a question we would feel guilty. Here it is said, ". . . we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren". We may be sensitive to the will of God and would surely want to do what God tells us to do we would in no way diminish the importance of doing the will of God. But we are aware of our imperfections and shortcomings. We want, above all other things, to do the right thing.

I am convinced that this passage would surely find it's background in many cases and instances in the Bible. Take for example the publican of Luke 18. There is no doubt about his wanting to do what was right in the sight of God. His repentance is evident as he would not even lift his eyes to heaven. He said, "God be merciful to me a

sinner" (Luke 18:13). When he left that temple his feelings about himself probably had not changed that much. His heart would no doubt condemn him, but Jesus said, ". . . this man went down to his house justified. . ." (Luke 18:14). Wasn't Peter at a point where he saw himself in that same way when he said to the Lord, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man O Lord" (Luke 5:8)? When you review that scene and conversation Jesus had with Peter beside the sea you will find much the same thing. It is there that Peter was grieved and said, after being questioned about his love by the Lord, ". . . Lord thou knowest that I love thee. . ." (John 21:17). Yes, Peter knew that he had failed the Lord for he "went out, and wept bitterly" (Matt. 26:75). But he knew that the Lord knew that he really loved him and he would have to leave the matter there. Peter appealed to all that Jesus knew about him. There is great assurance that the child of God can draw from the fact that the knowledge of God about himself is far greater than that of his own

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"Get Lost!"

Allen Webster

(Please Read Luke 15)

"That wasn't very nice," the young man thought as he walked back down the sidewalk. "I tried to help save him and he told me to 'get lost.'"

How does one "get lost?" We never intend to lose our way on a trip or in the woods, but sometimes it does happen. Spiritually, people usually do not intend to "get lost," but all responsible people have (Romans 3:23), and most never find their way back (Matthew 7:13-14).

Luke 15 pictures different ways folks get lost. It records four parables by the master "Story-teller." Their common denominator is that something gets lost. If you find yourself here, you need to do something about it!

SOME GET LOST BECAUSE THEY JUST WANDER OFF (15:4). In the first parable, a sheep wanders from the fold. It must have been grazing with its head down and made a wrong turn. This represents many Christians who have somehow wandered away from faithful service to the Good Shepherd. They do not become antichrist, but just get bogged down in the affairs of life -- a job, sickness, family responsibilities, a hobby, friends -- and let these choke out the fruit of the Spirit (Mark 13:22). They put their heads down to "graze" and before they know it, they are no longer worshipping regularly or purely.

This sheep was separated from the ninety-nine and in great danger. That night when the flock was taken home and bedded down, it would be left in the cold to face the wolves. Likewise, erring Christians will be left in the cold (or, rather "heat") at Judgment Day. The devil, as a lion, will devour them (I Peter 5:8). How sad! But do not despair, there is still time, if we can only convince them to come back.

The little fellow may not have even realized that he was lost! Likewise, some have just enough "religion" to comfort a

conscience, but not enough "righteousness" to calm the Creator. He probably did not even care that he was lost, for he had found what he thought were "greener pastures." Many who have wandered from the fold have, too, hardened their hearts because they enjoy this world's pleasures (Hebrews 6:4-6).

In the parable, the sheep is found and there is rejoicing.

SOME GET LOST BECAUSE OF ANOTHER'S CARELESSNESS (15:8). In the second parable, a woman loses her coin. She hunts furiously until it turns up. This represents one who is lost because another sets a bad example or is a hypocrite. Though another cannot make one fall, and each will be individually judged, nonetheless weak Christians often are hindered by poor examples (Matthew 18:6).

We should all be very careful what we say, where we go, what we do, and how we act for others are watching. "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (I Corinthians 8:11-13).

This coin did not even know that it was lost, just like most people we contact. They may feel very secure in false religion or good morality and have no idea that they are in line to hear, "Depart from me" (Matthew 7:23).

SOME GET LOST BECAUSE THEY CHOOSE THIS WORLD'S PLEASURES (15:11-24). The third story is about a selfish boy who took his father's money and spent it on "wine, women and song" in the far country of sin. Not a few today have chosen the "pleasure route" to Gehenna (Hebrews 11:25).

He deliberately chose the sinful path. He knew he was sinning, but did not care. It is a

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New Creatures Must Exhibit New Features

B. J. Clarke

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). It is impossible to be in the Lord Jesus Christ without also being a new creature. To put it another way; it is impossible to be a new creature without being in Christ. Thus, whatever puts one into Christ also makes that one a new creature. Paul plainly teaches that salvation is in Christ (II Timothy 2:10). It is simply impossible to be saved outside of Christ! It is equally impossible for one to be a new creature if that one is still outside of Christ. Entrance into Christ is therefore, a matter of supreme and eternal importance.

How does one enter into Christ and become a new creature? "For as many of you as have been baptized INTO Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized INTO Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in NEWNESS of life" (Romans 6:3, 4). The Scriptures clearly teach that baptism preceded by faith, repentance and confession puts one into Christ. When one is raised from the watery grave of baptism he is raised as a new creature to walk in newness of life. He has crossed over from spiritual death into spiritual life (John 5:24).

Baptism may complete the conversation of a lost sinner into a saved sinner, but in many senses the conversion process from old creature to new creature has really just begun. NEW CREATURES MUST EXHIBIT NEW FEATURES! It is not enough to merely claim to be a new creature. A change must be evident. When Saul of Tarsus was converted he exhibited the features of a new creature. The old man had died and had been buried never to be resurrected again. This did not mean that Saul would never sin

again; it simply meant that he was no longer enslaved in service to sin. Thus, Saul, who became Paul, knew better than anyone what being a new

creature was all about. Paul wrote to the new creatures at Colossae and instructed them to put off the features of their old creature and put on the features

of a new creature in Christ (Colossians 3:1-17). A new creature must work toward being clothed with the features and the characteristics of Jesus

Christ (Romans 13:14). Are you a new creature in Christ? More importantly, are you exhibiting the features of a new creature in Christ?

Must A Congregation Have Elders In Order To Render Corrective Discipline?

Mike Benson

While from my experience the topic of church discipline is rarely discussed within the Lord's church today, there are occasions when members of "soul-conscious" congregations address the issue. Often in the context of said discussion a member will sincerely inquire, "Since we have no elders in this congregation, are we still responsible for carrying out church discipline?"

How should we respond to such a question? Are churches without elders, in fact, exempt from such a work? What does the Bible say? Consider . . .

1. I Corinthians 5:5 teaches that corrective discipline is for the impenitent's soul. "Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

•If a congregation must first have elders in order to implement corrective discipline, then what happens to the impenitent's soul BEFORE elders are installed?

•What if a congregation never installs elders? Is the impenitent's soul "unreachable" because there are no men to serve in such a capacity?

2. I Corinthians 5:5 also teaches that corrective discipline is an effort to destroy the carnal ways of

the impenitent. . . . for the destruction of the flesh. . . ."

•If a church must first have elders in order to implement corrective discipline, then the impenitent is free to live after the ways of the flesh unnoticed and uncorrected by the church UNTIL elders are installed and they initiate said work.

3. I Corinthians 5:6-7 teaches that corrective discipline prevents the church from being impure.

See also II Corinthians 7:8-11.

•If a church must first have elders in order to implement corrective discipline, then the church BECOMES and REMAINS impure UNTIL elders are installed and they initiate said work.

4. I Corinthians 5:6-8 teaches that corrective discipline prevents the "leavening influence" of the sinner to permeate the church. . . . Do you not

know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened . . ."

•If a church must first have elders in order to implement corrective discipline, then the church is harmed by the sinner's rebellious behavior UNTIL elders are ordained and they initiate said work.

As Dan Winkler suggests, "Sin will enslave the individual (John 8:36) and

influence the church (Galatians 2:11-14). So, as one purges himself of sin (II Timothy 2:21) in obedience to the truth (I Peter 1:22), the church must purge herself of the impenitent, his influence, and his reputation. Such is accomplished by proper church discipline."¹

5. Similarly, I Corinthians 5:7. 8 teaches that corrective discipline prevents the church from partaking of evil.

•If a church must first have elders in order to implement corrective discipline, then WHAT HAPPENS TO THE CHURCH BEFORE elders are installed and they begin to oversee the work of discipline? Again Brother Winkler states, "To encourage wrong directly or indirectly is to partake in the wrong (Cf. II John 9-11). Even so, to encourage the

impenitent in his sin by failing to properly discipline, indirectly makes the church [congregation the man is a member of] guilty of the sinful ways it is implicitly encouraging."²

What then is the answer? Yes, a congregation is, in fact, responsible for corrective discipline, EVEN WHEN it has no elders just as it is responsible for all of the training, teaching, and discipline of its members (II Timothy 2:2). As James Pilgrim states, "Churches without elders are not exempt from this work. Some of the men should take the lead, and all others follow."³

James 1:22.

1 Dan Winkler, "Maintain The Purity Of Christian Fellowship With Proper Church Discipline,"

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"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

We've been blessed lately with good summer rains, and we're all glad for that. The other day I was traveling down the highway in a driving rain when I noticed a motorcycle rider with his motorcycle getting cover under a tree on the road side. What made this memorable for me was that I drove only about 1/4 mile further before I passed the rain cloud and drove in complete dry. That poor fellow didn't know it, but his wet mistake was quitting just shy of his immediate goal.

Isn't this often the story of our lives spiritually? The problem with many folks isn't that they didn't start off on the right foot, but that they quit pushing before reaching the goal . . . which is heaven. Unfortunately, in the question of heaven and hell, starting isn't all that's necessary . . . finishing the race also counts.

Hebrews 3:6 -- "But Christ as a Son over His house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

Greater Things Of God

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heart.

We can also draw great assurance from the fact that the love of God is greater than man can imagine (I John 3:1). In fact, if you look at the phrase, "what manner of love", you will find that it means, "of what country". That means that such love beats anything you can find in this world. That becomes pretty obvious when we think of the fact that Christ did not die for people who loved him; rather he died for many who hated him. It was for that kind of a crowd that he prayed, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). This prayer was prayed while he hung on the old rugged cross. This kind of love surpasses anything that man encounters on this earth. Man is prone to love those who love him. But the love of God overturns this concept. In fact the love of God runs ahead of all of man's comparisons. It tosses aside all of man's metaphors. Man doesn't have the ability to fully describe the kind of love God has for fallen humanity. In view of this great love we can be assured that though we may find condemnation in our hearts, there is still the love of God.

Again we need to learn that the mercy of God is extended when our heart would say it is not. Go back to the case of the publican. You will find that man standing "afar off" (Luke 18:13). He did not feel that he could approach God.

He "would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote himself upon his breast" (Luke 18:13). He said, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13). Here is one whose heart said "you do not deserve mercy". Even after the mercy was extended such a person would still have problems understanding how such could be extended to him. His heart would say, "you are so wrong and have fallen so far short". But Jesus said of this man something that he would not say of himself. Jesus said, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified. . . ." (Luke 18:14). But don't you think his heart would condemn him? Surely it would. But thank God, God is greater in mercy than the heart of man.

When John said, ". . . God is greater than our hearts. . ." (I John 3:20), he was speaking of those who were seeking to walk in the light (I John 1:7). He is speaking to those who would not say, "we have no sin. . .", "or," we have not sinned". They were aware of the fact that they were not to live a life of sin. They knew that they were to "sin not" (I John 2:1). They were doing their best to live godly and righteous lives. They had sensitive hearts and wills. They sought to meet the challenges set before them but they felt that they could always do more and always be better. There was the constant struggle to do what was right but they looked into their own hearts

and felt condemned. It is to these kind of people that John said, "God is greater than our hearts". He knows our struggles and efforts to be what we ought to be. God

knows us better than we know ourselves. So we are left with the apostle Peter to say, "Lord thou

knowest all things, and that we love thee". That is true even when the heart says we are falling short.

Must A Congregation Have Elders In Order To Render Corrective Discipline?

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Harmony Among The Heirs Of Heaven, p. 91.
2Ibid, p. 95.

3James Pilgrim, "How Is Discipline To Be Administer-

ed?", Withdrawing From The Disorderly.

Is A Youth Program Really Important?

Over an 8-year period, I have kept up with the number of young people who have and have not actively participated in the Youth Program of the local church and then noted the degree of faithfulness to God they demonstrated after graduation. Please note the following: When young people are not involved in youth activities, 37% of them grow up to be unfaithful to God, 44% end up spasmodic in attendance, and only 19% of them grow up to be faithful. On the other hand, when young people are actively involved in youth activities while growing up, 93% of them end up as faithful adults.

Before anyone starts to raise

some objections, let me make clear what I am not saying. I am not saying participation in youth activities makes it impossible to fall from grace. I am not saying that only young people who worship at congregations that have a Youth Ministry will grow up to be faithful. I am not necessarily saying these statistics prove anything. (Statistics can be presented in a variety of ways to prove a variety of other conflicting things.)

What I am saying is that too often people look at youth activities as "fun and games" that are really not important to the development of our youth. What these people fail to realize is that these activities are designed to help our youth grow as Jesus grew - socially, mentally, physically, and spiritually. Too many times

parents do not take an active interest in the youth work and do not encourage their children to take part. This is an unfortunate attitude. We encourage our kids to participate in sports, band, school functions or scouts, but we frequently treat the youth activities of the church as unimportant, and/or optional. Somewhere along the line our priorities have gone haywire.

One more thought. I will be the first to admit that it is quite possible that those 93% who were active and grew up to be faithful Christians might have been faithful even if they had not participated in the youth activities. There is one way to find out. Keep your children from participating and check the results, if you want to take that risk.

(Selected)

"Describe The Bible"

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virtually shove these aside to get to anyone who seems to genuinely care. Many times that has been brothers and sisters in Christ who really wish to imitate Christ, love His church, understand their mission, and grasp the greater importance of the eternal over the temporal. These truly converted Christians can aptly describe the Bible. As those famous words suggest, truly "people do not care how much you know until they know how much you care."

Some Christians turn the world away from the Bible by apologizing for it. Incredibly, this brand of believer attempts to make excuses for God's purity, justice, and expectations. Whether they are afraid of

ridicule or unwilling to stand firm on the solid foundation of the scriptures, they present an irrelevant standard to a people already bent on following self's desires. The world will shoo the wavering one aside to listen to the convicted Christian tell the whole gospel to them, from the grace of God to the destructive nature of sin to the responsibility of sinful man to gracious God. At the judgment, numberless lost of the world will stand beside apologizing Christians on the King's left hand.

The faithful disciple of Jesus can effectively describe the Bible, though. As stated, he or she lives a consistent, compassionate, and courageous life for all the world to see.

When such a Christian tells the world that the Bible is reasonable, they too will be willing to count the cost and sacrifice in view of the cross. When such a Christian tells the world that the Bible is logical, they will steadfastly follow the instructions therein contained. When such a Christian tells the world that the Bible is eternal, they will let go of the entices that the Adversary uses to keep them where they are. Do not just define the Bible with words, describe the Bible with your life. God has chosen you to point others to Him (cf. I Peter 2:5, 9)! You may be the only Bible your neighbor will ever read. What does he see?

sad condition of heart which allows one to drink, commit fornication or adultery, lie, cheat, or steal while knowing better. Paul had this happen to a co-worker: "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world . . ." (II Timothy 4:10). Some need this reminder: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (I Peter 2:11).

In another happy ending, the boy comes home!

SOME GET LOST

"Get Lost!"

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BECAUSE THEY ARE SELF-RIGHTEOUS (15:25-32). The fourth story is the saddest. The elder brother is lost at home! He represents those who may attend every service and do every outward act, but their "insides" are rotten (Matthew 23:27). They are in the worst condition because beams have blinded their eyes to their faults (Matthew 7:3). They need eye-surgery, and heart repair, but do not accept the Great Physician's opinion.

"Get lost?" -- Please don't.

Let's go to heaven together!

September 3, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- Dreamers
- America's "Achilles Heel"
- What Can Wash Away My Sins?
 - It's Time To Remodel The Church!
- "Are You Reverend?"
- Advice About Preaching My Dad Gave To Me
 - The Power Of A Persistent Invitation
- The New Testament: A Pattern For Our Day?
- "Most Of A Minute"

Volume 29 Number 36
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The Words of Truth

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

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Is The Church Of Christ Sectarian?

Steve Higginbotham

The distinctive and unique plea of the New Testament church has often been misunderstood as being sectarian by the religious world in general, and more recently, by even some of our own brethren. By making the claim that only those who are members of the church of Christ or Christ's church will be saved, some have accused us of being narrow and sectarian.

One brother in Christ stated that the church of Christ was comparable to a "pick up football game" in the parking lot of a large football stadium. The boys in the parking lot think they are the only game in town, while the stadium is filled to capacity with fans watching a game in progress inside the arena.

Under the slogan of "We are Christians only, not the only Christians," another brother has said that we have crystallized and become, to a large measure, what we set out to oppose. He says, "Somehow those of us who make the plea for people to be Christians only have let that plea come out to the world something after this fashion: 'Come over to us, and be Christians only because after all, we are the only Christians.' That is arrogant, that is wrong, that is self-righteous, that is sectarian."

Are we really guilty as charged? When we make the claim that only members of the church of Christ (Christ's church) will be saved, have we

become sectarian? Absolutely not! For when we say that the church of Christ alone will be saved, we are speaking of the church of Christ in its Biblical sense (the body of all saved people), not a sectarian sense (one religious body among several other bodies). In fact, it is rather ironic that those who accuse us of being sectarian are the very ones who are sectarian (Romans 2:1). For when they

say that there are Christians outside the church of Christ, they are using the term "church of Christ" in a sectarian manner that is foreign to the Scriptures.

N. B. Hardeman once accurately stated, "There is but one church built on Jesus Christ, and that is the church about which you read in the Bible and of which every Christian on earth is a member. With this we ought to

be content . . . My friends, God's church upon this earth is God's people wherever they are, and whosoever they may be." (*The Hardeman Tabernacle Sermons*).

No, we are not sectarian for teaching that one must be a member of the church in order to be saved. This is what Paul taught. Take time to read (Ephesians 2:16, 4:4, 5:23). There are but two realms

wherein a man can stand today; the kingdom of God (the church of Christ), or the kingdom of Satan. Hence, it is not sectarian to teach that no one outside the church of Christ (i.e. church of the Lord, the New Testament church, the church of the first-born ones . . .) can be saved. Only those who are in that one, universal body of called out people will be saved. Are you a part of that body?

--Glasgow, Kentucky.

Lessons From A River-Gathering

Neal Pollard

Her stormy banks encase a short, shallow river that winds through Palestine, beginning its descent at Mount Hermon and terminating its flow at the Dead Sea. She falls a full 2,500 feet from start to finish. Yet, her topographical features are far from her most valuable characteristics. Through God's Word, we are able to assemble as eyewitnesses to some important events and vital lessons that took place at Jordan. We see these through faith's eye.

Notice a few of the landmarks erected at her waters.

Two Choices -- Genesis 13:8-13. Both needing room to expand with their herds, Abraham and Lot were faced with a dilemma. Abraham chose to sacrifice, giving Lot first choice of either Canaan or the well-watered plains of Jordan. Lot chose comfort, picking the place resembling paradise. Abraham demonstrated great faith by choosing to follow the

golden rule. Lot showed shortsightedness by opting for an area whose neighbors were the sinful Sodomites. Abraham's choice led to blessing (he received the land promise, met Melchizedek, and had a son through whom Christ would eventually be born). Lot's choice led to destruction (he lost his wife, his sons-in-law, his possessions, his and his daughters' virtue). Matthew 6:24 tells us that we must also choose either God or this world. The Jordan River, if it could speak, might say, "the world might look good and provide brief pleasures, but one day it will all go up in smoke."

Twelve Stones -- Joshua 4. At the changing of the guard, God told Joshua that he would work through him as he did through Moses. One of the earliest events of Joshua's leadership signified that God was with him as Joshua led Israel across the dry riverbed of the parted Jordan River (Joshua 3). Then, in Joshua 4:2, as soon as the last

Israelite had dusted the sand from his feet, Joshua commanded a man from every Israelite tribe to gather a stone from the Jordan. These stones were set up, in the place where the feet of the priests who bore the ark of the covenant stood, as a memorial. These twelve stones were later set up in Gilgal (Joshua 4:20). There, they celebrated the passover (Joshua 5:10, 11). The twelve stones were to serve as a reminder to Israel that God had delivered them, just as he had delivered them from the tenth plague in Egypt. The Lord's Supper was instituted by our Lord as a reminder of how he delivered us from the pain of sin and death (cf. I Corinthians 15:54-56). As sacred as the gathering of the stones was to Israel, the Lord's Supper should be to Christians who have passed through the water of baptism to inherit the promised home of the soul.

Seven Plunges -- II Kings 5.

Naaman was doomed to die. Neither his name, his rank, nor his nationality could save him. He was a leper. Naaman needed a solution. The servant of Naaman's wife was an Israelite he had taken captive in a raid. She told Mrs. Naaman about Elisha, to whom Naaman went for healing. Although he was given clear, simple instructions as to what would restore his life, Naaman scoffed at Elisha's command. He was furious that his long journey south from Syria would be culminated by dipping seven times in this Jordan. He questioned why he had to leave his homeland, where flowed the superior Amanah and Pharpar Rivers. Yet, when he came to terms with the simplicity of the task, he complied and was made clean (II Kings 5:14). At Jordan, we are taught the significance of baptism. Many refuse to be baptized because

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Dreamers

Glenn Colley

A few years ago a woman came to see me who believed God was speaking through her pen. That is, she would write paragraph after paragraph on her paper, all the while asking God questions, thanking Him for the answers, and fully expecting those who witnessed the phenomenon to be as impressed and convinced as was she! She said, "He'll do this for you too! Take the pen -- try it!" I was reluctant to participate in this pitiful charade. Finally I took the pen, held it in the special way she showed me, and started to write: "Lois, you're not well. Ask Glenn if he will take you to the doctor."

She exclaimed then that God was not speaking through the pen, at least when I was holding it. Now I know she had problems, and I'm not trying to be cruel, but I want to make a point. She was convinced that God was directing her personally, UNTIL He disagreed with what she wanted to do. Then, she knew God was not speaking. Read on.

This week a man phoned to ask some questions about marriage and adultery. I told

him to get a pencil and write down some passages which address the subject. He said, "God told me that . . . (adultery) . . . was alright." What he had just attributed to God contradicted the Bible. I asked him how he knew that this wasn't the devil impersonating God, and told him that he should read his Bible to find out.

So many folks today are willing to place their salvation on a platform suspended only by subjective feelings of what God will and won't do. Their faith is based on what they fancy God to be whispering to their heart, even when that "small still voice" contradicts the Bible. We must remember that "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

Consider Jude 1-8. The church was being bothered by ". . . certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

Then Jude illustrates how unbelievers were destroyed by God in the past; the Egyptians, the unrighteous

angels, and the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. The ungodly men of Jude's day would also be destroyed: "Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities . . ." (Jude 8).

Jude calls them "dreamers." Commenting on this Greek word Thayer (#1797) says, "To be beguiled with sensual images and carried away to an impious course of conduct." In other words, they imagine that a wrong course is proper, and then follow that course.

I want to encourage all people to treasure the Bible as "a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our pathway" (Psalm 119:105). God's word "thoroughly furnishes us unto every good work" (II Timothy 3:16). The Bible gives us "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3). God speaks to us today only through His word. He does not speak directly to our hearts.

The next time someone tells you they are going to follow a course of action because God has "just told them" to do so, encourage them to double-check the Bible on their way. After all, that voice could be from an imposter!

America's "Achilles Heel"

Richardson Halverson

In my 10 years as Chaplain of the U.S. Senate, I cannot remember a time of greater frustration among members of Congress, or more expressions of anger from the people.

Some years ago there came to my attention a quote from Alexander Frazer Tytler who lived during the end of the 18th century. He wrote THE DECLINE AND FALL OF

THE ATHENIAN REPUBLIC. See if this is not timely today:

"A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of Government. It can only exist until voters discover they can vote themselves money from Public Treasury. From that moment the people vote for the man who promises the most benefits. As a result democracy collapses. Look at the sequence: From bondage to Faith;

From faith to great courage;
From courage to liberty;
From liberty to abundance;
From abundance to selfishness;
From selfishness to apathy;
From apathy to dependence;
From dependence to bondage."

"For the love of money is the root of all evil" (I Timothy 6:10).

What Can Wash Away My Sins?

B. J. Clarke

The above question is the opening line to one of my favorite songs. God has clearly revealed the answer to this question unto us in His Word. Yet, some individuals have the audacity to presume that their answer to this question is more accurate than the one given by God.

1. Some would contend that just being a good, moral, upright person is enough to cleanse us from the dark blot of sin. However, the man described in Acts 10 was as good and moral and upright as they come. He was a devout man, one that feared God with all of his house. He was a man of prayer, benevolence and because he was just, he had a sterling reputation even among his rivals. His name was Cornelius. Even though he was morally good, he needed to hear words from a gospel preacher whereby he might be saved (Acts 11:14). As good as he was, his sins still needed to be cleansed.

2. Still others would affirm that being good and kind to your fellow man justifies you in the sight of God. I have sat down with members of the Lord's Church who talked about how "Brother So and So" is just the greatest fellow you'd ever want to meet. "He's a fine Christian; why he'd give you the shirt off of his back." And yet, forgotten is the fact that this "good ole fella" is also guilty of being unfaithful to his wife, his children and his Lord. I have also heard preachers

practically preach unfaithful members right into heaven just because they helped to build the church building or because of their assistance with some other work project. DEAR FRIENDS, BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR AND HELPING OUT IN A PINCH IS FINE, BUT IT ISN'T ENOUGH TO SAVE US FROM THE WAGES OF SIN!! We need to learn that doing a few good deeds doesn't cancel out the sin of neglecting the assemblies of the church. We need to learn that moral indiscretions and sexual immorality are not forgotten by God just because we'd give people the shirt off of our backs!

3. What can wash away my sins? NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD OF JESUS! Our hope can be built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins (Hebrews 9:22). The following passages teach that only the shed blood of the Son of God can atone for our sins: (Matthew 26:28; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 9:12-14; I Peter 1:18, 19; Revelation 1:5; 5:9; I John 1:7; Acts 20:28). "O precious is the flow . . ."

--P.O. Box 128, Southaven, MS 38671.

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It's Time To Remodel The Church!

Allen Webster

They're at it again. We are hearing, "Let's remodel the church. It's old and run-down. Nobody wants to be part of an old church. It needs updating." They are not talking about the building, but the church! They have outgrown the Scriptural blueprint and feel that the church of Christ needs modernizing to fit the modern times. Humm . . . do we need to remodel?

We would not argue that the church is old. It has been in the mind of God longer than dirt has been brown (Ephesians 3:11). It has been a part of American culture nearly as long as there has been American culture. It has been on earth going on two thousand years.

It is old, but is it outdated? There are many old things that need no updating. Nobody's arguing for a new constitution just because times have changed. Bull dozers are not waiting to level St. Peter's Cathedral for a more modern approach to art. The White House is old but the President does not seem to mind. The sun has been around for a while, but it faces no political fight to keep its job. Folks have been feasting on food for a few thousand years, but no one seems to want to change this practice.

Do we need a new church for a new age? Let's start with the foundation. Do we need a new foundation? Who has come up with a better one? "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 3:11); "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephesians 2:20).

Do we need a new temple on the foundation? "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:21-22). No one has come up with a better idea than individuals washed in the

Lamb's blood and sealed with the Spirit to make up the spiritual building of the church. Only those who have obeyed God's form of teaching (Romans 6:17) by death to sin (repentance, Romans 6:1), burial in water (baptism, Romans 6:4) and resurrection (to a new life, II Corinthians 6:17) have been chiseled to fit God's spiritual house. Those who were not taught truth have not been

added to the house by Nazareth's Chief Carpenter (Acts 2:38, 47).

We need no new windows for the building is well-lighted with the Gospel (Psalm 119:105). It still provides our light enough to walk through this world of darkness into the land that has no night (Revelation 21:25).

We need no new furnishings for the Lord's Table still fills

the soul's need for a feast (I Corinthians 11:23-28) and man's knees still fit the altar of prayer (I Thessalonians 5:17). Simple worship is sufficient for the Lord was a simple Man. He never jumped or shouted, played or plucked, dramatized or sensationalized, and does not expect us to. Since we are supposed to be worshiping God, and God does not change from

generation to generation (Malachi 3:6; cf. Hebrews 13:8), then our worship needs no updating.

God made the church just as He wanted it. If it needs remodeling, He will do it. The only work He wants us to do is adding to it by teaching and baptizing sinners (Acts 2:41, 47).

"Are You Reverend?"

Mike Benson

Dear Mr. Benson,

"I have noticed that you do not use the term "reverend" before your name. Could you please explain your reason for this?"

Thank you for your question, but before I answer it, please allow me to preface my response with a few, brief thoughts: 1) In answering your inquiry, it is not my intention, nor desire to appear self-righteous or "holier than thou." 2) I simply plead for a study of and an acceptance of, "What does God's inspired word say concerning this matter?" With these thoughts in mind, please note the following:

1. The term "reverend" is used only one time in the King James version of the Bible. "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name" (Psalm 111:9). In this instance, "reverend" is a descriptive term applied ONLY to God. I do not wish to be referred to by a term reserved for the Lord.

2. Religious terminology should conform to God's will. Paul, through inspiration wrote, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Colossians 3:17). What would you think if a police officer came to your house today, knocked on the front door and said, "Open up IN THE NAME OF THE LAW"? You, no doubt, would understand him to be saying "Open up BY THE AUTHORITY OF the law.

Correct? Likewise, when God's word says "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus . . ." what does this suggest to us? It simply indicates that we must have DIVINE AUTHORITY for whatever we practice/profess in religion. I can find no such authority for the wearing of this title in the New Testament. Can you find an occasion where the apostles were ever referred to as Reverend Paul, Reverend Peter, or Reverend James? On the contrary, they discouraged anything that would result in their being exalted above others. See Acts 10:25, 26. And since this designation is conspicuously absent from the New Testament, we should refrain from using it.

3. Jesus forbids the wearing of religious titles. The Pharisees of Christ's day were fond of being called "Rabbi," a religious title which meant "greatest" or "my great one." They enjoyed being called this because it, in their own minds, denoted a degree of superiority. Jesus responded to their arrogant attitude by saying, "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ and all ye are brethren. And call no man your Father upon the earth for one is your Father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called master: for one is your master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:8-12). Paul wrote, "Mind not high things, but condescend to men

of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits" (Romans 12:16). The Bible clearly teaches that there should be no distinction between those who preach the gospel and those who do not.

In the New Testament, those

who proclaim the gospel are called "evangelists" (II Timothy 4:5), "preachers" (Romans 10:14), or "ministers" (I Timothy 4:6).

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

Advice About Preaching My Dad Gave To Me

Glenn Colley

1. When I was a boy: "Never say 'no' when asked to participate in any part of the worship. Always give a willing 'yes!' and then do the very best you can."
2. "Remember who you are working for. A man said to me one time, 'I wouldn't have your job. Why, you have too many bosses.' I said, 'No sir. I have many advisors, but only one Boss.'"
3. "If you will do right, the Lord will see to your financial needs. I've found that if in one meeting you don't even get your expenses, in the next you'll get more than enough to make up for it."

4. "Begin your sermons with the Bible, end them with the Bible, and fill them full of the Bible."
5. "When it's time to move and leave a church -- for whatever reason -- leave the church in the best condition possible. Leave quietly and graciously."
6. "Never talk with a woman behind a closed door. Leave the door wide open, and make sure the secretary, or your wife, or someone else is nearby. A rumor of indiscretion will destroy your good influence."
7. "Don't just preach. Stand for truth. Never be so afraid of losing your position that you fail to stand."

The Power Of A Persistent Invitation

Don Williams

It was in the first days of the year 1953. A young 22 year old man had just finished a three year stint in the Navy, and was now working at a Plastics Company in Michigan. This young man was befriended by a member of the church; a man by the

name of Paul Bates. In an eight week period of time, Brother Bates invited this young man to attend church with him some 6-10 times. Finally, as he said, "to get him off my back," he and a friend did attend the Church of Christ's Wednesday night service. A

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The New Testament: A Pattern For Our Day?

Dalton Key

Does New Testament teaching constitute a pattern for today's church?

There is no doubt that the first century church was expected to adhere to the pattern of inspired teaching. Paul instructed the Colossian brethren, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17). He reminded the Corinthians, "The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (I Corinthians 14:37). The church at Thessalonica was warned, "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed" (II Thessalonians 3:14). Peter wrote, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11). And John, the "apostle of love," demanded total subjection to New Testament doctrine: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son" (II John, ASV).

Moreover, early congregations of the Lord's church

were all expected to follow the same rule and submit to the same inspired teaching in fundamental areas such as salvation from sin (Romans 6:1-4; I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27), morality (I Corinthians 6:9, 10; Galatians 5:19-21; Colossians 3:5-9), family matters (Colossians 3:18-21; Ephesians 5:22-6:4), and Christian worship. (Hebrews 10:25; I Corinthians 11:20-29; 16:2; Acts 20:7). The Colossians were instructed, "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea" (Colossians 4:16).

But that was long ago. What about the church today? Our original question lingers still - Does New Testament teaching constitute a pattern for today's church?

The answer comes from Jude, an inspired writer and brother to our Lord. He exhorts his Christian readers to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3, ASV). Notice that "the faith," that body of truth governing and enlightening God's children centuries ago,

"the sum of that which Christians believe" (Delbert R. Rose), "that alone which is contained in the Bible" (James Macknight), has been "once for all delivered." It has been delivered once, hence we need look for no additional

revelations of divine truth. And it has been delivered "for all," or "for all time; it is a permanent deposit, it will never be superseded, amended or modified. As it now stands, it is a perfect, adequate,

complete and inviolable deposit of truth, providing the means with which to confute the gainsayer, and resist the advocate of false doctrine" (Guy Woods).

The answer? Yes.

The Power Of A Persistent Invitation

Continued From Page 3

misunderstanding of the time of the service caused them to arrive just as the final prayer was being uttered. Embarrassed, they were leaving quickly when Paul Bates saw them, thanked them for coming, and encouraged them to come back Sunday, when he would be leading singing.

As the story goes, they did attend that Sunday morning, and heard Brother A. J. Kerr preach a "first principles" sermon. Convicted by the simple gospel, the two young men returned that night. As Brother Kerr gave the invitation, both men responded to it and became New Testament Christians. Sadly, in time, one of the men went into the Army and fell away from the church. The story of the other man is different.

He came in contact with a young lady of that congregation where he was then going, began to date her, and later married her. They have been married for almost forty years. For the last twenty-eight years, he has been a gospel preacher and has converted several hundred people to Christ. In process of time, two daughters were born into this world through this couple's love. Both of them are faithful Christian ladies, having both married Christian men. All of this might not have happened, had a Christian man long ago not persisted in his invitation for a young man to come to church.

Is there someone you know that you can invite to come to church with you next week? Is there someone you have

invited before, but you have thought about "giving up on," because they never come? Do not lose heart, for hopefully "in due season you shall reap, if you faint not" (Galatians 6:9).

I am greatly indebted to Brother Paul Bates, although I have never met him. He has long since retired, and does some preaching and radio work even today. You see, the man that he did not give up on was John Robertson. The woman that he married was Tommie Musgrove (of Winfield). I married their oldest daughter, Leisa. And that is the rest of the story.

--P.O. Box 592, Guin, AL 35563.

Lessons From A River-Gathering

Continued From Page 1

they fail to see what possible significance there could be in baptism. The New Testament teaches us that the leprosy of the soul is healed by baptism (cf. I Peter 3:21). The plan of salvation is so simple. Perhaps some figure God would expect a greater task of us to receive pardon from our terrible sins. At Jordan, we notice how important obedience is to God. His authority is clearly outlined in the Bible, though undermined by faithless humanists of all ages. At Jordan, we learn that where God specifies, we are not at liberty to generalize.

Crossing the Jordan affected

the lives of Moses (who was forbidden to cross), David (who crossed it in flight), Elijah and Elisha (who crossed it miraculously), and Jacob, among others. Because Christ fulfilled all righteousness by being baptized of John [at the Jordan] (Matthew 3:15), the Jordan affects our lives too. And, because all of us will one day face the swelling current of death, the appearance of Christ as the perfect man and Son of God will mean more to the faithful Christian than any earthly thing when we cross the river of time. Samuel Stennett, in his beautiful song, writes,

"ON JORDAN'S STORMY

BANKS I STAND, AND CAST A WISHFUL EYE,

TO CANAAN'S FAIR AND HAPPY LAND, WHERE MY POSSESSIONS LIE.

WE WILL REST IN THE FAIR AND HAPPY LAND, JUST ACROSS ON THE EVERGREEN SHORE,

SING THE SONG OF MOSES AND THE LAMB, AND DWELL WITH JESUS EVERMORE."

When we gather at the Jordan in our Bibles, we face the grand stories and symbols of God's power, mercy, and love.

--P.O. Box 15, Livingston, AL 35470.

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

To The Least Of These . . .

Edwin Markham wrote a poem entitled "Where Love Is, God Is," in which a cobbler had a dream that Jesus would visit his shop on a certain day. The dream was so real that when he awoke, he began preparing his home. The day came, and he waited. But Jesus did not come. Instead, a beggar came and asked for a pair of shoes, which the cobbler quickly made, and sent him on his way. Later there was another knock at the door, but instead of Jesus, it was an old woman who was hungry. He fed and helped her, and sent her on her way. Finally, in the evening, a last knock at the door produced a lost child whom the cobbler recognized, and quickly returned to his mother.

"Jesus," the man cried, "Why didn't you come?"

Jesus replied, "I kept my word. I've been to your house three times today. I was the beggar, the woman and the child."

Jesus said in Matthew 25:40 regarding our good deeds, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me."

September 10, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- Jeff Walling On Unity
- "Did Jesus Ever Condemn Same-Sex Love?"
- Our Abominable Generation
- Church And Culture
- "Most Of A Minute"

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The Words Of Truth

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

Where Is The Power?

Neal Pollard

Perhaps many know the story of Alfred Nobel's first claim to fame. An inventor from Sweden, Mr. Nobel harnessed a powerful explosive in 1866 after years of hard work. To name his discovery, Nobel researched some of the ancient languages. The Greek language supplied him with the word for which he anxiously searched. The transliteration of the word is DUNAMIS. Yes, English-speaking countries call it "dynamite." Used by each side in both World Wars to destroy entire bridges, tunnels, and other military and civilian properties, dynamite's power came to be destructively used. Concerned with its explosive potential, Nobel strove to associate his name with something that would give him a gentler reputation. Named in his honor, the "Nobel Peace Prize" has become an annual award given to those whose contributions to the worth and promotion of civilization deserve special consideration.

Spiritually speaking, "Where is the power?" Does it rest in the size of the meeting house? Does it reside in the amount of influence possessed by the members of a religious group? Does it flow forth from the conclusions and dictates from the mind of man? Does it stand in the majority vote of a council or congregation?

Does it rest in the entities

spoken of in the scriptures?

THE BIBLE SPEAKS OF THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL (Romans 1:16). Paul says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek." Incidentally, the noun rendered "power" in the English Bible is that word DUNAMIS. The dynamic power of the gospel is asserted by the inspired apostle. The writer of Hebrews asserts that "the word of God is alive and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword." The shackles of sin had man bound and no deed would draw him nigh to God. Then, Jesus came on the scene of life as a man (Galatians 4:4) and died on the cross of Calvary to be sin for us (II Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 13:12). But, death and burial only enhances grief. Christ entombed did not spell victory over the chains of sin! Yet, on the morning of the third day, the ultimate DUNAMIS, inherent to God, caused the very explosion of Satan's trap. The sting of death and the victory of the grave lost its power, surrendering to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Paul knew that in himself was no power, none of his accomplishments made him endearing to God, and only an active response to God's grace would save his soul, so Paul sought to attain unto the resurrection from the dead (Philippians 3:11). By

Jesus' power over death, the faithful child of God will ever be with the Lord in heaven (I Thessalonians 4:17b). That is the power of the resurrection. The resurrection provides that living hope (I Peter 1:3).

Surely, the fact will escape no one that behind the gospel, the cross, and the resurrection of Jesus stands God on the rock of His own, all-encompassing power. The

power to condemn disobedient man rests in God's justice. The power to save obedient man rests in God's abiding love. David had it right when he stood before the congregation of Israel and poured out his prayer of thanksgiving, saying, "Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the

power, 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" (I Chronicles 29:10-11). To God be the glory, for in Him is ALL power!

--P.O. Box 15, Livingston, AL 35470.

What The Church Offers You

Elwood Holt

To stay away from the church services because we have so many other engagements and so little strength left is like staying away from the table because we are so weak and hungry, and it takes all our time to sweep and wash dishes. The church is the place to get spiritual strength from other duties, just as the table is the place to get bodily strength.

I truly believe that attending worshiping with Christians will refresh one who is tired. It will take his mind from the busy affairs of this life and center it in the Lamb from which strength issues. He will leave the worship assembly stronger than he was before he went and physically refreshed from the toils of the day. The average person doesn't think about this. Have you ever thought of it in this light? What do many think the Lord's

church is anyway?

It is wrong for us to become so involved in business of this busy world that we have no time left for the things of God. Jesus commanded, in the great sermon on the mount, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). Dear friends, do you believe this? God will not forsake those who seek him. He is to be sought, found and placed above all else. If we do not, then we are evaluating the perishables of time above the everlasting riches of the next life.

I know that most religion has slipped a long way from the original pattern. One man said, "I do not go to church anymore because I can get what the church has to offer in better form elsewhere." Now this gentleman thought he had found

the one excuse that could not be overthrown. Had he? Certainly not. When the Church gets into the business of offering the world what the world already has, it is in the wrong business. But many churches have done that. That is why they have quit having Sunday night services and prayer meetings on Wednesday nights. That is why their people have forsaken them for other things. The Church can't put on a stage show comparable to what professional entertainers can do. But many have gone into the entertaining business. When they do that they have no right to exist. They have forgotten the gospel which is "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16).

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley



"I enjoyed your sermon. I almost got the impression that you were a teenager once yourself."

Jeff Walling On Unity

Glenn Colley

How blessed it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! We hunger for it. We strive to maintain it. But, we know that the devil is relentless in his efforts to dismantle what we seek to build for Jesus. Unity is sometimes wounded when the devil finishes his work in the lives of people. We push on. We grieve at the loss of unity, but know that what is right and sound must come first; for if it does not, we will soon find ourselves unified in something that is an irrelevancy.

I listened to a taped sermon of Jeff Walling this week that grieved me. (Jeff is a popular speaker for youth groups across the country and in Alabama). He was speaking about the unity in Christ's body the church, and bemoaning the fact that there is so much division in the religious world. He said at the beginning of the recording that he had used these speeches "again and again."

His text is John 17 where the Master prays for unity among believers. Believers, according to brother Walling, refers to "those who believe on Me through their (apostles) message." He accurately pointed out that we wouldn't know the message were it not for the work of the apostles.

Then it got disturbing. He said that Jesus didn't pray that people would be sound doctrinally, but that they would be "one." He suggested that one reasonable scope on which to focus our quest for Christ's unity would involve all those in the world who when asked, would say, "Yes, I believe that Jesus is the Son of the living God."

Brother Walling said, "Recognize that there are a

lot of folks who make that claim outside of those whom I fellowship . . . Jesus said, 'That they all may be one.' Now, there's a lot of debate about who that 'they' ought to include. Who do you pray to be unified with according to Christ's desire? . . . One fellow says, 'Everyone in the world who believes in Jesus through the message of the Apostles . . . We should work towards unity with those individuals.' Now hear that . . . Everyone in the world who believes in Christ through the Apostles, we ought to work to achieve unity with them. Some say, 'That's too broad . . . I think it has a narrower view than that. I think it means those who believe in Jesus and follow through with His will.' --And I must say there is some precedence to that . . . there are those who will say that 'they' in that verse can only refer to those who have come into a covenant relationship with Jesus through baptism, and those are the only ones we can strive to have unity with. If you want to look at it that way . . . that's O.K., 'cause there's plenty of problems in that basket. I can line up people here on stage and say, 'were you baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, into Jesus?'

'Absolutely. Yes.' --

And each one attends a different stripe of church, a different kind of group, and most of them won't have anything to do with each other."

I find this teaching by Jeff insulting and misleading for these reasons:

1. This speech suggests that it is reasonable to teach that when Jesus referred to believers in John 17, that He may have been using the term

to mean simply all those who mentally acknowledge Him as God's Son. That's the way religionists erroneously use the term today, but certainly not what Jesus intended. Mental acknowledgement alone has NEVER been enough to establish fellowship with Christ. Yet, that's what most "Christian" religions teach today. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . ." (Mark 16:16). John 12:42 says, "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue." Galatians 3:27 teaches us that we get "Into Christ" by being baptized.

It is right and good to preach and teach from the sweet words of our Lord in John 17. But to hold them up and say belief (mental acknowledgement) could or should be the only necessary prerequisite for uniting with a church of people, is misleading. Could I unite with the various denominations who teach people "belief only" will save, and still correctly practice the teaching of I Corinthians 1:10? -- "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

It is clear from the New Testament that Jesus did not intend for teachers to support unity with false religions using this wonderful prayer. "Not everyone that saith unto me, 'Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven

. . ." (Matthew 7:21).

