

DECEMBER 30, 1994

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VOLUME 1 NUMBER 1
(USPS 691-760)

The Words of Truth

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

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"From The Beginning It Was N...io"

W.A. Holley

Jesus is the author of the caption of this article. He was skilled in the teaching of both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Jesus knew marriage was and is the backbone of a stable society. So-called relationships have taken the place Biblical marriage in our time. Without marriage as God instituted it, the home is destroyed. Thousands of little boys and girls are living with their forth and fifth fathers and mothers. For shame! This leads to child-abuse of the worst kind.

Will you listen to Jesus Christ? "The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he that made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh? What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses command them to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so. 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 19:3-9).

Thus Jesus Christ goes back to the very beginning of human history, to the days of Adam and Eve, when God first established His marriage law (Genesis 2:21-24; I Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 5:30-33). The only sin that permits divorce and a second marriage is the impurity of fornication. The destruction of marriage as God designed it turns us all into cats and dogs. Thus, marriage is not wholly physical, but it also posses a spiritual aspect too. The benefits that accrue to society must be recognized (Hebrews 13:4; I Corinthians 6:9-11; Revelation 22:15).

The church of our Lord Jesus Christ also had a beginning (Acts 11:14-15; 2:1-4; 36-38, 41-42, 47; Romans 16:16). This was God's only infallible and sure pattern (Hebrews 8:5; I Timothy 1:16; Titus 2:7). Regretably, many departures and corruptions have occurred throughout the rushing centuries.

(1) From the beginning it was not so. Denominationalism did not exist. In fact, denominationalism is of fairly recent origin. Please consult any authorative Church History. Today we

have more than 300 different denominational churches. The Bible says nothing about them because the Bible was written centuries before denominational churches ever existed. We ask our readers to consider Matthew 16:18-19; Ephesians 5:22-31). Was Jesus wrong when he prayed for unity of all true believers?? (John 17:20-23).

(2) From the beginning there were no Baptist, Roman Catholic, Campbellite churches, et al. See I Corinthians 1:1; Acts 2:47; Romans 16:16; Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Peter 4:16). We do not wish to hurt the feelings of anyone, but we do wish to state the truth (John 8:30-32; 17:17).

(3) From the beginning each church had a plurality of elders and deacons (Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:1-13). Each was autonomous. A departure from God's way resulted in the development of the Roman hierarchy, eventually giving rise to synods, conferences, associations, pastors, and the like. We suggest Acts 20:28-31.

(4) From the beginning there were no human creeds such as manuals, disciplines, catechisms, etc. The early Christians had the Apostles' doctrine only. Truly, if your human creed is less, or more than, or the same as the Bible, it is not needed (Galatians 1:6-10; Revelation 22:18-19).

(5) From the beginning

the Lord's Church has always eaten the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week (Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-42, 47 (Pentecost always came on the 1st day of the week, Leviticus 23:15-16). See Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Revelation 1:10. Feet washing is not a church ordinance; rather it is a home duty (I Timothy 5:10; Genesis 18:4; I Samuel 25:41). To eat the Lord's Supper on Monday or Friday is to flaunt one's own will and way.

(6) From the beginning mechanical instruments of music were never used in New Testament worship. The New Testament church was established in A.D. 33, but it was not until A.D. 670 that mechanical music was used for the first time...637 years later. The New Testament church engages in acappella singing.

(7) From the beginning immersion, not sprinkling or pouring, constituted baptism from a New Testament point of view Roman 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12; Leviticus 14:15-16). In all examples of conversion the preacher was present, the word of God was preached, and those converted were baptized. In those days an urgency was attached to the command of baptism (Acts 2:36-38; 16:25-34; 10:47-48; I Peter 3:21). No prolonged gathering of candidates, before baptizing them.

(8) From the beginning there was no joining of the church of one's choice. In the New Testament times the Lord added the saved to His church (Acts 2:38, 47). There is but one body, the church, and one baptism, immersion (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4-6). In Acts 18:8, those who heard, believed and were baptized were later addressed as "the church of God" (I Corinthians 1:1-2).

We believe that there are thousands upon thousands of sincere people who would like to go back to the Bible, back to the New Testament plan of salvation, back to the church as it existed in Apostolic times, back to New Testament worship, back to daily Christian living. We sincerely urge you to cast off all human doctrines and practices, and return to a thus saith the Lord.

You can, if you really wish to. Visit the church of Christ in your area, and see for yourself. A warm and sincere welcome awaits you ---P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL, 35580.

**Visit soon the
Sixth Avenue
Church of
Christ
Jasper,
Alabama**

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

New Year Approaching For Words Of Truth

Glenn Colley

There are a few times in our year which are considered landmarks; days like New Years, on which we are almost forced to see time passing in our lives. Can 1994 be gone? Where did all the weeks go? Did I use them the way I intended? Am I growing in the Lord?

As the editor of this seasoned publication, I want to express my appreciation to all who make THE WORDS OF TRUTH possible every week.

First, I want to thank our writers who submit those great articles which make this paper worth reading. An article is but the tip of a mountain of reading and pondering and studying. It takes time, and a love for teaching the Bible. The spoken word is often forgotten before it hits the ground. The written word, however, can be re-read and re-considered many years after the author has passed. Our writers are dedicated servants of the Lord, and this dedication is what

motivates them. They are not paid for their articles, though they are certainly worth great rewards. Thank you writers, for your great service to the WORDS OF TRUTH. Keep up the good work!

I also want to thank the elders of the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ for supporting me while I edit this great paper. They see, as I do, the importance of providing good Christian reading material to people young and old. Wherever or whenever you enjoy reading your WORDS OF TRUTH, they want it to be interesting and insightful. Our united goal is that each issue will be dependable material, well worth spending the subscription rate necessary to purchase, and the time necessary to read.

I want to thank our WORDS OF TRUTH proof-reader, Cindy Colley. I consider this "behind the scenes" job to be of extreme importance in any quality publication. I want our readers to draw the teaching from the articles without the distraction of

typographical and grammatical errors. While I suppose no paper can claim perfection in this area, Cindy does a great job and we appreciate her work.

Our church secretary, Chell Hollis, is also worthy of our appreciation. She is always available to type, or mail, or call, or copy, or handle the many other workings involved in publishing a paper.

I want to thank the Northwest Alabamian publishers, and especially Martha Burleson, our typesetter, for their good service. The WORDS OF TRUTH has rolled off their presses for about thirty years.

And finally, I want to thank you, our readers, for the encouragement you give to me through calls and letters, and by sharing the paper with friends. We intend to produce THE WORDS OF TRUTH as long as people are interested enough to subscribe!

May God again bless us with a great year!

What's Our World Coming To?

Dale Jenkins

For stories that are absolutely unbelievable nothing beats the news. Today's sampling is just a clearinghouse of some of the more recent insanities that have crossed my information receivers.

A woman sued McDonalds and won millions because she bought some coffee at the drive through, sat it between her legs and the hot coffee spilled on her and burned. I wonder, didn't she expect the coffee to be hot when she bought it? And now we have "copy-cat spillers" as a second lawsuit has been brought by another lady for the same reason.

It is against the law to smoke in the New York subway, but in a new ruling it is fine to go topless. Men or ladies.

Newsweek listed the number one problem on college and University campuses as alcohol and the University of Alabama offers a class entitled "The Fine Art of Beer Drinking".

U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders' son was convicted of selling cocaine and she reportedly said: "I don't feel that was a crime." Did I hear someone say something about character? Did I miss something somewhere?

The June 5, 1994 Times Daily of Florence carried an

article called "Beyond the Birds and Bees." Among other revealing quotes was this one, "There is a segment of adult society that wants kids to engage in sex as soon and often as possible."

Go ahead and blush. Godly people still can. But don't gasp too loudly, our society is just acting like any society does that has left God in the dust, forgotten His Book, and lived hedonistically.

It starts small. One generation stops daily Bible readings. Grandma and grandpa let radio or television take the place of a family gathered around reading the Bible and sharing values. The next generation is not really that faithful in worship. And the next does not know God, his law or any authority.

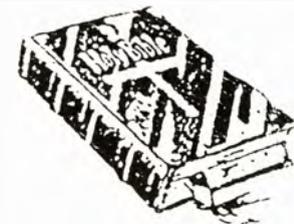
What's next? Who here knows? But I do know you need to be teaching your friends and neighbors about Christ, "the bread of life", "the living water", "the way, truth and light" who can change their world! They may be "basically good folks who just don't go to church" now, but look a generation or two down the road if you will. What's the world coming to?

--Hamilton, Alabama

Position Open

Following the recent resignation of Joe Spivy from our work at Sixth Avenue in Jasper, we are currently seeking a man to fill our Associate Minister's (Youth/Education) position. Resumes are now being accepted for consideration.

They should be mailed to: Attn: Elders Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, 1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501.



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Learning From Computers

Blake Nicholas

Computers really do help make our lives better, don't they? It's amazing to me that so much information can be stored in a tiny chip or on a hard drive. I'm glad that I don't have to fully understand man's technology to benefit from it.

The computer I currently use is an IBM 80-88. Some of my friends refer to it as a dinosaur, but they should have seen what I was using before! How long has it been since you've seen or used an eight-inch floppy disk?

Anyway, a funny thing happened to me this past summer as I was working away, preparing an article for our local newspaper. I

was about half done with an article, and working feverishly to finish so I could leave with our young people at church for camp.

Suddenly, the electricity went off. The weather was calm, and no warning of a power outage had been given. But the room was dark, the screen was blank, and I hadn't saved the article that I was writing. All of that work was gone, lost because I neglected to be sure that it was saved. Three or four easy, simple, commands that I knew to follow, and the article would have been saved. But it was lost.

After I got past the anger at the power outage, and at myself for being so careless, it occurred to me

what a great illustration this is, and what an important lesson it contains for us all. Many people today are rushing through life, working feverishly in many directions, but neglecting the salvation of their soul. Some day their lives will end, possibly as unexpectedly as a power outage.

But did you know that the Bible contains commands for salvation, not as easily accomplished as saving a file on a computer, but as easy to understand. Consider the following things that Jesus said regarding the saving of our souls.

"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).

"I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3).

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32-33).

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16).

"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not

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 3:21).

"...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Revelation 2:10).

Just as the computer will save our files when we follow the commands in the instruction manual, God will add us to his church when we obey his instructions regarding salvation. Don't get so busy living your life that you leave out God, and neglect the salvation of your soul.

[63 Azalea Lane
Burnsville, NC 28714]

The Day Of The Lord

Bobby Key

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10).

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done,

whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). Again, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

After the reign of mercy comes the reign of justice; after the Gospel that grants pardon and peace, the law that inflicts punishment and sorrow. Those who have slighted the invitation and rejected the Gospel will be arrested and brought before the bar of justice. The wicked shall be made to drink of the wine of the wrath of God (Rev. 14:10).

Every responsible soul that refuses to obey the gospel of God will be punished with the everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

This is called by the Apostle Peter, "the day of the Lord", because for it all other days are; from it all days borrow their value. On this great day the Lord will so demonstrate His power and justice in saving the righteous and punishing the wicked as to call forth the approval of the entire universe. On this day, for the first time

since the fall of Adam, God will receive universe glory. It will be the day of the Lord because Christ will be the judge of the living and the dead (I Peter 4:5). All judgment has been committed to Christ.

When Christ returns "every eye shall see him" (Rev. 1:7). The saints and sinners shall be parted right and left. The saints on the right hand shall worship him that liveth for ever and ever. The wicked shall try to hide from the wrath of the Lamb, but there will be

no place to flee.

On this day the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God (Thess. 4:16). He will render "vengeance on them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel." Jesus will judge angels and men. Are you ready for the Day of the Lord? "Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh (Matt.24:44)."

It's Always Time To Be With God

Those who have no time for God should consider what their circumstances would be if He had not time for them; no time to paint the sunsets; no time to see the warm sun's rays or the refreshing showers; No time to make the crop's and flowers grow. We doubt that any thinking person would actually want nothing to do with God.

Cain despised God's

authority and finally murdered his brother, but when he was driven from the presence of God he said: "My punishment is greater than I can bear" (Gen. 4:13).

One of the saddest sentences in the gospel records is our Lord's prediction that He will say to some: "Depart from Me, I never knew you, ye workers of iniquity" (Matt. 7:23).

Just what will it mean to be

"cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15)? We pray to God none of you reading this article will ever find out, but the Scriptures do clearly indicate that those involved will be cast forever out of the presence of God.

Thank God, it is not Christ who desires this. He paid for our sins at Calvary to reconcile us to Himself (Eph. 2:16). Paul declares that God continued on page 4

"Most of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

The other day I happened into a conversation between two people. They were discussing a person with whom they were both familiar and who they both regarded as mean and ruthless. After they had verbally tared and feathered this poor wretch, one of them turned to me and calmly asked, "He isn't any kin to you, is he?"

Well the one they had verbally thrashed was not my relative; but don't you think it's interesting that I was asked? After all, he could have been my father.

We may often catch ourselves saying things that we wish we could somehow reach out and pull back. But I don't know how words, good or bad, can never be retrieved.

What then can I do to avoid the pains of saying things I shouldn't have? I can taste my words before I speak them. This means that I won't always "speak my mind." Because, as James 3:5 says about my tongue, "Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth."

It's Always Time To Be With God

continued from page 3
has called believers "into the fellowship of His Son" (I Cor. 1:9) and that at His coming for them they shall "ever be

with the Lord," adding: "wherefore, comfort one another with these words" (Thess. 4:17, 18).

"Now then, we are

ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:20).

God has demonstrated His love for us in Christ. Why not respond by gratefully trusting Christ and rendering obedience? Friends, whether

you believe it or not, there may be no tomorrow. So why not obey God's Son today, while it is yet day.

"Lovest Thou Me? (No. 5)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

This will be the fifth and final article on the question, "Lovest thou me?" in John 21:15-17. The Lord Jesus asked the question; it was directed initially to Simon Peter; it has been recorded by the apostle John near the end of his gospel record and thus by implication is applicable to all of us. To date we have discussed this query as a distinguishing question, a remarkable question, a right question, a priority question, an individualistic question, a co-operative question, a brief question, an evangelistic question and a problem-solving question. Three more will be numbered and noted making a total of fifteen cardinal characteristics relative to this important and far-reaching query.

(13) It Is A Repetitious Question

Usually, the Lord, did not repeat questions, as quick survey of what he asked on

various occasions will fully reveal. But here He did repeat--not twice but thrice. Once evidently was not enough; twice was not enough; three times were required in His wisdom. Someone said years ago that there are three rules for learning--repeat, repeat, repeat. Repetition has been called the mother of all learning and the first law of learning. Every educator knows its value; so does every veteran preacher and successful Bible teacher.

There may be a connection between the fact that Peter denied the Lord thrice and the fact that Jesus asked this question thrice. Whether there is any link here or not, we do know for a surety that here was a question richly deserving repetition. This is the sort of question that we need to repeat to ourselves again and again. It is not the type of question we should face just once in life. We

have the tendency to learn more deeply and permanently what is repeated over and over again.

(14) It Is A Demanding Question

Peter could not avoid responding to this compelling question. The Lord did not intend for him to avoid it or evade its penetration. Peter made no effort to evade or avoid it. He answered it each time the Lord directed it to him. There is no way we can avoid or evade it now and declare neutrality toward the Compelling Christ. Pilate tried that nearly twenty centuries ago. He could not be neutral toward Jesus. To refuse to answer whether we love Him is to say that we really do not care for Him or His cause. To say we do love Him and then disobey His way and wishes for us is to speak one message with lips and live a totally different life in actions. This is a question that has to be answered.

(15) It Is A Revolutionary Question

An affirmative answer to this question on the part of the whole world would revolutionize all of human society in a very short time. People would get out of the shining business as a major. They would pursue a marvelous major in godliness, righteousness and sobriety. People would cease to murder, rape, plunder, vandalize and inflict harm and injury on others. Instead, people would put the Golden Rule of Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31 into uniform operation. People would cease living selfishly and would begin to live for a cause that is higher than selfish desires. Homes would stay together; marriages would begin to last; divorce would soon be but a relic of a past age of sin and unbridled wickedness; children would be brought up to fear God and to keep His

commandments as per Acts 10:34, 35. Communities would be safe. World peace would soon descend upon an earth that is so weary of wars and fightings. Old men would not begin wars for young men to fight and die in the perilous process! Christianity would be then the only religion that men would honor and find their chief glory therein. Truly, this was/is a revolutionary question.

Conclusion

What a powerful, precious and penetrating question we have studied in these five installments.

(More than twenty years ago I heard the late and lamented Franklin Camp speak on this text. I am indebted to him for some of the points mentioned).

P.O. Box 464
Ripley, Tennessee 38063

Message of the prophets paved way

Johnny Ramsey

The sterling work of Old Testament prophets paved the way for the coming of Christ. Except for Jonah they were stalwart men of God who courageously fought corruption and upheld decency and godliness on every hand. Undaunted by weak brethren who would not stand and the devastating power of ruthless nations they "bubbled forth" the message of God put in their mouths (Jer. 1:9). Unpopular but respected were these valiant soldiers of heaven's cause. What a debt we owe to them! Seldom has the world seen anyone with such commitment to a cause and such willingness to even die for truth. We need thousands of preachers today who will be like the prophets of yesteryear!

Isaiah spoke of the blessings that come from waiting on the Lord in 40:31 of his message:

"They will mount up
with wings as eagles;
They will run and not be
weary;

They will walk and not faint."

Sometimes we have to be willing to slow down and walk with God. We cannot always run and fly. Some days are sad and dark and dreary. But, regardless of the pace of the world God will be there to guide us and sustain our earthly existence (Psalms 73:24). Jeremiah 8:9 informs us that no one is really wise unless they are familiar with the message of heaven. A man may have seventeen doctoral degrees but if he knows not the Bible he is spiritually bereft of brilliance. We have all known educated dummies and also uneducated (formerly) wise men. We should use all the education we have to the glory of God and never let it get in the way of eternal matters. Or, we may like the very ones Lamentations 4:5 describes. Such folk were raised in splendor but finished up in the garbage dump! Yes, pride goes before destruction. Arrogance pays a high premium. Ezekiel tells us exactly why Judah wound up in captivity for 70 years in Babylon. In 20:32 of

that exciting book the fiery prophet rebukes the people of God for wanting "to be like the heathen." They got a front row seat in the arena of wickedness. Sinners always have the best seat in the house when Satan puts on his finest show.

Daniel shares with us the rich faith of the three close friends of God's devoted statesman. In 3:17 of that noble treatise we read thrilling words of conviction, in spite of the fiery furnace:

"Our God is able to deliver us."

Yes, one like unto the Son of Man walked with them and they came out untouched. Christ is introduced in Revelation as one whose feet had walked in the furnace of affliction. We are blessed by such a comrade. Along the difficult route and in the challenging moments of the gospel way:

"In the hour of trial,
Jesus plead for me
Lest by base denial, I
depart from Thee
When Thou seest me
waver with a look recall

Not for fear of favor
suffer me to fall."

The so called minor prophets, Hosea through Malachi, have timely messages for us also. Let us list a few of their major warnings and promises that add enrichment to our lives.

1. Spiritual Ignorance Will Ruin Us (Hosea 4:6).

2. Inward Purity Is A Must (Joel 2:13).

3. We Cannot Escape God's Judgment (Amos 4:12).

4. Pride Will Overwhelm Us (Obadiah 3).

5. Turning Our Back On God Is Foolish (Jonah 1:3).

6. Integrity of Character Is A Blessing (Micah 6:8).

7. Living By Faith Is The Only Way (Habakkuk 2:4).

God mightily used the prophets for good. They were unusual men who sacrificed much and accomplished a noble work. Without them Christianity would never have arrived. Those humble men preached the message Jehovah told them to preach. Jeremiah speaks for all of them in 15:16 and 20:9 of his

eloquent treatise:

"His words were
found and I did eat
them and they were the
rejoicing of my heart."
"His words was in my
heart as a burning fire
shut up in my bones."

Those men had preached the oracles of God so long and so faithfully that nothing could persuade them to stop. Oh, how we need that spiritual heartburn today. In season and out of season let us never leave the glorious work of proclaiming the glad message!

"I love to tell the
story
For those who know it
best
Seem hungering and
thirsting
To tell it like the rest
And when in scenes of
glory
I sing the new, new
song
'Twill be old, old
story
That I have loved so
long."

January 6, 1995

See Articles Inside:

- God Isn't Always Like Your Earthly Father
- "Most of A Minute"
- What Ever Happened To The Gospel Invitation?
- We Need Better Listeners!
- That's Your Opinion!!
- Nobody In Their Right Mind
- True Repentance

Volume 32 Number 2
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The Words of Truth

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

Billy Graham's Gospel

W. A. Holley

We want it understood that we have nothing personal against Mr. Graham. He is a very popular man, but he is a false teacher. Saul of Tarsus was a very popular man, but he also was a false teacher, until he was converted to Christ (Acts 23:1; 26:9-11; 22:16; I Timothy 1:13).

We shall quote some excerpts from "My Answer" as published in The Birmingham News, October 26, 1993. He says, "All religions are not the same . . ." Mr. Graham is right in his statement. The Jews religion, the Buddhist, the Shinto, the Moslem, the religion of Christ are not identical. We suggest that Galatians 1:13 and James 1:26-27 be read.

Mr. Graham says "There is only one God . . ." The same verse that teaches "there is one God," also teaches there is one body, and that that one body is the church (Ephesians 4:4-6). We quote, "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."

This "one body" is the Lord's church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18, 24). It was purchased by the precious blood of Jesus (Acts 20:28). According to your Bible there is "but one body," and that body is the church of

Christ (I Corinthians 12:20; Romans 16:16). We do not wish to be ugly, but no mention of the Baptist Church is to be found in your Bible. Would Mr. Graham argue that one church is as good as another?

Mr. Graham says, "Most religions believe that we must come to God by our own efforts, and that we can somehow earn God's favor by our good deeds." This allegation does not apply to the churches of Christ. "The way of man is not in himself" (Jeremiah 10:23). There is a way that may seem right but that leads to destruction (Proverbs 14:12). There are two ways through this world: The broad way and the narrow way (Matthew 7:13-14).

Human beings are creatures of choice (Joshua 24:15; Deuteronomy 30:15, 19; Isaiah 7:15-16). Works of merit can never avail, but works of faith can avail (John 6:28-29; James 2:14-24). To try to be saved by "faith alone" is to try to be saved by a dead faith. A dead man cannot walk. Even so, a faith that will not express itself in acts of obedience cannot save. John 3:16 teaches that those who believe obediently are saved. The word "believe" in the foregoing verse is a comprehensive term that includes faith, repentance, confession and baptism (Acts 2:36-38; 22:16).

Mr. Graham distorts the

meaning of Isaiah 64:6. "All our righteousness are as filthy rags," refers to acts of righteousness(?) devoted to idol worship, and not to acts of obedience commanded by God Almighty. Read the story of King Saul (I Samuel 15:10ff) and you will see the principle. The prophet Hosea wrote, "For I desire mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" (6:6). Jesus taught that His disciples' righteousness should exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees (Matthew 5:20). While we cannot earn our salvation, we can believe, confess Jesus' name, repent of our sins and be baptized into Christ as He has commanded us (John 3:16, Luke 13:3, Matthew 10:32-33; Mark 16:16). Verily, we are saved by an obedient faith. See Hebrews, chapter 11.

Mr. Graham further says, "Our greatest need is to be forgiven of our sins and to come to know God in a personal way." Where is the Scripture that so teaches? We can be saved from our sins only on God's terms (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38). Where do the Scriptures teach anything about "taking God as your personal Saviour?"

Actually, Mr. Graham is talking about some sort of a subjective feeling. What does the word "subjective" mean? Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary says, ". . . Arising

from conditions within the brain or sense organs and not directly caused by external stimuli . . ." Feelings are important, but one cannot feel the governor pardon him. The governor and his advisors would have to communicate their decision to the prisoner. The prisoner can never convince the warden to release him just because he says "I feel like I have been pardoned." In addition, if God miraculously saves one sinner He would be under obligation to save all sinners, since He is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35; Romans 2:11).

"Only Christ can save us," says Mr. Graham. But we should remember that Jesus saves those who obey him (Hebrews 5:8-9; Matthew 7:1-23). Yes, Jesus is "the way and the truth and the life." But truth must be obeyed (I Peter 1:22-25). This was the case in each instance of conversion as recorded in the Book of Acts.

Salvation is located in Christ. "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ with eternal glory" (II Timothy 2:10).

How does one get into Christ where salvation is located? Well, one by faith repents of his sins, confesses the name of Jesus, and is baptized into Christ (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Galatians 3:26-29;

Revelation 2:10). Why does Mr. Graham never preach these verses?

On occasion this writer has written Mr. Graham asking why he does not preach those verses cited above. His answer was: "The verses you mention are too controversial. I had rather spend my time just simply preaching Christ." But one cannot "preach Christ" without preaching what Jesus said. Merely to say "Jesus, Jesus" is not enough (Matthew 7:21-23). The Lord's will must be obeyed (Romans 6:34, 16-18; 2:8; II Thessalonians 2:10-12).

"Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14, asv).

"Beloved, believe not every spirit (preacher), but prove the spirits (preachers), whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1; I Timothy 4:1).

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

God Isn't Always Like Your Earthly Father

Glenn Colley

We are grieved to hear the new so-called "findings" about grace which some claim to have discovered. They deceive people with smooth logic thinking that over the last forty or fifty years we have ignored the compassion and security which God meant for us to enjoy in His grace. While it may be true that SOME folks SOMEWHERE taught doctrines which falsely limited God's wonderful grace, these new people are wrong in assuming that the majority of the churches of Christ have limited grace in their teachings. It simply isn't true. What is true is this: Many who are talking about grace today are teaching false doctrines which will sadly result in the loss of souls, for in their final analysis they teach a casual attitude about continuing in sin.

Some churches today have become a sort of haven for those who want to live in adultery. "Come over to our church where there is grace! We will ask no questions about your relationships!" If a church of Christians have withdrawn themselves from a man because of his impenitence, another church in town which understands this new "grace" will receive them in full fellowship without questions. If a man has an invalid baptism, (for example, not for the remission of sins, but "because God for Christ's sake has already pardoned me," or baptism to join a denomination), they gladly accept the baptism. They commend the great work of denominational churches without taking exception to their false teachings. These things are the fruit of the tree of the "new" understanding of grace,

and should frighten any lover of Christ's church. The end result of this movement will be a group of folks who used to be simple New Testament Christians, but now swim in the great pool of man-made religions which have little respect for the authority of the Bible.

Recently a woman argued that we should be less concerned about churches members living in impenitent sin, because (as she put it,) "God is our Father. You wouldn't push away your children because they did something wrong, would you? Of course not. Well, God wouldn't either." This is mighty broad logic.

We have studied and taught and pondered the sweet and holy relationship which God has with His servants-- Father and child. We have committed to memory the precious words of Galatians 3:26, "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...". Note also Psalms 103:13-18) He is our heavenly Father, and uses this analogy to teach us of His love and compassion for us. But understand please, that this does NOT imply that God is like our earthly fathers in every way. God is not like our earthly fathers:

1. In His decisions about discipline. (Hebrews 12:9, 10)-- "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness."

Sometimes human fathers are wrong in their disciplining decisions. God is never wrong.

2. In His ability and willingness to give good gifts to His children. (Matthew 7:9-11)-- "Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? 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?"

3. In His teaching. He always teaches us the truth, and earthly fathers may sometimes teach that which is false. (Acts 7:51-52)-- "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted...?" How many fathers today are misguiding their children in a way that will, after two or three generations pass, directly contribute to the loss of that child's soul? But God never misleads us.

These contrasts are offered to simply demonstrate that we cannot assume that God has ALL the attitudes and characteristics which human fathers possess. He is God. We are human.

We should thank God for His wonderful grace. Without that grace none of us would have any hope of heaven. Death would mean nothing but the beginning of torment. As we live by faith, (Eph. 2:8,9), His grace offers to us the hope of heaven. Believe in grace, hope in grace, thank God for grace, but make sure it is the grace described in your Bible, and not in someone's fanciful

What Ever Happened To The Gospel Invitation?

Holger Neubauer

Over the past several years it has become popular among our preachers not to extend the Gospel plan of salvation. Those who choose not to extend the specifics of the plan of salvation suggest that only a tradition has been changed. Common expressions like "Come if you have need" or "If you feel a need won't you come" are heard in churches of Christ. Though explicating the details of the plan of salvation at the end of sermons is certainly a tradition, so too is putting on our socks before our shoes. Some tradition's just make good sense.

The great discourse on Pentecost proclaimed by Peter included the words, "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). The assembly of the whole church in 1 Corinthians 14 was designed to convict a visitor so that he would "worship God" (14:25). This implies the understanding of the plan of salvation. In the same context Paul said, "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for battle" (14:8). The purpose of preaching is to save souls of men and women. Though one could not make the case from

Scripture that every sermon must include the specifics of the plan of salvation, it is likewise unscriptural to suggest the Gospel plan of salvation never need be expressed.

We are presently raising a generation much like the one after Joshua's day that knew not the Lord (Jd. 2:10). The fundamentals are not being taught as they ought. Consequently the church is losing its distinctiveness and uniqueness. Failure to extend the specifics of the Gospel plan of salvation will only add to the problem.

The entire Word of God is entwined in the scheme of redemption. Without the specifics of that plan being heralded on a regular basis, the focus of our preaching will have missed the mark. "And how shall they believe in him of who they have not heard?" (Rm. 10:14). If the plan of salvation is not proclaimed with any regularity, what are we encouraging the next generation to believe? I would hope that every church would concern itself with the specific details of the plan of salvation and those that stand in the pulpits would never be ashamed of the plan of salvation, but continue to herald that message with clarity and distinctiveness lest the next generation be unprepared for the good fight of faith.



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We Need Better Listeners!

Johnny Ramsey

Many a great Bible sermon has failed to bear fruit due to poor listening habits by an audience. The preacher was successful in delivering the message of salvation but the crowd failed by not really giving rapt attention. Jesus plainly stated in Luke 8:18, "Take heed how you hear."

Several times in Revelation the Lord reminded those with ears to hear! Nothing impedes progress in the divine realm so greatly as poor listeners. No one is as deaf as those who will not hear (or adhere) to the gospel message. A recent television commercial described how those who fail to pay attention to what is said in the classroom or board meeting or military induction centers actually become their own worst enemy. Poor listening habits cost industry millions of dollars a year. The fine art of listening must be

developed by all of us if we would succeed in any avenue of life. The Bible is filled with many examples of folk who failed because they forgot to concentrate upon that which had been clearly enunciated. Some sinned grievously because they did not listen properly and thus missed the application of Truth. I really believe slothful habits in this area of consideration will cause many people to be lost in the Day of Judgment. It is just that serious! Let us notice a few illustrations of this dilemma in the Bible.

1. In Acts 13:26-27 Paul tells the Jews in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia that they had heard the voices of the prophets every Sabbath for years tell of the coming of the Messiah. Yet, when He did come, in fulfillment of the very passages they had read, they put the Savior to death

instead of obeying Him! What a classic example of hearing but not hearing. No wonder then that James reminds us to be doers of the word and not hearers only (James 1:22). That is another way of saying:

Take Heed How You Hear!

2. In Numbers 4:15 God plainly told the people not to touch any holy thing. Even casual folk need help to misunderstand that. But, in spite of such directness and clarity, Uzzah was struck dead for his failure to pay attention to it (II Samuel 6). People today who constantly hide behind such slogans as "I did not mean to" or "I just forgot" need to learn a lesson from these examples. They were written for our learning (Romans 15:4; I Cor. 10:11).

3. Several times in the gospel account by John we learn that Christ came unto his own but they refused the light of divine counsel in

spite of the fact that He fulfilled Messianic passages minutely. (Read John 1:5; 1:11; 5:40). In fact, in John 7 they even ask themselves: "What will the Messiah do when he comes that this man has not already done?" Yes, II Peter 3:5 labels their error as willful ignorance. This is a classic example of hearing but not hearing.

4. The book of Acts reflects the sadness of pitiful listening techniques (attitudes). In Acts 2:41 we learn of those who "gladly received the word." But in Acts 13:46 we find others who heard the very same message but "thrust it from themselves." Those on Pentecost were "pricked in their hearts" by the message of truth and responded favorably. In Acts 7 Stephen's hearers were also convicted of sin by the gospel story but they responded by killing the preacher. Poor listeners have run off good

preachers ever since. Take Heed How We Hear will echo down the corridors of Hell. People who listen with preconceived ideas, with bias toward truth and prejudice toward the speaker are truly their own worst enemy. When we allow secular thoughts and mundane interests to clog our minds and stop our ears we are on the road to spiritual ruin. We really do need better listeners in every assembly and in every Bible class. Our very souls hang in the balance. Just ask Jehoiakim how he reacted to what he heard in Jeremiah 36 if you think we have overdrawn this point. Moses (Numbers 20), King Saul (I Sam. 15) and Pilate also listened to the wrong crowd and serious consequences followed. The fine art of listening has everlasting repercussions!

That's Your Opinion!!

Allen Webster

This phrase has ended many religious discussions. The truth may be so carefully explained concerning the oneness of the church or the necessity of baptism, as to leave no doubt about what the Bible says. But with an air of dismissal, someone says, "Well, that's just your opinion."

After faithful preachers have preached the Book on such matters as divorce/re-marriage, social drinking, immodest dress, or the necessity of attending each service, on passing many exclaim, "Well, that's your opinion." Many are not aware of the difference between **opinion** and **application**. The Bible is a book of commands, principles, and examples. It does little good for one to learn the facts of the Bible, the meaning of its words and its interesting stories, unless these find application in some

way to personal life. For example, for one to learn that "lasciviousness" (Gal. 5:19) means "unchaste handling of males and females" and "conduct which excites lust" would do little good unless this definition is applied to the modern evils of dancing, mixed swimming, and petting.

God did not give a book that is impossible to understand nor does He expect each to have his own interpretation. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:32), implying we can know the truth. To say otherwise is to make God "the author of confusion" (I Cor. 14:33). Jesus prayed for unity in doctrine (Jn. 17:20,21), Paul commanded it (I Cor. 1:10-13) and the early Christians practiced it (Acts 2:42-44). We are all "be of the same mind" (I Cor. 1:10).

There are matters of opinion in Christianity. These areas

God has not revealed to us and are left to our judgment. On such matters, one man's view is just as good as another's. This would include how many songs to sing in a service, where to assemble, what occupation to practice, and whether or not to eat in a church building. Paul commands that in matters of opinion, "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" (Rm. 14:13).

Then there are matters of revelation or faith. These are things on which God has spoken and expects His followers to obey. This includes direct commands, principles, and approved examples. These must be accepted, believed, applied, and obeyed. This would include how to become a Christian, how to organize the church, what to do in

True Repentance

Brian Kenyon

It has been observed that repentance is one of the hardest commands to obey. It is not always easy to change one's mind and reform his or her life. There are many biblical examples that teach the true repentance, but for this study let us consider the Corinthians. In 1 Corinthians, Paul addressed many problems

with the church. However, when Paul wrote 2 Corinthians about six months later he had a much more pleasant tone. Why? Because the Corinthians had truly repented! Let us learn from 2 Corinthians 7:8-11 what true repentance requires.

First, true repentance requires the realization continue on page 4

Most of A Minute

Glenn Colley

Jesus left this old earth with the promise to return (Acts 1). The day He returns will be the day of judgment when all will give account of the way they have lived their lives. For those who have the blood of Jesus to wash away their sins, this will be a day of rejoicing.

The end of your life doesn't have to only hold dread for you. It can hold also anticipation because of faith in Jesus and obedience to His gospel.

Queen Victoria, touched by a sermon on the coming of Christ said, "I should like to be living when Jesus comes so that I could lay the crown of England at His feet."

All that you today hold precious you can gladly lay at His feet some day. Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

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That's Your Opinion!!

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worship, and how to live the Christian life. Paul wrote, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus..." (Col.3:17). This means that what we practice must be by His authority. The authority to which we must appeal is the Bible. What it says we

must do and what it forbids we must not do.

The problem is, many have not studied the Scriptures enough to understand the difference between matters of opinion and matters of faith. Many are like those of Hosea's day who were "destroyed for a lack of knowledge.." (4:6). Peter

wrote of those who were unlearned and unstable who "wrested" (from a word meaning an instrument of torture; literally, "to torture my words") the scriptures "unto their own destruction" (2 Pet. 3:16). When one classifies matters of faith as opinions, he is wresting the Scriptures to his own hurt.

Therefore, each must study the Bible regularly, carefully, and sincerely.

Others have justified worldly actions in their own minds and cannot accept application of the Bible's teachings to their lives. The lawyer who confronted Jesus was guilty of trying "to justify himself" (Lk. 10:29)

and was seeking a loophole by which to bypass obedience. Those to whom Stephen preached had already made up their minds and thus "stopped their ears. (Acts 7:57). We must be careful not to make the Bible fit our desired lifestyle rather than making our lifestyle fit the Bible.

Nobody In Their Right Mind Would...

Don Williams

With much interest, I read where John David Munday did it again. It refers to going over Niagara Falls intentionally, in nothing but a four foot-diameter barrel.

Munday, a fifty-six year old diesel mechanic, had done this once before, back in 1985. Then, he had vowed he would never do it again. However, when folks began to question the "high-tech" barrel he had used before, he decided to try it once again in an old-fashioned barrel. He took the fearsome ride

over the one hundred seventy-foot Horseshoe Falls, and being picked up by the 'Maid Of The Mist' tour boat, Munday became the first person to successfully go over the falls twice. Thirteen "daredevils" have tried this stunt, but only nine have survived.

Having visited the Falls, and viewing their awesome power and wonder, I cannot imagine anyone in their right mind attempting such a feat. In the same light, there are other things of a spiritual nature that I cannot imagine folks

will try to do.

I cannot imagine why a child of God would deliberately go back to the ways of the world. So many spiritual blessings are his (Ephesians 1:3), that no one in their right mind would want to give it up for what the world offers. Yet, there are those who again become "entangled" with sin, and end up in a worse state than they were before. Peter likens it to a sow going back to muck, or a dog eating his own vomit again. (II Peter 2:20-22).

I cannot understand why a

child of God would choose to miss a worship service. The company they choose to distance themselves from is important to consider Jesus will be there (Matthew 18:20), faithful Christians and visitors alike. Our regular attendance at worship makes a real statement about who we are, and whose we are. Why would anyone willfully choose to disobey a God-given command on this subject, such as Hebrews 10:25 states? Answer: They do not love God with "all their heart, and with all their

soul, and with all their mind." (Matthew 22:37).

Munday will suffer the consequences of his daring stunt. Niagara Falls Police cited him for violating the Parks Act and the Trespass To Property Act. He could be fined as much as \$15,000. Our deliberate refusal to obey God can and will result in spiritual death (Romans 6:23). May we be wise and not make that choice in our lives.

True Repentance

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of the nature and consequence of our sin.

"For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent [regret it ASV], though I did repent [regret it ASV]: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season" (2 Cor. 7:8). Paul's writing of 1 Corinthians brought to their attention the grievous sins they had committed and the consequences of those sins (cf. 1 Cor. 5:11-13). Because of this confrontation, the Corinthians were made sorry, and thus repented. Paul did not regret that he confronted them with their sins, because his letter accomplished its purpose of making them sorry for their sins. Suppose that Paul had never brought these sins to their attention. Would they have been made sorry? Would they have repented?

If we are to truly repent we must also realize the nature and consequences for of our own sins. The consequences of sin are spiritual, and from God (Isa.

59:1-2; Ezk. 18:20; Rom.6:23). It is no wonder then that Jesus said, "But except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish: (Lk. 13:3).

Second, true repentance requires godly sorrow. "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of [which bringeth no regret ASV]: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor. 7:9-10). Paul's previous letter accomplished its purpose—repentance (cf. 2 Cor. 2:3-4). Note that the Corinthians were made sorry after a "godly manner" and that their sorrow is described as "godly sorrow." Godly sorrow is literally "sorrow according to God." That is, godly sorrow is the automatic result when we see sin as God sees sin. God hates sin (Prv. 6:16-19; cf Ps. 1:6)! Therefore, we must hate sin (Ps. 119:104; Prv. 8:13) and be of such a disposition that sin rends

our hearts and causes us to seek forgiveness from God (Mt. 5:3-4; Jms. 4:8-9). Note also that godly sorrow works towards repentance, thus leading to salvation. There is a difference between mere sorrow and repentance. Sorrow may lead to repentance, but it is not repentance. One can be sorry without repenting, but true repentance can never occur without first being sorry after a "godly manner." Repentance is a change of will, produced by sorrow for sin, which leads to a reformation of live (cf. Lk. 15:17-20a). Godly sorrow is also contrasted with the "sorrow of the world" which "worketh death." Sorrow of the world is a sorrow which results from worldly considerations rather than godly. We can be sorry for something merely because we "got caught," or because we lost out on some worldly activity or fleshly lust. However, such sorrow leads to death because it does not lead to true repentance. Only when we realize that sin is an offense to God and results in our separation from Him, will we have

godly sorrow which "worketh repentance."

Third, true repentance requires a reformation of life.

"For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter" (2 Cor. 7:11). The Corinthians had changed! They now had an earnest care (cf. "carefulness") for their present course (cf. 1 Cor.5:2). They removed the evil from among them and were thus self-vindicated (cf. "clearing of yourselves"). They now possessed a righteous anger (cf. "indignation") with themselves that they allowed and tolerated such sins as were mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians. They now had a "fear" for the measures Paul could have taken had they not responded to his word (cf. 1 Cor. 4:21). They now had a longing (cf. "vehement

desire") not only to be restored to God, but to gain a restoration of favor with Paul. They now zealously sought to make up for their past indifference toward sin. They now had properly disciplined the offender (s) according to Paul's instructions, thus leaving "revenge" (avenging ASV) to God. Through this reformation of life the Corinthians proved themselves to be pure in this matter and, therefore, showed that they had truly repented.

True repentance requires: (1) the realization of the nature and consequences of our sin; (2) godly sorrow for our sin; and (3) a reformation of life. God calls all to repentance (Acts 17:31), and He is longsuffering to that end (2 Pt. 3:9). Whether one is outside of the body of Christ or an erring child of God, one must truly repent if he or she is to find favor with God (Acts 2:38; 8:22). Have you truly repented?

Friendship, Tennessee

JANUARY 13, 1995

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 - Most of A Minute
- She Shall Be Called Woman
- The Communications Revolution

Volume 32 Number 3
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

What Will You Do In 1995?

Floyd Rodgers

Each year many people make New Year's Resolutions. I've often wondered, how many include the Lord in their Resolutions? Let's get personal. Did you make a New Year's Resolution that involved God Almighty?

In "94" there were many that moved their membership for different reasons. Many preachers gave up their ministry work for various reasons. There were elders who stepped down from their positions. Whatever the reasons were, was God included in the discussions?

God has allowed each of us to see a New Year. For what reason? To glorify him. In 1 Corinthians 6:20 the Bible says: "FOR YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE: THEREFORE GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY, AND IN YOUR SPIRIT, WHICH ARE GOD'S."

I, for one, quote this each day. I do this to remind myself, that self is nothing and it's God's will that I live and breathe. Do you remember reading Acts 17:28? Listen,

"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." Don't you just love reading that? To know that God holds us in the palm of his hand. And to know that it's because of him that we are who we are is a great blessing.

That's why I ask the question; "WHAT WILL YOU DO IN 1995?" I have some things that you might consider:

1. In Joshua 24:15 this man of God said, "...FOR ME AND MY HOUSE, WE WILL SERVE THE LORD." Can men make that same statement today? We can! God wants me to be the spiritual leader of the family.

Men, let's take a more active role in our spiritual lives so that we can be more spiritual with our families.

Women, God made you to be suitable for men. You should want your husbands to be spiritual leaders. Encourage them to grow spiritually and you can grow

with him. I enjoy the scene where an old man and his wife are sitting on the front porch rocking. Tell me something. What's wrong with a man and a woman sitting in Bible study together?

Fathers, mothers, and children, make it a goal to be together to serve God Almighty. IN "95" BE TOGETHER MORE IN WORSHIP. SPEND MORE TIME IN GOD'S PLACE BEING GOD'S PEOPLE.

2. There is a verse that I pray all Christians are familiar with. It is PHILIPPIANS 2:5. "LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU, WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS:"

When I was a young boy, I used to ask myself, what kind of mind did Christ have? Do you know how I got the answer? By reading the Bible. That's what I'm saying today. We need to read God's word more, so we can be more like Christ. ISAIAH 34:16 says, "SEEK YE OUT OF THE BOOK OF THE LORD AND READ:.....;" In 1 TIMOTHY 4:13 the Apostle Paul exhorts his son in the gospel, "TILL I

COME, ATTENDANCE TO READING. EXHORTATION, TO DOCTRINE." There is a great joy in reading the word of God.

All of us need to become stronger in life and I know how we can do it. PSALM 1:1-3 says, "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. AND HE SHALL BE LIKE A TREE PLANTED BY THE RIVERS OF WATER, THAT BRINGETH FORTH HIS FRUIT IN HIS SEASON; HIS LEAF ALSO SHALL NOT WITHER; AND WHATSOEVER HE DOETH SHALL PROSPER." Now, doesn't that sound like someone we want to be like? An individual that prospers

GIVE READS GOD'S WORD TO MORE.

3. Many family members did not see the new year. There will be many that will not see all of "95". Brother Peter wrote, "BUT THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL COME AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT;..." (2 PETER 3:9). With that in mind, God could decide that time will be no more. My word to you is, "...BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH,..." (REVELATION 2:10).

Decide now, that God takes care of the rest. Remember this: WHEN A MAN'S WAYS PLEASES THE LORD, HE MAKETH EVEN HIS ENEMIES TO BE AT PEACE WITH HIM" (PROVERBS 16:7).

Now, I ask you; "WHAT WILL YOU DO IN '95"?

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Max R. Miller

Baptism Follows Salvation
Many have made such a statement as, "I believe that God for Christ's sake has pardoned my sins." This is a claim that God has forgiven and saved them. Later they are baptized. Some have "prayed through" and were

saved; some others have had some sort of religious experience and were saved from their sins--so the story goes. These all claim to be saved and later they are baptized. If such statements and claims were true then their baptism could not be "for remission of sins" (Acts

2:38). Apparently, Peter was wrong when he declared, "Baptism doth also now save..." (1 Peter 3:21). Baptism is to "wash away thy sins..."(Acts 22:16). But, if sins have already been forgiven then one was saved before his sins were washed away! In setting aside Peter's

words, one was saved before he was saved! Absurd. The Bible is right. The Bible being right, then, the denominationalist must be wrong for we have here a clear contradiction. Forgiveness of sins does not precede baptism, but for the penitent believer who

confesses his faith in Christ, forgiveness is at the point of baptism. He obtains God's forgiveness in that act of obedience. It is in the act of baptism that sins are remitted (Acts 2:38), sins are washed away (Acts 22:16), and from baptism one is raised to "walk continued on page 4

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

The Man Who Lied To God

Glenn Colley

"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God, (Acts 5:3-4).

This familiar passage reveals so much. We see the place where Satan will do his evil work if we don't resist him. It's in the heart. We learn that the Holy Ghost is a person who is correctly called God. And we learn that a man may lie to God.

Ananias was of course lying to Peter and to the others standing within hearing distance. But that wasn't so important when compared with the fact that he was lying to the Holy Spirit. How was he lying to God? In the fact that he was challenging God's knowledge of the heart of every man. If Ananias and his lying wife Sapphira had "gotten away" with this sin they would have walked away believing that any thing hidden from mortals is also hidden from God. Picture them later telling close friends that they had successfully deceived the Apostle Peter, who was filled with the Holy Spirit. They probably could have deceived Peter alone, but they couldn't deceive God. God read them as clearly as you can read this page.

But Ananias was not the only one who expected to deceive God. In II Kings 5, after Naaman had been miraculously healed of his

leprosy at the instructions of the prophet Elisha, Naaman offered valuable gifts to Elisha. "...Now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant, (vs. 15b)." Here was Elisha's response: "As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused, (vs. 16).

Elisha's servant, Gehazi, seeing the incident, thought his master foolish for refusing a portion of Naaman's riches. So he slipped away and pursued Naaman. Here is what lying Gehazi said when he caught up with Naaman: "My master hath sent me, saying 'behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments."

Naaman was so grateful for his healing that he quickly and willingly offered more: "Be content, take two talents". It took two servants to carry the prize Gehazi received for his lie. Gehazi's trip home must have seemed pleasant. The perfect lie. No one would ever know, and everyone was happy. Now verse twenty-five: "But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him...Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money and to receive garments, and olive yards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed forever. And he went out from his presence

a leper as white as snow, (verse 26, 27)." That day Gehazi's sins found him out, because, you see, no one successfully lies to God.

One of the most graphic illustrations of a man testing God's knowledge by seeking to deceive, is Judas. Consider Matthew 26:25--"Then Judas, which betrayed Him, answered and said, 'Master, is it I?'

He said unto him, 'Thou hast said.'

Keep in mind that Judas had ALREADY sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver earlier in this same chapter, (verses 14 through 16). There's no question that Judas is testing the ability of the Master to read the hearts of men. Indeed, Jesus did read the wicked heart of Judas.

Wise is the man who appreciates the all-knowing nature of God. Don't run from it. Be thankful for it! Listen to David's advice to his son Solomon: "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts; if thou seek him, He will be found in thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off forever, (I Chronicles 28:9)."

James said, "Let no man say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted of God,' for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man...(James 1:13)." One reason God cannot be tempted with evil is that the father of lies (the devil, Jn. 8:44) has never been successful in deceiving Him. Neither will we.

Gospel Preaching

Allen Webster

Across the front of many communion tables read the words, "This Do In Remembrance of Me." In the early days of the Restoration Movement it was not uncommon to see inscribed across pulpits the exhortation, "Preach the Word."