2. There are some fundamental differences which we must appreciate. For example:

There is a difference between one who is "in Christ" and one who is "outside of Christ."

When we are scripturally baptized, (Acts 2:38), we are baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27, Romans 6:3). Those who haven't been scripturally baptized are outside of Christ. Almost none of today's denominations believe baptism has anything to do with salvation.

Consider also that there is a difference between a faithful member of the church, and an unfaithful member of the church. John wrote, "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

I may be scripturally baptized and then join a man-made religion. I would then be outside of the fellowship of Christ.

3. This speech seeks to rob us of our undenominational stand and teaching, by linking us with those who proudly profess denominationalism. The system of denomi-

nationalism is unholy because it supports man-made doctrines which are foreign to God's word, and claims that God will gladly accept them. Galatians 1:8 says, "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."

Jesus established only one church, His church (Matthew 16:18, Ephesians 4:4). Christ's unity is achieved when people leave man-made churches and doctrines, and cleave to the Savior who gave us His word and His church. Contrary to this, brother Walling says in his speech, "If we must sacrifice unity to be sound, then there's a problem with our soundness."

Do I believe we should seek to fulfill Jesus' prayer for unity among believers? Absolutely. But first we must appreciate some things which will never change. Until the trumpet sounds, there will be only one body (The church, Ephesians 1:22, 23), one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God (Ephesians 4:4-6).

Pray for, and work for unity as Jesus did, based on truth.



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"Did Jesus Ever Condemn Same-Sex Love?"

Mike Benson

Question:

"Is there any place in the New Testament where Jesus actually condemned same-sex love? If so, I have not been able to find it . . . It seems to me that if the Savior didn't say it was wrong, then neither should we . . ."

Answer:

While it is true that Jesus did not explicitly state that homosexuality is wrong, He did, in fact, condemn it. A careful study of the Bible will bear this out. Please read the following passages and then answer the questions which are listed below:

1. And He answered and said to them, "Have you read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' "and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh' (Matthew 19:4, 5)?

•What did Jesus say about God's creative work? Did He create Adam and Joseph? Did He create male and male, OR did He create male and female?

•According to this passage, what has been the Lord's plan for sexual union (one flesh) since the beginning of time? Was His divine plan for a male partner to be joined to another male partner, OR was His divine plan for a husband to be joined to his wife?

•According to this passage, is a man to cleave to his male partner, OR is a man to cleave to his wife?

Since Jesus approved of His Father's plan (one man, one woman, one flesh), could we correctly say that Jesus condemned same-sex love?

2. "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words" (John 5:46, 47)?

•Under what law was Jesus born? Under what law did He live? Answer: The Old

Testament law.

•Did Jesus endorse the Law of Moses (i.e., the Old Testament law)?

•What did the Law of Moses say about homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Deuteronomy 23:17)?

Since Jesus was born and lived under the Law of Moses, and since He endorsed the Law of Moses, and since the Law of Moses condemned homosexuality, then could we correctly say that Jesus condemned same-sex love?

3. "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you" (John 16:12-15).

•What did Jesus say the Holy Spirit would DO for the apostles v. 13)? **Answer:** Guide them into all truth.

•As the Holy Spirit guided the apostles into all truth, would He speak on His OWN authority (v. 13)? No. Then by WHOSE authority would He speak? **Answer:** Christ's (verse 14).

•What did Jesus say the Holy Spirit would do in verse 14? **Answer:** "He (i.e., the Holy Spirit), will take of what is MINE i.e., Christ's) and DECLARE IT TO YOU (i.e., the apostles)."

Since 1) the apostles would be guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit, and since 2) the Holy Spirit would not speak on His own authority but instead would speak on the authority of Christ, and since 3) the Holy Spirit would take of what was Christ's and declare it to the apostles, then by WHOSE AUTHORITY would the apostle's speak and

teach as the Holy Spirit guided them into all truth? **Answer:** Christ's!

What did the Apostle Paul (by Christ's authority) say about those who practice homosexuality (I Corinthians 6:9-10; Romans 1:26-27)? What does the New Testament of Christ say?

Yes, Jesus did/does condemn same-sex love in His Word.

The good news is, "there is hope for the homosexual; he

has reason to believe there is hope for a brighter future. Paul states that some at Corinth had engaged in homosexual acts, but they had been washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and in the Spirit of our God (I Corinthians 6:9-11). The same can happen today. As with anyone who repents of a sin, the homosexual can be forgiven. He can experience the same

freedom and joy that any other sinner knows when he becomes a Christian. The Bible condemns homosexual sex but clearly states that non-practicing homosexuals can be saved."¹

Luke 19:10

¹Doug Sensing, "Christian Response To Homosexuality," *Gospel Advocate*, April 1993, Vol. CXXXV, No. 4, p. 12.

Our Abominable Generation

W. A. Holley

"There is a generation that curses its father,

And does not bless its mother.

There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes,

Yet is not washed from its filthiness.

There is a generation -- oh, how lofty are their eyes!

And their eyelids are lifted up.

There is a generation whose teeth are like swords,

And whose fangs are like knives,

To devour the poor from off the earth,

And the needy from among men" (Proverbs 30:11-14, NKJ V).

These verses teach that wicked generations have existed and do exist even unto our present day. We have but to turn back to Noah's generation and to the time of Sodom and Gomorrah to find ample proof of wickedness in the earth (Genesis 6:1ff; 19:1ff).

Our text teaches that there are those whose conduct is abominable and disgusting and detestable. There are four great sins committed: 1) Those who fail to honor their parents, but abuse them; 2) those who were self-righteous, supposing themselves holy, but were great sinners indeed; 3) those who are full of vanity, hypocrisy, and pride, and stubbornness; 4) those

who are full of greed, having no sympathy for the poor and the down-trodden.

If these sins characterized the sins of the past, how much more do they describe the sins

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Church And Culture

Cecil May, Jr.

Some widely circulated books, stirring considerable comment among us, criticize the church as a product of 19th century culture. Some of their criticisms, it seems to me, are themselves products of 20th century culture.

They call for women in positions of church leadership just as the feminist movement has made that the politically correct thing to do.

They call for increased

tolerance just as toleration has become the dominant cultural virtue and the primary direction both the church and society are already going.

They object to emphasis on doctrine just as all doctrine is widely derided as dogma and conventional wisdom says truth is relative or unattainable anyway.

We need to be challenged to let our preaching correct culture, rather than merely reflect it.

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

George Seaton, in "Miracle on 34th Street," is quoted as saying, "Faith is believing in things when common sense tells you not to." I like that line of sentimental, whimsical reasoning when you're talking about Santa Claus and children, but we shouldn't try to apply it too far. You see, I've got faith in God, but that faith isn't blind faith -- it's faith that comes to a great degree by common sense. Common sense tells me that in a universe where the sun rises and sets with pinpoint accuracy, where the bodies of humans and animals are so awesomely complex in every detail, and where the beauties and workings of nature are so profound, that our world had to have a designer -- anyone should be able to see that this all couldn't happen accidentally. Add to that the uniqueness of the Bible which teaches of God and our world, and you have genuine faith. Psalm 19:1 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." Common sense should tell you that.

Our Abominable Generation

Continued From Page 3

of our present generation! For your consideration, we submit the following thoughts:

(1) Television could have been a great instrument for good, but it has become very detrimental to American society. Why? you may ask. TV violence is a source of worry to many Americans. The Times Mirror nationwide poll indicates that 80 percent of viewers of "TV entertainment shows believe that such shows are harmful to the nation" (Birmingham Post-Herald, March 24, 1993). As portrayed, the way to solve problems is to blow them away with guns. Whether we wish to admit or not, we are at war in our streets today! Witness the drive-by shootings! Those least concerned about violence are "young people, non-whites, men, and lower income groups." (Source cited, above). Again, nearly 4,200 teenagers were killed by firearms in 1990, but many remain unconcerned. Today, the Birmingham News carries a story of a 6th grade student being shot by another 6th grader in one of the area

Birmingham schools. Talk shows carried on television represent garbage, trash, junk, and nonsense dumped into the American homes day after day, month after month, year after year.

(2) Drugs in all forms are abominable in their withering effects on victims. The breweries and the distilleries can't make and sell enough to satisfy their own greed. They are constantly pushing for more and more sales. We have had drunkenness since the days of Noah but it has always been a destructive sin. Sometimes it gets into religious people (Isaiah 5:20-23; 28:7-8; Proverbs 23:29-35; Ephesians 5:18; Revelation 21:8). Thus, preachers, prophets, kings, men and women, boys and girls are forever ruined by it.

(3) Another great abomination is that of pornography. What is pornography? "It is the depiction of erotic behavior (as in pictures or writing) intended to cause sexual excitement." (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary). There you have it. This sort of trash is sold

almost everywhere: grocery stores, drug stores, book stores, in large towns and in country hamlets. How many church people are engaged in this kind of stuff? We are told that it takes this kind of stuff to "turn on" some depraved husbands and wives. Lord, have mercy! How can people keep their minds pure and clean watching such garbage? (Romans 12:1-2; Proverbs 21:27; Isaiah 26:3; I Chronicles 28:9). Satellites and VCR's bring all such filth into homes where innocent children are exposed to such rotteness. For shame! Thank God that there are a few people who can blush!

We should be aware that branded, seared consciences open the door to almost any sinful practice (I Timothy 4:2). This explains why many can commit the most disgusting and atrocious acts which violate human dignity, and feel no responsibility whatever. Enormous amounts of money seem to justify crime in thousands of misguided human beings. For example, the sale of drugs and

tobacco, the practice of prostitution, and participation in all sorts of gambling, whether legal or not, has a stultifying effect on the minds of thousands (Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13; I Timothy 6:5-19). But sin is sin whether they know it or not! (I John 3:4).

(4) The continued attack upon God's holy institution of marriage is another great abomination of our day. Although some so-called sociologists assert that marriage is of recent origin, it is not so, for marriage began in Eden (Genesis 2:21-24). Jesus said marriage was from "the beginning" (Matthew 19:3-9). Marriage in the mind of thousands has become a "relationship; one that you can slip into and out of any time you desire. Thus God's law of marriage is set aside. Elizabeth Taylor said, "I believe in marriage." Well, she should because she has been married eight times, she claims. God's law of marriage applies to Elizabeth Taylor whether she admits it or not, and she will have to give an account unto God for her sins, just like all other people (II Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:12; John 5:28-29). To hear the Talk show people, everything is right and nothing is wrong. It sounds much like the days of the Judges, when, "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25; Cf. 17:6; 18:1; Lamentations 5:14).

Think of the thousands of little boys and girls who have no mamas and daddies to guide them and teach them (Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:17-21). If the world is ever to be made better, we must begin with our children. Thousands of them have never received any religious training at all.

A little boy went to the Zoo where he saw two wildcats. He asked, why do they call them wildcats?

The answer was, "Because

their parents were wildcats." To make the application, many boys and girls are disobedient and rebellious because their parents are "wildcats." Would you agree? A TV cannot be a baby-sitter for your child.

(5) Centuries ago Israel's weakness was her worship of idols such as Chemosh, Baal, Dagon, and the like. Isaiah tells of one who would go into the forest, select a tree, taking part of it to cook his meal, another part to keep him warm, then taking another part to be formed into his god, then (can you believe it) falling down before the image he has just made to worship it (Isaiah 44:13-17). This misguided soul even prayed to it!

But, dear readers, millions today have their own gods. What are they? They are atheism, evolution, the doctrines and commandments of men, false churches, religious errors, and nominal Christian commitment to Christ. This is indeed a bed too short and a cover too narrow! (Isaiah 28:20).

Dear Readers, you can help make our generation and our world a better place in which to live. You can set a better example before others. You can believe and obey the truth of God as set forth in your Bible. You can read and study God's holy word each day. You can spend time in earnest prayer to your Maker. You can influence others to attend the Lord's services with you. You can support with your money the greatest work on earth, that of sowing down the world with the glorious gospel of Christ. You, in short, can go to work for our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

What The Church Offers You

Continued From Page 1

When the Church stays in its proper place, ministering to the needs of the souls of men, it has that to offer which nothing in the world can match. In fact, it offers that which the world must have. The world cannot do without it. However, the Church should remember that when it comes to entertaining, putting on shows, trying to appeal to the sensual natures of men, as some do, it cannot hold a light to the world. The world is well educated in such things, and the Church is not.

So, let the Church stay in the business to which God assigned it; and the promotion of worldliness.

"I do not go to church

anymore because I can get what the church has to offer in better form elsewhere." That's what the man said. If that is so, then the church is offering the wrong things!

What other institution on earth can offer the truth the Lord's church has to offer? No institution was established for the salvation of souls besides the Church. It is the place where "God reconciles men unto Himself" (II Corinthians 5:19).

Where else can men find the comfort, hope, encouragement and joy that they get from the Church?

Where else can men have the

fellowship, communion and association that they have in the Church?

In what other institution can the children of men have the assurance that they have in the Church? The Church offers the world what the world cannot get from any other source.

JESUS died for the CHURCH, Acts 20:28. Therefore, it is just as important as the BLOOD of JESUS.

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September 17, 1993

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Shall Wax Worse And Worse"

Volume 29 Number 38
(USPS 691-760)

The Words C Truth

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

God's Picture Of A Preacher

Wade Lee Webster

As one carefully studies the book of Jude, he is introduced to a great gospel preacher -- Jude. Although Jude is not as well known as other New Testament preachers, he is, nevertheless, a picture of the preacher that God wants all preachers to be.

First, Jude realized his position as a preacher (Jude 1). He understood that he was a servant of Jesus Christ. He counted it a great honor to be a servant of "the King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (I Timothy 6:15). He wanted to be like His Savior who came to earth "not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matthew 20:28).

Second, Jude preached the needed truth. Jude had planned to write a letter about "the common salvation" that they enjoyed as Christians (Jude 3). However, through inspiration, he learned that false teachers had "crept in unawares" (Jude 4). Therefore, Jude wrote to exhort the brethren "to earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3). Jude was the type of preacher that Paul told Timothy to be. We read, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 4:2). Jude realized that a man could preach the truth all of his life and still be lost, if he did not preach the needed truth.

Third, Jude stood up against

the false doctrines of his day. False teachers were "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4). His attitude was that of the apostle Paul when he wrote concerning the false teachers, "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).

Fourth, Jude put the brethren in remembrance of some things they had always known (Jude 5). Jude realized that preaching requires much repetition. He understood that brethren often forget "the first principles of the oracles of God" (Hebrews 5:12). According to what Paul told Timothy, Jude was a "good minister of Jesus Christ." He wrote, "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained (I Timothy 4:6).

Fifth, Jude preached in plain and simple words. Jude described the false teachers in words that all could comprehend (Jude 8-16). He realized that in preaching you have to get your message down to where the people can understand and apply it. Jesus did this as he taught the people. Mark records concerning Jesus that "the common people heard him

gladly" (Mark 12:37). It is reported that brother N. B. Hardeman in training young preachers told them to "put it down where the calves could get it."

Sixth, Jude used Bible examples to illustrate his points. Notice that in warning of the possibility of apostasy he used the examples of the Israelites, the angels that left their first estate, and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Jude 5-7). Also, in describing the false teachers he used the examples of Cain, Balaam, and Core (Jude 11). He pointed men to the word of

God throughout his sermon.

Seventh, Jude applied the message to those to whom he preached. He told them to "remember the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 17). He encouraged them to build themselves up "in the most holy faith" (Jude 20), and to keep themselves "in the love of God" (Jude 21). Jude realized that many listeners will not get the point unless you apply it.

Eighth, Jude gave God the glory. Jude concluded this inspired letter by writing, "To

the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (Jude 25). Jude realized that the power was not in him but, rather, in the gospel (Romans 1:16).

In the book of Jude we see God's picture of a preacher. If every preacher today was like Jude, there would be no end to the good that we could accomplish in the service of our Lord.

--Piedmont, Alabama.

How Did They Know?

Mike Benson

"How do you suppose Cain and Abel knew what kind of sacrifice they were to offer to God? I have been searching for the place in Genesis where God specifically commanded animal sacrifices and cannot find it. Could you please answer this in your column?"

This is an excellent question. I hope the following scriptures and comments will be helpful to you. Note:

1. God required specific sacrifice from both of the brothers. This is evident from the text. Notice, ". . . Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. Abel also brought of the

firstlings of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. So the Lord said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted . . .' (Genesis 4:2b-7a).

2. Abel offered his sacrifice by obedient faith. The Hebrew writer wrote, "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks" (Hebrews 11:4). On another occasion Paul wrote, "So then faith comes by hearing, and

hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). When these passages are considered together, it is apparent that God communicated with the two brothers as to specifically what kind of sacrifice He required.

3. God demands no less of His children today. Today many in the denominational community teach that almost any kind of worship (sacrifice) is acceptable to God just as long as a person is religiously sincere. Cain was religious. Was his offering/sacrifice acceptable . . . ? We would all do well to learn from his example. Jesus said, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Not Under Bondage

Glenn Colley

One of the most frequently discussed passages concerning the marriage, divorce, and remarriage question, is I Corinthians 7. Great emphasis has been placed on verse 15 where Paul writes, "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases; but God hath called us to peace."

I have never been able to believe that "Not under bondage" meant that the believing mate, now abandoned by the unbelieving mate, could divorce and remarry. Unless we broadly assume that the unbelieving mate has taken another and committed adultery, we are left with an apparent contradiction to what Jesus taught in Matthew 19:9: "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." Is Paul adding to or changing what Jesus said? I don't believe so.

When verse 15 is considered in light of the verse which follows, an interesting point emerges. Consider that there are two common schools of thought regarding "not under bondage." They are:

1. "Not under bondage" means the abandoned, believing mate is free to divorce and remarry.

2. "Not under bondage"

means that if the unbelieving mate refuses to live with his believing mate, and demands that she choose between living the Christian life OR living with him, and threatens to depart from her if she chooses Christ, the believer is not obligated to obey his wishes in order to keep him. She remains unmarried and committed to Christ.

Now look at verse 16: "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" Whatever is true about "Not under bondage" (vs. 15), must fit with verse 16! Our explanation MUST harmonize with the believing mate, left behind, proceeding with the idea of saving the unbeliever. With that in mind, look again at the aforementioned two possibilities:

1. In this scenario, the abandoned believer completely severs the ties to the unbeliever by divorcing and remarrying another. This seems to me an unlikely possibility, since the believer's objective (verse 16) is to SAVE the unbelieving husband or wife. What connection could this action possibly have with saving the unbeliever?

2. In this scenario, the believer says to the unbeliever, "You may threaten to leave me if I do not agree to forsake my Christianity, but Christ means too much to me. I

hope we can remain together, but if we can't, I must be faithful to my Lord."

Doesn't this harmonize better with verse 16? As Peter teaches in I Peter 3:1-6, when a believing wife is married to an unbelieving husband who won't listen to the preaching of the word, he may STILL be won by watching the godly, committed life of that Christian wife.

This interpretation also harmonizes with verses 12-14: "... If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him ... " No doubt one reason the believers in these verses are to remain with their mates is from verse 16 also: "For what knowest thou, oh wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?"

She will not have a chance of saving him after becoming the wife of another man. She has severed her ties. However, if she remains married to him, devoted wholly and firmly to Christ, desiring reconciliation with her husband, she will demonstrate to her husband the consecrated life of a true disciple; and that's a strong influence.

Make My Mansion A Chateau!

Connie Lee Krute

Quebec City is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful cities I have ever seen. Referred to as "La Ville de Quebec" in French, it overlooks the mighty Saint Lawrence River, and it is the only walled city in North America. Everywhere you look throughout this splendid Canadian municipality there are tributes to the past -- in its monuments, museums, the battlefield park, and in its lovely old buildings.

Standing as a sort of centerpiece, towering over the wall, is a very imposing structure -- the Chateau Frontenac -- a grand hotel which recently celebrated its 100th anniversary. Dignitaries from all over the world have enjoyed the gracious hospitality offered at this magnificent palace. Many appreciate it so much that they keep suites of rooms as permanent residences. I had the privilege of having tea in one of its elegant restaurants. Oh, to live in such a marvelous place!

Sometimes when pondering the loveliness of heaven and the many mansions located there as described in John 14 I think back to my brief visit to Chateau Frontenac. Then I let my imagination contemplate the following questions:

What if the size of each person's heavenly mansion was based on the number of souls they have influenced

over the years so they would have room to entertain them all. And if this were the case, would I be given an extra small efficiency apartment only big enough for me, or would I be placed in a mansion the size of Chateau Frontenac?

When I get to that point I become very aware of the fact that there are a lot of souls out there that I have yet to touch. Perhaps this is just a theory, but it wouldn't hurt to let as many people as possible know that Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6) and that no one comes to the Father except through Him.

I love people and as far as I am concerned "the more the merrier" is the number of souls I want to see in heaven. So if I have anything to do with it, make my mansion a chateau!

--P.O. Box 72, Winona, MS 38967.

To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.

I Peter 1:4



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"For Example"

Winfred Clark

You have heard speakers use this term time and again. Such is done by those who seek to illustrate a point or proposition. But you will also find this method used by inspired men time after time. "For example," there is a discussion by James on the subject of patience. He tells his readers, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord." Here is the command to be patient but he does not leave it at that point. Notice: "Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain" (James 5:7). He used an example to emphasize the truth taught.

We know there are occasions when people will refer to something as an example when such is not the case. How many times have you heard someone refer to the thief on the cross beside Jesus and then say that such is an example of conversion under the gospel? That man cannot be used as example for such. However, he could be used as an example of one who was able to see the truth about Christ even while others would put him to death.

"For Example" Of Patience

We are not left in doubt concerning this very important matter. James said, "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience" (James 5:10). He then goes on to speak of the patience of Job (James 5:11). So, when we come to study the subject of patience, we have no doubt about it's meaning. We are able to see it in the lives of the prophets who faced difficulty. Surely we find it in the life of Jeremiah. He is one who prophesied for years and years without any seeming success. But he did not falter from the task that was before him. Think of all the trials and

difficulties of Job, yet he served God. He did not give up. These are great examples. They should be of great help to all of us. These are examples that will help us to be sure that what we call patience is really patience.

"For Example"

Of Conviction

The writer of the Hebrew letter saw the great need for conviction. Only those who had strong convictions would be able to withstand the onslaught against their faith. Yes, some have taken "joyfully the spoiling of their goods" (Hebrews 10:34). But there were others whose hands were hanging down and their knees had become weak (Hebrews 12:12). There were those who faced the possibility of failing the grace of God (Hebrews 12:15). So what is the word of exhortation to these? Listen carefully to what he has to say: "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach" (Hebrews 13:12-13). You know the price our Lord had to pay for his convictions. You know what it cost him to face those who did not agree with him. You know that Jesus would not sacrifice his convictions. We are therefore told to imitate his example by doing the same thing in principle. We cannot afford to allow our convictions to waver. If he was willing to die on the cross because of his convictions, then surely we are not paying too high a price by suffering the kind of persecution we might have to face. He faced the "contradiction of sinners against himself" (Hebrews 12:3). But even that did not cause him to alter his convictions about the truth of God for one moment. You still find him hanging on the cross and making a statement so that the scriptures might be fulfilled (John 19:28).

"For Example" Of Holiness

In a world that has lost it's way and is wallowing in the mire of sin, there is surely the need for an example of holiness and purity. There can be no doubt at all in the mind of the honest student of the Bible that God has set before us the example of holiness. Listen: "Because it is written, Be ye holy for I am holy" (I Peter 1:16). The immediate context of this is found in verse 15 of the same chapter. Notice, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (I Peter 1:15). You will see that we have set before us the example of holiness. God is holy and pure. He is the supreme example and we are thus left without excuse.

What would following this example of holiness do for this world in which we live? It would surely eliminate the conflicts that are so rampant all around us. We have this within families, and between husbands and wives.

"For Example" Of Love

There are numerous passages that tell us to love one another, and then there is the phrase "as I have loved you." Christ or God never asked us to do anything that they were not willing to do themselves. Notice, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another: as I have loved you" (John 13:34). Jesus knew that he was dealing with a difficult topic among those men. There had been some quarrels among them as to who would be the greatest and that could surely be a test of their love for one another. They had been together for about three years and they had come to know many things about one another. They were aware of the weaknesses and strengths of one another. They knew the shortcomings. But in spite of that, our Lord told them that they were to love one another. But he did not just leave it at that point. He said, "as I have loved you." That is the

example that they were to follow. They could not say that it could not be done, for Jesus told them that he loved all of them. So, in spite of the shortcomings and weaknesses, he still loved them.

There is another side to this matter also. He loved them and he knew more about them than they knew about one another. He knew that Peter would deny him and that the rest of them would flee, with the exception of John. Yet, he still loved them. That is the example.

"For Example" Of Giving

Paul said, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (II Corinthians 8:9). Do any of us

have any doubts about what Jesus gave for our benefit? This verse tells us that he left heaven with all that it had to offer for our benefit. We know, though that much more than this was at stake. We know that he came and gave his life. He gave his all. He withheld nothing that was needed for man's redemption. We are told that he moved from rich to poor for our benefit. Does that tell me anything about my giving? Does that give me an example that I should seek to imitate? How does what I give compare with the example that I have for giving? Remember that these are not given just to fill space in the Bible. They are there to help me to learn. I hope I may.

--Athens, AL.

Finding Truth By Instinct

Dan Jenkins

Though the book of Jude is one of the shortest books in the Bible, it is filled with treasures. While Jude's first intent was to write about the common salvation, the entrance of false teachers among the church forced him to modify his epistle. His

descriptions of such men help us understand why many do not find the truth.

False teachers do not understand the source of truth. Jude says, "But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute

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"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

The other day I was thumbing through my old high school year books when something caught my mind. It was in the notes my teenage friends had written in the back of the book. Chances are good that if you look in the back of yours you'll find the same thing. It said "We had fun this year, let's do (this or that) next year." I thought about how silly that is. The reason it's silly is because those years have all "run together" in my memory. When we wrote those things we didn't realize that after we had seen a dozen hit-and-run years, the specific individual years in our past would become foggy and mean little to us.

Let's not be guilty of only looking into next year. Face it, the years pass by far too quickly for that. Let's make plans for our entire future . . . including our eternity. In a million years the soul within you will still exist in a place of bliss of a place of torment. Whether you're a New Testament Christian or not will determine the matter. In John 14:6, Jesus instructed, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no man cometh to the Father but by me."

The Answer To Our Soul's Needs Are The Things Of God

Elwood Holt

We should rise up from our beds with God uppermost in our hearts. We should take Him with us as we go to our respective jobs. I verily believe that the Lord will bless those who put their trust in Him. The Bible teaches us that he will, and by faith we are to do our part, then trust in Him for the promises.

A Sunday-school teacher, after telling the story of the rich man and Lazarus to a class of boys, asked this question, "Boys, which would you rather be, the rich man or Lazarus?" One boy promptly replied, "I would be the rich man while I live, and Lazarus when I die." This, my friends, is the choice that millions

make, or think they can make, but nothing could be more impossible. We cannot have the things of this world while we live and the things of God when we die. Oh, I do not mean that we cannot enjoy this world. We can. It is a beautiful world and we all love it. We love the clouds, the breezes, the green meadows, the hills, the lakes, we love the birds, our friends. There are places we like to go and things we like to do and the Bible does not teach that we have to give up all these in order to serve our God.

When John says, "Love not the world," (I John 2:15) he does not mean the world I have just described. He means the sinful world. Of course

there are places and things to which I cannot go or do, but the psalmist exclaimed once, "No good thing will be withheld from them that walk uprightly." I believe this with all of my heart. God will not take the good things of this life from us. He made them for us. He wants us to enjoy them. But, there are things that people claim they enjoy that God forbids. Really, they do not enjoy them. They think they do, but when the later years come they find out that they ate the husk which the swine refused when they could have been feasting all the while on the good grain supplied by the Father.

There are too many who want the sinful things of this life while they live, then they want the divine approbation of the loving Father when they die. It just cannot be. Heaven is a place that we will enjoy only if we prepare for it.

There is poem entitled: "Homesick in Heaven."

People who are not prepared for that wonderful land would be homesick if they were to go there. They would not be prepared for it. They would not enjoy it. A person cannot live for the devil all his life, and then suddenly accept everything of the opposite nature and be happy and content with it. No, if we enjoy the Glory Land it will be because we are prepared for it. Can you sing, "I'll be no stranger there?" Unless you can, I fear you will not be there. We will not be strangers if we are prepared to stand before God. Are you?

We cannot live like the rich man in this life and enjoy the fellowship which Lazarus enjoyed when he died. You can read of these characters in Luke 16. Check the story before you forget it. One had everything in life but nothing in death. The other had nothing in life but everything in death. The rich man had his friends, his banquets, his

parties, and his power in this life. He had nothing when he died. The beggar had not a friend, save the dogs that licked his sores, and no food sufficient for his satisfaction, for he cried for the crumbs from the rich man's table. But, in death which was a blessed relief, he had the joys that are unspeakable. Which of the two do you prefer to be?

The rich can be saved only if they trust in God and not in their riches. Then they are rich in the true riches, not in perishable ones. We must live here just like we expect to live in heaven. This is the proving ground. How many of us will prove our worth?

The ornaments of this world cannot warm us when we are cold. The answer to our soul's needs is found in the things of God. Have you tried them?

It is wonderful to live for the Lord. It is more wonderful to die in Him!

Finding Truth By Instinct

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beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves" (Jude 10). The New American Standard Version translates this more graphically. "But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, as unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed." Truth has always been objective, it cannot be known subjectively. It comes from revelation, not intuition. Yet the false teachers of the first century thought they could find truth by following their instinct.

Paul shows that without revelation man cannot know truth. He contrasts knowledge of God's will by inspiration with that of "truth" which one might claim to get by natural means. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Corinthians 2:14).

In our day two kinds of individuals seek God, but they are vastly different. Both have a Bible in their hands, but their hearts are not the same. One comes to the Bible seeking to make his own will subject to the will of God. The other comes seeking to make God's will subject to his. One comes seeking to discover only what God says. The other comes seeking to discover how he can make what God says, mean what he wants God to say. One comes willing to accept the results of God's teachings, the other only to accept it if it seems right to him. One discusses truth by saying, "I think . . . I don't see how God could . . . It just doesn't seem right to me . . . Many scholars say . . ." Are you living by inspiration, or by instinct? It makes a difference!

"Evil Men And Seducers Shall Wax Worse And Worse

Cecil Corkren

Paul writes to Timothy that these "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (II Timothy 3:13). Many things are bad morally in America, but we have not seen the worst yet! Evil men are not content to stop until they destroy themselves as well as others. Paul's warning concerning men that deceive is that they themselves are deceived. Peter says, "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption" (II Peter 2:19-22). Peter, in application, describes some of the elected officers in our government in minute detail.

This is but a prelude and a reminder of what is forthcoming in the future.

Jude is very vocal on sounding the alarm of the kind of people that would deceive. "For there are certain men crept in unwares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God in lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4). There are lawmakers in Washington who would legalize homosexuality and provide legal protection under the law for sodomites. They would pass laws giving men who marry men the same rights as a husband and wife.

"Gay" couples would have the right to adopt children, and schools could be forced to teach that homosexuality is a civil right. Evil men have begun to think like the antediluvians in the Genesis account "And that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). Yes, men today are thinking the unthinkable, and pursue the unimaginable in America! There ought to be an outpouring of public protest at every level, and from every citizen.

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

September 24, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- Now, That's Shocking
- What Is The Church?
- The Gospel Plan Of Salvation - Why Not From The Pulpit!
- "Most Of A Minute"

Volume 29 Number 39
(USPS 691-760)

The Words of Truth

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

"Shall We Sing?"

Gary Colley

Though some do know that the churches of Christ do not use mechanical instruments of music in worship to God, because there is no authority for the practice, many do not know why we sing and the great importance of singing as a part of worship. Some have never studied the commands of inspiration to learn "all truth" on this matter (Matthew 26:30; Acts 16:25; Romans 15:9; I Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; James 5:13). Some have never known the personal responsibility given by God which each faithful Christian has to discharge in singing. This is just as out of harmony with "truth" as those who have never considered, or else lightly consider, the fact that an addition to any act of worship given to us by God is sin (Matthew 28:20; John 4:24; Matthew 15:9).

But those who do not see the great importance of singing are often among Christians! If extra time for singing is set aside during our worship or a special time is suggested where mostly singing will be rendered in worship, some are heard to excuse themselves from participation for that worship period with, "Oh, this is singing night."

This attitude goes back it seems to the time when the singing was ignored by those who remained outside the building until "the worship

starts," meaning of course the preaching and the Lord's Supper. Most places have overcome one of the flaws in attitude but not both.

Singing Has A Divine Purpose

God has certainly done nothing by accident or lack of divine wisdom. There is purpose and value for man in all of His instructions. Among the values and purposes, there are four that are basic:

1. **Instruct and teach:** One of the avenues by which we dispense the spiritual food, and through which we grow, is to be gained by singing. It is an exercise in praise that brings strength and gives strength. The church is greatly benefited. Singing has the power to lift the downtrodden as it communicates the truth of God. The world is also helped to greater appreciation of the will of God through singing. It has been the spring-board of teaching by which many have given serious thought to God's love, and kindness, as well as His justice toward the lost.

2. **Communicate Ideals:** Singing sends out a strong fellow-feeling that is hard to express as well in any other way. The expression of heart, venting itself through the lips, is tender, sweet, and elevating to the good thoughts and morals of all. Children can learn greatly the real important things of life by observing and hearing good

singing. They are also aware when our singing is only lip service and not sincere. One of the controlling influences of life is in the music we are accustomed to, either for good or evil. God desires that we should communicate ideals that will draw men unto Him.

3. **Admonish righteous living:** Faithfulness to the cause of Christ will be the difference in Heaven and Hell. Singing has the power to bring back our thoughts to the proper place, remove our doubts, and re-establish our lives. We are reminded that we have started out in the Christian race and must work out our own salvation (Philippians 2:12) "with fear and trembling." We are encouraged to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our spiritual service (Romans 12:1-12). Singing brings warning and caution for one who would turn his back on righteous living (II Peter 2:20-22).

4. **Bring praise to God:** All that is said in the scriptures points to the important purpose of man's existence. Why are we here is a question of great magnitude. The simple answer missed by so many is that we are created to praise our Creator. Since "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Psalm 19:1), man cannot correctly deny God the

rightful place in his own creation nor successfully put Him out of his reasoning (Romans 1:19-22). To "glorify God for his mercy . . . I will

give praises unto thee among the Gentiles and sing unto thy name" (Romans 15:9; Psalm 18:49). "SHALL WE SING?"

"Where Do You Draw The Line?"

Don Williams

As I was reading the newspaper recently, a little article caught my attention. The caption read, Mail Carrier quits over "sinful news magazines." I read with interest about a substitute mail carrier from Merville, Iowa named George Yoerger. Recently, he decided against delivering issues of Time and Newsweek Magazines to his customers, because of their cover pictures. One magazine depicted two women hugging, with the headline talking about Lesbians and their lifestyle. The other magazine depicted a prostitute, dressed very scantily. The postmaster told Yoerger that he would have to make a choice: deliver the magazines, or lose his job. He chose the latter, stating that to deliver the magazines would have delivered his customers into the mind of Satan, by tempting them to sin.

I do not know what you think about the actions of this farmer and rural mail carrier. Some would say he acted

improperly - others would applaud his actions. One thing is certain - you have to admire him for taking a stand, and drawing the line as to what he thought was unacceptable for him to do.

Where do you draw the line? In matters regarding morality, are there some things that you stand "head and shoulders" against? What about your selection of TV and/or video viewing? I know of some people who will attend church every time the doors are opened, and yet regularly watch soap operas and/or other shows that depict the characters engaging in adultery and immorality. God, in his Word, tells us to "abhor that which is evil; and cleave to that which is good" (Romans 12:9). In I Thessalonians 5:22, Paul writes; "Abstain from all appearances of evil." In matters like this, where do you draw the line?

Where do you draw the line regarding attendance of worship services? Will you be

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Life is a book in volumes three,
The past, the present, the yet-to-be;
The past is written and laid away;
The present we're writing day by day;
The last and best in volume three
Is locked from sight; God keeps the key.
via Independence, MO

Now, That's Shocking

Glenn Colley

What motivates people to consider repentance is a fascinating subject. Repentance (Greek words, "Metamelomai" and "Metanoeo"), means "to follow a different direction, especially in regard to pleasing God, by changing one's mind, one's will, and one's actions."

In this article we are concerned with the "shocks" which have been effective in bringing people to their senses, and have motivated them to seek repentance. It is important first to remember what actually brings about the heart of repentance. Romans 2:4 says, "Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." Paul wrote in II Corinthians 7:10, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation . . ." (emphasis mine, GC)

We cannot deny however, that there are occurrences in the lives of sinners which put them in a better frame of mind to remember the "goodness of God," and to feel "godly sorrow."

There was a time when King Saul, eager to kill innocent David, awakened to find a part of his robe cut off. From a distance, David held it up before Saul, proving that he could have killed him easily, but didn't. David meant him no harm. Saul's heart was melted, and he repented of his meanness toward David (I Samuel 24).

There was a time when David quietly listened to

Nathan tell of a poor man with only one ewe lamb, who was robbed by a wealthy man in cruel selfishness. David's anger flamed. Then Nathan responded to David's question of the rich one's identity by saying, "Thou art the man." David said, "Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord . . ." (II Samuel 12). Later he would write, "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalm 51:7).

There was a time when Nebuchadnezzar thought only of himself, his power, and his riches. Then with the words, "Hew down the tree," God dropped him to his knees giving him the appearance and mentality of a wild animal. When God reversed the curse, Nebuchadnezzar exclaimed with the penitent heart, "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment; and those that walk in pride He is able to abase" (Daniel 4).

There was a time when Belshazzar, king of Babylon, mocked God by drinking from the golden vessels of the temple and worshipping the gods of Babylon. Suddenly, the laughter and noise of the party abruptly silenced, and the King's knees began to knock together, when they looked to see a man's hand writing "against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace . . ." (Daniel 5). He had a heart primed for repentance. He woke up and ceased his sinful practices.

There was a time when Peter denied the Lord three times, the last time with a curse. What was he thinking? How could his heart permit him to do this? And then the cock crowed. Never has the shrill cry of the rooster gone so deep within a man. Peter's heart changed to one of repentance (John 18).

There was a time when the prodigal son "came to himself" and said, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father and say 'Father, I have sinned . . .' (Luke 15). The shock of feeding the swine, and considering how low he had fallen, changed his heart to desire repentance.

There was a time when Zacchaeus, a tax collector lived up to the dishonest reputation of his profession, saw the Master. A conversation with Jesus produced a kind and honest heart within Zacchaeus, and he said, "Behold Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" (Luke 19).

There was a time when a man was committing adultery with his father's wife. The church at Corinth was rebuked for not taking steps of withdrawal from that man in hopes of waking him up to his dangerous position (I Corinthians 5).

Who needs to repent? II Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord . . . is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

What is the need of repentance? "Repent ye

therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out . . ." (Acts 3:19). Acts 17:30 says, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." Repentance is necessary because God commands it, and because we will perish without it.

It is an interesting, and sometimes disturbing thought to wonder what

"shock" will be needed to bring our friends and loved ones to want repentance in their lives. And as frightening as it is, a good prayer is that they will face that "shock" before they are hurled into eternity without Christ. I would like to think that we will have hearts focused on Jesus that will need only quiet, gentle "wake-up calls" when we stray.

What Is The Church?

Bobby Duncan

(This article came from Bobby Duncan, editor of Vigil which originates from the Adamsville Church of Christ, Adamsville, AL).

In a letter over the signature of Phillip Morrison, Managing Editor of WINESKINS, of which Mike Cope and Rubel Shelly are co-editors, the following statement is made:

Our background and commitment is to the Church of Christ that was born of the American Restoration

Movement. Our goal is to move that group closer to the church of Christ revealed in Scripture.

It needs to be understood that the letter in which this statement is made is a form letter mailed to those who subscribe to WINESKINS. The statement is also one of the key points of the "Purpose Statement" published in the first issue of the magazine.

An examination of this one statement will help us

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What Is The Church?

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understand why certain brethren believe we have a right to change certain fundamental aspects of the church, and why they are so intent on making such changes.

These brethren claim a background and commitment to "the Church of Christ that was born of the American Restoration Movement." There was a time when these same fellows would have insisted they were members of the church of Christ that was born in Jerusalem on the Pentecost of Acts 2. Now they make no such claim. Instead they say they are members of a church that was born in this country in the last century. They are trying to move that denomination "closer to the church of Christ revealed in Scripture," but say nothing about the need of getting out of their denomination and getting into the church revealed in Scripture. Notice, please, that it is they, and not I, who make this distinction between the church they say they are members of and the church revealed in Scripture. When they refer to the church to which they are committed they call it "the Church [upper case C] of Christ." When they refer to the church revealed in Scripture they call it the "church [lower case c] of Christ."

I know not in what kind of church these men may hold membership, nor where and when that church began. But I know that I am a member of the church revealed in Scripture. That is not to say I am perfect; none of the members of that church who are still living on earth are perfect. The same was true during the period when the New Testament was being written. If I am not a member of the church of Christ revealed in Scripture it is because I have not obeyed the gospel. The inspired apostle Peter wrote: "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that

obey not the gospel of God?" (I Peter 4:17). This verse shows there are only two classes of people: (1) the house of God, which is the church (I Timothy 3:15), and (2) those who have not obeyed the gospel. The inspired apostle Peter wrote: "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (I Peter 4:17). This verse shows there are only two classes of people: (1) the house of God, which is the church (I Timothy 3:15), and (2) those who have not obeyed the gospel. Now, into which of these two categories do the editors of WINESKINS fall?

The only thing on this earth one can get into by following the New Testament is the church revealed in Scripture. If the above-mentioned editors are in something other than the church revealed in Scripture, it is because they have followed something other than the New Testament. My plea to them is that they get out of that American-born church that is less than two hundred years old, quit following the teaching that led them into it in the first place, and begin following the New Testament only. This will make them Christians only, and Christians are those who have obeyed the gospel of Christ and have been added by the Lord to his church, the church revealed in Scripture.

How long will it be before some admit to themselves that these now destroy the faith they once preached? The words of I John 2:19 apply:

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

Do we want our children and grandchildren to be taught the distinctive nature of the church of Christ, and that they can become members of the church revealed in Scripture by obedience to the gospel?

Or do we want them to believe the very best they can do is to be a member of a denomination which is called the *Church of Christ*, and which is trying to move closer

to the church of Christ revealed in Scripture? The answer to that question will determine whether or not we will promote and encourage programs featuring those who

deny the distinctive nature of the church one becomes a member of by obedience to the gospel of Christ.

What say ye?

The Gospel Plan Of Salvation - Why Not From The Pulpit!

Mrs. L. O. Shannon

In the not too distant past -- our worship services always included an invitation to the "lost" to respond to Christ by repenting of their sins; believing in and confessing Christ and then becoming a Christian through baptism for the remission of their past sins. However, in these changing times, it seems that our pulpit ministers have a "mental block" against including the plan of salvation in their message!

There are still people who believe whatever the preacher tells them -- whether it be TRUE or FALSE!

There are those who are taught on a "one-to-one" basis - who then hear the preacher repeat the steps which place one into the body of Christ and it "clinches" their decision to become a Christian.

These three things can be accomplished by including the plan of salvation in each pulpit sermon:

1. It will impress the minds of new converts the importance of what they have just done and strengthen them in their Christian growth.
2. It is good for all Christians to "hear the old, old story of Jesus and His love!" It also refreshes our memory as we strive to bring the lost to Christ.
3. There is always the PROBABILITY that there are some in the worship service who may not know what to do to be saved -- or who have heard but their heart was not receptive in the past.

A lost soul who attends one of our worship services is entitled to hear the simple

plan of salvation -- which takes a matter of a very few minutes, including substantiating scripture!

In Acts 14:21, "After they preached the gospel to that city, they made many disciples." And in Acts 2:36-38, Peter preached Jesus to them and they asked: "WHAT MUST WE DO?"

Since we SAY our mission on this earth is to SAVE SOULS, WHY don't we preach it from our pulpits?

FINALLY, AND "IN A NUT SHELL," our pulpit messages should be inclusive instead of exclusive. They should be to the saved (Christians) that they may grow in the nurture and admonition of the Lord AND to the lost who need to

know what to do to obey the gospel plan of salvation in order to become one of God's children!

--1504 Wilbur, Dallas, TX 75224.

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"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

A little boy in the old West said to his father, "Daddy, I know where horses come from." The dad said, "You do? Where?" "From blacksmiths." Dad said, "Did you see him make one?" The boy replied, "Not completely, but I did see him nailing a foot on."

Now, there's an example of judging according to appearance, and sometimes we have a problem judging people that way -- particularly if we don't like them. We see or hear of them engaged in some activity that's not actually wrong in itself, and we place the worst possible connotation on that action. It's not fair, and it's not the way we want people to judge us.

I believe that's what Jesus had in mind when He said in Matthew 7:1, "Judge not that ye be not judged, for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." Let's work to treat people with the same fairness we'd like them to give us.

"Trouble is usually produced by those who produce nothing else."

The Gainsaying Of Korah

Neal Pollard

In Jude three, the writer exhorts God's people to strive earnestly for the faith in view of some who sought to undermine it. In vivid imagery, Jude identifies them. They are deceivers. They are distorters. They are disowners. They are disbelievers. He goes on to compare them to the faithless Jews who were denied Canaan. They are compared to the angels that sinned. These individuals are placed along side the immoral inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha. Then he labels them dirty dreamers, dominion despisers, and dignity defamers. Jude says they are brute beasts who corrupt themselves. Then, in verse eleven, he says, "Woe unto them!" They are like the murder, Cain. They have recklessly followed the crowd-pleasing Balaam. And, they "perished in the gainsaying of Core" (verse 11). Notice three things about this last phrase in Jude eleven.

Korah, The Gainsayer

("the gainsaying of Core")

Korah had a good heritage, for his great-grandfather was Levi. He had influential followers, princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown (Numbers 16:1, 2). According to his resume, he was a natural leader. He could have been a faith builder in Israel. However, he had heart problems. He was jealous of Moses! He blocked out of his

heart the fact that God had hand-picked Moses and Aaron to lead the Hebrew wanderers.

By gainsaying, Jude is suggesting that Korah was "opposing," "contradicting," or "denying" Moses. Korah thought the way he had devised was better than God's way, despite the fact that God's thoughts and ways are higher than any man's (Isaiah 55:8-9). Korah should have seen that God was holding Moses' hand as he had at the Red Sea, at Mount Sinai, and at the watering rock. But, he could only see himself and his grand designs of being the "leader of the pack."

In mentioning Korah, Jude is putting his finger over the pulse of an attitude of heart present in the early church. As in the days of Korah, in Jude's day there were those who thought they had a better way than God's way. So, they contradicted the faith once for all delivered unto the saints. What motivates individuals to bemoan New Testament teaching and preaching? What causes people to challenge the plea for the old paths? When the doctrine of Jesus is being undermined, surely those responsible for such are guilty of having a heart like Korah's!

The Followers Of Korah

("Have gone after the way of . . .")

Who followed Korah? In Numbers 16, we see again the 250 princes of the assembly (16:2). It is not altogether improbable to believe that

Korah was the ringleader of the whole uprising, more responsible for God's anger than his cohorts Dathan and Abiram (Numbers 16:1) were. The followers of Korah were willing to follow him all the way, despite the warnings of Moses (Numbers 16:9-11; 24-30). Because of this, the followers of Korah were equally guilty.

Who followed Korah? According to the book of Jude, they are those who speak evil of those things which they know not. The followers of Korah to which Jude refers in his writings are those who choose not to believe or defend God's wonderful words of life. False teachers are followers of Korah.

Who followed Korah? In the church of today, the followers of Korah are those who wish to scratch itching ears (II Timothy 4:3, 4). The followers of Korah are those who devise their own doctrine (Matthew 15:9). They are false teachers who deny the Lord that bought them (II Peter 2:1). They are the ones who deny the deity of Jesus Christ (I John 2:22). The followers of Korah are as guilty as he was.

The End Of Their

Gainsaying ("Perished . . .")

Back in Numbers 16, we read the end of the story about Korah. To determine who God was with, Moses challenged Korah to a test. Because Korah and the princes challenged the priesthood, Moses suggested that Korah take his censers, put incense in them, each of the 250 princes do the same, and Aaron also do the same. Moses said that God would show to all who was holy and acceptable. The next day, the challenge was issued by Moses. Korah and his princes made their offering at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. Noticing Numbers 16:31-35, we find, "And it came to pass, as he [Moses] had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them [Korah and

the princes]: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also. And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense." When the people murmured that Moses and Aaron had "killed the people of the Lord" (verse 41), the Lord readied to destroy the whole congregation of the people. Because the Lord sent a plague upon the congregation, Aaron had to rush to make an atonement for this crowd swayed by the influence of Korah. Aaron stood between the dead and the living, making an atonement for the people. The plague spread no further, but "they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah" (Numbers 16:49). God made it clear that Aaron was his High Priest. Korah was merely a trouble-making gainsayer.

What did the story of Korah illustrate to Jude's audience? False teaching would cause both false teacher and followers to perish. As

confident and smooth as Korah seemed to be, he led the people of God astray. Two hundred fifty men were consumed with fire because they followed Korah. Fourteen thousand and seven hundred Israelites were destroyed by the plague the Lord sent because they were swayed by Korah. How tragic! How heart-breaking! God's children were destroyed, not because they led an insurrection against Moses and Aaron, but because they followed the wrong leader. If they had trusted God and had known God's will, they would not have died. So, the inspired Jude could predict the same spiritual end for those who teach false doctrine and for those who are swayed by it. How sad to be lost because we follow a teacher down the path of error! If only more children of God studied His will to know what truth is, fewer and fewer would go astray.

As Jude suggested, let us "build up ourselves in our most holy faith," "keep ourselves in the love of God," and "look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 20-21). As we look to God's word and the doctrine of Christ as our standard for religious authority, we will avoid following the path that Korah blazed!

--P.O. Box 15, Livingston, AL 35470.

"Where Do You Draw The Line?"

Continued From Page 1

in attendance everytime the doors are opened, regardless of who comes to visit, etc.? Do you allow holidays to interfere with your allegiance to God? Do minor aches and pains that would not keep you from going to work keep you away from worship with God and his people? Indeed, our attitude needs to be like that

of the Psalmist - "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psalm 122:1).

May we truly be seen as lights to the world. May we "draw the line" along matters of common decency and morality so as to show others how Christians ought to live.

--Guin, AL



"He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers . . ."
Malachi 4:6

October 1, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- Waxing In The Bible
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- Predestination
- "Most Of A Minute"
- The Last Days

Volume 29 Number 40
(USPS 691-760)

The Words of Truth

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

1e

Rewards Of Reading

Tom Holland

In an age when seeing is such a significant force in life, thanks to television, videos, and motion pictures, we need to remember the importance of reading, especially the importance of reading God's Word.

God's Word is important to the young. It provides information by which young people may live a pure and productive life (Psalm 119:11; Ecclesiastes 11:9).

God's Word has the ability to provide the message of the Lord by which we are saved from sin, to an abundant life now, and eternal life in heaven (James 1:21; John 10:10; I Peter 1:5).

God's Word can edify the souls of God's people (Acts 20:32). God's Word applied to life enables a person to develop a godly character.

God's Word provides comfort to hurting hearts (I Thessalonians 4:18). Our brethren in the first century were grieving over their loved ones that had died. The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write words of truth by which people could be comforted.

God's Word produces faith, (Romans 10:17; John 20:30, 31), and faith is the foundation of hope (Hebrews 11:1).

A public reading of the entire Bible would take approximately 70 hours. It takes about 52 hours to read privately the Old Testament and about 18 hours to read the

New Testament. If one reads the Bible one hour per day it would take 2 months and 10 days to read the entire Bible.

Reading the Bible is like working in a gold mine; priceless treasure is found in

God's truth. Reading the Bible is like searching for diamonds, rich jewels of truth are found on every page.

To those who are determined to read the Bible through this year, keep reading. If you

started to read the Bible through and stopped, you still have time to start anew and read the Bible through. Not only will you accomplish something that not too many people ever do, namely read

the Bible through in a year, but you will have exposed your mind to words of truth that will enrich your life and also "give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

Our Doctrine - Jesus Christ

Elwood Holt

There are congregations of Christians meeting to worship God just as the Christians of the first century did, using only teachings of Christ. These teachings are the New Testament.

It is the belief of these people, who comprise the churches of Christ, that God should be worshipped just as the inspired apostles taught, following the pattern set down by first century Christians. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). This is the teaching of an inspired apostle. Furthermore, Christ has given no authority to anyone to change first century worship. In fact, Paul warned against anyone changing the teachings of Christ: "there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:7-8).

Members of the Churches of Christ believe that the Old Testament is inspired too; however, they believe that God did not mean for Christians to follow the Old Testament teachings in Christian living. They believe that the Old Testament is a record of the dealings of God with people, a "tutor to bring us to Christ" (Galatians 3:24).

The New Testament clearly teaches that the Old Testament (Moses' law) was "blotted out," taken out of the way, and nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14). When the old law was abolished, the new and better covenant of Christ went into effect (Hebrews 8:6, 8, 9:15-18).

Taking the New Testament as the rule of faith and practice, members of the Churches of Christ propose to speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where it is silent.

To obey any "man made" doctrine, to follow after any creed other than the New Testament, to fail to obey the teachings of the New

Testament, to add or to take away from the New Testament, would be against the clear teachings of Christ.

It is a plain teaching of the New Testament that "all authority" has been given to Christ (Matthew 28:18), and that God has spoken through Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2). Therefore the teachings of Christ are the only logical and safe teachings to follow.

Members of the Church of Christ believe that salvation is a free gift of God's grace and is not procured by man's works (Ephesians 2:8, 9). They believe, though, that this gift comes through an active faith which leads one to obedience of all Christ's teachings.

So, we see that churches of Christ today have the same guide that was followed by the Christians of the first century, the teachings of Christ, the New Testament.

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Christlikeness

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."
Matthew 4:4

A caterpillar becomes like the color of the leaf upon which it feeds. Its color in this way indicates the character of the food it eats. It eats a green leaf, it will be green. If it eats a yellow leaf, the caterpillar will be yellow. The lesson is obvious. The man who lives by every word of Christ will become like Christ.

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

What About Homosexuality?

Danny Pettus

Like Jesus, Christians are to love the sinner, and hate the sin. Homosexuality is a sin. The Bible says, "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God" (I Corinthians 6:9-10).

The verses teach that one cannot continue to steal, and inherit heaven. One cannot continue to practice adultery, or homosexuality, and inherit heaven. Jesus demands repentance (Luke 13:3).

Some homosexuals at Corinth, Greece believed in Christ and were baptized into Christ and into his church. Did they continue to be homosexuals? No! The Bible says, "And such were some of you" (I Corinthians 6:9-11). Not, "Are," but "Such were some of you." In the past, they were homosexuals, but not any longer. They had changed. What does God call this change? Repentance!

Such Behavior Must Be Changed, Because Homosexuality Is A Sin!

Both the Old and New Testaments condemn homosexuality. This sin carried the death penalty in the old Scriptures. "If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have

committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death" (Leviticus 20:13).

The law of Christ, the New Testament, also teaches that homosexuality is sin. Fornicators and sodomites are contrary to sound doctrine (I Timothy 1:9-10).

"Sodomite" is used today to refer to a homosexual. This is because homosexuality was one of the sins of the city of Sodom (Genesis 19). For our learning the Bible says, "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).

The New Testament condemns homosexuality by saying, "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not

Continued On Page 4

Waxing In The Bible

Glenn Colley

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.

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."

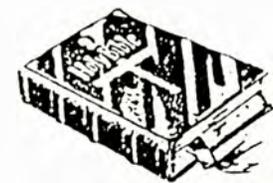
Where does it go from here?

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, simpler 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 are still being baptized into Christ every day! 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 solution 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 . . ."



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Predestination

Neal Pollard

Many in the denominational world say the Bible teaches that God, before He created the world and mankind, chose a select number of individuals to be saved (generally 144,000 based on a misunderstanding of the book of Revelation). This, their brand of "predestination," is a perversion of the scriptures. To say that God chose "Mr. Jones" before time began, to be saved regardless of how "Mr. Jones" behaved in his body, or whether or not "Mr. Jones" complied with God's scheme of redemption in becoming a New Testament Christian, defies the slew of passages representing God as "no respecter of persons" (Deuteronomy 10:17; Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11; Galatians 2:6; et al). There is the possibility that "Mr. Jones" can be numbered with the predestined who spend eternity in heaven. The New Testament church for which Christ died believes in "predestination." The Bible clearly teaches it, howbeit so different from the above stance.

What Is Predestination?

Observe what some learned men, who know the original language of the Bible, have written:

1. Thayer says that it means, "to predetermine, decide beforehand, to foreordain: in the N.T. of God decreeing from eternity" (THE NEW THAYER'S GREEK-LEXICON, 1981, Hendrickson, pp. 541).

2. Lipscomb, in his commentary on Ephesians, writes, "those who enter Christ are foreordained in accordance with the provisions of God's will" (A COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLES, VOLUME 4, 1939, Gospel Advocate, pp. 26).

3. Wuest defines predestination thusly: "to divide or separate from a border or boundary before; To determine or appoint beforehand" (WORD STUDIES IN THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT, PART FOUR, 1940, Eerdmans, p. 34).

4. Coffman, perhaps, has the best definition of predestination in his commentary on Romans. He says, "The syllable 'pre' is simple enough and refers only to the time (before the foundation of the world) when God 'destined' certain things to occur. God destined men to be conformed to the image of his Son, the meaning being obviously this that the destiny of every man ever born on earth was that he should obey God and be conformed to the image of God's Son. 'Destined' has special reference to the plan of God, his intention, the objective he had in view when man was created" (COMMENTARY ON ROMANS, 1973, Firm Foundation, pp. 316-319).

In summary of those four good definitions, we can understand "predestination" to mean that the destiny of all men was in God's mind eternally. He determined, before man was even created, that he would save those who met the conditions of his grace (conditions we refer to as the "plan of salvation.")

The Limitations/ Conditions of Predestination

Conditions are important to contracts, where one party defaults benefits if they fail to meet those conditions. An advanced college course may have as a non-negotiable condition that the student take an introductory course in preparation for it. Most clubs outline conditions for membership, whether they are based on income, interests, occupation, or similar provision. Most every will has conditions to which the potential recipient must comply. The concept of conditions in the eternal plan of God should, then, make perfect sense.

At the grocery store, a sale item will often have as a qualifier, "limit three per customer." The fourth item will not be covered by the sale. A college athlete is limited to four active years of participation in his sport. The speed "limit" is sixty-five on

the interstate. If a person driving ninety-five meets a state trooper, he will be penalized for exceeding the legal limit. The concept of limitation, like conditions, is easy for us to understand. God, too, has limitations relating to the salvation He offers.

The conditions of predestination are not foreign to us. We must hear the word of God (Romans 10:17). We must believe the word of God, having faith that Jesus is God's Son (Romans 10:10; John 3:36). We must repent or perish (Luke 13:3). We must confess Jesus as the Son of God (Romans 10:10). We must be baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3, 4; Galatians 3:27; et al). We must live faithfully until death (Revelation 2:10). If a person meets all of these conditions, he shall be saved. From the beginning, God has intended to save those who do the above.

Thus, the limitations are easy to grasp. As revealed in Mark 16:16, only the baptized believer will be saved. God destined only those who were baptized into the body of His Son to be saved. The limit of saved ones is not 144,000, as some suppose; rather, the limit of those who will be in heaven are only those who were baptized believers, members of the church for which Christ died, and faithful until death (in addition to those who die before they are accountable to God and those who are mentally incapable of being accountable to God).

Passages Which Refer to Predestination

While many of the passages of the New Testament embody the principles of predestination in God's scheme of redemption, at least five refer to predestination specifically.

1. In Acts 4:28, the phrase "determined before" in regard to the plan of God as He used His enemies to accomplish His eternal plan reveals the idea of predestination.

2. In Romans 8:29, the text says that Christians (28) are the foreknown and predestined ones to be conformed to the

image of God's Son.

3. In I Corinthians 2:7, the mystery and the hidden wisdom of God (His plan for saving sinful man) is said to be "foreordained" before the world unto our glory.

4. In Ephesians 1:5, the saints addressed in verse one are the "us" of the fifth verse who are predestinated (foreordained).

5. In Ephesians 1:11, Paul again says "we." The antecedent of this pronoun is Paul, the saints at Ephesus, and all the faithful in Jesus Christ are predestinated.

Clearly, these passages teach that God determined to save everyone who would become a child of God and who would remain faithful until death. Should we believe in predestination? Absolutely!

However, because the scriptures teach that only those who wear with fidelity the name "Christian" are destined to be saved, we must stand on that understanding of predestination. To believe any other way on this matter would be to our own spiritual hurt (Revelation 22:18, 19).

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On The Lighter Side:

A new friend of mine, Ralph, was describing a recent television documentary which examined a man's idea that the Ark of the Covenant still existed and was hidden somewhere near the discovered sight of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

He said, "Do you think they might find it?"

I said, "I don't know. I sorta doubt it. And besides, suppose someone produced a box fitting the description -- how would you know if it was the real Ark of the Covenant or a counterfeit?"

He said, "Well, you COULD touch it."

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

When we say, "It's good to share," what do we think of? We probably think in terms of that which is material . . . and that's not bad. We are blessed with material things, and we should share them and continue to teach our children to do the same. There is something more important than sharing material possessions, however.

I read recently of a son away at college, doing an unusual thing. For Mother's Day, instead of sending his mother a material gift he wrote her a letter. In it, he told her how much he loved her, and how much he appreciated all that she had done for him through the years. When she read it, she sat down and cried. Her husband said, "It was the best gift she had ever received."

There is something more important than giving people our material gifts. It's giving of ourselves.

The Bible teaches that we should "be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another" (Romans 12:10).

What About Homosexuality?

Continued From Page 2

convenient" (Romans 1:26-28). The word of God says homosexuals "dishonor their own bodies between themselves" (Romans 1:24).

Is It Different Today?

Several denominations accept, fellowship, and give their approval to homosexuality. They teach it is not a sin. They say, "it is different now." These denominations teach that Paul and Jude were influenced by their culture when they wrote, but now times are different.

We may live in a different time and culture, but the Lord who cannot lie said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). Peter said, "The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth forever" (I Peter 1:24-25).

God is eternal, and so is his word! Men make laws that become outdated, but God is not a man! His word is to all generations. Every generation is to pass the word on to the next generation (II Timothy 2:2).

There are different cultures; However, culture does not change the word of God. The word of God changes culture! This change is called repentance! Man must not change the Bible (Revelation 22:18-19). We must allow the Bible to change us!

We Must Respect The Words Of The Bible!

The forty men, who wrote the Bible, wrote it by divine guidance. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:21).

The commandments these men of God wrote are the Lord's! The apostle Paul said, "The things that I write unto you are the commandments of

the Lord" (I Corinthians 14:37).

Those who try to justify women preaching, ignore these verses. In doing so, they show disrespect for the word of God! Those who try to justify homosexuality, ignore the same verses, and in doing so, they show disrespect for the word of God!

If cultures are different now, they must change!

We Will Be Judged By Every Word In The Gospel!

If our nation makes laws, which approve of homosexuality, the truth still remains that on Judgment Day, not one person will be judged by those ungodly laws. "We ought to obey God, rather than man" (Acts 5:29).

The Lord will judge us, not man! We will be judged by the word of God. "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty" (James 2:12). "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (Romans 2:16). "He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

Are Homosexuals Born That Way?

No one is born a homosexual. Not all agree with this statement, but learned men such as Pattison, Hauer was, Patton, Karlen, Money, Stoller, Gadpaille, and Bieber do not believe homosexuals are born homosexual. We must agree with these men, not just because they are authorities in this area, but because they agree with the Bible, which is the Word of God!

Contrary to some's doctrine,

men are not born sinners (Matthew 18:3). It is contrary to the Bible to believe that God would let a person be born a homosexual, only to condemn that person to hell, if they do not stop practicing homosexuality!

"God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (James 1:13). There's not a genetic cause of drunkenness, murder, homosexuality, etc. Temptation comes from the devil!

Our upbringing, conditioning, and environment do lead to a person being tempted more with certain sins. What ever the sin is "which doth so easily beset us," God wants us to be a soldier, to put up a good fight, and to come out a winner (Hebrews 12:1 I Timothy 6:12).

Homosexuals Can Be Forgiven Of Their Sin, If They Stop Doing It!

Homosexuals at Corinth, Greece received forgiveness from God after they quit practicing such behavior, and obeyed the gospel of Christ (I Corinthians 6:9-11). Some in the Lord's church today were living in homosexuality, but now they have been forgiven. Now they are living as Jesus commands.

Regardless of what the sin is, repentance is a must! The Bible says, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30).

The Bible pronounces a woe upon all who say homosexuality is not a sin! "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil" (Isaiah 5:20). "Fools make a mock at sin" (Proverbs 14:9). "He that justifieth the wicked and he that condemneth the just even they both are abomination to

the Lord" (Proverbs 17:15). "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness" (Proverbs 30:12).

God wants all to be saved (I Timothy 2:4). Jesus died for the sins of every man (Hebrews 2:9, I John 2:2).

God's plan of salvation to every man is as follows: Hear the gospel.....John 6:45 Believe the gospel..Romans 10:9

Confess that beliefLuke 12:8-9

Repent of sins.....Acts 3:19 Be Baptized into Christ.....Romans 6:3

After obeying God's plan for man, we must not give in to ungodly lusts (I Peter 2:11). God's grace does not extend to those who keep on living a life of sin (Romans 6:1-2). We are to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts" and live godly (Titus 2:12).

The Last Days

Mike Benson

"Are we living in the 'last days?'"

Yes. Carefully study the following:

1. The Old Testament prophets said "the mountain of the Lord's house" (i.e., the church) would be "established" (i.e., built) in the "last days." "And it shall come to pass *in the last days*, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it" (Isaiah 2:2). See also Micah 4:1.

2. The church Jesus promised (Matthew 16:18-19), was established on the day of Pentecost following the resurrection of the Lord (Acts 2:47), thus the "last days" (i.e., the Christian age) began in Acts 2, in fulfillment of Jesus' promise. In fact, the apostle Peter told his audience that what was happening on that very occasion (in Acts 2), was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy which was to come to pass in

the "last days" (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:16-17). Hence, the "last days" began on Pentecost.

3. Thus, we are now living in the "last days," and we have been living in them for nearly 2,000 years. We read, "God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has *in these last days* spoken to us by His Son . . ." (Hebrews 1:1, 2a). Here the Hebrew writer makes it clear that the last days were currently in effect. If the last days were already in effect at that time, then we must conclude that they continue today.

Summary:

1) The church was to begin in the "last days";

2) The church was established on Pentecost; hence, the "last days" (i.e., the Christian age) began on that occasion;

3) Thus, the "last days" continue to today and will not cease until Christ returns (I Corinthians 15:24-26).

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

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October 8, 1993

See Inside Articles:

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•"Most Of A Minute"

•Must "Scholars" Or The

"Clergy" Give The Official
Interpretation Of The Bible?

(Part I)

Volume 29 Number 41

(USPS 691-760)

The Words of Truth

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

"They Sent Unto Him . . ."

Neal Pollard

The only pain for the family was the realization that this man of God would never commune with them at the table of this life again. The phone calls were still difficult to make. Fortunately, he was not taken in a sudden way. His debilitation had now given way to eternal delight. The family, after grieving their loss of his influence, would soon take great comfort in knowing he was with the Lord. As for now, they longed for someone to hold their hand.

An old brother and his wife arrived before many of the deceased's family. The couple's kind and gentle lives made their presence the comfort for which the mourners waited. In the saddest hour for his widow and his children, somehow his loss became a little less severe. These two children of God lived Romans 12:15, for they were now weeping with those who wept. In time, the pain subsided, but the memory of those who were present in a time of need was stamped on the minds of that family.

A Biblical role-model of a comforter? It should be immediately apparent. Alongside His miracles, His parables, His perfect nature, His skillful teaching, and His powerful influence, Jesus was an exemplary comforter! Specifically, the story of Lazarus' death in John eleven provides an example every child of God should imitate

when others are suffering the loss of a loved one. Remembering that Lazarus was faithful to God in life, we examine the account at the tomb.

Jesus Was Available (John 11:7, 11, 17). Jesus knew that Lazarus was dying, because such was an occasion for Him to demonstrate His power. In John 11:11, Jesus told His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." Lazarus died and Jesus came (John 11:17). As the busiest man who ever lived, Jesus could have offered an apology and His condolences. But, Jesus was available.

When there is a loss in the spiritual family, where am I? Is my absence from those who are suffering due to unavoidable, previous plans or indifference, inconvenience, and insensitivity? Despite their many faults we find later in the book of Job, "when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place . . . for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him . . ." (Job 2:11). When people are hurting, they need our presence.

Jesus Spared No Sacrifice To Be Present (John 11:18). This verse reveals that, for Jesus to come to Jerusalem from Bethany, He had to travel fifteen furlongs (nearly two miles). Hardly a cross-country

walk, but approximately a thirty minute trip and Jesus took the time to come to the tomb. He also accepted the risk of being among some who were less than friendly (cf. verse 46).

How many children of God refuse to go five minutes by automobile to comfort a family in their loss? How many will excuse their absence by pointing out they have never gotten along with the deceased or the family? For some, any sacrifice is too great. Jesus did all He could to be present.

Jesus Comforted (John 11:23). He offered hope. Of course, He was speaking of a miracle He would momentarily perform. Yet, His statement was laced with assurance for Martha. Jesus defined the borders of comfort in verses 25-26. Here, he says, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he die, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

When seeking words of comfort for those who have lost a faithful brother, we should remind them that he/she still lives and will never die. When seeking words of wisdom when addressing the loved ones of one who died outside of or unfaithful to Christ, we should speak of the resurrection and the life, emphasizing tactfully that whosoever lives and believes in Him shall never spiritually

die.

Jesus' Presence Was An Encouragement To Others (John 11:28-29). When Martha told Mary that Jesus had arrived at their house, Mary "arose quickly, and came unto him." Immediately, Mary felt better just knowing that Jesus was there.

I want a reputation like Jesus had. When death must visit and I go to the family, I want them to be encouraged by my presence. I do not want them to be filled with dread. By living like Christ, we can brighten the dark corner where we are.

Jesus Genuinely Cared (John 11:34-35). The shortest verse in the Bible teaches a score of lessons. When Jesus saw His dead friend, He wept. Viewing the God of the individual, we confidently sing "yes, for me, for me He careth." His heart of compassion was not for show.

Indifference is the gravest of all spiritual illnesses. Indifference will keep many out of heaven. As we come to live a transformed life patterned after Christ, we, too, will genuinely care for others more than we do ourselves!

Jesus Greatly Loved (John 11:36). This verse reads, "Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!" In verse three, Lazarus' sisters sent unto Jesus, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." His weeping indicated how much love He had for his

deceased friend, Lazarus.

Our presence with a family during a time of need is a proof of our love. If we sincerely love our brethren, we will hurt when one of them passes from this life. We will hurt for their family and friends. May a grieving family never have to wonder whether or not I love them.

Jesus Used This Opportunity To Glorify God (John 11:40). Jesus' divine power enabling Him to raise Lazarus, He achieved what we could never do in our non-miraculous age. Yet, in principle, we can do what Jesus did. That is, we can use the occasion of death to glorify God. Jesus raised up Lazarus so that the Jews at the tomb would believe that God sent Him. As a result of Christ raising Lazarus, many Jews believed (45). Recently, a gospel preacher told about a woman who asked that a gospel sermon be preached in lieu of a funeral sermon at her graveside service. That preacher had an opportunity, the woman being a visual aid, to glorify God, to preach on the resurrection, to stress the inevitability of death and the judgment, and to reveal the gospel plan of salvation. Wherever Jesus went, He preached God, His power, and His will. He realized that, even at Lazarus' grave, many present did not have faith in

Continued On Page 4

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Life's Incorruptible Things

Glenn Colley

We don't use the word "incorruptible" much anymore, but it is certainly worth understanding and considering. It is a Bible word translated from the Greek word, "Aphthartos," and means, "Not liable to corruption or decay; imperishable." Simply stated, things which are incorruptible will never decay. How many things in this life would you consider to be incorruptible?

The word is used seven times in the New Testament. Paul used it to describe our eternal God, who will never grow old or die (Romans 1:23, I Timothy 1:17). By inspiration he wrote later about our home in heaven, "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible" (I Corinthians 9:25). Paul taught us that when that last trumpet blasts forth it's sound, "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 Corinthians 15:52).

This article however, is primarily about times when Peter observed incorruptible things in holy writ.

I. OUR HEAVENLY INHERITANCE IS INCORRUPTIBLE

I Peter 1:4 says, "To an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."

Walk with me now in your imagination and picture the beauties of heaven. Picture the streets of gold and gates of pearl. Picture the river of life and the throne of God. How

long can something so beautiful last? After all, in this life temporal things may be beautiful for a while, but then the elements take their toll. Stone begins to crumble. Metal rusts and corrodes. Wood decomposes. But heaven is incorruptible. In a million years after you stepped through the gates, it will still be as fresh and new as it was the first moment. Heaven is incorruptible.

II. THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST IS INCORRUPTIBLE

I Peter 1:18, 19 says, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by the tradition of your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

Though the word "incorruptible" is not found in these two verses, it is clearly implied. Do we take for granted the fact that the same blood which cleansed the three thousand on Pentecost cleanses us today? Are we impressed with the fact that after our sins are washed away, (Revelation 1:5) they are never remembered again? The benefits of the sacrifice of the Son of God are not subject to decay. We were redeemed with something incorruptible.

III. THE WORD OF GOD IS INCORRUPTIBLE

I Peter 1:23 says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth

away; But the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you."

The seed is the word of God, Luke 8:11.

"But," someone objects, "I can think of many ways the word of God can be corrupted. It is corrupted when false teachers twist and misrepresent it. It is corrupted when deceivers mistranslate the original text in order to convert more people to their error. Anytime people seek to pervert the truth, isn't that "corrupting" the word of God?"

In the sense in which Peter writes, the answer is no. Regardless of how I may treat God's word, or how many people I might convince to follow error through my perverted teaching of God's word, the word remains exactly the same.

We speak sometimes of a person breaking God's law. In reality, we never break His law. We may be broken on it, but it isn't broken. It always remains in tact. The word of our Lord shall never pass away, and one day we will be judged by that word (Matthew 24:35; John 12:48). The word of God is incorruptible.

Jennie Wilson wrote the beautiful words, "Time is filled with swift transition; naught of earth unmoved can stand. Build your hopes on things eternal; hold to God's unchanging hand." Only in Christ can our lives be filled with things which are incorruptible.

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

In the course of a month, how often would you say you have a day in which nothing seems to go right? Two? Four? Ten maybe? All of us have bad days -- sometimes. The question is "How do I handle those days that I wish I had stayed in bed?"

Some folks fly off the handle at the least provocation. How many people do you know that you are somewhat uncomfortable around because you know they may blow their top at any time and say almost anything?

Is it a sin to have a temper? No, but it is a sin to lose control of it.

Ephesians 4:26 says "Be ye angry and sin not." Do you know what that means? It means that whether or not you are mad, you are still responsible and accountable for your actions and words. Do you see? Temper changes nothing.

As one man said, "You don't get to heaven by hitting the ceiling."

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Must "Scholars" Or The "Clergy" Give The Official Interpretation Of The Bible? (Part I)

(Editor's Note: Dr. Meador recently became the head of the Southwest School of Preaching in Austin, Texas, where my father teaches. Because of its length, I am dividing this excellent article into two parts. Part two will appear in your next issue of Words of Truth.)

Joseph Meador

Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me (John 5:39).

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

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:20, 21).

It has been correctly observed that much of the present-day confusion in the area of religion, as well as in the application of practical Bible principles, stems from a distorted interpretation and misinterpretation of God's Word. Historical investigation sheds light on the various movements by which men have sought to promote different theories of Bible interpretation. Some of these methods have been beneficial in helping one correctly to interpret and understand the intent of God's revelation. However, others of these methods have led to serious error in Biblical interpretation, and this has resulted in the espousal of false doctrine as well as in the establishment of unauthorized religious

systems.

The purpose of this series is not to present a detailed analysis of the rules of Biblical interpretation. Rather, we shall be concerned with providing a scriptural answer to the specific question: "Must 'Scholars' or the 'Clergy' give the official interpretation of the Bible?" In giving further definition to this query, we would frame it such: "Must 'Professors' in colleges or schools of preaching operated by members of the church, and/or 'Preachers' of the Gospel, give the official interpretation of the Bible?" In this inquiry, the Bible shall be upheld as our sole standard of authority. We shall all make use, as the need arises, of related literature in the areas of Ecclesiastical History, History of Christian Doctrine, and Hermeneutics.

The discipline of Hermeneutics, or more properly, Bible Interpretation, is an exacting area of Biblical studies. Simply put, Hermeneutics refers to "... the science that teaches us the principles, laws, and the methods of interpretation."¹ Hermeneutics has further been defined as follows:

Although contemporary usage of the term varies, 'hermeneutics' generally means the theory of the interpretation of the texts. Hermeneutics is thus the science of the interpretative process which begins with determination of the original meaning of a text (exegesis) and leads to elucidation of its sense for modern readers (exposition, paraphrase or sermon).²

The term "hermeneutics" is a transliteration of the

classical Greek word *Hermeneutike*, a cognate of the verb form *Hermeneuo*. It is interesting to note that Plato was evidently the first to have used *Hermeneutike* as a technical word denoting the interpretation of literature.³ The word "hermeneutics" was used for the first time to describe the study of Bible interpretation in J.C. Danhauer's pivotal text, *Hermeneutica Sacra*, published in Strasburg in 1654.⁴ In fact, the very title of Danhauer's book became the descriptive phrase which early Latin scholars used to characterize the science of Bible interpretation.

ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURE, AN INDIVIDUAL CAN INTERPRET THE BIBLE

The Bible teaches that an individual who is desirous of interpreting (knowing the correct meaning of) the will of God can do so by personal study and investigation (II Timothy 2:15) without the aid of any other person or "class" of persons (John 7:17; 8:32). Although reading the works of men, such as commentaries and sermons, may at times prove helpful, God has never authorized a "special professor/preacher class" to act as the rightful interpreters of His will to the church at large.

That the Bible was written in a propositional style is a fact revealed by the internal testimony of Scripture (John 8:32; 14:15, 23; Galatians 1:6-12; I Thessalonians 5:21). By the word "propositional" we mean that the substantive doctrinal content of God's Word is set forth in a provable and knowable

manner. Thus, it can be fully interpreted. A proposition is "a statement which says that something either is or is not the case."⁵ In describing the various kinds of propositional statements possible, it has been observed that:

A proposition may be categorized in that it asserts that something either is or is not the case, without stating any sort of conditions. Or, a proposition may be hypothetical in that it may state that if one thing is the case, then another thing will be the case. Or, a proposition may be disjunctive in that it may state that either one thing is the case or another thing is the case. A proposition may be conjunctive in that it may state that both of two propositions (or more) are true.⁶

In order for an individual to interpret the Word of God correctly, there are several necessary requisites. First, the one desiring to understand God's will must be honest of heart (Luke 8:15; Acts 13:48). Second, one must strive for purity of heart and mind (Matthew 5:8; 13:14, 15; John 5:44; Acts 7:51-53; 8:21; Philippians 4:8; II Timothy 4:3, 4). Third, one must have a firm belief in the facts of the Bible, and the evidence for this belief (faith) is produced by revelational proclamation (Romans 10:11-17; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Hebrews 11:1). Finally, one must be truly sanctified (that is, made holy; consecrated; separated) to Christ. As Christians are called out of the carnal world (Exodus 32:26; II Corinthians 6:14-18), they are also called into service

for God (Matthew 6:24; Romans 6:15-18; Galatians 1:6; I Peter 2:9).

The WHAT, HOW, and WHY of Christian sanctification is set out in Romans 12:1, 2. Paul explains that the WHAT of sanctification is the act of presenting oneself as a freewill offering to the Lord, for His use (which should be one's convicted desire in view of God's gracious salvation). Next, Paul reveals that the HOW of sanctification involves a separation from the world through a spiritual transformation. This involves renewing or harmonizing one's life with that of Jesus, which is accomplished by following the pattern as revealed in the New Testament (I Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Philippians 3:17; Colossians 3:17). Finally, Paul describes that the WHY or intended reason for sanctification is so the Christian may be able to "prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Hence, one cannot expect accurately to interpret the Scripture and apply its sacred principles while at the same time

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Must "Scholars" Or The "Clergy" Give The Official Interpretation Of The Bible? (Part I)

Continued From Page 3

harboring the mind and passions of the material world (Romans 1:18; 21-23, 28; I Corinthians 2:14-16; Colossians 2:20 - 3:17).

ROMANISM FORBIDS INDIVIDUAL INTERPRETATION

D. R. Dungan has well stated, regarding official sanctions forbidding the individual interpretation of the Bible, that "this has been one of the great faults of the Catholic Church."⁷ He continues by stressing,

In the decision of their councils, that the laity of the church should not read that book, lest they should reach wrong views; they have left it entirely to the control of those whose special business it has been to furnish the people with a knowledge of heaven's will. This enables them to establish a monopoly of interpretation. So that, to the people, the Bible is not the book itself; but the meaning of the book, as interpreted by the priesthood.⁸

Finally, Dungan concludes by stating: "This kind of power is always dangerous, as well in this respect, as in any other."⁹ Due chiefly to the gains made by Protestants during the Reformation Movement, the Council of Trent (convened by the pope and meeting eighteen years from 1545 to 1563) made the following epoch decree in respect to Bible interpretation: "The interpretation of Scripture is to be given authoritatively by the church and not the individual."¹⁰

Historian F. W. Mattox accurately recognized the logical consequence of this decision by concluding that: "an individual had the right to interpret the Scripture

only if his interpretation was not contrary to that of the church."¹¹ Commenting further on the evolution of the authoritarian nature of the apostate Roman Church, Mattox traces its development as follows:

From the scriptural position of the priesthood of all believers there grew up a distinct priestly class . . . The early leaders warned against falling from this idea, but soon a priestly class was developed and the priests began to do things for the common Christians that, they were told, they could not do for themselves.¹²

By 150 A.D. there is evidence of a distinction between those who served as ministers and the rest of the congregation. As the distinction grew the 'clergy' patterned itself after the Jewish priesthood. . . Such a priesthood developed out of a prior separation of Christians into two levels, the spirituals and the carnals.¹³

If the ministers were to be priests they had to interpret the items of worship in such a way as to give themselves special functions and to justify their position. The priestly idea grew up with the episcopacy . . . From this point on the full priesthood required only a little time to develop.¹⁴

The theory that produced Medieval Romanism is centered in the idea that Christ left with the church officials all of the powers and privileges that He had exercised while on earth . . . Because Jesus taught with infallible authority while on earth it was assumed that the church officials had the same authority. . . This theory made it unnecessary for the church membership

at large to study the Bible as it was the priesthood's responsibility to tell them what to do. It also became unnecessary for the priest to study, because his instruction came from his superiors.¹⁵

The notion of a clergy/laity system resulted in many diversions from the truth, as history will testify. This false concept was so broadly applied by the Catholic Church, and so strongly enforced, that it inevitably resulted in yielding the right of Bible interpretation exclusively to the papacy and the "messengers of Rome," the ordained priests.

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¹Berkhof, L., *Principles of Biblical Interpretation: Sacred Hermeneutics*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983, p. 11.

²Lewis S. Mudge, "Hermeneutics," *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983, p. 250.

³Berkhof, p. 11.

⁴A. C. Thiselton, "Hermeneutics," *The New Dictionary of Theology*, Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter Varsity Press, 1988, p. 293.

⁵Thomas B. Warren, *Logic and The Bible*, Little Rock, Ark: National Christian

Press, 1982, p. 9.

⁶Warren, pp. 9-10.

⁷D. R. Dungan, *Hermeneutics*, Delight, Ark.: Gospel Light Publishing Company, n.d., p. 37.

⁸Dunga, p. 37.

⁹Ibid., p. 37.

¹⁰F. W. Mattox, *The Eternal Kingdom*, Delight, Ark.: Gospel Light Publishing Company, 1961, p. 291.

¹¹Ibid., p. 291.

¹²Ibid., p. 150.

¹³Ibid., p. 111.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 150.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 160.

"They Sent Unto Him . . ."

Continued From Page 1

Him as God's Son. How many erring and non-Christians have been won to Christ because the hope of God was offered at a seemingly helpless time?

Jesus Prayed (John 11:41). He prayed aloud. How assuring it must have been for Martha and Mary to hear Him.

We cannot pray too often in any situation. The family, that is coping with loss, appreciates and desires that prayers be offered on its behalf. Of course, just as we cannot preach one into heaven, neither can we pray one into heaven. However, the prayers of a righteous man will do much for those who remain and are bearing the burden of death.

Jesus Did Not Let Criticism Hinder His Good Work (John 11:46). We are told, "But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done." How sad that the greatest of deeds would be

used as fuel to kindle the fire of the Jewish council (47-53).

Too many are hesitant to assist those in need because of the knit-picking crowd. Although the critical will be judged for his behavior, so will the one who fails to be of help in the time of another's needs (cf. Matthew 25:41-46). In view of that fact, the sting of criticism loses much of its potency. Realizing that the devil always uses criticism to deter good works, boldly and godly go about doing good like Jesus did. If we remember that folks are hurting, we will not let a little murmuring keep us from their doors.

Jesus Influenced Those Who Were With The Family (John 11:45). After seeing Jesus at work, "many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him." Never limit your focus to the immediate family. How many people, lost in sin, are

comforting this family along with you? They are excellent prospects for the Lord, for they are facing a specific need. How we respond to those who are with the grieving family may spell an eternal difference with some lost one. Never underestimate your influence (I Timothy 4:12)!

John eleven is an inspired "seminar" that relays common sense instructions for being useful to a family during its loss of a loved one. Though death is the symbol of sadness and emptiness, our godliness during this important event can mean joy and fulfillment to one won by the child of God in the valley of the shadow of death. Jesus, was the teacher of grave side manner!

--P.O. Box 15, Livingston, AL 35470.

October 15, 1993

See Inside Articles:

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- "Most Of A Minute"
- Must "Scholars" Or The "Clergy" Give The Official Interpretation Of The Bible? (Part 2)

Volume 29 Number 42
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The Words Truth

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

1e

A Message From A Baby Boomer

Michael Gifford

Just over 34 years ago I exploded on to the scene in the midst of a blast of babies which by that time had been in progress for well over a decade. Like millions of other "bombs" who detonated during this span, I have been labeled a "baby boomer."

Look all around you. See, feel, touch and sense the influence of my generation. We have borne the light of sophisticated thinking into the darkness of archaic traditions.

Who has made such strides in removing God from the schoolroom as we? Have we not led school systems and teacher's unions into a fear of the Bible while all the time convincing them of the value of studying and promoting the great humanistic philosophy?

What age of time has witnessed a sexual revolution akin to ours? Could a previous generation as deftly extract funds from the clutches of government to support pornographic art? I think not.

Who else has done more to promote leisure among the masses? We discourage those who work hard by taxing them to the teeth and reward those who dip the sop in the bowl of government welfare programs by giving them more hand-outs.

Consider what we've done for the home. The outmoded traditional family has been ousted. We have replaced

"husband" and "wife" with "partners." Day care centers have become both mother and father. And pat us on the back for what we did for discipline in the home; No spanking of kids today or we'll throw you in jail. "A little talking to" is sufficient so as not to damage Junior's delicate psyche.

Oh, and don't forget how we have been able to get society to cast off the burdensome shackles of personal responsibility for one's actions. Homosexuality is inborn. Alcoholism and gambling are diseases. Unexpected pregnancies are terminated quickly, efficiently, and secretly without a trace of guilt. We don't even have to be so crude about it all anymore because now we can use words like "gay" and "abortion" and "affairs," and other such acceptable euphemisms.

Do you think I would leave off what we have been able to accomplish in religion? Not on your life. People are writing books about how to get the boomers into church. Church leaders are bidding for our membership like we were the prize item at a Sotheby's auction. They'll give us what we want when we want it: Palatial buildings, cushy pews, our kind of preacher, our gender of leaders, our form of music. We control the churches and, by all indications, we must control God as well.

We baby boomers are

indestructible. Never before has the earth seen a generation so brilliant, so advanced, so utterly sure of where we are going and how we are going to get there. Hear, oh world: We are your leaders of today and tomorrow. Serve us. Please us. Do our bidding. Hang on our every word. We are your masters.

The preceding article is completely and utterly satirical, but it has its' point. We are being overloaded with articles telling us what baby boomers want. Not a few of these articles attempt to address our spiritual wants. I, for one, am fed up with the plans and programs geared toward my generation. What it all comes down to is an attitude which was reflected in the satire. Countless numbers of baby boomers are self-centered, self-serving, self-seeking sponges who will suck a leech's share of blood from anyone who bows to their wishes and then come back and demand more. Brethren and friends, it is all about pride. It is all about selfishness. Elders and preachers in the church of our Lord MUST NOT succumb to the pressures of egotistical baby boomers who want everything their way or else. We want souls to be saved. We want the pews filled every time the doors of the church building are open. BUT NOT AT THE COST OF TRUTH! Let's stop treating the boomers

like babies and devote ourselves to giving them, and all mankind, WHAT GOD WANTS RATHER THAN WHAT THEY WANT. And what God wants is for us to

preach and teach the pure, unvarnished, unchanged Gospel of Jesus Christ regardless of the response. Amen and amen.

Shall We Learn From History?