More and more churches of our day are receiving less and less of the Gospel with each passing year. It has become unpopular to give a "thus saith the Lord." Some say that "citing the Biblical reference in sermons hinders the presentation of the preacher." We wonder about a sermon that Biblical references hinder!

In place of the Word in sermons, many are presenting personal interest stories, testimonials, current religious thought, jokes, and contemporary events. As the beloved late Franklin Camp said, "Preachers of the past filled their sermons with Scripture. But one may hear sermons today with no Scripture or only one passage...[A] sermon without scripture is like an empty bucket for one dying of thirst." The Bible says, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2).

Why should sermons be filled with Scripture?

First, it helps hearers lean the Bible. Each is able to "search the Scriptures" (Acts 17:11), by following along. Abraham spoke from Paradise to say, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them" (Lk. 16:29). Preachers today have Moses, the prophets, and the apostles, so they should "let them hear them!" How can people learn the Bible if they do

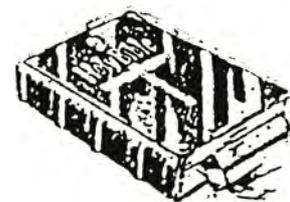
not hear it (Rm. 10:14)? As Paul wrote to the young preacher, "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (1 Tim. 4:13). Thus one of preaching's purposes is teaching. If preachers do not use the Bible, are they obeying God?

Second, it helps avoid misapplication (2 Pet. 3:16). Error is often undetectable when disguised in a few familiar-sounding biblical words or phrases severed from their original context. When honest truth-seekers are given opportunity to investigate, the "truth sets men free" (Jn. 8:32). Faithful preachers have nothing to hide, and desire that listeners check on them. Since each is responsible for working out his "own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12), preachers help by pointing others to Jesus (Jn. 1:37) and His Word (Heb. 4:12).

Third, it shows respect for Biblical authority (Col. 3:17). Hearers are reminded that the preacher is not speaking "of himself" (Jn. 7:16; 8:28; 14:10), or asserting his own ideas (1 Pet. 4:11; 1 Pet. 1:20-21), but rather permitting God to speak for Himself (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Fourth, it is following the Biblical precedent. Jesus often said, "It is written" (Mt. 4:4, 7, 10) and "found the place where it was written" (Lk. 4:16, 17) before beginning to preach. Peter's sermon on Pentecost (Acts 2) had quotations from Joel 2: 28-30; Psalm 16:8-11; 101:1; and 2 Samuel 7:11, 12. Because the apostles used the Scriptures, they were as invincible as a tidal wave--nothing could stop them!

Fifth, it fulfills the purpose of preaching (2 Tim. 4:2). As farmers, preachers are to "sow continued on page 4



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A Religion Of Convenience Or Conviction (No. 1)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Introduction

Conviction (Paul) spoke to convenience (Felix) in Caesarea in Acts 24:25. The passage reads, "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

Convenience: A Way Of Life for us

We live in an era when mankind majors in convenience. We now have lights in our home with a flip of the switch. Formerly, our ancestors had to get out the kerosene lamp, trim the wick, put in the oil, clean the chimney and then apply a match to the oil-moistened wick. Then the light produced was nothing comparable to the bright lights by which we do our work now. I experienced such as a youth in rural living.

Formerly, our ancestors had to heat their homes by the burning of wood that required the cutting of firewood, hauling it to the house, bringing it in little by little and by a slow process each cold morning getting a reluctant fire to burn brightly. I remember well just such experiences in my own early youth. Now we obtain round the clock heat in the winter by the quick adjustment of a thermostat. That same thermostat keeps us cool in the hottest weather in spring, summer and autumn.

Transportation is now so convenient. A quick call to one's travel agent or the local airport and one can be in a distant city and back home within the same time it once took our forefathers to go from their homes at the distant end of the county to the local county seat, conduct business and get back home shortly before night.

The longest part of one's journey, time wise, may be from his home to the nearest airport! Convenience in travel is the order of the day.

Instant radio or television coverage of world happenings is at our finger tips every waking moment of the day.

Convenience in working conditions is usually one of the major selling points between a potential employer and a potential employee.

We want convenient education. We want to do our shopping where there is convenient parking, convenient placement of desired goods and convenience in check-out counters. The world of advertisements is built largely around the selling concept of convenience or that of labor-saving. Convenience in secular matters is strictly all right and not many of us have a nostalgia in returning to the

inconveniences of former ages. I would hate to give up the modern car I now drive for the 1929 Model A I first learned to drive while a teen-ager!

Convenience Has Invaded Religion

A desire to have a convenient religion is very much in vogue today. This desire is quite all right as long as the convenience is in matters that are optional in nature and are left up to human judgment such as the location of meeting-houses, parking facilities, seating arrangement, carpeting of floors, provisions for nurseries, central heating and air conditioning, etc. But too many want convenience in doctrinal matters. They want a religion that will not be demanding either in time or dedication. They want a religion that will allow them to have their cake and eat it, too. They desire a religion that will allow them generous toleration to enjoy the

lusts of the eye, the flesh and life's pride or vainglory while ignoring what John wrote in 1 John 2: 15-17. They insist on pulpit silence relative to their pet sins. Spineless preachers and elders minus backbones acquiesce meekly with their financial eyes always focused on high contribution intake each Sunday which might fall if the convenience advocates are rebuffed. Fearless exposure of sin from the compromising pulpits of our land is becoming more rare all the time. People just described are looking for a religion that will be just as convenient to espouse as to reject. Which describes our religion--one of convenience or one of deep-seated conviction?

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She Shall Be Called Woman

Betty Burton Choate

Are women inferior to men? Are we only second-rate creatures? It would be surprising how many people would openly answer "yes" to those questions. Even women, sometimes, are so defensive that they are subconsciously answering, "Yes."

Why is it that often when a woman reaches a post of authority, she is hard and demanding in her dealings?

Is it because she has lived so long under the cloud of being counted inferior that she is going to the extreme to prove that she is not? When a woman runs a shop, usually she is even more "business-like" than her husband would be because, subconsciously, she is proving to him and to herself that she is not inferior. But we don't have to compete with men and become hard, uncompromising and unsympathetic to prove our

worth. Actually, God never intended for women and men to be in competition with each other. He intended, rather, that they form teams, working together in harmony. Yesterday, I dropped a dish. It broke into two parts, with a long uneven edge on each piece. I picked them up and put them back together, the "ins" fitting "outs" of the other, so that the plate looked whole again.

A man alone, or a woman

alone, would be something like one half of my broken plate. God formed them so that the two parts would fit perfectly together to form a whole.

The bodies of men and women are different. Neither is "inferior" to the other, but both are made according to the individual roles God intended for them to fill. Naturally, a man is physically stronger than a woman--his role is to be the protector and

provider for the family. And why can women not compete well in foot races with men? Because a woman's pelvic bones are shaped for bearing children, not for allowing her to run freely.

Women and men are not alike emotionally. A man must carry the responsibility for the family. Day after day he must go to his job and face the challenges of the world. So, generally, men are steady, continued on page 4

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Most Of A Minute

Glenn Colley

Have you done anything good for anyone today? I mean, have you made yourself available to anyone to offer assistance?

Christians are people who "do good" for others. In Matthew 5:44. Jesus told his followers to "do good" to even people who hate us. In Galatians 6:10 the Bible says "As we have therefore opportunity, let us 'do good' unto all men."

In Luke 10 there is a parable told about four men. One was wounded and in need. Two were religious but were hypocrites and unwilling to aid the hurt one, and the fourth man was a Samaritan. The good Samaritan. Three men saw the man who was in need. Only one was willing to help. If one of these three men was representative of you, which one would it be?

Have you tried, or will you try, to do something good for someone today?

Denominational Baptism

continued from page 1
in the newness of life" (Romans 6:3,4).

Joining A Church

Most denominational churches teach that one is to be saved and then he should join the church of his choice (and they want him to choose their church). We have heard

the testimony of those who "have had an experience of grace" coming forth in a church service seeking membership therein. If their testimony is approved, and it usually is (as if men could sit in judgment on such matters), then the candidate is baptized into the fellowship of that

church. This is the way they join the church. The denominationalist deny that being a member of the church is essential to salvation; they also deny that baptism has anything to do with one's salvation. Hence, their baptism is a non-essential act to get into a non-essential

religious organization.

The New Testament does not record a single instance of anyone joining the church. Neither does it even mention a single denominational church. However, we do learn that those who were baptized for the remission of sins were added to the church

by the Lord (Acts 2:47). In the act of baptism they were baptized into the one body which is the church of Christ (Romans 6:3,4; I Cor. 12:13), thus becoming a member of it.

Gospel Preaching

continued from page 2
the word" (Lk. 8:11; Acts 20:32). The power to save men is in the gospel of Christ (Rm. 1:16; 2 Cor. 12:9; Jn. 8:32; Eph. 6:17). It is not in money (Acts 3:6), men (Acts

4:13), or popularity (Acts 28:20). How can men expect to save souls without the soul-saving message?

Paul faced a similar problem at Corinth where men were preaching

themselves rather than the Word. He wrote, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18). Man was never

commissioned to preach anything other than the "old Jerusalem Gospel" (Mk. 16:15; Gal. 1:8,9). Are these pseudo preachers any better than Elymus who wanted to withhold the truth from

Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:8)?

Brethren, as souls hang in the balance, let us demand that the Word be preached!

She Shall Be Called Woman

continued from page 3
and enduring, not easily discouraged. A woman, on the other hand needs gentleness and tenderness in the care of her children, in the encouragement to her husband. She should provide in the home the haven of

peace he needs. Yet, even though a woman may be weaker, physically, than a man, and even though she may be gentle, this does not mean she is weak in spirit or in character. Often when a man is discouraged, it is his wife's strength, her faith in

him and the future, that enables him to go on. In this way they are helpers for each other, as God intended.

Spiritually, too, a woman usually has great strength. She has more time to study and learn about God, more time to pray. She is with the

children and can teach them. She can encourage her husband in his spiritual growth. So, in this area, the Christian woman can do much to shape her home life. No, woman is not inferior to man in any way. Both are carefully fitted by God for

each other and for the work He has given them to do. For this we should be thankful.

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The Communication Revolution

J.C. Choate

For some time now a revolution has been going on around the world. It is not a violent one and may not be readily recognized, but it is changing lives, countries, and all of mankind. I refer to communications: the ability to get information out to the masses. The printed word, radio, audio tape recorders, television, video, the satellite, the computer, fax machines--all of these things are informing masses, influencing individuals, and unifying nations as nothing else has done in the history of mankind.

As the Lord's people, what a wonderful age we live in, to have all of these tools available to help us carry the gospel to every creature under heaven! Amazingly, they are not just in the hands of the rich and most influential people, but they are even available for the common man to use! They are within the grasp of Christians!

The Lord knew that in the last part of the Twentieth Century there would be five-billion plus people on this globe of ours, and so He provided us with the tools to preach the gospel to them. What a shame, though, that Christians have allowed the political and business worlds, and false religious leaders of our day, to dominate the use of these means of communications instead of seizing the countless opportunities that were ours to use them in evangelizing.

One of our main problems in dealing with all of these communication outlets is that with the passing of time we become so familiar with them, and so accustomed to using them secularly, that we grow complacent and indifferent about them. Think of all the people we could reach with the gospel through the radio, television, and literature, for example. That is an exciting prospect to me! As much as

Paul was able to do in his time, just imagine what he would do now if he had access to modern-day communications! But here we have them, and for the most part we are ignoring them. What a crime against all of humanity!

Take, for instance, the video. Time Magazine recently reported that the video machine is having a great influence on the world, and especially in third world countries. The Voice of America reported that some countries which have in the past controlled their people through controlling the information given to them are finding it difficult to deal with this machine. Video clubs have sprung up everywhere. If videos are not welcomed, they are smuggled in, and they make their way even to distant and isolated places. In time they will influence languages, dress, eating habits, and every phase of life. They will

introduce people to the rest of the world, to political leaders, to sports figures, and numerous other things, some of which will be good and others will be bad. Still, for good or bad, the videos are here, and we have not seen the end of their influence yet.

But if this is true in the world, why can't we as the Lord's people see the potential of videos for the cause of Christ? They are being used now in a limited way, but we need to get busy and produce a variety of them on a large scale, and make them available at prices aimed at evangelism rather than profiteering. Tapes are so cheap, and wherever they go they will be in great demand. They can be used in homes and meeting houses. They can be used to teach individuals or groups. Libraries and video clubs will often be happy to stock them. They could even be sent or given to our better contacts. Especially in the

mission fields around the world, they can be used to great advantage.

Even audio cassette tapes can still be used as a powerful means of reaching people with the gospel. The fact is, we have the opportunity to take the initiative in putting so many different types of communication to work for the Lord. We ought to be leaders in this field. We have the Good News to get out, and these communication tools will enable us to get it to the masses in the shortest possible time.

Brethren, let's wake up. There is a revolution going on around us and all over the world. We should not be conquered by it, but we should use it to win souls in the world for Christ.

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THE YEAR
OF
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Words of Truth and soberness."--1

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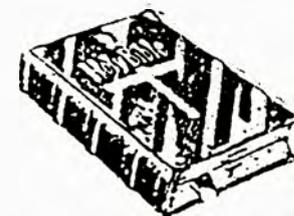
From The Editor

Glenn Colley

**VISIT WITH US
AT
SIXTH AVENUE
CHURCH OF CHRIST
SOON.**

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A Revealing Confession

Mel Futrell

Most of America, and probably many around the world are familiar with the name Jeffery Dahmer. Dahmer, of course, was the man convicted some two years ago of killing almost a score of young men. The Friday, My 13 edition of the Memphis Commercial

Appeal carried a picture of Dahmer and the following short notice.

SERIAL KILLER IS BAPTIZED

After Bible study, Jeffrey Dahmer was baptized by immersion in a Wisconsin prison whirlpool bath Tuesday by a church of Christ minister. Dahmer is serving

15 life terms for killing 17 young men; the incidents involved necrophilia and cannibalism.

In the long ago Solomon said, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold." (Proverbs22:1) Unfortunately, in his short life Jeffery

Dahmer garnered to himself neither a good name nor loving favor. It is our hope and prayer that he now enjoys the blessings of Paradise (luke 23:43).

Recently, about two and a half weeks ago, NBC's Dateline program aired a segment on Jeffery Dahmer. Actually it was a previous

interview done with him, that was now being show because he had just that wee been killed in prison. While watching the interview I was pleasantly surprised by couple of revealing

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A Revealing Confession (Continued)

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statements Dahmer made.

"If a person doesn't think that there is a God to be accountable to, then what's the point of trying to modify your behavior to keep it within acceptable ranges? That's how I thought anyway."

"I always believed the theory of evolution as truth, that we all just came from slime and that when we died, that was it, there was nothing. And I've since come to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is truly God, and that I, as well as everyone else, will be accountable to him."

Now, what do you think about that? Brethren, the truth of what he said couldn't have been said better. In those two brief statements Dahmer

talks about personal accountability to God, his one time belief in the theory of evolution, and his new found belief in God. Did you notice the natural connection Dahmer made between atheism and evolution? This isn't surprising since every atheist is an evolutionist and vice-versa. Evolution my friends is a false system that attributes man's origin to natural processes.

Creationism, on the other hand, accepts the Bible's explanation of origin, that is that it was a supernatural act performed by GOD (Genesis

1:1, John 1:1-3, Hebrews 11:3). The whole creation / evolution controversy that is raging right now is a pressing matter of importance to us all. In reviewing the Dahmer case

we should all be reminded that the gospel alone has the power "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto GOD, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." (Acts 26:18). It was the Gospel presented initially through a Bible correspondence course and then in person that caused Dahmer to abandon the theory of evolution as truth and to accept the fact of GOD.

Dahmer again hit the nail on the head when he spoke of personal accountability to GOD. The Scriptures couldn't be clearer on the matter of judgment and individual

accountability (see John 12:48; Acts 17:31; Eccl. 12:13-14; Romans 14:12). In 2 Corinthians 5:10 Paul said, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad". Since it is the case that everyone will stand before the bar on the last day, then indeed we must modify our behavior to conform to the standard of GOD'S word.

Too many have been duped by atheism with its evolutionary message that lacks any hope at all. And it is our hope that many more will transform their lives by renewing their minds through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I'm not the product of any

Big-Bang or Primordial soup. But rather, I'm the offspring of Adam, who was the direct creation of GOD (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7); and it is to that Creator that I will one day give account.

904 Randal Ave
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**Visit the
Sixth
Avenue
Church of
Christ
Soon!**

After 44 Years Of Preaching

Johnny Ramsey

How the years do fly away! While still in college years the joy of gospel preaching already filled my heart and time. It was like a dream coming true each time brethren asked me to teach a Bible lesson or "preach a sermon." When the invitation came for my very first gospel meeting no 19-year-old could have been more happy or scared! Now, over a third of a century later, proclaiming the glad tidings remains a constant thrill and adventure for me. God has been so good to me and brethren have encouraged me mightily along the way.

It has been my privilege to do the preaching in over 600 evangelistic efforts in nearly 20 countries and 45 states in our nation. Doing pioneer work, establishing congregations in difficult areas of this land as well as Australia, has brought particular pleasure, challenge and satisfaction. Special tours of evangelism in Norway, Africa, India, the Philippines and islands in the Pacific will fill my book of memories for years to come. I can and do heartily recommend the life of a gospel preacher to young men everywhere.

Let me share with you some of the major things learned in these wonderful years:

1. The Power of the Gospel
2. The Joy of Preaching
3. Satan's Devious Ways
4. Importance of Godly Homes
5. Lack of Zeal for Lost Souls
6. Power of the Printed Page

7. The Influence of the World
8. Failure to Practice Discipline
9. Courage of Godly Elders
10. Error of the Church Entertaining Youth.

It never ceases to amaze me when the dynamics of the gospel overwhelm the power of sin. To see wicked people completely transformed into gentle servants of Christ is truly joy unspeakable and full of glory divine. The golden ring of redemption's clarion call sounds in the ears of loyal evangelists everywhere. There are those now preaching who once were so worldly no one thought such to be possible. We are dealing with a powerful tool when we open the Bible and preach the Word! In harmony with this beautiful opportunity is the peace that pervades the very soul of men privileged to proclaim the sweet story of heaven's will to man. Loyal evangelists have the finest task on God's green earth. Just think, gospel preachers are actually paid for something they would gladly do for no remuneration! In a classic spiritual hymn on this very point, we often sing:

O spread the tidings 'round
Wherever man is found- The Lord
is King of Kings.

Satan's pernicious ways continue to draw disciples away from the Master's cause. That is exactly the reason we must preach plainer, live better, exhort longer and strive harder to present Christianity in its brightest light to a world gone mad with sensuality

and secularism. One of the richest arenas of godliness that wars against the Devils devious mandates is the home as God desires it to be. The words of Psalm 127:1 have sterling character etched into the fabric of hope.

"Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it."

If anyone truly needs to work overtime for a proper cause it would be parents in a world like ours. We live in an age where iniquity is glorified and praised and wherein righteousness is laughed at.

Over a century ago William Beckford wrote of the wisdom in living properly in the here and now:

"He did not think it was necessary to make a hell of this world to enjoy paradise in the next."

Perhaps one of our major problems in the Lord's church today is lack of concern for the lost that evinces itself in a failure to spread the gospel. Some have suggested that many members do not really believe anyone will go to torment anyway! But this is not what the Bible says in Matthew 7:13,14 and 25:46.

As I ponder over the past 44 years of proclaiming and writing the message of New Testament Christianity, I am saddened that my brethren, in the main, do not fully understand the power and importance of Christian journalism. The written page has a

lasting effect upon mankind but so many of us have not realized the impact of such upon the billions of the earth. The permanent nature of transmitting the plan of salvation in books, tracts, newspaper articles, etc., is of such a vital nature that we ought to be ashamed of the abject lethargy we have in this regard. John 20:31 shows God's emphasis:

These things are written that you might believe.

We must not continue to let the world influence us by its propaganda while we sit by in muted silence. The message of grace and hope and love must be heralded far and near. When we awaken to this world-wide challenge, angels in heaven will rejoice (Luke 15:10) and demons in hell will tremble (James 2:19).

We also must return again to the clear call for church discipline if the body of Christ would be a vital force in this wicked age. Sin goes unpunished and heathen laugh at the weakness of the army of God. How desperately we need godly elders with definite courage to lead us in valiant endeavor for our King (Acts 20:28-32). Since the church is the bulwark of truth we must be strong in the Lord and the power of his might (I Timothy 3:15; Ephesians. 6:10).

As I look back over four decades plus of gospel preaching my greatest sadness centers on the epochal mistake so many brethren made years ago when they decided to entertain the youth instead of challenging them. As a result of

this emphasis we now have a generation of folk who are not in love with plain and straightforward preaching. Social poise and gymnastics skills have replaced the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27) in many congregations. Sermons fashioned after television personalities and slick advertising gimmicks- yes, sermons that could be (and are) preached in denominational churches are the order of the day. Unless we get back to the clear enunciation of soul-saving messages we are in for disaster. Christ Jesus told us what to preach till Judgment Day (Matthew. 28:18-20). We have no choice if we would honor our Savior and ransom sinners from a Devil's hell! James Rowe, in a tremendous gospel song, tell us:

Still far from Jesus many live in sin and doubt, Ring out the news that makes men free; To all the lost of every nation Ring the message out!

Let us determine that in the next 44 years we shall have profited from our mistakes of the past. Let us stand on the solid ground and pristine beauty of the old Jerusalem gospel so that erring brethren will come and millions of lost mankind may be redeemed in the blood of the Lamb.

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JANUARY 27, 1995

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- What's Wrong With Having Dedication Services For Our Babies?
- A Religion Of Convenience Or Conviction (No. 2)
- Vandyke's Warped Invitation
 - "Suffering?"
- Never Trust In Riches
 - A Contribution Or A Commitment

Volume 32 Number 5
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

What Does Hebrews 10:25 Really Teach?

Neal Pollard

The oft-posed question is, "When, besides those times when I am hindered and unable, can I be absent from the assembly?" The spin-off to that inquiry usually is, "Does the bible teach that one must attend all the assemblies?" Let us assume, as we should, that these questions are asked by honest hearts searching for the correct, biblical answer. What does the bible say?

Frequently, the place in the scriptures where one goes for the answer is Hebrews 10:25. The verse reads, "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". Does this passage refer to worship? Is it a command?

In response, it is important to widen our view of Hebrews

ten beyond merely verse 25. The chapter begins by contrasting the Old Law with the New. Mention is made of sacrifices (1-22). The idea of sacrificing is sustained throughout these verses by the words "offering", "offered", and "offer". When were "sacrifices" "offered"? Verse two explicitly affirms that such was during the worship "assemblies" under Moses' Law.

If the Hebrews' writer does not change the subject in verse 23, the subject should remain "worship". In verses 1-18, the inspired writer contrasts the Levitical (Old) system of continual sacrifice to the once-for-all sacrifice made by Christ on Calvary. While animal sacrifices ended with the supreme sacrifice, worship did not end. Example of worship on the first day of every week is documented by passages

such as Acts 20:7 and Corinthians 16:1-2. A corporate meeting of the saints for spiritual strength is recorded in Acts 11:12. The idea of fellowship (1 John 1:7) and congregational Bible study (1 Timothy 4:13) also compels the local church to assemble.

Verse 19 is built upon the foundation of the subject matter discussed in the previous verses (**Note:** "Therefore" means "for this or that reason: consequently: hence"). The Hebrews' writer is drawing a conclusion. The conclusion is that, because Christ established a New and Better Law by His sacrifice, Christians can approach God in worship as priests (see 1 Peter 2:5,9).

At this point (10:19-25), the writer lays down legislation for this kingdom of priests. Christians are commanded to 1) "draw near with a true heart

in full assurance of faith..." (10:22), 2) "hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering..." (10:23), and 3) "consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together..." (10:24-25). Thus, we are condemned if we fail to 1) manifest active faith, 2) remain faithful, or 3) consider fellow -Christians (assembling is clearly part of that spiritual consideration). Hebrews 10:26-31 warns against willfully violating any of those commands (remember, sin is transgression of the law-- 1 John 3:4). Then, Hebrews 10:32-39 accentuates the need for Christians to faithfully endure all for their Lord. Part of what constitutes faithfulness is attending the assemblies.

Please prayerfully consider these questions based on Hebrews ten. Do we obey Hebrews 10:25 when we

willfully absent ourselves from the assemblies? Can we consider one another unto love and good works more effectively present at or absent from the assemblies? Is willful absence from the assemblies willful sin? Does being absent without true hindrance please God?

Never take any answer at face value. Carefully study Hebrews ten. Closely examine what is involved in faithfulness, endurance, and pleasing God. Soberly consider what input deliberate absence from the assemblies has on other Christians, including new or weak Christians. Study carefully, then please make the right choice.

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"Five Points To Ponder"

Johnny Ramsey

There are several Bible truths that tower above the rest. In fact these extraordinary points sum up the major areas of Scripture. To overlook these epochal matters will cause us to be unbalanced spiritually. When we get these monumental landmarks in their proper place we are well on the road to heaven. It is sad to contemplate that millions of people go through life missing out on the majestic themes of godliness. The five points to ponder are these:

God's Sovereignty
Man's Sinfulness
Christ's Death

Our Freedom of Choice
Responsibility of Christians.
When we come to realize that our Creator has sublime and absolute authority we cease to be overly concerned with popularity among mankind. We desire to please our Maker above all else (James 4:4-10) and to rescue the perishing lest their sins overwhelm them and the events at Calvary be in vain. When we use our ability to exercise our volition in heaven's direction we realize the deep responsibility we possess as servants of the Savior. "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah, Pilgrim through this barren land

I am weak but Thou art mighty
Hold me with Thy powerful hand."

Several notable passages definitely stress the omnipotence of the Almighty.

Psalms 66:7 - He rules by His power forever!

Psalms 93:1 - He is clothed with majesty.

Psalms 90:1 - He has always been!

Psalms 24:1 - The earth belongs to him.

Romans 13:1 - There is no real power but his!

Daniel 3:17 - He is able to deliver us.

Proverbs 3:5 - We should rely

upon Him always. When we fight against God we shall never prosper (II Chron. 13:12 and 26:5). Conversely, walking in the glorious light of heaven's sacred counsel guarantees us joyful existence now and abundant life in the world to come (Mark 10:30). A great hymn tells us: "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." Submission to the Father's will is the wisest decision earthly pilgrims could ever make. Sadly, rebellious hearts continue in sin when grace could abound.

Shameful opposition to the Redeemer's plan brings sorrow incapable of full description. The peace that righteous living provides escapes many folk who choose to wallow in the mire of wickedness (John 5:40). "Souls in danger, look above Jesus completely saves He will lift by his love Out of the angry waves." We are exceedingly unwise to allow the wages of sin to oppress and dominate us when we could be free to enjoy the benefits of salvation through Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24; 6:23).

Continued On Page 2

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

What's Wrong With Having Dedication Services For Our Babies?

Glenn Colley

The folks practicing "baby dedication" services today feel they have a pretty simple, and strong argument. "How," they say, "could it be wrong for us to pray for our children?" The fallacy of their idea is in the name they have borrowed from the denominations to call the practice. Of course we may publicly pray for our families -- petitioning God that our parents will be wise and strong, and that our children will be always receptive to God's truth. But to have a dedication service is an animal of a different stripe.

Webster says of *dedicate*, "To consecrate to a sacred purpose", and of "*dedication*", "Act of devoting to some person, use, or thing..." Pay particular attention to Webster's words: "To consecrate...", "Act of devoting". TO SAY "WE ARE HAVING A DEDICATION" IMPLIES AN INITIAL DECISION/ACTION. In other words, to have a dedication is to say that "from this point on we hereby determine to train this child in the Lord." Or, "from this point on we hope the Lord will consider this child His child."

To illustrate, when a public building is built and finally is complete, the town may invite the Mayor in for a dedication ceremony and a ribbon cutting. The dedication suggests a new beginning for a purpose. The swearing-in of a new president is a dedication service, and it represents a beginning. Coming in to the service, he is technically not the

president. At the time of the dedication, he becomes president and assumes his new duties.

If it is also the case with parents and their babies, then shouldn't this "dedication service" be accompanied by a confession of sin from the parents? They should have been faithful enough to "dedicate" this child to a Christian home, to Christian parents, to Christian teaching, etc., when they first learned the child had been conceived! If they did make that decision when they first learned they were going to have a baby, what is the point of having a "dedication" ceremony twelve or fourteen months later? Do they need, for some reason, to re-dedicate? Do they simply enjoy the ceremony? Are they simply taken in by church leaders who convince them that they should participate in this ceremony?

The difference between a "dedication service" and simply having prayer for the parents and babies in a church is that prayer would be a continuation of what was already begun. Dedication is a beginning. We would suppose that it has its roots in the common practice of christening, or sprinkling, babies. That too is viewed as a beginning, and described as a dedication of/for babies. It seems that some religious groups today, which used to argue that their sprinkling put the baby into a covenant relationship with Christ, have now reduced that to simply saying that the sprinkling is a dedication of the baby to the Lord. If that is the case, what is the difference between a

dedication service in which sprinkled water is used, and one where it is not? Furthermore, since in the past we have all met people who were involved very little in their religion, yet felt spiritually secure because they were sprinkled as babies, we wonder: Will church members, who are prone to be weak and uninvolved in God's work, feel better about rearing their children in that weak atmosphere because those children were earlier "dedicated"?

Dedication of our babies is not a corporate affair involving the entire assembly on a given Sunday. Nor is it something done to a baby by a group of people. It is a decision made by every godly parent, without exception. If the church prays for young parents and their children, fine. But to say that we as a body are dedicating this baby to the Lord is presumptuous. It isn't the church's role. The church is not the guardian of that child, nor the one who makes that decision. The parents are, and should have already decided.

The special "dedication service" is wholly without New Testament authority, without New Testament precedent, and violates good reasoning in faithful service to the Lord. Pray for our families. Pray for parents and their children. But keep it simple, and within scriptural boundaries. Leave "dedication services" and other unauthorized worship ceremonies to the denominations..

"Five Points to Ponder"

Continued From Page 1

Man's sinfulness drove the Savior to the Cross and our stubborn will crucifies the Son of God afresh (Hebrews 6). In the very shadow of Golgotha every sinner should stand, in deepest gratitude, for the gracious gift of cleansing that flowed from the wounded side of our Lord (Zechariah 13:1). "All to Jesus, I surrender Humbly at His feet I bow Worldly pleasures all forsaken Take me, Jesus, take me now." Using our freedom of choice (Joshua 24:15) we should rush to the dearest Friend we shall ever know and take a stand for matters divine and eternal. He is our refuge and strength and our help and deliverer as we struggle through this vale of tears and press on to higher ground (Psalms 70:5; Phil. 3:14). We

realize our need for heaven's help (Psalms 124:8) and the vanity of pursuing earth's fleeting and shallow treasures. The responsibility of pointing men to God is not a grievous burden but, actually, becomes the quintessence of life for us (John 1:29; Mark 16:15). Let us, therefore, be busily engaged in the glorious work of Jehovah (II Cor. 6:1) as we march irrevocably toward that final hour. For, after all, our eternal destiny is in the hands of the sovereign God who made the heavens and the earth! Kipling wisely wrote:

"Lord God of hosts, be with us yet, Lest we forget, lest we forget."

A Religion Of Convenience Or Conviction

(No. 2)

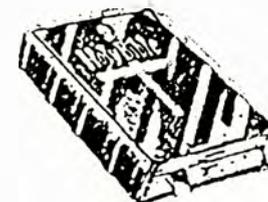
By: Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

The Scriptural basis for our short series is Acts 24:25 wherein we read from the pen of loyal Luke, "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." Felix is not the first person by any means desirous of religious convenience. There are a number of examples of such in the Old Testament. I choose one for the thrust of this article. "Jeroboam's Religion Of Convenience"

A driving desire for a

convenient religion is as old as the Bible. More than nine centuries before the birth of the Christ child Jeroboam I led the newly organized Northern Kingdom into a number of egregious errors by an appeal to the known conveniences of the people and with a firm eye riveted on political expediency. He was looking out for Number One. He strongly desired to keep his new subjects from any further religious pilgrimages made to Jerusalem thrice a year as commanded in such passages as Deuteronomy 16:16.

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A Religion Of Convenience Or Conviction (No. 2)

Continued from Page 2.

Passover, the Feast of weeks (called Pentecost in the New Testament) and the Feast of Tabernacles all could be observed minus the presence of his subjects in Jerusalem, he reasoned expediently. Jerusalem was in the territory of the Southern Kingdom and belonged to the jurisdiction of his political enemy, Rehoboam. The Bible says in 1 Kings 12:25-30, "Then Jeroboam built Shechem in Mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Peniel. And Jeroboam said in

his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: If this people go up to sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their Lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.

"A Religion Of Convenience Or Conviction (No. 2)"

Where upon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought

thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.

And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. So

he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense." When finished with his religion of convenience it had become man-made religion--not God's religion. In fact the Lord's wishes in the matter were not even consulted or considered. Convenience for the political expediency of his own newly established kingdom and for the people's worshipful pilgrimages to be less demanding were the deciding factors in these serious religious deviations and digressions from the Mosaic economy.

Human nature remains

unchanged. Modern man is not interested in a religion that costs, that demands sacrifices. Not many religionists today are willing to stand by the side of King David and declare, "Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing" (2 Samuel 24:24).

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Ripley, Tn 38063

Vandyke's Warped Invitation

By: David W. Hester

The Florence, Alabama area has seen the left-wing of the church invade and divide churches in recent years. As of the present, there are three congregations that have resulted from men preaching error and drawing away disciples after them. In fact, in Sept. 1993, Magnolia Church of Christ, one of those churches, had a joint worship service with North Wood United Methodist Church. Joe Vandyke, the preacher at Magnolia, downplayed doctrinal differences and said all churches should unite in spite of their differences. Since that time, much more has taken place.

Rubel Shelly came to College church (another of the apostate congregations) and delivered a series of lessons in October 1993. Vandyke has preached at several denominations, calling the preachers and the members "brethren." In June of 1994, he headed the "March for Jesus," which saw several denominations going in together. Before that event took place, Vandyke

delivered a sermon at Faith Tabernacle in the Spring. What he said on that occasion at the close reveals much of the thinking of the new left in the church.

Throughout the service, the instrument was used. In fact, only one song was sung without the instrument (if you don't count Vandyke's impromptu song during his message). Vandyke declared they were standing "on Holy Ground," and that this event had "been a dream of his for a few years."

When he came to the end of his sermon, Vandyke addressed a question which has dogged him since the meeting with the Methodists. The question, had to do with joint worship services. What if toward the end of the service a man, convicted of sin, were to ask, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" One preacher answers as Peter did in Acts 2:38, while the other preacher gives a different answer. One preacher says baptism is immersion, while the other

disagrees. What then? This is a good question, no matter who asks it.

Vandyke, in addressing the issue, proceeded to list a number of preachers from denominations who were present. He then said: "Don't you think that if somebody needs to respond this evening that we can all get together down here at the front and work something out that needs to be done?" The audience erupted in cheers, yells, and much applause. He then said: "I just believe that these hypothetical cases won't stand up when put to the test. We can work it out, brothers, we can work it out. If you need prayer, we can pray. If you want baptism, we can baptize. If you want whatever it is you need tonight--there's some preacher here that can minister to you in the name of Jesus."

Now let's stop and reflect upon what this brother has said: "We can work it out." Think about the day of Pentecost for a moment. When those people said, "do"

"Suffering?"

Mike Benson

Dear Mike,

"Do you believe that suffering can be helpful to a person? If so, how?"

Yes. Please consider the following:

1. Suffering can help a person determine his true spiritual condition before God. David said, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24). "When a person faces no great affliction, or suffering, it is easy for him to give little thought to his true spiritual condition, as viewed by God. But when the rigors and trials of adversity and suffering turn one in upon himself to face squarely what is the true condition of his heart and life, the person suffering often must face the fact that he is lacking in faith, in love, and in dedication of life."

2. Suffering can help a person recognize his need for God. "Suffering has the power to mold and make the sufferer one who can be more kind, compassionate and considerate of others. Who knows better how to sympathize with one who

is suffering than a person who has suffered? To some, being a believer in God should automatically guarantee freedom from suffering and pain. But this is totally inaccurate from the Biblical perspective. The Bible says suffering sometimes serves as a discipline. Man is said to grow in moral and spiritual character through suffering. There is also an emphasis given by some that suffering builds character because it is through suffering that God is revealed to man. **In suffering man is brought to meet God in a deepening fellowship because of the help that comes from God through that period of crisis.**"

3. Suffering can help motivate a person to renew his relationship with God. "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word" (Psalm 119:67). "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn your statutes" (Psalm 119:71).

1. Thomas B. Warren, "The Benefits of Suffering," **Our Loving God - A Sun and Shield**, p. 43.

2. Edward P. Myers, "Observations From a Christians."

Most of A Minute

Welfare Reform

So where do you stand on the question of welfare reform? There certainly is a lot of discussion right now on how America should take care of its needy.

Something that is always fascinating to me are people, who though they may not realize it, take common-sense positions which come from the Bible! Now, on the subject of Welfare, the Bible makes some important points. There's no question that Christians are taught to love all men and to be benevolent. Galatians 6:10 says, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men..."

But that's not all it says. It says something that most Americans are dying to hear said today. It may not be politically correct, but it's Biblically correct: "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat, (1 Thess. 3:10)." Glenn Colley

Vandyke's Warped Invitation

Continued From Page 3
 how did Peter respond? According to Vandyke, Peter should have said: "Well, we've got the Pharisees in the audience; we've got the Sadducees present; we've got the scribes and lawyers; we've also got the apostles. Don't you think that we can all get together on Solomon's porch and work something out that needs to be done?" How ludicrous!

You know as well as I do, how Peter responded. "Repent ye, and be

baptized...for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Those people had no doubt as to the mode of baptism, or its purpose. But, Vandyke would say, "If you want... whatever it is tonight, there's some preacher here that can minister to you." In other words, if you want to be immersed, we can immerse you. If you want to be sprinkled, we can oblige. If you want your baby baptized, we'll accomodate you. Where in the world did Vandyke get this kind of invitation?

But, consider what Vandyke said at the close: "We've got people coming to lead us in a time of response, and so I'm just going to issue the invitation. If you want to go where God wants you to go-be what God wants you to be-do what God wants you to do-without concern for who you are but concern only for who he is and where he wants you to go, if there's something missing in your life right now that you think a response in this

assembly could supply, then (at that point, the music started-DH) we invite you to come right now. All of these ministers will be down here to receive you. If there's some spiritual need in your life, won't you come right now while we have some music together." At which point, the music reached a crescendo and continued.

Brethren, this is the culmination of what the new left in the church wants to take place across the country; in fact, this

happened before Shelly had his joint meeting with the Christian Church!

We in the Florence area are doing what we can to stem the tide of apostacy. What are you doing for the kingdom? This is the time for all brethren to rise up as one and stand for what is right. Let us all resolve that we will preach and teach the truth, warn brethren about error, and issue the Lord's invitation without modification.

Never Trust In Riches

Johnny Ramsey

The Psalmist is crystal clear in many resplendent passages, that it is foolish to put so much emphasis upon earthly wealth since God owns it all anyway! Psalm 50 vividly reports this conclusion: For every beast of the forest is mine and the cattle upon a thousand hills. For the world is mine and the fullness thereof." The hymn writer was absolutely correct in a challenging song: "Earthly wealth and honored fame may never come to me and a palace fair here mine may never be." In Psalms 49, we learn anew that both wise men and foolish ones leave their wealth to others when they die. Such cannot "by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him" (49:7). Like the rich man in Luke 16, any effort from the grave would be futile even for those who once trusted in wealth and "boasted themselves in the multitude of their riches" 49:6. Solomon, in the eighth chapter of Ecclesiastes, laments the fact that one struggles to gain worldly lore and then leaves it to ungrateful folk who squander a fortune they did not labor to acquire. Truly, as the wise man chronicled, so we agree: "Vanity and vexation of spirit--a striving after the wind. There is no profit under the sun." One of the truly classic reminders that forever informs us of the vanity of building treasures on earth is Psalms (49:16-17.) Oh, how we need to give heed to this exhortation: "Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased. For when he dieth

he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him." Brother Teddie was abundantly accurate in his great gospel song: "Earth holds no treasures but perish with using, however precious they be. Yet there's a country to which I am going. Heaven holds all to me." In view of these momentous and solemn truths we would be wise and perceptive to be grateful for daily provisions and "all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 1:3). A greedy, avaricious spirit brought about sudden departure for two church members in Acts, chapter five! The first recorded sin in the early days of Christianity related to money. When our trust is in uncertain riches rather than God (I Timothy 6:17), we will always want more and more. Therein lies the root of all evil which Paul tells us is the love of money! We need to replace covetousness with gratitude for what we have and thus, be content with the provisions richly showered upon us by a benevolent Father (Hebrews 13:5, Acts 14:17). Notice Psalms 50:14---- "Offer unto God thanksgiving and pay thy vows unto the Most High." May we ever be mindful of the sovereignty of Jehovah and the brittle nature of fame and fortune. Indeed, "he enjoys much who is thankful for little." "The treasures of earth are not mine I care not for its silver and gold But a treasure far greater is mine I have riches in Christ Jesus untold." On the golden street of glory, we shall be enriched by the

A Contribution Or A Commitment?

Don Williams

The story is told of a pig and a chicken that were busy after a long day's work. The chicken said, "I have never worked so hard in all my life. That family must have used a dozen eggs all in one day. I am so tired." "Tired nothing," said the pig. "With you, all you have to provide is a contribution. For them to have sausage or pork, I have to make a real commitment."

The story reenacts what some do in the church when the contribution plate comes around. **HOW MANY OF US STOP AND REALLY THINK ABOUT OUR GIVING VERSUS WHAT OUR LORD DID FOR US?**

Have we really counted His cost on our behalf? Paul tells us that we need to give to God as we have prospered. In I Cor. 16:2, Paul writes, "Upon the first day of the week, let everyone of you lay by in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." Is there anyway that we can ascertain the value of our Lord's death on our behalf? Surely no money in all the world would equal what He did for us on that hill of Calvary. The greatest of gifts demands that we return in the

same way. How dare we give only a token contribution, when **GOD GAVE TO US THE VERY BEST?**

If one decides to give his life to Christ, he must make a total commitment to God. Jesus said that we must die to self and take up his way of life. In Matt. 16:24, He says, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." A token following of Jesus is not enough. Later, He made the comment, "No man having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62)

When we make that commitment to be baptized into Christ, we die to self. Our lives, yes, even our money, become His. (It is His already.) How sad if we do not decide to make a real commitment unto God in terms of what we give unto Him! I like the story of the man who was about to be baptized. The preacher suggested that he empty his pockets as they were to get in to the water. He noticed the man's billfold in the back pocket and reminded him of it. He was about to pull it out when he said, "no, go ahead and baptize it as well." He understood something about

the commitment he was about to make. **WE REALLY GIVE OURSELVES WHEN WE GIVE UNTO GOD, WE ARE SAYING "GOD, I TRUST YOU WITH ALL THAT I HAVE; HERE IS WHAT I LOVINGLY GIVE YOU, KNOWING YOU WILL PROVIDE FOR MY EVERY NEED AND THEN SOME."** That is what the Macedonian brethren did Out of their poverty, they were willing to give for the needs of the saints in Judah. Their attitude in giving is seen in the following statement. "And this they did, not as we hoped but first gave their own selves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God." (II Cor; 8:5)

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR A BIBLE TEACHER

1. Thou shalt understand the importance of thy work.
2. Thou shalt be a good example.
3. Thou shalt be prayerful.
4. Thou shalt know thy students.
5. Thou shalt check and visit thy absentees.
6. Thou shalt be studious.
7. Thou shalt see the possibilities in thy students and inspire them.
8. Thou shalt be humble.
9. Thou shalt be enthusiastic.

See Articles Inside:

- A Religion of Convenience or Conviction? (No. 3)
- Younger Preachers
- Christians See The Invisible
- One Church-Spiritual Claustrophobia
- A Lesson From The Book Of Hosea
- The Way That Is Right And Cannot Be Wrong
- O.J. Simpson And Forgotten Justice
- Great Gifts
- What About Jesus? (Part One)
- Preaching Jesus

Volume 32 Number 5
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

A Religion Of Convenience Or Conviction? (No. 3)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

In Acts 24:24,25 the beloved physician Luke described a discourse Paul preached to a royal couple at Caesarea, the Roman Capital of ancient Palestine, and the reaction that one of the two auditors gave the apostolic message. These two verses read, "And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

WANTED:

A CONVENIENT SEASON FOR A ROMAN GOVERNOR

Just what is the trembling Roman Governor desirous of having in the way of religion? He wanted one that

would be convenient for him to obey. Paul had preached to him about right-doing or how God proposes to make men righteous. Felix could not begin a life of right-doing without doing some major overhaul work on his attitudes, motives, words and especially his daily deeds. He could not live within an unrighteous relationship with beautiful Drusilla, (they were in adultery at the time Paul preached to them,) and be righteous at the same time. He could not continue to commit political crimes and live as a righteous individual. The context of the sermon reveals his covetous disposition. Luke wrote, "He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: whereof he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. But after two years Procius Festus came into Felix's room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a

pleasure, left Paul bound" (Acts 24:26-27). Felix was perfectly willing to release Paul for a bribe but not for the cause of deserved justice. This speaks volumes of the man.

Paul's sermon called for the two immoral people before him to repent of their sins and begin living controlled lives of righteousness, sobriety and in full view of a vast eternity awaiting each of them. His preaching demanded they believe in Christ, turn from their sins, confess Christ and be immersed into the names of the Sacred Three. They had already lived too long in sinful indulgence (Cf. 1 Peter 4:3).

Instead, Felix desired a religion that would enable him to fulfill every lustful aspiration of a degenerate soul just as he had done all his evil life. Judgment terrors did not coincide well with his materialistic, lascivious

lifestyle. He desired a religion that would enable him to sin at will but face no future reaping at a universal judgment at time's end. He wanted a religion that would be just as convenient for him to accept as to reject. Is this not what we mean when a request comes our way and we meet it with the expression, "I will do it when convenient?" Do we not mean we will get around to doing that when it is just as convenient to do it as to put it off?

Jehovah never had any intention of establishing a religion that would cost man nothing in his acceptance of it. Christianity had cost heaven a great price. It likewise demands a great price from those who accept it. We must be willing to renounce self and enthrone Christ (Luke 14:27-33). It must be done daily, Luke 9:23. We must seek first God's kingdom and His

righteousness (Matthew 6:33). We transfer ownership of our bodies and spirits into the hands of the Lord when we obey the gospel. This is what Paul means in such passages as 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Titus 2:14; Galatians 2:20; and Romans 14:8. Obedience to the gospel calls for conviction; convenience cannot achieve or maintain it. Living the Christian life calls for conviction; convenience will fail quickly in such earnest endeavors. Worshipping God regularly and doing His will while we live calls for conviction, not convenience.

The next two installments will talk of Old and New Testament examples of people who had deep religious conviction. Religious convenience was NEVER in their vocabulary!

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Younger Preachers

Bobby Key

It would be wise for those who are beginning their career to give attention to their latter days. Be careful with your finances. Don't spend all you earn; put some away for future needs. Stay

out of debt. Pay your bills on time. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. Never become obsessed with material things. The Lord deplores greed and the love of money in his servants. The love of money and love for

the lord do not often abide in the same heart and never dwell together long in any heart. God demands that His servants maintain purity. Avoid bad habits; "abstain from freshly lusts which war against the soul" (1 Peter.

2:11). The Lord requires preachers of the gospel to be examples. "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy. 4:12). Live the way you preach!

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Christians See The Invisible

Glenn Colley

Would a woman agree to marry a man she had never seen nor spoken to? Rebecca did, in Genesis 24. Abraham called his oldest servant and sent him on the amazing mission: to find the right wife for Isaac. The servant begged God for help, and with that help he chose Rebecca. But this servant had asked Abraham before leaving, "What if she doesn't want to come?" Abraham responded, "Then you are free from this task." Rebecca did come, and she married Isaac --whom she had never seen before the wedding day! She "saw" things that weren't visible. She knew that Isaac was Abraham's son, and from the servant's description, that Isaac could provide for her needs. She agreed to be his wife.

Have you considered that God expects Christians to look at, and "see" the invisible? In fact, he takes great *pleasure* in those of us who do see the invisible. II Corinthians 4:17, 18 says, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more

exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen are temporal; what are the things which are "not seen are eternal?" They are things like heaven, the gates of pearl and the streets of gold; they are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We keep our eye on the goal that is for now invisible, (Phil. 3:13).

When Thomas doubted in John 20, he said, "...Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." Later Jesus fulfilled that request, and said, "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet believed, (John 20:25,29)." Since no Christian living today has ever actually seen Jesus, they all fall into the category of being "blessed", because they believe without seeing.

Peter, when writing to suffering Christians, realized that they live by faith and not sight. Writing

to them about Jesus he said, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls, (I Pet. 1:8,9)."

May we be as the righteous in the "roll call of faith" listed in Hebrews 11, who could "see" the invisible. The text reads, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country (Heb. 11:13,14).

When I was a child I was impressed with Superman. He could see through brick walls. Now that I'm a man I am impressed with faithful Christians. They can see through layers of galaxies into the land that is fairer than day. By faith they can see it afar. They can see heaven.

A Lesson From The Book Of Hosea

Tony Lawrence

"Ephraim has mixed himself among the peoples; Ephraim is a cake unturned, (Hosea 7:8)." This passage comes in the context of God describing the sins of Ephraim (the northern kingdom). They were involved in fraud, robbery, adultery, alliances with foreign nations, and lying, to name a few. In chapter 7, God had compared them to an oven, a cake, and a silly dove. Just consider the illustration about the cake. Most ladies and perhaps some of the men are acquainted with preparing pancakes. If you pour your batter in the pan and never turn the pancake you will soon have it burned on one side and raw on the other. It is

sickening and no one wants to eat it. Ephraim had become "unbalanced" in their dealings. They had mixed themselves with other peoples thus becoming too heavy on one side. They had become burnt by having too much to do with these heathen nations. There are numerous lessons to be found in this passage for New Testament Christians. (1) Do not have too much in common with this world unless you expect to get burnt on one side. (2) Christians should be a balanced people. They should not expend too much effort in any one area. Preaching must be balanced between a positive presentation of the facts of the Gospel along with a negative

condemnation of sin and outright laziness. Doing one to the exclusion of the other will produce a "cake unturned." (3) God is sickened with us when we allow ourselves to get "cooked" by the world and we allow ourselves to go underdone toward God. Consider yourself, who gets more of your time, effort and concern, God or the world? The simple little statement found in the book of Hosea has profound teachings that we should realize are found in all of the prophetic books, yea even the whole Bible. God's word is truly a treasure chest full of valuable jewels!

One Church- Spiritual Claustrophobia?

Dennis Gullede

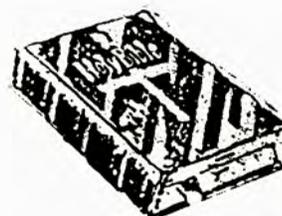
In Matthew 9:36, "...when he (Jesus) saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." There is so much about this verse that must surely impress the reader. The sympathies of Jesus are deeply moved by the sight of the masses who are hungry for the bread of life, but know not where to find it. He saw people neglected by those who ought to have been their teachers. They were ignorant, helpless, hopeless, dying and not spiritually ready to die, and the sight of it all moved him to pity. Those who should have been their spiritual leaders were more like wolves than shepherds. Jesus Christ was their true and rightful shepherd and he came to bring them back into the fold of truth.

The history of the religious world has been a story of people milling about in spiritual confusion, trying to find the answers to life's greatest questions and that bread of life and living water which we all need to feed upon so that we need never hunger or thirst (spiritually) again. The emergence of the apostate (Catholic) church marked the departure of many from the faith (2 Thess. 2:1-4; 1 Tim. 4:1-3). The Reformation Movement which followed made significant reforms for the better, but fathered many more digressive bodies with many of its adherents feeling that something was still lacking.

The Restoration Movement was a serious effort to restore that vital missing element: Christ and his church. Today, many people are still like those whom Jesus saw as misguided and misled, and as "sheep having no shepherd."

The November 28, 1994 issue of Newsweek magazine highlighted, "The Search For The Sacred: America's Quest For Spiritual Meaning." It is the story of a confused and bewildered "baby boomer" generation in search of spiritual meaning in their lives. The sense of the article is that whatever is right for you is right for you, whether it be channeling, crystals, the internet alter, harmonic convergence, meditation, a return to the old religion of your childhood, or "a cross culture spirituality," which, "brings an appreciation of very different worlds" (that is, anything you want). The article quotes one "religious professor" as suggesting that, "In a pluralistic society, 'one institution feels a little spiritual claustrophobic.' Thus, the 'one body' of Christ crates a sense of spiritual claustrophobia in some of the younger generation.

We might be moved to disgust and anger at such ignorance, but Jesus was moved to pity and compassion on such misguided souls. The compassion for the lost is the greatest compassion there is. Have we lost? Have we ever had it? It was pity for the lost that brought Jesus from heaven to earth, and from there to the cross. There is still much to do in preaching the gospel of Christ and pointing people to the only true way.



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The Way That Is Right And Cannot Be Wrong

W. A. Holley

We recognize that confusion exists in our world. Political situations divide people. Religious confusion everywhere abounds. Think of the Jewish and Arab quarrels. Even Christendom (?) is torn with strife and heretical wars.

Holy Scripture teaches us to "speak the same thing, 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). But we are far, very far, from following this divine injunction!

Each time we pick up the religious page of our newspapers, we come face to face with religious division. Protestantism is divided against itself; Roman Catholicism is far from being united. Islamism is torn by discord. To be fair, we must admit that the churches of Christ have had unity problems throughout the centuries (John 17:20-23; I Corinthians 1:10). "Is Christ divided?" The answer is no, a thousand times, no!!

How can a honest person know, from a religious point of view, what is right and what is wrong? This is a fair question. Let's see if we can answer it. There is such a thing as truth and there is such a thing as error (I John 4:6). Jesus said that one can "Know the truth" (John 8:30-32) This truth can be believed, understood, and obeyed (Romans 2:8; II Thessalonians 2:10-12; Ephesians 3:3-

4:5:17). The Holy Scripture teaches us that we can know for certain if we will but read God's revelation to mankind (Luke 1:4). "That thou mightiest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed." (See also John 20:30-31; II Timothy 3:15-17; 4:1-5).

There are some concepts upon which we cannot depend because our souls are too precious (Matthew 10:28; 16:26; Psalm 49:7-8). What are some of these false concepts?

Some feel certain of their salvation because of what seems right to them (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25).

Others think they are certain to be saved because they have a good conscience (Acts 23:1; 26:9-11).

Others think they shall be saved eternally even if they worship God ignorantly, but are sincere about it (Acts 17:23).

Others think they can be establish their own righteousness, and so, worship as the please (Romans 10:1-4).

Some think they can safely put their truth in a multitude of mighty men (Hosea 10:13).

Others lean upon their own understanding (Proverbs 3:5).

Some love father and mother more than they love the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 10:34-38).

WHAT IS "THE WAY THAT IS RIGHT AND CANNOT BE WRONG?" We shall note: (A) The Holy Bible as our rule of faith and

doctrine (Matthew 24:35; Isaiah 51:6; II Timothy 3:15-17). The doctrines and commandments of men will not do (Mark 7:7-13).

(B) Jesus is the way to heaven (John 14:1-6). It is the "narrow way," not the "broad way," (Matthew 7:13-14). The "narrow way" is too constricted for drunkard, murderers, and whoremongers, and the like, to enter heaven (Hebrews 13:4; Galations 5:19-21; Revelation 21:8).

(C) The sure church is that church which Jesus himself built and purchased with his own precious blood (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 20:28). Jesus is the Head of this church and its Saviour (Ephesians 1:20-23; 5:23). Jesus is the Head and Saviour of no other church.

(D) The right way to worship is doing what the Lord has commanded (John 4:23-24). This is required in order to enter the Kingdom (Matthew 7:21). We must sing and make melody in the heart (Ephesians 5:19). Included is teaching and praying in reverence to the Lord God (Acts 2:42). Participating in the Lords supper each Lord's day and the giving of our means to support the Lord's work (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-29; I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:6-7).

We should remember that the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind" (Proverbs 21:27). If we corrupt the

worship of God by our departure from his law, by the introduction of idols---pianos, organs, choirs, concerts, etc...our worship becomes vain (Matthew 15:9).

(E) The right way to live as a child of God is clearly set forth in the Scriptures. (Titus 2:11-12; Romans 12:1-2). We should endeavor to have quality homes or families. Sometimes a house is put by metonymy for the family, but a house is not much of a home if no one lives there. Throughout our nation thousands of homes are being destroyed by alcohol, drugs, adultery, fornication, all in the name of one's rights to do as she/ he pleases. It is time for responsible people to come to their senses---put God, the Bible, the Church, and Christian living into your life and see what a change it will make.

How much is your home worth? Is it worth all the strife, heartbreak, confusion,

fussing, and quarreling, caused by sins of drinking, adultery, drug addiction, and abuse?? The family can solve its problems if it truly tries!! (Titus 2:11-12; Philippians 3:13-14; II Peter 1:5-11).

(F) The Lord's Plan of Salvation is the right way. Man's programs can never suffice for any violation of the Lord's will (Matthew 7:21-23). What has the Lord commanded?? He has commanded:

1. Believe on Jesus Christ as God's Son. (John 3:16; Mark 16:16).

2. Repent of all sin. (Luke 13:3-5; Acts 2:38).

3. Confess Jesus' name before men. (Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 8:37).

4. Be baptized in Jesus' name for remission of sins. (Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4).

This way is right and cannot be wrong.

P.O.Box 274

Great Gifts

Cindy Colley

I prayed to God for strength anew
As I traveled life's roughroad.
And I was told that strength belongs
To those who bear the load.

I asked the Lord for wisdom
In the judgments I must make.
And I was told to grasp it
From my failure or mistake.

I asked for faith that I could move
Great mountains for the Lord
So God gave me the mountain
And the force was in His word.

E're I yearn for some great gift
And raise my voice in prayer,
Remind me that great gifts are wrapped
In burdens I must bear.

O.J. Simpson And Forgotten Justice

Glenn Colley

When the O.J. Simpson case first broke, issues seemed to be pretty simple and matter-of-fact. We had two murdered people, and one suspect with substantial evidence against him, who acts guilty. So, all that's left is to get a jury of peers and hold trial to examine evidence and decide. Right?

In this case you have to wonder if the first casualty of our justice system is justice itself. With all the swirling circus

surrounding this case, seems to have taken a back seat, or maybe even left the theater.

I want you to know that Christ doesn't work that way. One day, according to Matthew 25. He will hold court, and it will be perfectly fair. The call to this judgement will be quick, like the twinkling of an eye. No games, no tricks, no mis-trials. You and I will be judged with all other people according to whether or not we were faithful to God.

Most of A Minute

Term Limits for Congress

Item number ten in the Republicans now-famous "Contract with America" has to do with term limits. Now, at first glance this seems sort of odd. After all, shouldn't we assume that a politician who has served 35 years would be better for a seat in the house or senate than one who had served only one or two years? Well, most people seem to believe that the one with the shorter term is better, because so many long-term politicians become contaminated by the office. Americans want a government which understands the common man, not the government elite.

Have you ever considered that this is why Jesus is the perfect mediator between God and man? Jesus is God, our creator. At the same time, He came to the earth and lived like we do, as a man. I Timothy 2:5 says, "There is one Mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ." Hebrews 4:15 says, "...He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Glenn Colley

What About Jesus? (Part One)

Mel Futrell

Jesus once asked His disciples, "Who do men say that I the Son of Man am?". They responded, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets". Evidently, even in the first century, there was some confusion about who Jesus was. Our Lord though doesn't leave it at that, he continues: "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter replies, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living GOD" (Matthew 16:13-16). Brethren, this confession of Peter's is the rock on which that important, and I would hope and expect that anytime we are asked the same question, we would give the same answer (1Peter 3:15).

Unfortunately, there has been and is today much confusion about Jesus. Some scoff at the belief that Jesus was a historical figure. In

other words, that he actually and really existed. Others, although affirming that he existed, deny his deity. So the fundamental questions for us today are: Was Jesus an historical figure? And if He was, was He a mere Man or was he the divine Messiah? Brethren, the answer one gives *does* make a difference.

If Jesus is the Christ, the Son of GOD (John 20:30-31), then the church is obligated to give Jesus the preeminence in all things (Col. 1:18; Mt. 28:18). In Matthew 22:42 Jesus asked the Pharisees this compound question, "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he?" Now with the question in mind please consider the following.

Albert Schweitzer, in his volume *Quest for the Historical Jesus*, 1906 had this to say.

"The Jesus of Nazareth

who came forwardly publicly as the Messiah, who preached the ethic of the Kingdom of GOD, who founded the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, and died to give His work its final consecration never had any existence. This image has not been destroyed from without, it has fallen to pieces, cleft and disintegrated by the concrete historical problems which came to the surface one after another."

Jon Murray, president of the American Atheist, is quoted in the December 1994 issue of *Life Magazine*, in the article titled, "Who Was Jesus?" as saying:

"There was no such person in the history of the world as Jesus Christ. There was no historical, living, breathing, sentient human being by that name. Ever, (The Bible) is a fictional, nonhistorical narrative. The myth is good for business." (page 68)

Such was and is the disposition of the disbeliever in Jesus. Although we are saddened by their disinterest in what GOD'S word says on the subject. Yet, we are not willing that their objection alone be allowed to settle the matter. What if it were possible to produce testimony from sources not sympathetic to Jesus or His cause that authenticate His very existence? Might not that be convincing? Brother F.W. Mattox has correctly stated, "The facts of life of Christ are confirmed both by pagans and unbelieving Jews" (*The Eternal Kingdom*, 1961, p.31). The first century Jewish historian, Josephus, said,

"At that time lived Jesus, a wise Man, if he may be called a Man; for he preformed many wonderful works. He was a teacher of such men as received the truth with pleasure. He drew

over to him many Jews and Gentiles. This was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the instigation of the chief men among us, had condemned him to the cross, they who before had conceived an affection for him did not cease to adhere to him. For on the third day he appeared to them alive again. The divine prophets having foretold these and many other wonderful things concerning him. And the sect of the Christians, so called from him, subsists at this time."

(*ANTIQUITIES*, Book 18, Chap.3, Section 3)

Others such as Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny could be cited for further verification. But friend, surely one can see that the historical evidence confirming the existence of Jesus is overwhelming. And the cries of those who disavow his life are muted by the voice of history.

Preaching Jesus

Ken Tyler

We are told in Acts 8:35, "Then Philip opened his mouth and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." Preaching Jesus brought salvation to the eunuch's life. In this article I want us to consider what is involved in preaching Jesus.

1. Preaching Jesus is to proclaim that he died for our sins. "The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation?

for his life is taken from the earth" (Acts 8:32-33). This passage is found in Isaiah 53:7-8. Philip began at this scripture and preached Jesus unto the eunuch. Obviously, Philip proclaimed to the eunuch that Jesus died for his sins in his own body on the tree..." In preaching Jesus Philip proclaimed this message to the eunuch.

2. Preaching Jesus is to proclaim his plan of salvation. Jesus is "...the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9). Philip called upon the eunuch to obey the commands of Jesus to be saved. Acts 8:36-38 tells us, "And as they went on their way, they came unto a

certain water; and the eunuch said, see, here is the water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." When preachers quit telling people what to do to be saved they have quit preaching Jesus. In preaching Jesus, Philip proclaimed his plan of salvation. The eunuch obeyed and was saved.

3. Preaching Jesus is to proclaim the joy of

salvation. It is obvious that the eunuch realized the greatest of all blessings is salvation. "And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:39). Only in Jesus can real joy be found and the preaching of Jesus brought this great blessing to the eunuch. Jesus said, "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven..." (Matthew 5:12). When Philip preached Jesus he proclaimed the joy of salvation.

Conclusion: Preaching Jesus is the only thing that

will heal our sin-sick world. What we need is brotherhood that is committed to preaching Jesus. "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). In other words, they went every where preaching Jesus. This is our commission and the only thing that will get the job done.

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FEBRUARY 10, 1995

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Volume 32 Number 6
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

Are There No Flowers For The Children?

We were saddened and appalled by the two brutal murders that took place recently in the waiting room of a Brookline Massachusetts abortion clinic. Our hearts go out in deep sympathy to the friends and loved ones of the two people who lost their lives that day. From the dawn of creation God has made it plain that

murder is a sin (Genesis 4:10-11; Exodus 20:13). This awful crime was reported on the front page of all the papers and was the lead story on every major news station in our nation. A nation mourns while local residents and fellow workers bring hundreds of flowers to lay on the steps of the Planned Parenthood Center in

memory of the two who died.

On the same day that this horrible crime was committed 4,000 more lives were taken in our country. Little or nothing was reported concerning the 4,000 babies that were aborted on that day or any other day in the United States. One newspaper

reported, only in passing, that 3,000 abortions would be performed at this clinic in Brookline during 1995. Yes, murder is a sin, but abortion is also a sin. The Bible states emphatically that human life begins in the womb and that the unborn possess all the unique qualities of personhood (Psalm 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:5). Will "the

land of the free and the home of the brave" continue to rightfully punish those who murder abortionists, but idly stand by as thousands of precious children are murdered every day? Will no one leave flowers for the children?

Jeff A. Jenkins
Oklahoma City, OK

Failing In One Point

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumbles in one point, he is become guilty of all. For He that said, Do not commit adultery, but killest, thou art become a transgressor of the law" (James 2:10-11, ASV).

James, the writer of the Epistle of James, was a brother of Jesus Christ (Matthew 13:55-56; Mark 6:3-4; Acts 1:13-14). The notion that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a perpetual virgin is a figment of someone's imagination, and wholly contrary to the true teaching of the Sacred Text.

One of the lessons taught in James 2:1-11 is that there must be no special favors shown to the wealthy members of the Lord's assembly. The wealthy man is clothed in fine, expensive clothing, while the poor brother is dressed in shabby

clothing. The wealthy brother is given the best seat, but the poor brother is told to find his own place or sit on the floor. Such treatment causes "The worthy name of Jesus," to be blasphemed, because Jesus would never to be guilty of such partiality. Among Christians preferential treatment is never to be shown, regardless! (I Timothy 5:21; James 2:4; 3:17).

Perfection in all Christian endeavor is our goal (Matthew 5:48; Hebrews 6:1-3), but sinless perfection is never achieved in this life (Romans 3:23; 6:23; I John 1:6-10). In truth, "...one sinner destroyeth much good" (Ecclesiastes 9:18; Cf. Joshua 7: 1-26; II Kings 21: 2-17).

In our text, what does "guilty of all" mean? It means that one does not have to commit both the sin of adultery and murder to be a

sinner in God's sight; only one sin is enough to damn one forever, unless one repents of one's sins.

To illustrate: A cow inside a corral needs to jump only one panel of the fence to be outside the corral. Even so, the sinner is just as guilty of violating God's law as if he had committed all the sins in the catalogue, for sin is the transgression of the law (I John 3:4; 5:17).

The illustration? The cow, upon jumping one panel of the fence, was as much outside the fence as if she had jumped all the panels. So it is with those who sin against God. It is good to keep 99 percent of God's truth, but it is not good enough---the other one percent must be kept too.

We shall now give some example of those who failed in one point. Nadab and

Abihu offered "strange fire" upon the altar, fire which the Lord had not commanded, but it cost them their lives (Leviticus 10:1-2). As far as we know, this was their only sin, but it was a deadly one.

Moses, when commanded to speak to the rock, smote it instead, thus failing to give God the glory. In another place we are told that Moses "spake unadvisedly with his lips" and for this reason he was forbidden to enter Canaan (Numbers 20:9-12; Psalm 106: 32-33). Later, Moses approached God, asking Him to allow Him to go into the Promised Land, but God refused to change His mind (Deuteronomy 3:23-26).

Uzzah, (II Samuel 6:8; I Chronicles 13:6-11), was one of those who accompanied the ark of the Lord when it was being brought from

Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem. The ark was being drawn by oxen. The ark was about to fall. Uzzah, though honest and sincere, and trying to help, touched the ark and was killed. Good intentions are not necessarily right. Paul had a good conscience as he persecuted Christians (Acts 23:1; 24:16; 26:8-11; I Timothy 1:12-13,15).

The Rich Young Ruler made one fatal mistake. When Jesus commanded him to sell his possessions and give them to the poor, he walked away from Jesus. Jesus loved this fine young man. The Young Man had one fatal flaw; he loved his possessions more than he loved the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 19:16-22).

(Continued on page 2.)

VISIT WITH US

SIXTH AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST SOON

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Things The Devil Can't Take Away From Us

Glenn Colley

As sin entered the world through the decision of our grand-parents Adam and Eve, with it came a loss. Adam lost his comfortable surroundings, his happy job keeping the garden, and his ability to live forever.

Since that time mankind has paid dearly as a result of the consequences of sin. Consequences, not only of our own sin, but also consequences we pay because of the sins of others. The devil, by constantly convincing people to follow his sinful ways, has taken many good things from us. In 1995 the examples are abundant. We lose money. There are very few merchants who don't have to increase the price we pay for their product in order to cover losses suffered by shoplifting and other theft.

We pay higher insurance premiums because of the sin of fraudulent claims.

We lose time. The devil, by moving people to sin, has taken parts of our language. There are good words which we hesitate to use now because of people's sin. When we were children and the teacher read poetry which spoke of "gay apparel", no one snickered or laughed. Today "affair" means something more than just two people getting together.

We weep when we consider that the devil has taken so much of our innocence away. Unlike some past generations in which strangers were freely taken in for a meal or a night's sleep, or college students could safely hitch-hike back home for the summer, we look to most strangers with suspicious

skepticism. We perhaps feel safer presuming they are bad than we do presuming they are good. The devil is behind this.

Happy is the man who can claim that in his life the most valuable things can never be taken away by the devil! The love of God toward His followers can't be diminished. Romans 8:38 says, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

As the Apostle Paul discussed spiritual gifts in I Corinthians 13 he begins a sentence, "And now abideth...". In other words, these things are here to stay! What things? "Faith, hope, and love." Let the devil try as he may, but these things will last until the trumpet blows.

"Faith" comes from the Greek word Pistis, meaning, "a conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and Divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and conjoined with it," (Thayer). Hebrews 11:6 says, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." The reverse is also true. With faith we do please Him. Let the devil take away every visible evidence of safety and Daniel still shows undying faith while in that lion's den. The devil and his angels may take our freedoms away, yet our faith will stand tall, for the Master in whom we have that faith will not change,

(Hebrews 13:8). Evidence of this faith can be seen in places like a fiery furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

"Hope" means desire with expectation. It describes the Christian's present reality of a future heaven. I Peter 1:4 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you..."

"Love" describes our attachment to Christ and His people. Bless be the tie that binds has been sung for decades --often by struggling Christians who were being purified in the cauldron of worldly trials and persecutions. We love one another. Love for God cannot live where there is not love for all Christians, but it flourishes where Christians love one another. "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God, (I John 4:7)."

While in their own lives some may choose to reject faith, hope, and love, the three will still exist. They will ever be the magnets that draw sincere seekers to the Savior. They aren't going anywhere. The devil can't take them away.

(Continued from page 1.) Thousands make the same mistake today (Matthew 10:28; 16:26; I Timothy 6:5-18). Money, as important as it is, cannot buy one's way into heaven. (Ecclesiastes 8:8-13).

We shall now notice some practical examples directed toward responsible human beings: (1) If we fail to believe that God is and that Jesus is the Son of God, we shall be eternally lost (Hebrews 11:6; Romans 10:17; John 3:16). (2) If we fail to repent of our sins we shall perish (2 Peter 3:9; Acts 17: 30-31; Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:36-38). (3) If one believes and repents of one's sins, but refuses to confess Jesus' name before men, that person has fallen short of what Jesus has commanded (Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 8:37).

(4) If one believes, repents of his sins, confesses Jesus' name, but refuses to be baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," such a one is destined to die in his sins because he has not gone all the way with his obedience to God (Acts 2:36-38; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27).

(5) If one should obey all

the primary commands necessary to becoming a Christian but fails to assemble together with the saints on the first day of the week, such a one would be lost (Hebrews 10: 25-26; Acts 20:7; Revelation 1:10).

(6) If one assembles together with the saints each Lord's day, but refuses to sing, or adds to singing organs, pianos, paid choirs, orchestras and concerts, one's worship is vain It is great sin to add to or to take away from the Word of God (Revelation 22:18-19; John 4:23-24; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

(7) If one assembles together with the saints each Lord's day, but never eats the Lord's Supper, he has sinned against God and His word. God always punishes the disobedient (Acts 20:7; Hebrews 10:25-26).

(8) If one fails to give to the Lord as he has been prospered, he is sure to be lost (Acts 5:1-11; I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:6). Hence, one must obey the whole truth, remain faithful unto death to be saved.

P.O. Box 274

Parrish, AL. 35580.

AUSTIN, TX - The Southwest Church of Christ is pleased to announce that the 14th annual Southwest Lectureship, will be held April 9-12, 1995. The theme for this years lectureship is "Music in New Testament Worship." Speakers from five states have been invited to come and lecture to an expected record number of brethren who will gather in Austin from across the nation to attend this years lectureship series.

Gary Colley, Lectureship Director at Southwest Church of Christ, 8900 Manchaca Road, Austin, Texas 78748-5399/ Ph (512) 282-2438 or Fax (512) 282-2486.

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"I Have Sinned"

Mel Futrell

Back in July 1993, while rereading John A. Broadus' classic 1870 volume, "On the preparation and delivery of Sermons", (which, by the way, is still in print), I came across this interesting tidbit at the bottom of page 17:

"Spurgeon has a sermon on the words, "I have sinned", as occurring seven times in the Bible, and gives interesting views of the different circumstances and states of mind in which they are uttered."

The footnote for this statement indicates that this is a reference to the, American edition of Spurgeon's sermons, Third series, P. 241. Not having this book available I decided to check his claim myself. By my tally, the expression "I have sinned" appears in the Old Testament in reference to six different individuals, (Pharaoh, Balaam, Achan, Saul, and David) and in the New Testament twice in reference to Judas, and the lost son.

I'm aware that Paul said, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of GOD". (Romans 3:23) Yet, like Spurgeon, I thought it would be interesting to note some of the circumstances and the states of mind of these men when they uttered, "I have sinned".

(1) PHARAOH

Exodus 9:27 reads, *"And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked."* (see also 10:16) The occasion here is the oppression of GOD's people and the plague of hail being sent on the Egyptians as a result of Pharaoh's refusal to release the Israelites. It would appear Pharaoh's state of mind is one of panic and desperation upon viewing the devastation resulting from the power of GOD. We would do well to

remember that Pharaoh's promise to free the people was not genuine (vs. 34-35). Be honest now, haven't there been times when you've panicked at the consequences of your sins? You even confessed your wrong doing. But when the "danger" was past, as you saw it, you went right back to your same old deeds.

(2) BALAAM

Numbers 22:34 says, *"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."* The scenerio in this context is Balaam being pressured by Balak, king of Moab, to curse GOD's people. And Balaam's failure to strictly comply with GOD's instructions. The New Testament refers to Balaam in a negative light three times with these expressions, "the way of Balaam" (2 Peter 2:15), the "error of Balaam" (Jude 11), and the "doctrine of Balaam" (Revelation 2:14)). Balaam's state of mind when he utters the phrase, "I have sinned" is apparently shock at finally realizing that GOD meant business. It takes a sword toting angel appearing to him to get his "full" attention. Even a donkey speaking human language didn't wake him up. Brethren, isn't it the case that sometimes we seem unaware of the sin in our lives until another party shocks us into awareness with a wake up call?

(3) ACHAN

Joshua 7:20 proclaims, *"And Achan answered Joshua, and said, indeed I have sinned against the Lord GOD of Israel, and thus and thus have I done."*

The circumstances here was the defeat and conquest of Jerico with the stipulation from GOD not to loot the city. But Achan violates GOD's command and his actions cost Israel a defeat at

the hands of the men of AI. But what was Achan's state of mind when he acknowledged "I have sinned"? Doesn't it appear to be despair? I think so. Could it be that from time to time we to totally disregard what GOD has clearly required of us? And the result is others adversely affected by our sin. Even though we "fess-up" the consequences must still be faced.

(4) SAUL

I Samuel 15:24 states, *"And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words; because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice."* The scene here is the rejection of Saul as king as a result of his disobedience at the defeat of the Amalekites. And the open rebellion of Saul is answered with that timeless truth, *"BEHOLD, TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE AND TO HEARKEN THAN THE FAT OF RAMS."* What might Saul's state of mind have been when uttering "I have sinned"? Could it have been regret and sorrow? Possibly so (see verse 30). Surely, there is a lesson for us today. We to, sometimes rebel against GOD by listening to and obeying man's wishes rather than following GOD's pattern (Acts 5:29). And unfortunately we don't always regret and attempt to correct our actions until we see what it is going to cost us.

(6) JUDAS

Matthew 27:4 reveals these words, *"Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? See thou to that."* The setting here is Judas' return of the blood money to the Sanhedrin upon realizing that Jesus was indeed condemned. The statement that Judas "repented himself" has confused some as to his state

of mind. "repented himself" is from the Greek word "metameletheis" meaning regret or sorrow. A.T. Robertson correctly notes, "But mere sorrow avails nothing unless it leads to change of mind and life (metanoia)...But Judas had only remorse that led to suicide. (Word Pictures in the Testament, 1930, vol. 1, pp.222-223) The New King James Version renders it, "was remorseful" and their interlinear rendering is "feeling regret". That should adequately demonstrate Judas brethren, sometimes our words and actions are such that we too betray Jesus, "innocent blood". And like Judas, we may despair over our conduct but we don't always repent; that is, we don't always turn from our sins.

(7) LOST SON

Luke 15:21 communicates this sobering statement, *"And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."* (see also verse 18) The parabolic picture here is of the prodigal (wasteful) son awakening to his plight

which was brought on by wasting his substance with riotous living (vs.13). After finally opening his eyes he begins rehearsing what he will say to his father (vs.18). This love story between a father and his son graphically pictures GOD's love for the lost and willingness to forgive. Like David of old, the lost son exemplifies genuine penitence and in doing this returns to his father. Brethren, today just as in a reunion that awaits the penitent. And these comforting words of the father remain to this day, "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found...".

**VISIT WITH US
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SOON.**

Most Of A Minute

The Words Of My Mouth

In 1991 the number of car phones jumped 43% to a total of 7.6 million subscribers - A record breaking year. The things we can do now with communication are amazing. But you know what? I'm more concerned about what we say than I am by making sure we can say it whenever we want.

How often do we use our words in a slanderous way to the destruction of others? One man wrote, "Slander takes a few brains, little effort and a minimum of character. It is the folly of idleness and the vehicle of scandal. It hurts not only its object of scorn, but also its originator. It is crime against truth, courage, virtue, and justice. It is a robber, a wrecker, a destroyer and a killer."

God's word says, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer" (Psalm 19:14).

Glenn Colley

What About Jesus? (Part Two)

As far back as New Testament times there have been those who conceded Jesus' existence but denied his deity. The books of First and Second John have a great 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2John 7). In John's writings the term antichrist seems to apply to all who manifest a disbelief in Jesus as the Christ (see I John 2:22). {Note: One should not equate the terms antichrist and false christ-Mt. 24:24} Many commentators believe these antichrists to be those later identified as Gnostics, a name derived from the Greek word "gnosis" meaning knowledge. Be that as it may, there can be no doubt as to the apostle John's position relative to those denying the Lord's deity. John exhorts the brethren to abide in Christ and not be led astray by false prophets who deny that Jesus is the Christ or that he came in the flesh

(I John 2:26-29; 4:1-3).

In more recent times, about 70 years ago, Charles T. Russell, founder of the International Bible Students, (now the so-called Jehovah's Witness-es) said Christ, "*was the highest of all Jehovah's creatures, so also he was the first, the direct creation of GOD, ...and then he, as Jehovah's representative, and in the exercise of Jehovah's power, and in his name, created all things, angels, principalities and powers, as well as the earthly creation*" *Studios in the Scriptures. 1924. p. 27).*

Brethren, one need not be an Einstein to figure out that the above position has Jesus relegated to creature status. And so it is that the Jehovah's Witnesses deny the deity of Christ; thinking he was the archangel Michael, a created being. Further proof of their denial is attested by simply

consulting THEIR OWN Bible, The New World Translation which renders John 1:1 thus, "*In the beginning the word was; and the word was with GOD, and the word was a god*". Now brethren, please compare that with the rendering of John 1:1 in a reliable translation such as the King James Version. "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with GOD, and the Word was GOD*". It would be impossible to miss the difference in the two. The former denies that Jesus is GOD, the latter affirms that he is. What will we say to such blatant dishonesty? The simple fact of the matter is because of their own position denying the deity of Christ they were forced to prepare their own translation or else panic every time they looked at John 1:1. When people will

stoop to doing that (making "their own" bible) there's not much they won't do or say.

The Jews viewed Jesus and still do as a carpenter who decided to preach, a good man, but not the Messiah. Almost 2000 years ago our Lord told the Jews, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24-KJV). Other religious groups (Moslems, Mormons, and New Age) to name but a few are equally wrong in the stance they take on the deity of Jesus. But remember this, the Bible is correct when it says of Jesus: "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily". (Colossians 2:9) Brethren, well do I remember hearing my "Pa" could through the years comment on John 8:58 which says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before

Abraham was, I am". He would say, and correctly so, that the words "I am" are the language of the ETERNALLY PRESENT.

Did Jesus have a beginning? NO. Is Jesus Christ eternal? YES. Is it correct for us to call Jesus, GOD? ABSOLUTELY.

Brethren, why so many people will not believe what the Bible says about Jesus just flatly escapes me. The fact that Jesus is the son of GOD is the foundation you and I rest upon (Mt. 16:16). The fact that Jesus is GOD (John 1:1; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8) is the awesome truth of the ages. "*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever*" (Hebrews 13:8).

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A Religion of Convenience or Conviction? (No.4)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

The first three installments of this extended study have dealt with the convenience aspect of our title. The remnant will deal with the conviction part. I shall do so in three dimensions--examples from the Old Testament, examples from the New Testament and examples since the Bible was completed.

Conviction Among Old Testament Worthies

Enoch pursued a religion of conviction else he would not have walked with deity for three centuries (Genesis 5:21-24). So did Noah who was a preacher of righteousness and built the ark for the saving of himself and his family (2 Peter 2:5; Genesis 6-8; Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:20). Conviction moved Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the three founding fathers of the Israelite people. The life of Joseph would have been vastly different had the Egyptian Governor pursued a religion of convenience and not one of

conviction. Conviction moved and molded Moses in the books of Exodus through Deuteronomy. Joshua would have been a failure in conquering Canaan had convenience been his prime mover. Conviction moved and molded Othniel, Deborah, Gideon and Samuel among Israel's judges. The brave youth from Bethlehem who faced mighty Goliath in a crucial battle in Southern Palestine was not pursuing a religion of convenience but one of deep conviction. Jonathon, Saul's son, stood heads and shoulders above his fickle father. Jonathon and David, in their friendship, knew the true meaning of conviction. Convenience and political correctness, as we might express it today, did not make and mold them into great friends of God and of each other.

Solomon, in early life, knew and practiced the true meaning of conviction but lost it in his sunset days when sensuality replaced spirituality in his bankrupt

life (I Kings II; Nehemiah 13:26).

Old Testament prophets were of spiritual nobility and eminent worth. Enoch, Moses, Samuel and David have already been mentioned and each was a prophet according to Scriptural declaration. When Nathan confronted the impenitent David in 2 Samuel II and said, "Thou art the man," he was definitely not pursuing a religion of convenience but one of confident conviction. Micaiah before atrocious Ahab in I Kings 22 was moved by conviction--not convenience. Elijah and Elisha reproved kings and kept alive God's name and His law in the Northern Kingdom in times of widespread apostasy. They were men of conviction, of deep and uncompromising conviction. The major prophets from Isaiah through Daniel and Ezekiel were noteworthy examples of the deepest of conviction. Jeremiah is of this noble number. For forty or more

lonely years he preached an unpopular message to people who hated him, Jehovah and Mosaic law under which they lived. Daniel in the lions' den is one of the great examples of courage and conviction in all of Old Testament Scripture. The minor prophets, twelve in number, were men of courage and conviction. They overcame great odds in remaining true and loyal to the God of heaven and to the messages He imparted to them. Amos, the great country preacher from Tekoa, in the compromising court of a wicked king of Israel with his politically correct prime minister and priestly confidant as chief spokesman was the very personification of conviction and courage. Other of the minor prophets were not a whit behind him in the exhibition of such a rare virtue in that crucial; period of Hebrew history.

The three Hebrew children, Hananiah, Mishael and Asariah, of Daniel three marvelously manifested the

mettle of their courageous character. They were not about to become spineless puppets in the king's idolatrous craze. They refused to bow, bend or break and God saw to it that they did not burn in the king's fiery furnace. Conviction was their attractive alias, their striking synonym.

Conviction was not lost among these Old Testament worthies. The list includes both marvelous men and wonderful women such as Sarah, Jochebed, Hannah, Ruth, Esther, the worthy woman in Proverbs 31 and the unnamed woman of Shunem in 2 kings 4.

Together they wrote a wonderful volume on what conviction in religion is all about.

P.O. Box 464
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**SEVEN DAYS
AWAY FROM
GOD
MAKES ONE WEAK!**

FEBRUARY 17, 1995

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Volume 32 Number 7
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

he

Making God In Man's Image

Johnny Ramsey

The Bible order is man made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26). The creature should not reply against the Creator (Rom. 9:20). However, millions today "do not like to retain God in their knowledge" and many even attempt to worship the creature more than the Creator (Rom. 1:20-28). There is no fear of Jehovah before their eyes (Rom. 3:18), even though "our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). It is still "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31). But sadly, just as some "laughed Jesus to scorn" (Mark 5:40), today we see puny men mocking God. Their ridicule will turn to mourning when they reap the lonely dividends of their iniquity (Gal. 6:7,8). *There's a sad day coming, a*

sad day coming, There's a sad day coming by and by; When the sinner shall hear his doom, "Depart, I know ye not," Are you ready for that day to come?

Have you ever realized that most of the basic errors in religion are based on a faulty view of God? Men try to force upon Jehovah their own concepts and ideas, thus making the Creator in their own image! Let us notice three applications of this principal.

1. Man thinks one religion is as good as another. Even though Numbers 23:19 tells us that God is not like man, the human family persists in trying to make the Lord view things from a finite perspective. Jehovah, in His Word, reveals but one church purchased with the blood of

Christ (Acts 20:28). Paul emphatically wrote in 1 Corinthians 12:20, "There is yet but one body." Jesus promised in Matthew 16:18 to build his church and God is glorified therein (Eph. 3:21). No religion founded by mere men could compare favorably with that divinely arranged system. Men labor in vain to establish something the Lord did not build (Ps. 127:1).

2. Man is a respecter of persons. We are notoriously biased and partial in our evaluations. God-who is not carnal-sent His only begotten Son to "taste of death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). Therefore, we all stand on level ground at the foot of the cross. Of one blood all nations derive; in every nation those who obey God are pleasing to the Almighty and every creature under

heaven is privileged to hear and embrace the gospel (Acts 10:34; Acts 17; Mark 16:15). Jehovah is not parochial in His evaluations and no one is black, or white, or Russian, or American in His sacred view. We dare not try to make the Maker in our image (Ps. 50:21).

3. Man does not want to accept hell as a reality. In Isaiah 55:8,9 we read of those who would not think as God does and, therefore, they would not follow the ways of Divinity. But when God speaks it always comes to pass (Ps. 33:9), for it is impossible for Him to lie (Rom. 3:4; Heb. 6:18). When religious liberals try to accept what they choose and reject the uncomfortable passages in the Bible, they show their true existential colors. In Christianity one does not pick

and choose, for there are no optional commands! The same Bible that describes the glories of heaven depicts also the agonies of hell (Matt. 25:46). Rather than concoct a system of doctrine that rejects Bible truth, one ought to reject error and immorality so he can miss hell! Jehovah reineth in absolute sovereignty (Ps. 46:1; 63:1; Rom. 9). May we be wise enough to submit wholly and humbly to His blessed will. "For if God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31).

May we never be guilty of attempting to make God in our image. What a mess the world would be in if we should succeed!

Love One Another

Now That's A Grudge!

Michael Moss

This week I ran across an author who cited a divorce case from the Philippines Daily Express. After thirty years a couple in England was finally seeking a divorce. Apparently, the first eighteen years of their marriage had gone very well. They lived together, worked together, and raised a well-adjusted son.

However for the last twelve years they had lived together as "silent partners."

The wife was finally seeking a divorce. Her lawyer was cited as saying "For twelve years, extraordinary years, they had lived their lives so that they wouldn't have to meet each other. When one would come into the house, the other would leave; and when they did communicate with each other, it was with notes."

That sounds like a miserable life, doesn't it? For twelve years solid the couple had not spoken a word to one

another. The ironic and really sad part of the story is the nature of the squabble. When asked what it was that caused the rift between the two, neither the husband nor the wife could remember what the hassle had been about!

Holding a grudge can destroy a marriage. Even after admitting that they had no idea what started the problem, it is unlikely that the husband and wife would ever get back together.

So it is with a grudge.

Many a family, work place, friendship, and church has been destroyed by a simple grudge. The grudge soon takes on a life of its own. It often outlives the offense and memory of that offense.

The grudge held against a brother, a sister, an aunt, an elder, the preacher, or for that matter anyone, has the potential of destroying relationships and lives both for the grudge-holder and for the offender.

Israel was instructed not to

bear a grudge (Lev. 19:18). Paul instructs believers, "Let all bitterness...be put away from you, with all malice" (Eph. 4:31). James, says, "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned..." (5:9).

Perhaps the following quote sums it up well: "A grudge is one thing that does not get better when it is nursed."

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Jesus As A Miracle Worker

By the Late Gus Nichols

A miracle is an event, or an effect, in the physical world deviating from the known laws of nature, or transcending our knowledge of these laws." (Webster.) In other words, that which is done by Deity apart from natural laws may be called a miracle.

Those things which are accomplished as a general and universal effect of natural law are not miraculous. It is not a miracle for cotton seed to produce cotton, nor for wheat to produce wheat. This is natural and the result of the operation of the general and well-known laws of nature established by Jehovah when He declared that every seed should produce after its kind, (Gen. 1:11-12). In fact, it would be a miracle for corn seed to produce cotton, or anything but corn. It is physically and morally true, that

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. 6:7.) Without God doing anything more to the seed, than He has done in creating and controlling it by His laws of nature, the seed will produce after its kind, if it produces anything at all.

God honored His laws of nature, after all things were created and set in motion and made to function after the due order. Except in rare instances, for special divine purposes, God does not set aside His natural laws and work a miracle. God has always kept the miraculous to a minimum.

The Patriarchal age, from Adam unto Moses, (from Creation unto the giving of the law of Moses at Sinai), covered a period of about twenty five hundred years. This age was ushered in by all the miracles of creation. (Gen. 1.) But God did not keep on creating

things, over and over, again and again. But seed reproduced after its kind, and the animals reproduced their kind. And there was no need for the Almighty to create a second man and a second woman. Adam and Eve produced their kind upon the earth, and here we are. God still had as much power to create as He ever had, but He purposed to honor his own laws, so that man would have the proper motive to honor them. So God did not perform miracles and do by miraculous power what could be accomplished by respecting His own laws of nature. "Man's extremity was God's opportunity". Hence, after creation God kept the miraculous to a minimum. There was a divine reason for the flood, and for a few miracles during the Patriarchal age.

And when God gave His spiritual laws, He respected them, and demanded that man believe and obey His word, and trust its promises. Though the whole Bible was not yet given, God respected His own word and revelation, and kept the miraculous to a minimum, looking forward to the time when man would have the whole Bible, and could be perfectly guided there by for all matters of religion. (2 Tim. 3:15-16.)

But the time came for the family religion of Patriarchy to give away to the national religion of Judaism under the law of Moses. This age, (the Jewish dispensation), like the Patriarchal, was ushered in and introduced by all the miracles of Sinai. Miracles were not reproduced over and over throughout that dispensation, which lasted from Moses to Christ, a period of about fifteen hundred years. But during that time, as under the Patriarchal age, miracles were kept to a

minimum. God did not perform miracles except when it was necessary to further reveal and confirm His word. In the fullness of time, God sent His son into the world by a virgin birth, which miracle was never to be repeated, and had Him work miracles to confirm His claim to be the Christ, the Son of the Living God. These are written that we might believe in Him unto the end of the world. (Jn. 20-30-31.) Now, God is not doing these miraculous works over and over down through the centuries since the apostles. When Christianity was once for all-time-to-come revealed and confirmed by miraculous power, it remains revealed and confirmed, and God honors what he has done in this matter, and requires us to respect it also. This Christianity began with Christ, the Church of Christ being established on the first Pentecost after His resurrection. (Mt. 16:18; Acts 2.) Even while the New Testament was being revealed and confirmed, God kept the miraculous to a minimum, as in the ages before Christianity. By the close of the first century, A.D. God had given us all His word--the complete revelation of His will" for man for all time to come on this earth. (Jn. 16:13; Jude 3; Rev. 22:18-19; 2 Jn. 9-11.) God honors the seed--His word, and does not ignore it and create distrust in it by violating it and making Christians without the gospel. (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 15:2.)

God has always exercised His providential cares over mankind, and worked with man, and blessed Him, as divine wisdom saw fit, through

(Continued on page 3.)

Can We Know When God Saves?

Dennis Gullege

For ages the denominational world has kept salvation shrouded in mystery. How many anxious souls have gone through life struggling in needless agony of heart because they believed that their salvation rested in the arbitrary election of God and that they were powerless to effect the salvation of their souls by their own faith and obedience? It is tragic indeed that people are made to feel they cannot control their own destiny in their response to God's revealed will, but, are left to wonder, "Am I saved? Am I not saved?"

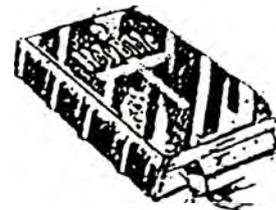
It seems to that there is a resurgence of such Calvinistic thought today and it is being clearly enunciated by some powerful, articulate and influential man among churches of Christ. For example, F. LaGard Smith wrote, "But any attempt to understand our human response to God's divine grace will be dangerously misguided if we see salvation resulting from anything we might do. Salvation is a divine act of mercy, a work of the Spirit. Whatever else it might be, baptism is a response...One may get the idea that we can recognize salvation by a particular process. But in God's sight, our salvation exists when He deems it to exist" (*Baptism: The Believers Wedding Ceremony*, pp. 17-18).

Please get the drift of these two statements. (1) There is nothing a person can do to effect his salvation, and (2) Salvation exists only when God deems it to exist. These statements cause me grave concern for the simple reason that they make salvation such a mystery. First, Smith asserts that salvation is unconditional

(not resulting from anything we might do). Did Jesus make any requirements for salvation (Jn. 8:24; Mk. 16:16)? Did the Holy Spirit through the apostles make any requirements for salvation (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Gal. 3:27; 1 Pet. 3:21)? Second, Smith claims that salvation is not to be recognized by any particular "process" (does he mean faith, repentance, confession and baptism?), and that it exists when God deems it to exist. How is a person to know when God had deemed salvation to exist for him? Is he to experience some inner illumination or some overwhelming flush of inexplicable emotion effected by the Holy Spirit in his soul? A person could easily live his life in doubt as to whether or not God has "deemed" him to be saved.

Forgiveness or pardon (salvation) is not an act which takes place within the soul of the one who is guilty; it takes place within the mind of the one who forgives, and it cannot be known to the one who is guilty except by some means of communication. Indeed, our salvation begins with God through Christ. God has communicated through His Son that, "Whoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Is there something one must do? Indeed! Is it a "process" by which one can recognize salvation? Call it what you will! When one obeys God to be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) does God then deem salvation to exist? He has so said!

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The Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2.)

His laws of nature, and in harmony with His word. Hence we pray for God's blessing and favor to be upon us as we teach and preach His word, and as all hear it that it may be a blessing to all who hear. Even Paul desired the prayers of his brethren in such work. (Eph. 6:17-20.) But this is Jehovah working through His word, and through His laws of nature, and not miraculous. God is doing this kind of work now, and thus honoring His own immutable laws, natural and spiritual, but He is not duplicating all the miracles of the beginning of the three Biblical ages--the Patriarchal, the Jewish, and the Christian. Neither is God still revealing and

confirming His word by miracles as He did in the making of our Bible. All of His word has been revealed, and all of it has been confirmed. It needs no new revelation, nor any new confirmation by miracles. The Bible now contains all that is divinely calculated to enable man to believe His word. (Jn. 20:30-31.) But His providence continues, and He still hears our scriptural prayers--every one of them. They must be according to His will, (I Jn. 5:14). When we pray for bread we are to remember to work, and that a harvest depends upon the seed, and not upon some direct harvest--producing power independent of the seed. If we pray for the conversion of men, we must remember

the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, (Rom. 1:16). We must remember the word is able to convert and save men, and that God works through this spiritual law to this end, and that He has not promised to save men otherwise, (Psa. 19:7).

But the miraculous necessary in the giving and confirming of the Christian religion has ceased, having accomplished the divine purpose in all such miracles. They were like ladders and scaffolding needed and used in the construction of great building, but set aside when no longer necessary, and when their purpose had been accomplished.

Change Agents In The Church

Dennis Gullede

In the October 1969 issue of *The Spiritual Sword* Brother H.A. Dixon, then President of Freed-Hardeman College, wrote about, "A New Breed Of Preachers." This "new breed" is what is today styled "change agents." This modern designation is not a name given in derision but is a self-styled appellation.

What is change agency in the Lord's church today? Although there is something of a generic agenda among change agents one must realize that they are such who do not march in lock-step with any one particular voice among change agents. Each change agent is a "free agent" in many respects, however, a few general items are recognizable within their schemes: Accusations that churches of Christ are sectarian; assertions that the church must be redefined; affirmations that the worship services must be restyled, and finally, the claim that all of these, and other changes, are driven by "a God-given vision" on their part.

The fundamental premise of change agents is to take "the Church of Christ that was born of the American Restoration Movement" and, "to move that group closer to the church of Christ revealed in Scripture." To change agents "Church of Christ" with capital letters is a denomination among denominations, but, "church of Christ" refers to the "church of Christ revealed in Scriptures" and which includes all the saved. To them "the Church of Christ," or any of the typical Protestant denominations may or may not be a member of "the church of Christ revealed in Scripture."

The code words of "change" and "renewal" serve to mislead brethren into thinking that they are merely zealous advocates who only want to liven up the worship service by using various contemporary hymns with overhead projectors and to change the order of worship occasionally. Nothing more is supposed to be thought to be in their minds. Clearly more is.

Change agents have a newly "discovered" belief (ie., salvation by grace only) which they desire to put into action; an action with harmful results for congregations which will be embroiled in the struggle over this "God given vision" which drives them. They view themselves as God's agents to bring peaceful churches to the brink of tolerance by their insistence on change, then to "back off" and "talk about familiar and safe things for a while, but only for a while, and then to "move back out to the cutting edge."

The particular work done by change agents will vary from place to place, but the main objective will always be to change the church. That objective will involve our worshipping with and otherwise fellowshiping various denominations. Change agents are constantly working to press for such changes. They are doing so through pulpits, papers, college class rooms and Bible classes. Their views are heard in sermons, articles and a few books. Be aware

Practical Suggestions For Prayer

A full, meaningful prayer life does not happen by accident. It requires planning and organization. Consider the following suggestions:

1. **Have a prayer list.** List people (by name), church programs, etc. for whom you want to pray. It is easy to forget if you don't have something to jog your memory.
2. **Organize your list.** In addition to having general prayers each day and specific prayers for immediate needs, plan a special time to pray for a different subject area each day of the week. For example:

Sunday - Saints. Pray for fellow Christians, church leaders, your local congregation, and the church universal.