Steven Wiggins

"In January, 1902 or 1903, I was preaching for the Pearl and Bryan Streets Church in Dallas. Brother McGarvey, an old man at the time, was invited to speak at the Central Christian Church in Dallas. We had three men in the Pearl and Bryan Streets Church who had graduated from the College of the Bible in Lexington, under brother McGarvey, and they were great admirers of him. They suggested that we invite brother McGarvey to preach at Pearl and Bryan that night. We did so. I was just a boy of 24 or 25 then. I was sitting on the front seat, waiting for the service to begin. As we sat there talking, brother McGarvey said to me: 'Brother Sewell, I want to say something to you, if you'll accept it in the spirit in which I mean it.' I told him I'd appreciate anything he had to say to me. He said about these words:

'You are on the right road, and whatever you do, don't let anybody persuade you that you can successfully combat error by fellowshipping it and going

along with it. I've never held membership in a congregation that uses instrumental music. I have, however, accepted invitations to preach without distinction between churches that used it and churches that didn't. I've gone along with their papers and magazines and things of that sort. During all these years I have taught the truth as the New Testament teaches it to every young preacher who has passed through the College of the Bible. Yet, I do not know of more than six of those men who are preaching the truth today.' He said, 'It won't work.' That experience has been an inspiration to me all the days of my life since. It has helped me, when I was ever tempted to turn aside and go along with error, to remember the warning of this great old man."

[Note: The preceding incident is a true story told by brother Jesse P. Sewell, a former gospel preacher and past President of Abilene Christian University. I offer it to you because of the timely and paramount advice given Continued On Page 4

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

The Criminal Cop

Glenn Colley

Michael Dowd was, according to his superiors, a terrific young police officer. In talking about him they would say, "He has excellent street knowledge," or "He will be a role model for other officers," or "He has good career potential." But, like the Jews with their whitewashed tombs full of dead mans bones, Michael was corrupt. This shining knight of justice was running an \$8,000 per week drug protection racket, and sniffing lines of cocaine off the dashboard of his patrol car.

While testifying in September in the beginning of his trial, Dowd confidently said, "I could do just about anything and get away with it." Michael Dowd, a 10-year police veteran, was fired after his arrest, convicted, and sentenced to prison.

Thoughts of disgust go through our minds as we read stories like this one, and these kinds of tales are common in our day. In light of these concerns, consider with me some important observations:

1. JUST BECAUSE SOME PEOPLE ARE HYPOCRITES, DOESN'T MEAN ALL PEOPLE IN THE SAME POSITION ARE HYPOCRITES.

Before our first child was born, my wife and I were brainstorming for an appropriate name. Some names were suggested which were quickly rejected by one or the other of us because we remembered someone else who wore that name and who made a bad impression. Of course that doesn't mean ALL who wear those names are bad.

In every worthwhile occu-

pation imaginable there have been people of low character. From policemen to preachers to parents to politicians to plumbers, there will sometimes be people who will be a disappointment. Of course that doesn't mean ALL in those worthwhile occupations are low on character.

The point is that I must not allow myself to be so disappointed about one or two individuals, that I begin to unjustly pre-judge other individuals by them (Matthew 7:1, 12).

2. PEOPLE IN POWER ARE NOT ALWAYS GREAT PEOPLE

As we categorize "heroes" in our lives, we may assume that power and greatness are the same. They are not. In fact, throughout the Bible we see powerful men who were corrupt in heart. King Saul, by his evil ways and cold heart, sought to kill innocent David (1 Samuel). This forced David into a real dilemma: Either kill Saul in self-defense, or risk the chance that Saul would kill him. Nevertheless, David respected Saul's great position as king. David would not harm the Lord's anointed. In Saul we see a corrupt man in king's clothes.

Jesus chastised the Jewish leaders in Matthew 23 who, He said, "sit in Moses seat." They had taken that position of authority and were considered powerful and great. Jesus saw through their self-righteous mask and revealed their true characters: "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is

made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves" (Matthew 23:15).

3. IF WE EDUCATE OUR CHILDREN'S MINDS AND NOT THEIR MORALS, WE WILL PRODUCE BRIGHT REPROBATES.

Mr. Dowd knew the law. He had studied the law. He was breaking the law, and evading the law. He was pretty smart. Now he has sold his integrity and waits in prison. I know where he learned law enforcement. I can easily guess where he learned the three "R's": reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic. But he didn't learn self-discipline. He didn't learn the importance of loving and obeying Jesus.

Dr. Joycelyn Elders, the new U.S. Surgeon General said during her confirmation hearings, "I see children surrounded and overwhelmed by a sea of drugs, homicide, suicide, AIDS, and teen pregnancy, while we argue about whose values we are going to teach. . . ." Ironically, Dr. Elders, with her ideas about salvation from problems through the distribution of condoms, and the increased accessibility of abortion, is preaching HER ABSENCE of good values!

Make sure that in your home there is no question in anyone's mind about which education is more important: secular or religious. For if you have the best secularly educated children in our country, and they are one day lost eternally, all is vain.

(Matthew 16:26) -- "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his soul?"

From The Editor:

Over the years I have collected many of the Elam's Notes and Teacher's Annual Lesson Commentaries, which are the Bible school teachers' editions still being produced by the Gospel Advocate each year. They are now called Companion.

I greatly enjoy studying from these volumes, but I am missing a few important dates. I wonder if among our readers someone might have a few of these old books tucked away which are not being used? I would of course be happy to pay a reasonable amount for them if you do. The dates I need are these: 1927, 1928, 1929, 1934, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1942, and 1943. If I am able to obtain these books, I can complete my set.

I hope to hear from you.

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"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

Often I have opportunity to discuss the Bible with someone who is in a man-made religion instead of the church you read about in your Bible. Sometimes while hearing the doctrines we preach, the life we try to lead, and the worship we practice, they will hear something new to them and say, "I think you're just being picky about that!"

There are even those within the church today who criticize Christians who are seriously concerned with doing everything right, or as right as possible. Is Jesus concerned with our paying attention to details, or should we all adopt a more "laid back" approach to Christianity?

In Matthew 23:23, Jesus chastises the scribes and Pharisees with these words: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

Question: Did Jesus encourage these to ignore the "smaller, lightweight" matters, and only concentrate on the "weightier" matters? No. He taught them to do those things and to not leave the other undone.

Let's work to be faithful Christians in ALL matters.



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Must "Scholars" Or The "Clergy" Give The Official Interpretation Of The Bible? (Part 2)

Dr. Joseph Meador

**EARLY REFORMERS
ADVOCATED THE RIGHT
OF INDIVIDUAL
BIBLE STUDY**

The greatest contribution made by the early Protestant Reformation was that its principle focus aimed at returning the Bible to the people as the fully authoritative Word of God. With the rise of the Catholic religion, which literally covered the globe, the Bible had long been its closely guarded property. The Roman Catholic Church had issued papal dictates preventing a popular examination of the Word of God as well as giving the exclusive rights of interpretation to its own hierarchy of "clergy/scholars."

As church historians (students of church history) are aware, this era, commonly known as the Medieval period, was the darkest of times for Europe, both religiously and socially. A cloud of common ignorance and superstitious mysticism had replaced the high spiritual character of the first Christian century. Indeed, as in no other time before or since, the Bible was in bondage to a select few, and the whole world suffered.

The Renaissance period, from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, marked the rebirth of learning and culture. This period also served as the transition from the Medieval period to the modern world. During this time of "awakening" on the part of classical scholarship, a variety of men played important roles in the early attempts to reform the unauthorized practices of the Catholic Church.

In 1324 Marcellus of Papua and John of Jandun revived the idea "that the authority of the church should rest upon the common people" and that "the Bible itself should be the only source of faith."¹⁶

William of Occam (c. 1300-

1349) advocated "that the Bible is the only infallible source of authority in the church."¹⁷

John Wycliffe (1324-1384) "felt the need to put the Bible into general use and in 1380 translated the first complete Bible (N.T.) into English." When faced with severe persecution he exclaimed, "If there were one-hundred popes and all the friars were turned into cardinals their opinion ought not to be acceded to in matters of faith except insofar as they based themselves upon Scripture."¹⁸

Other religious leaders who made valuable contributions to the early reformation of Romanism included John Huss (1369-1415); Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498); and Ximenes (1436-1517). To this number should be added those classical humanists who provided a very powerful force for change in the academic community: Francesco Petrarca, or Petrarch (1304-1374); Boccaccio (1313-1375); Lorenzo Valla (1405-1457); John Colet (1467-1519); and Thomas Moore (1478-1535). Yet, it was the scholarly Erasmus (1466-1536) who made the greatest stride as he continued to build upon the foundation laid before him. In a famous passage of Erasmus' "Paraclesis" or Introduction to the New Testament, he wrote:

I utterly disagree with those who do not want the Holy Scriptures to be read by the uneducated in their own language, as though Christ's teaching was so obscure that it could hardly be understood even by a handful of theologians, or as though the strength of the Christian religion consisted in men's ignorance of it.¹⁹

The New Testament which Erasmus had translated came off John Forben's printing presses at Basel in 1516, and by the following August, a copy had reached Martin

Luther (1483-1546), who was at that time a young professor at Wittenburg.²⁰ Luther, whose own academic studies were inspired by his mentor, John Trebonius, was a devout disciple of Rome who served the Catholic Church in three capacities (first, as a teacher in the University of Wittenburg; second, as a parish priest; and third, as an inspector of Augustinian monasteries).²¹

Protestant scholars in the field of Church History, such as Philip Schaff, Roland Bainton, and Preserved Smith, describe Martin Luther as perhaps the greatest single figure of the reformation movement. As F. W. Mattox has stated: "Luther . . . set a pattern for Reformation that spread over most of Western Europe."²²

The rise of Luther's opposition to the Catholic Church began in 1517 when he nailed his ninety-five theses on the church door at Wittenburg. By the next year, he was in open debate with John Eck, a professor of Theology at Ingolstadt who was loyal to the pope. In 1520, after lively discussion, a papal bull of excommunication was issued against Luther and during an ecclesiastical hearing at the assembly which met at Worms (1521), he was pronounced a heretic by the Catholic Church. With assistance from his friends (especially Philip Melancthon) and students, however, Luther continued his ministry of reformation which involved four basic principles: 1. Justification by faith; 2. The priesthood of all believers; 3. The right of the individual to interpret the Scripture; and 4. The final authority in religion is the Scripture itself, rather than the authority of the church."²³

Other key reformation leaders such as Huldreich Zwingli (1484-1531) and John Calvin (1509-1564) also supported the rights of the individual to

study the Bible and interpret the text according to sound reason.²⁴ However, a fundamental difference existed between some of the reformers regarding the practical limits of interpreting the Scripture. Following the death of John Huss in 1415, his followers were divided into two groups: the Taborites and the Utraquists. Although the practices of the former group could not be supported by Scripture, the Utraquists opposed only what was explicitly forbidden.²⁵ Martin Luther adopted this same hermeneutic as well (i.e., the principle of express prohibition, JM). Yet, at the other end of this question were such figures as Huldreich Zwingli, who would approve only what the Bible authorized (cf. Zwingli's *A Commentary On the True and False Religions* published in 1525). He felt that when the Bible specified a certain item, it applied the exclusion of anything else. It has been this latter method of hermeneutics, the Scripturally correct view, which served to guide those who sought for a restoration of first century Christianity rather than mere religious reform.

**THE RESTORATION
MOVEMENT PROMOTES
THE RIGHT OF THE
INDIVIDUAL TO STUDY/
INTERPRET THE BIBLE,
AND IT REJECTS THE
AUTHORITY OF
SYMBOLIC THEOLOGY**

The sole intent of the Reformation Movement was to rectify the basic errors of the Roman Church rather than to seek a return to the faith, worship, and doctrinal practice of the ancient apostolic church. Because of this, there arose a parallel movement which had as its purpose not just reform, but a restoration of primitive Christianity.

The final result of the Reformation Movement was

quite unexpected to many of the leaders. New denominations were formed around the teachings of certain figures as they divided from the Catholic Church. This movement, better known as Protestantism,²⁶ is responsible for much of the religious division and doctrinal confusion which exists today. As D. R. Dungan comments regarding the Protestant efforts at Bible interpretation:

Our Protestantism is an improvement, perhaps, but not such an improvement as will give us any particular cause of boasting. The creeds that are in use have been made a long time, at a time when knowledge was lower and prejudices were higher than at present. And, yet, in light of these catechisms we have been compelled to conduct our investigations. So, it has not been, even to Protestants, so much "What does the Bible say on the subject?" as, "What does the creed or catechism say?"²⁷

It was with such an awareness in mind that Robert Richardson began a series of weighty articles dealing with Bible interpretation. In his first article, appearing in the May 1847 issue of *The Millennial Harbinger*, Richardson writes:

We do not affirm that the Protestant communities deny to their members theoretically the right of private judgment. Romanists refuse it both theoretically and practically; but it is the boast of Protestants to concede this right to all. Yet, the latter are found to be almost as much averse to the practical exercise of this privilege as the former, and the pastor or preacher proves often as intolerant of any difference of sentiment on the part of a member, as the cardinal or priest. And the reason of this is obviously that each party has equally adopted certain points

Continued On Page 4

Must "Scholars" Or The "Clergy" Give The Official Interpretation Of The Bible? (Part 2)

Continued From Page 3

of doctrine and theories of faith and opinion as absolutely essential to salvation, and that, couched as these are in unscriptural language and framed by the human mind, they exact a more punctilious conformity to them than to the word of God . . . Why reject the traditions of Rome, merely to adopt opinions from Geneva or from Wittemberg (sic)? Why diligently circulate the scriptures, and place a copy in the hands of every family in the land, if they deliver along with it the doctrine, that the laity must not presume to understand these sacred writings for themselves, but must receive this law from the lips of their pastor, who alone is authorized to explain the scriptures, and only in harmony with the standards of his church . . . We say with truth, then, that while

Protestants in theory concede the right of private judgment, in practice they deny it.²⁸

As Roman Catholicism vested her authority in the church (via the councils and oral tradition) and in the papacy (the dogma of papal infallibility [e.g. Pastor Aeternus] in re: "ex cathedra" revelation which was decreed by the First Vatican Council in 1870),²⁹ the Protestant Reformation movement succumbed to the ill fate of relying for denominational authority and unity on their manifold creeds and catechetical statements. Thus, both groups largely rejected the first century doctrine of Bible authority (II Timothy 3:16,17; Jude 3). The study of creedal statement is termed by Reformed systematic theologians as Symbolic Theology.³⁰ Princeton

theologian A. A. Hodge (1823-1886; son of Princeton theologian Charles Hodge) defined Symbolic Theology in his text *Outlines of Theology* as follows:

Symbolics . . . (a). the scientific determination of the necessity for and uses of public Creeds and Confessions. (b). The history of the occasions, of the actual genesis, and subsequent reception, authority and influence of each one of the Creeds and Confessions of Christendom. (c). The study of the doctrinal contents of each Creed, and of each group of Creeds separately, and (d). Comparative Symbolics, or the comparative study of all the Confessions of the Church, and thence a systematic exhibition of all their respective points of agreement and contrast.³¹

Symbolic Theology, as a supposed branch of Bibliology (the Doctrine of the Bible) was originated by those who desired to interpret their particular views beyond that which God had given through the Bible (Mark 7:6, 7). The pivotal creeds of the Protestant Reformation include: The Augsburg Confession of Faith (Lutheran, 1530), The Helvetic Confessions (Calvinistic, 1530, 1536, 1566), The Anglican Confession (Church of England, 1552). The Heidelberg Confession (1575), The Westminster Confession of Faith (Baptist, 1677). Other creeds of the various Protestant denominations include: The New Hampshire Baptist Confession (Baptist, 1833), The Confession of the Free-will Baptists (Baptist, 1834), and The Confession of Faith of the Cumberland Presbyterians (Presbyterian, 1813), along with many others. Thus, the creedal statements of various men and religious councils are a well accepted, yet unauthorized part of later Protestantism. Concerning the use of these creeds as a basis for historical authority, George Klingman well notes:

There is one "Divine Creed,"

and many "Human Creeds." The Creed of the New Testament is very simple . . . The claim is made, however, that the various elements of the teaching of Christ should be gathered from all parts of the "Sacred Writings" and put into convenient form . . . The trouble arises from the fact that men incorporate their opinions and speculations in their formal creeds, and "teach for doctrines the commandments of men."³²

In conclusion, those men who have given their lives to the service of God in the Restoration Movement have continually held to the right of the individual to study and interpret the Bible in the light of reason. Too, the faithful pioneer preachers of the past have not merely rejected the creeds of men but have vigorously fought against their inclusion to the policy of local, autonomous congregations of the church of Christ. Thus, the Bible has been upheld as the one and only rule of faith and practice authorized by God for His one church, and the notion of a separate scholar/clergy or professor/preacher class, whose function it is to interpret the Bible for the churches, has been utterly rejected as unscriptural and, therefore, undefendable. With this in mind, the words of brother Josiah W. Cox from Middletown, Missouri, written in 1841 and published in *The Christian Messenger*, are worthy of our attention:

The Bible is the best book that was ever written, rich with instruction, for time and eternity. It has been the wonder of the wise, and the support of millions, even in the hour of dissolution; it is the rock that has thrown on our sin worn world the glorious hope of immortality, for which the heathens would have given a world, and for which the men of genius among them sought with diligence but in vain. What is all the wealth and magnificence of the world, to this glorious and soul stirring truth?³³

¹⁸Ibid., p. 225.

¹⁹E. Harris Harbison, *The Christian Scholar In The Age Of The Reformation*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956, p. 100.

²⁰Ibid., p. 103.

²¹Mattox, p. 224.

²²Ibid., p. 252.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., p. 259.

²⁵Ibid., p. 226.

²⁶Preserved Smith, *The Age Of The Reformation*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1955, p. 115. The author notes that the Reformers protest to the Recess of the Diet of Spires called in 1529 resulted in their being known as "the Protesting Estates," and subsequently the name "Protestant" was given to all those who left the Roman Catholic Church.

²⁷Dungan, p. 38.

²⁸Robert Richardson, "Interpretation of the Scriptures, No. 1." *Millennial Harbinger*, Series III, Vol. IV, edited by Alexander Campbell and W. K. Pendleton, Bethany, VA: Printed by Alexander Campbell, 1847, pp. 348, 349.

²⁹Hubert Cunliffe-Jones, *A History of Christian Doctrine*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984, p. 513.

³⁰Frederick Danker, "Symbolism, Symbolics," in *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, Everett F. Harrison, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Carl F. H. Henry, editors, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981, p. 508.

³¹A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust*, 1983, p. 28.

³²George Klingman, *Church History for Busy People*, Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, n.d., p. 48.

³³Josiah W. Cox, *The Christian Messenger*, edited by Burton W. Stone, March 1841, Vol., XI, No. VII, reprinted by Star Bible Publications, Fort Worth, Texas 1978, p. 244.

Shall We Learn From History?

Continued From Page 1

by that revered figure of Restoration history, J. W. McGarvey. Brother McGarvey lived during a time in which he witnessed the liberals split asunder the church of Christ with their unauthorized innovations of instrumental music. No one opposed these liberalistic leanings with any more vim and vigor than McGarvey. His weakness turned to compromise, however, by his continuing to fellowship and work with those traitors who had obviously departed from the faith. The result was that in over 30 years as a Professor at the College of the Bible in Lexington, Kentucky, no more than six of his students ended up as faithful proclaimers of the truth. In 1902 he was eventually ousted from a congregation that he had spent more than thirty years in as a preacher and elder. And, in 1911 at his funeral, in total disrespect for his long held

convictions, those same devil-pleasing liberals stoked the fires of hell by playing the organ over his dead body. Sad is the day!

A century later history begins to repeat itself. Churches of Christ are now facing another full-fledged apostasy from the truth. Many congregations are digressing at a rapid rate from the distinctiveness which the gospel demands. The liberals are gaining control of our larger congregations along with our schools. They are selling the principles of truth wholesale in return for sectarian pabulum. They hate the man who preaches it straight and love even less the one who calls attention to their current apostasy. Let us therefore take heed unto the advice of McGarvey: "don't let anybody persuade you that you can successfully combat error by fellowshipping it and going along with it . . . It won't work."

October 22, 1993

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- The Power Of The Press
- I Love Older People
- God's Work At Thessalonica
- The Mountain

Volume 29 Number 43
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Truth

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

Redemption's Sweet Song

Johnny Ramsey

We do not have to wait for heaven in order to enjoy the benefits of Christianity. Long before we reach the golden street of glory we bask in the bountiful life of peace and purpose in Christ Jesus. God speaks to us through His Son (Hebrews 1:1) and tremendous comfort flows through daily contact with Jesus. The Savior is the only way to the Father (John 14:6) and we can allow the word of Christ to abide permanently in our hearts (Colossians 3:16). No one can take away from us the joy of redemption in the Lord (I Peter 1:7-8). Mike Vestal recently shared this powerful poem with us in the bulletin from Odessa:

"Where I Needed Some Help You Lifted Me"

When I needed some help you lifted me

From the depths of great despair,

And when burdens, pain and sorrow

Have been more than I can bear,

You have always been my courage

To restore life's troubled sea,

And to move these little mountains

That have looked so big to me.

What a grand benefit to our spiritual sojourn it is to be able to follow the perfect example of the man of Galilee! Scripture informs us that our Redeemer defeated Satan in

every avenue of temptation and this is hope of victory over sin through our Lord Jesus Christ. A beautiful poem, based on the Bible, warms our hearts in dark hours of loneliness and sorrow:

I have dreamed many dreams that never came true

I have seen them vanish at dawn,

But I have realized enough of my dreams, thank God,

To make me to want to dream on...

Our Lord tells us to trust Him to bear our burdens and grant us solace in time of stress (Hebrews 2:18). A startling stanza in the song of redemption is the message of a spiritual hymn:

Jesus, thy dying love

Thou gavest me

Nor should I ought withhold

Dear Lord, From thee

In love my soul would bow

My heart fulfill its vow

Some offering bring thee now

Something for thee!

Another powerful message the Father sends to us through Christ is that the wages of sin are too high to be worth the expense. It is a serious mistake to barter our soul for the fleeting pleasure of iniquity. Jesus triumphed over sin that we might see the beauty of holiness. Recently, I read the following statement that deeply challenges all of us:

Sin will take you farther than you ever wanted to go,

Keep you longer than you ever wanted to stay,

And cost you more than you ever wanted to pay.

The message of the New Testament is that it took the tragic death of the greatest one who ever graced the earth to overwhelm the power of evil and give us hope. What a price to pay that we might clear the huge debt against our name!

The heart of the message Jehovah conveys through the beloved Son is that heaven loves us and deeply desires our salvation (Luke 19:10; Matthew 1:21). To miss this

cardinal teaching of the Bible us truly a tragedy beyond comparison. God wants all men to be saved (I Timothy 2:4) and desires that none should perish (II Peter 3:9). Only rebellious and insensitive souls would ever miss this emphasis in Bible study. Verily, "heaven came down and glory filled my soul" is the clarion call that heralds the gospel (John 3:17). Someone captured this sentiment in a precious verse:

I cannot find a truer word, Nor better to address you; Nor song, nor poem have I heart

Is sweeter than: God Bless You!

Redemption's sweet song is the anthem of eternal concern for fallen mankind. Our Creator longs for the creation to glorify and magnify it's Maker. May we ever be found in co-operation with this divine mandate and purpose in the plan of salvation.

A Matter Of Wills Vs. Wiles

Neal Pollard

Back when cartoons were cartoons, I gave an hour of my week to the "BUGS BUNNY/TWEETY SHOW." There was a character on that show everybody loved to hate -- "Wile E. Coyote." I once asked Mom what "wiley" meant. She told me that it meant "sneaky like a coward, and mean like the devil!" (Webster could hardly improve).

Paul tells the Christian in Ephesians 6:11 to put on the whole armor of God to protect against the wiles of the devil. Satan is that great deceiver against whom we constantly defend ourselves. He is the age-old veteran of disarray, disillusion, disappointment, and disenchantment. He has broken up homes, families, trusts, bodies, and souls as far back as Eden. With a trail of devastation so thick, why can he be so successful today?

Could it be that many do not have themselves properly protected? Observe some scriptural defense:

1. TRUTH: (Ephesians 6:14) Buy it, don't sell it. Love it, for it is Christ (John 14:6). It sanctifies us (sets us apart, John 17:17). We should always tell it (Revelation 21:8).

2. RIGHTEOUSNESS: (Ephesians 6:14) It will exalt a whole country (Proverbs 14:34). That means it can lift me up, too!

3. GOSPEL OF PEACE: (Ephesians 6:15) The gospel (good news) is that God loves us. KNOW THAT! Act on that (Matthew 11:28-30) and have peace!

4. FAITH: (Ephesians 6:16) Increase it. Strengthen it. Cling to it, in happiness and sadness, triumph and defeat, TOOTH AND NAIL!

5. SALVATION: (Ephesians 6:16) God offers it to us, no

matter how checkered our past. It is free in that Christ paid our debt. All he asks is our commitment in exchange for eternal life. ETERNAL LIFE! Have you had any better offers lately?

6. SPIRIT (WORD OF GOD): (Ephesians 6:17) The Holy Spirit was God's means of spreading His word, the bread of life. We will spiritually starve if we miss "feeding time" too often. Are you spiritually malnourished? Remember, Satan does not have to take all six away from you at once. He'll take them one at a time. I can not and you can not afford to give him one chink in our armor of God! Take courage! Take heart! The devil doesn't punch a clock; he is always at work! God be with us!

--P.O. Box 15, Livingston, AL 35470.

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Visit Soon
6th Avenue
Church Of Christ
Jasper, AL 35501

What Baptism In Florence, Alabama?

Glenn Colley

Every week it seems something comes to my attention about brethren from one area or another, who are buying in to the liberal ideas which are so popular today. Without question it's the "In" thing to do.

When people decide to adopt these liberal positions they almost always criticize those of us who are "traditional" enough as to still teach against the system of denominationalism, and who preach the oneness of the church we read about in our Bibles. They gradually see the church of Christ as equal with denominations and argue that we should unite with them based on our common ground, while stifling any doctrines on which we differ.

A few weeks ago in Florence, Alabama the recently formed Magnolia Church of Christ united in a first annual joint worship service with their neighboring North Wood United Methodist church. The newspaper headline read, "Historic event; Church of Christ, Methodist church hold joint meeting." Joe VanDyke, the preacher from the Magnolia church of Christ said in his sermon that his theory is this: "If religious fellowships can focus on the supreme, that which they hold highest in common, and believe in God through His Son, there will be no time to notice those things that have caused differences and divisions in the past."

These people are under strong delusion.

Consider please that one of those "things that have caused differences and divisions in the past," which we expect to have "no time

to notice," is the mode of baptism, and the question of whether baptism is essential to salvation or not! Folks, while this is not the only problem with uniting with our neighboring denominations, as some are pushing to do, this is critical and fundamental. THIS IS A "PEARLY GATES" QUESTION!

Have you ever heard of a "pastor" in the aforementioned denomination who taught or practiced baptism for the remission of sins? Have you ever heard of one who would renounce infant baptism as unscriptural and worthless? I have not.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:5, "There is . . . one baptism . . ." I want to ask a question: Which baptism will these people practice when they unite with their neighbors? Suppose someone had come to the "Historic" worship service in Florence wanting to be saved and asking how. What would our brother have told that man? I tell you this: He could not have told the man the truth and continued the service, because he would contradict his new brethren's doctrine on salvation!

Let us commit to heart what the Bible says about salvation, and it's irrevocable connection to baptism:

•Baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

•People must believe and be baptized to be saved. (Therefore infants are not suitable candidates for baptism) (Mark 16:16).

•Baptism is immersion in water (Acts 8:38, 39; Romans 6:4-5).

•We are baptized into Christ's death (Romans

6:3).

•Our sins are washed away when we are baptized (Acts 22:16). They are washed away in His blood (Revelation 1:5).

•The way one gets "into Christ" is by baptism (Galatians 3:27).

•"Baptism doth also now save us . . ." (I Peter 3:21).

Friends, plainly speaking, one cannot be saved without being baptized according to the scriptures. Man's baptism will not do!

Some are saying that any baptism, provided the person wants at the time to please God, will be acceptable. Simple

consideration will show that that is not true. The Holy Scriptures teach that there is one baptism, and shows us that baptism is essential to our salvation. Almost all denominational churches today believe, teach, and practice a baptism which has, according to them, NOTHING to do with a person's salvation! If you want to know whether their baptism is from the Bible, ask one of their preachers to describe it to you, and then compare it with the Bible.

We all enjoy the sweet thoughts of all churches' uniting into one body. No one desires that more than I do. But to compromise the very plan of salvation to have unity, is to take steps toward the certain loss of people's souls. Jesus said, "Not everyone that saith unto Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

The preacher said, "There will be no time to notice those things which have caused differences and divisions in the past." What

he meant was, "We will be so busy saying, 'Lord, Lord' that we won't have time to be concerned about doing the will of the Father."

Brethren, may it be our fervent prayer that we will ALWAYS make the time to notice the differences like those concerning the precious plan of salvation.

In case you're wondering, according to the newspaper,

"Members of both churches took part in conducting the service. The organ was played during singing of half of the hymns and the other half were sung without musical accompaniment, in respect to the traditions of the denominations. . . The service closed with the singing of 'Blest Be the Tie that Binds . . .'"

The Power Of The Press

Dalton Key

Because "a drop of ink may make a million think," mankind is continually moved by the power of print. For this reason, we can not but agree with Martin Luther's words of over four hundred years ago: "We must throw the printer's inkpot at the devil."

D. M. Patton has commented, "The printed page never flinches, never shows cowardice; it is never tempted to compromise, it never tires, never grows dishearted; it travels cheaply, and requires no hired hall; it works while we sleep; it never loses its temper; and it works long after we are dead. The printed page

is a visitor which gets inside the home and stays there; it always catches a man in the right mood, for it speaks to him only when he is reading it; it always sticks to what it has said, and never answers back; and it is bait left permanently in the pool."

Wendell Phillips, considered by many to have been one of the most eloquent orators in American history, realized the tremendous power of the written word. He was once speaking to a mostly hostile crowd in Boston. Their constant jeering and heckling

Continued On Page 4



The Words Of Truth

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I Love Older People

Dale Jenkins

Now, don't take offense at this article. If you don't consider yourself an older person, that is fine, neither will I. But old people are special.

I love them because they have time for people. Older people have lived long enough to learn that the earth won't stop rotating if they don't accomplish all they plan for that day. They take the time to sit on the porch and swing, to take a nap or to spend a while just talking to other people. In a day when people are often too busy for people, older folks take the time to talk and to listen.

I love them because of their experience in living. Listen, and listen closely, because an older person has been around long enough to learn a great deal about living. They've lived long enough to know what is really important and what is really worthwhile. You won't see them breaking their backs just to make an extra dollar -- unless it's to help a child or grandchild or friend in need. They've learned that friends are more important than things, and that relationships don't rust, but possessions do.

I love them because of their zest for life. What zeal and encouragement can come from God through His older saints if they will guard against the embitterment that is common place in worldly people when

they grow older. There are few words more encouraging to a young person than words of love, support and concern from a loving older saint.

God has a special responsibility for older saints:

Titus 2:2-5 "That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers . . . teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women . . ."

God has a special place in His heart for godly older people too:

"The glory of young men is their strength; and the beauty of old men is the grey head (Proverbs 20:29).

God expects us to honor older people:

"Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD" (Leviticus 19:32).

God allowed a godly old man and woman to see Christ for their righteous hope and patience:

Simeon was a man "just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel. God promised him that he would not die "before he had seen the Christ." When Jesus was brought to the temple, Simeon "took Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, 'Now let thy servant depart in peace . . . for mine eyes have seen

thy salvation: a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.'" The prophetess Anna, well into her eighties, "departed not from

the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and

spoke of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:25-38).

Let's thank God for our older people!

God's Word At Thessalonica

Winfred Clark

We will remember that Luke had something to say about Thessalonica. He said, "Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind. . . ." (Acts 17:11). One does not doubt that such was the case at the time. But, aren't you glad that some did respond in the right way to the word of the Lord in Thessalonica?

If we read Paul's letters to the church in that place, we will find that some did manifest a grand attitude toward the word of the Lord. This will be easy to discover as we read the epistles addressed to the church there.

I. IT WAS RESPECTED AS GOD'S WORD

Paul would continually thank God for the great attitude these people showed towards God's word. Here is what he had to say: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (I Thessalonians 2:13).

When Paul, Silas and others would preach the gospel among these folks, they would not think that the message they delivered originated with them. They were aware that the gospel they preached came with signs (I Thessalonians 1:5). This would surely show that these men had God's endorsement. Thus, what they would have to say would come from God. What they were preaching was not something that began with man. They have "preached the gospel . . . with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven" (I Peter 1:12). They had heaven's backing and

endorsement. This grew out of the fact that they spoke the word of the Lord.

Take a moment and look at the number of times Paul referred to the word of the Lord in these letters. When he spoke of their evangelism he said, "For from among you sounded out the word of the Lord" (I Thessalonians 1:8). Paul would identify that which was being preached as "the word of the Lord. Yes, he knew these were men and women, and he knew they were using human language, but he also knew that what they were saying was what God wanted them to say. They were passing on what God said. When that is being done even in our day, it is still God's word. We are aware that times have changed. We are aware that our culture may be deficient. We are aware that our place in history is not the same. But we are also aware of the fact that we still have God's word today. As they sounded out the word from Thessalonica, or as they had occasion to go to other places, that which was the word in Thessalonica would be the same word in any other place. The change in location did not change the nature of the word. We are aware that there might have been language differences from one place to another, but that does not mean that what they said in those languages was not the word of the Lord. A change in language does not alter the fact of God's word still being his word. God is not the God of only one nationality. He is the God of all men.

He reminded them that what he imparted unto them was "the gospel of God" (I Thessalonians 2:8). The gospel which Paul preached was not something that had it's origin

with him. It belonged to God.

When he would deal with those who were troubled about their departed loved ones, he would say, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord" (I Thessalonians 4:15). If that could not undergird them surely nothing could! There is no stronger argument that can be used by mortal man, than to say, "This is said by the word of the Lord." Surely when one comes to a place like that he will need that which will sustain him.

II. IT WAS ACCEPTED IN THEIR HEARTS

Paul said to them, "having received the word," or, "ye received the word of God." That means it was taken into the hearts. They did not merely hear what was said, but they also accepted it into their hearts.

You will also note the phrase, "having received the word in much affliction" (I Thessalonians 1:6). When these came preaching to them they found opposition. They found those who did not believe what was being preached, but they did not stop there. These folks stirred up others to try and oppose them (Acts 17:5). In fact, Paul and Silas left Thessalonica at the request of these brethren. It was not easy to be a believer in that city. Things were not conducive to one being a Christian. Nevertheless, they would accept the word of the Lord in spite of the affliction and opposition that they might face.

These are not the last people to face that sort of a situation. There are people within a family that accept the word of the Lord and then find themselves facing opposition from members of the family. There are students who are Christians who try to walk by

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

How long has it been since you said in exasperation, "I've just got too much stress"? Work deadlines, family problems, traffic jams, bills you must pay with a late charge and that telephone -- sometimes turn us into a trembling human pressure-cooker. Dr. Kenneth Pelletier, a stress expert at the University of California at San Francisco, says the evidence is stronger than ever that life's aggravations, large and small, contribute in a very real way to heart disease. Just knowing that makes us stressed!

Want a suggestion? Simple, but true. We humans need the Lord in our lives. We need the calming effect that only Jesus can give us. He's loving. Stable. Unchanging. He's Truth.

Psalms 46:10: "Be still and know that I am God . . ."

God's Word At Thessalonica

Continued From Page 3

the will of the Lord, and yet find themselves in an alien environment. It isn't always easy for them to go on doing the will of the Lord, but that does not stop them from accepting the will of the Lord. There are people who go to their job on a daily basis and find that not all those with whom they work will walk in God's way. But, that does not stop them from doing what God will have them do. They have accepted God's word and they intend to follow that word in spite of the difficulties they may have to face. It never occurs to them that they should do anything other than the will of God.

They accepted it in spite of the fact that it demanded great changes in their way of life. You will note that Paul said, "and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (I Thessalonians 1:9). Here are people who are given to the worship of idols.

Yet, they will accept the word of the Lord though it demands that they give up their idols.

When you stop to think about what they did, you might stop and ask some questions or make some observations. You would say that they should have given up those idols wouldn't you? In fact we would know of no scriptural reason we could give for them doing otherwise. But why would we encourage them to do what they did? You say, "because it is the right thing to do and it is the only right thing to do." You would be right in so speaking. It would be right because idolatry is contrary to the will of God (I Corinthians 10:14).

Now move this principle to our own day. If a man is involved in denomination-ism, wouldn't the same kind of changes need to be made? The doctrine is surely contrary to the will of God (John 17:20-21, I Corinthians 1:10-13).

Accepting the word of the Lord, one moves out of denominationalism and into the church of the Lord. One could no more continue in denominationism than those of Thessalonica could continue in idolatry. There would have to be a change.

We admire those of Thessalonica for giving up idolatry and turning to God. Shouldn't we also admire men of our day who give up denominationalism and become members of the church of the Lord?

III. THIS WAS REFLECTED IN THEIR LIVES

Paul spoke of remembering "your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope" (I Thessalonians 1:3). He also spoke of how they "became followers of us and of the Lord" (I Thessalonians 1:6). Not only so, but they had also become "ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia" (I Thessalonians 1:7). They have sounded out the word and are serving the living God. They are waiting for the Lord from heaven. One does not have to wonder what effect the word of God had in their lives. You could see it in the way they acted, and in the things they did. It was the effect of God's word that made them evangelistic. It was the word of the Lord that made them expectant. These folks are not the same after having heard the gospel preached. When the gospel was heard and obeyed they were different people.

We need to note that the word of the Lord did not overpower them against their will. They had to respond for it to have this kind of effect. It is also true of us. God's word must be believed and obeyed for it to work effectually in our lives.

Now go back and review. These folks respected the word of the Lord as being the word of the Lord. They also accepted it in spite of afflictions and the changes that needed to be made. This causes us to be able to see the

word of the Lord reflected in their lives. They became a people of God with a great influence for good in the city of Thessalonica. That is what

the word of the Lord did for them and may it have the same effect in our lives!

--Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

The Mountain

Cindy Colley

A mountain was before me
A rugged, rocky climb;
So I began the upward path
That steepened all the time.

My burdens were so heavy;
With great pain I faced the test.
And I longed to turn back and descend . . .
To lay them down and rest.

"Don't look back," a voice would tell me.
"Yesterday is but a dream.
Lay its burdens at the water's brink
And forge this mountain stream."

And so the load was lighter,
I was given strength anew.
The mountain would be mine now,
For my purpose still was true.

But the sun bore down in torrents
Blinding me . . . I couldn't tell
Where the jagged racks ahead lay,
I stumbled, then, and fell.

The everlasting arms were there
To catch me once again.
And a reassuring voice said,
"I understand the pain."

"Do not fear the rugged path ahead
Or shirk from the unknown,
For I will give you blessings
Where my sparkling sun has shone."

So the burden of tomorrow
I left lying in the sun;
And the prospect of what was ahead
Became a hopeful one.

Though the mountain just got steeper
And the sun ne'er failed to shine,
With each step my soul soared higher
And the mountain . . . it was mine!

My burdens still remind me
From that rugged mountainside,
That the shackles of another day
Are but gain when God is Guide.

As I look down on green pastures
Greatest joys within awake;
For in truth, the tallest mountain
Is in the step that I now take.

"Give me this mountain . . ."
Joshua 14:12

The Power Of The Press

Continued from page 2

nearly drowned him out. Sizing up the situation, Phillips stopped trying to address the trouble makers, and instead bent over and began speaking softly to the reporters on the platform. This caught the crowd's attention. When they quieted and strained themselves to hear what the great speaker was saying to the reporters, Phillips looked at them and said softly, "Go on gentlemen, go on. I do not need your ears. Through these pencils I speak to thirty million!" As might be expected, not a voice was raised throughout the remainder of the oration.

There is power in the printed word -- power to unsettle, to change, to transform. We become what we read. Whether we fill our minds

with filth, or drink in the wisdom of the ages, we become what we read. Whether we pore over the pages of the latest lurid novel, or gaze intently into the looking glass of God's holy word, we eventually become what we read.

Read. But read only that which will help you on your way to heaven. First, foremost, and before all else, read the Bible. This inspired book will "build you up . . . and give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

Then, read good, wholesome books. Read instructive, uplifting magazines, papers and journals.

And finally, for those of you who read these words, "Thanks for reading."

October 29, 1993

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- Fifty Framed Together
- Consequences Of Modernism (No. 1)
- Working Together For God Almighty
- How Many Hairs Make A Beard?
- "Most Of A Minute"
- "Lose His Soul?"
- Are You In The Plains Of Ono?
- Experts Say: Limit TV

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The Words (Truth

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

Living For Jesus

Johnny Ransney

One of the great things about Christianity is the challenge found in various areas of living for Jesus. We must constantly strive to grow in the grace and knowledge of God. There is no place where we can rest on our laurels and come to the conclusion that we have arrived at the zenith of our service to the Lord. But, pressing on in the pursuit of righteousness adds zest to the divine adventure the gospel affords. Nothing is more invigorating as walking down the road of life hand in hand with the Master! To claim friendship with the King demands our best and richly rewards every fleeting moment. To live upon this sinful earth without such a relationship would be overwhelmingly sad. A grand hymn says it well:
Savior, Thy dying love
Thou gavest me
Nor should I ought withhold
Dear Lord from thee . . .

Indeed what a Friend we have in Jesus! He puts genuine meaning into our sojourn and helps us to see those matters that are eternal. We are blessed beyond measure to have purpose in life, hope of heaven and fervent love in our souls that propels us into sharing with those who are lost without the unsearchable riches of Christ.

There is a fountain filled with blood

Drawn from Immanuel's

veins

And sinners plunged beneath that flood

Lose all their guilty stains. . .

Living for the Lord demands that we stand up for the truth in spite of the popularity and ease of error, compromise and worldliness. It may seem that Satan's followers are blessed with all the wealth of this mundane sphere but that kind of riches fades into oblivion. Remember:

"If you want to feel rich, just count all the things money cannot buy."

The abundant life reserved for the saints of God far exceeds all the trappings of material pomp. No one is ever as wealthy as the loyal devotee of the Redeemer (I Peter 1:18-20).

Sometimes it appears that sincerely living for Jesus is an impossible task due to the excessive opposition Christianity receives from the world. Never forget these words:

"Great opportunity is often disguised as an impossible situation."

When we rise to the occasion, meet the foe and march on to greener pastures and more vibrant challenges we are nearer heaven than those who are "at ease in Zion" (Amos 6:1). Ships may be safe in the harbor but that is not what ships are made for! We are not on earth to merely exist but to ardently serve the Master (James 1:22). Someone has

well stated these provoking words:

Do not count the days

Make the days count!

Our lot in life is not for parking but building.

Living for Jesus demands our close attention to sound doctrine (Titus 2:1), scriptural worship (John 4:24) and godly living (Matthew 5:8). We dare not claim to walk with the Savior while overlooking these fundamental facets in the life of a child of God. Pleasing men is an easy, shallow and unrewarding lifestyle (Galatians 1:10; James 4:4). Though purity demands courage and loyalty to eternal mandates, the effort is well worth it. When we compromise the high ethics of Christianity to make friends of carnal neighbors we will find, at the end of the way, that we lost the fellowship of the redeemed for all eternity (Matthew 25:46). What a poor bargain!

Living for Jesus definitely makes one an optimistic person. The One we serve has all authority in heaven and earth (Matthew 28:20) and is willing to guide, maintain and sustain us every step of the way (Psalms 27:1-4). How

could we ever be pessimistic and sullen? If we have the proper set of attitudes no set of circumstances can overwhelm our journey toward heaven.

All the way my Savior leads me

Cheers each winding path I tread

Gives me grace for every trial
Feeds me with the living bread . . .

These will be days that appear dark and dreary but in the midst of such moments we find sweet peace in the shelter of His wings. On the darkest

day in the life of a Christian there is still hope, but the brightest moment in an infidel's existence finds only eternal despair awaiting him. Let us, therefore, always remember the brilliant advantages faithful followers of the Lamb of God possess. We truly are bound for the promised land. Beyond this vale of tears is the land of fadeless day. Living for Jesus will continue on a golden street forever!

What About The "Christian Sabbath?"

W. A. Holley

We must assemble ourselves together on the first day of the week if we wish to please God (Hebrews 10:24-26; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Revelation 1:10). This assembly is not a celebration of a "Christian sabbath" (Colossians 2:14-17). The first Christians began to worship God on the first day of the week (Acts 2:1-43, 36-38, 41-42, 47; Leviticus 23:15-16). Pentecost always came on the first day of the week, and since the Lord's church was

established on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection, they began to worship God on that day (See verses noted above).

Those who teach otherwise are in error. The Sabbath Day commemorates God's creation rest. The first day of the week commemorates Christ's resurrection (Luke 24:1, 13, 21; Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1; John 20:1). The early Christians never kept the Sabbath Day as a Christian Sabbath!

Vist Soon
6th Avenue Church Of Christ
Jasper, AL 35501

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Fitly Framed Together

Glenn Colley

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 2:41). 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 Apollos 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."

Consequences Of Modernism (No. 1)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Modernism is a rejection of the miraculous of the Bible; it is a rejection of the Deity of the Christ; it is a rejection of the efficacy of His blood; it is a rejection of the fundamentals of that faith which is most holy.