Monday - Missionaries. Pray for missionaries, evangelism, and the lost (by name).

Tuesday - Teachers. Pray for Bible class teachers, department heads, and the education department in general.

Wednesday - Washington. Pray for civil government leaders at all levels. Pray for world-wide peace so that the gospel might be spread.

Thursday - Thanksgiving. Make this day a day to thank God for all material and spiritual blessings.

Friday - Family. Pray for your family, friends, and relatives.

Saturday - Shut-ins and sick. Pray for the shut-ins, elderly and chronically ill.

Also remember the poor, the afflicted, and those that mourn.

3. **Review past prayer lists.** This reaffirms our belief that prayer works and increases our thanksgiving.
4. **Develop good prayer habits.** Spend more time in prayer. Pray at set times everyday and be open to opportunities for spontaneous prayer.

John Tracy

The Bible! "A Pathway To Eternal Life"

Most of A Minute

Newt's Mom And Connie Chung

I'm so glad to see the hoop-la finally dying down over the incident between CBS newscaster Connie Chung and Newt Gingrich's mom. You may remember that Connie did an interview with Mrs. Gingrich and said she couldn't say what her son said about Hillary Clinton. Connie whispered, "Go ahead and say it. Just between you and me." Then Mrs. Gingrich said Newt had called Mrs. Clinton a foul word, and she said that word.

Now, who do you think was wrong about this whole thing? I think all three were wrong.

Connie was wrong because she lied. She made Mrs. Gingrich believe something that wasn't true. Revelation 21 condemns the practice of lying.

Newt Gingrich was wrong to use the kind of language he did. Folks, while we sometimes hear foul language described as "adult language", it's really more like a highschool locker room. The Bible says, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." (Eph. 4:29)

And Newt's mother was wrong. A Mother has no business using foul language; and ought to correct even her grown son when he does, even if he is the speaker of the house.

Glenn Colley



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A Religion Of Convenience Or Conviction? (No. 6)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

All examples of deep conviction are not confined to the Bible. I close this series with some more modern examples of such. They are worthy of being considered.

More Recent Examples Of Conviction

One of the pioneer preachers was conducting a gospel meeting. The preaching of the truth was stirring up much antagonism. One night before he went into the pulpit he received a death-threatening note warning him not to preach that night. When time came for him to ascend the pulpit, he did and preached with fire and fervency. At one time in his sermon so many rocks were hurled against the meetinghouse that he had to be silent until the noise subsided. He finished that sermon and lived to preach many more times. My admiration increased abundantly when the report stated that he preached that whole

sermon with his back to an open window! That man knew about conviction!

I knew personally and well R.V. Cawthon of Middle Tennessee. I helped preach his funeral in 1971. As a preacher the first half of this century he had many, many experiences which he often related to me. Upon one occasion he was to baptize a young lady. Her father hated the church and Cawthon. He sent a note to Cawthon and told him that if he continued with plans to baptize the daughter, that he would be on the opposite side of the river bank with shotgun in hand and this young lady would be the very last one he would ever baptize. When time for the baptizing, Brother Cawthon waded out into the water with the young lady following. True to his word the father was on the opposite bank with gun on lap. Brother Cawthon did not know what the man would do; neither did the daughter. He baptized her

into Christ. The man never raised his gun and took aim. Brother Cawthon said later he baptized that man into Christ. Brother Cawthon and the baptized daughter knew what conviction was all about in that situation.

I think about some of the people I have baptized. One was a teen-age boy in the Middle Tennessee meeting back in the 1950's. As he and I were getting ready for the baptismal service he told me he did not know what he would be facing when he arrived home that night. He said, "My dad is not going to like it one bit when I tell him I have been baptized tonight." But courageously, he went ahead. I think of the Catholic lady and her two daughters I baptized many years ago. She came by our house on Saturday afternoon and told me of their plans for the next day. All three wanted to be baptized into Christ. Her husband and the father of the

two daughters was very much opposed. She said, "We are having to keep secret what we are about to do. He would do all in his power to stop us if he knew." I baptized them the next day. At last report they were still faithful to Christ. That mother and her two daughters knew firsthand what religious conviction is all about. I think about a young man just out of high school who was to be baptized one afternoon. Perhaps eight or ten of the local Christians were present to witness such. His father hated the church with a passion. He found out what we were about to do and invade the gathering and forcefully took his son home minus baptism. Later, I made arrangements with that young man to meet secretly in another town and I baptized him into Christ. Conviction abounds in such cases as the foregoing.

Sadly, I think about some others whom I have taught

who refused to go against parental religion, even though wrong and they knew it was wrong. They preferred family peace over pardon from God and sonship to Him. Their religion was one of convenience--not of conviction.

People on the right hand in final judgment will not be there due to religious convenience but to strong conviction that said, "We will obey God and live the Christian life regardless of what pressures are brought to bear on us by family and friends!"

Convenience in religion might seem wise to a surface mind now but it is nothing but a sandy foundation upon which to build for eternity (Cf. Matthew 7:24-27). Conviction is where safety and security are found!

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God's Part And Man's Part

Does man contribute to his salvation? Does man have any part to play, any role to fulfill, in the salvation process? Does salvation arise from human activity? Some say no. What saith the Scripture?

It is imperative to properly define our terms. Webster defines "contribute" as follows: "to give a part to a common fund or store :to play a significant part in bringing about an end or result." Among the definitions Webster gives the word "part" is: "one's share or allotted task (as in an action)...A function or course of action performed."

The above definitions deserve elaboration as they relate to the questions asked in the first paragraph of this article. Does man contribute to his salvation? Yes. Not in the sense that he gives a part to a common fund or store but in the sense that he plays a significant part in bringing about an end or result. In other words, it is true that there is nothing that I can contribute

to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ to make it any more efficacious or powerful than it already is. I cannot improve upon the redemptive work of Christ. (I cannot ever remember hearing a preacher in the Lord's church say that we can, by what we do, add anything to the Divineside of God's work. Yet, the charge is being made that this is a widespread mistake among us). God's part is His and I cannot add anything to His part. However, this is not to say that I have no part to play. I have an allotted task to perform. My performance of this task is not meritorious (Eph. 2:8,9). I can never do enough to deserve salvation (Luke 17:10). Yet, without doing the will of the Father in heaven, I can never enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 7:21). I do not nullify God's part (Grace) by doing my part (Obedient Faith).

Hebrews 5:9 should forevermore settle the controversy as to whether God

and man both have a part to play in the salvation process. The record says that Jesus became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. The word "author" is the translation of the Greek word "aitios." Vine's Expository Dictionary of Greek New Testament Words notes the meaning of the word which is found only once in the New Testament. He says that Christ "on the grounds of his finished work on earth has become the personal mediating cause of eternal salvation." Thus, the word "author" denotes God's indispensable role in saving humanity. Jesus is the divine cause of eternal salvation. Does man also have a part in the process? The latter portion of verse 9 answers with a resounding yes! Jesus is the cause of eternal salvation only to men and women who obey him. If obedience is never offered in response to the grace he proffered, then salvation will never be realized.

Numerous examples of this

principle are found in Scriptures. God made gracious provisions for Noah and his family to be saved from the flood. Did Noah contribute one whit to his salvation from the flood? "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Gen. 6:22). By faith he prepared an ark to the saving of his house (Hebrews 11:7). Noah couldn't add anything to God's power to protect him and God wouldn't build the ark for Noah. Thus, God has His part and Noah had his. Noah didn't earn anything. God deserves all the glory. However, if Noah hadn't built the ark and followed God's instructions, all of the grace that God had promised Noah would have been pointless.

It was the power of God that caused the walls of Jericho to come tumbling down. Yet, man had a part to play in bringing about the transaction. Men walking around the walls didn't contribute any power that God needed to make the walls fall

down. But God had made it clear that He would not do His part until man had done his (Heb. 11:30). The same is true of our salvation. Though He has already done His part in the sending of His Son to die on the cross, he will not do His part in cleansing us from our sins until we have done our part in humbly submitting to His will. Salvation would never have arisen for Saul if he had not arisen and been baptized (Acts 22:16).

God has done His part, and without it, no amount of man's part can justify. God's part has been to demonstrate His grace. Our part is to access that grace by faith that submits and obeys (Rom. 5:1,2; 6:1-4) and to realize that even after we have done our part we have not merited our redemption. God has done His part. We must do ours to receive the promise (Heb. 10:36).

B.J. Clarke
Southaven, MS

FEBRUARY 24, 1995

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- Come To Church And Live Longer!
- "I Never Seem To Finish"

Volume 32 Number 8
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The Words Of Truth

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

A Separatist

Allen Webster

A Separatist is "an advocate of independence or autonomy for a part of a political unit (as a nation)" (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary). In religious terms, a separatist is one who separates himself from the pollutions of the world. Christians must live in the world, but the world must not live in them.

Paul gives some interesting figures to impress this truth upon us in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

A Christian is like a farm animal who does not want to be "unequally yoked" with another kind of beast (2 Cor. 6:14). Under Moses' law, farmers were forbidden to plow with an ox and an ass together (Deut. 22:10), perhaps because it would be too hard on the smaller animal. There were other similar laws which forbade mixing. They were forbidden: to allow cattle to "gender with a diverse kind, to sow a field with mingled seed, to sow a vineyard with diverse seed" (Deut. 22:9), and "wear a garment mingled with linen and wool

(Lev. 19:19)." Fathers were forbidden to allow children to marry those who followed other gods (Ex. 34:16; Deut. 7:3,4; Ezra 9:9-19; Neh. 13:1-3,23-26; Mal. 2:11,15; cf. 1 Cor. 7:39). Israel "mingled among the heathen, and learned their works" (Psa. 106:35). God's child wants to separate himself from any situation where he is too closely tied to unbelievers (Jas. 4:4).

A Christian is like a honest businessman who wants no partnership with an unrighteousness man (6:14b). The word "fellowship" (metoche) indicates a business participation (cf. Simon had "partners," Lk. 5:7). If a honest man hooked up with a crook and opened a store, would people assume that the bad man had straightened up or the good man had gone bad? Probably the later. And if the dishonest man continued his shady deals, his partner would also have to answer for it.

Paul wrote, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11; cf.

1 Cor. 5:9). "Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go" (Prov. 22:24). David said, "I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go with dissemblers...and will not sit with the wicked" (Psa. 26:4,5) and "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me...I will not know a wicked person. Whoso prively slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer" (Psa 101:3-5). Jehu asked Jehoshaphat an interesting question, "shouldst thou help the ungodly; and love them that hate the Lord..." (2 Chron. 19:2).

A Christian is like a light fixture in a dark room (6:14c). Light and dark are mutually exclusive. They cannot mix, for where light is, darkness flees. Similarly, "An unjust man is an abomination to the just: and he that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked" (Prov. 29:27). "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot

be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils" (1 Cor. 10:21). "...God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all," (1 Jn. 1:5), and his children have "cast off the works of darkness" (Rm. 13:12).

A Christian is like a musician who is out of harmony with the world (6:15). You just can't mix rap and opera! Concord comes from a Greek word that give us our English word "symphony" (sumphonesis, "to agree in sound, to be in harmony") and suggests that believers and unbelievers belong to different orchestras, read different scores, and follow different conductors (Weirsbe).

A Christian is like a citizen who is traveling through foreign territory (6:15). Part (meris) is a word that means "portion" and has geographical overtones. It can refer to real estate such as a division or district of a nation. God's people and the people of the world have different citizenships and live on different ground. A Christian can sing with feeling: "I'm pressing on the

upward way, New heights I'm gaining ev'ry day; Still praying as I onward bound, Lord, plant my feet on higher ground." "For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20).

This world is not my home, I'm just a passing thru. My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue; The angels beckon me from heaven's open door, And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.

A Christian is like political activist who cannot vote against his party (6:16). Agreement (synkathesis from synkatat-ithemi) means "to cast one's vote together." The temple of God doesn't support the candidates on the devil's ballot. Like Joseph of Arimathaea we "consent not to the counsel and deed of them" (Lk. 23:51) and like the released apostles we go to our own company" (Acts 4:23).

"Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate..."

Younger Preachers

Bobby Key

Be a student. Study everything that may be helpful to your work, but above all else study the sacred Scriptures. "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to

them..take heed unto thyself and unto thy doctrine, continue in them." Do your best every time you preach.

Let me urge you to memorize many verses of

Scripture. Learn to locate them readily, and quote them accurately. avoid the habit of talking about yourself. Be careful about praising yourself. Egotism has no place in the life of a

Gospel preacher. Listeners are seldom impressed with a man who is full of himself.

Develop a fervent prayer life. Remember your calling, and "woe is unto

me if I preach not the Gospel."

Never neglect your family. It is a tragedy to save others, and lose your own.

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Positive Signs On The Abortion Front

Glenn Colley

There are good signs currently rising in America's societal changes. At the time of this writing, President Clinton's announced nominee to replace Joycelyn Elders as surgeon general, Dr. Henry Foster, Jr., is embroiled in controversy. He may still get the post, but the controversy in this case is encouraging.

This is about abortion in the U.S. With regard to Dr. Foster's involvement in practicing abortions, the White House seems to indicate they "forget to ask." When he was asked, Dr. Foster first claimed to have performed only one abortion. Later, his memory gradually improved, and he could say that he had preformed "fewer than a dozen" abortions. Still later, after prolife folks spent three days combing through records of patients and the procedures performed by the doctor, the number 94 surfaced.

According to the Birmingham News, "Abortion rights groups accused Foster opponents of demonizing doctors who perform legal medical procedures and of unfairly attacking Foster." Planned Parenthood, our nations number one provider of abortions, brought 100 representatives from around the country to Capital Hill to form what it called a "Foster Truth

Squad" to counter allegations by the prolife folks.

What's positive about this controversy? Simply that in 1995, in America, a physician who has preformed abortions is considered to have a blemished past. That's good news. While it is true that Christians are not of the world but in the world, it is also true that we should rejoice anytime the people of our society oppose sin!

The pro-life people are accused of "denominizing" abortion doctors. How else does one correctly characterize a man or woman who dismembers unborn babies within the womb and upon removal counts body parts to insure the procedure accomplishes the wishes of the one who pays him --a womb with no baby growing inside? The road to being "demonizing," as we characterize the actions of others, has never been so short or easily traveled. What these people are doing is wrong.

Of all the statements Dr. Foster has made thus far, including "I abhor abortion...To me, abortion is failure, I don't like failure," and all the supporting statements from the President and Planned Parenthood, one statement is conspicuously missing. None of these folks, who are reeling from criticism over abortion, have said, "Abortion is wrong." Dr. Foster, and any other

doctor for that matter, could renounce the practice of abortion, repent of the sin, and in all probability regain the approval of the pro-life public. Instead, what they are saying in essence is, "Whether or not a doctor preforms abortions has nothing whatsoever to do with this credibility or character." Apparently many Americans, including this editor, disagree.

Christians oppose abortion, not for political reasons, but for Biblical reasons. Sin is transgression of God's law, (I John 3:4). Murder, or the willful taking of innocent human life, is sin, (I John 3:15, Galatians 5:21). Abortion, as we know it today, is the deliberate taking of innocent human life, and is therefore transgression of God's law. It is sin.

Savor with me the sweet thoughts of the Psalmist, Psalm 127:3-5. "Lo, children are in heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is His reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them. They shall not be ashamed, but thy shall speak with the enemies in the gate."

May we all stand in opposition to the power of darkness as it shows itself every day in the practice of abortion.

Let This Cup Pass

Let this cup pass from me, O Lord
This burden is too great.
But I learned perseverance
As He taught my soul to wait.

I was lost in all my blessings
And caught up in daily living
But my cup of sorrow showed me
Truths in gratitude and giving.

I thought that I was in control
'Til trials made me see
I am nothing by myself
For it's Christ who strengthens me.

I yearned for something better
With each sorrow that was hurled,
And I found my hope grow stronger
For a new and better world.

So stripped of pride and earthstains
In this lifetime's darkest day
My soul had learned submission
And my heart had learned to pray.

My cup has changed to blessing
But please let me not forget,
That until I bless another,
I'm not finished with it yet.

Let this cup pass, Oh Father,
But not until I drink
In the stillness of the night
Teach me, Father, make me think.

"...Weeping may endure for a night,
but joy cometh in the morning."
Psalm 30:5b

Cindy Colley
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Only For The Saved?

By: Mike Benson

Dear Mike,

"I've heard it said that Jesus died only for the saved: that He did not die for the lost. Could you please give your thought on this?" Since the thoughts of Mike Benson will not judge us (John 12:48), let's examine this idea in light of what the Bible says. Consider:

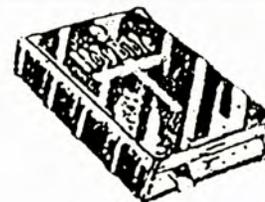
1. **Jesus died for ALL.** "For the love of Christ constrains us, because we judge thus: that if One

died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again" (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).

2. **Jesus died for the UNGODLY - for SINNERS.** "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6). "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we are still sinners, Christ died for us"

(Romans 5:8). See also Romans 5:10.

3. **Jesus died for the sins of the WHOLE WORLD.** "My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world" (1 John 2:12). P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, Georgia 30103.



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Children And The Church

W.A. Holley

Habits are not wrong just because they are habits. Obviously, there are good habits and bad habits. Christian habits must be established. Habits, routines, should be a part of each Christian's life. The habit of church attendance, of Bible reading, of prayer, of giving prospered, of partaking of the Lord's supper, of singing praises to the Lord, need to be deeply ingrained into our minds. (Acts 2:36-38,41-27; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7; Acts 20:35). The faithful attendance of these Christianduties are certain to have great influence upon the mind of our children. Verily, children are not easily fooled; they soon discover if church really means something special to their parents. When parents continually criticize the elders, the preacher, their neighbors, and make excuses for their absence, when their children know the truth, great harm is done to the future of the church. We submit,

"A little girl with shining eyes, Her little face aglow, Said, "Daddy it is almost time For Sunday School, let's go. They teach us there of Jesus' love, Of how He died for all. Upon the cruel cross to save Those who on Him call." "Oh, no," said Daddy, "Not today, I've worked hard all this week, And-I must have one day of rest; I'm going to the creek; For there I can relax and rest, And fishing's fine they say. So run along; Don't bother me, We'll go to church someday."

Months and years have passed away, But Daddy hears that plea no more: "Let's go to Sunday School." Those childhood days are 'Ore. And now Daddy's growing old. When life is almost through, He finds time to go to church, But what does daughter do? She says, "Oh, Daddy not today, I stayed up ' most all night; And Ive just got to have some sleep Besides, I look afright." Then Daddy lifts a trembling hand to brush away his tears. Again he hears the pleading

voice Distinctly through the years. He sees a small girl's face, upturned, with eyes aglow As she says, "It's time for Sunday School, Please, Daddy, won't you go."

---Anonymous.

When it is too late, we can reach a point of no return. A tree can be trained to grow in almost any figuration desired. But a child cannot be trained after he/she has become set in the ways of Satan.

In The Old Testament, the education of children was in the home (Exodus 12:26-27; Deuteronomy 6:7; Joshua 4:21-24; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesus 6:4; Collosians 3:21; II Timothy 3:15; 1:5). Discipline was to be firm, with corporal punishment (Proverbs 22:15; 23:13; 29:15). This does not mean "child abuse," but it does mean guidance, direction, firmness, and admonition.

An atheist said that he was opposed to teaching children any religious training in any form. He said, "Let the child find his own, later, when he is older, he may or

may not, form his own opinions as to whether or not he should include God and His religion in his own life."

Later, after hearing the atheist's opinion, he invited him out to see his garden; The atheist said, "This is not my garden; it is a garden of weed, vines, and wild grass." His friend said, "Well, you see, I didn't wish to infringe upon the liberty of the garden in any way. I was giving the garden a chance to express itself and to choose its own production." How shameful!!

Jesus divided the world into two groups: the believers and the unbelievers, those who love light or darkness, and those who practice evil or follow truth (John 3:16-21).

We shall now quote Revelation 22:11. "He that is unrighteous let him do unrighteousness still: and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still: and he that is holy, let him be made holy still," (ASV).

What does this verse

mean? It is applied to the final judgement scene. All hope of change is forever past. In whatsoever state one dies that shall be the state in which he is found at the great judgement. "In the place where the tree falleth, there shall it be" (Ecclesiastes 11:3, ASV). The word "still" is a very significant word. It refers to " the permanent character, condition and destiny of the saved and unsaved." The rich man and Lazarus is an excellent example of the foregoing lesson (Luke 16:19-31).

Parents, put the knowledge of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the church of Christ, and the Holy Bible in your Children's mind, and do as early as it can be done. Set the very finest example before them. Let them see that Christ and the church mean something to you, and it will mean something to them. (I Peter 2:21).

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Come To Church And Live Longer

A recent study conducted at Dartmouth Medical School has revealed that heart patients who draw strength from religion and participate in social groups live longer than those who do not. Those who said they gained comfort from religion were more than three times more likely to be alive as those who did not. Those active in social groups were more than four times as likely to be alive as those who weren't active.*

Can you believe it? We always knew church was good for you, now we have proof! Those who come to church live longer! Actually, heart patients who go to church live longer than those who do not. But if it is good for the sick, why not the well? I can already feel a three-point sermon develop-

ing:

2. Exhort One-Another Daily!
3. Live Longer As A Bonus!

However, Dr. Thomas Oxman, who conducted the study, warns, "Just showing up won't do it. You have to get something out of it." This is great sermon material! It is not enough just to come to church, you must participate! And get this--**you have to enjoy it**, if you want to receive the benefits!

Dr. Oxman speculates that religious belief and social participation give people "a sense of comfort and belonging." Dear friends, this is not new. The New Testament has a word that describes this sense of belonging. It is **Koinonia** (fellowship). Participation in corporate worship and church activities allows us to share in each other's lives. We laugh, cry, dream, work, rejoice, and praise God together! We

belong to each other; we belong to a cause that is bigger than we are; and we belong to a God that is bigger than anything! We are family -- a loving, caring, sharing, active family! No wonder we live longer!

There is one thing that Dr. Oxman's study did not cover regarding church attendance and involvement. **Those who participate joyfully in these activities will not only live longer, they'll live forever!**

Have you been to the Great Physician for your checkup? You really should, you know. You'll live longer

Joey A. Gafford
East Tallahassee, AL

* Reported in USA Today, 1/30/95, by Marilyn Elias.

Most of A Minute

Seeing The Old Clock

Occasionally my wife and I enjoy attending local estate auctions. There's something exciting about the fast shout of the auctioneer, and besides that, I enjoy old pendulum clocks which are often sold at such auctions.

The other day my wife and I went to a sale which contained such a clock. I decided before time what it was worth to me. I would bid no higher. When the bidding began, several folks were involved. Then, only two...another gentleman and myself. When I reached my pre-determined price, I stopped. He bought the clock. He obviously thought it was worth more than I did. He saw something in it that I didn't. Afterwards I learned what he saw. You see, the clock belonged to his grandmother, and no price was too high.

There's a lesson here. Isn't it true that Jesus saw something in us as sinners that others couldn't see? Romans 5:8 says, "God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

When I saw that clock, that's all I saw, an old clock. When the grandson saw it, he saw a remembrance of his grandmother. When Jesus looked at me, He saw not only what I was, but what I could be, a forgiven Christian.

Glenn Colley

From My Heart To Yours

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Early this year I wrote under the above caption an article in our church bulletin at Ripley, Tennessee. For some of the thoughts set forth I am indebted to a sermon on tape delivered by Richard Guill at Cleveland, Tennessee, in December of 1994, and to which I have listened carefully a couple of times. The problem addressed is brotherhood wide. I feel it needs greater coverage than the 350 who received it in our weekly bulletin. Here is the article without any modifications made for its inclusion in Words of Truth.

1994 in retrospect is worthy of a few remarks. Faithfulness at worship assemblies is part and parcel of Christianity. Early saints of

the mother church in Jerusalem continued steadfastly in apostolic doctrine (teaching), fellowship, breaking of bread (the Lord's Supper) and in prayers as per Acts 2:42. They were not playing at their religion; it was serious and solemn to them. A generation later Hebrew Christians received a weighty warning relative to assembly absenteeism (Hebrews 10:25). The manner of some during the decade of the 60's was to forsake these assemblies of exhortation for saints and the expression of their praise and adoration of God.

During 1994 we had 216 services for the entire church. This does not count the Ladies Class, the Children's Class on Sunday evening at

6:10 just before our worship period or the Men's Training Class held last winter. Counted in this 216 are Sunday morning Bible Study, the worship hour at 11:00 A.M., the evening hour of worship, Wednesday Bible Study, a spring Gospel meeting, a summer Gospel meeting and a Vacation Bible School.

How faithful were you during the year? Now we are not talking about times missed due to serious illness, care given a seriously ill member of the family or when away but faithfully attended services where we were visiting. How many services were deliberately missed? Some never came a single time on Wednesday night. That is 52 services that

were missed. Some never came a single time on Sunday night. That is another 52. Some never came a single time to Sunday morning Bible Study. That is another 52. Interested in the number missed thus far? The calculator says 156. Interested in the percentage missed? Almost 73 percent were missed. Some never came to VBS or the weekday nights of a gospel meeting (Monday, Tuesday, Friday or Saturday). This adds 8 more. Some come only about one-half of the time for Sunday morning worship. This adds another 26 missed. This means attendance at 26 services out of a possible 216! If our school record had been like this, would we ever been promoted out of kindergarten

or the first grade? If our/work record read like this, would we still have a job? If our attendance at our favorite civic club were like this, would we still be a member? If your car started 26 times out of 216 when you needed to make a trip, how faithful would it be deemed to be? Ford, Chrysler and GM could not stay in the car manufacturing business if they turned out vehicles no more reliable than this. Think on these things.

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Ripley, Tennessee 38063

**JOIN HEARTS
AND PRAISE OUR
LORD AND SAVIOR
JESUS CHRIST**

Service to God Must Be Prompted By Love

Dennis Gullede

What are the motives by which men attempt to serve God? Some are driven by fear (the fear of going to hell if they do not serve God). Others are motivated by a desire to do good, to be a positive force in the community, or to meet another person's expectations. Certainly the reality of hell is a powerful motivator to want to do right, but no one should be solely driven by fear. I have heard some give so much emphasis to it that you would think it is the only thing that moves them. The only motive for acceptable service to God is our love for God.

This is one of the points which comes out of Deuteronomy 6. In verse one Moses emphasizes "the commandments, the status, and the judgments" which Israel was commanded to keep. In verse five they are told, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Paul said essentially the same thing in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, "though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge,

and though I have faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing." In other words, service to God without it being motivated by love for God amounts to zero with God.

With these facts in mind it would only seem logical that if greater love existed in the hearts of Christians there would also be greater service demonstrated. If greater love was present the attendance figures for Bible classes, Sunday evening worship and

Wednesday evening Bible study would swell rather than bottom out. If greater love for God existed there would be no lack of visiting, evangelism, benevolence, compassion, hospitality and overall service to mankind. One who is driven by a genuine love for God does not have to be persuaded of where he needs to be on Wednesday night. His love for God will put him in the company of saints.

We should serve God because we love Him. We should love Him because He first loved us. John wrote, "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). We should love God because

of what He has done in giving His Son upon the cross (John 3:16). The love of God in Christ through the cross is intended to touch our hearts and our lives and bring about a response of love that leads us to obey God because we love Him (John 15:8-10).

We would be the most miserable of all creatures if we were to go through life with a fear of being lost eternally as our soul motivation for service to God. Not only would there be no joy in our salvation, but our service would not be such

**LOVE
ONE ANOTHER**

I Never Seem To Finish

Keith McNeely

Do you ever have days were you just can't seem to get "caught up?" Maybe everyday is like that! We live in a busy world that seems to get busier by the year.

Christian living is like that in some ways. Oh, there are some things that we complete. We are only

baptized once (if we did it right, Acts 19:1-6). We only get married once (unless there is death unfaithfulness, Romans 7:4; Matthew 19:9). But most other Christian duties continue. We never reach a point with them where we can say, "There, I've finished with that. I'll move on to something else."

What are some of these things?

STUDY. The Psalmist said, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (1:2). The aging and imprisoned Paul wanted Timothy to bring his books and parchments (2 Timothy 4:13). He still had some studying to do--

so do we.

SERVICE. The Bible says, "...but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve" (Luke 22:26) and "...by love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13). We never reach the point where we are to be served rather than to serve.

SUPPLICATION. "Pray without ceasing..." (1 Thessalonians 5:17), so prayer is a duty that is never finished. We "ought always to pray and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).

These are pleasant duties. Let's not forsake them day by day.

March 3, 1995

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- It's Always Time To Be With God

Volume 32 Number 9
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

he

The Blood Of Christ

W. A. Holley

The word blood is used in the Scriptures approximately 400 times. From God's view blood is extremely important because it is the very essence of life (Leviticus 17:11-14). For this cause the Israelites were forbidden to eat blood (Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 19:26; Acts 15:20-29).

This prohibition has continued throughout the ages-- Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian. Today it is still a sin to eat blood. Truly, as the blood leaves the body, life ebbs away. (Deuteronomy 12:23).

There is a wonderful lesson in the story of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1-10). Cain became the world's first murderer. Why did Cain kill his brother? Because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous. Abel's blood cried out to God for vengeance, (I John 3:12; Hebrews 11:4). Even though Abel has been dead for centuries, through his example of obedient faith, his voice is still heard, loud and clear.

Abel offered by faith the sacrifice which God had commanded; Cain substituted a bloodless sacrifice which the Lord had not commanded. The blood shed in Abel's sacrifice was typical of the blood of Christ which centuries later was shed on Calvary's Cross (Luke 23:33; John 20: 30-34; Hebrews 10:1-4).

The institution of the

Passover feast is designed to teach us a wonderful lesson (Exodus 12:1-13; Leviticus 23:4-8; Deuteronomy 16:1-8). A lamb was to be slain, its blood was to be put on the sides and over the doorway of each house where Passover Supper was to be eaten. Verse 13 explains the significance of this act. "The blood shall be a sign for you, upon the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you."

Some lessons to be learned by our readers: these Jews were to remain in their houses; Christians today must remain faithful as members of the church (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 10:24-26). Just suppose the Jews had said, We don't want blood smeared on our doors, we will substitute prayer instead, would God have been pleased (Proverbs 28:9)? God has arbitrary commands and we must obey them whether we can see any sense in them or not (I Corinthians 1:25-29; Matthew 11: 25-27). It would have been sad if some of the Israelites never heard of the requirements of the Passover Feast; even so, the gospel must be preached to the whole world (Matthew 28: 18-20; Romans 1:16-17).

Exodus 24: 1-9, teaches that the covenant which God made with Israel was dedicated with blood. Later the Hebrew writer, Hebrews 9: 7-26, teaches that the New Testament has been sanctified by the precious blood

of Jesus Christ. Our readers should also consider Matthew 26:28 with Hebrews 10: 24-29.

Why is it a sin to use mechanical instruments in the Lord's church? The answer is clear; It was not dedicated or sanctified by the blood of Christ. It was David, not God, who introduced instrumental music into the Temple worship (II Chronicles 29:25, ASV). It was not unto 760 A.D. that mechanical instruments were introduced into the worship of a church service, and then it was the Roman Catholic Church. The New Testament church has never used it, no apostle ever commanded it (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). True teachers of God's Holy Word must show the difference between God's way and man's way (Ezekiel 22:26; 44:23; Hebrews 5:11-14; II Timothy 2:15). It is a great sin to offer to God, in worship, anything which He has not commanded (Leviticus 10: 1-2; John 4:23 -24; Colossians 3:17).

The blood of Christ is represented as having a voice of its own. "And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:24). The lesson must be: Abel's blood spake well, but the blood of Christ speaks better. Abel's blood called for vengeance, but the blood of Christ calls for mercy. It is through faith in cleansing power of Christ's

blood that forgiveness of sins is available (Romans 3:25-26). The literal blood of Christ no longer exists, notwithstanding, the claims of those who argue for transubstantiation.

The advantages to be enjoyed through the blood of Christ are conditional. It is true that Jesus tasted death for all men, but only those who obey Him can be saved (Hebrews 2:9; 5: 7-9). A drowning man who refuses to take hold of a rope thrown to him cannot be saved. Some for whom Christ died are certain to be lost (I Corinthians 8:1; II Peter 2:1; Acts 20:28).

Matthew 26:28 teaches that Jesus shed His blood for the remission of sins. But Acts 2:38 teaches that repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ is for the remission of sins. Are you an honest reader? Do you believe what these passages say?

In Christ "we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins" (Colossians 1:13-14, ASV). But Romans 6:3-4 teaches that we must be baptized into the benefits of His death and raised to walk in newness of life. Read these passages; they are a part of your Bible. Do you believe these verses?

Jesus shed His blood in His death (John 19:31-34). But one cannot enter Christ, where forgiveness of sin is located, until the sinner, by faith, repentance, confession of Jesus' name, is baptized into Christ

(Galatians 3:26-27). Hence, baptism is not a non-essential command!

Revelation 7:14 speaks of those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. But one is washed in the blood of Christ when one is washed in the waters of baptism "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16). One calls on his name when one does what the Lord commands him to do.

Strange to some, the church of Christ was purchased with Christ's holy blood (Acts 20:28). Therefore one must be in the church to be among those who have been bought by His holy blood. But by one Spirit (guidance, direction, instruction) are we baptized into the body, the church (I Corinthians 12:3-13; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4-6). Do you believe it?

Even church members, when they sin, need the cleansing power of the blood of Christ (I John 1:6-10; 2:2). Backsliders who fail to abide in Christ have moved out from under His blood. These must repent of their sins, confess them, and ask God for forgiveness (Acts 17:30-31; II Peter 3:9; Acts 8:22). Friends, we urge you to obey God today.

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Jesus Calms The Daily Storms

Glenn Colley

One of the sweetest and most comforting verses in the Bible is Hebrews 4:14, where the inspired writer says, "But we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." What a thought! When the Word became flesh (John 1:14), and Jesus humbled Himself as a man, (Phil. 2:7-8), He subjected Himself to the human lifestyle. His days, like ours, were filled with joy and sadness, successes and disappointments. Hebrews 2:14 says, "Because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise took part of the same...". That is, He became human.

It is for this reason that we can sing songs like the one which contains these words: "Does Jesus care when I've said goodbye to the dearest on earth to me...Oh yes He cares, I know He cares, His heart is touched with my grief." He understands how I feel when I lose a loved one to death, because He lived through that, (John 11). He understands when I face strong temptation to sin, because He faced that, (Matthew 4). He understands when things about me make me angry because He faced that, (Matthew 23). He understands when people I trust let me down, because He faced that, (Matthew 26, John 6).

But does the understanding heart of Jesus reach only to the major struggles in my hard days? Does He also understand the days that simply are filled with that awful stress? The answer is yes, because He faced that.

Mark 2 of the New Testament describes a day in the life of Jesus. As chapter one closes, Jesus is trying to limit the crowds of folks swarming to Him. It seems the more He tried to slow them down, the faster they came! Consider the varied personalities Jesus faced on this day, how he dealt with them, and the practical application you can make to your own life:

1. One who has to get you regardless of the difficulty, for your help. (Verse 1-5).

While Jesus preached to a packed house, the palsied man literally "raised the roof" in hopes of Divine healing. As the men lowered the diseased body down to Jesus, the Master might have responded, "Wait your turn! You are rude to break in this way!" But not Jesus. He marveled at their faith, and healed the man with the words, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."

2. One who is constantly trying to cut you down. (Verse 6-12).

We would expect only joy from all who saw this mighty healing for Jesus, but we are disappointed. The Jews look past the power of God and ask, "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?"

Jesus responds to them as if they were sincere seekers of truth, and demonstrates that forgiving sins and healing disease are very much alike in one way. One requires divine authority, the other divine power. Either way, He is demonstrated to be the Christ.

How will I respond to those who are my enemies? As a Christian I will follow the pattern of Jesus.

3. Those who are cooperative and those who make you feel valuable. (Verse 13-15).

We marvel at and appreciate Matthew's clean, immediate response to the call of the Master. Jesus said, "Follow me." The Bible then says, "And he arose and followed Him."

We also smile to note that the sinful outcasts of society are drawn to this approachable Savior. The publicans and sinners sat with Him to hear His kind wisdom and teaching. He did not condone their sin, but taught of repentance and forgiveness. They could live righteously through Christ Jesus!

Even these kinds of sweet folks often indirectly cause a type of stress. We feel so productive when we can help them, and feel so guilty that we haven't more time to spend with them.

4. The pain dealers again. (Verse 16-17).

"And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto His disciples, "How is it that He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?" Put yourself in Jesus' shoes. You know you are accomplishing something good, but must take time for the people you'll probably never be able to help. Jesus repeated His kind and reasonable attitude.

Jesus is the Master teacher, not only in what He taught, but in how He lived. To know Him is to love Him.

Our Lord looked to the raging sea and said, "Peace, be still, (Mark 4:39)." If we will put His teachings into practice He will bless us with peace as well, (Phil. 4:6-7).

Spiritual Indifference

Gary Colley

The deplorable condition of sinful man today matches in many areas that of Bible times (Gen. 6:5; Rom. 1) We need many more Elijahs, Isaiahhs, and Johns to cry out against sin, to "...spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show people their transgressions" (Isa. 58:1). But, alas, some of our preachers are refusing, saying they "don't want to be negative," and will not preach anything "that is not positive"! By these retreating and traitor-like actions, there are many of our would-be Gospel preachers, elders, and members today who refuse the admonition of I Corinthians 15:58 to "...be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Such is spiritual indifference!

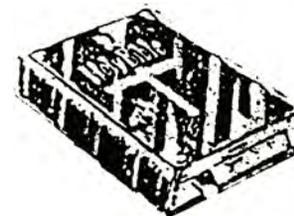
Spiritual indifference is one of the worst troubles that weakens the work of the church. Indifference in any field of endeavor will kill the best efforts of some and the cause itself. There are those who desire the rewards without desire of the labor. God, very surely, is not willing that any should perish (II Peter. 3:9), but this does not mean that many will not perish when the Lord returns to reward His servants. God will not reward those who are found ashamed or indifferent to His will and work, except with eternal punishment (Mk. 8:38).

The knowledge of duty is the measure of the known responsibility all have toward God (Jas. 4:17). However, we must study God's Word to show ourselves approved unto

God (II Tim. 2:15). We must grow in grace and knowledge (II Pet. 1:5-11; 3:18). Although God wants to save all, He will give a man up to his passions and worldly wisdom when he rejects the Truth.

When man shows his indifference toward God and His Word, God ceases to restrain sinful man from evil, or protect him against it. In other words, when one grows indifferent to God's ways, is satisfied with the praises of men, God lets him alone to do as he pleases without hindrance from Him! Romans 1:24 implies that until God gives a man up, He is ever present with by His providence to protect and care for him. God does not give man up until man gives God up!

Surely God is sorrowful to see many so totally careless of His work. Some seem to think that God cannot really see our every move and thought. Then when we hold back His duty fulfilling our own wants, then He will not punish us. Some think they can cheat God. remind you of I Corinthians 10:1-11, where Paul shows God's displeasure in those of His children who became indifferent to His way. When they went in their own way they were destroyed. Paul said "they were written for our admonition." Don't grow weary in well doing (Gal. 6:9) Resist the devil and he will flee from you (Jas. 4:7-8); Be strong in the Lord (Eph. 6:10-18).



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Blind Men Of Hindustan

Johnny Ramsey

Nearly everyone is conversant with the famous poem concerning the blind men who went to "see" an elephant. Since each one was sightless and each one was stationed at a different vantage point surrounding the huge creature the six men came away with vastly different concepts regarding the gigantic animal. One said: "An elephant is like a rope" because he had felt the tail. Others, due to their groping contacts with the elephant, concluded he was like a fan or a wall or a tree. A partial view of the Bible is a lot like that. Parochial thinking is similar. Prejudice has blinded many a person to the whole truth. Secretarian dogma, shallow teaching, traditional emphasis and emotional persuasion has also mightily contributed to spiritual blindness. No one is as blind as the person who just will not see the plain gospel truth lest that message destroy one's favorite doctrine or

hallowed position. I have known folk who almost have a heart attack over Acts 2:38 because their creed book says we are "saved by faith alone" and Acts 2:38 says no, that's not so! There are those who teach Calvinistic predestination but Joshua 24:15; Leviticus 1:3 and Romans 11:22 confirm the Bible teaching from cover to cover: Man is a creature of choice! Some teach that "once a man is saved he cannot fall from grace" but Paul even calls the names of three men who did (I Timothy 1:19-20; II Timothy 4:10). He also warns all Christians to "take heed lest ye fall" (I Corinthians 10:12). What an exceedingly strange warning if it is impossible for us to fall! Now there is an element of Bible vocabulary in all three of these positions just as there was an element of animal husbandry in the Blind Men's view of an elephant. For, the tail of an elephant is similar to a rope, his sides remind one of

a wall and the huge animal's ears are reminiscent of giant fans. But similarity and isolated viewpoint "do not an elephant make!" Just so with human creeds, dogmas and theology. A little glimmer of truth, a few perverted passages, a sprinkle of scriptural words and a clergy tone do not make for sound doctrine. Faith does play a necessary part in salvation but not the only part in the drama of redemption. It is not by faith alone (James 2:24) but by a system of faith that must be obeyed (Galatians 5:6; Acts 6:7) that men obtain remission of sins. Similarly, the Bible clearly tells us in Romans 8 and Ephesians 3 that salvation in Christ through the church was predestined by God from eternity. But this is far cry from Calvin's theory of each person being predestined to salvation or condemnation before they were even born! It is also true that no child of God should fall from grace.

The gracious provisions of the gospel ought to keep us near to the heart of God. But, sadly, some choose to return to the beggarly elements of the world and thus, they go back to their wallowing in the mire of sin (II Peter 2:20-22). As John Saxe said of the blind men in his striking poem, so it is abundantly true in religion today:

"Each in his own opinion exceedingly stiff and strong, though each was partly in the right, and all were in the wrong!"

We, today, must allow "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27) to teach us fully on every subject. Taking all that the Bible says forms the best commentary of all upon the sacred Scriptures. This will allow us to see the harmony and blend in God's grace and man's obedience. Never again will we assume a conflict between the blood of Jesus and the loving response of the sinner to the Savior's commands (Hebrews 5:8-9).

Members of the church desperately need to especially be fair in their appraisal of Holy Writ. Some today are trying to assume a distinction between "liberty in Christ" and "salvish duty to law." However, an honest acceptance of Galatians 5:13 and 6:2 remedies this. Not a few think they see a problem for God in being just and merciful but Matthew 25:37, 41 and 46 takes care of the matter for all time. For too many like the six blind men, "Rail on in utter ignorance Of what each other mean, And prattle about an elephant Not one of them has seen!"

May we, with eyes wide open for Truth, search the scriptures and seek for light that we might share with others the unsearchable riches in Christ.

**Search
Your Bible
For The Truth**

How Many Rooms In The Church?

Allen Webster

When someone is planning a new house, a common question is, "How many rooms will it have?" If we were going to build a new church building, most people would also be interested in the floor plan. They would want to know what rooms were intended. What rooms is a church supposed to have?

A CHURCH SHOULD HAVE A HOSPITAL ROOM FOR SICK FOLKS. The architect of the church is a doctor (Luke 4:23), so we would expect Him to have a room set aside for healing. While on earth He was a healer of bodies (Matthew 15:30), but today His specialty is the "soul's diseases" (cf. Isaiah 9:6).

A CHURCH SHOULD HAVE A CHAPEL HALL FOR PRAYING FOLKS. The early church was known for its prayer meetings (Acts 1:14; 12:5-17; 16:13; 21:5). Have we gotten away from a dependence on God

expressed through constant and fervent prayer (cf. Jas. 5:16)? Is there "room" any longer for prayer in the church? In a self-sufficient age, prayer gets crowded out by other things, but it's time we get back on our knees. "We ought always to pray and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). Queen Mary declared she feared the prayers of John Knox more than the armies of her enemies. Though neither were New Testament Christians, they both believed in the power of prayer. The devil fears a single faithful Christian on his knees more than a whole church of indifferent, self-sufficient people. The church needs a prayer room!

A CHURCH SHOULD HAVE A SCHOOL ROOM FOR STUDYING FOLKS. The Savior was a "teacher come from God" (John 3:2). We would expect a teacher to have a school room. We are called disciples (John 8:31), which means learners. We

need to set aside time in our assemblies and in our personal lives as church members to diligently study His core curriculum (2 Timothy 2:15).

A CHURCH SHOULD HAVE A GYMNASIUM FOR EXERCISING FOLKS. The church is not in the business of entertaining youth or building bodies, so we aren't advocating the kind of gym with goals and foul lines. We are talking about another kind of exercise. "...exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Timothy 4:7-8). "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:14). We do need "room" in the church for

exercising folks--those trying to grow stronger in the faith (2 Timothy 2:1; 1 John 2:14).

A CHURCH SHOULD HAVE A PRACTICE FIELD FOR SOLDIERING FOLKS. The church is an army

(1 Timothy 1:18), so it should have a training area for young soldiers to perfect the tactics involved in "waging a good warfare"

(Continued on Page 4)

Most Of A Minute

Peter: Depart From Me Lord

Can you name the Apostle in the Bible who begged the Lord to leave him?

It was Peter, and the text is Luke 5:8. Peter and his fellow fishermen had been fishing all night and had caught nothing. They were on the bank mending their nets. Jesus borrowed Peter's ship for a while in order to put some space between Him and the crowd so He could preach to them. When He was finished He told Peter to go back out fishing. Peter said, "Lord, we've fished all night with no results. But if that's what you want, I'll do it." Peter pulled in so many fish that his net started breaking, and he had to call the other ship to his rescue. Before it was over, both boats were filled to overflowing.

Peter was overwhelmed. He fell to his knees and said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." Jesus said, "Fear not. From henceforth thou shalt catch men." The lesson for you to remember is that Jesus sees not only what you are, but what you can be: A forgiven, dedicated, child of God.

Glenn Colley

(Continued from page 3) against Satan and his allies (1 Pet. 5:8-9; Jas. 4:4; Gal. 5:17-21; 2 Tim. 3:8; Jude 3-4; Eph. 6:12; 1 Tim. 6:20). Soldiers must be taught to enlist (Mt. 28:18-20), obey (2 Cor. 10:5-6), please their captain (2 Tim. 2:4); be disciplined (1 Cor. 9:25-27), use the armor expertly (Eph. 6:13-17), endure hardship (2 Tim. 4:7-18), and fight hard (1 Tim. 6:12). Where is he going to learn these things if there is not "room" in the church?

A CHURCH SHOULD HAVE A FAMILY ROOM

FOR LONELY FOLKS. The church is the household of God (1 Tim. 3:15), and members are referred to as brothers and sisters (1 John. 2:10). Certainly, it is appropriate for a church to emphasize love between members. "See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently..." (1 Pet. 1:22b).

A CHURCH SHOULD HAVE A LIVING ROOM FOR DEDICATED FOLKS. Each of us is on a journey, a pilgrimage (1 Pet. 2:11). We have set our faces toward Zion (Jer. 50:5). To stay on the straight and narrow way,

we need a map to keep us on track. Jesus provides such in the church (Jn. 14:6). If you have lost your way (Jer. 10:23; Prov. 14:12), maybe you need to consult the "map room" in which you will find the Word of God (Psa. 119:105).

A CHURCH SHOULD HAVE A BEDROOM FOR WEARY FOLKS. Jesus said, "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. For

my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Mt. 11:28-30). A faithful Christian should be refreshed by his church associations.

A CHURCH SHOULD HAVE A KITCHEN FOR HUNGRY FOLKS. There are many hungry people in the world, and not all of them can be filled with loaves and fishes. "...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Mt. 4:4). John records, "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life..." (Jn. 6:33-35). Souls that are hungry should find in the church a place where they can be filled.

The church is body of Christ. He is the "all in all" (Eph. 1:23). He is the door (Jn. 10:9), the foundation (Isa. 28:16; 1 Cor. 3:11), the chief cornerstone (Lk. 20:17; 1 Pet. 2:6), the rock (1 Cor. 10:4), the building (Eph. 2:21), and, even, the light (Jn. 1:9). There is "room" in the church for you!

A Religion Of Convenience Or Conviction? (No. 5)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Old Testament worthies of deep, lasting conviction were noted in the previous article. There is no scarcity of such in the New Testament which the spirit of truth and His eight selected scribes have preserved for us.

NEW TESTAMENT WORTHIES OF CONVICTION IN RELIGION

Parents of John, later called the Baptizer, were of this noble order. They were both righteous before God, walking in blameless fashion before Him (Luke 1:6). Joseph and Mary were of deep conviction. Matthew 1,2 and Luke 1,2 prove this to be so relative to this Galilean couple.

Personalities linked with the Lord during His personal ministry were of this noble order. Jesus, before them, was the very personification of conviction; the Christ of convenience would be a

contradiction of terms. John, His Messianic Harbinger, pursued the religion of conviction. Convenience was never the platform he mounted whether speaking to Pharisees, Sadducees, Herod and Herodias or to the rank and file of Israelites during his ministry. Conviction kept him on the firing line till his mission stood accomplished. When the Lord began to draw disciples around Him, He did not look for men at ease, indolence and convenience; he sought out men and women of principle, of conviction, of sacrificial willingness, of strong courage and of loyal potential to the cause of truth. Convenience guided those who turned away from the Lord in John 6; conviction guided and governed those in the same chapter who said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). Conviction was

of top order when He selected from among His disciples the twelve men to become apostles. Judas Iscariot compromised and changed in this regard but the other eleven retained their conviction and even deepened it throughout life.

Peter and John were men of courageous conviction when they told the Sanhedrin Court members in Acts 4:19-20 that they were not about to seal their lips or stay their hands relative to future gospel proclamation. The entire twelve did more of the same in Acts 5:29 as they said through Simon Peter's lips, "We ought to obey God rather than men." Surely, no one can doubt the brand of Stephen's conviction in Acts 7! The liberal preacher who recently said that Stephen's lack of diplomacy cost him his life is a total stranger to conviction and bows before the shrine of convenience and

pragmatism (whatever will work, do it).

We read of Saul's conversion in Acts 9, 22, 26. Convenience would have kept him with the Pharisees and climbing up the corporate ladder of Judaism. Conviction caused him to defect from Judaism and cast his lot with the Christ and his persecuted band of maligned messengers on earth. The Lord said to Ananias in Damascus relative to Saul's future in the cause of truth, "For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:16). Conviction kept him on the firing line till Rome slew him several years later. Convenience is not noted for it's call for sacrificial suffering. Conviction is on the front burner in this momentous matter. Paul's brand of Christian conviction is seen in Acts 20:24; 1 Corinthians 2:2; 2 Corinthians 11,12; Galations

2:20;6:17; Philippians 1:21ff; Colossians 1:24; 1 Thessalonians 2; 2 Timothy 2:10; 3:10-12; 4:16-17 and Philemon 9. Why not take the time to look up and read carefully and reverently all these passages? They touch in wonderful and weighty fashion what a religion of conviction should be.

Revelation 2:10 is a great passage depicting conviction in religion. Such a dynamic disposition could stay them well in the many conflicts they had with the Roman Empire of evil determined to stamp out Christianity and replace it with Emperor worship.

In Revelation 2:13 we read of the Lord's faithful martyr, Antipas, who was slain in Pergamos. Men do not choose to die for a religion of convenience; they die for a religion of conviction.

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It's Always Time To Be With God

Elwood Holt

Those who have no time for God should consider what their circumstances would be if He had no time for them; no time to paint the sunsets, no time to see the warm sun's rays or the refreshing showers. No time to make the crops and flowers grow. We doubt that any thinking person would actually want nothing to do with God.

Cain despised God's

authority and finally murdered his brother, but when he was driven from the presence of God he said: "My punishment is greater than I can bear" (Gen. 4:13).

One of the saddest sentences in the gospel records is our Lord's prediction that He would say to some: "Depart from Me, I never knew you, ye workers of iniquity" (Matt. 7:23).

Just what will it mean to

be "cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15)? We pray God none of those reading this article will ever find out, but the Scriptures do clearly indicate that those involved will be cast forever out of the presence of God.

Thank God, it is not Christ who desires this. He paid for our sins at Calvary to reconcile us to Himself (Eph. 2:16). Paul declares that God has called believers

"into the fellowship of His Son," (1 Cor. 1:9), and that at His coming for them they shall "ever be with the Lord," adding: "wherefore, comfort one another with these words," (Thess. 4:17-18).

"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (11 Cor. 5:20).

God has demonstrated His

love for us in Christ. Why not respond by gratefully trusting Christ, and obeying His gospel. Friends, whether you believe it or not, there may be no tomorrow. So why not obey God's Son today, while it is yet day.

Make Time To Be With God.

MARCH 10, 1995

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- The Standard Of Right And Wrong
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- An Astute Observation From Paul Harvey
- You Don't Have To Cross Your Legs

Volume 32 Number 10
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

The Liberated Woman

W.A. Holley

Adam, the first man, was created from the dust of the ground. In the course of time, God saw that it was not good for man to dwell alone. By His mighty power, God put Adam to sleep and removed from his side a rib from which he made woman, Adam's companion and help meet. How did God do this great act? We are not called upon to explain God's miraculous works, but we are required to believe them (Hebrews 11:1-3,6). We submit that miracles cannot be explained!!

When Adam saw her, he 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 (Genesis 2:7, 18-23). If Eve had not been created, Adam could never have had a family. Woman is able to share man's responsibilities, respond to his nature with understanding and love, and wholeheartedly co-operate with him in fulfilling God's great plan for the human race.

In the ambrosial bowers of Eden's paradise, Eve must have stood in all the charms of intellectual grandeur, moral purity, and physical beauty. But in an evil hour she hearkened to the deceitful eloquence of Satanic flattery, and touched the alluring fruit of the forbidden tree. John Milton wrote, "Whose mortal taste brought death into the world, and all our woes." "...She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave it unto her husband with her, and he did eat" (Genesis 3:1-6, ASV). Thus, she contributed to her husband's

fall from God's grace. Eve was beguiled, but Adam was not (1 Timothy 2:14-15).

After the tragic fall, God said to the woman, "I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Genesis 3:16-20). Pregnancy and childbirth would be attended by pain--both physical and mental. God assigned a certain role to woman and a certain role to man. Woman is not a man; nor is man a woman. God arbitrarily made this distinction and these distinctions are not to be confused!! Lesbianism is hereby refuted. (See I Corinthians 6:9-11).

"But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (I Corinthians 11:3). God's order is: God, Christ, man, woman. There is no inequality of the sexes here. As long as the Divine Order stands, women must be in subjection to men. Some modern women may be unhappy with God's order, but they cannot change it.

Jesus's disciples "marveled that he talked with a woman" (John 4:27). Jesus appreciated women. He knew their power and influence over their families. He gave them status and status in society which they never possessed before.

God highly honored woman when He chose to bring the Messiah into the world through her (Genesis 3:15; Psalm 132:11; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23). "But when the fullness of time was

come, God sent forth his Son, made a woman, made under the law" (Galatians 4:4). Hence, God has bestowed upon woman a high honor and the distinct privilege which no man can attain.

We recognize that good and bad women have always been in our world. We can read of the Jezebels and the Athaliahs who disgraced themselves. But, thank God, all women have not been like these.

There are many good and great women mentioned in your Bible; these represent the truly liberated women, for they followed the will of the Lord. For example, Sarah was the faithful wife of Abraham; Rachel was the beautiful wife of Jacob; Deborah was a fearless patriot; Ruth was a young widow who became a humble gleaner and finally an honored mother; Esther was a great queen who was instrumental in saving her people; Hannah is the woman who personifies ideal motherhood; Huldah was a prophetess; Elizabeth was the joyous mother of John the Baptist; Mary, probably a seventeen or eighteen year old virgin, became the mother of Jesus, the Son of God; Martha and Mary were close sisters who often befriended the Savior; Dorcas was a woman who with her needle embroidered her name ineffaceably into the beneficence of the world; Priscilla is a woman who is always paired with her husband, Aquila; harmoniously, they labored together in the service of the church and to the Lord; Phoebe was a servant of the church in

Cenchrea; the Syrophenician woman was commended for her great faith; and Lydia was a business woman who became a hospitable Christian woman.

The liberated woman is not the woman who becomes the elder or preacher or songleader of the Lord's church. The Bible reads: "But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness" (I Timothy 2:12, ASV). Let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law" (I Corinthians 14:34, ASV). These words do not represent one of Paul's cultural hangups, as is alleged by unbelievers. When one reads I Timothy 2:13-15, one will understand Paul's argument is based on God's order of creation. No woman can ever be an elder of the Lord's church, for she can never be "the husband of one wife" (I Timothy 3:2). In these verses read the qualifications of an elder (I Timothy 3:1-7).

What shall we say more? We thank God for the many faithful women in the Lord's church today. These women work very hard for the advancement of the Cause of Christ. Paul wrote, "...help these women, for they labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life" (Philippians 4:3). Paul gave Lois and Eunice, grandmother and mother, praise for the good training they provided for

Tim (I Timothy 2:15).

Verily, the Equal Rights Amendment cannot liberate women, insofar as the Lord's church is concerned; it can only enslave them. This conclusion is true because the ERA changes God's order of things. The full and complete revelation of truth has already been presented in the Holy Bible (II Timothy 3:16-17; Jude 3; John 8:32; Revelation 22:18-19). The word of God is not subject to addition, or subtraction, or to emendation.

Who are the liberated women? They are those women who have believed on Jesus Christ, repented of their sins, confessed His holy name before men, and have been baptized into Christ for remission of their sins, thus dedicating their lives to the perpetuation of the church as revealed in the Bible (Matthew 16:18-19; 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38, 41-47; Romans 16:16).

As far as becoming a Christian is concerned, gender has nothing to do with it. We read, "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond or free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise" (Galatians 3:26-29, ASV).

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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6th Avenue
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How Paul Applauded His Enemies

Glenn Colley

Paul wrote, "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will; The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds. But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel. What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice...(Philippians 1:15-18)."

Woven throughout this great book of Philippians, from the prayer for grace in the salutation, to the way he described a gift from Epaphroditus, "an ordour of a sweet smell, as sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God" at the close, Paul shows a heart of self-less humility and undying trust in Jesus Christ.

In the opening text of this article, Paul examines the hearts of some fellow preachers, and then makes a remarkable assessment: although some preachers of Christ were strong critics of Paul's work, and other preachers of Christ were supporters of his work and apostleship, he was thankful for them all! When one considers our natural, human tendencies, we ask, "How could he be so considerate of his enemies? How can he be thankful for even those who speak harshly of him to others?"

The answer is in his heart. He was filled to the brim with Jesus Christ! His spirit echoes men like John the Baptist who preached, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but

He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear...(Matt. 3:11)." In writing of this kind of devoted heart Paul said, "Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus...(Phil. 2:5). In Colossians 3:16 he wrote, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom..." Paul saw past the unjust criticism hurled from the hands of his brothers who preached Christ, and he rejoiced in their work. What mattered to this seasoned apostle was not what folks said about him, but rather what they said about Christ.

Albert Barnes, when commenting on this great passage, obviously saw through denominational glasses which distorted his vision. Because of some present day matters facing the church now, these comments are interesting. He wrote, "When ministers of other denominations preach what we regard as error, and their preaching becomes popular, and is attended with success, we can find occasion to rejoice, for they preach Christ. In the error we should not, we cannot rejoice; but in the fact that the great truth is held up that Christ died for men, we can always find abundant occasion for joy. Mingled as it may be with error, it may be nevertheless the means of saving souls, and though we should rejoice more if the truth were preached without any admixture of error, yet still the very fact that Christ is made known lays the foundation for gratitude and rejoicing. Had all Christians, and Christian ministers, the

feelings which Paul expresses here, there would be much less envy and uncharitableness than there is now in the churches. May we not hope that the time will yet come when all who preach the gospel will have such supreme regard for the name and work of the Savior, that they will find sincere joy in the success of a rival denomination, or a rival preacher or in rival plans for doing good? Then, indeed, contentions would cease, and the hearts of Christians, 'Like kindred drops,' would mingle into one." (Notes on the New Testament, by Albert Barnes, June, 1974 edition on Philippians, pg. 152, 153).

This is worth considering because from the pen of this old and respected denominational preacher, comes a sentiment which is being repeated by many in the church today. At first glance the sentiment may seem completely reasonable and noble, but beneath the pleasant surface lies corrupt and damnable doctrine.

Here's the primary difference in what Paul wrote and what Albert Barnes wrote: Paul and Albert meant different things when they spoke of those who "Preach Christ". Albert thought of a broad group of people who simply profess Christianity and to be preachers of Christ. He believed that even if they preach error, they are to be accepted and appreciated for the fact that they speak of Jesus. But that isn't what the apostle Paul meant when he wrote by inspiration of those who "preach Christ." You see, in the scriptures, preaching

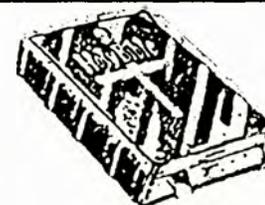
Christ has always included preaching His doctrine. When Philip "preached Christ" to the people of Samaria, (Acts 8:5), and they gave heed to what he had taught, here's what happened: "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women, (Acts 8:12)." Preaching Christ clearly meant teaching people about the church, the importance of following Christ, and baptism. If John 9 says, Suppose a man today, preaching for a denominational church, stands and proclaims that Jesus is Christ, and then denies the teachings of Jesus? Wouldn't it be safe to say that 95% of the denominations in America today have preachers who teach that baptism is NOT essential for salvation, and that believers are saved before they are immersed in water? The "Faith alone" doctrine is enjoying wide popularity, but it is a false doctrine. Jesus taught, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...(Mark 16:16)." Shall we, preachers of the

gospel and the church established by our Lord, rejoice in the work of these denomination preachers whose doctrines will ultimately result in millions facing judgment having never obeyed the Gospel? NO! NO!

Remember please, two lessons which bear observing from Paul's teaching in Philippians 1:15-18. First, that we must be willing to put nothing ahead of our devotion to the cause of Christ. Though mistreated or misunderstood by those who are preaching Christ, we must rejoice that Christ is being preached. Second, that Paul was not encouraging Christians to offer endorsement to anyone who preaches doctrines opposed to Christ, even if the preacher also professes to preach Christ.

**Jesus Never
Said It Would
Be Easy.**

**He Only
Said It Would
Be Worth It!**



**The
Words Of
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The Standard Of Right And Wrong

Mel Futrell

Well over a hundred years ago brother Robert Milligan said, "It will, I presume, be generally conceded that the will of God is the natural and only proper standard of all that is right, and pure, and virtuous." (Reason and Revelation, 7th ed. 1872, p. 34). As true as our brother's statement was (and we believe still is), nonetheless the perception of so many today is that there is no standard. Brethren, the perceived non-existence of an absolute standard of right and wrong today is deplorable at best. And such an attitude was in the not so long ago simply unthinkable. Brother LaGard Smith tells of His law and Morality students who decry any absolute, claiming they can't impose their value system on any other individual. Now brethren, that is an example of the subjective mentality that denies a standard of right and wrong. Without a doubt the world we live in sees things differently than do we (Jn. 17:14-16; Rom. 12:2). That there is a standard of right and wrong, WE BELIEVE, and we believe that it cannot be successfully denied (Jn. 17:17, 12:48, 8:32; 1 Jn. 2:3). All moral

and/or doctrinal questions must be answered according to the Scriptures, the Divine Standard. And rest assured the standard hasn't changed, only some people's appraisal of it has changed.

In and out of the Lord's church one is confronted today with examples of things that used to be right but are now perceived to be wrong. Likewise, what used to be considered wrong is in many cases today said to be the right thing to do. One can't help but think of Isaiah's statement, "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). Brethren, we're living in a topsy-turvy world where men are calling no standard, a standard and THE STANDARD, no standard. Many today seem to be more content following the "pattern" of the pattern rejector Cain rather than the pattern of the pattern keeper Able. The writer of Hebrews said, "By faith Able offered unto GOD a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous... (Hebrews-11:4). From the standpoint of argumentation the burden of

proof always rests with the individual or the group that is advocating change. Therefore, those advocating no standard have the responsibility of proving there is no standard. And those advocating a change away from the standard have the responsibility of showing where their authority is for changing the standard.

Brethren, one used to regularly hear preaching against dancing, drinking, immodest, clothing, gambling, sexual permissiveness, etc., but now some would have us believe that things are different, norms have changed. And thus what used to be considered RIGHT preaching is now in many congregations wrong. As you know, the Bible furnishes us the only proper and correct standard of morality, and failure to preach and live that standard will bring grave consequences. Along the same lines as the above I would call your attention to the issues of abortion and homosexuality which have gained a national audience. Brethren there was once a general disdain for these sins, but what was once disdain is now acclaim. And the "hands that shed innocent blood" (Prov. 6:16-17), are in many

cases today the hands of the abortionist. Their hands are being lifted high in victory by the liberal media of this country. Without a doubt the media is heavily biased towards the pro-abortion position. I would call your attention to what GOD calls "against nature" or "unnatural" (Romans 1:26) and what man calls a lifestyle choice. Furthermore, in I Corinthians 6:9 Paul says, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of GOD?". And then he goes on and enumerates ten sins, two of which pertain to homosexuality. These perverted people can now be seen parading up and down the streets of our country demanding their rights. If the inspired writer James were alive today I imagine he would say to all this, "My brethren, these things ought not so to be" (James 3:10).

A final brief word is in order in regard to a couple of doctrinal points. Congregational verbal vocal music, that which is authorized by scripture (Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16), is being assaulted on all sides by the proponents of not only instrumental music but also by those who advocate solos and choirs in

and as worship to GOD. Please don't think this is a new issue, it has merely come back around. Our brethren were battling this well over a hundred years ago. But I must say this: The fact that singing in worship is to be congregational rules out the solo and the choir. The fact that it is to be verbal (pertaining to words-expressed in spoken words) rules out humming, whistling, and the simulation of instruments with the mouth. The fact that it is to be vocal (pertaining to the voice) rules out instrumental accompaniment period.

Likewise, what is the proper role of women in the church today has been and is a hot issue we must face. Too many are disregarding the standard (1 Cor. 14:34-35 and 1 Tim. 2:1-12) and are making claims that have them wrapped up, tied up, and tangled up in sin.

What was once preached against is now being embraced. I'm afraid many today are more interested in political correctness than Biblical correctness and have in effect, created a new standard for themselves which is in reality no standard at all.

What O.J. Really Needs

Orange Juice is one of my favorite drinks; but I've had all the O.J. I ever want. I love the refreshing taste of orange juice. However, O.J. leaves a bad taste in my mouth.

The following headline in the paper caught my interest recently: "O.J.'s Fate May Hinge on Blood." I didn't read the article, but I couldn't help but think about the significance of the headline. The person who titled the article probably did not realize the truth contained in the statement. O.J.'s fate does not indeed hinge on blood. Jesus' blood.

Christ died for all men. That includes O.J. Simpson. The blood of Christ is no less

effective for him than it is for me. In fact, if the blood of Jesus is not sufficient for Mr. Simpson, then it isn't any good for any of us. Thank God such is not the case. The acceptable sacrifice of Abel shows God has required blood as a means of atonement almost since the beginning of time. Hebrews 9:22 says "...and without shedding of blood there is no remission (forgiveness)."

Only the perfect blood of Christ could fully cleanse us of our filthy sin. The Apostle John exalts the Lord about this very thing in Revelation 1:5 when he says: "To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own

blood." The blood of Christ is powerful enough to wash away the dirt of anyone's sin, no matter how vile. Not only does it wash, but it also justifies us before the Judge of all mankind. "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Romans 5:9).

Mr. Simpson does not just need legal counsel. He needs the same thing each and everyone of us desperately needs: the blood-bought gospel of Jesus.

Scotty Sparks
Florence, AL.

Grandparents, Who Are They?

Bryan Sharp

Growing up as a boy there were two things that I knew for certain. First, that mama and daddy loved me. Secondly, so did my grandparents. With the news that my last grandparent had died, I began to replay mental tapes of the times that I had spent with each of my grandparents.

I thought of all the stories, songs, hugs, and kisses that I received, which by the way, were better than any material gift that could have been given to me. I remember walking to the store or going to the bank, riding in papa's pick-up to feed the cows. I thought of the great meals that both my grannies could cook up. And I could go

on.

Who were these grandparents? They were the people who cut bigger pieces of pie than mother did. They were people who always had candy and gum. They were people who told me all the stuff my parents did when they were kids. And they were the people with soft laps and shoulders that you hated to outgrow. And I could go on.

I am thankful for my grandparents. I cannot begin to imagine growing up without them as a part of my life. I am thankful for my parents who were loving and wise enough to know and understand the importance of sharing their mom and dad with me.

Are There "Witnesses" Today?

We are more frequently hearing some suggest that they think we ought "to witness for Christ," "witness one-on-one," or be "Jehovah's witness" in our 20th Century.

To witness means to bear testimony to that which we have seen, to furnish evidence or proof. A witness is one who has seen or has knowledge of an incident and tells the exactness of that which is in his knowledge.

The beloved apostle John said, "That which was from the beginning which we have

heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the father, and was manifested unto us" (John 1:1-2).

Peter said of his and the other apostles' power to witness, "And we were witnesses of all things which he did in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they

slew and hanged on a tree: (Acts 10:39).

Peter also stated in preparation for choosing one to take the place of Judas, "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto the same day that he was taken up from us, **MUST BE ORDAINED TO BE A WITNESS WITH US OF HIS RESURRECTION**" (emphasis mine, GC) (Acts

1:21-22).

Of these apostles, Jesus himself said, "ye shall be witness unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

We are not commanded to "go into all the world and witness" but we are commanded to "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel" or "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them..." (Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 18: 19-20).

We should be humble and honest enough to do what the Lord has commanded, to "speak as the oracles of God," and to cease the desire to be denominational in our vocabulary. At no time should we be ashamed "of the testimony of our Lord" (2 Timothy 1:8), which is the Gospel which has been written in the Book Divine that we might believe (John 20:30-31).

Gary Colley
Austin, TX

An Astute Observation From Paul Harvey

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Back in December of 1994 he related a story of a little boy at church who listened as the preacher told how there was no room for Mary and the about-to-be-born Christ child in the inn and how they were sent to the place where the animals were sheltered. The alert boy whispered to his mother, "I bet if they had known who He was, they would have made room!" Paul Harvey quipped, "Don't be too sure, son. We know who He is and we do not have room for Him!"

Paul Harvey is right on target in this assessment. Religious people in mid and late December become unusually interested in the Christ of the cradle. For a few days the Babe of Bethlehem

of nearly two thousand years ago becomes increasingly important to them. Then on December 26 He is the forgotten factor in their secular lives till near the end of the ensuing year. Before December ends, many of them will join drinking crowds in buying a bountiful supply of liquor to bring in another new year. Somehow sobriety does not go well with the evening hours of December 31 and especially when the midnight hour is reached and a new year is ushered in with the drunken parties and stoned partici-pants. If the Lord were to return on some December 31, He would find more of his so-called subjects drunk or drinking than any other night of the year. What a

disgrace such drunkened deportment is among those who less than ten days before were singing and telling the world what joy they felt in their hearts relative to God's Son.

No room for Jesus was the story of his life on earth. There was no room for Him in the Bethlehem Inn the night He was born. There was no room for the child Jesus sometime later as Joseph and Mary hurried him from Judea into Egyptian safety to the southwest. There was no room for Him in Nazareth where He grew up as we see reflected in Mark 6. There was no room for Him among the country of the Gadarenes in Mark 5 where He performed an amazing miracle of mercy. There was

no room for Him in Jerusalem either during His ministry or at it's end when they tried Him and crucified Him outside its walls. There was no room for Him in the Samaritan City in Luke 9 because His face was set toward Jerusalem. There was no room for Him in the Heart and life of Judas as he betrayed Him for thirty pieces of silver in Matthew 26. There was no room for His gospel in many of the places where the apostles and early evangelists took it as evidence, in the book of Acts and in the apostles. Laodicea had no room for Him in Revelation 3. Neither did the spiritually dead people at Sardis who were already in Tombstone Territory.

Far too few today have

room for the Christ of creation, the Christ of the cosmos, the Christ of the cross, the Christ of the church, the Christ of the crown or the Christ of the second coming. The comprehensive Christ is not the Christ the twentieth century wants and will welcome. Were He to come back in the twentieth century and taught nothing more or less than He taught in the first century, He would be dismissed by the masses as a gloomy crank peddling a gospel of calamity! What an affront we present to the Lord of glory!

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You Don't Have To Cross Your Legs

Gus Nichols of Jasper, Alabama, was quite a man. When he died the whole town shut down for his funeral. I knew because I was there. He devoted his life to preaching the Word of God, but he started out as a farmer living in a log house near Carbon Hill. His son, Flavil, writes about him: "Soon after his conversion, in the 'bib' pocket of his overalls he would take a New Testament to the field. At the end of a row, as the mule turned, the young

Christian read a selected passage; as he plowed the next row, he recited that verse aloud repeatedly until he got to the end of the row. While the mule turned to go back, Dad checked his memory work, making certain he had every word in proper sequence; then he would read the next verse, which he recited to old 'Kate' (his mule) as he plowed the next row."

Brother Nichols did not have the educational

advantages some have enjoyed, but I remember a tribute given to him by a former college professor of mine, Dr. Frank Pack. While delivering a series of lectures in Little Rock on Revelation 20, Dr. Pack noticed in my library a book on the Holy Spirit by Gus Nichols. He borrowed the book and brought it back the next day with the comment, "Gus Nichols knows the Bible so well, there's not any way that he is going to get off track in

handling the scriptures."

I'm convinced that we need to rediscover the lost art of meditation; and one doesn't have to sit in the lotus position and intone "ommm" to do it. Consider the psalmist as he speaks about the Word of God, "Oh, how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day." And again, "I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation". Take the Word of God. Go over it in your

mind. Ponder. Reflect. Joshua was told, "This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success" (Joshua 1:8).

John Gipson
Little Rock, Arkansas

MARCH 17, 1995

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Volume 32 Number 11
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

"I Just Want To Join The Church And Quit Cussin"

Guy F. Hester

Many years ago my father was conducting a gospel meeting in a rural school house in Walker County Alabama. In those days three Sunday meetings were common and ten day meetings were considered short. Such subjects as *the kingdom, the gospel plan of salvation, instrumental music in worship, the errors of denominationalism, the purpose of baptism, etc.*, were preached long and hard. At the conclusion of this particular meeting enough people had given up their religious error and obeyed the gospel that a congregation of the Lord's church had been established.

At the conclusion of one of

the services during the school house meeting, as the invitation song was being sung, a man came down the isle and as daddy took his hand and asked him if his desire was to be baptized, the man responded in a loud voice that could be heard by all, "No, I just want to join the church and quit cussin'." It turned out that this man was a "half wit" who was incapable of understanding.

I believe that one of the great problems we have in the church today is that we have a lot of people on the roll who have never been converted to New Testament Christianity, but have just "joined the church and quit cussin'." Too many have just regarded baptism as the

method by which one "joins the Church of Christ."

They do not understand that the kingdom and the church are one and the same (Matthew 16:18). They regard the Church of Christ as "the Church of Christ denomination." They do not understand that denominationalism is condemned in the Bible (John 17:20-22). They do not understand that instrumental music in worship is sin because it is not authorized in the New Testament (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). They do not understand that in baptism one is saved from his sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). They do not understand that when one is baptized "for the remission of sins" that the

Lord adds him to the church (Acts 2:38-47). They do not understand that there is more to Christianity than a partial reformation of life (quit cussin'), that it is a totally new life, changed completely from the life that they lived in the world (Romans 6:3-4; 12:1-2). However their problem is not the same as the man in daddy's meeting over fifty years ago. They are not "half wits" incapable in understanding. The problem is that we have too many "half wit" preachers from whose "sermons" one would be incapable of learning these important truths.

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at this

appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry; (2 Timothy 4:1-5)."

Vengeance

Mike Benson

Back during WW II, the U.S. submarine "Tang" was on military maneuvers just off the coast of China. On one occasion while under the cover of darkness, the Tang surfaced in an attempt to fire upon an oncoming convoy of Japanese ships.

But since the submarine had been involved in previous military engagements she was only carrying eight torpedoes. It was absolutely imperative therefore, that all eight hit their designated targets; for if only one missed, the enemy would be able to quickly trace the path of the failed attack and return fire upon

the Tang. The first seven torpedoes were launched against the Japanese ships with deadly accuracy. However, the eighth torpedo suddenly deviated from its course, and turned back toward the Tang. The emergency alarm to submerge was sounded, but to no avail. For only a few, brief seconds later, the torpedo struck the hull of the Tang killing her crew and sinking the submarine.

In much the same way, when we do not love our enemies, but instead seek to take revenge upon them, we invariably do more harm to ourselves than to the people

we are trying to injure. In Romans 12:19 the apostle Paul urged, "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance in Mine, I will repay,' sayeth the Lord."

Are you doing Gods' job and seeking vengeance, or are you doing your job and loving your enemy (Matthew 5:43-44)?

P.O. Box 216

Whoever loves God must love his brother.
1 John 4:21

Dear Father, For Our Elders

Neal Pollard

Holy Father, Watcher, Giver
Overlooking All Our Hearts
Proper Thanks We'll Offer Never
For Thy Plan For Our Souls' Care
Thou Hast Spoken Through Thy Word
Wanting Thy Flock Free From snare
Commanding Men To Wisely Shepherd.
Thy Great Stewards From Our Midst
Are Men With Feet Of Clay, And Yet
They Faithfully Follow As Thou Bidst
Through Each Sorrow, Care, And Fret.
Sacrificial, Loving Pastors
Careful Of The Food We're Fed
Fighting Sin, Submitting To Their Master's
Written Word. They Love The Church's Head.
Could We Pay Them, Father, Truly
What They're Worth To Body, Spirit
Faithfully They Lead Us Fully
Hold Forth Thy Word. And Keep Us Near It!
As We Close, We Vow Before Thee
That We'll Support These Godly Men
Until We Cross Death's Final Sea
Please Bless Our Elders. In Christ, Amen.

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Should I Recommend Max Lucado's Books?

Glenn Colley

Perhaps some Christians have wondered why there haven't been more of our brethren reach the higher echelons of book sales among "Christiandom". There have been a few, like Leroy Brownlow and others. But it is hard to think of a member of the Lord's church who hit the secular book shelves with more force than Max Lucado, and I'm not surprised! I cannot think of anyone living today who I think is a more creative writer than Max. I don't know anyone who can so skillfully turn a phrase. That a member of the church would have such a readership among those who have never obeyed the Gospel should be a reason for rejoicing.

In one of his recent books, which is before me now, he doesn't actually mention the church of Christ, only the "Oak Hills Church" in San Antonio. In a later book, I see no mention of the church at all in the Book's description of Max and his work. But I'm not rejoicing. I'm disappointed.

While it's true that Max is extremely talented, he teaches false doctrine. While I have nothing whatsoever against him personally, and I admire his special ability, I feel compelled to warn Christians about the error in some of his writing. Some preachers are recommending these books to Christians with blanket endorsements. That must stop! Those who read books like, "He Still Moves Stones" need to proceed cautiously, fully aware of the dangerous and erroneous ideas carefully wrapped in creative language. Then, after seeing the false doctrines in the

books, need to be very hesitant to recommend the books to others. Teaching false doctrine to "babes" in Christ, or to non-Christians, is just as wrong whether one does so through preaching, teaching, or circulation of a book where the doctrines are taught.

When a member of the body of Christ hears that Max is a member of the church, and is very popular among the denominational book stores he may wonder about doctrines of salvation. After all, preaching truthfully what Jesus said in Mark 16:16 would exclude a preacher from 90% of America's denominations! Most denominations preach that we are saved by grace alone or faith alone without baptism. They believe that to preach the necessity of baptism is to erect a code or ritual that negates the grace of God. They believe that most any church will do, and one should join whatever group suits them best. The Bible, on the other hand, teaches that baptism IS essential (Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16, I Peter 3:21 etc.), and that we must be added to the one church of our Lord (Eph. 4:4). We are added to the church when we are baptized into Christ for the remission of our sins, (Acts 2:38-47).

But when that same member of the body of Christ reads Max's book "He Still Moves" he isn't taught about the necessity of obedience to the Gospel, or the oneness of Christ's church. Here is a sample of what he is taught:

"A legalist believes the supreme force behind salvation is you. If you look right, speak right, and belong to the right group, you will

be saved. The brunt of the responsibility doesn't lie within God, it lies within you." "Spirituality, Jesus says, comes not from church attendance, or good deeds, or correct doctrine, but from heaven itself."

"We religious teachers like to control and manage. we like to define and outline. Structure and clarity are the friend of the preacher. But they aren't always the protocol of God. Salvation is God's business. Grace is his idea, him his work, and his expense. He offers it to whom he desires. Our job in the process is to inform the people, not to screen the people."

"Nicodemus has never heard such words. Never. He has had many discussions of salvation. But this was the first time in which no rules were given. No system was offered. No code or ritual. 'Everyone who believes can have eternal life in Him,' Jesus told him. Could God be so generous? Even in the darkness of night, the amazement is seen on Nicodemus' face. Everyone who believes can have eternal life. Not "everyone who achieves." Not "everyone who succeeds." Not "everyone who agrees." But "everyone who believes."

Now, sincere reader, do you read the preceding paragraphs a bit confused about what the Bible says with regard to these subjects? Consider:

1. Did Jesus ever teach that church attendance, good deeds, and correct doctrine were separate from spirituality? Max is using his own definition of spirituality here. Part of the Christian walk, without which no one can be saved, is love for and

faithfulness to the church (Heb. 10:25, I Tim. 3:15), good deeds (Eph. 2:9), and correct doctrine (II John 9).

2. It is true that "Salvation is God's business. "Grace is His" idea, His work, and His expense." But to say, "He offers it to whom he desires, when He desires," is unbiblically cloudy. Is Max trying to say that salvation comes wholly by God's grace without our obedience of faith? If so, and it certainly appears that way, he's ignoring the truth of the Bible. Titus 2:11-12 says plainly, "The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men; teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." In other words, EVERYONE has God's grace offered to them. The question is, "Will they repent and obey?"

3. Max writes that when Jesus met Nicodemus, He offered no rules, no system, no code or ritual. This is amazing! How can he write such things?? Here's what Jesus really said: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God...Except a man be born

of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God...Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. (John 3:3 5-7)" Jesus DID teach rules, a system, and a code! He told Nicodemus that he MUST be born again. How does that happen? Is it by a system of rules or a code? You decide: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever, (I Peter 1:23)." How does God save people? Through the Gospel, (Rom. 1:16), not through some mystical, no law, no system, no rules, better-felt than-told teaching. And that Gospel includes baptism for the remission of sins.

I am not presuming to dictate what people can or cannot read; I am rather suggesting that for faithful Christians, some books deserve cautions and not endorsements.

Those things, which ye have both learned ...and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

Philippians 4:9



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Those Creation Days

Mell Futrell

In a recent issue of the "Christian Chronicle" (December 1994) the managing editor in response to a letter to the editor, concerning the Day/Age theory, stated:

"What did God say about the days of creation? Out of curiosity, I researched my Hebrew text and lexicon. Yom, the Hebrew word for day, can mean any one of six different things, according to the lexicon:

1. Different parts of a day.
2. Day as a division of time.
3. A time frame known only to God as his coming judgement.
4. One's lifetime or age.
5. An indefinite or unexplained period of time.
6. Time, such as "Since the day I have been before you."

"There is no consensus among Bible scholars over which meaning to apply to Genesis 1. How, then, can we be sure of the meaning?

Regardless, we can be sure that our all-powerful Creator did create all things. Our salvation doesn't hinge on how he did it."

Brethren, this questioning of the length of the days of Genesis 1 appears to me to be a growing phenomenon and I beg to differ with some of the above. I would suggest to you here a brief study of the days of creation. I'll begin with a few questions of my own. Is there no way for us to determine the meaning of "day" in Genesis 1? Are the days of Genesis 1 left unexplained? Must one be a "Bible scholar" before he/she has the capacity to properly understand the days of Genesis 1? What motivation could one possibly have for denying or doubting that the creation week was composed of 6 literal, approximate 24 hour periods? Please keep those questions in mind as you read the remainder of the article.

True enough, the Hebrew word for "day" (Yom) does

carry several meanings. This we have never denied. For example, in Genesis 2:4 we read, "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the DAY that the Lord GOD made the earth and the heavens." Here it is obvious that the singular day has reference to all 6 days of the creation. Thus, "day" is used here to convey a period of time longer than 24 hours. You may also see Psalm 95:8-9 where "day" (yom) appears to refer to the 40 year wandering of the Hebrews. Now brethren, it is one thing to know that "day" (yom) carries different meanings and another thing to know which of these meanings it carries in a particular passage. I say without reservation that it is possible to know the exact meaning of "day" in Genesis 1.

How did we know that the word "day" in Genesis 2:4 and Psalm 95:8 referred to longer than 24 hour periods? The context, was it not? Of

course it was, And the same method of checking a word's meaning can and should be applied here in Genesis 1. One of the most basic and general rules of interpretation is that, "All words are to be understood in their literal sense, unless the evident meaning of the context forbids." (D.R. Dungan, Hermeneutics, 1888, p. 184) Another Christian writer said it like this, "Expressions are to be understood literally unless the evident meaning forbids it." (Edward P. Myers, Interpreting Figurative Language in Biblical Interpretation: Principles and Practice, 1986, p. 92) Brethren, the CONTEXT has the final say as to how a word should be understood and thus what it means in that passage. Just what does the context of Genesis 1 indicate? First, in verses 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, and 31 the word "day" is modified by the phrase "evening and morning". Those creation days were composed just as our days are today with an

evening and a morning. That alone should settle the matter, but unfortunately for many it does not. Second, if the days of Genesis 1 are great periods of time (millions or billions of years) then what are the years mentioned in verse 14? If a day is not a day then what is a night (vs. 5)? If "day" here is to be understood figuratively then what about light, darkness, grass, waters, cattle, etc? What some have done to Genesis 1 brethren, via "buffet-style hermeneutics", is exactly what our premillennial neighbors have been doing to Revelation 20, as well as other chapters, for years.

Brethren, anyone with enough sense to read a newspaper and whom is not wearing evolutionary glasses ought to be able to digest Genesis 1 as it stands. You may rest assured GOD did not leave the days of Genesis 1 unexplained.

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Oppositions of Science

M. Floyd Bailey, Jr.

I've just finished reading John Clayton's January-February issue of "Does God Exist?". Unfortunately, it contains more misleading arguments, especially with regard to the age of the earth. Brother Clayton wrote an article which begins on Page 6 entitled "The Skies of 1994 Classroom Extraordinaire". He declares that great strides have been made to show that science and scripture are "symbiotic in nature". Unfortunately, he has listed his priorities of this symbiote correctly; that is science first, and we will make the scriptures cooperate. Brother Clayton needs to realize that it is God and the Bible first and science must harmonize; for when scientific hypotheses conflict with scripture, they cannot be deemed scientific (I Timothy 6:20).

He argues that the earth is ancient (i.e., millions of years) based on the measurements of

light originating from a supernova. He states the view of creationists that Adam and Eve were created full grown, and says that God can do things in any way He chooses, **except for making the cosmos appear full grown!** He argues that God would have to "violate some of his properties if he created the cosmos full grown". Brother Clayton reasons that since we receive light from other Galaxies and supernovae that are measured to be 15 millions of light years away, it took 15 million years for that same light to get here. From human reasoning of cause and effect, this sounds true and logical, but Brother Clayton has left out one very important factor in his equation - God!

Let us assume for the sake of argument that Brother Clayton's assumption, that "God would never mislead us by creating light from these novae and galaxies in transit", is true. By the same reasoning

we would have to say that Adam must have had a mother and father who had the same and so infinitum. For God could ever mislead us into thinking that Adam was just formed from dust (the logical flow of this fallacious argument). Adam must have been an embryo - oops, won't it take sperm and egg to make an embryo, but won't it take a mother and father to have eggs and sperm? You see the quandary? The first tree had to have grown from a seed which fell from another tree and so infinitum. Can you see the fallacy of Brother Clayton's argument? He has left out the beginning (creation) altogether.

He also fails to note that "God said, let there be light; and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). Brother Clayton argues that since there is light, it must have originated at the source. God says that He created the light first, without the material source.

I'm sorry, Brother Clayton, your argument doesn't plausibly place believing creationists in any difficulties, but rather shows how foolish it is to question the ways of

God.

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Most Of A Minute

The 120 Year Old Woman

This past week there was an article in the newspaper about a woman in France who has lived to the very ripe age of 120. Now, if you are like me, you had two reactions to that piece of news, and the two reactions happened in the same order for us all.

First, you thought, "120! That's great! Boy I hope I live to be 120!"

Then secondly you thought, "But you know, her life must not be too interesting. Physically, she operates with a body that is 120 years old and quite worn out. Socially, she knows that all of her contemporaries have died away a long time ago. I don't really think I care to be 120."

The most reasonable philosophy about this thought is this: I will live every day as a faithful Christian before God, and live just as long as He wants me to. Then I'll go to heaven.

James 4:13 says, "Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain. Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, if the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."

Glenn Colley

The Only Ones?

B.J. Clarke

"Do you all think you are the only ones who are right?" "Is it true that you believe you are the only ones going to heaven?" Who among us has not been faced with the preceding questions and others like them? How should we answer such questions? Can we be dogmatic about answering them?

Ours is an age of broad-mindedness. Tolerance is shown to everyone except those who are not broad-minded. Often, the most intolerant attitudes are manifested by those who are allegedly the most tolerant. Thus, the claim that a certain way is the only way or the idea that certain ones are the only approved ones, is rejected immediately by our general culture. Notwithstanding these cultural attitudes, Jesus said that the way that leads to eternal life is narrow and that the broad way leads to destruction (Matt. 7:13-14). In fact, God's way has always been narrow. Throughout Bible history, certain ones have been the only ones who were pleasing to God.

Cain and Abel brought

offerings of worship to God. Abel's offering was accepted whereas Cain's was rejected (Gen. 4:1-5). Of the two worshippers the only one who pleased God was Abel. Suppose Cain had said, "Do you think your worship is the only kind acceptable to God? DO you think that you are the only one who is right?" How could Abel have answered? He could have said, "I believe that God's way is the only right way and that is the way that I am seeking to follow" Likewise, Nadab and Abihu offered worship unto God. However, the text declares that they "offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord (Lev. 10:1-2)." Imagine some friends of Nadab and Abihu saying to the other priests, "Do you think you are the only ones who worship correctly? Do you think the depository of God's truth on how to worship rests with you?" I seriously doubt that such a conversation took place, for God had quite obviously demonstrated that there was one way to worship

him and that was His way. One of the major theological principles of the Bible is that God's holiness be honored by strict observance of his ordinances.

In Samuel 13, King Saul was surrounded by the Philistine army. He waited seven days for Samuel to come and offer a burnt offering to God. When Samuel did not arrive, Saul grew impatient and took it upon himself to offer the sacrifice himself. No sooner had he finished offering the sacrifice when Samuel arrived on the scene. Samuel immediately rebuked Saul for His unlawful sacrifice. Visualize Saul saying to Samuel, "Do you think that you and your little bunch are the only ones approved of by God in offering sacrifices? Do you think you are the only ones?" How could Samuel have replied? He might have said, "God has authorized certain ones as the only ones qualified to perform this action. If you have a problem with that, you can take it up with the Lord". A similar instance is found in the action of King Uzziah as recorded in 2 Chronicles 26:16-21. King

Uzziah entered the temple of God and burned incense upon the altar. Azariah the priest went in after him with eighty others to confront him with his sin. They said to him, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense" (2 Chr. 26:18). Uzziah became furious. Envision Uzziah saying, "Do you think that you and your little group of priests are the only ones who can burn incense to God? What a self-serving, narrow-minded group of legalists you all are! Why you must think you're the only game in town!" The truth of the matter is that these priests were the only ones God has authorized to perform this act of service. God struck Uzziah with leprosy until the day of his death. A different character named Uzza was struck dead by God for touching the ark of the covenant (1 Chr. 13:10). This could have been avoided if the ark of the covenant had been transported as God had directed. God had decreed that the ark be transported by only Levites who would put

poles in the rings of the ark and carry it by holding on to the poles (Ex. 25:10-16; 1 Chr. 15:2). Uzza was not a Levite and the ark was being transported on an cart. Suppose the family of Uzza had said to the Levites, "Do you think you all are the ones who can carry the ark?". In reality, the Levites were the only ones who could carry the ark and be pleasing to God.

Is there a group of people today who can be identified as the only ones who are pleasing to God? Absolutely. The only ones who are pleasing to God today are those who do God's will in God's way. Who are the only ones who are going to be saved? Those who are in his body, which is his church, or which there is only one (Eph. 5:23; 1:22-23; 4:4). Who are the only ones going to heaven? Let Jesus answer the question. "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" (Matt. 7:21).

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The People Of God

Vance Hutton

Christians are referred to in Heb. 4:9 as the people of God. Peter in I Pet. 2:9-10 said that only after our conversion are we the people of God. In a very special sense are we the Lord's people. He bought us and thus we belong to Him (I Cor. 6:19-20). He did not force us to be His people. We responded to His invitation. Being His people, there are many responsibilities that come our way. Please notice with me four of these.

I. PEOPLE OF PURPOSE:

The people of God have a noble purpose in this life. Man's primary mission does not have to do with pleasures and treasures. Solomon said in the long ago that to fear God and keep His commands

was the whole of man (Ecc. 12:13). The New Testament plainly bears this same purpose in essence. We are here to please God (I Thess. 4:1). Our labors are to have judgment day in mind and to be acceptable to the Lord (II Cor. 5:9-10). Life is not bound up in possessions (Lk. 12:15) and we are to be laying up treasures in heaven (Matt. 6:19-21). Our thrust is to live so that God is glorified (Matt. 5:16). Our affections and labors are to be geared toward the spiritual (Jn. 6:27; Col. 3:1-2). God loves all and all have potential for heaven. The choice is now yours and mine. The people of God have a great, high, and noble purpose while here.

II) PEOPLE OF PURITY:

The people of God have the

awesome responsibility of living pure lives. "Keep thyself pure" were the words of Paul to Timothy (I Tim. 5:22). Jesus said the pure in heart would see God (Matt. 5:8). The Hebrews penman wrote that unless we are holy we will never be privileged to enter heaven and be with the Lord (Heb. 12:14). Those dominated by sins of the flesh shall not enter heaven according to Gal. 5:19-21. The Bible closes by saying no sin can go to heaven (Rev. 21:27), and the ungodly will be on the outside (Rev. 22:15). The Bible is our standard and Jesus our pattern. Let us live lives of purity.

III) PEOPLE OF PRAYER:

It is imperative that the people of God be a people of

prayer. In prayer we honor God (Matt. 6:9-12), ask petitions (Matt. 7:7-11), offer thanks (Phil. 4:6), and make confession of sins (I Jn. 1:9; Acts 8:22; Lk. 18:13). Are not these vital to our spiritual lives? Jesus got up early to pray (Mk. 1:35) and at times prayed all night (Lk. 6:12). We are taught to continue in prayer and be dependent upon prayer (I Thess. 5:17; Col. 4:2). There are so many areas of concern in our lives that demand prayer. Yes, we are to be people of prayer.

IV) PEOPLE OF POWER:

God expects His people to be a people of power. God has granted us the means to be strong (II Tim. 1:7). We can be strong in Christ (Eph. 6:10-11). We are to add self-control and moral courage to

our faith (II Pet. 1:5-7). It takes power for us to endure. We must overcome discouragement and maybe even persecution. We must not grow weary. We must say "no" to sin. Yes, we are to be a people of power.

God's people have a unique future. Heaven, it is for the faithful. Let us face our responsibilities. How are we faring as the people of God?

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Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Colossians 3:17

MARCH 24, 1995

• See Articles Inside:

- Some People Who Touched Paul's Life
- Dangers Facing The Church
 - Qualified Leadership
 - The Average Man And TV
 - Living The Word
- Those Creation Days (Part 2)
 - The Meaning Of EIS In Acts 2:38

Volume 32 Number 12
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

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Some People Who Touched Paul

Allen Webster

There are at least 100 different men and women named in Acts and Paul's letters, as a part of his circle of friends and fellow laborers. Paul could not do the job by himself. A number of these are listed in Paul's last book, actually in his last chapter (2 Tim. 4:11-13). He is sitting in a prison cell, knowing that death is near, and he muses about those who have touched his life. Here are some of those he names and a lesson we can learn from each.

Luke (4:11), the loyal laborer. He is the "beloved physician" (Col. 4:14) who had constantly traveled with Paul since the stay at Troas on the second missionary journey (Acts 16:8-11; cf. to Phillip, Acts 16:10-12; to Jerusalem on the third missionary journey, Acts 20:5-21:17; to Rome, Acts 27; during first imprisonment, Col. 4:14; Phile. 24). Being a doctor, he is probably a great help to Paul as he faced numerous injuries in his labors. Paul may have even dictated this letter (2 Timothy) to Luke (being a doctor, Luke must have appreciated Paul's reference to gangrene, 2 Tim. 2:17. Luke may have stayed to testify in Paul's behalf. All others had either forsook Paul or been sent on errands, "only Luke is with me." From Luke we learn that being dependable is one of the chief characteristics of a good servant of God. Ability is good, availability is better.

Crescens (4:10), the anonymous co-laborer. He is likely sent by Paul to Galatia. We know nothing else of him, but gain encouragement that he was there to help Paul in the hour of need. The RV margin

gives Gaul an as alternative reading here; and, if that is correct, Crescens' going there may have indicated that Paul on the trip to Spain (which he very probably made between the first and second imprisonments), might have established congregations in Gaul (France) (Coffman). From Crescens we learn that we do not have to be noticed to be helpful to the Lord's cause. Let God have the glory and we care not who gets the credit.

Titus (4:10), the trusted "troubleshooter." Paul's close associate who was first taken, probably as a recent Gentile convert, to the Jerusalem Council as a "test case" regarding circumcision (Gal. 2:3). He had been involved in helping straighten out the problems in the Corinthian church (2 Cor. 2:12,13; 7:6,13-16; 8:16-24). Paul, during the first Roman imprisonment, had left Titus in Crete to straighten out the problems in the churches there (Tit. 1:5). Titus had each of the men mentioned to this point (except Luke) and that they were sent to an area that Paul had personally evangelized. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that Paul wanted to send a last message to each of these regions and also to have his companions to explain the situation to them. Also, Paul had been left alone in Rome (with Luke), and this may have been his own devising. Perhaps he was fearful of the imprisonment and execution of his friends.

Carpus (4:13), who shared what he had with God's servant. Carpus lived at Troas and showed Paul much hospitality. Paul must have departed in a hurry (perhaps

being sought for arrest) because he left his cloak and books behind (or perhaps the weather was warm and he did not want to carry the cloak or need the books). Carpus was a faithful brother; he would guard them until somebody picked them up to take to Paul. Even such so-called menial tasks are ministries for the Lord. As Timothy hurried to Rome, he could stop in Troas and get the cloak. He also wanted him to bring the books, and parchments, which may have been with Timothy all along (the grammatical structure seems to indicate this, 4:13). Paul probably left them there in haste to depart. (Some have speculated that he was arrested there and not given time to get all things.)