The four articles in this series will speak of the grave, deadly, lethal dangers we face from malicious modernism. There can be NO affinity between the gospel of God's only begotten Son and the modernism of men. The two systems are totally and mutually exclusive. It is not the gospel AND modernism; it is the gospel VERSUS modernism. It is not an option between two equally acceptable systems of belief and practice. Both cannot remain in the same heart; one MUST go!

Have you ever wondered very seriously just what the consequences of modernism are? They are grave; they are grievous. They are deadly; they are destructive. What will our world be like if modernism wins the victory and cogently establishes its various claims? If modernism is valid, what would be some of the certain consequences to follow?

If modernism is valid, Jehovah God is swept totally and completely from human hearts. Remember that modernism has no place for the supernatural. But Jehovah is God of the supernatural. Modernism has no place for the miraculous. This rules out the God of

heaven. He acted miraculously in creation (Genesis 1, 2). He acted miraculously at the Red Sea (Exodus 14). He acted miraculously in giving and confirming the Sinaitic covenant (Exodus 19, 20). He acted miraculously in daily provision of manna for forty years in the wilderness. He acted supernaturally throughout the period of the prophets and that of Christ and the apostles in the New Testament.

If modernism is so, then atheism has been right all along in its denial of Deity. The Bible has been wrong, since Moses penned those initial words of Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The Bible meets atheism and modernism head-on. Psalm 14:1 and 53:1 both state this fact.

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good . . . The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, have done abominable iniquity; there is none that doeth good."

If modernism is right and true in its various claims, then these passages read incorrectly. They should be rewritten to read, "The fool hath saith in his heart, There is God!" Grant modernism to be right, then wise is the man who denies His existence and the fool would be the one who acknowledges the existence of

Continued On Page 4



The Words Of Truth

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Working Together For God Almighty

W. A. Holley

The word together is used many times in both the Old and New Testaments. It is used approximately 376 times. There are some special lessons contained in this word which are extremely important.

Together suggests unity of action, cooperation, helpful. Christians are not working alone but with God Almighty. Nothing can truly be accomplished when God has been circumvented.

The Corinthian church was divided over preachers and other problems (I Corinthians 1:10-13). Little good could be accomplished until these problems were settled.

We suggest that these points be remembered. Lazy, slothful people never accomplish things worthwhile. A cage of hungry lions at each other's throat serves no special purpose. It takes unified action to spread abroad the gospel message (Matthew 28:18-20).

God Almighty uses human agency to effect salvation in the lives of men and women. For example, God used Noah, Abraham, Moses, John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, the apostles, et al, to carry out His will among men. To illustrate, your hands, your tongue, your voice, etc., are God's hands, tongues, voices -- to help spread abroad the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:44-48).

Conversion is not a miracle as is often taught by modern-day preachers. Since God is no respecter of persons, if He converted one by miracle, He would convert all by miracle. In which case we would have universal salvation (Acts 10:34-35; 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; I Peter 3:20-21).

To be workers together with God we must think right, walk right, and act right (Titus 2:11-12; Romans 12:1-2).

In what areas does the Holy Bible teach us to be workers together with God? We shall cite just a few examples. We are "heirs together of the grace of life" (I Peter 3:7). We have

been "quickened together with Christ" (Ephesians 2:5). We have been raised up together, to sit together in heavenly places. We are "the whole body fitly framed together -- and fitly joined together," to glorify Christ Jesus our Lord (Ephesians 2:6-22). We should have "one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel (Philippians 1:27)."

For what should Christians work together? We shall note:

(1) We should work together for a greater degree of brotherly love. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. But whosoever hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him (I John 3:15-19)." Thus, we feel each other's needs. We work at forgetting evil things of the past, ever pushing onward and upward (Philippians 3:13-14; Luke 9:62; I Corinthians 9:24).

Other Bible verses that should be read are: Amos 1:9, Romans 12:10, I Thessalonians 4:9, Hebrews 13:1, and II Peter 1:7.

(2) We should work for greater cooperation among all our members. Unity, not division, is the key word. Oftentimes some of our members work against each other. Team work is the order of the day. Are not the preachers, elders, deacons, and brothers and sisters in Christ on the same team? Your Bible teaches that the way up is down. Jesus, in the shadow of the cross, said, ". . . He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve" (Luke 22:24-26). Crotchety church members cannot get the job done.

(3) We should work for a greater devotion to Christ and

his church. Brethren, fidelity, allegiance, loyalty, and devotion are words which help us to understand that we are bound by duty, or by a sense of what is right, to serve God wholeheartedly (Matthew 22:37-40). Those who are off-again, on again, gone again are of little value to the Lord's church. The Lord needs those who are "steadfast and unmovable (I Corinthians 15:58)."

(4) We should work together for greater generosity in the use of our time, talent, and money. All of these represent loans from the Lord (I Chronicles 29:14; Deuteronomy 8:17-18; James 1:17).

Buried talents end in disaster (Matthew 25:14-31).

(5) We should work for greater personal consecration to the will and way of the Lord. "Not my will, but thine be done" should be our constant prayer. We should devote ourselves irrevocably to the worship and service of God. Jesus remained true to His mission, even though it cost Him his life. Paul stood firm when others around him fell by the wayside (II Timothy 4:9-18).

(6) We should work together in a greater effort to preach the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost and ruined world (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:4). In

Apostolic times the gospel was preached to the whole world, (Colossians 1:6, 23). Can we not do the same with all the modern means of communication available?

(7) We should make greater efforts toward relieving the needs of the poor, the orphans and widows (Galatians 6:10; James 1:26-27).

Brethren, let us lift up our eyes and look on the fields. Great opportunities and great rewards await us.

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

How Many Hairs Make A Beard?

Dr. Flavil R. Yeakley, Jr.

The Bible does not discuss social drinking, but it does say Christians are not supposed to get drunk. Drunkenness is clearly condemned in such passages as Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:21, I Corinthians 5:11, and many other places.

The percentage of alcohol in the blood is the only scientific measurement of drunkenness. When the level of alcohol in the blood reaches .5% the person dies of alcohol poisoning. At .4% the drinker goes into shock. At .3% the drinker passes out. At .15% the drinker has such serious coordination problems that he is legally classified as being "drunk" -- even in states with the most liberal rules.

Most states set the .1% level as the legal definition of "drunkenness." Some foreign countries use the .05% level. But at the .04% level, vision is impaired as much as if the person were trying to drive at night while wearing sun glasses. From this relatively low level to the point of death, the effects of alcohol are physical. However, at lower levels of blood-alcohol content, there are some other effects. The first part of the brain to be put to sleep by the effects of alcohol are those parts of the brain associated with judgment, self-control,

and reason. It does not take much alcohol to put the conscience to sleep. One can of beer, or one-half a cocktail contain enough alcohol to affect the brain to a measurable degree. And the very first effects are those that are most important morally and spiritually.

The Bible does not say,

"Don't get dead drunk" or "Don't get blind-staggering drunk." The Bible just says, "Don't get drunk." What people today call "Social Drinking" involves enough alcohol to produce the effects that the Bible warns against. The only safe course for Christians is to avoid drinking alcoholic beverages altogether.

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"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

Do you believe the theory of evolution? Do you believe that humans came from apes and that we today are only animals with more sophisticated brains than our monkey ancestors? What are some obvious differences between men and animals? Consider these:

--When an old faithful dog gets blind and crippled, we might carry the old friend to the vet to be "put to sleep." We would certainly not do that to our elderly humans. But what makes them different?

--When a horse breaks a leg, a common practice is to shoot him. This reasoning would be cold-blooded murder with any human.

--Thousands of cattle are slaughtered each day for food for other creatures. Such a thought for humans is repulsive.

What's the important difference between humans and animals?

Genesis 1:27 -- "So God created man in His own image." I think some people owe their ancestors an apology.

"Lose His Soul?"

Mike Benson

Dear Mike,

"Do you believe that a Christian can so sin as to lose his soul . . . ? Is there a passage in the Bible which teaches this can happen?"

Actually there are several passages which teach the possibility of apostasy. Here is but one from James 5:19-20:

1. "Brethren, if anyone among you wanders ('errs' KJV) from the truth . . ."

•Whom does James address when he says, "Brethren, if anyone among you . . . ?" Among whom?

•Brethren "fellow member, kinsman, fellow citizen, comrade."¹

•According to this verse, is it possible for a brother to wander/err from the truth?

•Wander v. "stray away, become lost."²

•How is it possible to wander/err from the truth unless a person has first been in the truth? (Is it possible to wander from a position one has never attained)?

2. ". . . and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way . . ."

•How is it possible to turn back to a saved state if you've never wandered from it in the first place?

•If a brother who wanders from the truth (i.e., a sinner) is not in a lost condition, then why should a spiritual brother (Galatians 6:1) attempt to turn him back? Why attempt to turn an erring brother back to the truth if his soul is not in jeopardy?

•What will happen to a person who does not obey the truth (Matthew 7:21-23)?

What will happen to a person who does not teach the truth (II Peter 2:1-3)?

3. ". . . will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins."

•What did James say about a brother's spiritual condition when he is turned from the error of his way?

•If a brother who wanders from the truth (i.e., a sinner) is not in spiritual peril, then how could James say that when he is turned back from the error of

his way (i.e., restored - Galatians 6:1) that his soul is saved from death?

•In the context of these two verses, to what kind of death does James refer? Physical or spiritual?

•How can an erring brothers' soul said to be saved from eternal death if it was never in danger of eternal death in the first place?

•Why would an erring brothers' sins need to be covered (Romans 4:6-8) if it is

impossible for him to so sin as to be lost?

•How does a person's sins affect his/her relationship to God (Isaiah 59:1-2)? ". . . But your iniquities have separated you from your God . . ."

¹Random House Thesaurus, College Edition, 1984, p. 103.

²ibid, p. 788.

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

Are You In The Plains Of Ono? (Nehemiah 6)

Neal Pollard

Valleys are often associated with dismal times, heartaches, and loss. We think mostly of the "valley of the shadow of death." That name rings with finality. Valleys often represent low times and sorrow.

Nehemiah 6 relates the story of the valley Ono. The enemies of Israel - Sanballet, Tobiah, and Geshem - represent the beguiling devil. Nehemiah and the Israelites represent the Christian and his duties. Let us notice some things represented by the plains of Ono.

The Valley Of Entrapment (Nehemiah 6:1-2). The three enemies were bullies. They tried hard to trick Nehemiah into the valley where they could mischievously undo him. Today, Satan tempts us to gather at the lake instead of gathering with the saints in worship where we can drink together of the water of life. Or, he tempts us to stay at home rather than visit the sick and wayward. Do not be trapped! Solomon said, "there shall no evil happen to the just; BUT the wicked shall be filled with mischief" (Proverbs 12:21).

The Valley Of Scorn (Nehemiah 6:3). The enemies of God did not think the work of Nehemiah was very important (verse 4). Today, God's enemy tells us that "church work" is not valuable use of time. Thanks be unto God for ministers, Bible

school teachers, missionaries, faithful Christians, and spiritual leaders who refuse to fall into this valley of scorn. God resists the scorers, but gives grace to the humble (Proverbs 3:34).

The Valley Of Deceit (Nehemiah 6:7-12). If Nehemiah would have gone into this valley, he would have lost his courage and godly influence. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). Do not let any one deceive you into a valley of worldliness and poor choices.

Prayer, Bible study, and general faithfulness will keep

us out of these valleys. Through encouragement and active love, we can help pull others from these valleys. Through encouragement and active love, we can help pull others from these valleys and prevent others from plunging into them. By endeavoring to remain on the spiritual peak of fidelity to God, we, like Nehemiah, will overcome the wiles of the wicked (cf. Nehemiah 6:16)!

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Consequences Of Modernism (No. 1)

Continued from page 2

a Supreme Maker of the Universe and everything therein.

But reader friends, the Bible is not wrong; it is right -- eminently right! The Bible is right when it declares the man a fool who would look at all staggering and overwhelming evidence so easily available to the inquiring mind and still blatantly boast, "There is no God!" It is of more than passing interest to call your attention to the fact that the word for fool in Psalm 14:1 and 53:1 comes from a Hebrew term nabal and literally means an "empty person." The daring denier of God is empty of head, heart and hand; he is minus profit in such blasphemous denials. Only the empty of heart, head and hand would stoop so low as to deny the existence of God. Youthful readers, are you reading carefully? When your atheistic or agnostic professor tells you in the university classroom that there is no God

or no surety of His existence, just remember that you are listening to one who is empty of head, heart and hand. "How firm a foundation" which has been bequeathed to you by faithful parents and concerned Bible preachers and teachers should NEVER be shaken by any man or woman with an empty head, heart and hand. Why should you go to hell just because they are determined to go there?

Would you want to live in a world with no God? As bad as our world is today, and it gets worse hour by hour due to Satan and sin, it would be ten million times worse if all lived as though there were no God. If the tenets of modernism are attractive to you, just remember that the world of modernism is a world without God for they reject the supernatural and that rules out God.

--P.O. Box 464, Ripley, TN 38063.

Experts Say: Limit TV

Robb Hadley

Recently, the American Academy of Pediatricians called for parents to strictly limit the amount of time they allow their children to watch TV. In order to decrease damage caused by violence and sex-saturated programming, the pediatricians urged that children should watch no more than two hours of TV a day.

Why are the nation's pediatricians just now getting around to speaking out on an issue that has been plaguing the American family for the last 20 years? Because recent research has shown that kids under 18 are watching around

25 hours of TV per week. That's close to one-fourth of all their waking hours. And during those 25 hours, kids see hundreds of violent acts and sexual references -- up to 25 violent acts per hour and 14,000 sexual references and innuendos per year.

Is it any wonder that so many of today's young people see violence as the answer to life's problems and sex as a harmless passport to a good time?

Ultimately it is up to parents to set viewing standards for their kids. Parents, what message are they getting from you?

--Fayetteville, AR.

November 5, 1993

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- The Humble Strong Ones
- Consequences Of Modernism (No. 2)
- The Period Of Judges
- Have You Placed Membership?
- Don't Change The Message
 - "Most Of A Minute"
 - "Name Of The Church?"
 - Is All Change Good?

Volume 29 Number 45
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

"Don't Fall Out Along The Way"

W. A. Holley

The caption of this article is taken from Genesis 45:16-24, ASV.

In the context Joseph is sending his brothers into the land of Canaan to bring their father, Jacob, down into Egypt, to Goshen. As they go they are instructed to keep their minds on the purpose of their journey, and not to get lost along the way. We may not know just what Joseph had in mind, but we know how easily we can become distracted, and thus lose our way.

Jacob's family was a special family in God's sight. But there were many problems in Jacob's family just as there are many problems in our families today. Jacob had a favorite son (which should never be), and his brothers hated him. They planned to kill him, but he was finally sold as a slave into the land of Egypt. Joseph, because of his grand character, and in spite of many unfortunate acts, finally became Governor of Egypt, second only to the Pharaoh. We suggest that you read the full account (Genesis 37-50). Although we do not live under the laws of the Old Testament, there are many wonderful lessons there taught for our learning and admonition (Colossians 2:14-17; Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:11).

Today God's family is His church (I Timothy 3:14-15). We enter God's family or church through the new birth (John 3:3-5; II Corinthians

5:17). The Lord God adds to His church all who believe obediently, repent of their sins, confess Jesus' worthy name, are baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of sins, and who remain faithful to Him (Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-42, 47; Revelation 2:10). "So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God . . ." "For our citizenship is in heaven. . ." (Ephesians 2:19; Philippians 3:20, ASV).

Christian friends, since you have started toward heaven, you must take great care lest you "Fall Out Along The Way." God keeps those who keep themselves through obedience to His will (II Timothy 1:12 with I Peter 4:19). "Once in grace, always in grace," is based upon an misunderstanding of God's word (I Corinthians 9:27; Matthew 25:30). Heaven would be ruined if drunkards and fornicators, et al, could inhabit heaven (Galatians 5:19-21; 6:7-9). Clean up your lives, brethren!

What are some of the dangers which might cause us to Fall Out Along The Way? We shall note --

(1) We must avoid becoming mired in the swamps of religious division. Religious division is very destructive. A football team that does not play as a unit cannot win. There are seven ones in the Bible: One body, one Spirit, one hope, one faith, one Lord,

one baptism, one God (Ephesians 4:3-6). A house, or a church, or a city divided against itself cannot stand (Matthew 12:22-32). Jesus prayed for unity (John 17:20 ff). "Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Corinthians 1:10, ASV). Don't become lost fighting each other.

(2) Resolve not to become drowned in the ocean of doubts and fears and uncertainties of life. God Almighty is the anchor of your soul (Hebrews 6:19). Fear and doubts are emotions that destroy those who have a weak faith. In the days of John the apostle, when Christians often suffered persecution and death, he wrote: "Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, even so are we in this world. There is no fear in love: but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath punishment, and he that feareth is not made perfect in love" (I John 4:17-18, ASV).

Dear Reader, do not be of a doubtful mind (Luke 12:29, here, consider context). Human beings are far more important than what they possess (Luke 12:13-21). One does not have to possess great wealth, or a great education, or

hold high political office in order to go to heaven. In the midst of all troubles, God is ever with His children (Hebrews 13:5-6; see Matthew 28:18-20).

(3) Uncontrolled anger leads many from the path of truth and righteousness. Words or deeds spoken or done in anger does great injury to the cause of Christ. Anger is not always bad. God and Jesus are said to have been angry (Mark 3:5; Hebrews 3:11; 4:3). Anger is said to be "the strongest of all passions" (Vine, page 26). When wrath is permitted to smolder in the minds of its victims, it is deadly indeed (Romans 2:8; Galatians 5:19-21). Do not allow your anger to cause you to become lost along the way. Some become angry with the church, the elders, the preacher, or another member of the church and, because they cannot have their way, abandon God and His church altogether. Stop, look, and listen, before it is too late.

(4) Brethren, do not allow envy to cause you to become side-tracked along the way. What is envy? Envy may seem like a mild and harmless mind-set of no serious consequences; but it is deadly indeed. What is envy? It is a feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others. A bad sense always attaches it. "A tranquil heart is the life of the flesh; but envy is the rottenness of the bones" (Proverbs 14:30). "Where

envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work" (James 3:16). God is not the God of confusion (I Corinthians 14:33, nor is He sympathetic to it. Back of the crimes of Cain, King Saul, King Ahab, and the crucifixion of Jesus Christ was the sin of envy. Joseph was sold into slavery because of envy on the part of his brethren. Yes, envy perpetrated the most atrocious crime every planned in hell or executed on earth in the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus (Matthew 27:18; Mark 15:10). Malice and spite are deadly sins closely related to envy.

(5) A lack of brotherly love causes many brethren to become lost along the way. We must not love in word only, but indeed and in truth (I John 3:13-18). Truly, love can be known only from the actions it prompts. For example, God so loved the world that He gave His Son to save it (John 3:16). In Luke 10:25-37, we have a demonstration of love in action. The lesson: On the Jericho Road, a man was beaten and robbed, a priest and a levite (two religious persons) passed by on the other side. A Samaritan, a despised man, stopped, rendered aid to the unfortunate man, took him to an inn, paid his bills and promised to pay more if need, thus showing genuine love for his fellowman. Jesus said, "Go, and do thou likewise." Do you love God? show it; do

Continued On Page 4

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

The Humble Strong Ones

Glenn Colley

Hopefully all of us know good and godly men who occupy the office of bishop (i.e. elder) in the church. These men are great examples to the flock. They lead and guard us throughout our years. They are there to teach and nurture us when we are unlearned babes in Christ, correct us when we sin, and encourage us when we are discouraged.

The elders' work requires balance. They are not to be "brawlers" (I Timothy 3:3), yet they are to "convince those who speak against the truth (Titus 1:9)." They are to be of good reputation in the community (I Timothy 3:7), able, willing, and known to teach the word of God (I Timothy 3:2), and at the same time good husbands and fathers in their homes (I Timothy 3:4). To suggest that these and other qualifications are unreasonable is to question God Himself, for His word clearly teaches that men can and should meet these fine qualities.

I Peter 5:3 says of these church leaders, "Neither as being Lord's over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." Some erroneously use this verse to teach that the only

authority elders have is in the realm of their godly example. This doctrine seeks to remove God's authority, for He designed the work and authority of elders. They are "Presbuteros," or overseers (Acts 20:17). They are "Episkopos," or those who are charged with seeing things are done right (Acts 20:28). Elders who fail in these duties are letting God down and should do better or resign. The cause of Christ is too important to be damaged by elders who refuse to do their best.

What I Peter 5:3 teaches is a spirit which should live within all elders of the churches of Christ. It is the key ingredient in the leadership character which directs and tempers the man. It is humility.

This shining characteristic of humility is seen in a variety of leaders in the Bible. Though dead, they still speak volumes of encouragement to leaders today:

•Exodus 3:11 -- "And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

•Judges 6:15 -- "And he (Gideon, GC) said unto Him, O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my

family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."

•I Samuel 9:21 -- "And Saul answered and said, 'Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? And my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Wherefore then speakest thou so to me?'"

•I Samuel 18:18 -- "And David said unto Saul, who am I? And what is my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the King?"

•I Kings 3:7 -- Solomon: "And now, O Lord my God, Thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father, and I am but a little child. I know not who to go out or come in.

•Isaiah 6:5 -- "Then said I, 'Woe is me! For I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.'"

Elders, do you see? May the Lord give us more godly men who know and love the Bible, who know and love the Lord, and who know and love the flock.

Lead us home brethren, lead us home.

Consequences Of Modernism (No. 2)

Editor's Note: If any of our readers miss any portion of this 4-part series by Robert Taylor, and would like a complete set, I will be happy to fulfill the need free for the asking. - Glenn Colley, 1501 6th Ave., Jasper, AL 35501.

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

In the initial article of this four-part series attention was directed to what modernism does with God. It eliminates Him. But this is only the beginning of the elimination process. It extends to His only begotten Son. If modernism is so, we have no Christ. Modernism rules out the supernatural and that leaves NO place for Jesus Christ. If modernism is valid, there is no place for all the supernatural prophecies that told of His first coming. Prophecy, in and of itself, is supernatural; it is miraculous in its noble nature. There are more than three hundred supernatural or miraculous prophecies in the Old Testament relative to His first coming. Not a single one of them is valid if modernism be true. There could be no room for His supernatural entrance into our world by the marvelous means of the virgin conception and birth prophesied of in Isaiah 7:14 and fulfilled with precision in Matthew 1 and 2. If modernism is true, there would be no room for the miraculous manner of His life on earth. Jesus Christ is the great miracle of the Bible. There would be no specific room for any of His miracles such as

turning water into wine in John 2, walking upon the stormy Galilean Sea in Matthew 14, healing the sick and diseased as in Matthew 4:23, 24, calling the dead back to life as in Mark 5, Luke 7 and John 11, His own resurrection in Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24 and John 20, His ascension in Acts 1, the establishment of the church amidst miraculous manifestations of great spiritual power in Acts 2 and the many signs and wonders He performed throughout apostolic agency from Acts 2 onward.

If modernism is true, we might as well forget all about His second coming, the resurrection of all in their graves, the final judgment and eternal destinies in heaven and hell for all mankind. That is precisely what Modernism wants us to ignore and eliminate from all future concern! Minus all question or quibble to the contrary, all these Biblical finals demand the supernatural and modernism has no place for the supernatural -- not as much as a particle!

Some modernists may be thinking, "We are not seeking to eliminate Him as Teacher, Philosopher, excellent Guide and unparalleled Example." But lost humanity needs more than a great and renown Teacher or Philosopher. Ruined mankind needs more than a moral guide and good example. We need Jesus as

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The Period Of Judges

Neal Pollard

"And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he did for Israel" (Judges 2:7). "And there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel . . ." (Judges 2:10b). For over 200 years, Israel was ruled by judges (Hastings Dictionary Of The Bible, Volume Two, p. 807). These individuals provided the leadership over God's people until Samuel anointed Saul king in I Samuel 10.

From a historical perspective, the period of the judges fits on a time line after the death of Joshua and before the United Kingdom of Israel. Israel, having taken Canaan under Joshua, received their inheritance tribe by tribe. Each tribe failed to fully obey God's command to utterly destroy the natives within the borders of their inheritance. Those Canaanites not exterminated provided the repeated oppression against these descendants of Abraham throughout this period of biblical history.

Morally, Israel was depraved. The generation succeeding Joshua and the elders' was one which "knew not God." Judges 2:16-19 discloses a concise summary of this period. From this time in Israel's history, we find:

1. THE RULES - "judges" (verse 16) (from Othniel to Samuel, fifteen judges)

2. THEIR ROLE - "delivered" (verse 16)

3. THE RESCUED - "them" (verse 16) (the Israelites)

4. THEIR RIVALS - "those . . ." (verse 16) (God's enemies)

5. THE RUINATION - "spoiled them" (verse 16) (the general oppression of the period against Israel)

6. THE REFUSAL - "they would not hearken unto their judge" (verse 17)

7. THEIR REVELLING - "went awhoring after other gods" (verse 17)

8. THEIR RETREAT - "turned quickly out of the way" (verse 17) (a moral retreat)

9. THE RIGHT ROAD - "the way which their fathers walked in" (verse 17)

10. THE ROLE MODELS - "which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord" (verse 17)

11. THEIR RESOLUTION -

"but they did not so" (verse 17) (contrast this resolve with a determination NOT to sin)

12. THE RAISING - "The Lord raised them up judges" (verse 18)

13. THE RELATIONSHIP - "The Lord was with the judge" (verse 18)

14. THE RESTORATION - "Delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judges" (verse 18)

15. THE REPENTANCE - "for it repented the Lord because of their groanings" (verse 18) (God changed His mind)

16. THEIR RETURN - "and it came to pass, when the judge was dead, they returned" (verse 19) (Israel went back to the mire of sin)

17. THEIR RETROGRESION - "Corrupted themselves more than their fathers" (verse

19) (they moved further away from God each time)

18. THEIR RESILIENCE - "they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way" (verse 19) (they persevered in walking on the wrong path)

Though Israel forgot God when times were good all during this dark period, let us learn from their folly and our own!

Have You Placed Membership?

Gary Colley

Wherever a Christian lives, his "membership" in the Lord's church (or responsibility to Christ) goes with him. Some honestly question whether it is needful, necessary, and scriptural for Christians to make known where they intend to worship and work in the locality where they live. Some drift in and out of various congregations and feel no obligation to God's order, thereby spurning responsibility and reward. This type of irresponsible action ignores the God-given order of elders overseeing the flock among them (I Peter 5:1-2).

By the examples of the New Testament, we realize that it is scriptural, and in harmony with God's desire and order, for each Christian to be identified with a local congregation (Acts 9:6; 18:27; Romans 16:1-2). Some have never been made aware of this and therefore have not "placed their membership" or been "identified" with any local body. A few facts to study will no doubt help those who have been hesitant along this line. We are sure that with understanding will come the desire to meet with God's approval.

1. The local congregation (flock together) is the only unit of organization known in the New Testament for carrying forth God's work (I Corinthians 1:2; Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14).

2. God has ordained that qualified men (elders) should

oversee, feed, and protect this flock from error (Acts 20:28-31; I Peter 5:1-4).

3. Since there are to be overseers, it is necessary that the flock submit to, and make known their submission to, this oversight (Hebrews 13:15-17).

4. In respect for God's order or will, the overseer submit or make known their willingness to be under the oversight, discipline, and watch care of the elders. There could be no divine organization otherwise (I Timothy 5:17, 19).

5. There are none found in the New Testament as "members at large" or "floaters" who do not want to be responsible in a locality.

6. Therefore it is necessary IN SOME WAY when we move into a community and decide where we will worship, to make known to all that our "membership" is with a certain local congregation.

7. To make known that desire to be identified as a part of the chosen congregation, you may choose to go forward at the appropriate time of response, by speaking to an elder or the preacher so that it can be announced, or by indicating your desire on a registration form or program of worship.

There is no doubt that for our safety and strength, the full use of our talents, the provoking of others to "love and good works" (Hebrews 10:23-25), as well as the spread of the Kingdom, God desires that we make known our intentions to be a part of one of the local congregations of His people.

Have you placed member-

ship?

--8900 Manchaca Rd.,

Austin, TX 78748-5399.

Don't Change The Message

Don Deffenbaugh

The other day Bobby Key showed me a printing error that appeared in one of his articles that made what he wrote to appear to be foolishness. What he had written was, "God can be depended on because he lives." What actually appeared in his article was, "God can be depended on because he lies." Now that was a bad mistake! The message was completely changed by just leaving out one letter.

This reminds me of what

Satan told Eve in the garden of Eden. Eve said, "But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden. God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." But Satan changed the message to say, "Ye shall not surely die."

This kind of thing has been going on for a long time now.

For example, the Bible says, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us . . ." (I Peter 3:21). Yet

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"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

It is said that in Iowa there stands a historic little brown church building where hundreds of weddings take place each year. The preacher has adopted a beautiful farewell to the many couples. After the ceremony he takes the couple to the entry and says, "Before you go, the bride has the honor of ringing the church bell." He places the rope in her hands and she pulls with all her might, but the heavy bell will not turn. Then the preacher turns to the groom and asks that he lend a hand and help his bride. Together, they pull and the bell turns, sending out over the countryside the news of another wedding. Then the preacher says, "As you go out into life, never forget that as long as you pull together, you can ring the bell."

You know, there's a great lesson here. Husbands and wives must pull together in all they do.

In I Peter 3:1-8 Peter says, "ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life . . ."

Truth is, it's easier for two to get to heaven than one.

"Name Of The Church?"

Mike Benson

Dear Mike,

"We have so many different churches in our community, most of which go by different names . . . I can't see how all of these different names could be pleasing to the Lord. . . What name does the church of the Bible go by?"

Actually, the church which we read about in the Bible has no name.

1. Consider: If I mention to

you the *dog of John*, I have told you that the dog belongs to John, but I have not told you the name of his dog.

2. Consider: If I mentioned to you the *wife of Sam*, I have told you that Sam is married, but I have not told you the name of his wife.

3. Consider: If I mention to you the *church of Christ*, I have told you that the church belongs to Christ (Matthew 16:18), but I have not named

His church.

The church of the Bible has no name. It is simply referred to as "the church" (Colossians 1:18), "the church of the Lord" (Acts 20:28, ASV), "the church of God" (I Corinthians 1:2), or the church of Christ

(Romans 16:16).

I have been unable to find the names Lutheran Church, African Methodist Episcopal Church, Baptist Church, Catholic Church, First Christian Church, Episcopal Church, Mormon Church, Nazarene Church, Presbyterian

Church, Seventh Day Adventist Church, Etc. anywhere in the Bible.

If these names cannot be found in the Scriptures, from where did they originate?

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

Consequences

Of Modernism (No. 2)

Continued from page 2

Lord and Saviour (Acts 5:31). We need Him as God's Lamb who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). We need Him as the Good Shepherd and the one who laid down His life for the sheep (John 10:11). We need Him as The Way, The truth, and The life (John 14:6). We need Him as the one who died for our sins. His death, burial and resurrection form the heart of the gospel message as per I Corinthians 15:1-4. As per Hebrews 2:9, He has tested death for every man.

We need far more than a teacher, philosopher, example and moral guide -- the only realms modernism is willing to accede to Him. We need one who is both God and man. Modernism has no place for Him who is both Son of Jehovah and Son of man all merged into the greatest personality ever to walk God's green footstool. The manufactured Jesus of modernism is just a man and NOTHING more. They take from Him His Deity; this robs

Him of His power to save. There is no room in modernism for Him as Atonement and Saviour. Modernism really does not believe man is in sin and thus has any need of a sacrifice and salvation. Calvary is NEVER the message of modernism. Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38 form NO plank in the foundation of modernism. Modernists do not preach Christ, His Church, entrance requirements thereunto and the type of life ordered therein. This is precisely WHY modernism is the overt enemy of Jesus Christ and Christianity. NEVER allow anybody to deceive you to the contrary with high sounding speeches and smoothly flowing words of empty rhetoric. If modernism is valid, we have already bidden a final good-bye to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ and modernism are far more distant than are the North and South Poles.

--P.O. Box 464, Ripley, TN 38063.

"Don't Fall Out Along The Way"

Continued From Page 1

you love your family? Show it; Do you love the church? Show it.

We cannot fight the good fight of faith while using the devil's weapons (I Corinthians

13:4-13; 16:13-14; John 13:34-35). The race is not won until the race is over (Galatians 5:7). Don't Fall Out Along The Way.

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

Is All Change Good?

Max Patterson

So much is being said today about change. So many are pushing the concept of change - from politicians to religionists. But is all change good? If we are speaking of repenting from sin, if we are talking about changing our lives for the better and turning to God, we would have to agree that such change is good.

But much of the change going on in this country is not good. Think about this: In the last 30 years the U.S. population has increased 41%, the gross domestic product has nearly tripled, and total social spending by all government agencies has risen more than five times - from \$143.73 billion to \$787 billion. Now think about this: In this same 30 years violent crime has increased 560%, illegitimate births have increased 419%, divorce rates have quadrupled, the number of children living in single-parent homes has tripled, the teenage suicide rate has increased 200%, homosexuality, and immorality of the rankest kind has come out of the closet, etc., etc.

Why has all of this taken place? That's a good question, and it deserves an answer. These things have happened despite government's "programs" to "remedy" these situations. One of the reasons why these and other programs have not succeeded is that more and more Americans are valuing self-expression over self-control. We value less the moral obligation to pay what we owe to others. We are no longer willing to sacrifice. We no longer have the discipline to restrain ourselves in matters of physical pleasure and sexuality.

Think of some of the factors that indicate our decline:

1. Average daily TV viewing has risen from 5.06 hours in 1960 to 7.04 hours in 1992 (Nielson).

2. College SAT scores have dropped from 975 in 1960 to

899 in 1992 (The College Board)

3. The number of illegitimate births went from 5.3% in 1960 to 26.2% in 1990. (National Center for Health Statistics)

4. Children with single mothers went from 8% in 1960 to 22% in 1990. (Bureau of Census)

5. Children on welfare went from 3.5% in 1960 to 11.9% in 1990. (Bureau of Census)

6. The teen suicide rate went from 3.6% in 1960 to 11.3% in 1990. (Bureau of Census)

7. Violent crimes (per 100,000) went from 16.1 in 1960 to 75.8 in 1991 (FBI)

8. The median prison sentence in 1954 was 22.5 days. Whereas in 1990 it was 8.0 days. (National Center for Policy Analysis)

Since God does not impose His will on people, He will not make us do better. We are a free people. The responsibility to do better rests with us, the people of our society. We can do better if there is a will to do better (John 7:17). What can we as individuals do?

1. We need a return to God and to the teaching of the Word of God (Isaiah 55:7; Matthew 11:28-30).

2. We need to vote into offices of leadership in this country men of high moral values, and who will enact

social legislation based on morality (I Timothy 2:1,2; Romans 13:1).

3. Our families must concentrate on being stronger (Deuteronomy 6:5-9; Ephesians 6:1-4; Hebrews 12:5-11).

4. Our churches must take a more aggressive role in teaching and leading in moral and spiritual matters in the community. (Some of the things that ought to be taught are self-control, compassion, honesty, respect for property rights, respect for authority, etc.) (Titus 1:10, 11; Eph. 3:9, 10).

5. We need to understand clearly our purpose in life, and articulate it clearly by word and deed (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14; I Peter 4:11; I Corinthians 15:58).

6. We must take responsibility. It belongs to no one else (Romans 14:12; Galatians 6:5).

Obviously, there are many more things which could be said about this complex matter, and other suggestions listed as to what we can do to help. These are a few to get us to think, and to get us started doing what we need to do. Encourage change for good; resist with all your might change for evil (James 4:7-11).

--1037 W. South St., Neosho, MO 64850.

Don't Change The Message

Continued From Page 3

nan has changed this teaching of Scripture to say that baptism both NOT also now save us.

The Bible says, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19). Man changes this passage to say that we are to sing and make melody on a mechanical instrument of

music.

The Bible says we are saved "by grace through faith" (Ephesians 2:8-9). Man teaches that we are saved by grace alone or by faith alone.

Let's all make sure that we do what God says and not be guilty of changing his message in any way. Don't change the message!

November 12, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- Never Take Me Back There
- Consequences Of Modernism (No. 3)
- Some Say Jesus Will Dwell On The Earth Again
- The Benevolence Of Barzillai
 - "Most Of A Minute"
 - Is Local Membership Just A Tradition Of Men?
 - Doing Right

Volume 29 Number 46
(USPS 691-760)

The Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak the Words of Truth and soberness." -- *Acts 26:24*

he

What Is Christianity?

Johnny Ramsey

Christianity means that a person has a goal, a name, a purpose, a friend, an influence and a very bright future. To be a Christian, in the Bible usage of that word, means that I am free, forgiven, happy, anchored, urgent and concerned for others. To follow the Lord is the only way to walk the sands of time on the road to glory. Any other emphasis in life falls short of full joy and depth. There are personal relationships that exist between the Lord and His loyal friends. Notice these words that form the epitome of what it means to be a Christian.

Soldier

In a stirring battle with Satan we militantly use the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17) as we fight the good fight of faith against spiritual wickedness in high places. To be sure, this is not carnal combat with physical weaponry, but it is mighty toward God (II Corinthians 10:5) and is capable of making friends for the Lord out of former enemies. Christianity has the power to bring peace to nations, families and individuals. These words reminds us of this truth:

Sometimes God calms the raging storm.

Sometimes He lets the storm rage and calms His child.

Saint

The people of the Lord are

pure, holy and distinctive; (John 15:19) set apart for the master's cause (I Peter 2:9). A Christian will not allow the world to deter him from His march toward heaven. He will be the light of the world and not permit darkness to arrest his progress in spiritual commitment.

Purer yet and purer I would be in mind

Dearer yet and dearer, every duty find . . .

Disciple

A disciple is a pupil, a learner -- one who adheres to the mandates of his teacher -- that is what it means to follow Jesus (John 8:31; 15:8). The power and purpose of discipline is an undergirding virtue of the gospel system. Without it we would only have chaos in Christianity. Revelation 3:19 proves that God uses chastening as an act of love designed to make us better people as we correct our lives so as to better serve the Savior. Easy street is the broad avenue many compromisers seek. It takes real effort to be a disciple of Christ. We should never forget the following maxim:

Some people had rather pray for forgiveness than fight temptation.

Too many people reject the value of discipline by always following the line of least resistance.

Fellow-laborer

Paul reminded the Corinthians that they were co-workers with the Creator. In

Philippians 2:12-13 we have an even fuller statement concerning this tremendous association. To serve the Redeemer is life's grandest relationship.

I walk with the King
In pastures so green . . .

We glory in the cross (Galatians 6:14) as we partake in the glory of saving souls and edifying the brethren.

Success is not a destination;
it is a road . . .

As long as we live there will

be wonderful work for us to do in Jesus' name. To be a follower of the Man of Calvary makes our days so meaningful and productive.

O land of rest for thee I sigh
When will the moment come
When I shall lay my burden down

And dwell in peace at home . . .

What is Christianity? It is truly the only life that counts for time and eternity. May we

pursue this magnificent obsession with the zest and gratitude it so richly deserves.

Heaven holds all to me
Brighter its glory shall be
Joy without measure
Will be my treasure
Heaven holds all to me . . .

Such hope should motivate us to pursue a closer walk with God.

Do You Know Who I Am?

Ken Dye

For some reason humanity often demands recognition. Perhaps our quest for identity drives us on occasion to want someone to recognize us over others.

The following story illustrates this point. Christian Herter, when governor of Massachusetts, was running hard for a second term in office. One day, after a busy morning chasing votes (and no lunch) he arrived at a church barbecue. It was late afternoon and Herter was famished.

As Herter moved down the serving line, he held out his plate to the woman serving chicken. She put a piece on his plate and turned to the next person in line.

"Excuse me," Governor Herter said, "could I have another piece of chicken?" "Sorry," the woman told him,

"I'm supposed to give one piece of chicken to each person."

"But I'm starved," the governor said.

"Sorry," the woman said again. "Only one to a customer."

Governor Herter was a modest and unassuming man, but he decided that this time he would throw a little weight around.

"Do you know who I am," he said. "I'm the governor of this state."

"Do you know who I am?" the woman said. "I'm the lady in charge of the chicken. Move along, Mister."

When Jesus walked the earth He recognized this hunger for pre-eminence and gave the following illustration:

"When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest

a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him; and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14:8-11).

We would do well to learn these lessons about our importance before we too are exposed to a graphic display of our unimportance. After all, if we are who we think we are, others will see it and recognize it without our effort.

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Never Take Me Back There

Glenn Colley

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 practices!"

"For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor."

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).

Consequences Of Modernism (No. 3)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Modernism's elimination system does not end with ousting God the Father and God the Son. God the Holy Spirit likewise must go. Recall that modernism rejects the miraculous and the supernatural. The Third Person of the Godhead was active in the creative drama unfolded in Genesis 1. He moved or brooded upon the waters in Genesis 1:2. Creation was supernatural or miraculous. He is associated with the supernatural or the miraculous when Christ was here as per Matthew 12:28. The baptism of the Holy Spirit that came on the apostles in Acts 2, upon Paul in Acts 9 and upon Gentiles in Acts 10 are all associated with supernatural signs and mighty miracles. Those upon whom apostles laid hands received spiritual gifts, some nine of them as per I Corinthians 12:8-10, and these were miraculous in their noble nature.

The entire Bible was written by Holy Spirit inspiration as per such passages as II Samuel 23:2; Jeremiah 1:9; I Corinthians 2:13; II Timothy 3:16, 17 and II Peter 1:21. But modernism denies the very thing that the Holy Spirit did through some forty selected scribes. If modernism is so, the Holy Spirit is wiped from the scene of any reality. If any reader is favorable to the tenets of modernism and still has any religious inclinations, he should take a long, lingering look at what this malicious

system does to the Spirit of Holiness.

If modernism is so, then the Bible is not true. Remember that there is no place in modernism for the supernatural. The Bible is not a naturally produced Book. It was conceived in the supernatural counsels of Jehovah's mind and by supernatural inspiration was conveyed to the minds of some forty men over some sixteen centuries who penned it under the infallible guidance of Jehovah's unerring Spirit. The Book begins on the supernatural note of creation in Genesis 1 and concludes in Revelation 21 and 22 with the saved's redemption in the new Jerusalem which is supernatural in scope. In between these two events the Bible is filled with supernatural or miraculous works. Modernists are not happy with a Book that majors in miracles and is punctuated with powerful manifestations. Therefore, they seek to rewrite the Bible and omit its various references to any supernatural occurrence. When modernism is finished with the Bible, it is a book filled with natural theology and no supernatural events at all. The Bible of modernism is not the Bible you and I know, love, teach, defend and live. It is not the Book you and I revere and seek to share with those who are enveloped in the region and shadow of death

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Some Say Jesus Will Dwell On The Earth Again

Cecil Corkren

Jesus, "is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him" (I Peter 3:22). One of the very prevalent doctrines of our time is that Jesus will return one day soon to this earth. According to this theory, He will come to set up His kingdom and reign here on earth, and His throne will be in

Jerusalem. This doctrine uses the book of Revelation, and Matthew chapter 24, as "proof." One evidence offered, that you occasionally see on bill boards, is Revelation 3:11. Is this an adequate proof text of Christ's return to earth? No. Nothing is said about when or where He will rule and reign. The thousand years mentioned in Revelation 20:2-3 is often taken literally, i.e. that He will

reign on earth a thousand years before the end of time and the judgment. There are a number of things that clearly contradict this theory.

First, Jesus will not return to dwell on this earth. We sometimes follow the mistake in our song books by singing "The Lord will return to this earth some sweet day," when we could change that to read in the lyrics "The Lord will

return in His glory some day." Jesus told the apostles, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2-3). The Bible teaches that Jesus is now at the right hand of God in heaven (Acts 2:33; Hebrews 1:3; I Peter 3:22). Jesus is preparing a place in heaven, not here on earth. Further, Paul says that when Jesus returns we will meet the Lord in the air, not here on the earth (I Thessalonians 4:17). Peter declares that the "earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Peter 3:10).

Second, Jesus will not return to set up His kingdom, for His kingdom already exists! The kingdom is the church! Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1). Notice here that the text would come during the lifetime of those who heard the message that day. Paul spoke of the kingdom in his day, later

in the first century, as then being in existence. Speaking of God, he wrote, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son" (Colossians 1:13). The church and the kingdom are used interchangeably in (Matthew 16:18-19).

Third, the doctrine that teaches Christ will reign on earth a thousand years is taken from the book of Revelation which is highly figurative. In Revelation 20:1-6 there are nine symbolic references made. Why take one literally? It doesn't make good sense to take eight of them symbolically, and one which supports their pet doctrine, as literal.

When Jesus was beginning His return to heaven (Acts 1:11), He promised He would return in the clouds of heaven. Revelation 1:7 bears this out. When Jesus returns He will receive up in the air to be with Him, those who have obeyed the gospel, and have remained faithful. They will have the wonderful privilege of being with the Lord forever (I Thessalonians 4:17).

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

The Benevolence Of Barzillai

Neal Pollard

My wife let in the third one yesterday. I was much too busy for this, and just a bit aggravated at the intrusion. After all, I had to work on my sermon and run some errands. This one told the same story they all tell. I am sure, as she talked, my impatience and displeasure were apparent. In fact, my wife gave me a look expressing disapproval at my thin layer of courtesy. A woman in soiled, smelly clothing explained that she, her husband, and their four-year-old son were heading west, but had no money for gas and food.

I explained that the community service program in our community was defunct. Then, I told her that our congregation assisted many people, but could not help everyone that came down the road. At this point, I looked into her eyes long enough to see the sincerity and determination which shaped her request. Shame filled my heart. I grabbed the money that was on our counter, and I bought them their gas and a little food. Yes, they could have been charlatans, and their request might have been part of their racket. God will judge those who love and make a lie (cf. Revelation 22:15). Alongside the liars on Christ's left hand, however, will be a great number of individuals who saw, but ignored people with needs (cf. Matthew 25:41-46).

Back from the gas station, I began to study that sermon about which I had earlier complained. An outline on aged saints of the Bible, the sermon included a look at a generous Gileadite of Rogelim (II Samuel 17:27). As I reviewed this Old Testament likeness of the "Good Samaritan," I was confronted by the genuine, giving spirit of one Barzillai.

Old Barzillai Was Willing To Help Save King David's Life (II Samuel 17:27-29). Barzillai had a pretty legitimate excuse. He needed to hang on to everything he had to provide for himself. He could have abdicated the role of providing for King David to younger, more able men. Yet, Barzillai was found in the company of men who "brought beds, and basins, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentils, and parched pulse, and honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat . . ." (II Samuel 17:28-29a).

Barzillai was a cheerful giver. He gave benevolently, such proven by the lengthy list of items he brought to the king and his men. Barzillai also gave compassionately. He heard the complaint of David's company. "For they said, the people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness" (II Samuel 17:29b). Old

Barzillai had remained tender-hearted throughout the years. He epitomized the spirit of giving about which Paul spoke in II Corinthians 9:7.

Barzillai did not give expecting to receive (II Samuel 19:31-36). David offered Barzillai a place in his household in appreciation for services rendered back at Mahanaim. The sincerity of Barzillai's giving is best represented by his question in verse 36. He asked the king, "and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward?" What humility! Barzillai was only interested in doing things for others, and shunned a return of the favor. Would it have been wrong for Barzillai to have accepted the king's offer? Absolutely not! Yet, his refusal does not make him seem foolish; rather, his refusing the blessings of David reveal a giver who gave without strings being attached.

Barzillai's charitable spirit benefited others (II Samuel 19:37-38). At Barzillai's request, David Blessed Chimham instead. Chimham, who Edersheim supposes to be the son of Barzillai (Bible History Old Testament, Volume Five, page 33), was given the honor and blessings first conferred upon the elderly servant of David. Because of the generosity of Barzillai, Chimham went at least as far as Gilgal with David. It could

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"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

One of the Nashville newspapers recently ran some articles that sound somewhat like the "ravings" of a conservative preacher on the subject of teen drinking.

Here's a quote "There is no such thing as social drinking for adolescents," a local counselor said, "They don't know how. To a teenager, a social drink is a six-pack. They drink until the bottle is gone."

Now, that's frightening. However, understanding this next point may "shake you up" even more: The article continues: "Teens use alcohol to buoy up their self-esteem. . . Why not? Their parents do." "Parents who unwind with drinks after work and stock the bar before parties influence teenagers, who see themselves as adults and want to imitate their elders. The message that most parents give their kids is that the only way to socialize is to use alcohol."

I can't help but hear Ephesians 6:4 echoing in my ears: "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

The Benevolence Of Barzillai

Continued From Page 3

have been that the inn near Bethlehem mentioned in Jeremiah 41:17 was either erected by or named for Chimham, as many conjecture (*Hastings Dictionary Of The Bible, Volume 1, page 383*). If this is the same Chimham of II Samuel 19, how lasting and rewarding for others was the benevolence of Barzillai.

Barzillai's generosity endeared him to the king (II Samuel 19:39). In their last goodbye, King David "kissed Barzillai, and blessed him . . ." On into Gilgal David would carry the memories of the kind-hearted Barzillai. The reward King Jesus waits to give His benevolent children will remain beyond our comprehension until we cross the line which separates time from eternity (cf. Matthew 25:34-40; I Corinthians 2:9).

Let us learn the lesson lived by Barzillai. "When we realize the value of our possessions, we will begin to do good to others with them" (Sir Joseph Cook). The giving of Barzillai

is reminiscent of a poem compiled by William Arthur Ward in his book, **For This One Hour**.

If you find that life is flat,
Full of this, with none of that,

Try giving!
Introspection makes it flatter;
A few more years -- what will
it matter?

Try giving!
If the world is dark and bitter;
Things all tend to make a

quitter -
Try giving!
Forget yourself in helping
others;
Know that all men are your
brothers,
You will see then life is

sweeter
Than you thought, and far
completer -
When you give!
--Margaret Gordon Kuhlman
--P.O. Box 15, Livingston,
AL 35470.

Is Local Church Membership Just A Tradition Of Men?

Holger Neubauer

The question under review, like all questions that pertain to spiritual life and godliness, is to be determined solely by Bible teaching and not simply by the fact that the church has practiced something for years.

In order for local church membership to be established from the scripture, first, the local congregation itself must be proven to be divinely purposed. Though the church is sometimes designated in its universal sense (Matthew 16:18), it many times is spoken about in its local setting. In I Corinthians 1:2,

Paul spoke, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth." Colossians 4:16 speaks of the "church of the Laodiceans" while at the same time mentions that the epistle Paul was writing should be "read among you." The Colossian church was to hear Paul's epistle among themselves, which establishes that the local congregation came together regularly, and that they had an apostolic admonition to do so in the assembly. The local congregation is not simply a church tradition, but an established entity with firm grounding in the scripture.

Secondly, each individual church is to have ordained "elders," when a plurality of men meet the qualifications. In Acts 14:23, elders were ordained "in every church." Since there is but one universal church (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 4:4) the church, in Acts 14:23, is referred to in the local sense. The Philippian church was established with its own "bishops and deacons" (Philippians 1:1). I Peter 5:2 records Peter's admonition to elders which says, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight." Elders were to oversee those among themselves, which fits perfectly with the terminology of Colossians 4:16, implying the elders were to oversee the local congregation.

Since the elders were given the admonition to feed the flock among themselves, and they are to give account to God in whether or not they fulfilled their responsibility, they obviously can only be held responsible for those among themselves or the local

congregation. Denominational hierarchy which reaches above congregational autonomy is not authorized in scripture. Yet members of the local congregation were told to "obey them that have the rule over you" (Hebrews 13:17). It must be the case that local church membership is mandatory because each Christian is to be in an environment where we can obey those who have been delegated to authority positions in the church. Without being part of a local congregation, these commands would be nonsensical.

Thirdly, Hebrews 10:25 admonishes that no Christians forsake the "assembling of ourselves together." This again is the local congregation. Matthew 18:20 has been misused many times to justify "Christian liberty" in assembling wherever one

would choose to assemble, for Jesus said, "where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them." Remember, Jesus promised to be with Christians always not only when they assembled (Matthew 28:20). Jesus was not speaking of worshipping but settling problems. In the context of church discipline, where 2 or 3 were gathered to iron out a problem, each should remember Jesus is in their midst and act like a Christian ought. Matthew 18:20 does not loosen the Christian's responsibility to meet with the local congregation and become part of a congregation. Church membership is not a tradition of men, but it is taught clearly within the pages of God's holy writ.

--P.O. Box 1405, Forest Park, GA 30051-1405.

Consequences Of Modernism (No. 3)

Continued from page 2

(Matthew 4:16).

Do you want to live in a world without a Bible? If so, then you are an avowed modernist. If you do not, then you do not wish to live in a world dominated with modernistic theology and materialistic concepts. If modernism is so, then we could never again open the Blessed Book and find strength for our weaknesses, aid for our troubles, comfort for our affliction, confidence for our minds and assurance for our heavy hearts in a world of woe and sphere of sorrow. Do you want to live in a world void of the creation account in Genesis 1 and 2, the ten commandments given Physical Israel in Exodus 20, the Songbook of the Bible -- the Psalms, the

wisdom of Proverbs, the prophecies of the Hebrew Seers, the Sermon on the Mount, the narrative of thrilling Pentecost, the answers to the questions of what must we do to be saved and how to remain saved on the other side of the new birth and a host of other great spiritual riches? This is the very world which modernism is seeking to carve for you, your children and grandchildren, for me, my children and grandchildren and for generations yet unborn. Modernism is militant in its designs and is a force with which to be reckoned. It is in a life and death struggle with Biblical Christianity and the minds of men occupy the battleground.

--P.O. Box 464, Ripley, TN 38063.

Doing Right

Give me not swift solutions
Or conquests in the fight,
But rather give me peace inside . . .
To know I've done what's right.

I may win a trifling contest
If I merely do my part;
But if I "go the second mile";
I just may win a heart.

Let me surrender all but truth
To show someone the Light;
And then if he should turn away,
I'll know I've done what's right.

Let Christ be my solution,
No matter what the plight;
For nothing's really settled
Until it's settled right.

Cindy Colley

November 19, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- Pearls From Acts 8
- Consequences Of Modernism (No. 4)
- "The Church," "The Kingdom" Are They Related?
- "Most Of A Minute"
- Doing What You Can?

Volume 29 Number 47
(USPS 691-760)

The Words of Truth

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

Proof-Texts That Do Not Prove

Johnny Ramsey

1. John 10:25-29:

In this passage two types of individuals are portrayed. We see the rebellious Jews who chose to follow Satan instead of Christ. The Pharisees definitely rejected the Lord. On the other hand, Jesus speaks of his true followers. They had also made a decision. Rather than being rebellious they were meek and submissive to the yoke of the Master. Christ's devotees heard His voice, followed His teachings and obeyed His commands. As long as the Lord's disciple hears His voice and follows Him he abides in God's grace. Notice that all three verbs are present tense. We have two inspired commentaries on this passage in I John 1:7 and Romans 11:22. If one continues in the Lord's goodness by walking in the light of Truth, God's grace and Christ's blood forever attend him. Otherwise such a one shall be cut off! No, John 10 does not teach the impossibility of falling from grace. That doctrine is false. John 10, in harmony with the rest of the Bible, simply teaches us to humbly receive the Savior's teachings, obey them and follow constantly His steps -- so that one day we can receive eternal bliss from him (Revelation 14:4; I Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 6:9; Revelation 2:10).

2. II Corinthians 1:21-22:

In this passage we learn that the Christian has been sealed

by God; he has been given "the earnest of the Spirit" in his heart. Many groups affirm that the two words sealed and earnest forever prove that a child of God just cannot lose his inheritance of heaven. W. E. Vine, the noted scholar on the Greek language has this to say about the word "earnest": "Arrabon - originally earnest-money deposited by the purchaser and forfeited if the purchase was not completed." Vine goes on to say that in modern Greek arrabona is the word for an engagement ring! Did you ever hear of an engagement being broken, nullified and forever banished by the parties involved? Certainly. Just so, a Christian can lose his inheritance; he can forfeit the down-payment on heaven. To whom did Paul say that "God sealed us and gave the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts?" To the Corinthians of course. Honesty demands that we notice other pertinent passages to the same people. In I Corinthians 10:12 they were exhorted to "take heed lest ye fall." Why this injunction if it were impossible for them to fall? In II Corinthians 13:5 these people who had been sealed by Jehovah received the exhortation to "examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith." Otherwise, Paul warned they would be reprobates; they would not stand the test. Such ones are rejected by the Lord. The most potent passage, however, is II

Corinthians 12:21 where Paul warns the recipients of the earnest of the Spirit that he was afraid that when he returned to their midst some would be found "who had sinned already and had not repented." Jesus said: "Except you repent, you will perish" (Luke 13:3). Such people are not even temporarily secure -- much less eternally (James 5:19-20; II Peter 2:20-22, 3:17; Hebrews 3:12).

3. Ephesians 1:13-14:

To the church in Ephesus the apostle mentioned "the earnest of our inheritance" and the truism of "being selected with the Holy Spirit of promise." To whom was this spoken? It was spoken to the Ephesian Christians. Was anything else addressed to these people that helps us understand the nature of their relationship to divine realities? Yes indeed! For reference just read the entire book of Ephesians, Acts 19 and 20, I and II Timothy and Revelation 2. In these passages you will find that some of them had "erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." Such action would result in "destruction and perdition." Some would even "teach the doctrine of demons" and heap to themselves false teachers. Even some of the leaders in Ephesus would become false teachers and "draw away disciples after them." It is no wonder that our Lord told them at the close of the first century: "I come to

thee and will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent." (See I Timothy 6:9-10; 4:103; II Timothy 4:4; Acts 20:28-30; Revelation 2:5). From a careful analysis of the three favorite texts used by "eternal security" preachers we have found that the security of those referred to in the passages depended upon their constant loyalty to Christ. Any other type of life jeopardized their earthly happiness and heavenly citizenship. If language means anything at all the abundance of foregoing Scripture teaches beyond doubt the possibility of apostasy.

Passages That Challenge

Brethren, there is a lot more to I Corinthians 9:27, James 5:19-20, II Peter 2:20-22 and Revelation 3:1-5 than mere ammunition with which to fight the heinous doctrine of "once saved always saved!" Don't misunderstand me. We are not desiring that we stop using them to disprove error. They will always be powerful in the overthrow of such error. But, have we prayerfully considered the import they convey to Christians. The Holy Spirit did not primarily put such teaching in the Word in order to give us material for debates. In each case the purpose was to warn members of the body of Christ to be on guard against Satan and sin that we might more profitably pursue the life of a Christian. In realizing the propensity in oneself to sin the servant of the

Lord will diligently restore his brethren who have slipped away. It often seems that we have been so intent upon proving that one can fall from grace that we have clinched the argument by doing just that! In our anxiety to offset error we have gone to the other extreme. Some of our teaching on the subject of a Christian's relationship to sin leaves the impression that we ought to sin. In our prayers we tell God that "we sin everyday so please forgive because Thou hast promised to." Do we mean by such a statement that we have to sin everyday? It looks like a mature Christian could spend at least one 24 hour period without sinning. Our real trouble in this matter stems from the fact that we stress the forgiveness of sins by God. The Bible, in reality, stresses the stain, scar and the wages of sin.

I heartily recommend a daily reading of Romans, chapter six for every Christian. That thrilling passage informs us that we are dead to sin but alive unto God. Sin shall no longer reign in our mortal bodies. It shall cease to have dominion over us. At one time we were servants of sin but now we serve the Redeemer. "Our old man was crucified with Him that the body of sin might be done away, so that we should no longer be in bondage to sin.

A Christian can sin and fall from grace. But we ought not

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Pearls From Acts 8

Glenn Colley

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 through 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 and 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 prophesy." 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 a 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, 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.

Consequences Of Modernism (No. 4)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Modernism has no room, none at all, for the God of the Bible, His Son, the Spirit of

holiness or an Inspired Bible. Of these I wrote in the three previous installments on this important theme. Three other aspects will be covered in this final article.

If modernism is valid, there is no place for preaching. Why bother about preaching if modernism is true? I have given the best years of my life to the preaching of the gospel - some forty-four to date. Yet it was all for nought if modernism is valid. If there is no God to preach, no Christ to proclaim, no Bible to exalt and no truth to extol, any kind of preaching would be but a shell. It would be worthless and worse than simply a waste of the speaker's time and the listener's attention. If modernism is valid, you have heard your last sermon. There is no need to preach and no need to listen to preaching if human wisdom is our only body of content to share. There are those today who despise preachers and preaching. Is this really what those who despise preachers and preaching want -- a world with no more preaching, a world with no more teaching, a world with no more religious journalism? There is no conceivable way we can visualize just what would happen if every preacher laid down his Bible never to pick it up again and silenced his tongue for the remainder of his days on earth. If modernism is true and has its way, preaching is at an end. We can forget

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"The Church," "The Kingdom" Are They Related?

Winfred Clark

In the past we have not been surprised to hear denominational preachers make a great distinction between the church and the kingdom, especially those of the premillennial persuasion. But you do not have to move into those ranks today to find such. Recently in a Nashville meeting it was said, "the two do not have an identity relationship, it is theologically incorrect to say church equals kingdom." It was said, "the church is a body of redeemed people in pursuit of an ideal which the New Testament calls the kingdom of God." We are also told that the kingdom will not exist until the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven. The idea is that we cannot have the kingdom as long as people are not perfected. It was further stated that "the church will not be the full realization of the kingdom until He comes." Therefore the conclusion is that all we have is the "pilgrim church" on it's way to becoming the kingdom of God.

It seems to me that this idea overlooks some very obvious things. We have in our New Testaments some descriptions of some churches. There was the church at Corinth, Colosse, and the seven churches of Asia. I don't think any of us would say those churches were perfect. In fact, we would all agree that they possessed imperfections of major proportions. These sins were not endorsed or condoned by the apostles. They were to rid themselves of those things that were sinful (II Corinthians 7:1-2). But, we can have no doubt of the fact that they were accepted as being churches (I Corinthians 1:1-3, Colossians 1:1-3). Must we say that in spite of their sins they were only on their way to becoming the kingdom of God? Was it that they were only pursuing the ideal called the kingdom of God? That would be the case if we were to accept the thesis stated above.

I am not ready to say the kingdom of God did not exist at Corinth. I wouldn't anymore say the kingdom did not exist than I would say the church did not exist. Oh yes, if I adopted the thesis stated above I might do that, but I do not accept such as being valid or true. The Bible does not teach this doctrine.

Take a moment to think: Was the Lord's supper being observed in the church at Corinth (I Corinthians 10:16, 11:23-33)? Yes, I know they were abusing such, but that does not take anything from the fact that such was being observed in the church at Corinth. In fact, Paul taught them to observe the Lord's supper. So we have a church that is not perfect, taking the Lord's supper. But wait a moment. Didn't Jesus place the Lord's supper in the kingdom? Go back, as did Paul, to the night when he instituted the supper. You will find the Lord said, "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:29-30). Would you conclude from this statement that the Lord's Supper was to be in the kingdom? Did the Lord know where it was supposed to be found? I would think so.

We need to stop and see that Paul endorsed the Lord's supper being practiced in the church at Corinth. This is seen by the fact that he tried to get them to go back to the very place where it was instituted for a pattern as to how it was to be observed at Corinth. But if he goes back to that place and time, he will also find that the Lord spoke of it being in the kingdom. Would you think Paul made a mistake of encouraging something to be in the church that belonged to the kingdom, if indeed, the church and kingdom are not the same? Paul would have

known if there was such a difference, but Paul made no such difference and neither should we.

Paul did not see the Lord's supper as being something the church would pursue as an ideal. He saw it as a reality for the present time in Corinth, and that was true in spite of the fact that they were not perfect.

But take another look at the church at Corinth. You will also find those who were born again at Corinth. They are described in a number of ways such as, "them that are sanctified" (I Corinthians 1:2). They are said to have been "begotten by the gospel" (I Corinthians 4:15). They are said to be "washed . . . justified" (I Corinthians 6:11). They are also said to be "saved" (I Corinthians 15:2). One could have no doubt about the fact that these folks were saved, justified, washed, and sanctified. Now, would you tell any of those folks that they ought to be born again? You would not dare tell a person who is said to be saved that he ought to be born again! There could be no doubt about their being born again. But if they have been born again would they not be in the kingdom of God? Isn't that where Jesus indicated that they would be? It most surely is. Listen to what He had to say about the matter: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Now what does the Lord place between a man and his entrance into the kingdom of God? The only thing I see in this passage is his being born of water and of the Spirit. Now were any at Corinth born of water and the Spirit? Were any of those folks born again? You would have no doubt about this would you? You know they were begotten by Paul's gospel. You know they are sanctified. Would it not follow that they had been born again?

But if they had been born again, they were not on their way to the ideal which is the kingdom of God. They were in it by the process of the new birth.

One would either have to deny that those in the church at Corinth had been born again or admit that they were in the kingdom of God. But if one admits that they are in the kingdom of God, then he admits that the church and the kingdom are the same. Thus you have the kingdom of God at Corinth in spite of the fact that there were obvious sins that they needed to deal with. (The fact that the human side of the kingdom is flawed does not mean God's side does not exist).

Again, we conclude that those in the church at Corinth were converted. We agree that they did what converted people are supposed to do. Do we not read "many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized" (Acts 18:8)? Didn't Paul later speak of such people being baptized into one body (I Corinthians 12:13)? Look at what Paul had to say about some of these folks. He talks of thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners. He said "and such were some of you" (I

Corinthians 6:11). We would have to conclude that a conversion had taken place. He goes on to say, "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:11). We can have no doubt about the fact that these folks were converted. But if we admit that in the church at Corinth we have converted people, we must also admit that these people are in the kingdom of God. Listen what Christ had to say, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). But what will happen to those people who are converted? You say, they will enter the kingdom of God. But we would all have to admit that people in the church at Corinth had been converted. If they were converted they were in the kingdom of God. That is what Jesus said and that ought to be good enough for any of us.

Yes, the church and the kingdom of God existed at Corinth, in spite of the human flaws that also existed. With God's grace and help

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"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

A fly landed on a nice strip of gooey, sweet-smelling flypaper. Not seeing a challenger in sight, he happily announced, "My flypaper!" Sinking his nose in the syrupy stuff, he dined sumptuously. Then, deciding to leave, he began hopelessly fanning his wings against the air -- and the paper announced, "MY FLY."

That's often the way it is with a man and his possessions. Surveying his accumulations he proudly says, "My possessions!" The possessions knowingly announce, "My man!" The greatest danger in possession lies in the fact that the uncontrolled love for more and more things has a way of freezing out the warmth brought to our lives from faithfully following Jesus Christ. Materialism is the devil's home field. It is in this field he has won his most stunning victories. It's no wonder Jesus said, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth (Luke 12:15).

Consequences Of Modernism (No. 4)

Continued From Page 2

all about what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1 and 2. The Bible says,

For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. 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. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God . . . For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified (1 Corinthians 1:17, 18, 21-24; 2:2).

Modernism is the avowed enemy of gospel preaching and gospel preachers must recognize that modernism is an enemy with which to be reckoned. It is not a weak enemy but one that is deeply entrenched. Do you want to live in a world where you will never again hear any gospel messages on radio, television, from the pulpits or see such from the printed page? I do not for a surety. I love to preach the gospel and I love to hear it preached. I attend gospel meetings far and wide when I am not in a meeting or a lectureship. If modernism has its way, preaching is at an end.

If modernism is valid, you have prayed your last prayer and had the last one prayed over you and for you. To

whom will we pray if there is no God to listen, no Christ to serve as a mediator between God and men and nothing for which to make requests? Do you know of any praying modernists? If they do pray, they are being inconsistent with their own espoused theology of natural religion. A praying modernist would be as inconsistent as a movie star, sympathetic to Communism some years back, who said in essence, "If you knew more about Communism, you would get on your knees and pray to be one." Pray to whom? Communism has no God in heaven who hears prayers. If modernism has its way, there will be no more prayers at funerals, no more prayers by the side of the sick and diseased and no more prayers for our food and physical blessings. The world of the modernists is a world minus prayer for a surety!

If modernism is so valid, you might as well forget about going to worship services again. There is no need to assemble for a religious gathering if modernism is valid. If modernism is valid, we might as well sell all our church buildings or lock them up and forget they were ever erected. The world of modernism is a world without the church. Modernism feels toward the church just like Robert Ingersoll who once said the church must go. He did not mean that the church should go as that marching order is expressed in the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:15. He meant that the church must go in the sense that it must be eliminated; it must die; it must be destroyed. Modernism would love to sing its lusty tune of irreverence,

unbelief and utter joy over the grave of the church. If the world of modernism becomes universally dominant, then there will be no such things as the observance of the Lord's Supper each Sunday, no Gospel hymns and no Christian fellowship. The world of modernism will be just like the world the Ephesians and other Gentiles

of the first century knew before they became saints of the most high God. Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:12, "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Modernism seeks a world void of God, Christ and hope.

Is that what you want? If it is, you are an avid supporter of modernism. If not, then you do not want the world of modernism and should be militantly opposed to all of it in its manifestations of mischief and maliciousness.

--P.O. Box 464, Ripley, TN 38063.

"The Church," "The Kingdom" Are They Related?

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there should ever be the human resolve to have fewer and fewer of these flaws. We are

people who are in the kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1:3).

--1602 W. Hobbs St., Athens, AL 35611.

Doing What You Can?

Dale Jenkins

Did you hear about the group in Bolder, CO called "We The People" who had a bake sale to "Offset the national debt" of 4 trillion dollars (that's \$400,000,000,000.00)? They made forty-nine dollars and fifty cents (that's \$49.50).

What's your reaction to that story? I'd like to have seen the reaction of the member of the treasury that received the check.

Here's my reaction. They may not have done much, but they did something. They may not have settled the four trillion dollar debt but they made a contribution and if every American would make a similar attempt the debt would shrink. Now, you know this article isn't really about national debts and shrinking them but about a much larger task.

There are 5.5 billion (that's 5,500,000,000) souls in the world. The majority have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. There are multitudes more of them that have no Bibles than that do own Bibles. Christians in Hamilton, Alabama are sending

three hundred and fifty Bibles to Russia (that's 350) and the Ukraine next week. Now when there are several billion without Bibles some might scoff at our attempt, but the fact is if every Christian would make a similar attempt the Bible would begin to saturate the world. We can either be cynics who decry the problem or saints who attempt to make a difference where we are.

Maybe you've heard the story about the old man who was walking along the seashore picking up star fish that the tide had washed in and throwing them back into the sea. A little boy laughed at the old man; "Why, there must be thousands of them out there and the tide will continue to force them on to the shore. You're wasting your time, it'll never make any difference." As the old man picked up another and hurled it toward the sea he said: "It'll make a difference to this one."

We may not save every soul or reach every individual with the gospel, but we will make a difference to some: "And of

some have compassion making a difference. . . ." (Jude 1:22). Inviting that friend to church the thousandth time may be the one time he comes Teaching your children about Jesus as they squirm around may be difficult but the next story about his compassion may forever touch their lives Showing up to teach the rowdy bunch of fourth graders may seem like the furthest thing from spiritual service but there may be a Gus Nichols in that class. Washing baptismal clothes, mowing the yard or raking leaves for a widow may seem menial, but you are making a difference.

God takes our feeble efforts and blesses them over and over again. He blesses far greater than we expect. "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, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without end. Amen." (Ephesians 3:20-21).

--Hamilton, AL

Proof-Texts That Do Not Prove

Continued From Page 1

to do so. All of the rich provisions that Deity could bestow have been showered upon us to keep us

pure and holy. May the gracious God help us to realize our blessings and responsibility that we may never go into apostasy.

November 26, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- That's Not Sin, Is It?
- Our Record
- She Shall Be Called Woman
 - Martha, Martha
- "Doesn't She Have A Right?"
 - "Most Of A Minute"
- Dealing With Discouragement
 - Some People Believe And Some Do Not (Acts 28:23-31)

Volume 29 Number 48
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The Words Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but the Words of Truth and soberness." - Acts 26:23

Growing Up In Sodom

Allen Webster

Mr. and Mrs. Lot must have had a tough time rearing their children on Jordan's well watered plains. What kind of school system did Sodom have (cf. Gen. 13:13; 19:4)? What sort of little boys and girls did Lot's children have for playmates? Could they let them go home with friends for an overnight stay?

Parents today must feel something like they did. Leon O'Bryant gives a list of what happens in a young persons' world "in just one day!" Each day in the United States:

- 2,795 teens get pregnant,
- 372 teens miscarry,
- 1,106 teens get abortions,
- 1,295 teens give birth,
- 689 babies are born at a low birth weight,
- 67 babies die before 1 month of age,
- 105 babies die before their first birthday,
- 27 die from poverty,
- 10 kids are killed by guns,
- 30 are wounded by guns,
- 6 teens commit suicide,
- 135,000 bring a gun to class,
- 7,742 teens become sexually active,
- 623 teens contact venereal disease,
- 211 are arrested for drugs,
- 437 children are arrested for drunken driving,
- 1,512 drop out of school,
- 1,849 children are abused or neglected,
- 3,288 run away from home,
- 1,629 children are in adult jails,

2,556 babies are born to single parents,

2,989 children see their parents divorce.

What can a God-fearing parent do "to rear good children in a bad world?"

(1) THEY MUST "ACT." To beat Sodom one must be a "hands on" parent. Passive parents who let the TV baby sit and a daycare provide "quality time" will never turn out children who overcome the devil. Notice carefully Paul's wording: ". . . fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

Involvement means knowing what is taught to them in school. In some places, homosexuality is taught as an "alternate lifestyle" (as early as third grade). Condoms are passed out. Evolution is taught as fact. When is the last time you read your child's textbook or looked at his/her notes?

(2) THEY MUST "REACT." When something comes across the TV screen that portrays false values, children need to know that is not believed or practiced in a Christian home.

When a PTA/PTO meeting is held, go and express a Christian viewpoint about sex education and values clarification in school. This is no time to be shy. Your tax dollars are just as valuable as the next fellow's. The Gospel needs defending as much in a classroom as in the pulpit (Phil. 1:17; Jude 3).

(3) THEY MUST "COUNTERACT." A child's soul is a void that will be filled with something. Jesus taught this in a parable about unclean spirits coming back to a man who had not made an effort to fill his soul with the truth (Mt. 12:42-45).

If God's values are taught in Bible classes, home devotionals, and by Godly example, then false values will not find room to grow (Deut. 6:6, 7).

Children need to be vaccinated before being sent to the infectious surroundings at school -- and we are not talking about measles and polio! They need to be vaccinated against spiritual and moral error. Strong emphasis on teaching and living the truth will protect them against the wicked influences of Sodom.

Parents need to counteract the wicked environment with a great deal of prayer. Children can never stand tall without parents who stand on their knees. Hannah prayed for Samuel (I Sam. 1:12), and he turned out to be a great servant of the Lord.

Sadly, Lot and his wife failed to overcome the wicked influence of Sodom in the lives of their children. When fire rained from the clouds that day their sons, sons in law, perhaps daughters in law, and maybe even some daughters burned to their deaths (Gen. 19:12, 15, 24).

The two daughters who

escaped showed Sodom's influence by getting their father drunk and committing incest with him on two consecutive nights (19:31-38). Even worse, those who died in Sodom are presently suffering God's eternal vengeance (Jude 7). And so are the perverted daughters if they did not repent.

The Lord will help parents who turn to Him and trust His

grace (Heb. 13:5). Abraham brought up Isaac at the same time Lot lived at Sodom. And he turned out fine. The difference? Abraham was a man of faith who commanded his family after him (Gen. 18:19). Let's raise up a generation that knows right from wrong and is willing to practice the truth.

--Tiptersville, MS.

Forget The Bag

Dalton Key

The owner of a small country store was once appointed postmaster. But a full six months later, not one piece of mail had left the office. When the postal authorities came from Washington to investigate, the postmaster explained, "It's simple. The bag ain't full yet!"

How many of us are neglecting to do the good we know we should do, waiting until circumstances are absolutely perfect, until "the bag gets full?"

Some of us can't come to worship services. Why? The weather is too hot, or too cold. We haven't been feeling well. We barely find energy to work all week, play all weekend, and attend whatever ball games we can find. Or we are feeling too well to spend a beautiful Sunday indoors in worship services. The church members are too cold and unfriendly; or they are so friendly we can't get away

from the building as quickly as we would like. The folks who go to worship are hypocrites who are not sincere in their religion; or they are a bunch of fanatics who take their religion too seriously.

We may as well admit it. For many of us, with excuses as lame as these, our bag will never get full -- it has too many holes! One lady said she couldn't come to worship services because she lived too close to the building to drive, but too far away to walk. Don't laugh. After all, one excuse is just as good as another.

Why not forget the excuses -- forget "the bag" -- and be with the saints in worship services this Sunday? Take another look at Hebrews 10:25. And then read the next verse; verse 26. Attendance is serious business.

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

That's Not Sin, Is It?

Glenn Colley

Doctor Kavorkian, or "Doctor Death," as some are calling him, has become the nation's most recognized doctor of the '90's. He is the advocate/practitioner of doctor assisted suicides, and now has a long list of successfully deceased former patients. The legal community shrugged their shoulders, shook their heads, and wondered what to do about this question. If two adults are consenting to an act, (in this case the doctor and the patient), can we call that action wrong? A law was finally constructed, and the doctor is out on bail.

This is a mammoth question for this decade: Shouldn't people have the right to do whatever they want so long as they don't harm innocent people in the process?

Christians must guard against being "conformed to this world" (Romans 12:2). That principle forcefully applies to the question of what we call sin. We cannot be pulled in to the modernistic thinking of folks

who, in reality, ignore God when deciding what they will call sin. And this question of sinful or not sinful isn't just with regard to Doctor Kavorkian. It applies to the question of fornication, to homosexuality, to divorce and remarriage, to drug abuse, to false religion, and on and on.

"Where do I draw the line, and call an action 'sin'?" There are several possibilities.

A few people would say that only deliberate actions by one person which cause some harm to an innocent person or persons are sinful or wrong.

Others would draw the line between right and wrong in this way: Actions which cause immediate or future harm, and are not between consenting adults are sinful or wrong. They would have a hard time calling these actions sinful, based on the fact that the participants consent to the actions. They believe that if the individuals involved are willing, we should passively approve. After all, this is their

business. Doctor Kavorkian believes this in regard to suicide. The adulterer believes it in regard to his actions. The one who teaches a religion contrary to the New Testament believes this in regard to religion.

Notice the Biblical position: Actions are sinful, regardless of their anticipated happy or harmful results, when God's word forbids them. After all, sin, according to I John 3:4, is transgression of God's law.

Don't be drawn in by humanistic thinking when you are faced with calling an action sin. Sin is determined in the mind of God, and is ultimately against Him. Faith in Him demands that I agree with what His word deems wrong.

In considering what is being called the "Ethics of the 90's," may we all remember what Isaiah said: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter" (Isaiah 5:20).

Our Record

Johnny Ramsey

One of the truly fascinating verses of the Old Testament is Psalms 56:8 which reads:

"Put thou my tears into thy bottle; are they not in thy book?"

In a parallel passage in Isaiah, we learn that our Creator hears our prayers and sees our tears! Yes, the halls of heaven welcome the prayers of the saints (Revelation 8:4-5). What a glorious rendezvous we have with Jehovah in the precious garden of prayer (I John 5:14). Someone has aptly spoken these beautiful words:

"The highest joy is unbroken fellowship with God." Yes, whether in sunshine or shadow, laughter or tears, our heavenly Father knows and cares, provides and sustains. A grateful Christian always concurs with the sentiment of the unknown poet:

"I learn as the years roll onward

And leave the past behind

That many a flower I longed for

Had a hidden thorn or pain

And many a rugged by-path

Led to fields of golden grain."

When our tears are in God's remembrance we joyously affirm as did the Psalmist:

"This I know; for God is for me."

The final stanza in this intriguing section of Holy Scriptures confidently affirms three wonderful conclusions:

(a) God will deliver us from death.

(b) He will keep our feet from falling

(c) This fellowship means

light and life!

Jesus referred to such an arrangement as the more abundant life (John 10:10). Past, present, and future is meshed into an anthem of praise and ultimate victory because we surrender our will to the Almighty. The closing statement of Psalms 56 is a marvelous expression of trust and hope:

"That I may walk before God in the light of the living."

Christ brought life and immortality to light in and through the gospel system. We can partake of a quality of life unknown until the Savior left heaven and came to earth to show us the way back home to the Father (II Corinthians 8:9). Verily, God keeps a record, our tears are in His bottle, our destiny etched into His book, and our future exceedingly bright, if we live and die in the Lord (Revelation 14:13). A century ago Rosetti wrote these tender and touching words that reflect the response of grateful servants of God:

"What can I give Him, poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd I would give Him a lamb,

If I were a wise man I would do my part--

But what can I give Him, I give Him my heart."

Does God's book have a favorable record of us?

Visit Soon
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She Shall Be Called Woman

Betty Burton Choate

Lesson One:

"Especially Made"

In today's world, there is a wide range of feelings about women. Sadly, some feel that a woman is little more than an unpaid servant, bound to obey her husband's wishes and to work endless hours every day taking care of his needs.

On the other extreme are the "modern" women who would prefer to enter the man's world, declaring themselves to be "equal" to men. Some even go as far as to demand all the "advantages" they believe men

have, yet at the same time they expect consideration and concessions because they are women. What those women really want are the privileges of both groups and the responsibilities of neither.

Between these two extremes (neither of which is right) is woman as she was created to be.

Can you imagine the scene "in the beginning?" God had prepared a perfect home -- a literal paradise -- for the crowning act of His creation:

man. He formed man lovingly, perfectly, from the earth, in His own image. Then He breathed into him the breath of life and that first man -- Adam -- became a living, moving, thinking being.

Only one thing was wrong with this perfect scene. Every living thing was paired with another of its own kind, and all were empowered by God to ". . . Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth. . . Let the earth bring forth the living creature

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Martha, Martha

Neal Pollard

There is never enough time. Man spends the majority of his time on the minor things. How often the things over which we have been made stewards become our tastemakers! Our schedule becomes our ruler. Maybe because everyone knows someone whose disdain for work has painted an ugly picture of laziness, few individuals make idleness their idol.

Twelve New Testament verses mention the Martha whose brother was Lazarus and whose sister was Mary. Martha was truly an active woman. In Luke 10:38, she "received." Luke 10:40 finds her distracted about her much serving. Jesus saw her as a woman involved in doing many things (Luke 10:41). Two verses in John eleven reveal Martha's hurrying to meet Jesus about her brother's death (11:20, 30). In John 12:2, who served the supper prepared for Jesus? Yes, it was Martha. No doubt, Martha was a dependable and reliable person. She was most likely one upon whom many people called for help. We would have to search our Bibles very carefully to find another as busy as Martha. However, on one occasion, Martha's concentration on her chores drew the soft rebuke of her Lord (Luke 10:40-42). Jesus did not rebuke Martha for working, but He did shake up her priorities. Notice four thoughts about Martha from Luke 10.

Martha was distracted (Luke 10:40). The King James Version tells us that Martha was cumbered. Martha's attention, instead of centering around Jesus, was spread out here and there (Vincent's Word Studies, Volume 1, page 357). Granted, the things in which Martha was engaged had to be done, but Jesus was in the house!! She could have done her work before He arrived, or she could have done so after He left her home. The Son of God was revealing His word (10:39). Martha was so caught up in the minor things that she lost sight of her responsibility

to Christ.

Have you ever stayed home from the assembly of the church to cook for family or friends? Have you ever failed to attend the worship services because of the company who dropped in on you? Does work constantly keep you from being involved in your Christian duties? If so, you are too distracted. Forsaking the assemblies means forfeiting an opportunity to be with Jesus and the children of God. Forsaking Christian duty means the minor has taken precedence over the more important.

Martha was worried (Luke 10:41). She was "careful." The word careful, here, literally means filled with cares. Perhaps, her situation paralleled Peter's when he attempted to walk on the water. Remember, Peter let the water distract him to the point that he took his eyes off Jesus. Then, worry set in. Peter fell. Christ caught him and said to him, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt" (Matthew 14:31)? Peter's worry was destructive. Jesus described worry as a destroyer of faith. In Matthew 6:25, Jesus tells us not to worry over the little things.

Peter, in I Peter 5:7, encourages us to cast all our cares on Christ. The Christian should not spend his life enslaved to worry. So much of what we spend our time fretting over never transpires. When worry pries us away from our faith, we are too preoccupied. It seems that Martha was "careful" about many things. Her worry kept her from sitting by Mary at Jesus' feet.

Martha was troubled (Luke 10:41). The "domino effect" continued. Her distraction led to her worry. Now, her worries gave way to her troubled heart. This word "troubled" probably indicates an outward reflection of her inward worry, carried out by her frantic complaint about Mary in verse 40. Composure left Martha.

How naturally panic follows worry. We have attempted to rewrite the immutable priority

list of Matthew 6:33. When we are troubled over things, we are seeking trivia first.

Martha was needy (Luke 10:42). Martha was hampered by her focus on those "many things" (Luke 10:41). Jesus called her attention to the one thing which was needful, and which Mary had chosen. Instead of consuming her thoughts and energies on the physical and earthly, Martha was instructed by Jesus to ponder the spiritual and heavenly (Commentary on Luke, Boles, p. 227-228). Truly, as has been suggested, "only what is done for God

will last."

When we stand before God, we will give an account of how we spent our time. If you live to be seventy years old, you will have been given a total of about 611,500 hours on earth. How much of that time was spent in the pasture, on the golf course, at the office, on the ball field, in the stadium, and in front of the little and big screens? How many hours out of 611,500 will you have spent over an open Bible, on bended knees, before your God in worship, and in the presence of individuals with whom you have shared the story of

Calvary? How many folks today live out entire lives like Martha lived those moments in Luke 10? How tragic to live in spiritual poverty! If the vast majority of our time is regularly spent on the earthly, time is definitely a wastin'!

Conclusion. Instead of "Martha, Martha," could Jesus be calling your name? Do you need to change your focus, rearrange your priorities, or rewrite your schedule? Let us choose what shall not be taken from us.

"Doesn't She Have A Right?"

Mike Benson

"What's wrong with letting a woman decide whether or not she should have an abortion? Doesn't she have a right to do with her body as she pleases?"

You have posed some important, and yet volatile questions. May I respond to them by asking some questions in return?

1. Does a woman have the "right" to use her body to steal (under the guise that it is HER body and she therefore has the right to do with it as she pleases) . . . ? No.

2. Does a woman have the "right" to ingest into her body

such drugs as marijuana, heroin, and crack cocaine (under the guise that it is HER body and she therefore has the right to do with it as she pleases) . . . ? No.

3. Does a woman have the "right" to use her body to be a prostitute (under the guise that it is HER body and she therefore has the right to do with it as she pleases) . . . ? No.

Now consider . . .

•If she does not have the right to use her body to steal,

•If she does not have the right to use her body to take illegal drugs,

•If she does not have the right to use her body to be a

prostitute,

. . . then by what "right" can she kill an innocent, unborn child within her womb? (Did God give her this right)? The baby is not, in fact, HER body. It has a different body, different genes, different chromosomes, and 50% of the time is of a different gender.

No. She does not have the right to decide about the life within her. Life is from God (Acts 17:25), and as such, it should be under HIS control (Job 1:21).

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

Dealing With Discouragement

"When you feel down in the mouth, think of Jonah. He came out all right."

Children of God can successfully handle discouragement. Consider the example of Jesus. He overcame a soul that was "exceeding sorrowful even unto death" (Matthew 26:38). He did so by trusting the Father. "Oh my Father," he prayed, "If this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done" (Matthew 26:42).

Like Jesus, today's Christian can work through the sources of discouragement by relying on God. Trust, should be the Christian's watchword. "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (I Peter 5:7),

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

The other day my wife and I saw an unusual sign on the house of a lady who sold Avon. The sign read, "Catalogues are in this box; order by telephone, you pick up orders when they arrive." Now, I'm sure this lady is not a good example of this reputable company, but do you see what she has done? She has taken a business that thrives on one-on-one selling & almost completely taken human contact out of it. I really doubt that she sells too many cosmetics.

Sometimes Christians are this way. In a religion that thrives on one-on-one contact, we sometimes have the attitude that if people want what they'll have to come and get it, without any assistance from us.

In Matthew 5, Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its savor where with shall it be salted? It is good for nothing."

That lady may need one more lesson in the finer points of selling Avon and we need to remember that a Christianity is a "let me bring it to you" religion.

Some People Believe And Some Do Not (Acts 28:23-31)

Neal Pollard

There are those in this world who adamantly believe that one gets warts from frogs. They simply refuse to buy into this idea that viruses cause them. They'll cite several names of people who picked up a frog only to "catch" a wart soon thereafter. Nothing will convince them, and maybe they are right. The one fact that all will agree upon is that it does not matter either way. Everyone has a right to disagree in matters of opinion, even if the evidence is stacked on one side. However, this affection for stubbornness is fatal when it comes to spiritual matters! There are some things we must believe in order to be saved. For instance, belief in Jesus as God's Son is not optional (Matthew 3:16; John 3:16). This very matter was the substance of Paul's preaching in Acts (28:23-31).

Paul, the confident preacher (Acts 28:31), had never let bonds, whips, or threats keep him from proclaiming the gospel of Christ. So, it seems natural that Paul would preach more vehemently in "peace time," even though he was still encountering opposition. Paul kept on preaching the pure Word of God, citing the

law and the prophets from morning till evening (Acts 28:33). Verse 24 sums up the audience's reaction. "And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not." Little has changed since Paul's day. Today, some believe and some do not. From verses 23-31, we find at least three implications growing out of the statement made in verse 24.