The *Cloak (phailones)*, only here in the New Testament) was a course, circular cape which fell down below the knees, with an opening for the head in the center. It had no sleeves and somewhat resembled the pancho popular in south Texas and Mexico. The cold of the Roman nights, even in summer, is well known; and Paul's prospect of possibly spending the winter in a dungeon without heating or proper clothing was not a welcome thought. We are not surprised that a scholar such as Paul wanted material for study and writing. Paul was a student until the very end of life. The first word books (*biblia*) probably refers to papyrus rolls or scrolls which likely contained Old Testament Scriptures. (Our word *Bible* comes from this.) The second word *Parchments* (membranes, only here in the New Testament) literally means "skins" and refers to scrolls

made of animal skins. It is not known for certain if the parchments had materials written on them (like New Testament books) or if he needed them to write letters to friend and churches. It may have ever been something he needed for his legal defense.

Mark, the "come back" kid (4:11). He was a cousin of Barnabus, Paul's first partner in missionary service (Acts 13:1-3). His mother was a noted Christian in Jerusalem (Acts 12:5,12) and he was chosen to travel with Paul on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:5). He was an "assistant" (*hupereten*, a keeper of documents in the synagogue, cf. Lk. 4:20). Unfortunately, John Mark failed on that journey (Acts 13:13). Paul refused to take Mark on the second trip, and this led to falling out between Paul and Barnabus (Acts 15:36-41). However, Paul would not close his portion of the Bible without a full "reinstatement" of Mark. Paul had twelve years earlier mentioned him as a worker during the first imprisonment (Col. 4:10; Phile. 24). Mark was also involved during this time with Peter in Rome (I Pet. 5:13). He now admitted that John Mark was a valuable ("profitable," *euchrestos*, 2 Tim. 2:21; Phile. 11) worker, ("ministry" is *diakonian*), and he wanted Mark with him in Rome. How Mark must have rejoiced to finally hear words of commendation from Paul! The one who had no use for him now said that he was useful! How good is it to know that one failure in Christain service need not make one's whole life a failure. Tradition says that Mark was a pioneer in Egyptian

mission work (Alexandria). From Mark we learn that one mistake, even a serious one, does not keep from being of valuable service in the kingdom.

Tychicus (4:12), the "relief pitcher." Tychicus was a believer from the province of Asia (Acts 20:4) who willingly accompanied Paul and probably ministered as a personal servant to the apostle. He was one of the messengers (*apostoloi*) who carried the contribution to the poor saints in Jerusalem (Acts 20:4; 2 Cor. 8:23). Since he was from Asia, Paul sent him, along with Onesimus, with letters to Ephesus (6:21:22) and Colossae (4:7) during his first imprisonment. Paul may have sent Tychicus to Crete to relieve Titus (Titus 3:12). Now he was sending him to Ephesus to relieve Timothy. A relief pitcher may not get much the glory, but he wins alot of games! From Tychicus we learn that someone needs to be there to continue a good work after it has been going for awhile. There are some who are good at starting, but we need "finishes" as well.

Tychicus met Paul at Nicopolis during the period between Paul's arrests (Tit. 3:12). Now Paul had summoned him to Rome and sent him to Dalmatia, across the Adriatic Sea from Southern Italy (modern Yugoslavia). From Titus we learn that we can help the Lord's cause by smoothing out problems that develop between brethren (cf. Mt. 5:9). None of these men became as famous as Paul, but they all labored in the cause for which he died. He could not have done what he did with the assistance of others. Thanks be to God for co-workers.

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Visit Soon
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Guest Editorial

Gus Nichols

The great apostle Paul warned the elders at Ephesus night and day, and with tears, that there were great dangers confronting the church. (Acts 20:17, 28-32.) Some on has said that, "To be forewarned is to be forearmed." As Christian soldiers we are greatly blessed if we know what enemies are lying in wait for us, and of the dangers facing us.

1. **THERE IS DANGER THAT THE CHURCH MAY DRIFT INTO SECULARISM AND MATERIALISM.** Our nation has never had such affluence as it has now. We are about 8 per cent of the world's population, but we own about 80 per cent of the wealth of the world. There may be more spiritual danger in wealth than in poverty. We are so close to this world that we are sure to be somewhat affected by it. We are in danger of exchanging the spiritual for the secular and material things about us. The masses are now looking at nearly all things through dollar marks. It is easy for the church to drift with the tide, and to put the emphasis on material things. There is danger that elders and leaders may become primarily a glorified finance committee. (I Tim. 6:5-19; Mt. 6:19-21.) Men of Israel, in their apostacy, would not close the door for naught. (Mal. 1:10.) Joyful, sacrificial service is lacking.

Preachers should, if possible, give full time to the teaching and proclamation of the gospel. (I Tim. 4:12-16; Acts 6:1-7; I Cor. 9:1-4; 2 Cor. 11:8.) They should not be buried alive

with secular and material things. It is not enough for preachers, elders and deacons to be busy. A dog may chase cars all day long; but what good does he accomplish? Let us keep the church spiritual and busy winning souls. Let us use mass media for reaching the billions who do not know the gospel, have never heard it. Let us use the printed page, radio, and TV. Let us not forsake the old time gospel meetings. Look ahead! (2 Cor. 4:16-18.)

WE ARE IN DANGER OF DEPARTING FROM BIBLE PREACHING. Paul charged Timothy to "PREACH THE WORD." (2 Tim. 4:1-3.) Christ charged his disciples to go into all the world "AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE." (Mk. 16:15.) And "they went forth and preached every where". (Mk. 16:20; Col. 1:23; Rom. 10:18-20.) Paul said the time would come when they would not endure sound doctrine. The ears are itching for man's wisdom and fables instead of the powerful, saving word, (Rom. 1:16.) The time has come when many want to apologize for reading the Bible in the church (Neh. 8:1-22; Lk. 4:16-21.) The man with a "Thus saith the Lord" is still needed in the pulpit. Ignorance in the church is the cause of the divisions among us today.

The brotherhood is spending millions of dollars on meeting houses, with the doors opened about 4 hours per week (of 168 hours). A totally converted and committed church would gladly assemble for an hour each night in the whole

year. The fact that worldly members would do this, if offered enough money, proves it could be done if we were so transformed that spiritual things would motivate us.

3. **THERE IS A DANGER THAT WE MAY OVER-EMPHASIZE LITTLE THINGS AND NEGLECT THE WEIGHTIER MATTERS, OF MERCY, LOVE, UNITY, AND THE LIKE.** Good and adequate meeting houses are important, if the church would do it's best work. But they are a poor substitute for conversion, godliness, true service and devotion. Our confidence must not be in material things, but in the Lord. Buried talents are worse than no talents. And there is no substitute for hard work in the Kingdom of God. There is something each one can well do, and he should specialize in doing it and become efficient in his field of service, (Rom. 12:4-6.) The preacher must prepare sermons for the pulpit, radio, TV, articles for paper, lessons for classes, and what ever his teaching opportunities may be, there is a challenge for preparation! The same is true of all the class teachers, the elders, and deacons, and the song leader should give time to preparing to be efficient in directing the singing. We must all work. It is wise to plan the work and services of the church, (I Cor. 14:40; Mk. 6:40.) But no sort of plans will work themselves. Ninty nine per cent of success in church work, is **WORK!** And one hundred per cent of the members who are normal must work to be Christians to be

Christlike. (I Cor. 15:58; Tit. 3:1.)

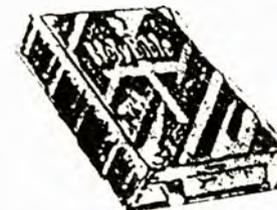
4. **THERE IS DANGER THAT THE CHURCH MAY LOSE FAITH AND BECOME A MERE SOCIAL SOCIETY.** Many are in the church (?) for material reasons; they follow for the loaves and fishes. They are not in the church to give, but to eat. They are not out to work, but to criticize those who do what is done. They "murmur" and complain at every thing done, or undone, and yet they will not lay a little finger on the job to do it themselves. (Mat. 23:1-3; Phil. 2:12-16; I Cor. 10:1-12.) They salve their smarting consciences with lip service and criticisms. They are liability, and not an asset to the church. If asked to do something, they say, "Let George do it." They are interested in socializing the church, and in following every trend away from the truth, and from the faith of the Gospel. (Heb. 3:12; I Tim. 4:1-5; 2 Jn. 9:11; Rom. 16:17-18.)

5. **WORLDLINESS IN THE CHURCH IS ONE OF OUR GREATEST DANGERS.** "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

(I Cor. 5:1-13.) "The works of the flesh" kill the zeal and darkens the light of truth preached. (Gal. 5:19-21.) The motto of many is to compromise with the world, and get on friendly terms with it and its ways, (Jas. 4:4; I Jn. 2:15-17.) They want us to conform to the world and its standard in more ways, and still try to be conformed to the word, (Rom. 12:1-2.) They want the church to be popular by dancing, social drinking, general pleasure seeking, and the like. God says for us to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, (Jas. 1:27.) While the church is in the world, the world has no place in the church.

6. **ANOTHER DANGER FACING THE CHURCH IS LIBERALISM.** The Bible must be believed and strictly obeyed. Christ has all authority and power in Christianity, (Mat. 28:18-20.) He is to be obeyed in all matters, (Heb. 5:8-9.) There were liberals in New Testament times who worshipped after the commandments of men. And their worship and religion were vain. Mt.15:9; Mk.7:3-13.)

(Continued on Page 3)



**The
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Danger's Facing The Church (Continued From Page 2)

Liberalism trifles with specific laws, and sets aside, as it sees fit, the plain, positive commandments of the Lord.

It rejects the verbal inspiration of the Bible, the virgin birth, the atonement of Christ, his bodily resurrection and ascension along with his coming at the end of the world, (Jn. 14:1-3; Jn. 5:28-29; Mt. 25:31-46.) In a counseling problem an elder of a large church was teaching a young peoples' class that the virgin birth of Christ is a fable, and is not to be believed. They thought he ought to be let alone, that he was doing a good work, he was giving \$100 per

Sunday.

7. ANTIISM IS ANOTHER DANGER CONFRONTING THE CHURCH. This attitude trifles with generic commands, and tries to make and force its own laws upon the church in the realm of liberty, and where God has not told us how to do something command, They say "There is no realm of opinion", or of human judgment in the service of God. The Lord said "GO" and "TEACH", but did not tell us how to do this, did not give all the details. But some make laws for God and teach that there must be only one class taught at a given time in the meeting

house where there are many rooms for teaching. They oppose other things; some of them are against the use of the baptism; others against the individual communion cups. Still others are against the church taking money out of its treasury to buy food for hungry, destitute children. Some are against Bible colleges supported by individuals. Others teach the saints only doctrine.

8. THERE IS THE DANGER THAT FOR A LACK OF DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCH IT MAY BECOME ROTTEN TO THE CORE WITH UNGODLY CHARACTERS AND WORLDLY

PERSONS. It may not be long now until such members will be calling the elders "Pigs", and will be rioting to get their men at the steering wheel to take over the church for the devil. The church is commanded to withdraw from every member who walks disorderly, and not according to the truth, (2 Thes. 3:6; I Cor. 5:1-13.) God killed two of the members of the church at Jerusalem in discipline, (Acts 5:1-14.) This shows his attitude toward sin in the church. It also shows the apostle Peter's attitude toward the discipline that should be used against ungodly members, who

cannot be corrected and converted from the errors of their ways, (Jas. 5:19-20.) Yes, there are problems everywhere even facing the church. But STRONG CHRISTIANS don't give up because of dangers and problems ahead. Rather they more fully arm themselves for the battle, (Eph. 6:10-17.) They know the church cost Jesus his blood and life, and they stand ready to preserve it in its purity regardless of the cost, (Eph. 5:25; Acts 20:28.) By God's grace and help we shall win at last! Our faith will overcome the world! (I Jn. 5:4.) We shall win by the word, the sword of the spirit!

Qualified Leadership

Dalton Key

The qualities expected of elders in the church may be found in I Timothy 3:2-7 and in Titus 1:7-10. Much has been said and volumes have been written over the years concerning the interpretation of these attributes and the stringency with which they should be applied. The issue has produced heated word-wars among brethren, many still being fought.

Some hold to an ultra-rigid view of elders' qualifications, requiring absolute perfection from prospective bishops on all points. And because no one is without some faults, some weaknesses, these

extremists know of no one anywhere (with the possible exception of themselves) qualified to serve. Others embrace the opposite extreme, viewing the Bible's requirements as little more than benign suggestions, to be used, modified, or completely discarded at will. Both of these radical perspectives are misguided and counterproductive to a reasonable understanding of the passages at hand.

It is true that many of the qualifications are rigid, unbending, and easily discerned. Either a candidate is the husband of one wife or he isn't. He either "rules well his

own house," "having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly," or he doesn't. Is he "not given to wine"? Is he true to the scriptures, "holding fast the faithful word"? Many of the qualifications are "either/or", "yes or no" matters.

Other attributes require more judgment. A man must be "not selfwilled, not soon angry," and he is to be "sober-minded" (ASV), but to what degree? How hospitable must he be? How vigilant?

In these areas of degree, one's ability to lead and manifest a worthy example should be considered. Shepherds in the church are

spiritual leaders, with authority to oversee, but also with a charge to be "ensamples to the flock" (I Peter 5:3). A man need not be perfect in these areas, but is he "blameless," serving as a valid example with respect to them? Moreover, is he a man the congregation can easily and comfortably follow in these Christ-like attributes? If he can't be conscientiously modeled as a fitting example of Christianity, what right has he lead the body of Christ?

A few necessary requirements for elders are self-

evident. They must be "elders," older men, of sufficient age, maturity, and experience to warrant respect. They must be capable of leading. And they must be involved with a body willing to follow them. Leadership without "fellowship" is a futile and impotent exercise.

Needed: qualified men who "desire the office," the "good work," of "a bishop" (I Timothy 3:1.)

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The Average Man & TV

An article recently pointed out that the average man in America, among other things, is 5'9" tall and weighs 173 pounds. He is married, and would marry her again. He spends about 7.2 hours a week eating. He prefers showering to taking a bath. He doesn't know his cholesterol count, but it's 211. He hates to stop to ask for directions when he's in the car. And he watches 26 hours and 44 minutes of TV a week.

Wait! Almost 27 hours of TV? Now that's a shocker - especially considering the important things we put off because we "don't have time". There're the children who need one-on-one time with their parents. And then there's the spouse who needs attention and conversation. The Bible says, "See then that ye walk circumspectly (or carefully), redeeming the time...(Ephesians 5:15). I will never see this day but once. Let me spend it wisely.

Glenn Colley

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The Words of Truth**

Most Of A Minute

Living The Word

Paul Stewart knew the law. He taught criminal justice at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. He held a bachelor's degree, a law degree, and a master's degree.

Authorities arrested Stewart at his home the other day. It seems that when he left New York about 11 years ago, he also left eight felony convictions. The charges included burglary, larceny and desertion from the Army.

Interesting situation: Stewart knew the law, he taught the law, the problem was that he didn't keep the law.

Only too often this same story applies to my religion. I may be a member of the church, profess to be a Christian. But, until I apply His truths to the way I live, I'm not His disciple. In Matthew 7:21 Jesus said, "Not everyone that sayeth unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

Glenn Colley

Those Creation Days (Part 2)

Last week we spent some time stressing the value of context in determining a words meaning in a particular passage. Of course, the word we are concerned with is "day" as it appears in Genesis 1. The question we are answering is, "Are the days of Genesis 1 to be understood as literal, approximate 24 hour periods"? We firmly believe the answer to this question is YES. This week we will attempt to make some additional arguments that bolster what we believe to be the Biblical position relative to those creation days.

Brethren, Biblically speaking, it appears that there is some significance to the fact that those Genesis 1 days are modified by numerical adjectives. For example we read, "And the evening and the morning were the FIRST DAY" (vs. 5), and this use of

a numerical adjective continues throughout verse 31 in connection with each day of creation. Dr. Henry M. Morris, president of the Institute for Creation Research has said, "...it is noted that whenever a limiting numeral or ordinal is attached to "day" in the Old Testament (and there are over 200 such instances), the meaning is always that of a literal day." (Scientific Creationism, 1985, p. 224) Brother Bert Thompson in a seminar handout quotes Dr. Arthur Williams from the Creation Research Annual as saying, "We have failed to find a single example of the use of the word "day" in the entire Scripture where it means other than a period of 24 hours when modified by the use of the numerical adjective." All of this further strengthens the argument for

understanding those creation days as 24 hour periods. Elsewhere in Scripture information is provided us which corroborates the contextual testimony of Genesis 1 for 24 hour days. Moses wrote in 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 thou son, nor thou daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, 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...". It is evident from reading these four verses that GOD patterned the Israelites' week after his creation week. How

did you suppose the Hebrew people interpreted this command from GOD? Did they view 6 days as 6 indefinite periods of time or as we do today as 24 hour periods? The answer should be obvious. One of my original questions in last week's article was, "Must one be a 'Bible scholar' before he/she has the capacity to properly understand the days of Genesis 1?" Naturally, my answer would be no. But please understand also that I'm not opposed to quoting "scholars" or "authorities" per-se. As you've seen I've done a bit of quoting myself in these two articles. But ultimately, we should all concede that Genesis 1 stands as it reads and reads as it stands. Finally as distressing as it is, it should come as no

surprise to us that many today, including some brethren, deny in full or in part the Biblical account of creation. As informed New Testament Christians we may not be surprised but we should be greatly concerned about the inroads evolution none form or another is making in our society and even in the church. It seems to me that in one's motivation for denying or doubting the Biblical account of creation just as it reads matters little because the result is the same, a discounting of the word of GOD. "And GOD saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." (*Genesis 1:31*)
Mel Futrell
Daphne, AL.

The Meaning Of EIS In Acts 2:38

In 1979 I was fortunate enough to obtain a copy of a booklet entitled, *Baptism And Remission*, a reprint of an article written by Baptist scholar J.W. Willmarth which was published in the *Baptist Quarterly* (July 1877). In it he admitted that the Greek word *eis*, which is translated "for" in Acts 2:38 denotes purpose of action. He wrote, "Everything unites to render a mistake as to the force of *eis* almost impossible. Everything compels us to assign to its obvious, natural, distinctive meaning, as used to denote the purpose of actions. It here marks the purpose for which, the object to which, the inquirers of Pentecost were to repent...and be baptized" (p. 301).

That is an amazing statement coming from one whose theology teaches that one is baptized "because of" remission of sins rather than "in order to" obtain such. Other scholars have been able to look beyond their denominational theology and admit the truth on the purpose of baptism, as per Acts 2:38. Note the following:

TRANSLATION	NAME	DENOMINATION	WORK
for the putting away	Abbot	Church of England	Commentary on Acts
for, to or toward	Alexander	Presbyterian	Commentary on Acts
for, unto	Benson	Methodist	Commentary on Bible
for, unto	Bickerteth	Church of England	Commentary on Acts
in reference to	Adam Clarke	Methodist	Commentary on Bible
unto, to	Dill	Baptist	Shepherd's Handbook
is always prospective	Ditzler	Methodist	Wilke-Ditzler Debate
aim, purpose	Godet	Presbyterian	Shepherd's Handbook
purpose	Godwin	Congregationalist	Shepherd's Handbook
in order to	Harkness	Baptist	Shepherd's Handbook
in order to receive	Harper	Baptist	Shepherd's Handbook
unto	Hovey	Baptist	Commentary on John
unto, to this end	Jacobus	Presbyterian	Commentary on Acts
denotes object	Meyer	Lutheran	Commentary on Acts
with a view to	McClintock	Methodist	McClintock & Strong
might receive	Schaff	Presbyterian	Shepherd's Handbook
in order to	Strong	Methodist	Shepherd's Handbook
unto, to the end	Summers	Methodist	Commentary on Acts
unto, to, toward	Thayer	Congregationalist	Greek-English Lexicon

For the above listing I am indebted to Max R. Miller in a Bible lesson he authored entitled, *Baptism Is Not Essential To Salvation* (a study of false doctrines regarding baptism). To admit a truth is not the same as practicing that truth, but it is of interest to note that sectarian scholars have seen what some of our brethren are beginning to deny.

MARCH 31, 1995

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 - The True You
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Volume 32 Number 13
(USPS 691-760)

The Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but
Words of Truth and soberness."--1

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Well Acquainted With Scripture

Mell Futrell

In 1835, Alexander Campbell quoted with apparent approval, "Luther's Favorite Maxim": "One well acquainted with scripture makes a good theologian." (The Christian System, p. 229, n.d.) Our title is taken from this quotation and merits some consideration.

Who among us will deny that one needs to be well acquainted with Scripture? You guessed it, not a soul! But the "facts" of experience speak for themselves and an honest observer is forced to declare that far too many Christians are, as we say, Biblically illiterate. Do not the words of Hosea cry out to us even now?

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me; seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy GOD, I will also forget thy children." (Hosea 4:6)

Why are some brethren not well acquainted with Scripture? Could it be, in part, that Bible instruction in the home is not what it should be? I believe so. Take a moment to reflect upon the Bible instruction, or lack thereof, that you received growing up. While you're doing just that I'll share with you this admonition from the law of Moses, the book of Deuteronomy. After having reminded Israel that GOD had brought them out of the house of bondage (5:6), Moses states the ten commandments (5:7 -21), exhorts them not to turn to the right hand or to the left (5:32), tells them GOD is one and must be loved with the totality of one's being (6:4-5), and then beginning in verse six he offers these familiar words:

"And these words I command thee this day shall be in thine heart. An thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt

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.

And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." (6:6-9)

Now you tell me brethren, does the above sound like anything you experienced growing up or that your practice at the present time?

In addition to these Old Testament verses, we may and should as Christians and parents appeal to the New Testament for guidance as it respects our duty in the home to acquaint our children with the Scriptures. You may remember that Paul told Timothy, "And that from a CHILD thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2

Timothy 3:15). Brethren, we need more grandmothers like Lois, mothers like Eunice, and fathers like that depicted in Ephesians 6:4. Tell me now, when was the last time you and your family sat down TOGETHER at home to study the Scriptures? Has it been awhile? I would share with you this quote from the pen of Alexander Campbell:

"I never knew but a very few families that made it their daily business to train up their children in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, to cause them everyday to commit to memory a portion of the living oracles; but these few instances authorize me to think, and to say, that such a course, persisted in and sustained by the good example of parents, will very generally, if not universally, issue in the salvation of their children. And before anyone says, I have found an exception to the proverb of Solomon, which says, "Train

up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it, 'let him show that his child was, TRAINED UP IN THE WAY HE SHOULD GO.'" (The Christian System, P. 278, n.d.)

Many other reasons, then the one we've offered, could be asserted for why some are not well acquainted with Scripture, but the point has been made. And the excuses of some will not suffice. I don't know about "a good theologian" but one well acquainted with Scripture does make one good Bible student. And good Bible students are in my estimation much more likely to make good faithful Christians. Doesn't it make sense brethren, to begin this acquaintance with Scripture at the earliest age possible? Surely it does.

"Why Sit We Here Until We Die"

Four leperous man sat near the entering of the gate, "and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die?" (II Kings 7:3). Does this remind you of some brethren who are unwilling to get involved in exposing false teachers and preachers who come into a congregation, and begin teaching many of the innovations that are currently being taught in many of the larger congregations? Can we afford to sit by and let the

become a denomination? The apostle Paul said, "To whom we gave place of subjection, NO NOT FOR AN HOUR"; Why Paul? "that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Galations 2:5).

Some of the more well educated preachers and big churches are fostering many innovations: exchanging pulpits with their denominational preacher friends, and women being used in the public worship, and some

women are now preachers along with their husbands. Women serve the Lord Supper. Twenty years ago no one could have convinced me that would be happening in the Lord's church. What is so different in the sweeping movement is that they no longer leave the church, but retain the name church of Christ, and the weaker among us succumb to their liberal views.

The reason there is such a

wide spread departure from the "old paths" is because we are setting by letting these false teachers sell their literature and books without warning brethren of these insidious doctrines. Faithful elders and preachers are failing to expose these false practices; therefore, they are making their inroads into even the rural churches and causing divisions. "Awake!" Paul said, (Eph. 5:14). The church more than a century

ago faced a similar condition with the missionary society, and instrumental music etc. We are faced today with some of the same problems. How long will we sit idly by watching congregation after congregation swept away by the liberal brethren among us. "WHY SIT WE HERE UNTIL WE DIE?"

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Visit with the
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What My Sister Laura Taught Me

Glenn Colley

A few weeks ago I got the call that no one ever wants to get. My dear sister, who is 34, was diagnosed with breast cancer. News like this takes your breath away. Having a loved one diagnosed with malignancy makes the word cancer hard to say. You can't believe this can be happening. It doesn't seem real.

After her surgery, and literally thousands of prayers, the pathology report of the lymph nodes came back normal. It's funny how that a little word like "normal" can send waves of joy and tears of relief through a surgical waiting room.

Laura will undergo chemotherapy, and adjust her life in a variety of necessary ways. We look forward to spending many more Christmasses together.

I know that many of our readers have experienced similar, even more terrible things of life. Still, I thought these lessons might be helpful for the present and future. Laura taught me,

1. THAT "GOOD NEWS" AND "BAD NEWS" ARE RELATIVE TERMS.

This lesson has never come home to me with such force. To think that hearing a doctor say, "Your loved one has cancer, but we believe we got it all. She will undergo Chemo treatment.", would make me rejoice, is amazing to me! And yet, when you compare that message from the doctor to what he *could* have said, it is clearly wonderful news.

Author Robert Fulghum

wrote, "One of life's best coping mechanism is to know the difference between an inconvenience and a problem. If you break your neck, if you have nothing to eat, if your house is on fire --then you've got a problem. Everything else is an inconvenience. Life is inconvenient. Life is lumpy. A lump in the oatmeal, a lump in the throat and a lump in the breast are not the same kind of lump. One needs to learn the difference."

This kind of perspective is precisely what the Hebrew writer was teaching when he wrote to Christians who were facing struggles in life. Sometimes the weight was heavy, but how bad "heavy" was depended on what they compared it with. The text says, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin, (Heb. 2:2-4)." In other words, to those who would look at their troubles as Christians and cry "This is bad. This is more than I can bear!", the Lord would say, "Compared to what? How bad is it when compared to my sufferings?"

Hopefully, throughout my life, I will work to not murmur and complain over trivial things. May we be kind and gentle and tenderhearted, ever thankful for a God who has

blessed us again and again.

2. YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT A DAY MAY BRING FORTH. The wise sage of Proverbs, 27:1, said, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." How wonderfully profound!

For years I've kept a wall calender in my office, on which I have carefully plotted dates and times and destinations for the future months; and yet, it takes but a moment for a ring of the phone to change it all. One brief message of shocking news, and you reverse those calendered plans like a child clearing a checkerboard with one sweep of his arm.

Consider how the calamities of Job occurred: "Now there was a day...(Job 1:13);" Then the news. Job had lost his livestock, his servants, and worse, his sons and daughters. Forever the history will echo from the pages of Job, "Now there was a day..."

How did we respond to the possibility that human life is fragile and that news as greivous as cancer may come my way on any day? Do I respond in pessimism? Do I let realities of life pull me down to despair? No! Instead, I must be mature enough to make daily deposits into my personal storehouse of faith. The day calamity comes there won't be time to build a solid faith on which to lean. I must build it in advance. During the difficult times, that bolstering faith is of great value. Which do you think would be considered of more value to the Colley family today: great riches, or a strong abiding faith in our Creator? "Take the

world but give me Jesus!"

Romans 10:17 says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The best place to keep your Bible is not on the table or in the pew. The best place to keep it is in your heart.

3. SOMETIMES PAIN IS VERY GOOD.

This point, at first, may seem a bit curious. Humans universally work to avoid and reduce pain. Nevertheless, some pain is a bitter/sweet blessing from God. Were it not for a brief pain, Laura would not have seen the doctor. The cancer would have spread, perhaps quickly, and gone out of control. That pain raised a red flag of concern, and the doctor was consulted, thankfully in time. Aren't there other times when pain is good?

This is true with regard to temptation which I overcome. James wrote, "Count it all joy when you fall into various temptation, knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience, (James 1:2,3)."

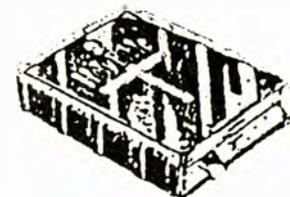
This is also true with regard to trials I am called to endure as a Christian. Peter wrote, "...ye are in

heaviness through manifold temptations; That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold...might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." When we endure the pains of trials and temptations, we put to the test our faith in God, and His care for us. Afterward, we enjoy the sweet fruit increased confidence in our Lord.

4. IN THE TIMES OF CRISIS FOR A CHRISTIAN, THERE IS A SWEET OCEAN OF PRAYERS FROM THE LIPS OF CHRISTIANS FLOWING TO THE THRONE OF GOD.

My younger sister has taught me that when facing medical tests which can reveal a future of life or of death, prayer takes on value of immense proportions. The riches of Solomon could not compare. I found myself asking every Christians with whom I spoke to pray for Laura. Cancer provokes an urgent, passionate desire for God to hear and kindly answer.

(Continued on Page 4)



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Identifying With The Local Congregation

It seems to be in "vogue" today among some brethren to live in a city or area but refuse to identify themselves with the local congregation. Many feel that they are under no obligation to "identify" and simply refuse to do so. What does the Bible teach regarding an individual identifying with a local congregation of the Lord's people?

A student of the scriptures should recognize that the authorization for a particular act often comes as a result of implication. That is, the actions described in scripture require that certain other criteria are present. The New Testament is literally filled with these implications regarding the matter identifying.

Personalities mentioned in

the New Testament are often mentioned in connection with the local church. First Corinthians 1:1, 2; Romans 1:7 and Ephesians 1:1 are just a few examples. In Acts 15:22 we read that the elders in the church at Jerusalem determined to "...send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabus." In order for them to have been "of their own company", they must have in some way been identified as Christians of that congregation.

Relative to this matter one must also understand that submission to the elders requires identifying. That is, when one is in submission to the eldership in a local congregation, he is implying that they identify him/her as one of their flock. Hebrews

13:17 says, "Obey them that have the rule over you and **submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls...**" Rulers have a dominion. An eldership's domain is the local congregation (Acts 20:28). They are to oversee it! This requires that they know who belongs to the local flock. If all Christians determined to attend without identifying, then the eldership would fail in that they could never really determine which sheep belong where!

Not only do we find implication regarding this matter, we also have an example of one seeking to be identified with the local church. When Saul (Paul) "moved" to Jerusalem from Damascus, the Bible tells us the first thing he did was "...he assayed to join himself to the

disciples..." (Acts 9:26). How long Paul was in Damascus is not revealed in this text, but Galatians 1:17, 18 says it was three years. He had been taking an active part in the church at Damascus and, having moved to Jerusalem, wanted to be "identified" with that local assembly. Later, in Acts 13:1-3, we find Paul a member of the church at Antioch. Paul left from Antioch and made his first missionary journey, but when he finished, he returned to Antioch and "abode" there a long time" (Acts 13:4-14:28; 15:35). He reported to the eldership at Antioch (Acts 14:28), thus one could rightfully say that it was his home congregation.

We can clearly see that God's word contains both implication and example of

individuals identifying with the local church. Sadly, those who refuse to do so today may have ulterior motives. Could it be that they do not want to submit themselves under the eldership in opposition to Hebrews 13:17? Could it be that they don't want to work for the church in opposition to I Corinthians 15:58? Could it be that they don't want to attend regularly in opposition to Hebrews 10:25?

What's your excuse? Identify today with the local assembly of God's people.

M. Floyd Bailey, Jr.
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Precious Indeed

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints, (Psalm 116:15)". Humans live in paralyzing fear of death. Too often, even Christians are influenced by the culture of the world and live a lifetime with that dread in their hearts. Death is seen as the "bottom line; the worst thing that can befall an individual.

How, then, can the Scriptures describe such an enemy of man as 'precious' in God's sight? Is not death the tool of Satan? Should it not be hated by God?

First, we need to note that the verse does not say that death, in general, is precious

to God. Death was the end result of the entrance of sin into the world. From that standpoint death is bad, and to those in the world the sting of death and the victory of Hades are very real.

But God's outlook with regard to His children is different. What are we? According to Romans 8:9,10, we actually are no longer in the flesh but in the Spirit. "...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation..." (2 Corinthians 5:17). What counts to God is not the imprisoning of the fleshly body but the new spiritual being that is alive to Him through obedience to the

gospel.

Living in the flesh in this alien world is not easy for the child of God. Satan is the roaring lion, and no living being is safe from his onslaughts. From spiritual birth until physical death, one is in continual danger of being led astray, or of growing weary with well-doing, or of leaving one's first love. To see His children pass safely through those dangers and on through the veil into eternity is precious to God.

The body itself is both tool and prison. In the strength and health of youth, when the soul dreams and the body serves the dreams

unstakingly, no more perfect tool exists on the face of the earth. But as age takes its toll, and as health fails, life within the confines of the body grows increasingly unbearable. Many a person, worn down by the pain of disease and the hopelessness of recovery, has cried out in vain for release from the soul's fleshly prison. Such a release, for the Christian is precious to the Father who knows the pain and the frailty

of the flesh.

But to leave behind the prison is considering only the negative side of the coin. The positive side is that perfected soul now knows the essence of what it means to live. To be free through death is to experience unfettered LIFE! This eternal life, the gift of God, is precious in His sight.

Betty Burton Choate
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It's Nobody's Business If I Take A Drink

Guy F. Hester

The preachers and do-gooders, I know what they say,

About the evils of drinking and traveling the broad way.

But I'm a grown man and I don't care what they think,

It's nobody's business if I take a drink.

He drank down a beer and then, three or four,

He said, I'm all out but I'll go get some more.

He jumped in his car and out of the drive way did spin,

I'll put the peddle to the metal, he said with a grin.

The neighbors were all awakened by the sound of the crash,

The clashing of metal and the breaking of glass.

Mommy, oh mommy, the

small child's voice said,

But mommy couldn't answer, she was already dead.

The father was dying, in his own blood he lay,

The drunk was unhurt as they led him away.

He said, I'm a grown man and I don't care what they think,

It's nobody's business if I take a drink.

Most Of A Minute

PISTOL ABORTION

Recently I read an unusual murder. In fact, I've never heard of any thing like this happening before.

The incident occurred in Loretto, TN. A Ms. Brown who was eight months pregnant decided the child within her womb was unwanted. She took a .38 caliber pistol and shot herself thru the abdomen; killing the child.

Now, think: was that murder or not? Before you answer, remember that convenience abortion happens everyday. Look in your phonebook under "clinics". While we may shout "murder" when a gun is used to terminate an eight month pregnancy, we must be consistent. What if the child is killed with saline solution or by powerful suction? The result is the same.

Mark it down. Convenience abortion is sin because it is murder. Luke 1 mentions 2 babies. One in the womb and one out of the womb. In the Greek language in which Jesus spoke, the word is the same for both. God, you see, considers them equal.

Let's never miss a chance to teach people what convenience abortion really is.

Glenn Colley

The True You

Floyd Rodgers

Some years back, there was a TV show called, "To Tell the Truth." There would be three individuals claiming to be the same person. People would ask questions and from the questions, they had to guess who was the right individual. In the end, the right one would stand up.

We can fool others, but there are two that are not fooled. One, is God; (Acts 1:24) "AND THEY PRAYED, AND SAID, THOU LORD, WHICH KNOWEST THE HEARTS OF ALL MEN. SHEW WHETHER OF THESE TWO THOU HAST CHOSEN." You see, you can't fool God! Second, is Self; for you know self better than anyone.

The *True You*, will soon be known. Notice please

Luke 7:36-40. This Pharisee tried to keep his true identity a secret. I view this man as A FAKE. He invited Jesus into his home but in verse 39 he questions within himself whether Jesus was a prophet. I see him as A FAULT-FINDER, for he characterizes this woman a sinner. Last, I see him as A FANTASTIC LISTENER. Jesus said, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee," and Simon said, "Master, say on." In these things I see the TRUE SIMON.

In this same text, the woman's true identity is brought to light. Verse 37 lets us know she was a SINNER. Jesus tells her in verse 48 that her sins are forgiven. Yes, she was a SINNER but she was also SORROWFUL. Verse 38, "AND STOOD AT HIS FEET BEHIND HIM

WEeping, AND BEGAN TO WASH HIS FEET WITH TEARS, AND DID WIPE THEM WITH THE HAIRS OF HER HEAD, AND KISSED HIS FEET, AND ANOINTED THEM WITH THE OINTMENT." Without a shadow of doubt, she was truly penitent. Something great happened and in verse 50 Jesus says, "THY FAITH HATH SAVED THEE; GO IN PEACE." Out of being a SINNER, she became SORROWFUL, and then our Lord tells her she is SAVED. The True You will come to light.

WILL THE TRUE YOU. PLEASE STAND UP?

In 2 Corinthians 13:5 Paul wrote; 'EXAMINE YOURSELVES, WHETHER YE BE IN THE FAITH; PROVE YOUR OWN SELVES...'. This is an on-going process,

as long as you are living. Jesus should be the center of our lives but sometimes we let self come before Christ. We forgot Matthew 6:33, "BUT SEEK YE FIRST THERE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS; AND ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU." When we put Christ first, blessings follow.

Only in the TRUE YOU, do you know whether or not Christ is the center of your life. See how you answer these QUESTIONS:

1. Do you study God's Word Daily? (Psalms 1:1-2; 2 Timothy 2:15)
2. How often do you attend Worship Services? (Matthew 6:33; Hebrews 10:25)
3. Is midweek Bible study part of you? (Acts 17:11)
4. Do you encourage the

weaker members? (Ephesians 4:12; Hebrews 3:13)

5. Do you visit the sick, widows, and fatherless? (James 1:27)

Now, these are just a few questions that can be asked. There are several questions that you should be asking self each day of your life. Jesus asked an important question in Matthew 16:26 "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Only the TRUE YOU can answer these questions. The TRUE YOU, knows you. You may fool others but GOD and SELF you can not fool.

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Behold The Man

Vance Hutton

The word "behold" is often used in the Bible to mean "to take notice thereof". There are so many things which we would do well if we would behold or take notice. In Jn. 19:5, Pilate said to behold the man Jesus. In John 1, twice John the Baptizer made reference to beholding the man Jesus, the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world (Jn. 1:29,36). Let us take notice of the man Jesus, the man's mission, the man's message, the man's miracles, and the man's mansions.

I) BEHOLD THE MAN:

Jesus is our model by which to live. Let us follow Him (Jn. 21:22). He left us an example (I Pet. 2:21). His

mind is to be in us (Phil. 2:5). We are to look at Him as a mirror and strive to be like Him (II Cor. 3:18). We are to be conformed to His image (Rom. 8:29). We wear His name which implies that we live like Him (Acts 11:26). Behold the man Jesus. Take notice of His humility, forgiveness, compassion, meekness, obedience, prayerfulness, love for souls, love for His enemies, good works, interest in the lost, purity, priorities and all the other great traits of Jesus. Behold His hands, feet, and riven side (Lk. 24:39). One day you will take notice of Him (Rom. 14:11-12). Please don't wait until judgment.

II) BEHOLD THE

MAN'S MISSION: Jesus came out of interest in men. He came to seek and save the lost (Lk. 19:10). He came that men might have abundant life (Jn. 10:10). Jesus came to do the will of the Father (Jn. 17:4). Christ lived to please the Father (Jn. 8:29). The Lord's mission was to do good (Acts 10:38). Jesus came to establish the church (Matt. 16:18). Our mission has to do with saving the lost, extending heaven's invitation, and glorifying, obeying, and pleasing the Father.

III) BEHOLD THE MAN'S MESSAGE: We must take notice of the Lord's message. The Lord's words are spirit and life. They are words of eternal life (Jn.

6:63,68). Earth will pass but not these words (Matt. 24:35). These words will judge us in the last day (Jn. 12:48). To be wise, we must heed the Lord's message (Matt. 7:24-27).

IV) BEHOLD THE MAN'S MIRACLES: Except we believe in Jesus as the Son of God we will die in sin (Jn. 8:24). Part of the motivating power for us to believe in Jesus is found in His power. Take notice of His power in creation (Rev. 3:14). His works testify of who Jesus is (Jn. 5:36). Take notice of the miracles He did. Many are recorded that we might believe (Jn. 20:30-31). Behold such power.

V) BEHOLD THE MAN'S MANSIONS: Let us behold or take notice of the Lord's mansions. Jesus spoke of that place of the great reward in (Jn. 14:1-3). The inheritance is incorruptible, undefiled and fades not away (I Peter 1:3-5). This glorious place is one of no tears, pain, sorrow, death, crying, night, hunger, and sin. The alternative is just the very opposite. Friends take notice of these things. BEHOLD THE MAN JESUS! Behold His missions, message, miracles, and mansions. We will be eternally blessed if our lives are lived in view of these realities.

What My Sister Laura Taught Me (Continued from Page 2)

Glenn Colley

For someone to respond to this point by feeling that prayer means little to them right now, there is this caution: Without a moments notice this very day, you may

find yourself willing to forfeit all of your worldly goods, if it were required, to have one righteous man speak your petitions before God's throne. James wrote, "The effectual.

fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, (James 5:16b)." Live in such a way that you, at any time, can be that righteous one.

For the prayers of those

who prayed for Laura, I am deeply grateful.

The years roll on, and so do the generations. The lessons we learn along the way are not new to the race

of man, but only new to us. I know that. It seems to me, however, that the more I can learn them from others, the better off I'll be.

Thank-you Laura.

APRIL 7, 1995

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- God Rules The World
- Scaffolding

Volume 32 Number 13
(USPS 691-760)

The Words of Truth

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

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Sing God A Sweet Song

Allen Webster

God is a music lover. In fact, he wants us all to "sing Him a song," though with the life instead of the lips. He commands us, "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Peter 1:5-8).

The word *add* (*epicho-reego*) in this text has an interesting background. It means "supply or equip" and refers back to the days of old Athens when it was considered a great honor to be a citizen who was asked to help defray the expenses of a public ceremony or entertainment. It originally referred to citizens who financed a theatrical performance or fit out a warship for the state they loved. It had a special reference to the abundant supplies provided for a chorus, which is derived from this Greek word (as is *choreographer*) (Coffman). The graces which adorn the Christian's character are to be chorused into a grand symphony to the delight and pleasure of Him who fashioned and made us for His own good pleasure. There are eight graces, and

they thus form an octave of soul tones, the first being faith, the last love, an octave higher. When these are harmonized and played on by the divine Spirit, disharmony disappears and life's discords vanish. How we should rejoice that we have been privileged to provide such an instrument in the hand of God! (Woods).

FAITH is the foundation (Phil. 4:13). By it we have been justified (Rm. 5:1); by it we walk (II Cor. 5:7); by it we please God (Heb. 11:6); and by it we overcome the world (I Jn. 5:4, 5). Faith that does not add the graces is dead (Jas. 2:17-26; I Pet. 2:1, 2; II Pet. 3:18). The New Birth is not the end, it is the beginning. Spiritual growth is not automatic. It requires cooperation with God and the application of spiritual diligence and discipline (Phil. 2:12, 13).

VIRTUE (*areta*) denotes courage. Our English word *virtue* is derived from the Latin word *vir*, meaning "man." But it describes only a certain kind of man. *Homo* also meant "man" but applied to any man of the human species. *Vir* denoted a man of strength, courage, and good character. It included moral strength. This is one reason our word *virtue* is used as a synonym for purity, as in *virgin*. We were called to virtue ("excellence") (1:3). It basically means the manliness and determination to do that which is right. It is used in four verses in the New

Testament: once by Paul (Phil. 4:8) and three times by Peter (I Pet. 2:9; II Pet. 1:3, 5). A virtuous person has the fortitude to stand for Christ no matter what the odds, to speak out for Him no matter what the costs, even to die for Him if necessary.

KNOWLEDGE (*gnosis*) is gained by the faithful continuation of studies in the Scriptures. Knowledge helps us to see things as they really are. Zeal without knowledge, like a ship without a rudder, becomes fanaticism. Saul of Tarsus was willing to kill for in his ignorant zeal (I Tim. 1:13), but in his knowledgeable zeal he was willing to die for Christ (Acts 21:13). Spiritual ignorance has been the cause of people being destroyed (Hos. 4:6); being alienated from God (Eph. 4:18); crucifying the Lord (Acts 3:14-17); and be eternally lost (II Thes. 1:7-9). We are commanded to understand the will of the Lord (Eph. 5:17), and grow in knowledge (II Pet. 3:18), to the point where we can even be teachers (Heb. 5:14). Are we "diligent" to add this virtue day by day? How often do you study?

TEMPERANCE is only found two other times in the New Testament (Acts 24:25; Gal. 5:22). It refers to self-control or "keeping oneself in check" (*engrateia*, from *en* and *krates*, "one who holds himself in" or "getting a grip on oneself"). Temperance is the discipline of an athlete (I Cor. 9:24-27; Phil. 3:12-16; I

Tim. 4:7,8). It is "reason's girdle as well as passion's bridle" (Taylor). Chrysostom said it meant "mastering passion of tongue, hand and unbridled eyes." The saint is not the man who gets away from the world, but one who stays in the world but never lets it master him. Temperance is the iron side of the silver coin of patience. It means to totally abstain from those things that are wrong and to be balanced in those things that are right. It is not a problem for a Christian to avoid drunkenness. But it takes good judgment to know limits of eating, exercise, recreation, and sleep. We need to know where self control ends and over-indulgence begins. Fishing, ball playing, and other sports are not sinful because they are pleasurable. Eating is not wrong because it is tasteful. However, if these get out of balance, they become sinful (Mt. 6:33).

We should be as Christ who yielded Himself to God (Jn. 8:29; cf. Rm. 6:13). Temperance is the opposite of the "let go" philosophy of the wild world around us. Those who have not mastered themselves are at the mercy and control of others. They move at the whims of their peers and are under majority rule. The wise man discussed the value of this ability (Prov. 16:32; 25:28). This surrender produces self-control of:

• Our *temper* (Eph. 4:26), "And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained

himself, and said, Set on bread" (Gen. 43:31).

• Our *tongue* (Jas. 3:1-12; Psa. 39:1, 2).

• Our *thoughts* (Mt. 15:19) or passions (Phil. 3:12-16; Tit. 2:12).

• Our *tendencies* (I Cor. 6:12). Paul discussed self-control with Felix and he "trembled" (Acts 24:25). It is no wonder that Felix was terrified. He was a stranger to righteousness, knew no self-control, and was unprepared for the judgment. According to Tacitus, this man was guilty of "every kind of cruelty, and lust, he exercised the authority of a king with the temper of a slave." In his *Annals* (11:54), Tacitus further represents Felix as considering himself licensed to commit any crime with impunity. The last of his three wives, the beautiful Drusilla, young daughter of Herod Agrippa I, was wooed away from her husband Azizus, king of Amersa. Thus Felix had been married three times and Drusilla twice (Prov. 6:32).

PATIENCE (*hupomone*, literally "abiding or remaining under") is the ability to resist evil and bear up (endure) when circumstances are difficult (Jas. 1:3; 5:7-11; Rm. 2:7; 5:3-5). It means to "remain

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Editor's Book Recommendation:

Among The Scholars

Glenn Colley

David Hester, who preaches for the Spring Valley Church of Christ in Tuscumbia, Alabama, has written a 167 page book entitled Among the Scholars. After reading the book I was so impressed that I decided to recommend it to our Words of Truth subscribers.

The title of the book does not suggest that this will be difficult reading or too scholarly to be enjoyed by common people like you and me. The title rather refers to some of the leaders in the change movement, and the idea that they are supposedly more scholarly in their

knowledge of God's word and the New Testament church than the rest of us. As William Woodson says in the forward, "At the root of the trouble is the teaching of these who call themselves 'change agents.' One must not be misled: these men have an agenda, a self-chosen set of beliefs and practices to implement in churches of Christ. They claim to be guided by a 'God-given vision' which is advanced, step by step, in their preachments and practices. This 'vision', so called, drives their actions and is the center piece of their efforts."

Thus, the book concerns

the change movement which is sweeping across our country at an amazing pace. It must be stopped. It will be stopped in churches with elders and preachers who are aware of the dangers, and who have the courage to stand for what is right.

Chapter headings include, "Just Preach Christ," "The New Hermeneutic," "Is the Use of the Instrument in Worship a Sin?," "What are the Young People Hearing?," and others.

The book can be purchased in paperback from the author by writing:

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Visit Soon

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Jasper, AL 35501

"The Evidence of Things Not Seen"

Guy F. Hester

Slowly and gingerly the blind man walked down the street tapping and feeling carefully with his white and red can until he located the curb on the busy street corner where he stopped and waited until he was aware that someone else was also at the same corner. Carefully he touched the arm of the person who stood by him and asked, "Would you mind if I accompany you across the intersection?" "Why not," replied a woman's voice, "I'd be delighted." He then took her arm and with traffic roaring through the busy intersection they stepped briskly to the other side. As the blind man was about to thank her, the lady said to him, "Sir you cannot imagine how I, being blind, appreciate your kindness and consideration in helping me across this busy street corner."

These two people very sincerely had faith in each other but they did not have sufficient evidence for that faith. If either of them had known that the other was blind, neither of them would have relied upon the other to

get them across the street. Many people have the same problem religiously. They sincerely place their trust and confidence in a system of religion which they believe with all their hearts will get them to heaven not knowing that they are following blind leaders. Jesus said, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matthew 15:13, 14). While it is true that "we walk by faith and not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7), there must be sufficient evidence for the faith that saves. Notice how saving faith is defined by the Hebrew writer, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). The word of God is the only source of saving faith. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). There is all the evidence in the world that the Bible is true, that it is, as it claims to be, the word of God. The Bible

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Why Are You Going To Work Today, Daddy?

B. J. Clarke

While I was preparing to go to work the other day, my son who wanted to play, asked me "Why are you going to work today, Daddy?" As I started to respond to his question, my first impulse was to tell him that I was going to work in order that I might make a living to provide for his needs. It then occurred to me that although such an explanation was legitimate, it was not really the main reason that I was going to work nor was it the main motivation that I wanted my son to remember with reference to my reasons for engaging in the work of preaching. Thanks to the question of my son, I was reminded again of why it is that I do what I do in preaching the gospel. Allow me to give three reasons as to why we preachers should go to work everyday.