I. THOSE WHO DID NOT BELIEVE WERE THE VERY ONES WHO ASKED PAUL TO PREACH (23). The unbelieving some of verse 24 should be understood to be part of the many in verse 23. They were curious to hear what Paul would say (22). Perhaps their interest was in no way spiritual. Maybe they were anxious to hear a prominent member of a violently opposed "sect" speak about his Lord. So they listened to Paul's persuasive testimony from the Old Law. Surely, Paul delivered the message in a plain and simple way. Yet, they chose not to make application. They no longer wanted what they had once requested. How many people today ask, "What does the Bible say about _____," only to scoff at the answer given? When

given the Bible answer they once actively pursued, many of the questioners refuse to believe. Remember Jeremiah? He was approached by the captains and the people concerning their future given their present course. They besought him with supplication to hear God's answer (Jeremiah 42:1-4). By the time Jeremiah had finished presenting God's truth to them, they had stiffened their necks in child-like defiance saying, "WE ARE NOT GOING TO DO IT!" (Jeremiah 44:16). The rich young ruler ran to Jesus to find out what he needed to do to be saved. After Jesus told him to give up his attachment to "things," a disappointed young man turned his back on the Savior and salvation (cf. Luke 18:18-23). Some people think they want to hear God's word until they actually hear it.

II. THE SAME MESSAGE MET WITH DIFFERENT REACTIONS (24). The reactions had nothing to do with Paul's message. Rather, Paul was preaching the word of God to different kinds of hearts. Apparently, some were hard-hearted, while others were receptive. Jesus tells us that the "seed" (here, the word

of God) falls on different types of hearts (Luke 8:5-15). The same message that caused pricked hearts to obey the gospel on the day of Pentecost prompted pricked hearts to commit murder in Acts 7. Oh, how well Paul knew that the gospel reaches only honest hearts. In I Corinthians 1:18, Paul said, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God." Some people will not believe the word of God when they hear it preached or taught. Many others will and have! Such will give us the needed incentive to spread the gospel.

III. THE REACTION DID NOT DETERMINE WHAT WAS TAUGHT (25-27;31). Paul maintained his boldness after some had made known their lack of faith. This beloved apostle is a sterling example of one whose love for God outweighed any tendency to compromise. In Galatians 1:10, Paul wrote, "Do I seek the approval of men or God? Or do I seek to please men? If I were yet pleasing men, I would not be Christ's slave." He further explains in verses eleven and twelve that what he taught was by the revelation of Jesus Christ. The doctrine of Christ was enough for Paul. The concern of those who teach the Bible must always be to please God by teaching His word, regardless of the audience's response to it. Paul reminded Timothy that we must present the truth of the gospel whether it is popular or unpopular to do so (II Timothy 4:2). In writing to the church at Rome, Paul had told these brethren, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is God's saving power to everyone who believes, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). Paul reasoned that because the message he disclosed was God's scheme of redemption, he owed it to

his audiences to shamelessly preach it! There are some who do not like to hear the truth and are not afraid to voice their displeasure when it is taught. However, like Paul we must not let reaction change redemption's song. With Peter, "we ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

The importance of believing rests in the validity of what is taught. Hebrews 11:6 says that to come to God, we must believe that He exists. Therefore, we must believe the Biblical description of a God who punishes wrong and rewards right. Those in Acts 28 were not harming Paul; rather, they were hurting themselves by choosing not to believe.

One night a man driving home got behind a slow-moving vehicle. As the man's patience grew thin, he planned to pass as they approached a bridge. A sign posted on his right read, "No passing on bridge." He glanced at it as he whipped around the slowpoke. As he neared the end of the bridge, he saw the blue lights flashing. The police officer pulled him over and commented, "the sign was clearly posted. Why did you blatantly disobey and pass on the bridge?" The man could only reply, "I did not believe I would find you at the end."

The cost of unbelief is high, indeed!

She Shall Be Called Woman

Continued from page 2

according to its kind . . . " Only Adam was alone. When he had seen all the creatures . . . there was not found a helper comparable to him" (Genesis 1:22, 24; Genesis 2:20).

"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

"And Adam said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called

Woman, because she was taken out of man.' Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:21-24).

What do we learn from these verses?

(1) That man, alone, was not and is not complete.

(2) That God's intention in making woman was to design a helper who would be comparable to man; one who would soften his harshnesses and strengthen his weaknesses so that together they would be lacking in nothing.

(3) That woman was not made from another lump of clay but she was made from man, so that both she and the man would realize the special oneness God wanted them to share.

(4) That when a man and a woman marry, they are to devote themselves to each other.

So Eve, the mother of all living, was especially made for Adam. And throughout history, a good wife has continued to be God's greatest gift to a husband and a home.

Dealing With Discouragement

Continued From Page 3

should be the Christian's motto in hours of despondency.

When trouble, anxiety, discouragement, and feelings of self-pity knock at the door, send trust to open it and, surprisingly, no one will be there.

Dan Winkler
Huntington, TN

December 3, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- Bishop Mary
- For What Did Our Lord Pray?
- Abortion, Safe For Whom?
- "Most Of A Minute"
- Never Had An Opportunity?
- Are You Bored By Science?
- Perils Of Youth

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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

The Lion And The Ant Or "What Shall We Drink?"

Neal Pollard

They had just dusted the sands of the parted Red Sea from off their feet when they arrived at Marah in search of water. Their victory there was fresh on their minds. Then, "they went out into the wilderness of Shur, and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water" (Exodus 15:22). It took all of seventy-two hours for Israel to be transformed from a jubilant, worshipping children into a throng of faithless grumblers. They did not have the faith to make it to the oasis of Elim (cf. Exodus 15:27).

Between Marah and Elim, God told His people, "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians . . ." (Exodus 15:26). The discomfort of going three days without water was the cause of Israel's anxiety. They feared death only moments after God had preserved their lives. Water was the necessity. If they could only taste the refreshing, wet cool of the water, they would again be satisfied. In the midst of their murmuring, God reminded them of their top priority. God's immutable statement essentially was, "DO WHAT I SAY."

Grabbing a handful of the Bible's pages, we flip many centuries beyond that wilderness scene. From the

driving east wind that checked the mighty walls of the Red Sea, we turn our minds to the hush of the mountains where the voice of God fell on the ears of the people by the voice of the perfect man, Jesus. With the authority of a thousand scribes, Jesus delivered His universal message on the mount. In the midst of His powerful sermon, He again deals with anxiety, necessity, and priority. Notice Matthew 6:24-34.

Jesus speaks of a moral dilemma all men face (Matthew 6:24). The dilemma can be posed through several questions. For instance, all men must inevitably ask, "Who will I serve?" Joshua said we should choose our Master. As the head of his family, Joshua steered his family with his made up mind (cf. Matthew 16:26). All men face the following question: "When must I obey man, and when must I obey God?" Of course, the laws of the land should be followed to the extent that they comply with the decrees of God (Romans 13:1-7). Otherwise, we must stand with Peter and John and obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29).

Jesus speaks of a material anxiety all men must overcome (Matthew 6:25-32). Life is more than food and clothes, although we should work hard to provide the necessities for our family (I Timothy 5:8). Jesus emphasizes that we must not become WORRIED about

things! We handle big problems and traumatic events like disease and death much more easily than we do the trifles of daily living. Perhaps we are like the hunter in a poem written by Walt Mason. He wrote:

*Once a hunter met a lion
near the hungry critter's lair,
and the way that lion mauled
him was decidedly unfair;
but the hunter never whimpered
when the surgeons, with their
thread, sewed up forty-seven
gashes in his mutilated head;
and he showed the scars in
triumph, and they gave him
pleasant fame, and he always
blessed the lion that had
camped upon his frame. Once
that hunter, absent minded,
sat upon a hill of ants,
and about a million bit him,
and you should have seen him
dance! And he used up lots of
language of a deep magenta
tint, and apostrophized the
insects in a style unfit to print.
And it's thus with worldly
troubles; when the big ones
come along, we serenely go to
meet them, feeling valiant,
bold and strong, but the
weary little worries with their
poisoned stings and smart s,
put the lid upon our courage,
make us gray, and break our
hearts (from IT CAN BE
DONE, Morris & Adams).*

In verses 26-30, nature is used as an illustration of God's care. Jesus tells us we are more important than birds that do not toil, yet who receive. Then, Christ mentions the lilies of the field, all of them more glorious than King Solomon.

Think about this. Solomon had an annual income of well over \$19,000,000 per year by our standards (cf. I Kings 10:14ff). What is more, he had an ivory throne covered in gold, great armies, and many other assets. How intricately God provides our smallest needs!

Faith grows when we overcome anxiety! While grass is temporal, we are eternal. God's promises are sure! God knows what we need, He knows before we ask, and He knows better than we know what we need! A man must overcome his anxiety about things to reach spiritual maturity.

Jesus speaks of a mind-set all men must have (Matthew 6:33). First, we discover the objects of our concentration. Jesus tells us to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." The One who instituted salvation, God, and His divine institution, the church, must be foremost in our minds. Second, we see the position of this consecration. The kingdom of God and His righteousness must be sought **first!** Anything set above God in our lives becomes our god. Third, we understand the diligence of our investigation. We are to seek God's kingdom first. We are to greatly desire, yea strive to attain unto the kingdom of God. Jesus addresses every man in Mark 16:16, saying, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Baptism puts a man into Christ (Galatians 3:27). A man cannot be in the kingdom without being in Christ (cf.

Matthew 16:18, 19). As the kingdom is the church, a man must seek entrance into the kingdom to be saved (Ephesians 5:23). Fourth, we come to **realize** the result of our **submission**. If we seek God's Kingdom and righteousness first, all the necessities of life will be given unto us. We are reminded by the psalmist that the righteous are never forsaken, nor does their seed beg bread (Psalm 37:25).

Jesus speaks of a morrow all men must ignore (Matthew 6:34). Jesus does not say it is acceptable to put off a decision to become His disciple. The good word has always been today (cf. II Corinthians 6:2). In verse 34, however, Jesus refers to the common practice of man, crossing bridges to which he has not yet come. Jesus essentially tells man to let tomorrow take care of itself. Prevent the preventable. Accept the unavoidable.

Jesus ends this paragraph the way he started it. He tells man not to worry about the incidental things of this life. He urges us to think about and prepare for the eternal things of the life to come. "Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed" (Matthew 6:31).

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

A Hug Is The Perfect Gift --
One Size Fits All And
Nobody Minds If You
Exchange It!

Bishop Mary

Glenn Colley

This, according to President Clinton, is the "Year of the Woman," and, in the mind of many, great strides are being made by women in religion. I have before me a photograph and news article about "The newly consecrated Bishop Mary Adelia McLeod . . .", wearing a smile that goes from ear to ear. Mary became the first woman Episcopal diocesan bishop in the United States on November 1, in Burlington, Vermont. She is dressed in Episcopal robes with a cross about her neck and a tall hat with tassels that resembles the head dress from a high school band uniform.

We are not surprised. We live in a world where religions of men treat their old customs and their new ideas as the shining skyscraper of their faith; while the Bible is merely the little shack out back. They tragically care little for Biblical authority. Jesus compels people to return to God's holy Scriptures when he says, "In vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men (Matthew 15:9)." Those who ordained Mary no doubt know that I Timothy 3:2 says "A bishop then must be . . . the HUSBAND of one wife . . . One that ruleth well HIS own house," but like Grandmother Eve, they have decided themselves into thinking that either God is mistaken about what He wants, or somehow what He wants doesn't apply to them.

We are surprised, and perhaps dismayed, at some of our own brethren who seek to push aside their old

faithful Bibles, and eagerly embrace the theories of men in regard to women's role in worship and the home.

For those studying the role of women in the church, I Timothy 2:7-15 is a crucial passage. We need to understand these words. Read them. Read them again. Ponder their meanings. Apply their teachings in your mind. Jesus said, "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Consider with me some important words in this passage of scripture:

1. (Verse 7) -- "*Whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an APOSTLE. . .*" What Paul writes here has behind it the authority of the Holy Spirit. With this back drop he writes, "I will therefore that men pray every where . . . (vs. 8)"; and, ". . . But I suffer not a woman to teach . . . (vs. 12)."

2. (Verse 8) -- "*I will therefore that men pray everywhere. . .*" The Greek word for "men" here is "Aner." It is not the word meaning "mankind," but rather the word meaning, "male, man." It never means "woman," nor even "men and women."

Likewise, the Greek word in verse 12 for "woman," never means "man."

This text therefore is to designate roles for the two genders. Men are to pray everywhere.

3. (Verse 12) -- "*But I suffer (permit, allow, GC) not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.*"

Now we know that Paul doesn't mean here to forbid

women from ALL teaching settings, for he writes in Titus 2:4 that the older women are to teach the younger. Additionally, we read about a woman, with her husband, teaching a man in a private setting (Acts 18:26).

What kind of teaching is Paul forbidding here? The kind that would require having authority over a man.

Someone might raise this question: "What if she doesn't USURP the authority over the men, but is rather offered the position willingly?" The answer will come in understanding the text more perfectly. In the original Greek, the words "to usurp authority over" all come from only ONE word, "Authenteo," which means literally, "to govern one, exercise dominion over one." Whether the dominion the woman possesses over the man is taken by force, or is willingly offered by the man, is irrelevant. What is prohibited here is simply the woman having dominion over the man in our assemblies.

Picture a woman teaching a class of children. Does she have dominion or authority over that class? Certainly. Picture a woman teaching a ladies class. Is she leading that class, and therefore exercising dominion over that class? Of course. Now picture a woman teaching a class containing both men and women. Is she exercising dominion over that class by being the TEACHER? There is no question. She is, and in doing so, is in violation of what the Bible teaches in I Timothy 2:12. The same applies to a woman who LEADS singing, or LEADS

prayer, etc.

4. (Verse 13-14) -- "*For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.*"

--Some are still arguing today that Paul's prohibitions about women were only for the first century because their early culture lent itself to this arrangement, and that we are silly to apply this to women today. However, the apostles says nothing about culture. Paul writes here that the prohibition is because of the happenings in the Garden of Eden. We may look to these verses and ask, "What difference does it make that Adam was created first, or that Eve was deceived?" But it does make a difference! We must respect this reason because

this is God's reason. In His infinite wisdom He designed these roles. We will respect them if we respect Him.

As the discussion of women in religion and their roles continues, let us never think of the Bible as just being on the "cutting edge" of this discussion. (That is, part of the large picture which includes the Bible, men's opinions, current trends, modern evangelism concerns, etc.). We can know God's will. Let's let it BE the cutting edge, sharper than any two-edged sword, always determining for us what is right; always determining who is on His side, and who is not.

This is our plea to ALL religionists, including the Episcopalians who now have made a woman bishop. May we have the faith, courage, and determination to follow His will, all the way home.

You will be happier if
you will give people a bit
of your heart rather than
a piece of your mind.



The Words Of Truth

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For What Did Our Lord Pray?

Winfred Clark

We are all aware that our Lord prayed. This is not a matter of doubt. Time and again we read of his praying. One man said, "The praying Christ," is a strong argument for prayer. You can easily find more than a dozen instances of our Lord's practice of prayer. He prayed at his baptism (Luke 3:21). He prayed in Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-46). He prayed on the cross (Luke 23:46). Again and again Jesus prayed and He taught others to pray.

When we read of his praying we are impressed. However, when we take the time to look at some of the things for which he prayed, we find this of even greater interest. We get an insight into the great heart of our Lord as we stop to pay attention to those things for which our Lord prayed. These tell us the things that were the most important to him, and the things that he considers to be most essential. These help us to understand his priorities and purposes. They help us to see how to pray better and to be more like our Lord as we pray. Let us take the opportunity to look at three occasions where Jesus prayed. First, there was the time before Peter's denial (Luke 22:32). Second, there was the time when he hung on the cross (Luke 22:34). And finally, there was the prayer on night of his betrayal (John 17).

I. HE PRAYED FOR THE FAITHFULNESS OF A DISCIPLE.

One night our Lord met with his disciples to eat the passover. Among them was a degree of strife as to who would be greatest (Luke 22:24). That posed a very special problem. Such would leave them open to many temptations. As he dealt with that problem we find the Lord addressing Peter and saying, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31-32).

When we take into account what the Lord had to say to

Peter and to the others, there are some very obvious lessons. First, we learn that a person's faith can fail. This is another way of saying his confidence could fail. We also know that before that night was over that Peter's faith did fail. If it had not he would not have denied that he knew the Lord (Luke 22:55-62). This he did the very night our Lord prayed for him.

Second, we learn that divine foreknowledge is not causation. The fact that Jesus knew that Peter would deny him did not cause him to do so. Jesus knew the sifting would come but this does not ignore the fact of human responsibility.

Third, we learn that any failure of faith is of deep concern to the Lord. He knows that faith is essential and that without it one cannot please God (Hebrews 11:6). This prayer helps us to see the Lord's concern about man's faith.

II. HE PRAYED FOR THE UNITY OF BELIEVERS.

Take some time to read the seventeenth chapter of the book of John and you will find yourself in the midst of a tremendous spiritual atmosphere. In this chapter you will find the phrase "I pray" again and again. This is a very noble prayer that is addressed to the Father (John 17:1). In this prayer we find that our Lord does not ignore a distinction between those who are in the world and those who are in the church. He saw a clear difference and made a distinction in his prayer (John 17:9, 14, 21). He prays that those who believe on him may be one, or united (John 17:20-21). But he is not speaking of just any group of believers. Notice that he is speaking of those believers of the word of the apostles (John 17:20). They are described as, "them also which shall believe on me through their word" (John 17:20). That word was the word which he had given to them (John 17:8). That is the truth by which men are sanctified (John 17:17). So we can see that our Lord spoke of a certain kind of unity. It was a

unity based on the preaching of the apostles. He did not just pray for unity, but a unity that is produced by faith in the word of the apostles. Jesus did not pray for unity on just any basis. To make it appear that he did is to misrepresent the prayer of our Lord.

III. HE PRAYED FOR SALVATION OF MEN.

As he hung on the cross, there was around Jesus a crowd that was intent on putting him to death. As he saw what occurred He said, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). This was like an intercessory prayer. It was a prayer of one whose heart is filled with love on the one hand and yet with pity on the other. He saw the stark ignorance of those who were

killing him and yet he prayed for them.

This prayer is so much like his whole life. It does not surprise us that he did this. Remember that Paul wrote, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). So this is in keeping with the character of Jesus. Yes, he prayed for the salvation of men, even when they did not want the salvation that he had to offer. Isn't that always the case? Do not churches have to be concerned today about people who are lost, who do

not even know they are lost? Are not parents often concerned when their children do not see why they are concerned?

We have no doubt about why Jesus prayed these prayers. Notice that none of these were for material things. None of these were for a more comfortable life. Each and every one of these had to do with the souls of men. Those are the issues which gripped the heart of the Son of God, and they should do the same to ours.

--1602 W. Hobbs St., Athens, AL 35611.

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Abortion, Safe For Whom?

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

The January 23, 1993, edition of The Commercial Appeal quoted our new president as saying, "Our vision should be of an America where abortion is safe and legal and rare."

Significantly, that statement appeared in the media almost twenty years to the day, January 22, 1973, after Roe vs. Wade became lethal law in our land -- lethal to unwanted babies. We are now twenty years and thirty million abortions beyond that black Tuesday in our nation's history, a day even more infamous than Sunday, December 7, 1941, when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. Germany and Japan did not kill nearly as many American citizens between 1941-45 as cruel, cold, calculating and calloused abortion has killed babies in our land the last twenty years. Herod's massacre of the Bethlehem innocents in Matthew 2 and Hitler's killing of six million Jews both fail to touch anything like the magnitude of thirty million abortions in America the last twenty years.

Abortion has not been safe

for thirty million babies who have been murdered. What about their rights? They did not ask to be conceived. They surely were not consulted when they were aborted. Mothers' wombs become babies tombs for 1.6 million babies every year just here in America. Worldwide the number is forty to fifty-five

million. And our president talks about rarity?

God hates those who shed innocent blood (Proverbs 6:17). This gets murderers of men, women and children. It also gets every abortionist, sympathizer, supporter, pro-choice advocate (this means each mother can decide to kill

Continued On Page 4

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

A New York enthusiast had a good collection of paintings, one of them being the "Leaning Tower of Pisa," which hung over his writing desk.

For a long time he noticed that it persisted in hanging crooked despite the fact that he straightened it every morning. At last he asked the housekeeper if she was responsible for its lopsided position each morning that he came to his office.

"Why, yes," she said, "I have to hang it crooked to make the tower hang straight."

There's a spiritual application here. Sometimes we study and twist the Bible to try and make it fit our beliefs. The result is often a perverted view of the sacred scriptures.

II 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 that the man of God may be perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Let's be people who study the Good Book to learn what right beliefs really are.

Never Had An Opportunity?

Mike Benson

Dear Mike,

"What do you think will happen to people in other parts of the world, for example in Africa, who have never had an opportunity to hear the gospel of Christ? Will they be lost . . . will they go to hell?"

This is an important question. Let's see what the Word of God has to say about it:

1. **The Bible teaches that men are lost because of sin.** Paul wrote, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Three chapters later he wrote, "For the wages of sin is death . . ." (Romans 6:23). See also Galatians 3:22.

2. **Ignorance does not relieve an individual from his responsibility to the law.** Allow me to illustrate this point. A few years ago I was traveling through Davidson County, Tennessee with a close friend. I had been driving for some time and had not seen a speed limit sign for several minutes. My speed was 42 m.p.h. However, the actual speed limit was 25 m.p.h. As I turned a corner, a police officer on a motorcycle pulled me over and gave me a citation for exceeding the speed limit. A few weeks later when I appeared before the local judge, I could not use ignorance as an excuse for breaking the law. I was guilty, and even though I had not seen a sign indicating the speed

limit, I was still under the jurisdiction of Davidson County law. Did my ignorance of the law relieve me from the responsibility to obey the law? Of course not. As a result, the judge ordered me to attend an evening at driving school in Nashville.

In the same regard, ignorance does not excuse an individual

from his or her responsibility to the law (Galatians 6:2) of Christ. The apostle Paul said, "Truly, *these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent*" (Acts 17:30). A person is amenable to Christ's law, whether he is aware of it or not.

3. **Christ will be the judge of lost people.** It is not my

place to pass sentence on anyone. Again Paul said, "Because He has appointed a day on which *He will judge the world in righteousness* by the Man whom He has ordained. . . ." (Acts 17:31). See also II Timothy 4:1, 8; I Peter 4:15.

It is important to remember that our condition is not like

that of the people you mentioned. We have the opportunity to hear the gospel. And when we hear it, we should obey it and then make sure that other people, wherever they may live, have the same opportunity to hear the good news of Jesus.

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

Are You Bored By Science?

Dale Jenkins

Well, I wish I could say I was surprised, shocked and stunned, but I wasn't. It was the eventual outcome of a downward spiral that began several years ago. First the history, then the most recent revelation.

It all began sometime ago when scientists "discovered" a possible link between genetics and alcoholism. Suddenly we had to say that "alcoholism" was a disease. I have some awfully close friends who at one time had a drinking problem. Some of them even claim to be recovering alcoholics. Maybe, but nonetheless I've always found it difficult to call it a disease; especially when the Bible says drunkenness is a sin. It wasn't too long until science made another breakthrough, revealing a direct link between the mind (read: Behavior) of the abusive parent and the

child who becomes an abusive parent himself. Forget all this environment stuff. It's got to be heredity these new studies "proved." The door now flung open wide, last year two new studies found that homosexuality was also inherited behavior. While many of us missed it, that "study" (conducted "coincidentally" by homosexuals themselves), took a mega-leap and connected "behavior" with genetics. indicating, in case you missed it, that we have no control over our own behavior.

Now for the present. Newsweek (November 1, page 57) reports that a new study links "Bad Behavior," specifically "violence" to heredity. It hurts my brain to think of all the implications of this marvel. I can almost hear the defense in a court of law, that "of course I killed my boss, spouse, parents, sibling

and twenty other innocent bystanders. You see, my dad one time spanked me. This shows him to be a violent man and that is why I am." Why, a person like that needs our sympathy and not punishment. He could become the poster child for some "faulty genes study." I also find it interesting that only men, in this study could be found having the faulty chromosome -- too bad ladies, you still don't have any excuse for "bad behavior." And two quotes from the article bear repeating: "No one can say with certainty that those chemicals provoke the men's strange actions . . ." and "However eye-popping, the new findings don't imply that antisocial behavior is a simple matter of heredity." Funny, it sounds to me like that's how the media is reporting it.

Folks, do you want to know the cause of violence, homosexuality, drunkenness, and domestic abuse? It is sin! (I Peter 4:3, Romans 13:13, Galatians 5:19-21). And do you want to know why so many who fall into these categories commit the same atrocities? They have learned sinful behavior from their parents and environment (Deuteronomy 6). They have not had their consciences trained to know right from wrong. Geraldo and the elite media would have you believe that such deviant behavior is in fact the norm. Could it be that maybe they are trying to cover up their own "deviant behavior?"

I have great sympathy and hope for the sinful alcoholic

who has repented and is making attempts to overcome his sin. I rejoice with the homosexual who has renounced that sin and is changing his lifestyle (I Corinthians 6:9-11). But that does not change the fact that behavior is controlled by the individual. We will all give account some day before God for our own behavior. To the world's cry for the church to redefine sin and get with the times we must respond that God's unchangeable Word is the standard. We will not water down Truth so that you can feel better about your sin.

--Hamilton, AL

Perils Of Youth

In their book *13th Gen*, Neil Howe and Bill Strauss give some eye-opening statistics which document the challenges facing the children of the 1990s. Every single day in America . . .

•More than 2,500 children witness the divorce or separation of their parents . . .

•About 90 are taken from their parents' custody and committed to foster homes . . .

•Some 1,000 unwed teenage girls become mothers . . .

•13 commit suicide, and 16 are murdered . . .

•About 500 adolescents begin using illegal drugs, and 1,000 begin drinking alcohol . . .

•At least 3,610 teens are assaulted, 630 are robbed, and 80 are raped . . .

•More than 100,000 high school students bring guns to school . . .

•At least 2,200 teens drop out of high school . . .

•They watch three hours of TV, and do one hour of homework . . .

Let's remember our young people in prayer regularly and encourage them frequently. They need our concern and encouragement and a lot more urgently than they need our criticism.

Via *The Beam of Light*

Abortion, Safe For Whom?

Continued From Page 3

her unborn baby or let it live), etc., whether President, First Lady, Supreme Court justices, medical people who perform the dastardly deeds, social planners who promote it with all their power, pregnant mothers who choose to abort, etc.

Abortion is murder and yet the doctors who perform it are never arrested, tried and convicted of murder. The mothers who callously plan for its execution are never arrested, convicted by trial or

punished.

The Bible teaches that there will be degrees of punishment in hell. Surely, the hottest parts of Eternal Gehenna will be reserved for murderers of precious babies who go to judgment with that atrocious sin on their records.

Abortion may be legal in America but it is not right in God's eyes and in the sight of people who still respect the dignity and worth of human life. It surely is not safe and

rare! Remember twenty years and thirty million babies murdered do not add up to safety and rarity! It is shameful and disgraceful that it adds up to legality!

Safety and abortion are incompatible terms. One country, some time back, boasted that they had not lost a single life in performing abortions! What about one-half million babies who lost their lives that year?

December 10, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- The Way
- Bill's Billboard
- Never Be Sure?
- The Fruits Of Sin
- Don't Believe Everything You Hear Or Read
- "Most Of A Minute"
- Be Thankful For Your Bible
- Outstanding Service
- "Accentuate The Positive, Eliminate The Negative"

Volume 29 Number 50
(USPS 691-760)

The Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but say unto me the words of truth and soberness." -- ACTS 26:25

Shall The Bible Guide Us?

Johnny Ramsey

The church we read about in the Bible should certainly follow the Scriptures and never cease to be loyal to divine precepts. It is absolutely unthinkable that the body of Christ would revert to human philosophy and credal machinery when the pristine beauty of the sacred text is available. We have always been known for our allegiance to God's revelation of Truth. To allow any other emphasis is to deny the testament sealed in the blood of the Lamb (Matthew 26:28). L. O. Sanderson has blessed us with these words:

Holy Book Divine,
Precious treasure mine,
Lamp to my feet
And a light to my path
To guide me safely home!

It will not do for us to tamper with eternal truth or to allow worldliness and the smugness of pseudo-intellectual snobbery to replace "thus saith the Lord" with modern edicts from theologians, historians or those enamored with their verbosity. We must speak as the oracles of God (I Peter 4:11) and not the conclusions of seminarians or the consensus of synods or dogmas of Popes. Cowper wrote brilliant words concerning the integrity of the Bible:

A sacred glory gilds the page
Majestic as the sun
It gives a light to every age
It gives but borrows none.

Critics of the Bible and those that approach it with scorn will one day wish they had never

been born (Mark 14:21).

Christians must always stand in awe of God's holy and precious word (Psalms 119:161). We shall be judged by it (John 12:48) and only those who pattern their life after its glorious tenets are really blessed (Psalms 1:2; John 15:3). Scripture cannot be broken by the craftiness of men (John 10:35) and the power of heaven's message (Hebrews 4:12) never ceases to amaze soldiers of Christ. The

divine message must ever burn in the hearts of the people of God (Jeremiah 20:9) even as Christ's use of it caused the men on the road to Emmaus to rejoice in its beauty (Luke 24:32).

Ezra's attitude toward the Scriptures (Ezra 7:10) and his presentation of it to the people (Nehemiah 8:8) shows the clear, sharp and personal application of the bread of life that enriches any occasion. When we fail to resort to this

remedy for sin that heaven has provided we cause a spiritual famine that is truly devastating (Amos 8:11-12). May we never forget the salient message of Psalms 119:11, 15-16 that challenges our hearts:

1. Hide God's Word in your heart
2. It will overwhelm sin
3. Meditate upon it
4. Have deep respect for it
5. Never forget God's will

Jesus defeated Satan in Matthew 4 by adroitly using

the sacred word. Demons still tremble when the mirror of the soul -- the Bible -- is properly used (James 1:25; 2:19). When the day returns wherein all members of the church know, love and cherish the Scriptures and boldly proclaim the same we will reap a harvest of souls again. Urgently we must preach the Word (II Timothy 4:2) and never apologize for Truth that makes men free (John 8:31-32).

If The Bible Is Not A Divine Pattern

Max Patterson

There are some among us that are saying there is no divine blueprint or pattern in the Bible for us today. If this is true, consider the following:

1. "Hold fast the form (pattern) of sound words, which you have heard of me" (II Timothy 1:13). If there is no pattern, how could one do this?

2. "And the things that you have heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2). If there is no divine blueprint, how can one do this?

3. "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21). How can one do this if there is no pattern?

4. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try (test) the spirits whether they are of

God" (I John 4:1). How is it possible to obey this verse in any way if there is no divine blueprint?

5. "If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed" (John 8:31). If there is no pattern how could one know if or when one is continuing (abiding, dwelling) in His word?

6. "He that rejects me, and receives not my words, has one that judges him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). If the word of God makes no demands, or shows no pattern to be followed, how can God condemn that person who did not follow in the day of judgement?

7. "Earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3). How can one do this, if one cannot decide what that objective standard is?

Paul said he wrote, "whereby, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ" (Ephesians 3:3, 4). Paul obviously thought we could understand. In fact, that is the very reason he wrote -- in order that we might understand.

To deny that there is a pattern or blueprint is to try to absolve man of any responsibility to

faithful obedience. Paul was thankful to God for the Romans who had "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine (that plan of salvation, or that scheme of redemption) which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:17, 18).

--902 Lariat Dr., Neosho, MO 64850.

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

The Way

Glenn Colley

Christians are people who have set one ultimate goal for themselves: Heaven. They do many things and are involved in many daily decisions and activities, but they maintain this goal. They go to school, work their jobs, rear their children, care for their sick, and bury their dead, but they still have one major goal in life: Heaven. They work to let nothing interfere with that goal. As the Lord would phrase it in His book, they are "in the way."

"The way" for the Christian is one of self-discipline and determination. It's a way of living in service to one supreme Master. Examine with me some facets of "The way."

Jesus explained this lifestyle to us as the "narrow way, which leadeth unto life," and added, "few there be that find it." When the Master taught, people could see that He was "true, and taught the way of God in truth." Luke wrote that our Jesus came "To give light to

them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." John the Baptist came "in the way of righteousness."

By the time Jesus was ready to return to His Father He could say to His closest disciples, "And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." Jesus is the way. The way is described as the "way of salvation," "the way of the Lord," "the way of God," and "the way of peace."

Peter warns that "Many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." Later he wrote that some had already "forsaken the right way." We are not too surprised, considering the kinds of persecutions Christians have faced. Saul headed to Damascus to the synagogues,

"that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem."

For people to begin the way of righteousness, and along the way develop a weak and doubting heart is dangerous, for "it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they had known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."

It is right to make every effort as parents to rear our children to live in the way. The sweet pen of Proverbs instructs, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

The Way is Jesus. The destination is heaven. Know the way. Walk the way. Teach your children the way.

(Scripture references: Matthew 7:13, Matthew 20:32, Matthew 22:16, Luke 1:79, John 14:4-6, Acts 16:17, Acts 18:26, II Peter 2:2, II Peter 2:15, Proverbs 22:6, Acts 9:2).

Never Be Sure?

Mike Benson

Dear Mike,

"I read your article last week entitled, 'Save His Soul,' and I would agree that a Christian can so sin as to be lost . . . But does this mean that he can never be sure about his salvation?"

Answer:

While it is true that a Christian can wander from the truth (James 5:19), this does not have to occur. Such an

individual can remain faithful to God and, in turn, enjoy the security of a close relationship with Him. Please note:

1. A Christian can **KNOW** that he has eternal life. John wrote, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God" (I John 5:13). See also John

20:31.

2. A Christian can have **CONFIDENCE** in his salvation. Peter said, "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved. . . ." (Acts 15:11a). See also II Timothy 4:7-8.

3. A Christian's assurance is founded upon his **OBEDIENCE** to God. "Now by this we know that we know

Continued On Page 4

Bill's Billboard

Dale Jenkins

Bill's thirty-two and he's looking for a wife. His search hasn't been very fruitful so far so he decided to take some unusual steps. First he bought a billboard. In three foot high lettering it reads: "Looking for a wife" and has his phone number, and an address. That generated over 500 letters. Bill has since appeared in People magazine and on the "Today Show." I caught the early morning interview. Bill told us that he wasn't meeting "quality women." Gumble must have been reading our minds because he asked the first question that came to my mind too: "What is a 'quality woman'?"

Bill had his list down pat, didn't even have to pull it out of his pocket and consult it. "She's stable, honest, committed and likes children." Up to now, Bill and I were on the road to becoming fast friends. Why, I might even send him a couple of names. His method is a little unusual, but hey, variety is the spice of life.

Then Bill slipped up, he disappointed me, though over the miles of the airwaves I doubt he'll ever know it. He continued: "I wasn't meeting quality women in the conventional places; bars, singles joints and discos." Bill, maybe what you need is a quick lesson on where to meet quality women.

If you are looking for a quality relationship you do need to look in the right places. The place to look for

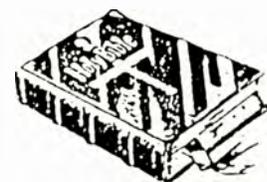
honest, stable, committed women would be at a place that teaches honesty, stable living and committed lifestyles. And, no Bill, that's not a singles' bar. There they encourage dishonesty and lying to get what you want. There they teach unstable living -- when you wake up in the morning who knows where it'll be? And there they preach no commitment. If you don't believe it, just listen to the juke box in the back ground and ask the people on the dance floor how many relationships they have had in the past year. There, as comic songwriter Ray Stevens says, "Happy hour is the saddest time of the day."

Everybody out there is looking for relationships, a spouse, a friend, a business partner, and everybody will find them. Some of the relationships will turn out to be "quality" ones, but sadly, most will be duds. In your search remember one thing: "Do not be deceived: 'Evil companionship corrupts good morals'" (I Corinthians 15:33).

Remember one more thing. This one comes from "Crossing My Desk" by Allen Webster: "Husband to wife, about teenage daughter: 'It's not that I'm worried about her marrying some Tom, Dick or Harry. It's some Moe, Larry or Curley . . . !' Choose wisely, it's for life (Matthew 19:6)."

Good luck Bill, and if you need phone numbers of places to meet "quality women" I suggest checking out "Where the Saints Meet."

--Hamilton, AL.



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The Fruits Of Sin

Roelf L. Ruffner

Recently a committee within a well known American denomination released a report which recommended that their denomination accept practicing homosexuals into their church as well as unmarried heterosexual couples "living together." Needless to say there was an uproar among the conservative wing of that denomination. Ads were placed in newspapers around the nation denouncing the report as seeking to condone sin, which it did. The decent, God-fearing members of the denomination were outraged; as they should be. God's displeasure with sin, homosexual or heterosexual, is well stated in His word (Leviticus 18:22-23; Romans 1:21-32; I Corinthians 6:9-10, 18; Hebrews 13:4).

Even though this report will probably not be adopted at any convention of this denomination in the near future it does point out the sin inherent in any man-made religious organization. The same God who said, "For I hate divorce" (Malachi 2:16) also said through Paul, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye speak the same things, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement" (I Corinthians 1:10). God does not want many "churches" but one body, the church of Christ (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 4:4). He certainly does not want a polyglot of religious confusion with each party "doing its own thing" yet still claiming to have "unity in diversity" in Christ. That is contrary to the spirit of unity for which Christ prayed (John 17:20-21)!

I am thankful for the congregational autonomy of the New Testament church. Congregation A has no scriptural authority to oversee congregation B. (Yet they should lovingly point out doctrinal error and even disassociate themselves from an apostle congregation if necessary (Romans 16:17).

This is one way the Lord isolates apostasy and keeps it from spreading to other parts of the body (I Corinthians 11:18-19).

Through the eyes of most, any denomination begins harmlessly enough. A religious conglomeration of individual congregations forms which follows some leader espousing doctrines foreign to the New Testament. Again contrary to the New Testament they form a denomination with each local

congregation giving up some of its autonomy in the process. Then they organize conventions or ruling bodies which make rules and regulations not found in the New Testament. A bloated bureaucracy follows, demanding part of the "tithes and offerings" of the local body. More and more the local body is governed by hierarchy in a distant city. Gradually the denominational leadership

becomes imbued with secular ideas and modernism. Soon this man-made monstrosity is far removed from the idealism of its founder and even the beliefs of the laity. And one of the fruits of the sin of denominationalism is the acceptance of anti-biblical positions on morality.

Let us use this "report" to show our religious neighbors the sin of denominationalism. If we show them this sin they may become convinced of the

other errors they embrace concerning infant baptism, the Lord's Supper, etc. Perhaps we can teach them the simplicity and God blessed obedience of New Testament Christianity. They can be freed from creeds and the doctrines of men and be simply Christians, saved by the blood of Christ. God grant us the opportunity and the love to do this!

--210 Royal Drive, Marlin, TX 76661.

Don't Believe Everything You Hear Or Read

Dalton Key

Heaven reserves no special blessing for the credulous Christian. Inspiration rather warns us, lest we be "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:14). Again we are warned, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8). The noble Bereans were so described, not because they blindly believed, but because they "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). The Bereans were not cynical, but neither were they gullible.

Don't naively believe everything you hear or read just because it flows from the lips or pen of a preacher. Preachers have been known to be wrong. Mistakes are often made unintentionally. A preaching friend of mine once exhorted his hearers by saying, "All those who feel the need may come forward and commit their sins publicly." Of course he meant to say confess, not commit. Another preacher, during the course of a local Gospel Meeting, proclaimed, Let me

assure you that we have gathered here for no other purpose than to think on worldly things." Somewhat flustered, he continued by saying, "It would be impossible for one to attend every service and get anything out of the sermons." Such "bloopers" are accidental, understandable, and expected from time to time of all who speak publicly.

Other errors are not so accidental and are far more serious. False doctrine is no laughing matter. The religious world appears to be permeated with the filth and stench of moral and doctrinal error. If you find this hard to believe, just listen to the religious broadcasting on radio and television. You may conjure up the wildest, most outlandish doctrine imaginable; then, if you listen long enough and closely enough to late night radio preachers, you will eventually hear that doctrine proclaimed as truth.

I frequently tune into a few of these late night radio evangelists as I travel home from evening speaking engagements. Within the space of one week's listening a while back, I heard lessons on "Your Beloved Pets in Heaven," "There's a Witch or Wizard After You," "Warding Off Evil Spirits with Common Table Salt," and "Getting Filthy Rich by God's Grace."

A radio station not far from where I once lived was at one time in danger of losing its license because of the anti-black, anti-semitic remarks made by one of the preachers speaking during its late night programming. And you would think from hearing some preachers that your salvation depended upon sending them money! The sad part of it all is that there are hundreds of thousands of people gullible enough to listen to, believe, and financially support these

preaching parasites.

John warned, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). Paul wrote, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (I Timothy 4:1, 2). And

Continued On Page 4

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

Major F. J. Harold Kushner, an army medical officer was held as a prisoner-of-war for over five years. He relates the story of a tough young marine, 24 years old, who was in his POW camp. He had survived two years of prison-camp life in relatively good health. He had been promised to be released by the camp commander if he would be cooperative with his captors. Such releases had occurred before and, therefore, gave this young marine a great deal of hope. As time passed he gradually realized that his captors had lied to him. The following statement appeared in the New Yorker Magazine (July 14, 1975): "When the full realization of this took hold he became a zombie. He refused to do all work, rejected all offers of food and encouragement, and simply lay on his cot sucking his thumb. In a matter of weeks he was dead."

We do not survive long without hope. What about your hope after this life? In what condition is your hope of heaven? Paul said in (I Timothy 4:8), that the Christian has the hope of "the life that now is, and that which is to come."

Let's be faithful to our God, and always keep our hope of heaven in tact.

Be Thankful For Your Bible

Holger Neubaer

Long before the invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg (around 1450 A.D.), the making and copying of books was a long and arduous procedure. Ancient books were written and copied letter by letter by scribes who gave their utmost devotion to ensure they had copied completely and

accurately the book before them.

The ancients considered the work of the scribe extremely important and those that would copy scripture considered their task the most noble service they could render for God and mankind. A man named Cassiodorus, who founded a monastery which was noted for its Latin

paleography (study of ancient writing), wrote this commentary on the work of those who endeavored to preserve the word of God,

By reading the divine Scriptures, (the scribe) wholesomely instructs his own mind, and by copying the precepts of the Lord he spreads them far and wide. What happy application, what praiseworthy industry, to preach unto men by means of the hand, to untie the tongue by means of the fingers, to bring quiet salvation to mortals, and to fight the Devil's insidious wiles with pen and ink! For every word of the Lord written by the scribes is a wound inflicted on Satan, And so, though seated in one spot, the scribe traverses diverse lands through the dissemination of what he has written. . . Man multiplies the heavenly words, and in a certain metaphorical sense, if I may dare so to speak, three fingers are made to express the utterances of the Holy Trinity. O sight glorious to those who contemplate it carefully! The fast-traveling reed-pen writes down the holy words and thus avenges the malice of the Wicked One, who caused a reed to be used to smite the head of the Lord during his passion.

Indeed those men who worked tediously and laboriously to give the world the Bible, the saving message of the gospel, ought to be highly esteemed and respected for their great work.

In an Armenian manuscript, the scribe who copied wrote in the margin that a heavy snow storm was raging outside and his ink had frozen while his hand had become numb and his pen had fallen from his fingers. The scribes' work in copying the Bible was long and demanded much patience. The ancient Hebrews, in ensuring accuracy of the copy, would count every letter they had written and match it with the original and if one letter was added or deleted they would destroy the copy and

start over again.

The thousands of manuscripts now extant, which have been discovered from different parts of the world, all attest with amazing agreement, that the word of God has been preserved and that all men can know the saving message of the Gospel.

Knowing something of the history of Scripture, can only

strengthen our conviction that we do have the very "Word of God" contained within the sixty-six books of the Bible and we ought to be so thankful that we can assemble in comfortable surroundings, with those of like faith, to study the efficacious, effulgent and eternal word of almighty God.

Outstanding Service

Tommy Blewett

A desire to do better than average is shared by all. Though this desire may be covered over by fear, failure, and disillusionment, most of us want to reach deep down and pull out the best that is in us. This is only right. Paul said, "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Colossians 3:23), and, if we put our heart into every effort, sometimes we attain greatness.

Greatness is achieved when one performs above the ordinary. It can be recognized in all pursuits. In football it's measured in the number of yards gained, passes completed, and points earned. In business it's measured in the number of units sold, services rendered, and dollars earned. Even in the kingdom of God there is greatness to be attained and if we put our whole heart into this effort it will be ours. But, we must understand that greatness in the kingdom is measured and recognized in a different fashion.

Two men desired to achieve greatness as disciples of the Lord. They came to him with their mother and she asked Jesus if her sons could sit on his right and left hand in his kingdom (Matthew 20:20-21). Recognizing their desire to be great and their ignorance concerning his kingdom, Jesus replied, ". . . Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able" (Matthew 20:22).

In the context of Matthew 20,

we learn that Jesus was neither expecting nor desiring greatness in the eyes of men. At the climax of his ministry he was going to be betrayed by one of his disciples, abandoned by the others, condemned to death by the religious leaders of his nation, mocked, scourged, and crucified by the heathen. Those who stood close to him could expect the same treatment. His faithful followers would drink the cup of rejection and be baptized with the baptism of suffering. And in the eyes of men such things do not make one great.

The disciples thought that greatness in the kingdom would be like that of the power-hungry leaders of the Gentiles, recognized by their dominion and authority they exercise over others, Matthew 20:25. But, Jesus taught that greatness in his kingdom came from serving others: ". . . Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:26, 27).

Jesus put his heart into being a servant of others and gave his life for the kingdom. Those who desire greatness in the eyes of God must do likewise. We may never be recognized in the Football Hall of Fame or receive the Salesman of The Year Award, but we can put our heart into serving the needs of others and spend our life giving the best that is in us for the kingdom.

"Accentuate The Positive, Eliminate The Negative"

W. A. Holley

- Cultivate a pleasing disposition.
- Learn to be tolerant.
- Genuinely love people.
- Be as courteous as possible.
- Follow the Golden Rule.
- Obey God rather than men.
- Guard your temper.
- Watch your words.
- Purpose to do right, regardless.
- Be a peacemaker, not a peacebreaker.
- Cast no stone unless you are perfect.
- Disarm your enemy by admitting your faults.
- Understand that others have problems too.
- Judge righteous judgment.
- Be faithful to the Lord and to His church.
- Set up a schedule of prayer and Bible reading.
- Wear a smile and the world will smile with you.
- Read the Lord's sermon on the mount.
- Find the verse that says "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me."
- P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Don't Believe Everything You Hear Or Read

Continued From Page 3

again, Paul warned of those who "by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple (Romans 16:18).

May we become neither cynical nor gullible. If what

we hear preached is taught clearly within the Bible, let us accept it, believe it, and fully obey it. If the preaching we hear is not founded upon a clear, "thus saith the Lord," let us by all means refuse it!

Never Be Sure?

Continued From Page 2

Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word

truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him" (I John 2:3-5).

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

December 17, 1993

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Volume 29 Number 51
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Truth

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

1e

The Courage To Stand

Johnny Ramsey

Both Moses and David wrote vivid words on the subject of courage and fortitude. Steadfast loyalty is a major Bible subject. A typical statement in the Old Testament, on this vital matter, states:

"Be strong and of good courage,

Fear not, nor be afraid of them,

For the Lord, thy God, will be with you."

Paul wrote similar words to the Ephesians urging them to do all they could to stand firm as soldiers of Christ against the wiles of the Devil. Warfare against spiritual wickedness in high places is a fierce battle that demands proper use of the shield of faith, helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit!

"Stand up, stand up for Jesus
Ye soldiers of the Cross,
Lift high His royal banner
It must not suffer loss."

Since the Savior has promised to be with us and never forsake us (Hebrews 13:5-6) we shall not fear what men can do to harm us. Casting all our cares upon Christ grants us freedom to seek and pursue peace (I Peter 3:11). A secular song challenges our attention:

"Give me some men who are stout-hearted men,

Who will fight for the right they adore

Start me with ten who are stout-hearted men,

And I will soon give you ten thousand more!"

Then we review the Bible record of courageous folk who stood for Truth against all odds it gives us hope.

Noah is mentioned in Ezekiel 14:14 as an example of absolute trust in God.

Joseph had the determination to do God's will in a heathen land under difficult circumstances.

Joshua was a valiant leader who would not make easy decision but rather stood firm for the right.

Micaiah was a genuine prophet who would not be swayed by 400 "yes men" or even earthly kings.

Daniel, a young but dedicated statesman for Jehovah, would not take the easy route of popularity when God's people needed a voice that would never bend to earthly pomp.

Stephen was a courageous gospel preacher who died at the hands of evil men but left behind a legacy that helped to convert Saul of Tarsus.

Barnabas manifested conviction and purpose that caused him to cleave to the Lord whatever the situation.

Jesus, at age 12, made it clear to all about Him, that the Father's business took priority!

We, too, must have the courage to stand against Satan with steadfast faith (I Peter 5:9) as we resist the fiery darts of the enemy of our soul (James 4:7). When we obey God, rather than men (Acts 5:29) we gain inner strength so desperately needed.

"Each step I take, I know that

He will guide me,

To higher ground He ever leads me on. . . "

There are several areas in which members of the church need to truly manifest the courage to stand. Let us always stand up for:

The Bible - Psalms 119:46

The Church - Ephesians 3:21

The Lord - Psalms 116:1

Purity of Life - Titus 2:12

The Plan of Salvation - Acts 22:16

The Home - Psalms 127:1

Judgment Day - Hebrews 9:27

Can God, our Maker, depend upon us to stand? Wilkin Bacon wrote these challenging words for Christians:

Can He Depend On You

His Blessed Will to Do

Will You Be Crowned
With The Faithful and True
Can He Depend on You?

Let us never give Satan a comfortable place to launch his evil plans in our lives (Ephesians 4:27). Stand up for Jesus today!

"Practical Atheism"

M. Floyd Bailey, Jr.

"The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God; they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good." Psalm 14:1

It is no doubt the height of foolishness to doubt the existence of God. Atheistic attitudes could be called the "seat of all sin." Many who would never declare that God does not exist show their atheism by their lifestyles. It is atheism to doubt that God either does not have the power to or will not punish their sins. To doubt God's word in any way is a practical atheism. The "practical atheists" profess that they ". . . know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:6).

Notice that in both verses cited above we find that men commit sins of commission (" . . . done abominable works" and ". . . being abominable and disobedient") and sins of omission (" . . . none that doeth good," and ". . . unto every

good work reprobate" (Titus 1:6).

Notice that in both verses cited above we find that men commit sins of commission (" . . . done abominable works" and ". . . being abominable and disobedient") and sins of omission (" . . . none that doeth good," and ". . . unto every good work reprobate). Both sins of commission and omission stem from a doubt of God. There are many in the Lord's church who guard themselves from sins of commission. Although they may fall from time to time (Romans 3:23), they are upright in their deeds; but, oh so many will find themselves lost simply because they fail to do good (Matthew 25:31-46). "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

Many times congregations strive for good works, but sadly, when it comes time to work, there are few who put forth the effort needed to accomplish the good. For

example, visitation programs, nursing home visitation, prison ministry, mid-week Bible study, Sunday evening worship, ladies' Bible class and gospel meetings, etc. are all good works with too few laborers (Matthew 9:37-38). Is it because we don't know of the need for these things? When we fail to do good, we place ourselves in the foolish category of being "practical atheists." Are we reasoning that God would not punish us for not obeying the commands to do good (Matthew 5:16; I Peter 4:19)?

Let us never deny God that which is His: our hearts, our souls, our strength (Matthew 22:37); yea, our lives and bodies as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1). Let us work to glorify God.

"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

--1705 Starview Drive,
Salem, VA 24153.

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Last Minute Gift Reminders

Glenn Colley

1. *To work and enjoy the benefits of honest labor is a gift of God. The best life is the simple, thankful life.*

Ecclesiastes 5:19 -- "Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God."

2. *Never let gifts distract or dissuade you from doing what is right. Nothing is worth more than your soul.*

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."

3. *Everything good given to us in life can be directly attributed to God.*

James 1:17 -- "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

4. *There is one unspeakable gift.*

II Corinthians 9:15 -- "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."

Romans 6:23 -- "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 5:15 -- "But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many."

5. *We are saved by the gift of God's grace, coupled with our faith.*

--Ephesians 2:8 -- "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God..."

6. *God gave to us so we may give to others.*

--I Peter 4:10 -- "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever."

Gideon -- "Who Looked To God"

Gene Morris things.

In Judges 6 we read of the story of Gideon, the son of Joash the Abiezrite, who was chosen as the sixth judge of Israel. Gideon was selected for this position because he was a "mighty man of valor" (verse 12). Even though Gideon was a strong person, he wondered how he could be the person who would rescue Israel from the Midianites since his family was poor and he was the least in his father's house (verse 15).

We are all familiar with how Gideon began asking God to show him signs to confirm his consciousness, his confidence, and his capability concerning the parts of his task. Sometimes Gideon's asking for signs from God is given a negative connotation, suggesting that Gideon did not have enough faith in what God said; yet, Gideon is included in the "Faith Hall of Fame" (Hebrews 11:32). Instead of viewing his actions in a negative way, we need to see that Gideon was merely seeking from God the answers to his questions. Let us notice that Gideon looked to God (something we must and need to do today) for signs of three

First, Gideon looked for a sign of God's presence (verse 17). Gideon wanted assurance that he was talking to the one true God. Today, we as Christians need to look to God for evidences of His presence which He has given to us. One evidence we have that God is with us is the Bible. The Word dwelt with God and was God, and it was made flesh and dwelt with man (John 1:1-2, 14). Another evidence is God's word given unto us through Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:20). Still another evidence of God's presence and being is His creation (John 1:3, 10). These three evidences are only a few of what God has given us to prove His presence.

After Gideon looked for a sign of God's presence, he looked for a sign of God's deliverance of Israel (verses 36-38). Gideon wanted to know if God would save Israel from the Midianites with the number of soldiers he had. Presently, we can look for the evidence God has given us of our deliverance from sin and Satan. We know that God loves us immensely; so much, in fact, that He sacrificed His only Son for us

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The Fallacy Of Faith Alone

Neal Pollard

In his MAXIMS OF PIETY AND OF CHRISTIANITY Thomas Wilson commented, "Faith is the root of works. A root that produceth nothing is dead." While Mr. Wilson was not a member of the Lord's church, he had an excellent grasp on the activity involved in the belief of God. Too many religious leaders in the denominational world have advocated with a loud, sustained voice that one need **only** believe in order to be saved. Some contend that one reflects a poor image of God who teaches that our merciful, giving Father expects anything more than belief in His Son.

If one contends that faith alone saves, he forgets some crucial elements revealed in the scriptures.

FAITH ALONE FORGETS REPENTANCE. Jesus tells us that failure to comply with His command for repentance means damnation of the soul (Luke 13:3, 5). Several Bible characters, in fact, were told that they stood condemned if they would not repent. Nineveh was lost without a change of heart. The Pentecostans were lost without repentance (Acts 2:36-38). Truly, genuine belief in God will cause a transformation of one's life and mind (Romans 12:1, 2). When one comes face to face with the meaning of Calvary and has his heart melted, he will desire to conform to the image of God's Son!

FAITH ALONE FORGETS CONFESSION. Jesus said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him

will I confess also before my Father in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32, 33). Jesus taught that confession was a prerequisite for salvation. The Eunuch had the presence of mind to see the importance of confession (Acts 8:37). In fact, is not faith without confession a denial? Paul said confession with the mouth is made unto salvation (Romans 10:10).

FAITH ALONE FORGETS BAPTISM. Peter told Cornelius, shortly before their trip to the waters of baptism, that those who are accepted with God are those who fear Him and work righteousness (Acts 10:35). David

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Among The "Scholars" # 1

(Editor's note: This is the 1st article in a two-part series. Part two will appear next week. G. C.)

David W. Hester

The Christian Scholars Conference was held on the campus of Harding University July 22-24. The theme of the meeting was "Worship." Professors from several of our universities came and participated, as did other men who are not connected with any of our schools.

This writer was invited to participate and deliver a speech entitled, "Is The Use Of The Instrument In Worship A Sin?" Despite the fact that these conferences have produced some radical doctrines the last few years, the decision was made to go and observe as well as participate.

During the conference, I noticed several things about the "scholars," the language used by many of them, and the doctrines taught by some. One must be aware that many of these men are presently teaching our children, and their attitudes toward the church, the Bible, and other matters may be passed on to impressionable minds.

The first thing I noticed was the effete snobbery of some of the participants. A distinction was made between "specialists" (themselves) and "non-specialists" (those who do not have advanced degrees). A conversation was overheard concerning a recent book which was highly critical of the "new hermeneutic." Referring to the occupation of the person who wrote the book, it was said, "That's what happens when a lawyer tries to do theology."

The second thing observed was a lack of Scripture used by some. A few lectures were interesting; these were few in comparison to those which weren't. More time was spent in quoting or alluding to neo-orthodox and evangelical "scholars."

A further area of concern was the language used by a few of these men. The phrases "church renewal" and "worship

renewal" were used, but most of their time was spent in bashing the church and "traditionalism."

The areas of most concern were the false doctrines promoted. Among them were: an expanded role for women; false teaching about marriage-divorce-remarriage; "special music" in worship; and radical feminism.

Perhaps the most drastic perversion of Truth came from an advocate of radical feminism. He pressed for a rethinking of the nature of God to accommodate the "feminine" side of the church. He claimed that a view of God which thinks and addresses the Creator as exclusively male is an "idolatrous image." He also claimed that, although Jesus addressed God as Father, it "probably" was not the only way in which he thought of God.

It was also claimed that, if we do not adopt his view, we will "lose a whole generation of young women and young people from our churches." He also claimed that, since there are many rape victims and spousal abuse cases in our congregations, we must change the mode of address to God.

The answer to all of this is pretty simple. The original language of both Old and New Testaments addressed Deity with masculine pronouns. Did Bible writers have an "idolatrous image" of Jehovah? It is insulting to think that man can make the Almighty an idolatrous image. Also, just because there are unfortunate people who have suffered through tragedies in their lives, that is no reason to change the mode of address to God and violate Scripture.

The most curious doctrine promoted was concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage. The person promoting it said that "fornication" in Matthew 19:9 does not refer to every sexual sin, but only to incest! His proof? Recent finds from the Dead Sea Scrolls indicate that in some cases, the word translated "fornication" can refer to incest. Never mind what respected Greek

authorities say about the word.

One doctrine which dominated the conference the last morning regarded special music in worship. The conclusion was assumed, by most present, to be axiomatic: The first-century church employed choirs and solos;

therefore, we in the modern church may have them in our worship of God. In recent articles, I have dealt with the arguments used by those defending this practice. When one looks at the reasons given, he is at first puzzled as to the curious logic and then amused

at the absurdity of the claim.

This is but a taste of what I experienced. There is more to this story. I will report on my presentation, and the aftermath, and, give some observations.

--Rt. 4, Box 138, Tuscumbia, AL 35674.

Taking Away The Anxiety

Vance Hutton

The world in which we live is one of instability, insecurity, and uncertainty in so many ways. Certainly, part of such could be avoided. Some of it is geared to the nature of man and things. It is said that the average man will change jobs about five times during his working career. There are many such areas of life where uncertainty abounds. The Bible speaks of such. Proverbs 27:1 says man should not boast about tomorrow because he knows not what a day may bring. James 4:13-15 instructs us not to take confidence in the future because man as a vapor knows not what will be on the morrow. Paul in Acts 20:22 spoke of being bound in spirit, not knowing what would befall him when he got to Jerusalem. We are taught to be ready for judgment because we know not when the Lord shall come (Matthew 25:13). There are some things available that bring comfort and solace in the time of storm and difficulty of life. Notice some things to which we can tie ourselves and take away so much of the anxiety connected to uncertainty of life.

1) The Bible: Forever the Lord's word is settled in heaven (Psalms 119:89). Heaven and earth will pass away but the Lord's word will endure forever (Matthew 24:35; I Peter 1:25).

2) God In Heaven: Hebrews 13:5-6 speaks of the Lord promising to not leave us or forsake us. Hebrews 13:8 speaks of Jesus the same yesterday, today, and forever. God is not slack in His promises (II Peter 3:9). Jesus

spoke of being with His people until the end of the world (Matthew 28:20).

3) The Church: Daniel 2:44 spoke of the church never being destroyed. Jesus said the gates of Hades would not prevent the establishment of the church (Matthew 16:18). I Corinthians 15:24 speaks of the church when the Lord returns.

4) Prayer: I John 5:14 speaks of knowing that the Lord hears and answers prayer. Hebrews 4:16 teaches us to come to God in prayer with confidence and find help in a time of trouble. Matthew 7:7-11 teaches us about the concern God has for His children.

5) The Lord's Work: The least of good done for the Lord will verily be rewarded (Matthew 10:42). Hebrews 6:10 teaches us that God is not

unrighteous to forget our work and labor of love. Our labor in the Lord is not in vain but will be rewarded (Galatians 6:9; I Corinthians 15:58).

6) God's Providence: We know all things work together for good for God's people (Romans 8:28). He promises to provide for us if we do His will (Matthew 6:33). The Lord provides strength to do what is demanded of us. His ears and eyes are over the righteous (I Peter 3:12).

7) The Peace Of God: There is a peace of God provided that passes understanding that will keep our hearts and minds (Philippians 4:7). There is the assurance of our salvation and our relationship with God (I John 5:13).

8) Heaven Itself: There is a place of a better and enduring substance (Hebrews 11:10). It

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"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

Do you ever wonder if true, old fashioned conviction is becoming more rare than ever before? Is it difficult to find people who will determine what is right and then stand their ground?

If this kind of conviction is impressive to you, then you would enjoy reading the Old Testament of the Bible. It's pages are saturated with the accounts of meek people who had a cause bigger than themselves.

Take Daniel for instance. Daniel prayed three times in an open window every single day . . . without wondering or caring about who might object to faith in Jehovah. One day King Darius signed a new law which forbade any prayer or petition to any god but himself. The penalty of breaking the law was death . . . and Daniel knew it. When his time to pray came however, he was right there in that open window. For his crime he was thrown to hungry lions. God's protective arm was there however, and Daniel was safe.

Couldn't we all use this conviction? A good many people believe that the reason the lions did not eat Daniel in that lion's den was because he was all backbone.

The Fallacy Of Faith Alone

Continued From Page 2

emphasized that God's commandments are righteousness (Psalm 119:172). Baptism is the righteous command unto which we must yield ourselves in faithful obedience in order to be saved. In the same way that Noah went where salvation was promised (the ark), one must be in the church in order to be saved. The only way to be added to the church is through baptism (I Peter 3:20, 21). Christ is the only way to the Father (John 14:6), and only baptism puts one in Christ (Galatians 3:26, 27). Faith without baptism is ineffective. As Guy N. Woods once explained, "The 'he' of Mark 16:16 is restrictive." The only ones promised salvation are those that believe and are baptized. So, he that believeth **not** and is baptized **not** shall meet what end? Since the blood of Christ saves (Revelation 1:5) and baptism is where we contact the blood (Romans 6:1-6; I Peter 1:19), is not baptism clearly a condition of salvation?

FAITH ALONE FORGETS PERSEVERANCE. One can never erase from inspiration the statement, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). A child of God must remain true to God all the days of his life. He must be true to God in his attendance (Hebrews 10:25), his priorities (Matthew 6:33), his response to the Great Commission (Mark 16:15, 16), and his manner of life (I Timothy 4:12). Frank Chesser once told the story of a denominational preacher who boasted, "I could not, after believing, be lost if I swung through the gates of hell on a rotten potato vine spitting

Taking Away The Anxiety

Continued From Page 3

is incorruptible. Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

MAY THESE THINGS

tobacco juice in the devil's eyes!" The absurdity of that statement is seen in light of the scriptures (Hebrews 6:1-6; Galatians 5:4; II Peter 2:20-

Dear Mr. Benson,

"I don't understand why you try to force your religious beliefs on everyone else. If a person is really sincere and loves Jesus, what difference does it make what he believes or practices?"

I am unable to "force" the teachings of the Bible on anyone. However it is my desire to study/share the Word of God with those who are also interested in learning it (Isaiah 1:18a).

In answer to your question, please note the following:

1. Sincerity is essential to salvation. Paul wrote, "that you may approve the things excellent, *that you may be sincere* and without offense till the day of Christ (Philippians 1:10). See also Ephesians 6:24.

2. However, you need to recognize that it is possible for an individual to be sincere, but to be sincerely wrong. For example, a friend of mine who preaches in Chattanooga recently drove to Pensacola, Florida for a speaking engagement. Upon arrival, he went to a restaurant just down the street from the motel where he was staying to eat a bite of supper. He had been driving for several hours and looking forward to a nice meal and a tall glass of ice tea. After he placed his order, the waitress came back to his table, poured his drink, and

22). In the words of Joseph Beaumont, "Faith and works are like the light and heat of a candle; they cannot be

then left the pitcher on the table. Unfortunately, what my friend thought was a glass of tea, in reality turned out to be a glass of ice-cold "bleach"! (Someone had set a pitcher of bleach next to all of the tea pitchers and my friend was given the wrong one). Imagine his shock when he took an initial swallow of the "beverage"!

What is the point of the story? Just that this was a

As Good As Good Can Be

Cecil Corkren

"As good as good can be." The Stouffer convenient frozen food company has used this line for advertising their products. They want consumers to see their products as the best of all.

Now we are hearing a similar commercial by Land of Lakes products. They boast that their products are, "As pure as can be."

The faithful Christian washed in the blood of Jesus is as pure as he can be (Psalm 51:7). "For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy, but to the sinner he giveth travail, together and heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God" (Ecclesiastes 2:26). "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and He delighteth in his way" (Psalm 37:23). God's children are "As good as can be," because they are faithful in Christ. There is no way of making the world better by our own powers for "It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

The church can say, "the Christian redeemed by the blood of Christ is 'As pure and good as can be.'"

separated. Faith without works is like a bird without wings; though she may hop about on earth, she will never fly to heaven. -- But when both are joined together, then

doth the soul mount up to her eternal rest."

James said, "As the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead" (James 2:26).

"simple," honest mistake in which someone thought she was serving tea, while another presumed he was drinking tea. And despite the fact that both of them were "sincere" in their convictions, both were wrong. Their feelings were unreliable. This can also occur in the realm of religion.

I wonder how many religious people there are today who are just as sincere in their love for the Lord, and yet sincerely wrong in their service to Him? Sincerity does not guarantee that we are in a right relationship with the Lord.

Solomon wrote, "*There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death*" (Proverbs 14:12).

3. The Lord requires sincere obedience based upon truth. Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, *but he who does the will of My Father in heaven*" (Matthew 7:21). Joshua said, "Now therefore, fear the Lord, *serve Him in sincerity and in truth* . . ." (Joshua 24:14a).

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

From The Mailbag:

". . . The Words of Truth is a very powerful medium of the Lord's work. I remember looking through the paper when I was much younger and being fascinated with the articles. The Words of Truth definitely encouraged me in my decision to become a Christian. I would like to submit the enclosed article . . . Thank you for your time and for encouraging a young man who desires to do God's will."

Gideon -- "Who Looked To God"

Continued From Page 2

(I Corinthians 6:20) (Galatians 5:1). When we are faced with temptation, God has promised us a way to escape the snares of the devil (I Corinthians 10:13). God is definitely planning on delivering us from Satan if we do what He has commanded (Acts 2:38; Colossians 1:14, 21-22).

Finally, Gideon looked for a sign of surety from God (verses 39-40). Gideon wanted to secure his absolute trust in God. Again, he has given us His word that He will do as He tells us; God will not break His promises (II Peter 3:9; Habakkuk 2:9; Hebrews

10:23). God is not going to forsake us or leave us (Hebrews 13:5). We can put our complete trust in Him.

Gideon looked to God for signs to see what He was doing. Today, however, we look to God through His word, the Bible, as we live our lives for Him. Although we cannot receive signs as Gideon did (I Corinthians 13:8-11) God can direct us through his Providence (Genesis 22:8, 14) as well as through His Word. Let us be like Gideon and look to God for the answers to any questions we have.

December 24, 1993

See Inside Articles:

- Three Important Questions To Ask Regarding Present-Day "Tongue Speaking"
- Among The "Scholars" #2
 - The Importance Of Friendliness
- "Most Of A Minute"
 - Why Is It There?
 - The Main Event

Volume 29 Number 52
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Truth

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

the

Jesus - The Hope Of The World

Elwood Holt

The land of Palestine is the land where our Savior once lived. All his life was spent in this small country. His disciples lived there. Our Lord never traveled extensively, though he was always on the move. He was out of the land perhaps only once, and, that when but a mere babe. His parents fled into Egypt with him that he might be spared the wrath of a wicked king.

It has been the desire of many gospel preachers to tour this land where so many wonderful things took place; some are fortunate enough to be able to go and walk where Jesus walked. They can see Jerusalem, the Jordan River, the Dead Sea, the Mount of Olives, and many other places that leave them feeling in their hearts that they have truly stood upon holy ground. And yet the land of the Jews today is a land of disbelief in the Christ who once walked there.

They firmly believe that the man who came nearly two thousand years ago was an imposter and a fraud. They are looking for the advent of the true Messiah. It is strange and sad that an entire nation would deny One who failed to fit the mold they had prepared for him. He had his own teachings and, because what he taught did not comport with what they wanted the Messiah to teach, they renounced him, crucified him, and even cried, "Let his blood be upon us and upon our children." Should he

come again as he did the first time, what assurance do we have that people would not do with him as they did the first time?

In his first coming, he came as the result of PROPHECY. He fulfilled the words of the prophets in the most minute details. Prophets told where he would be born and when. They spake of his life, and where he should live. They talked of his miracles, his teachings, his death and resurrection; his going away "into a far country (that is, heaven) to receive a kingdom,) and how he would come again. All of these prophecies, with the exception of the ones relating to his second coming, have been fulfilled. AND IT WILL BE FULFILLED IN TIME. God is not slack concerning his promises, and he has promised us that His Son will come one day on clouds of Glory, to receive his own, to reward the diligent, and to punish the disobedient.

How can anyone read, even casually, these prophecies and their fulfillments, and continue to disbelieve in the man called Christ, the SON OF GOD! Prophecy and its fulfillment give us undeniable proof of the integrity of the Bible. If the man we call "Lord" is not truly God's son, then not only is our New Testament null and void, the OLD is, too.

When the Jews of Christ's days denied Him, he lovingly referred them to their great

prophets -- to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and others. He said, "They spake of me." And they did. Moses said, "A Prophet shall the Lord God raise up from among they brethren like unto me . . ." (Deuteronomy 18:18). In Acts 3:22, Peter, under the new dispensation, quoted these very words and applied them to the man he knew as Christ. And Peter came to know him well during his association with him. Peter, in the same passage, said that men should "hearken to him in whatsoever

Charles T. Abernathy
The apostle Peter writes, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious, (I Peter 2:2, 3). In describing that sincere milk of the word, Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

The Word of God is a spiritual feast. The man in Psalm one, verse 2 finds it delightful. We often teach and admonish one another with spiritual songs like, "Sweeter than All," and "Sweeter as the Years Go By." But perhaps the sweetest taste of all is found in this statement of God's gracious gift. "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 15:57). Read that entire chapter a time

he shall say unto you." This is our work in this life: to persuade men and women, boys and girls, to harken to this Savior.

He is revealed in the New Testament. He came in fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament. The hope of the world, unbelieving Palestine included, is this Lord and Master. He said, "Unless you believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins, and where I am ye cannot come." But faith is a process of action. It demands obedience,

and if obedience is not forthcoming then the faith is not genuine. It is our plea that the will of God be obeyed from the heart, without ADDITIONS or SUBTRACTIONS. Let us help you if we can in coming to a better understanding of God's will in your life. Remember John 8:32, in which Jesus said, "AND YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."

A Matter Of Taste

or two, and answer this question: "Can you think of anything sweeter than that victory?"

The New Testament helps us understand what one taste means by describing its opposite. Note what Luke 22:61 & 62 says about bitterness, "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out and wept bitterly." Peter knew he had disappointed the Lord, and it left a bitter taste.

Peter saw bitterness in Acts 8:21 thru 23. He told Simon, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray 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." We see from that account that Simon the sorcerer was in opposition to God's gracious plan of salvation. A complete reading of that account shows that fear was a part of Simon's bitterness. And, as we know from Hebrews 10:27 the end result of willful sin without repentance is "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Can you think of anything more bitter than finding yourself in opposition to God on judgment day?

In conclusion, there is no better advice on matters of taste than this: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."

--Council Hill, OK.

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Three Important Questions To Ask Regarding Present-Day "Tongue Speaking"

Glenn Colley

Many religionists today practice and teach "speaking in tongues" during their public assemblies and private devotions. In the church of Christ we do not, and this often raises questions from our friends associates. Occasionally one of our members is made to feel less than "spiritual" because he or she has never spoken in "tongues." Questions like, "You mean you've never spoken in tongues? How sad. What kind of church do you go to?" or, "I can't imagine Christianity without miracles. I speak in tongues all the time. Don't you think that Christians who don't are quenching the Spirit?"

However, we must understand that in the final analysis, the "proof" offered for present-day tongue speaking is wholly subjective, and never objective. By "subjective" I mean the arguments defending present-day tongue speaking are based on what the speakers feel in their hearts. They "know" it is right because they "feel" it is right. They "know" this is the Spirit's work, because they "feel" it is the Spirit's work. By "objective," I mean the arguments truly from proper examination of the Word of God. Since this tongue speaking is either from God, or from the fertile imagination of men, it becomes very important that we approach this with an objective attitude.

Any time we engage in a religious discussion to determine God's will, and one participant starts basing his arguments on how he "feels in his heart," the productive discussion is squelched. No one can dispute how another person feels, and feelings are not our standard! We must determine right from wrong

by carefully examining God's word (II Timothy 2:15).

Consider three important questions for present-day tongue speakers:

1. "THROUGH WHAT MEANS DID YOU OBTAIN THIS ABILITY?"

There were two ways -- ONLY two ways -- by which people obtained the miraculous gift of tongue speaking in the New Testament: The baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4), and through the laying on the Apostle's hands (Acts 8:17-20). People today who have this miraculous ability, have to get it through one of these two ways. Unfortunately, neither of these are available today.

It's easy enough to deduce that since all the apostles died long ago, no one can hope to receive the miraculous gift through their hands. Those old bones have long since been reduced to dust.

Most who practice "Tongue-speaking" today, and who are concerned with Biblical authority, claim to have this gift from the baptism of the Holy Spirit. "Baptism" simply means immersion, thus, to be directly immersed with the power from the Holy Spirit. In the New Testament there are two obvious occurrences of this baptism, and an implied occurrence (Acts 2:1-6, Acts 10:44-48, II Corinthians 11:5).

Notice please however, that today there is only ONE baptism! There is a glaring inconsistency among most tongue-speakers today because they believe in TWO baptisms: the baptism in water, and the baptism of the Holy spirit. Ephesians 4:4, 5 says,

"There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

One Lord, one faith, one baptism . . ."

That means one of the two baptisms has ceased! Since we know that water baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), and water baptism puts us in contact with Christ's death (Romans 6:1-5), we know that water baptism must continue. However, there is not one single mention of Holy Spirit baptism after Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:5 that there is "ONE baptism."

There was a time and purpose for miraculous gifts like tongue-speaking which sometimes required the baptism of the Holy Spirit. That time and purpose are gone.

2. "WHAT KIND OF TONGUE IS THAT?"

The word "tongue" or "tongues" is found fifty-five times in the English New Testament. Forty-seven of those times it comes from the Greek word "Glossa." "Glossa" simply means, "Tongue, the little member in the mouth." However, it is almost always (90%) used in it's figurative sense meaning "spoken language." In all of these cases, it refers to a spoken, intelligible, human language and never anything else.

Only twenty-five of the times the word is used does it refer to a gift of speaking a language by a miracle.

Do not be misled by the phrase, "unknown tongue" in the King James translation. I Corinthians 14:4 for example says, "He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himself . . ." The word "unknown" is in italics in each of the six times it is used beside tongue. The italics mean that it was inserted by translators to make the text more readable. It is not in the original Greek text. Occasionally it conveys

a wrong idea. These were not tongues unknown to all people, but rather unknown to those who were speaking them. THAT was the miracle!

Do not underestimate the weight of this point in the discussion. Present-day tongue speakers ALWAYS speak in gibberish, NEVER in true languages which they have not studied. If the tongues in the New Testament were true languages, and they were, then what is practiced today has nothing to do with the Holy Spirit, or Jesus Christ, or the church of the New Testament.

3. "WHAT KIND OF EFFECT DOES THIS EXHIBITION HAVE ON UNBELIEVERS?"

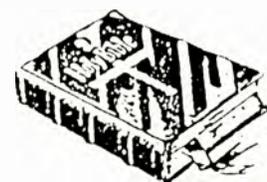
I Corinthians 14:22 says, "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not . . ." This gift was to impress NON-CHRISTIANS, not Christians. What reaction do you think comes from unbelievers today when they hear the gibberish pouring from the mouth of emotionally driven charismatics? They mock! They laugh! Children through the years have "snuck in" to these services to be entertained by the crys and gibberish and gyrations of these religionists. No miracle of God would ever cause such a thing! Spiritual gifts, including the ability to speak in other languages, were designed to build faith in God and His word, not to make men mock.

Contrast these current practices with Acts 2:4-6: "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem

Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galatians? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? . . ." That day they listened. That day about 3000 were baptized into Christ for the remission of their sins (vs. 38-41).

Garland M. Robinson, in discussing I Corinthians 14 writes, "The whole context completely refutes their supposed doctrine. The problem in Corinth was their abuse of spiritual gifts, especially "speaking in tongues." For some reason they coveted this gift above all others and loved to exercise it in the assembly. Paul's writing of chapter 12-14 was to correct their misuses and explain the true purpose of such miraculous gifts. When Paul said their tongue speaking was "not unto men, but unto God," he simply was indicating that it was not understood by those present, not that it was not intended to be understood. His point is clear that if any spoke in tongues, there must also be one to interpret what was spoken (v. 5), else, none would be able to profit from it. He said such utterances were useless. They were just spoken "into the air" (vs. 9). Even the one speaking in the "tongue" (language) does not benefit from it since no one interprets what he said (vs. 14). Tongue speaking under such circumstances would be understood by no one but God, so wherein is

Continued On Page 4



The Words Of Truth

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Among The "Scholars" #2

David W. Hester

Those who presented papers at the Christian Scholars conference at Harding were grouped under different sub-topics under the main theme, "Worship." Depending on the number of participants, the average session lasted two and a half hours. Each speaker was allotted thirty minutes to deliver his speech. At the end of all speeches, there was a thirty minute discussion session, during which questions were asked.

As mentioned in the first article, this writer was invited to deliver a speech entitled, "Is The Use Of The Instrument In Worship A Sin?" Scheduled along with me were two men from very different backgrounds. One has gone on record saying that no examples in the New Testament are binding. The other is a professor at a major state university. It is my understanding that he comes from the "anti-Sunday school" wing of the brotherhood.

The content of my speech was a basic sermon against the instrument. The points were straightforward. First, I discussed the nature and authority of Scripture; second, the nature of worship, with special emphasis on **John 4:24**; third, I examined **Ephesians 5:19** and **Colossians 3:16**, with special emphasis on the word **psallo**; fourth, the testimony of history; and, finally, I examined current arguments made to defend the use of the instrument.

The "moderator" for the session was an editor of an extreme left-wing magazine. Also, there were several of the "progressive" leaders in the audience, as well as a couple of men from the Independent Christian Church.

When one considers what has come out of the Christian Scholars Conference the past several years, he has reason to be alarmed. I do not consider myself a "Chicken Little," but the situation is disturbing. However, I am also an optimist. Faithful brethren have not yet begun to fight! Thus, some observations are in

order concerning what we may learn.

First, Satan is a coward! We know the Bible says, **"resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7)**. The devil cannot effectively answer truth! More often than not, false teachers will "observe the passover" when dealing with the truth; they will "pass right over" the arguments.

Second, the "scholars" are not optimistic as to their success in "renewing" the church. This was indicated in the speeches I heard. I believe I know why. These men know that brethren are beginning to "wake out of sleep," and are seeing the truth! We are seeing a repeat of the great strife which swept through the church in the late 1800s. As that conflict ended in division, so might the current dispute.

Godly preachers, elders, and all faithful Christians must stand in the gap and cry, "NO!" to all false teachers. When the brotherhood is fully informed, it responds as Christ would.

Third, not all of our schools are falling for false teaching. There were two notable exceptions. Freed-Hardeman and Faulkner were not represented. Encourage the men at these schools to continue their good work. Being a 1987 graduate of F-HU and a resident of Alabama, I'm doubly proud of them.

It never ceases to amaze me how some university board members justify providing "safe haven" for false teachers. A conversation I had with a representative of one of our universities is enlightening. I let him know that there are professors at his school who are intent on "restructuring" the church, and I told him I think they are doing wrong by publishing books that teach false doctrine.

His response? While obviously not in agreement with the professors in question, he brought up the defense of "academic freedom." Now, that is well and good when applied to a state school, but it does not apply to a Christian school! Truth is not negotiable. It would perhaps enlighten many parents to examine the

charters of some of our schools and see what they require. It may well be that those schools are in violation of the founders principles!

Finally, the mindset of the new left must be considered. A sizable number of these men come out of the "anti" wing of the brotherhood. This helps to explain the extremist thinking of the leftists among us. Extremists cannot find a middle ground. Consider Carl Ketcherside. In 1952-53 G. K. Wallace debated him on the located preacher and college questions, and then dealt with him again some ten years later when the "gospel-doctrine" view of fellowship was being pushed. Is it not significant that much of the same is being heard today?

Joshua was commanded in the long ago by God to not **"turn from it (the law-DH) to the right hand or to the left" (Joshua 1:7)**. Apparently, the former "radicals" are now part of the "new radicalism!"

Some in the church want us to "go back to Egypt," and return to what my late grandfather left over fifty years ago. S. F. Hester was a Freewill Baptist deacon and preacher before obeying the truth. When he questioned the practice of voting people into the church, (and instrumental music), the rest of the disciplinary committee for Alabama and Mississippi said, "You're just pushing that old Campbellite doctrine." He didn't know what a Campbellite was!

He then heard there was a Campbellite preaching in Fayette, AL. He went to hear him, and came back angry. He was going to "prove that preacher wrong." At midnight, he closed his Bible, took off his spectacles, turned to my grandmother and said, "Clora, we're wrong! This man is preaching what the Bible says!" The next night, W. A. Holley baptized my grandfather into Christ, and later did the same for my grandmother.

The next Sunday, he desired to tell his former church why he was leaving. They forbade him, so he set up a pulpit on

the property line of the church, and the majority came out to hear him! He later received a letter, signed by his father and mother, which said: "We would rather see you dead and in your grave than a member of the Campbellite church." Later, he baptized his father, along with others of his family. As a result, there are over fourteen preachers in our family.

I believe there are enough faithful brethren among us

who will not allow some modern-day "Sanballats" to lead us into compromising unions. Let us all resolve, here and now, that we will dedicate ourselves to living and teaching the truth. If enough of us will stand for the truth and promote it without fear or favor, the cause of Christ and his blood-stained banner will ever be exalted and souls will be saved.

The Importance Of Friendliness

G. F. Raines

When the Canadian Manufacturers Association conducted a survey in many corporations to learn what happens to a customer when he quits buying from a company, they found that out of every 100 lost customers 68 quit because of the indifference of the employees of the company.

I am convinced that many persons who attend one church service never return because of indifference and lack of interest manifested by the members.

People usually come again

and again only to places where they know they are wanted.

"A cold church is like cold butter: it doesn't spread very well."

"One man said he visited a certain church and found it so cold that the neighbors of the members brought their jello over to get it set."

"Many people are cold, and some are worse off than that -- they are frozen. The same is true of many congregations."

It is said that after a preacher had preached an interesting sermon concerning recognition of friends in heaven someone

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

So someone walks up to you on a sidewalk and asks, "Don't you remember me?" Well, if you do, you have just exercised one of man's greatest abilities. It's your memory. Imagine what our planet would be like without our being able to remember things:

--There would be no recorded history. No one could remember it long enough to write it down.

--There would be no business transactions. No one could keep his word.

--You could forget getting a guarantee with products you purchased, because the manufacturer wouldn't remember making it.

--Husbands and wives would be strangers every time they met.

God gave us our memories, and then He commanded us to use them to His glory. We have the words of our Master in the Bible, and we obviously must remember to obey them. Jesus said in **John 12:48**, "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."

Why Is It There?

Bernice Vinsant

Nestled snugly between Judges and I Samuel in the Old Testament is one of the most beautiful love stories ever told.

In only four short verses we learn about famine, hunger, travel to a strange country, death, grief, loneliness, and love like no other, between two women.

The Book of Ruth was written about two sisters who have nothing in common except to have the same mother-in-law. The love story unfolds.

In Chapter 1:4 of the Book of Ruth we are told that she was a moabite woman.

We know that Moab was in the plains by the Jordan, near Jericho. We are told in Numbers 26:3 that Moses and Elizar divided Israel after it was numbered.

As we read the Book of Ruth, we wonder why it had its place in the Old Testament. It seems like any ordinary story of a young girl and the love she has for her mother-in-law.

Naomi was an ordinary woman, with a husband, Elimelech, a man of Bethlehem - Judah. He had two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. They left their homeland because of a famine that had lasted for three years. They had come to Moab because they heard there was food.

Naomi's husband died. We're not told how. Then the

two sons looked for wives. They found them in Moab, a place where false gods were worshiped.

Then after ten years of marriage and no children, the sons died.

It was then that Naomi said the hand of God had gone out from her. Chapter 1:3. She wanted the two girls to return to their own people. She understood their life style was different and the gods they worshiped were different. Chapter 1:15; I Chronicles 16:26.

It was almost as if Ruth knew there was a reason stronger than the love she had for Naomi that would keep them together. She chose to worship Naomi's God.

We wondered why Naomi tried to send the girls back to their own people instead of teaching them of her God. But in Joshua 24:14-15, we are told that the people were asked to serve God, but if it seemed evil to them, they should choose their gods.

In II Timothy 16:17-18 we are told what true friendship, helpfulness, and brotherly love will do.

Naomi loved the girls, as her own, but she loved her God and her land more.

Orpah went back to her people, but Ruth refused to leave Naomi. So she went with her to her homeland and her kindred. She did not know

how she would be received, but it didn't make any difference.

Naomi asked that her name be changed from Naomi to Mara, meaning "Bitter". Her grief and afflictions were so great.

Ruth's love never weakened for Naomi and her kinsmen. She went to the fields to work to feed them, not knowing how she would be accepted in a strange land.

Naomi knew Ruth was a good person and had made a real sacrifice to follow her and her God.

But Naomi had made plans for Ruth and Boaz. She gave Ruth all the instructions. In Chapter 3 we read of the courtship.

Surely God's hand was in all the following events.

In Chapter 4:13, we find Ruth and Boaz were married. She conceived, by the hand of

God. A son was born. He was named Obed, the father of Jesse who is the father of David.

We know that later Christ was born through the lineage of Boaz.

We can now understand why the Book of Ruth has such a prominent place in the Old Testament.

- Bernice Vinsant, 104 Graham Road, Wetumpka, AL 36092.

The Main Event

Ken Durham

Sunday morning. The announcements have been announced, the songs sung, the prayers prayed and the communion service concluded. Now the hymnals are back in the rack, and everyone settles back in their pews. For now the preliminaries are over and it is time for . . . the Main Event.

From amongst the congregation one of her members rises and takes center stage. He gazes into a sea of faces, full of expectations: Inform us. Convict us. Reassure us. Stir us. Orient us. Commission us. Heal us. All of the above. Any of the above. (Just don't bore us).

No, that's not the view of worship that God intended. We may treat the sermon like the main event of our worship service ("Come to our services and hear our preacher"). And the man in the pulpit may be sorely tempted to think of his presence as the most important one there. But the sermon is not the main event.

What is the main event? No, I do not believe it is communion either. Scripture does not identify the Lord's Supper as "the most important part of our service," though over the years I have often heard that said among our people. The Main Event, from what I can deduce from my Bible, is this: "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, (and) that he was

raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (I Corinthians 15:3-4).

The Lord's Supper is crucial because it celebrates that magnificent event, allows us a participation (Koinonia) in that event (I Corinthians 10:16), proclaims that event until Jesus comes again (I Corinthians 11:26). The sermon is crucial because its primary task is to announce the good news of that event (I Corinthians 1:17, 23; 2:2). We can confidently approach the throne of grace in prayer because of that event (Hebrews 10:19-20). Our songs give us the opportunity to raise our voices in praise and thanksgiving for that event (Colossians 3:16, see also Philippians 2:5-11, thought by many New Testament scholars to be a first-century Christian hymn). And yes, even those

inescapable announcements bear witness to that event: our crucified and resurrected Lord has a body that lives in the world today, and that body has people to pray for and Bible classes to teach and food closets to fill and committee meetings to convene and budgets to meet and birthdays to remember . . .

Center stage belongs to only one, the crucified one. His presence, along with that of the Father, is the most important. His victory over our sin is the Main Event of human history. When Jesus is lifted up in the collective assembly of the saints and in the individual hearts of us who worship, then -- and only then -- will we be informed, and convicted, and reassured, and stirred, and oriented, and commissioned, and healed.

The Importance Of Friendliness

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put this note in the suggestion box: "Sir, please preach a sermon on recognition of friends on earth. I have attended your services for six months, and nobody has ever taken notice of me."

Once when Robert Burns, the national poet of Scotland, attended the services of a sophisticated church in a strange city, and received no

word of welcome, he wrote the following bit of poetry on the flyleaf of a hymn book:

"A cauld a wind as ever blew;
A cauld a kirk, and in't but few;

As cauld a minister's e'er spak';

Ye'll all be hot ere I come back."

The End

Three Important Questions

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the benefit to men? It would defeat the whole purpose of speaking in a foreign language since its goal was to communicate the will of God for the purpose of producing faith in the unbeliever!" (Light for Living, Nov. 13, 1988)

In conclusion, let us always speak the truth in love. People who practice their

limited form of miracles often are wholly convinced of the validity and reality of the miracles, including tongue-speaking. Because concerns of the miraculous sometimes dominates their religion, realizing that Bible miracles have ceased leaves a large hole in their faith. Be always compassionate.