1. Because we love the

Lord - After all that God has done for us through Jesus Christ His Son, it behooves us to show our adoration and appreciation for him by giving our lives in service to His cause. After Jesus healed the Gerasene demoniac, the text says, "And he went his way, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him" (Mark 5:20). This is not to suggest that one must enter into full-time preaching to manifest love for the Lord. It is simply my desire to serve the Lord in this way. The commandment of the Great Commission applies to me (Matt. 28:18-20) and if I love the Lord I will keep his commandments (I John 14:15; I John 5:3). My love for God motivates me to go to work each day to try to save the lost through preaching.

2. Because we love the lost - The greatest joy in the world is to assist others in

learning how to be saved by the grace of God through Jesus Christ. A passion for souls should lead us out the door each day to go to work. We are involved in the greatest work upon the face of the earth. To be involved in rescuing a soul from darkness and leading that soul into the light of God's love is the marvelous lot of preachers. When I remember that one soul is worth more than the whole world (Matt. 16:26), I am inspired to put forth that extra effort to influence that one individual to come to Jesus Christ. Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). As an imitator of Jesus (I Pet. 2:21) this will be my goal as well.

3. Because we love our families - God has authorized preachers to receive compensation for their labors (I Cor. 9:7-14; Gal. 6:6; Philippians 4:15, 16). Thus, preaching can be a means for

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Sing God a Sweet Song

Continued from page 1
when others have departed; to remain; not to flee" (Oberst). Thayer says ". . . unswerved from his deliberate purpose. . . by even the greatest of trials and sufferings." No race was ever won by a runner that failed to finished the course (II Tim. 4:7, 8). Self-control has to do with handling the pleasures of life, while patience relates primarily to the pressures and problems of life. (The ability to endure problem people is "long-suffering."). Often, the person who "gives in" to pleasures is not disciplined enough to handle pressures either, so he "gives up." Jesus said, "In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21:19). Patience is not something that develops automatically; we must work at it. James 1:2-8 gives us the right approach. We must, by faith, let our trials work for us

and not against us. If we need wisdom in making decisions, God will grant that wisdom if we ask Him.

GODLINESS (*eusebeia*) simply means "God-likeness" or "manifesting God in the flesh." Tracing the stem root (*seb*), back it meant to "fall back before," thus came to mean "to worship well." Perhaps the words reverence and *piety* come closer to defining the term. It is found in the Septuagint translation of Proverbs 1:7, ". . . the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Paul uses the word ten times in the letters to Timothy and Titus (I Tim. 2:2; 3:16; 4:7,8; 6:3-5, 6, 11; II Tim. 3:12). The godly person lives above the petty things of life, the passions and pressures that control the lives of others. The first and great commandment was to love God (Mt. 22:37). Too often in our world religious

duties are relegated to a secondary status, and humanitarian duties have been elevated to the status that really belongs to religious duties. Some maintain an outward form and deny the inner power of godliness (II Tim. 3:5). Christians are practical enough to realize that the Bible governs their everyday lives.

BROTHERLY KINDNESS is the love of tender affection and attachment (*philadelphia*, which comes from *philo*, meaning the love of brothers, or, even, the affection that an animal has for its young). As God is our Father, His children are our brethren, and we must have love for the family. When reverence for God overflows our hearts, love toward God's people follows. If we love Jesus, we must also love the brethren (I Pet. 1:22; 4:17;

Heb. 13:1; Rm. 12:10; I Jn. 5:1, 2). On occasion it seems that members of the church are harsher in their dealings with one another than the children of the world. Brotherly kindness is the opposite of being judgmental, censorious, disagreeable, partial, political, and unkind (I Cor. 13:7). When we continually point out the faults of loved ones but never compliment them when they do well, we are "watering the weeds" and letting the flowers die.

LOVE (*agape*) is the crowning virtue. "And the greatest of these is love" (I Cor. 13:13). "And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness" (Col. 3:14). This is the highest type of love, the kind that God shows toward sinful, unworthy men. It is described in I Corinthians 13, the love that

the Holy Spirit produces in our hearts as we walk in the Spirit (Rm. 5:5; Gal. 5:22). When we have brotherly love, we love because of our likenesses to others; but with agape love, we love in spite of the differences we have. Paul began his list of the fruit of the Spirit with love (Gal. 5:22); Peter ends his list with love. It is like a chain; each link holds fast to its fellow and is a part of the whole.

This great list of virtues is one of the most beautiful and comprehensive passages in the New Testament, reminding one of the procession of the seven deadly sins (by contrast) in Proverbs 6:16-18. If we will add these notes to our soul's song, God will like the tune we sing.

"The Evidence of Things Not Seen"

Continued from page 2
has withstood the test of time and never has it's enemies been able to destroy it's credibility or prove one syllable to be untrue. The Scriptures are the inspired word of God (II Timothy 3:16, 17).

The Bible declares the existence of God and that he is the creator of all things (Genesis 1:1). We can have undaunted faith in this because of the abundance of evidence. "Every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God"

(Hebrews 3:4). "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork" (Psalm 19:1). All about us is the evidence of the Almighty and the creation but there in no evidence anywhere for the false claims of evolution. Although we cannot "see" God, our faith in him is not "blind faith" because of the indisputable evidence. The very same thing is true of the Son of God (John 1:1-5; 5:32-37; 20:30, 31).

Since the Bible is true, based upon solid evidence,

we can have faith in whatever it teaches. We can have faith in the virgin birth of Christ (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-13). We can have faith in his death, burial and resurrection (I Corinthians 15:1-8). We can have faith in the fact that Christ has but one church (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47; Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 1:18). We can have faith in the power of the Gospel to save all who believe and obey (Romans 1:16; Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 5:8, 9). We can have faith in the fact that God will accept only worship that

is sincerely offered and authorized by the New Testament (John 3:23-24; Colossians 3:17). We can have faith that singing without the use of mechanical instruments of music is acceptable to God (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). We can have faith in the observance of the Lord's Supper as a regular part of the worship every first day of the week (Acts 20:7). We can have faith that those who remain faithful will receive "a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10), when Jesus comes.

Many are placing their faith in religious organizations that teach and practice that which is contrary to these things; but to do so is to blindly follow blind leaders which will ultimately fall into a ditch (hell).

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

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Why Are You Going To Work Today, Daddy?

Continued from page 2
an individual to provide for his family. "But if any man provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the

faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (I Tim. 5:8). A man should never enter into preaching for the sole purpose of making a living. If a man is only interested in

money and drawing his paycheck, then he is a hireling. If on the other hand, he is first and foremost interested in serving the Lord and saving the lost, there is

nothing wrong with his being thankful for the income he dervies from preaching by which he is able to provide for his precious family. What is your motivation? Why did

you go to work today, preacher?

**"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for ,
the evidence of things not seen.
(Hebrews 11:1)**

God Rules The World

Betty Burton Choute

Once there was a mighty king. He built an empire, with the city of Babylon as his capital. He planned and developed the "Hanging Gardens" that became one of the wonders of the ancient world.

This king had a problem, though. He was filled with pride and he refused to acknowledge God or to submit to him. One day "...he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon..." and he "...spoke saying, 'Is this not great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my power and for the honor of my majesty?'"

"While the word was still in the King's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you!' The voice went on to say that the king would be driven away from men for period of time and would be treated like an animal "...until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever he chooses."

"And at the end of the time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored him who lives forever. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain his hand or say to him, 'What

have you done?'"

"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the king of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and his ways justice. And those who walk in pride he is able to abase." (Dan. 4:30-37.) But someone would say, "If God rules, why is there so much injustice? Why does he allow evil men to gain control of nations and to kill innocent people by the thousands?" There are two parts to the answer to this question:

(1) God's overruling is not for the purpose of taking away sin and evil from the earth or to meddle with political affairs. (Men are sinful by their own choice and God does not force anyone to be godly. He allows us the freedom to choose to be good or evil. He has also placed within man the strength of resistance, so that by nature when a ruler or a government becomes unbearable, the people have the responsibility to work together to rid themselves of that evil.) But his overruling is for one purpose: for the ultimate physical and spiritual welfare of his children, both those who are already obeying him and those he realizes through his foreknowledge will obey him. Whatever God does in the world is done **for this purpose**, and we cannot understand his overruling in governments (or the seeming lack of involvement sometimes) unless we understand this point. (2)

Also God's overruling is not always apparent to the human eye and it is impossible for us to see the whole picture as he deals with all governments over years of time. A ruler that is brought to power today may not actually be used in God's working for his children for 10 or 15 years. And, even then, with our limited vision, we may not see what God is accomplishing. We are taught that prayers are to be made "...for kings and all who are authority," (Why?) "that we may lead a quite and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (I Tim. 2:14.)

So, how does God use governments and rulers for his people? I think we can best understand this if we look at the inspired record of God's use of them throughout history.

Of course, we are familiar with the stories of David, of Solomon, of the other kings of Israel, and we know God used them mightily in building Israel into a great nation through which He could bless the world in Christ. We know, too, of the bad kings who divided the people and who led them into idolatry. But it hasn't been only with His own kings that God has worked. The Pharaohs worshiped the idols of Egypt, yet God sent dreams to one of these rulers

so that through Joseph He could preserve His people during the famine that was to come on the earth. (Genesis 41.) Later, though, another king of Egypt so hardened his will against the will of God that God used that hardness to teach the world a strong lesson about His interference. "But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show my power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." This scripture shows us that through the use of His powers of overruling and foreknowledge, not only did God foresee what lesson the world needed and also the attitude this man would have toward God, but He also used His powers of overruling to bring that particular man to the throne so that through his hardness and the resulting lessons, the world would have an irrefutable testimony to God's ultimate authority in the world. Isaiah 10 is an inspired record of God's use of an evil nation to punish and correct His people who had strayed into idolatry. God asks, "As I have done to Samaria and her idols, shall I not do also to Israel and her idols?" Before any of the corrective work was done, God had promised concerning Assyria, "...the rod of my anger and the staff in whose hand is my indignation. I will send him against an ungodly nation, and against the people of my wrath I will give him charge...yet he does not mean

so; nor does his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy." (Isa. 10:5-7). Later, after finishing the teaching work He had planned through Assyria, God said, "I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the glory of his haughty looks." (Isa. 10:12.) A close study of the inspired record show that God does not force a nation to be good or evil, but He uses and often strengthens rulers according to their own wills. If they have chosen to follow a course of evil, God can and does use them as a tool of discipline for His people.

The family of God exists in the world today in the form of His church. God's desire is to work through it mightily as He did in the first century, to "turn the world upside down." (Acts 17:6.) But he forces good no more than He forces evil. To a great degree, we limit God by our lethargic approach to our role in the affairs of men.

We ourselves will be the determining factor concerning the future of the church. If we wake up to the potential of all that God can do through us, He will work and the world scene can be changed for good.

But if we refuse to see, so that God cannot use us for good, we will be responsible when He has to work through evil nations to bring about our own correction and painful instruction, as He did with Israel.

Scaffolding

Mike Benson

My father was a carpenter for many years. Whenever he started to build a house, I noticed he would always use scaffolding. The scaffolding made it possible for him to work on a house at different levels without having to go up and down a ladder. In addition, it was used to

SUPPORT his weight as well as his tools during a job. But when the house he had been working on was finally completed, the scaffolding was removed. Why? Because it was temporary; it was no longer needed. It served its purpose until the house was finished.

Likewise, when the Lord's

church was in it's "building" stages (I Cor. 13:11), tongue-speaking was used as a scaffolding to SUPPORT or confirm the preaching of inspired men (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3,4; Romans 15:18, 19). But with the completion of God's revelation to man (I Cor. 13:10; Eph. 4:13; Jude 3,)

tongues were no longer needed. They served their purpose until "that which is perfect" HAD come.

Do we still need tongue-speaking today? No. No more than a finished house needs scaffolding.

P.O. Box 216
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**JOY COMES
FROM KNOWING**
God, knows who I am
and where I'm going...
that my future is
secure as I rest in Him.

• See Articles Inside:

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 - The Change Movement In Churches of Christ
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- What Was Jesus Really Like?

Volume 32 Number 14
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

1 the

"They Shall Take Up Serpents"

W. A. Holley

"Snakebite kills worshiper," is the caption of a news story carried in the Birmingham Post-Herald, January 19, 1995. We quote: "A man who brought a rattlesnake to a church service as a way of following a biblical message died after the reptile bit his hand...Witnesses said Hale brought the rattlesnake to church in a box and removed it around 12:30 P.M. He was bitten when he took it out...A cousin of the victim said, "church members take the Bible literally, particularly a passage in Mark saying that one sign of those who believe in Jesus is that 'they shall take up serpents'"

Now Dewey Bruce Hale is dead! Did the Lord forsake him? No, the fault was his own. He either did not read or believe the full story concerning miraculous gifts as set forth in the Sacred Scriptures. (Ephesians 5:17; Acts 17:11).

What our readers should understand is that miraculous gifts never intended to continue throughout the Christian Age (I Corinthians 13:8-13). In verse 8 of the reference cited, we quote: "...But whether there be prophecies (miraculous predictions of the future), they shall fail. Whether there be tongues (tongues never learned or studied) they shall cease, whether there be knowledge (supernatural knowledge), it shall vanish away." We suggest that Romans 12:6-8 and Ephesians 4:8-13, also be read closely.

Mr. Hale lost his life

because he did not understand Mark 16:17-18. "THEM THAT BELIEVE," in verse 17, has reference to "the eleven" apostles, Verse 14). Paul was bitten by a viper (snake), but he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm" (Acts 28:4-6). Paul lived but Mr. Hale died!

Mark 16:17-18 is talking about the protection God would give His apostles until the complete should be revealed. This is why it is said, "They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." If the apostles had been poisoned before all of God's truth had been revealed, God's order of things would have been destroyed. Hence their protection.

Here are some facts which all honest readers of the Bible must consider: There are three ages or dispensations of time revealed in the Sacred Scriptures: (1) the Patriarchal Age began with miracles, but when they accomplished their purpose, they ceased. (2) The Mosaic Age began with miracles, but having served their purpose, they ceased. (3) The Christian Age was ushered by miracles, but having served their purpose, they ceased.

"As in the days of thy coming forth out of the land of the Egypt will I show them marvelous things, (Micah 7:15, ASV). Here the prophet seems to say that since Israel had spent 40 years in the wilderness, miraculous gifts would continue for about 40 years. (See Exodus 3:20; Psalm 78:12). Most scholars think that sometime near the

destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, supernatural gifts were abolished.

These supernatural gifts were limited to the Apostles and to all upon whom they (apostles) had laid their hands (Acts 1:1-4, 26; 2:1-4, 37, 42, 43; 8:14-24). Thus, when the Apostles died and when all upon whom they had laid their hands died, miraculous or supernatural gifts, CEASED. Since that time we have had many claimants who pretended to possess supernatural powers, but they have never been able to demonstrate miraculous powers (I Corinthians 2:4; I Thessalonians 1:5). When these false teachers are challenged to demonstrate their supernatural gifts, they usually become angry, claiming that those who question their supposed powers do not have "Enough faith to be healed." Well, how much faith do they have?? Jesus healed some upon the faith of others "When Jesus saw their faith, "the faith of those who brought him to Jesus (Mark 2:1-12; 7:24-30). Hence, we ask the healers? how much faith do they possess??"

We suggest that Matthew 4:1-11 be scrutinized. In the context Satan carries Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple and urges Him to jump off. Jesus' reply was, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Again read the context. Satan's mouth is full of scripture. Many false preachers abuse the Scriptures using them out of context. For Example, Salvation by grace only, by faith only, "once in grace

always in grace," et al. (Ephesians 2:8-9; Hebrews 6:4-6; I Corinthians 9:27). Jesus never performed a selfish miracle. Paul refused to heal himself (I Corinthians 12:7-9). Paul could have healed Epaphroditus and Trophimus but he did not (Philippians 2:25-27; II Timothy 4:20). Why? Why?

What did Jesus Christ mean when he said, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." We may tempt God when we unreasonably require proof of God to support us in acts contrary to His will. We must never expose ourselves to dangers from which we cannot escape without miraculous interposition.

To deliberately and presumptuously handle serpents and to drink poison as practiced by some extreme religious sects is "TEMP-TING GOD!!"

In the light of the foregoing remarks, I shall tell you a true story. Brother Gus Nichols and Glen V. Tingly were engaged in a debate here in Walker County, Alabama. This incident happened 50 years ago, more or less. A part of their discussion had to do with miracles. Mr. Tingly believed in miracles. He told the story of John Wesley who was on his way to preach. His horse became lame---one of the knees of the horse swelled up like a balloon. It was said that Mr. Wesley dismounted from his horse, knelt down and prayed for the Lord to heal his horse. His prayer was answered and one could see the swollen knee deflated.

I was present. Through

Brother Nichols I asked Him to request Mr. Tingly to heal me, since I had a withered arm. Brother Nichols interceded in my behalf. Mr. Tingly said that he could not heal me because I did not have the faith to be healed. Brother Nichols replied: "I think he has about as much faith as John Wesley's horse." Many in this area still remember.

Miracles were great in their time, but they were followed by greater things (I Corinthians 12:31; 13:13). "And now abideth faith, hope, charity (love), THESE THREE; but the greatest of these is love." This is the most excellent way.

Miraculous gifts were temporary; but faith, hope and love are permanent.

God used miraculous gifts to reveal and confirm His word; when this job was finished miraculous gifts ceased, vanished away, and were done away (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:4).

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Visit Soon
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The Change Movement In Churches Of Christ (Introduction)

Glenn Colley

The church of our Lord is loved by every Christian living. It is the Pearl of Great Price of Matthew 13:45, and the bride of our Master in Ephesians 5:25. The value of the church of Christ is immeasurable; in fact, the purchase price was the blood of our Lord, (Acts 20:27). Thank God that the church exists today, and that people can still repent, confess, and be baptized, and be added to that church, (Acts 2:47)! The Lord has taken us from the power of darkness and placed us in the Kingdom, or church, of His dear Son, (Col. 1:13). We don't want to see the light of a single day in which we are not part of the body of our Lord, the church.

The Bible speaks of Jesus as "The Christ". Matthew 16:16 says, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." It is important to note that the Bible speaks also of "The Church." Ephesians 5:25 says, "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it." The reason is clear when you read Ephesians 4:4-6: "There is one body, (The body is the church, Eph. 1:22,23), and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord,

one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all..." There are as many churches as there are Christs! And that number is one.

That body of people is made up of the saved. There are no saved people outside that body. None. Some will go to heaven who were not in that body, (Those who died as infants, or those without the mental ability to sin or repent), but they are not saved --because they were never lost in the first place. Those of us who have ears to hear must hear! The blood of Christ which washes away sins, (Rev. 1:5), is applied to the sins of people when they repent and are baptized, (Acts 2:38). At that time the Lord adds them to His church, (Acts 2:47).

The church has always been under attack from *somewhere*, and we aren't surprised. The devil is defamed where people exalt the Christ, and he responds with persecution. Christians are especially grieving, however, when the persecution is from within the body.

In the following weeks, I will present a series of editorials on what is today called the "Change Movement." This series will

hopefully be useful to many elders and preachers in churches who have wondered about these names and doctrines, but haven't had ready access to what's being said, written, and done. It is my hope and prayer that this series will do no harm and only good. The motivation for its writing is pure. I seek no ones personal harm, but rather to use my voice to speak out against what is the most damaging movement to hit the church in the last three decades! The change movement has already successfully split and splintered more churches that we would have thought possible, and if permitted to continue, will turn the church of our Lord into nothing more than another pathetic denomination.

These articles will be published on successive weeks to make them easier to follow. We will examine the change movement and such topics as denominationalism, worship, baptism, grace, the New Hermeneutic, the role of women in the church, and the role of elders in the church.

I hope you find them useful.

The Substance Of Things Hoped For

What is your definition of spiritual faith? And perhaps of 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, "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 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 a profit."

Conversely, the Hebrew writer demonstrates a seasoned measure of respect for man's faith in God. Writing by divine 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. The author of the Hebrew letter

presents trusting, unwavering faith as central to unleashing the gospel's saving power and assuring one of entering into heaven's rest (4:1-3). Unlike the scoffers and skeptics who have long sought to demean Christian faith, the Hebrew writer 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.)

Our Lord's question in Luke 18:8 seems especially pertinent for our cynical society: "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Will he find faith in us?

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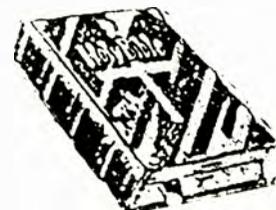
Bride

Hanging on the wall of my den at home there is a framed, black and white photograph of my wife. And it's not just any picture of Lanore, if there is such a thing, but it is Lanore beautifully adorned in her wedding gown. I cannot look at that picture and not be reminded of her radiance as she walked down the aisle, and as she pledged her faithfulness to me nearly twelve years ago.

Which also reminds me. Did you know that the church of our Lord is referred to in the scriptures as a beautiful bride? Read carefully the inspired description, "Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:2; See also Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 21:9-10; Isaiah 54:1ff; Ephesians 4:32ff).

Since the church is the bride of Christ, doesn't that suggest that she ought to be faithful, loyal, and loving? Dear Christian, have you been faithful to your marriage (Romans 7:4) vows (Jeremiah 2:32) to Christ (Ephesians 5:27)?

Mike Benson



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Faithful Sayings

Mel Futrell

I would imagine that all of us have heard and are therefore familiar with some faithful sayings. Faithful sayings are those sayings which have merit, value; they are sure, they are true and can be treated. In fact, Psalm 19:7 says, "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." Likewise, haven't we all heard such statements as, "You need to remember this... you ought to write this down..., My daddy used to say..., or This is going to be valuable to you some day..." And all of these phrases were used to introduce a faithful saying from someone dear to you.

Now admittedly, there are countless faithful sayings in the Bible, due to it being GOD-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16-17), but there are few statements in the New Testament which are specifically called "faithful sayings". Please consider

these.

1. 1 Timothy 1:15 - The faithful saying here centers around the very purpose of Christ's coming into the world, to save sinners.

2. 1 Timothy 3:1 - This faithful saying is that aspirations of serving as a bishop are good desires.

3. 1 Timothy 4:8-9 - The faithful saying that is worthy of all acceptance here stresses the value of godliness.

4. 2 Timothy 2:11-12 - This faithful saying is comprised of three parts which emphasize the demands of Christianity.

A. If we die, we live. (an allusion to one's dying in baptism?)

B. If we suffer, we reign.

C. If we deny him, we get denied.

5. Titus 3:8 - The faithful saying here touches on the profitability of good works.

Let's back up a minute and take a closer look at number three from 1 Timothy 4:8-9.

While it is true that some would view verse 10 as representing the faithful saying (see LIVING WORD COMMENTARY SERIES, Vol. 14, P. 78). Others, (see ROBERTSON, WORD PICTURES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, Vol. 4, P. 580) myself included, would view verse 8 as containing the actual faithful saying being highlighted by the expression of verse 9. Remember, Paul said this saying was worthy of all acceptance. In other words, the application of this faithful saying is that we should train ourselves in godliness. Brethren, bodily training has some value but it has little value when compared to godly training. Godliness on the other hand, is valuable everywhere and at all times.

It amazes me, brethren, what emphasis our society places on body training. Many in this country seem to be "eat up" with their bodies.

One can't turn around without hearing about body toning, body sculpting, body building, body beauty, etc.. Don't get me wrong, I believe we should take care of our bodies since they belong to GOD (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). But one begins to wonder what is really being stressed in some homes, the physical or the spiritual? Is it more important that little Johnny make the soccer team or that he spend time in God's word daily and is prepared for Bible class? And I could go on asking more of the same questions. So tell me, where and on what is the emphasis being placed in your home? Is it on things of a temporal or an external nature (Colossians 3:1-2)? Please consider the insightful quote below.

"Most saints, in this generation, appear more zealous that their children should shine on earth, than in heaven and that they may be

rich here, at the hazard of eternal bankruptcy. They labor to make them rich and genteel rather than pure and holy; and spend more time in fashioning them to the foolish and wicked taste of polished society, than in teaching them by precept and example the word that is more precious than gold, and more precious than rubies." (Alexander Campbell, Millennial Harbinger, 1833, P. 364)

Surely the sentiments of Campbell are also appropriate for today. The apostle Paul said, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." (2 Corinthians 4:16) But with the current emphasis on the body, with many it is the inward man that perishes and the outward man that's being renewed day by day.



The Mind Of Christ

Keith Kasarjian

If the average church member were asked if they wanted to grow spiritually, I believe 100% would answer in the affirmative. Many only wish to grow but do nothing about it. Still others actively pursue growth. They increase prayer time, read the Bible every day, give more, and attend every service, all in an effort to grow. In spite of all this effort, many times they still feel the emptiness that is a result of immaturity. Why? What went wrong? They didn't first have the mind of Christ.

A prerequisite to Christian growth is to have the mind of Christ. Paul describes this mind set in Philippians 2:5-9. Notice several things that are involved in having the mind of our Savior.

Self-surrender is involved in having the mind of Christ. Verse 6 tells us that He "thought it not robbery to be equal to God." The word translated "robbery" is from

the Greek word "harpagmos", which means "a thing eagerly to be seized, coveted, or desired". The fact that He came to this earth is proof of His willingness to surrender self. We live in a selfish world that encourages us to be selfish, but we must resist the temptation. When a decision is to be made in the church, do we want our way or what is best for the church? When there is conflict between my way and the Lord's way, who wins out? Jesus will never be at the pinnacle of our life until we take ourself down.

Servanthood was characteristic of Jesus (v. 7, Matt. 20:26-28). When we see the life of service that Jesus lived, we ought to be motivated to serve also. What Christians are willing to sacrifice for is sometimes amazing and disappointing. Many will travel great distances, stand in long lines, and sit through inclement conditions, all to see a

football game. What are we willing to do for the cause of Christ?

Overcoming temptation was a daily part of His life. He "was made in the likeness of men", (v.7) "yet without sin", (Heb. 4:15). We need to read James 1:13-15 to understand the temptation process in an effort to overcome.

Humility is a vital part of the mind of Christ. Notice the statements found in verses 7 and 8; "made himself of no reputation", "he humbled himself". Was there ever any doubt about the humility of Jesus? The Bible is replete with warnings about the dangers of pride and it's results. If the Son of God and Savior of the world found reasons to be humble, I think I can too.

Obedience was the end result of the aforementioned qualities (v. 8). Paul felt it necessary to point out that Christ wasn't just obedient, but that He was obedient

even to the point of death. He continued by saying that not only was He obedient to the point of death, but even death on the cross. It was Him who prayed "Not my will...". Is that our attitude? Are we "all ears" to the will of God?

Just imagine the church where every member had the mind of Christ. That congregation would be the mature, growing, godly body that Jesus wants His church to be. Let us work daily on having the mind of Christ.

Most Of A Minute

To Forgive Is Divine

Two young women are talking together. The first woman with head hung begins by saying, "I've got something to tell you. When we were talking the other day and I made you a promise, I lied to you. Now I know that this has happened many times before, but I'd like for you to forgive me so we can still be friends." What would you do?

Listen to Matthew 18:21 - "Then came Peter to Him and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till 7 times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until 7 times but until 70 times 7."

Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, was once reminded of an especially cruel thing that had been done to her years before. But miss Barton seemed not to recall it.

"Don't you remember it?" her friend asked.

"No," came the reply, "I distinctly remember forgetting the incident."

Let's be people who possess forgiving spirits.

Glenn Colley

God's Only "Forgotten" Son

Allen Webster

A man once wandered into a church building and asked the minister for some spiritual advice. The preacher asked about his religious background. He replied, "I went to Sunday School as a child, but I can remember only one verse from the Bible, John 3:16: For God so loved the world that he gave his only FORGOTTEN son, that whosoever believeth in his should have everlasting life."

He did misquote it, but then again, Jesus is all too often the "forgotten" Son of God.

JESUS IS FORGOTTEN WHEN HIS WORD IS REJECTED. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that

judgeth him..." (Jn. 12:48). Have you heard the story about the college football coach who was experiencing the terror of a losing season? By late October the alumni were in a state of near mutiny. One Saturday after an embarrassing loss to an arch-rival, the coach received a telegram which read: "The last train out of town leaves Sunday at noon. Be under it!" As the "philosopher" Snoopy once said in a Peanuts cartoon, "It doesn't make any difference whether you win or lose-until you lose" (John Atkinson). Rejection hurts. It hurts Jesus when men hear of the salvation He offers, the sacrifice He made, and then shrug their shoulders, go their

way, and reject His plan for their lives. When one rejects Him and returns to the world, he crucifies to himself "the Son of God afresh," and puts "him to an open shame" (Heb 6:6).

JESUS IS FORGOTTEN WHEN HIS WORD IS NEGLECTED. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being

not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (Jas. 1:22-25). Interestingly, the word natural means "the face of the genesis," that is, his "beginning" or "birth." The word glass (esopticon) occurs only here and in I Corinthians 13:12 in the New Testament. In those days mirrors were not made of glass but of metal (usually of copper or tin) (Earle). So, a man soon forgets his natural appearance after looking at a mirror and thus has return to look again. Otherwise his appearance will be neglected. Likewise, a man who neglects to read his Bible will forget what he looks like to Jesus and neglect his spiritual appearance.

JESUS IS FORGOTTEN WHEN GOOD WORKS ARE FORSAKEN. "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. 13:16). Communicate here means fellowship" or "sharing." In the context of the chapter, he discusses brotherly love and instructs them, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers.." (13:2). Jesus was not forgetful to do good (Acts 10:38), and we are instructed to walk in His steps (I Peter 2:21). At Judgment Day, He will inquire as to how we treated the poor, hungry, naked, and imprisoned (Mt. 25:35-40).

Don't make Jesus God's only "forgotten" Son!

What Was Jesus Really Like?

Johnny Ramsey

One of the most interesting studies I have personally made in the past few years concerned a careful review of the life of the Lord as revealed in the first four New Testament books. This survey of Christ's sojourn upon the earth convinced me that many people have dreamed up their own concepts of the Savior and have not been willing to even let the Bible change their minds! The Jesus of religion is not the same as the Master Teacher of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. . Even in the church one can find some faulty impressions regarding the Redeemer. Far too many people depict the Son of God as honey-dripping sweet and apologetic and undemandingly patient. It comes as a rude shock to such folk to learn that Jesus forcibly ran the money changers out of the temple and even became angry because of men's hardened hearts!

Even the celebrated Sermon on the Mount contains several pungent challenges that demand far more of us than some devotees of Jesus realize. In other words, Christ is more demanding and insistent than most folk wish

to admit.

The classic illustration of the wrath of the Lord is Matthew 23. In this fierce chapter in the life of Christ, our Savior bluntly tells the Hebrew religionists that only desolation and hell awaits them. Their ultimate rejection of the Messiah would result in their absolute barren condition spiritually. The temple would be in ruins in symbolism of their shattered dreams and broken aspirations. No one can honestly read Matthew 23 and then continue to only see Jesus as the epitome of love and compassion. In order to be just and honest He also manifested the wrath of God against iniquity!

The Bible often reminds us of the consistent nature of God. As the writer of Hebrews cogently stated: it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" and "our God is a consuming fire." In Revelation 5 the Lord is not only depicted as a Lamb but also as a Lion.

It is true that even in scenes of fiery indignation one can also read of the unfathomable love, compassion and concern of the Savior. But most everyone knows that "God is

love." In fact, nearly everyone believes that is all that He is! Who has not thrilled to the tender pleading of Matthew 11:28-30 after a strong denunciation of three wicked cities by our Lord? And, certainly Revelation 3:20-21 mellows the fearsome blast pronounced against Laodicea! It would also seem that Revelation 22:17 is placed by purpose in the last paragraph of the Bible to remind - for all time to come - every sinner to come back to God. To be sure, even the stern setting of Matthew 23 breathes one of the loveliest of all Bible invitations as Jesus implores the Jews to find shelter under His everlasting arms of love. There is a haven of rest for the weary and a balm for the troubled heart and the rejected Savior provides that consolation. However, those who persist in rejecting the Master will not abide therein.

In teaching the whole counsel of God we dare not eliminate the unpleasant and the challenging material that some call "negative teaching." As Jeremiah and Paul were commanded to tear down, pluck out, destroy, reprove, rebuke and exhort, so must

gospel preachers today loyally proclaim the full truth. It is as Raccoon John Smith once told a startled audience: "I must remove the rocks, pull up the weeds and move out the stumps before I can plant the good seed of the Kingdom, the word of God, in the hearts and lives of the people."

Jesus was so bold and unrelenting in His preaching that his contemporaries thought another prophet had come upon the scene or that John the Immerser had been revived. No one acclaimed Him as a crowd-pleaser or compromiser!

Christ was tender and considerate but He was also very practical and even clever and demanding.

Although our Savior "tasted of death for every man" He also warned of blotting names out of the book of life and sharply pronounced the doom of many who will spend eternity with "the Devil and his angels."

Jesus did not agree with everyone nor did He shun controversy. He had not come to earth to please men but to save them. In I Peter 2:21 we learn that we are to be like Him. What tremendous

responsibility. Some brethren, under the guise of humility, will not rebuke error or condemn sin or practice church discipline. The only aspect of the life of the Lord they seem to notice in the New Testament is that of tenderness. But in Romans 11:22 we learn also of the severity of the Lord.

Just as a gentle mother slaps hard on her baby to keep the child from choking so God chastens those whom He loves and scourges everyone He receives. We dare not pick and choose the characteristics we admire in Jesus; we must be like Him in every way. Each facet of the Divine One should challenge our attention.

What was Jesus really like? We all need to read again the Bible story lest we group around the scaffolding of His life like blind men of Hindustan and never really get to the superstructure of divine revelation on the matter. Such a study would be a real adventure for an honest student and Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are waiting to tell us the story.

APRIL 21, 1995

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- Is One Church As Good As Another
- Denominationalism
- "What Must I Do To Be Saved?"
- Beauty For Ashes
- Finish
- Nichol's Pocket Bible Encyclopedia
- Confirmed

Volume 32 Number 15
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

The Seed Principle

In explaining the parable of the sower, Jesus said, "Now the parable is this: The seed is the Word of God" (Luke 8:11). In order to appreciate fully the un-denominational nature of the church, one needs to be reminded of the seed principle. That is, he needs to conceive of the church and its members as the fruit produced by planting that seed which is the Word of God.

In the days immediately following the establishment of the church of Christ in Jerusalem, the gospel, the Word of God, was preached throughout "Judaea, and in

Samaria, and unto uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). People who believed and obeyed the Word of God became Christians. Churches established by the preaching of the word of God were churches of Christ. Not a single denomination existed for hundreds of years, and then not a single one of the denominations came into existence as the result of preaching the word of God, the gospel of Christ.

The reason I know this is true is the seed principle. You see, seed does not produce one kind of fruit in one place at one time, and then produce a different kind of fruit in

another place at another time. What that seed, the word of God, produced in the first century in those countries around the Mediterranean Sea it will produce in the twentieth century in America. What that seed did not produce in those countries and in that century that same seed will not produce in any century. That is the nature of seed.

In order for one to prove that the church of Christ is a denomination he would have to show that it is produced by something other than the seed of the kingdom, which is the Word of God. In order for one to prove the claim that those

who are members of the church of Christ are members of a denomination, he would have to show they did something other than obey the Word of God in becoming members of the church of Christ. Are churches of Christ produced by the Word of God, and that alone? Do people become members of the church of Christ by obeying the Word of God, and that alone? The answer to both of these questions is yes. Such being the case, then those who are members of churches of Christ are not members of any denomination, for the Word of God alone will not produce such.

Oh, incidentally, ask these same questions with reference to any one of the various denominations, and the answers you come up with might be quite interesting.

If I were a member of some religious body which never could have been produced by the pure seed, the Word of God, I would want to get out of it. If just doing what the Word of God teaches, and that alone, did not make me a member of it, I never should have gotten into it in the first place.

Bob Duncan
Adamsville, AL.

Is One Church As Good As Another?

Dalton Key

Shortly before his death upon the cross, Jesus promised, "I will build my church." (Matthew 16:18.) What did he intended to build?

Did the Lord plan to establish a denomination? No. A denomination, by definition, is a named part of a larger whole. The scores of denominational bodies around us, all claiming at least some allegiance to

Christ, purpose to exist as but parts or units of the larger, universal body of Christians. They are distinguished by their own peculiar doctrines, dogmas, and practices.

Christ had no denomination in mind when he promised to build His church, for that which he was to build, was not merely a fraction of the whole of those redeemed, but rather the whole itself. After the church

was established on Pentecost Day, as recorded by Luke in the second chapter of Acts, the saved were being added by the Lord to the church (Acts 2:47, KJV). If the saved were in the church, and the church was to be comprised of these saved, the church could not possibly have been designed as a part or unit of some larger whole.

No, the church which Jesus promised to build is simply the body of those

saved by the blood of Christ and who submit to him as the body's head. Because all those who obey the gospel and are saved are added to the church, "There is one body" (Ephesians 4:4). Wherever and whenever faithful saints are found, the church may be found. As the body of Christ, operating under his headship (Ephesians 1:22-23), the church of Christ submits to his divine and perfect will in all matters of faith, practice,

work, and worship (Ephesians 5:24; Colossians 3:17). The church built by Jesus Christ is both singular and exclusively His.

In light of these facts, who can honestly say, "One church is just as good as another?"

801 N.E 15th
Amarillo, TX 79107

**"But seek ye first the kingdom of
God and his righteousness"
Matthew 6:33**

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Visit Soon
6th Avenue
Church Of Christ
Jasper, AL 35501

Change Movement #2 Denominationalism

Glenn Colley

This article is second in a series of articles on several issues currently involved in the "Change Movement" among the churches of Christ. I am writing the series out of my deep concern for churches not yet infected with the doctrinal disease, in hopes that knowledge of the movement will motivate elders and preachers and members to arm themselves for what will likely occur. In its early stages the change movement seemed isolated to two or three big cities. But sadly, even many of the smaller rural churches are splitting and splintering over the movement.

The church of Christ is not a denomination. We are non-denominational. We hold these convictions because of sentiments like those of Paul in Acts 5:29, "We ought to obey God rather than men." God's word has a great deal to say about the church and in favor of the church, but condemns the division and secretarian spirit called "denominationalism". Many folks today would be surprised to learn that a man can go through his entire life, be a righteous man, a faithful Christian, a strong church member, having never joined any denomination! It's true, because the New Testament is true.

Jesus came to establish his church, Matthew 16:16-18. The price which He paid for the church was His blood, Ephesians 5:25 and Acts 20:27. The church of Christ was created on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, Acts 2. People became members of that church, Colossians 1:13 and Revelation 1-3. According to

the Bible, Jesus established only one church, Ephesians 4:4-6 and 1:22-23. As those early preachers went from Jerusalem and set up churches, they did not organize denominations. They simply planted the seed of the Gospel, (I Peter 1:23), and more churches of Christ resulted. They were not denominations. The only church authorized in the New Testament is the church of Christ. To plant any church but His is to do that which is unscriptural and anti-scriptural. Paul strongly warned against any man-following division, I Corinthians 1:10.

The change movement would have us to push aside the Bible that stands between the Lord's church and the denominations, and simply unite. We would LOVE to unite! But who are these self-proclaimed change "agents" suggesting should change to accomplish this unity?? If you answer, "the denominations," you're wrong. The one's, according to them, who should change, are members of the church of Christ. According to the change movement, we must be willing to compromise our teaching on matters like baptism, church organization, worship, etc., at least to the degree that we adopt the belief that the many differing ways denominations do these things is God-approved or grace-covered.

There are two matters for consideration on this issue. First, the matter of the Lord's church changing to unite with the denominational churches, and second, the change agent's decision that we in the church of Christ are a denomination already ourselves!

On April 10, 1994, Rubel Shelly, who is arguably one of the key spear-headers of this division, and perhaps the kingpin, preached in a "Post Easter Celebration" in the Woodmont Christian Church building in Nashville, Tennessee. According to the advertisement, "This 'celebration' provided opportunity for 'sharing in worship and fellowship.'" Participating were members of the Christian Church, the Baptist Church, the Presbyterian Church, and the Methodist Church. Rubel, though thought to represent the church of Christ, did not teach that people need to leave denominationalism and be simple Christians. He believes and teaches rather that there are faithful and devout Christians scattered among all denominations. Such a position immediately creates red flags among Bible believing Christians. "What about the necessity of baptism, which these denominations repudiate?", or "What about worshiping in 'spirit and in truth?'" These are very relevant questions, and will be considered in the future articles in this series.

After listening to a recent taped sermon by Rubel Shelly entitled, "Being Distinctive Without Being Divisive," I am convinced that Rubel sees the people of the various denominations as closer to Christ and righteousness than the members of the churches of Christ.

The second matter at issue is whether or not members of the Church of Christ are in reality members of a denomination. Are we different? (Incidentally, the change agents aren't listening to what people teach and

believe. For example, the Baptists repudiate baptism for the remission of sins, yet (according to change agents), God will MAKE their baptism for the remission of sins anyway; the members of the church of Christ repudiate the unscriptural concept of denominationalism, yet according to the change agents) they are members of such anyway. Rubel Shelly and Mike Cope are co-editors of Wineskins magazine. In the first issue, May 1992, one reads with great interest the "Purpose Statement". This is a periodical designed, according to the editors, to bring "reform and renewal in the church...Wineskins is committed to the stimulation of bold but responsible change in the church of God." (As you will see, it is bold, it is change, but it is not responsible.) Then there is this amazing proclamation: "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." (Wineskins, May 1992, pg. 5, 6)

"BORN of the American Restoration Movement"??

That's much different from saying, "A group of people who appreciate the American Restoration Movement," or, "A group of people who respect the preachers of the American Restoration Movement." The word "born" refers to the origin of the church. That is, according to this, the church of Christ, of which many of our readers are members, began in the 1800's. It is a product of man. In other words, according to these change agents, those thousands of folks through the years who studied the Bible and desired to be simple New Testament Christians, actually joined a denomination. They obeyed the Gospel, assembled, and worshiped, according to the scriptures. They wore only the name Christian. They taught simple New Testament Christianity. Yet, according to the Wineskins editors, they were part of something which was born in the 1800's!

One might say, "Well, perhaps this was nothing more than a poor choice of words. Maybe they didn't actually mean BORN of the American Restoration Movement."

(Continued on Page 4)



The Words Of Truth

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"What Must I Do To Be Saved?"

W. A. Holley

We believe in the old time religion, the ancient Jerusalem gospel (Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-42,47). This is the gospel as preached by the apostles and the other inspired men in the first century. Read your New Testament to see for yourself just what this gospel is (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47).

The modern concepts such as "getting religion," "taking Jesus as your personal Savior," "praying through to salvation," "saved by grace only," "saved by faith only," "saved by the direct operation of the Holy Ghost," "getting saved and joining the church of one's choice," are strangely missing from the Sacred Pages of the HOLY BIBLE. Why? Surely, if God had wanted sinners to be saved in such a manner, He would have put it in the Scriptures!! Verily, no man or preacher can change God's word with impunity (Revelation 22:18-19; Galatians 1:6-10).

The question under consideration is found three times in the Book of Acts, although in somewhat different language: Acts 2:36-38; 9:6; 16:30-34. Read these passages and consider their context. The question posed must be answered in the light of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47).

The Lord Jesus Christ has but one way of saving sinners from their sins. The little numeral "One" is very important in God's scheme of

things. Consider Ephesians 4:4-6; John 17:20-23.

No sinner can be saved according to his own will; but, if saved at all, he must be saved according to the will of God (Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 6:46; 13:23-27). "...The way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps; (Jeremiah 10:23). The Lord's ways and thoughts are not our ways and thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9). One can honestly and sincerely think and feel that he is saved, but be so terribly wrong about it. Saul of Tarsus was such a person. (Acts 23:1; 14:16; 26: 9-11). Here is man who had a good conscience while he was persecuting Christians to death! One cannot solely follow his conscience; one must also follow God's word.

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). Obeying the doctrines and commandments of men can never save our souls (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:3-13).

But, there are those who object to being baptized in order to be saved. These objectors say that Abraham, David, or Isaiah, were not required to be baptized, and they were saved, why cannot we be saved without baptism??

Well, we are taught to "rightly divide" the word of God (II Timothy 2:15). There are three ages or dispensations of time in your Bible--the Patriarchy, which lasted for about 2500 years;

Finish

for 60 months.

Likewise I have observed that it is comparatively easier to decide to follow Christ, confess His name, and be immersed for the remission of sins, than it is to face hardship, overcome discouragement, and do what is right an a daily bases. But if we hope to enjoy eternity with God in heaven, we must

the Mosaic, which endured for 1500 years; and the Christian age, which began on the First Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection, and will continue until His second coming. Thus, we can see that each person will be judged according to the law under which he lived. No, Abraham, David, et al., Were not baptized, because the law under which they lived did not command it. But, you live under the law of Christ and it does require you to be baptized (Matthew 28:18-20). To believe, repent, confess Christ, and be baptized for (or unto) remission of sins are not works of merit, but they represent "the work of faith" (I Thessalonians 1:3;) II Thessalonians 2:11; John 6: 28-29). A faith that does not work is a dead faith (James 2:18,19, 24-26).

"What must I do to be saved?" What did Jesus and the inspired Apostles teach? Let us go all the way back to the beginning of the church and see what was required then.

What was right then is still right because the Word of God never changes. What was preached in those days is what must be preached today (Matthew 28:18-20). Note

1) They were taught to hear and understand God's message (Ephesians 3:3-4; Romans 10:17; John 6:44-45).

2) They were taught to believe that Jesus is the Son of God (John 3:16-17; Hebrews 11:6; Acts 16:30-34).

learn to do just that. The apostle Paul once said of himself, "I have fought the good fight, I have FINISHED the race" (2 Timothy 4:7; See also Acts 20:24).

Christian friend, it's not enough that you get started; you must also GET FINISHED. Are you trying to finish your job for the Lord?

Mike Benson. Parsons, TN

3) They were taught to repent of their sins (Luke 13:3-5; Acts 2:38; 17:30-31).

4) They were taught to confess Jesus' name before men (Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Romans 10:9-10).

5) They were taught to be baptized, into Christ, for the remission of sins, to be saved, to wash away sins (Galatians 3:26-27; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4). Please read these verses.

A word of warning is in order here: You may think you have been baptized already, when you have not met the demands of the Scriptures. If you have been sprinkled (some call that baptism but it is not), you need to be baptized. Baptism consists of the process of immersion, submersion and emergence, which cannot be true with sprinkling (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12).

Any baptism that is faulty must be corrected. If you were "baptized because of remission of sins." your baptism is Unscriptural. In order to please God it must be corrected. Do we have a Bible example showing that faulty baptisms were corrected? Yes, indeed, we do!! We suggest that you read Acts 18:24-28; 19:1-7. Here we have an "eloquent man...mighty in the Scriptures," but whose knowledge was limited. The

preacher knew "only the baptism of John." He had never heard of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38). Fortunately, the preacher (Apollos) was teachable; he permitted Priscilla and Aquila to "Expound unto him in the way of God more accurately." Many highly educated preachers today refuse to be corrected.

When Paul the Apostle came to Ephesus, he learned about 12 disciples whom Apollos had baptized, he taught them the difference between John's baptism and Christ's baptism. John's baptism had expired; the only baptism that now counts is the baptism of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). "And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus" Acts 19:5, ASV).

Dear Friend: If you were baptized "because you were already saved," you need to be baptized again. Why?? Because your first baptism is faulty!! We do not say these things to make you angry, but to teach you the truth. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

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Most Of A Minute

Beauty For Ashes

I hope today is going to be a great day for you, but I want to ask you a question: What would you do if it wasn't? What if you faced one of those unthinkable days when it seems many of the important things about you are crumbling?

Well, had you lived before the life of Christ, during the Old Testament times, you might have put on a rough cloth called "sack cloth," and sat down in ashes. It was a practice symbolic of being low and sad, and to show an utter dependency on God. People often sat in ashes to express how sorry they were for their sins.

I told you that to say this: According to Isaiah 61:3, Jesus came to this earth to give us "Beauty for Ashes." That is, by washing away our sins by His death, and teaching us how to live as a Christians, He gave us a reason to live, and a security to hold to when one of these tragic days come. He gave us "beauty for ashes."

Glenn Colley

Nichol's Pocket Bible Encyclopedia

Mel Futrell

A recent article by my friend Bill Lockwood, in his paper. "Hammer and Tongs", made reference to the late C.R. Nichol's Pocket Bible Encyclopedia. Reading this provided me with the impetus to pen this short article.

I have in my possession my Nannie Gould's personal copy of Nichol's Pocket Bible Encyclopedia with a copyright date of 1949. She gave it to me just before I moved down here in June and you can imagine it is a cherished item to me. I would be interested to know how many of you brethren are familiar with and/or possess this small (3" x 5 3/4") 224 page volume. According to brother Earl West it was in 1926 that brother C.R. Nichol wrote his Pocket Bible Encyclopedia (The Search

For The Ancient Order. vol. 4. P. 219). And there have literally been millions of these little volumes distributed around the world. It says alot about brother Nichol and his pocket Bible that it can still be purchased from the Gospel Advocate Company (and maybe elsewhere) here almost 70 years later.

A few weeks back when I preached over at Central in Mobile, we were notified that a young couple had obeyed the Gospel the night before. At the end of the service they were presented with two items of reading material one of which was, wouldn't you know, Nichol's Pocket Bible Encyclopedia. I considered that a wise move on the part of the congregation to pass out to these babes in Christ such a useful and sound

volume.

The late brother Guy N. Woods wrote that he was often asked to suggest what books one should buy in order to learn better what the Bible teaches. In his volume "How To Study The New Testament Effectively" chapter 10 he lists scores of good books but he also has a list of 10 books of exceptional value, number 8 in the list is, you guessed it, C.R. Nichol's Pocket Bible Encyclopedia. Listen to just a portion of what brother Woods had to say about this little book.

"There is a Latin phrase, multum in parvo which, loosely translated, means much in little'. If ever there was a publication of which this might truly be said it is this marvelous little work. Small enough to be carried

in a man's shirt pocket or in a ladies' small purse, it contains sufficient biblical proof to refute every principal false doctrine on earth!" (Gospel Advocate Co., 1992, p. 128)

Brother C.R. Nichol was truly a defender of the faith. The late brother R.L. Colley whose son and grandson, Gary and Glenn are also gospel preachers, thought Nichol's "great ability is not surpassed as a preacher and debater." (West, p. 217) By 1940, Nichol himself said he had baptized more than 10,000 people and conducted more than three hundred debates. (West, p. 219) Brother Earl West describes Nichol as, "a thinker" and "a serious-minded and energetic student of the Bible" (p. 218). Brother Nichol's 5 volume "Sound Doctrine" series,

which is also still in print, should be in the library of every Christian. But brother C.R. Nichol's "claim to fame" will probably always be that little Pocket Bible Encyclopedia. GOD only knows how many people have been strengthened, aided, and possibly convicted of their sins by the Biblical information contained in Nichol's small volume. But this I do know: If you and I could be just half as dedicated to the cause of Christ as C.R. Nichol the army of the Lord would swell to unthought of proportions and this world would be a better place. Spend two dollars and fifty cents and share in the experience of "Nichol's Pocket Bible Encyclopedia".

Confirmed

Once something is confirmed, does it need to be confirmed again? For example, if a jury declares a man innocent of a given charge, is it necessary that it reconvene and thus "re-confirm" his innocence each year? Of course not. One

simply has to check the court's WRITTEN record to verify his innocence.

Likewise, do we need miracles today to confirm (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4) to us that Jesus is the Son of God? No. We need only go to the written record (i.e., the

New Testament) for confirmation of this truth. The Bible says, "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but THESE ARE WRITTEN THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE that Jesus is

the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:30-31).

Friends, the only miracles we need today are the ones recorded in the Word of God. If THOSE miracles aren't enough to establish and

strengthen our faith (Romans 10:17) in Christ (John 8:24), then nothing can.

Mike Benson

Denominationalism

(Continued from Page 2)

But they did. When an individual begins a subscription he is sent a letter from Philip Morrison, managing editor, which repeats the purpose statement, and the assertion that the "Church of Christ was born of the American Restoration Movement." In addition, the latest issue in my possession, (Volume Two, Number 8), contains a cardboard insert which again

repeats the same sad assertion.

Faithful Christians are part of the body of Christ today, His church. They are not part of ant denomination, and will deny to the death that the church of which they are members originated in the 1800's. It began, they will tell you, on Pentecost about 2000 years ago, and you may read about where it was "born" in Acts chapter two.

I wonder what happens when a change agent baptizes someone today. Is that person added to the church? If so, what church? If he assembles with the same church of Christ as Rubel Shelly for worship, and places membership there, has he joined a denomination born of the American Restoration Movement? If so, shouldn't Rubel discourage him from membership? If not, what are

they doing in that church which makes it more non-denomination than the rest of us? Lingering questions.

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God

speed. For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds, (II John 9, 10)."

Obey the Gospel, be a Christian, and a member of Christ's church so when the trumpet blows, you can be with the Lord in heaven.

Next week's article will be used to discuss the change movement and today's worship.

Glenn Colley

APRIL 28, 1995

• See Articles Inside:

- We All Live Downstream
- The Change Movement Among Churches of Christ #3
- The Church Must Take The Lead In Mission Work
 - Are We Respectable
 - Clean Language
- Crime And The Disintegration Of The American Family

Volume 32 Number 16
(USPS 691-760)

The Words C Truth

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

with the
5

We All Live Downstream

Allen Webster

Barry Boothe observed, "We all live downstream." Environmentalists use this phrase to make us aware of our impact on others. When we throw something away it has to land somewhere. Anti-freeze poured in the ground may show up in the water table fifty miles away... There are some who say what they do privately is nobody's business. This just isn't true. We all live downstream" (edited from Iuka bulletin). He's exactly right. We do live downstream. Think with me for a few paragraphs.

SINNERS LIVE DOWNSTREAM. A father was concerned that his son, who always seemed to be in hot water, would get into serious trouble when he got older. He worked on ways to make a positive change in the young man's behavior. Finally he hit upon an idea that struck a cord with the boy. Every time the boy got into trouble, he was sent out with hammer to drive a nail into a post his father had placed in the front yard. It was not many days until the post looked like a porcupine! After a week or so, the boy began to act better and seemed concerned about the nails in the post. Finally, he approached his father and asked how they could be removed. He thought for a moment and said, "Every time you do a good deed, I'll let you take one out." He seemed pleased and in not many days all the nails were gone. Later on, his father saw him staring at the post. He asked about his concern since there were no nails in the post. The boy said,

"The nail scars are still there." And so it is. We can remove sin's guilt, but it's scars may remain for a long time.

Forgiveness of the guilt of sin is different from freedom from the consequences of sin. We all live downstream from the consequences of past sins. David repented of his sin with Bathsheba (Psalm. 51), but the sword never departed from his house (2 Sam. 11:10-13). Esau repented of selling his birthright, and sought it again with tears, but was unable to retrieve it (Hebrews. 12:17). The drinker can be forgiven of his drunkenness, but it won't restore his liver, bring back an accident victim, or replace his wasted money (cf. Proverbs 20:1). The smoker can be forgiven for harming God's temple, but neither baptism nor prayer will fix his lungs (cf. 1 Corinthians. 6:19-20). The fornicator can be forgiven of fornication, but it will not restore virginity or take a baby out of the womb (cf. Hebrews. 13:4). The adulterer can be forgiven of adultery, but it may not restore the severed marriage relationship (Matthew 19:9). The liar can be forgiven of lying, but it may take a long time for other to trust him again (Ephesians 5:25). A thief can be forgiven of stealing, but he may still have to serve prison time (Ephesians 4:28).

So, what's the point? It's better never to sin than to have to "pull the nails out." Young folks, and tempted folks, remember that you'll soon be "downstream" and you'll be glad then that you avoided

today's temptations. The wise man said, "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished" (Proverbs. 22:3), and "Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard" (13:15).

FAMILIES LIVE DOWNSTREAM. We live downstream from our parents. In most cases, girls turn out to be about the same kind of wives and moms as their mothers were. Boys turn about to be like their dads. "As is the mother, so is her daughter" (Ezekial. 16:44). By the grace of God, the strength of Christ, and the Spirit's Word, we can change if we want to have a different kind of home than our parents. We can become better husbands, wives, and parents (Philippians 4:13). But it is not easy. We do live downstream.

Families live downstream of their own decisions. Many live to wish that they had spent more time together "upstream" after circumstances no longer allow it. Many who thought they "couldn't live without" the extra money of a second or third job, downstream regret emphasizing things over time and training (Titus. 2:4-5; Ephesians 6:4; Luke 12:15). Later in life parents may find time for spiritual things, only to find that it is too late to influence their kids. The world's hold proves too strong. Parents with a troubled teen wish they had not laughed at his back talk when he was small. Husbands whose wives leave them wish they had paid a little more attention to them "upstream" (1 Peter 3:7).

Then, again, kindnesses shown often show up downstream in a rich and full relationship (1 Corinthians 7:3-5; Colossians 3:19). "I love yous" have a way of echoing, smiles are contagious, and good deeds bommerang. Thoughtfulness begets thoughtfulness. Concern fathers concern. Love mirrors love.

CHURCHES LIVE DOWNSTREAM. We are building on the foundation of those who dreamed of having a congregation in this place. We are worshipping in a building they sacrificed to purchase. We are reaping the benefits of classes they taught, sermons they preached, meetings they held, prayers they prayed. Paul wrote, "For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon" (1 Corinthians 3:9-10). We need to let those who have served as elders, deacons, and preachers in days gone by know that we appreciate all the good they did. They do not need to be put on a shelf, but on a pedestal. God be thanked that they were there to fill the gap before we were old enough to know right from wrong.

We stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before to restore the church to its original pattern. Those who want to lead the church into denominationalism should be honest enough to move out on their own and start from scratch instead of stealing

buildings and members others sacrificed to build upon the truth. Paul went on to say, "but let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (3:10 b-11).

In another vein, churches live downstream of their elders' decisions. Each elder needs to continually pray for wisdom (and members need to pray for their leaders) because a decision made in an elders' meeting today may have far-reaching consequences "downstream" (cf. James. 1:5-6). We need to empathize with elders. They have great responsibility (Hebrews. 13:17), and most of them do very well. They realize that it is much easier to keep the church pure from those living in adulterous marriages, than it is to deal with such situations after they have placed membership (Matthew. 19:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:6). They see that it is easier never to start a controversial practice, than to stop it. They know it is better never to invite an unsound speaker, than to undo the damage and division he has caused. They foresee that it is easier to forbid young people to go to unscriptural and questionable rallies, jubilees, and workshops than to get them to quit clapping and the girls from wanting to lead prayers when they get back. We need to hold up their hands because they are thinking about the souls "downstream."

Who knows where we'll be tomorrow? Wherever it is, it will be downstream."

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

New Testament Worship

Visit Soon
6th Avenue
Church Of Christ
Jasper, AL 35501

The Change Movement Among Churches of Christ, #3

Glenn Colley

This series of articles focuses on the number one source of division in the Lord's church today. It's called the "change movement," and is led by men who call themselves "change agents." They seek to make the church melt into the massive pool of denominationalism. They promote the compromise of fundamental Bible teachings in order to accommodate the many different religions which claim some tie to Jesus. They believe the church of Christ of which we are members, is a denomination. My hope, in writing this series, is to aid elders and preachers and other members of the church in identifying and stopping these false doctrines. This short article focuses on the subject of the New Testament worship.

In this article I want to quote from a book by Rubel Shelly and Randall J. Harris entitled, "The Second Incarnation." I believe this to be appropriate because Rubel is clearly a leader in the movement, and arguably the king pin. Consider these quotes from the book:

(Page 139) --We must have a "raucous celebration...Spontaneity."

(Page 132) --"Individuals, groups, and entire congregations," singing.

(Page 119) -- "Unavoidable" worship, "shouts," "dances." (Page 140) -- "Jubilation...with applause and cheering." (Page 136) -- "One person or a small group singing to the larger."

(Page 124) -- "Dramatic

celebration of God."

(Page 125) -- "A narcotic trip into another world." (Page 9) -- "Dramatic presentations by 15 men and women that communicates the will of God."

Page 139 goes on to say, "None of us has the right to dictate how things always must be. We have no right to quench the infinite variety of loving responses to the presence of God. Mutual respect and concern will lead us into unselfish acceptance and praise to God for our brother's and sister's offering of praise, even when it is in ways to which we are not personally disposed."

Page 132 reads, "The church must be open to the invigorating presence of the spirit's fresh breezes."

Page 135 reads, "When the spirit of God is present, it will not always be possible to determine the atmosphere in advance. Leaders may intend and prepare for a service of one sort, and God may bring about another end to His glory."

But what does the Bible say in contrast to this "Do what feels good to you, and no one has a right to criticize it" doctrine about today's worship?

We should commit to memory what Jesus said in John 4:24: "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." While we would readily admit that there are times when our hearts in worship may lack the "spirit" which God requires, that does not justify changing the "truth" requirements of worship. Worship must be in harmony

with the New Testament pattern to be God approved.

We can go nearly back to the dawn of creation to see the first lesson on acceptable worship to God. Genesis 4:5 says, "But unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect...And the Lord said unto Cain... 'If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?'" Hebrews 11:4 says, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous..." Notice that Abel's sacrifice was God approved because it was what God had required. Cain knew God's will, ("If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?"), but didn't submit and obey. Able used his sacrifice to express his faith. He did what God wanted. He was in submission. He did his sacrifice by faith. Where does faith come from? "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, (Romans 10:17.)" I John 3:12 concludes the discussion by saying, "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."

What we do in our worship must be authorized. Colossians 3:17 says, "Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus..."

Needing authority before practicing a particular course of worship is what excludes instrumental music from our worship. It simply isn't authorized. God told us what He wanted, (Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16, vocal,

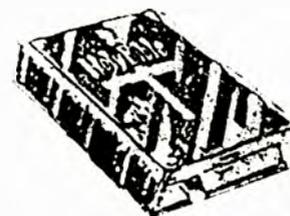
reciprocal singing), and we must be satisfied with that specific. The same is true with regard to the bread and wine specified for the Lord's supper.

Some are saying that everything a Christian does in life is worship. This implies of course, that whatever would be appropriate in my daily living could not be considered inappropriate in our worship assemblies. But that's a false doctrine. There are many things which we do in our daily lives which would be unauthorized in our worship. It is true that all we do in life as Christians glorifies God, but only worshipful acts constitute worship. And only Biblically authorized actions are God-approved.

In conclusion, it is distressing to read from books like "Second Incarnation" that in worship

"...it will not always be possible to determine the atmosphere in advance. Leaders may intend and prepare for a service of one sort, and God may bring about another end to His glory." The elders are shepherds and overseers over the flock, charged with seeing to it that what is done is done right, (Acts 20:27). Have they no control over what people will do during the worship assembly? Are they to give a lethargic smile while ignoring unscriptural worship practices? Faithful elders will not. Don't allow this divisive movement to take hold in the church of which you are a member. Stand for what is right.

Next week's article will discuss the subject of how baptism relates to the change movement.



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The Church Must Take The Lead In Mission Work

In out time it has been the preacher or some individual Christian who has taken the lead in doing mission work. If that person had the desire and time to go out and find support, and he made a good impression, he was able to go to his chosen mission field. Some had only the drive, and not much else, but when because of persistent effort. Sometimes congregations helped, seemingly only to get rid of the person requesting assistance. Such mistakes have been harmful to the cause of Christ.

While some brethren have sought a family to send to the mission field, most have not. This, too, has been a mistake.

Not taking the lead in choosing the man and the field means that the congregation itself was most prepared to provide the needed direction for the work, and it often began the effort reluctantly. As a result, if committed at all, the commitment was to the individual or family, and not to the work itself. As long as the individual was there, the congregation would support him, but when he came home, brethren felt that their responsibility had ended. That work, then, was either taken up by some other party or was abandoned--and perhaps no one cared greatly, one way or the other. This is a

sad way to do mission work.

The more ideal method is for a congregation to prepare itself for the responsibility, both in terms of teaching its members the importance of the work and of their need for involvement; and in terms of supporting the missionary financially. Then they should seek some one to go, backing him with their full support, monetarily and otherwise. Their commitment should be a long-term one, to the family and also to the chosen field of work.

When the church takes the lead in developing a mission program, it is something that has been thought out and well planned, with the

membership being supportive of it, and with great excitement and expectation of entering into it. With the choosing of the missionary and his family, the members are ready to send them and to work with them in the furtherance of the Lord's cause. In this way both are benefited and the work thrives in their respective places.

The local congregation that is unable to sponsor or fully fund a missionary family should still take the lead in finding someone to support even partially. Various missionaries should be invited to speak and to inform the elders and the church

about their work rather than to wait to be asked for appointments. In doing so, again, the church has decided to do mission work, is prepared to do it, and desires to seek out the right one to represent it in the mission field.

As the Lord's people, we need to get serious about mission work and treat it as a priority instead of something that we are pressured into doing. It can be a rich and rewarding experience for all concerned, if the church will take the lead in doing the work God has given it to do.

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Are We Respectable?

A leader among the Quakers once said it was a sad day when his religious group became respectable. He, of course was playing with the word respectable, because what prompted his remark was the fact that his people were no longer distinctive but were much like the denominations around them. Perhaps such famous Quakers as James Michener and Richard Nixon, whose writings are so well known, could provide further comment on their leaders observation.

But suppose we look at ourselves, members of the Lord's church. There was a time when our preaching, teaching, and Christian living were indeed distinctive. We were regarded as the people who were different. We really were a "peculiar people." (Titus 2:14, 1 Peter. 2:9). The churches of Christ were known as "Bible totin', scripture quotin'" people who were "in the world but not of the world." Such things as drinking, dancing, and questionable recreation were taboo. It is no coincidence

that the church was growing rapidly during that time. Is it possible that some today have become "respectable"? Have some of our brethren compromised in order to be respectable?

Everyone is familiar with compromise. It is necessary for healthy relationships in our lives. Husband and wife must compromise from time to time. Parents and children often need to compromise. There are many times when compromise is helpful and imperative. Compromise, however, is neither helpful or wise when pertaining to the eternal truths of God's word. We may compromise on the color of the door on the church's building but never on entrance into the church. (Acts. 2:38-47). We may compromise on the hour we worship but not the way we worship. We must not compromise our morals and principles in every day living.

Often compromise springs from a good heart that wants to be liked and longs to believe that most will be saved. While we understand this desire, we must

understand that fraternizing with the world and compromising the truth has never led a single soul to obey God.

May we never compromise with the world. Charles Spurgeon once said, "Our being so much like the world - our trading as the world trades, our talking as the world talks, our always insisting on it that we must do as other people do - this is doing more mischief than all our preachers can hope to effect god. I cannot imagine a man professing to be a Christian, and then acting as the world acts, and yet honoring Christ." It is a shame that this denominational preacher knew something that some of our own have failed to realize. Maybe one reason the church has so little influence over the world has so much influence over the church!

Let us be thankful for the men and women that have remained rock solid in matters of doctrine and conduct and let us continue to pray for our brethren who have sought to be respectable.

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JESUS
Is Your Best
Friend

Most Of A Minute

Clean Language

How many teenagers during the 1940's sat a spell bound in front of the television and movie screen dreaming of living like the make-believe stars!

Of course most folks knew that the life was generally a far cry from the "frills and thrills" life of the movie stars. There are still things however on the TV and in the movies today that aren't just like real life for most people.

For instance, most actors and actresses from shoot-em-up cowboys to socially prominent women curse like this. English language couldn't get along without it. Is this filthy and gutter talk really characteristic of most people? I don't think so. and I know it isn't of God-fearing people.

In (Exodus. 20:7) the Bible says, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain."

Is there any good reason why you need to use bad language?

Glenn Colley

Crime And The Disintegration Of The American Family

W. A. Holley

The politicians are apologetic with regard to the rising crime rate. They think something should be done. The educators are permissive, in the main, toward total freedom in human conduct. Hence, in their mind there is no norm, no standard, no rule, by which one can tell right from wrong. Many educators argue that truth can not be known. If such a proposition is true, we ask, How do they know that we do not know?? Jesus taught that men can know the truth (John 8:32). Countless millions have discarded the Holy Bible, as man's perfect guide in moral and religious truth. They claim that everything is left up to the individual to determine what should or should not be done. Such a situation prevailed in Old Testament times (Deuteronomy 12:8; Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). Our nation is fact becoming a nation of criminals. The crime rate is rising so rapidly it is frightening. Teenage gangs control the streets in many cities, robbing and murdering almost at will. Television, newspapers and magazines carry these stories every day. The majority of arrests are under 25 years of age. The Scriptures teach: "By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted; but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked" (Proverbs 11:11, ASV). Again, "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any

people" (Proverbs 14:34, ASV).

America is awash with kids denied guidance, discipline, and conformity of the wholesome, secure family life. Marriages are declining, divorces are soaring. Millions of kids born out of wedlock have never had Moms and Dads. Hence, they never receive necessary training (Genesis 18:19-20; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21). Today, thousands of women glory in having children without the benefit of Holy Matrimony. How far FROM God can one get?? (Genesis 2:23-24; Matthew 19:3-9; I Corinthians 6:15-18). The family is the basis of society as God ordered; when the family is gone, all will be gone.

The Scriptures says, "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some already turned aside after Satan" (I Timothy 5:14-15). "But who cares what the Scriptures say?" many reply disdainfully. Since the arrival of the "pill" and "abortion," many think that marriage is unnecessary.

"Let marriage be had in honor all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge." (Hebrews 13:4, ASV). Aside from marriage, sex is dishonorable! Listen to Jesus Christ: "WHOSOEVER shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry

another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery" (Matthew 19:9, ASV). What does this verse teach? Unlawful intercourse with any other person permits the innocent party to break the marriage vow; the guilty party can never again enter a pure and lawful marriage. Husbands, if you are doing things your wife does not know about, stop it NOW; Wives, if you are doing things your husband does not know about, stop it NOW. In this manner your marriage can be saved.

Jesus taught the Samaritan woman: "...Go, call thy husband, and come thither. The woman answered and said unto Him, I have no husband. Jesus saith unto her, Thou saidest well, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: this hast thou said truly" (John 4:15-17). Are you living with one to whom you have no right?? Society once (publicly at least) considered sex outside of marriage a threat to its stability. Now, sex reserved exclusively for marriage is considered quaint.

Somehow, American citizens must rebuild their lives. We can do that by putting God, the Bible and the church back into our minds and hearts. It will work! We know that human philosophies mock and scorn such ideas. The wisdom of the world cannot solve our sin-problem

(I Corinthians 1:18-25).

We need to appreciate the value of work ethic. Even in Paradise, God gave Adam work to do (Genesis 2:15). "An idle mind is the Devil's workshop," I was taught 70 years ago. Work solves many economic, social and emotional problems. A loss of values has almost destroyed our nation. To prosper, we need to subscribe to a set of standards that motivate people to work, stay married, to be honest and sincere, and exercise self-control. We suggest that you read II Peter 1:5-11. These traits of character are not sold in the Malls of our country. Teach a person how to fish and you will not have to give him a fish.

Moreover, we must develop a greater appreciation and a higher regard for human life. We are at war in our own streets. Murder, drive-by shootings, and other forms of violence are common. In 1994 there were more than 1,000 murders in Chicago; in Birmingham there were about 140. Consider all the other metropolitan areas; what will we have?

The sale of pornography, alcoholic beverages, drugs, and sex are promoted for the sake of the Almighty Dollar. We read, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows (I Timothy 6:10, ASV). Sin is

not sin anymore in the minds of countless thousands; it is looked upon as a mere peccadillo. Profanity is accepted in the highest society ---think of Nixon's tapes, or Clinton's bad language.

Food for thought: "Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals" (I Corinthians 15:33). "And because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matthew 24:12, ASV). "But evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (II Timothy 3:12, ASV). "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on earth? (Luke 18:8).

When troubles are deep
and your world is dark
don't give up hope,
"TRY GOD"...

When life turns sour
And you've lost your way,
don't give up hope,
"TRY GOD"...

When fears stack up
and you're sure no one cares,
don't give up hope,
"TRY GOD"...

When temptation
comes knocking and
you struggle with it so,
don't give up hope,
"TRY GOD"...

Anonymous.

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**"Righteousness exalteth a nation;
but sin is a reproach to any people"**

Proverbs 14:34, ASV

MAY 5, 1995

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- Falling From Grace
- Untapped Potential

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The Words of Truth

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

th the

Lift Up Your Eyes

Johnny Ramsey

There are a number of passages in the Bible that speak of the importance of using our eyes properly for spiritual discernment. These verses usually refer to being alert for opportunities in the service of the Lord. In John 4:35 Jesus challenged the apostles to look upon the teeming masses of humanity coming toward the Lord searching for salvation. In the language of II Kings 6 we need also to open our eyes that we may clearly see our opportunities and responsibilities.

When we get our eyes opened properly we see a world lost in sin (Jeremiah. 51:5; Romans 3:10) in desperate need for a Savior. God does want all men to be saved (I Timothy. 2:4). But this requires knowledge of the Truth and thus, our participation in the spread of the glad tidings of redemption (Acts 8:4; Romans 10:18).

"While the souls of men are dying; And the Master calls for you let no one hear you idly saying; "There is nothing I can do."

When we count the cost of being lost and realize

that loving our neighbor involves the pure message of the cross we will be incessant regarding the parting words of Christ: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel!" So many people live totally unprepared to meet the Lord in the Judgment. Jesus proclaimed in John 12:48. "The words I have spoken the same will judge you in the last day." Paul prayed that our body, soul and spirit be preserved blameless in view of that final hour (I Thessalonians 5:23). We truly need to lift up our eyes to clearly see the challenge before us.

"Are you sowing the seed of the Kingdom, brother, All along the fertile way? Are you sowing the seed of the kingdom, brother; you must reap at the last great day?"

Millions are gambling, at very high stakes, concerning salvation and eternity. Such foolish ones are in dire need of someone to "Rattle their cages" in order to awaken them unto the precious nature and incomparable value of their never-dying spirit.

"When in a better land before the Judgement we

stand, How deeply grieved our soul will be. If some lost one there cries in deep despair, "You never mentioned Christ to me."

There are times when storms sweep away cotton, corn or wheat crops. Such temporary calamities cause farmers to cry: "I am ruined."

In the day of reckoning all lost ones will surely know the anguish of that statement. Farmers can live another year, in this life, and recover losses with a bumper crop or harvest but when lost men hear their final doom there will be no more escape. Eternity is a long time to be forever lost! Matthew 25:46 is a heart-breaking reminder:

"These shall go away into everlasting punishment." What an awesome prospect. When Jesus saw folk headed in that direction, Matthew 9 tells us that He had compassion upon them for they were as sheep not having a shepherd. Then our blessed Lord said: "Pray ye the Lord of harvest to send forth laborers into the vineyard."

Have we agonized over lost mankind? Do we

really care? Is it nothing to us (Lamentations 1:12) that so few of the 4.7 billion people in this vast world know the name of Christ? In the final accounting day we shall be thankful for every opportunity we used to glorify God and deeply ashamed of golden moments we wasted that could have been spent saving the lost (I Timothy 4:16; James 5:20).

We must lift up our eyes to see the following things:

(1) How love of money consumes our time (I Timothy 6:17)

(2) How misplaced priorities hinder us (Luke 10:38-42)

(3) How selfishness is a form of idolatry (Phillipians 2:1-5)

(4) How failure to learn the Bible hurts the cause (Acts 17:11)

(5) How Christ demands the best we have (Luke 9:23)

(6) How Satan strives to deter us (I Peter 5:8-9)

(7) How desperately the lost need us (Psalms 142:4)

(8) How joyous soul-winning can be (Proverbs 11:30)

(9) How stingy giving thwarts the Gospel

(Malachi 3)

(10) How racial bias keeps the lost still lost (Romans 2:1).

We must lift up our eyes to keep our view permanently fixed on the Savior (Heb 12:2) as we seek to restore the erring and bring light to a world of darkness (I John 5:19). We must open our eyes to seek opportunities to do good as we develop brilliant young men to preach the word urgently (II Timothy 4:2). When we personally grow spiritually, the providence of God uses us and blesses our efforts in things divine. We will then utilize every proper means to communicate the message of redemption. An unknown poet challenges us:

"I knelt in tears at the feet of Christ

In the hush of the twilight dim

And all that I was, or hoped or sought

Surrendered unto Him.

Crowned or crucified my heart shall know

No king, but Christ, who loved me so."

Let us lift up our eyes and serve Him faithfully always!

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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The Change Movement #4 The Critical Question Of Baptism

Glenn Colley

In the last three issues of the Words of Truth, I have dedicated my editorial space to the discussion of the massive division weaving through the churches of Christ in America. It is getting increasingly difficult to find a city or town where there is not one church of Christ bent on following the teachings of the "change agents". In some cities, it may soon be hard to find a church of Christ which is not compromising for this movement. It should be noted, that change is not always bad. With regard to the church of Christ however, the change agents who began by assuring us that the changes were only in regard to methods and matters of judgment, have quickly and obviously stepped across into working to change matters of faith.

This series reviews a variety of subjects because the change movement seeks to change so many different facets of the church of Christ. Today we consider the important subject of Baptism.

In their change-advocating book The Second Incarnation by Rubel Shelly and Randell Harris, page 211, in introductory remarks for a chapter entitled, "Baptism and Lord's Supper; Symbols of the Promise", we read, "We are convinced that these (Baptism and Lord's supper, GC) are instances where theological principles are so enmeshed with their forms that a rejection of the forms entails significant theological loss."

Two observations. First, I am amazed that men who hold such high degrees in theology and other areas, write sentences which say so much and mean so little. Brethren, let's remember that greatness in preaching and teaching God's word comes in

presenting His truth in simplicity. Furthermore, let us pray that we will teach in such a way that people who listen to us or read from our writing, will clearly know what we are teaching. I know that is not always easy, but when we fail in that, may it not be because we were so interested in creative writing that we lost the message, or because we believed that if we expressed our convictions in clear terms we would be rejected. While we understand that there are some subjects requiring more technical language and explanations, than others, baptism and the Lord's Supper should be taught by us with the clarity as the holy Scriptures gives them.

Second, if the writers of "The Second Incarnation" mean to say that "Changing what the Bible says about the practice of Baptism or the Lord's Supper will make us disapproved by God," then I'd like to agree. If that is what they mean to say however, then why do they seek to mingle the church of Christ with denominations which boldly teach error regarding baptism? How can they calmly assemble for worship and celebrate fellowship with denominational teachers and members who practice baptism contrary to the Word of God?

People who have involved themselves in the change movement have a sticky problem when it comes to the truth about baptism. One young woman who had been smitten by the change doctrines was asked about her new beliefs. She said, "There are only two commands in the Bible that are important: Love God and love your neighbor. That's all God is really concerned about." The Christian talking with her asked, "Well, what about other

commands --for example, what about baptism? Must a person be baptized to be saved?" She responded, "Well, yes, (pause), no, (pause), oh, I don't know!"

At the heart of this issue is the fact that the majority of denominations teach false doctrine regarding baptism. They believe and teach that baptism has nothing to do with a person's salvation. While Jesus taught, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..." (Mark 16:16), they in essence teach, "He that believeth and is saved shall be baptized." They believe we are saved by grace alone. What does Rubel Shelly, leader in the change movement, say? "And, no, I'm not going to debate anybody on the theory of whether salvation is by grace and grace alone; because the Bible just makes that too plain. In affirming that I do not deny human responsibility. Of course, we have responsibility. It's faith. But, I'm saved after I have believed; I am saved by what He did, not by my faith, and not by anything that in obedience to Christ I have done to demonstrate that faith is real." (In a speech for the 1991 Jubilee conference) After reading that statement, do you think these brethren are teaching that baptism is essential for salvation? Of course not. And why would they want to abandon the plain teaching of the Scriptures on the necessity of baptism? (Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16, I Peter 3:21, Mark 16:15-16, Gal. 3:27-28, etc.) Because that is the only way to join into fellowship with denominations. The denominations are not going to compromise and teach that baptism is necessary for the remission of sins. So, the change agents move to persuade New Testament Christians to compromise.

Carroll D. Osburn, change agent, in his book, "The Peaceable Kingdom Essays Favoring Non-Sectarian Christianity," published in 1993, wrote, "There should be a room in the Christianity fellowship for those who believe that Christ is the Son of God, but who differ on...theories such as pre-millennialism, congregational organization...or whether baptism is 'for' or 'because of' remission of sins."

Some of the change agents are promoting the notion that a man doesn't have to know or understand that baptism is for the remission of sins for it to be so. Any baptism, they suggest, motivated by a desire to please God, will be accepted by God. This is false doctrine. In Acts 19 we read of folks who were clearly baptized to please God, yet because they were baptized with John's baptism, which had by then been replaced by Christ's baptism, they had to be baptized again.

What must happen in the following scenario for a man to meet the requirements of the Gospel: He is taught by a denominational preacher that baptism is not for the remission of sins; he believes baptism is not for the remission of sins; he is baptized with words repudiating the truth that baptism is for the remission of sins, (i.e. "I baptize you because God for Christ's sake has already

pardoned your sins."); and he leaves the water believing and telling others that baptism had nothing to do with the remission of sins? Those in the change movement are saying and implying that this baptism is still for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), and that this person has indeed been baptized into Christ. The truth however, contrary to that notion, is that this man must be baptized again, scripturally, for the remission of sins. Why? Because he is yet in his sins.

Baptism is an integral part of the Gospel. Philip taught the people of Samaria. He "Preached Christ" to them. How did they respond? They were baptized, (Acts 8:5-12). Although no mention is made of his preaching other than that he preached Christ, they learned from that sermon the necessity and importance of baptism. It was Jesus, not men, who included baptism in the great commission.

Incidentally, to teach false doctrine about baptism, or to teach that we are saved without the baptism taught in the Bible, is to teach another Gospel, and I hope my brethren so bent on changing the church will consider the consequences of that reality long and hard. (Galatians 1:8-11) Let's hold to God's truth revealed in the Bible. And let us try these teachers to see if they be from God.



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What If....

"What if...?" How many times have you made this remark as a prefix to some grand declaration? In the spiritual realm we can ask this question over and over.

"What if" every preacher preached only the Bible and left off his denominational dogma? The result would be that all who heard and obeyed the teaching would be simply New Testament Christians! The word of God is the seed (Luke 8:11). "They...went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). Philip preached Jesus (Acts 8:35). Paul preached the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:12-16). I have heard various men in varied religious organizations make the statement, "I don't preach denomination; I preach the Bible." This remark is more critical of such a person's denominational affiliation than he might realize! If one can preach the Bible and not preach denomination, then it follows that if one preaches only the Bible there will be no denominations! There are no denominational dogmas or denominations in the Bible.

"What if" every Bible class were devoted to Bible study and not foolish playing? I am not suggesting that teachers

of young children in a Bible class should not make the class interesting or that they should not use all available methods of adequate instruction. I am, however, reminding such teachers that their class time is not their time!! It is the time set aside by the local elders for further instruction of the children and young people who attend. It is time for the older classes to think seriously and reflect soberly on the grand eternal truths of God. It is a time to search the scriptures (Acts 17:11). It is not the time for cantankerous members with foolish ideas to utter their "remarkable" observations by taking scriptures out of context in order to tie the class up in a never ending discussion over trifles. What if every class would heed this?

"What if" every Bible class teacher were prepared for the class when class time arrives? Have you ever sat in a class and had the distinct impression that the teacher had not prepared his lesson? Have you ever been in a class in which the teacher spouted out like a parrot some things he has heard others say but he obviously has not done his own study to have real

personal conviction on the issue at hand? It seems to me that Paul instructed Timothy to instruct the church to prepare men to be real teachers, not just lecturn ornaments (2 Timothy 2:2).

"What if" every member who is present Sunday morning would be present Sunday evening and Wednesday evening when possible? Of course "possible" to some means only if their favorite T.V. show isn't airing or the ball game isn't being shown or uncle Joe isn't coming for a visit, etc. What if every church member showed true concern for the church by insisting that they should want to be present, not because you have to show them a scripture proving their presence is essential, but because they really have the right attitude toward God and the church?

"What if" every member of the church were really different from the world? I don't mean by this that we need fanatics or extremists. Jesus was no fanatic and the apostles were not extremists. They were not anti-social. They were not holier-than-thou in their demeanor. But they lived what they

believed! God's grace teaches us to deny the worldly things and live for righteousness (Titus 2:11-15). Jesus teaches us to be lights in the world (Matthew 5:13-16), as does Paul by inspiration (Philippians 2:15-16; Ephesians 5:9-13). It is rather disappointing to hear some good brother make excellent statements in Bible class Sunday morning only to see him living the remainder of the week inconsistently with those remarks!

"What if" parents quit blaming the preacher, the elders, and the church for the failure of the young people in the congregation to be "interested in the church"? Brethren, it is not the preacher's job to stay on top of every new entertainment to keep people--including your children--interested in the church! It is the duty of the home (yours and mine) to train our own children! What if parents, both fathers and mothers, took seriously the charge given in Ephesians 6:4 and Titus 2:4-5?

"What if" the church generally took seriously the fact that souls are dying in

sin? What if the local church would be busy saving souls in the community? What if the church would be busy striving to restore the backslider? What if the sick were noticed and the elderly were attended to by every member of the church? What if the church would pay attention to the needs of the members, whether the need is spiritual or physical? What if the elders would stand in the pulpits more frequently to exhort the church to serve Jesus the following week and give public notice that they stand behind the preacher one hundred percent as he preaches the word of God?

"What if we should exhort one another more frequently? What if we told other members more often without blushing that we are praying for them? What if we used the phone more to call the invalids or sent more cards to cheer up the down-hearted?

"What if" the Lord were to come today? Where would we stand in the judgment?!

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Read

Did you know that there are only 66 books in the Bible: 39 in the Old Testament, and 27 in the New? Did you know that the longest book in the Bible, which is Psalms, has but 150 chapters, while the shortest book, third John, has a mere 14 verses? Did you know that the Bible contains 1,189 chapters, 31,102 verses, 773,746 words and 3,566,480 letters? (O.K., probably not). But did you know that a casual reader could read through the ENTIRE Bible in about four days? That's right, in

about four days! You could read through the entire Bible in a year if you read an average of three and a half chapters a day.

On several occasions in the New Testament Jesus asked His audience, "Have you not read..." (Matthew 12:3-5; 19:4; 22:31; Mark 12:10-26)? Friend, when was the last time you sat down and READ the Word of God?

Mike Benson
Parson's TN.

Most Of A Minute

DEBORAH/BARAK/SISERA

The Old Testament is filled with interesting accounts of people of whom you need to study. I believe that we can see ourselves in many of these Bible characters. If you grow old and die having never made a serious study of the Bible, you dare a poor man or woman.

Among the fifteen judges, Deborah was the only woman. You can read about her in Judges 4 of the Bible. She called Barak and asked, "Didn't God tell you to gather up an army and fight against our oppressors and the captain of the army named Sisera?" Barak said yes, and that he would go to war if Deborah would go too. She agreed, but then said, "Not withstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honor; for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman."

When the battle began, the Lord caused heavy rains and sleet blowing into the face of Sisera's men, and Israel had a mighty victory. Sisera in the mean time, fled on foot into a tent belonging to a woman named Jael, whom he thought was a friend. She welcomed him in, gave him milk to drink, and he fell asleep. She then took a hammer, and a tent stake, and... I'm sorry. I'm out of space. You can read the rest in Judges 4.

Glenn Colley

***A Church Grows As
Individual Members Grow.
Invite A Friend
Come And Worship With Us!***

Falling From Grace

The subject of falling from grace comes up often in religious discussions. Some think that once one becomes a child of God that there is nothing he could ever do that would cause him to fall away so as to be lost. Others who might have argued at one time against the "once-saved-always-saved" doctrine, have now let it happen to them.

Is it possible to fall from grace

On almost every page of the Bible it is implied that a Christian can fall from God's grace. There are constant warnings to live righteously and faithfully (e.g., I Corinthians 10:12; I Timothy 4:1-3; Matthew 13:41; Hebrews 3:12; Revelations 2:10). Apostasy is the constant battle which all saints face (2 Corinthians 13:5). The solemn words of Jesus remind us, "And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch" (Mark 13:37).

God's Word shows that nations (I Kings 12:26-33), angels (2 Peter 2:4), Satan (Revelation 12:7-9), and individuals have fallen (Acts

8:9-24). The entire book of Hebrews was written to stem the tide of Christians who were drifting from Christ back to the out-dated Jewish religion. Saul (I Samuel 15:11), Solomon (I Kings 11:1-10), though he seems to have returned at the end of his life, Ecclesiastes 12:14), Amaziah (2 Chronicles 25:14-16), Judas (Matthew 26:14-16), Hymaneus and Philetus (2 Timothy 2:17-18) and Demas (2 Timothy 4:10) all fell from grace. Paul wrote to some in Galatia who had just fallen, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are [would be, ASV] justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4).

Peter wrote, "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they

have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (2 Peter 2:20-21).

What causes one to fall from grace?

Obviously, Satan is behind every lost soul (Luke 23:31), but other specific factors are involved. False teachers destroy the faith of some (Acts 20:29-30), while others pervert (2 Timothy 4:3-4) and wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:16). Persecution gets some quickly (Matthew 13:21), while unbelief slowly creeps in on others (Hebrews 4:9-11). Some allow a love for the world, physical enjoyments, and personal comforts to lure them away from the cross (2 Timothy 4:10; I John 2:15-16). Some suffer from a sin-sick hardened heart (Acts 7:54-57) and/or spiritual eyes that cannot see (Acts 28:25-27). They thus leave the Great Physician.

How can one keep from falling?

With feet firmly planted upon the strong foundation of

God's Word, one will never fall (John 10:28-29). The Bible is our complete spiritual guide (2 Peter 1:3) and is able to make us spiritually perfect (complete) (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It serves as our armor against the fiery darts of the wicked (Ephesians 6:16), helps us grow strong (Acts 20:32), and gives us faith (Romans 10:17). By being grounded in the faith (Ephesians 4:13-16), indoctrinated in righteousness (Acts 20:29-31), and spiritually perceptive (Hebrews 5:12-14), we need never fall.

While we abide in Christ, the vine (John 15:6), we will not fall. The Lord's Supper is given in part to help keep us close to Christ and His cross (I Corinthians 10:16). We must keep our bodies in subjection with its fleshly lusts and desires (I Corinthians 9:27), add the Christian graces (2 Peter 1:5-8), and trust in the Lord as our Protector (Psalms 121:1-4). Practically speaking, attending all Bible classes and worship services,

communing daily with God in prayer, study, and song will keep the fires burning. We should also cultivate Christian friendships which will help us keep our mind on heaven and its glory (Heb 10:25).

If you are presently drifting, why not resolve to return? Once you start slipping, the longer you wait the harder it will be to set things right. If you have completely quit running the Christian race, we plead with you to return to our loving God (Luke 15:20). The cure for backsliding is making a decision to change (Acts 17:30), repenting and praying for forgiveness (Acts 8:22), and confession of public wrong in a public way (I John 1:9; Joshua 5:16).

Yes, it is possible for one to fall from grace and be eternally lost, but please don't go out and prove the proposition by your own actions.

Allen Webster

Untapped Potential

Keith Kasarjian

Recently the Oscars for 1994 were awarded. If you are like me, you were unaffected by them and only slightly interested. One story concerning one of the winners, though, caught my attention. Jessica Lange won best actress for her role in a movie titled, "Blue Sky". I am not familiar with Mrs. Lange nor the movie, but here's the interesting point: the movie was filmed four years ago and had been just sitting in a vault. Isn't that amazing? An oscar winning performance just sitting in a vault. Never seen. Not appreciated. Just sitting there. Untapped potential.

Then the thought occurred to me, many also have

untapped spiritual potential. Spiritually speaking, many have the ability, the tools, the "Oscar-winning" performance, but never realize it because their talent is yet untapped. What a shame! What a waste! Untapped potential! Those with ability and potential have the obligation to use it for the One who gave it to them. Many have never realized, and the church has never benefitted, from their talent. Why?

Some have untapped potential because they refuse to use it.

The prime example of this sin is seen in the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30). The servant to whom one talent was given refused to do

anything but bury it in the ground. He had the talent but balked at doing anything constructive with it. Why? (1) He had a wrong concept of the master. v.24 (2) He was lazy. The master called him slothful in verse 26. It wasn't that he couldn't do anything. It was that he didn't want to do anything. Such is still the case with some today. Many have potential but it requires effort to do anything with it so they just do nothing instead.

Some have untapped potential because they have taken the wrong road.

Judas was a good and talented man or else Jesus would not have chosen him as an apostle. We are sure that at least some good was

accomplished by Judas during the earlier years. But because he chose to betray our Lord the rest of his potential was unused and untouched. Judas' example reminds us of the church member, who once was active in the work of God, but now is unfaithful to Him. Their potential is untapped because they have stopped using it as they should. What a waste!

Some have untapped potential because they use their abilities to do wrong.

Imagine the power to do good that Pilate possessed. He was powerful. The life of Jesus was in his hand. Yet he chose to do wrong. Think of the positive effect Ahab and Jezebel could have had. As King and Queen they could

have influenced an entire country to follow the Lord. Instead, they chose to do evil. This causes us to think about the one who uses his time, intelligence, money, position, and abilities to accomplish, not the desire of God, but the will of Satan. What a shame!

Everyone has potential. Possibly we all have potential that is yet untapped. The challenge for us, and the need of the hour, is for God's people to rise up and use every ability, every opportunity, and every fiber of their being to accomplish the will of God. May we never waste what God has given us, but rather use it to His glory!

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MAY 12, 1995

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Volume 32 Number 17
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The Words Of Truth

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

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LEST WE FORGET

It is so easy for us all to see all of the problems in the church today and to become negative and discouraged. We may focus in on liberalism, division, and a falling away of individuals and congregations. The future may look dark and bleak. Some would react by giving up and even quitting. But is this the solution? A thousand times, NO.

What we must remember is that God is still reigning and in control of things. Christ is still the Son of God and the Saviour of those who will come unto him and obey his will. The Bible is still the word of God; it is still the truth, and the truth never changes. The church is still the Lord's spiritual body and only the saved are added to it. That body is still beautiful and glorious and will endure forever.

While some are asking for change, God, Christ, and his truth never change. The Lord and his way continue the same as they have always been. How could we find a better answer to our needs? How could anything be superior to the truth, the church, the kind of worship the Lord has authorized, and the Christian way of living?

It would appear that the church can never be very large in any country. The larger it becomes, the more diverse the members become in their way of thinking. There are always those who are poor students of God's word, or those who are proud and become dissatisfied with the basic teachings of the Bible, and end up leading a group off after them into error. The longer their digression continues, the further away they get from

the Lord's pattern of doing things, and finally they are swallowed up in the religious world. As much as we hate to see any soul lost to error, if there are those who persist in apostasy, then finally we must let them go, withdraw from them, and proceed to go forward with the Lord's work, in order to protect the body itself.

Our schools face the same danger. The larger they become, the greater the tendency on the part of some to question the Lord's way. There are those who make a God of education, and they get too "intelligent" and too full of pride to continue to be faithful to the Lord. Suddenly they are "discovering" new truths and they set out to restructure the church. They portray the ordinary members as being ignorant and blindly following "old worn-out

traditions" These people have ceased to serve and have begun now to dictate and to attempt to control the church. It is sad to think that we have such people in our colleges. While we appreciate those Christian schools that take a stand for the truth, we deplore and reject those people in our schools who have departed from the faith. As a brotherhood, we would be wise to give them up to their own destruction.

May we keep in mind that our salvation depends on our obedience to the Lord. We must be Christians only, faithful members of his church, worshipping the Lord as he has dictated. We must stand for the truth whether anyone else stands for it or not. We must read and study God's word and faithfully proclaim it, whether our schools do or not. We must

go on with the Lord's work and with evangelizing the world although the majority may frown on it. This is the only way we can be God's people and have his blessings to rest upon us.

No, the church is not dead and it is not going to die. Furthermore, there are many Christians today who are worshipping and serving the Lord faithfully. God is still reigning and he is still in control of everything. He has blessed his people in the past and he will continue to bless his people in the days to come. The church will be victorious in the end.

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"Holy And Reverend Is Thy Name"

The word "reverend" is typically used by denominational people as a title of honor for a preacher. The custom has grown until it is considered by many a lack of respect not to so address him and many ministers expect no less of a title of honor.

It is generally known that we in churches of Christ do not refer to our preachers as "reverend." In giving their reason for not using the term "reverend" when referring to preachers, people often say that the term is only used once in the Bible (Psalms 111:9), and it is applied to the name of God and not man. The only problem with that argument

is that it will not cut it and we do not need to defend the truth with a broken sword!

It is true that the word "reverend" refers to God in Psalm 111:9. It is true that the word "reverend" occurs only once in the King James Version. It is not wrong that it occurs only once in God's word. And it is not true that reverence only applies to God and not man (Ephesians 5:33; Hebrews 12:28). May we not overlook the fact that the word "holy" stands in exactly the same relation to the name of God and the word "reverend" in Psalm 111:9. It is wrong to refer to men as "holy,"

or else we cannot explain 1 Peter 1:15-16. But, as a religious title, that, or any term would be wrong if so used, as we shall see.

Our word "reverend" comes from the Hebrew word *yare*. This word occurs 376 times in the Old Testament in various verb forms. It is translated, in the KJV, by "be afraid" (76 times); "dread" (1 time); "fear" (242 times); "reverence" (2 times); "afraid" (3 times); "be feared" (4 times); "be had in reverence" (1 time); "dreadful" (5 times); "fearful" (2 times); "fearfully" (1 time); "terrible" (24 times); "terrible acts" (1 time);

"terribleness" (1 time); "terrible things" (4 times); "afright" (1 time); "make afraid" (2 times); and "put in fear" (2 times). The Niphal verb form of *yare* is found 44 times in the Old Testament (Cf., Exodus. 15:11; Deuteronomy. 1:19, etc.).

Therefore, the Hebrew word translated "reverend" in Psalm 111:9 is found 376 times in the Hebrew Scriptures. If we add to that the 143 times the corresponding Greek term is used in the New Testament, we have the root idea appearing 519 times in the Bible.

The reason it is wrong to use the word "reverend" as a

religious title is not because it is used only once in the Bible and applies only once in the Bible only to God (which cannot truthfully be said). It is wrong because there is no Scriptural basis for any so-called "clergy" and "laity" distinctions. The fact that all Christians are priests proves this to be the case (1 Peter 2:9). Also, Jesus clearly condemned the use of special titles of religious honor for his people (Matthew 23:8-10). Therefore, it is totally foreign to the spirit of Christ.

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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The Change Movement #5 The Critical Question of Grace

Glenn Colley

This series of articles concerns the ongoing change movement now ripping and splintering churches of Christ. IT IS CRITICAL that church leaders become aware of these dangerous doctrines. So often the promoters of the change movement come in quietly. They are kind, gentle, and well liked. They introduce the changes in bits and pieces, often through private home "studies" which quickly change to sessions on why local Christians should dislike the way things are done in the church, and why the preacher and elders are harmful and to be the objects of disgust. Elders often let matters go too far, hoping they will "blow over", until the church is ready to split.

Happily, I am now hearing of churches in which the elders ARE aware of the movement, and in a prayerful and sober way, are putting a stop to the false doctrines before they get a foot hold. There are churches inviting informed, sound Gospel preachers to come and present lessons in the congregations, exposing the doctrines, magazines, books, and leaders of the change movement. This is a wise decision, even in churches in which the doctrines are just beginning to surface and gain sympathy among some members. In addition to informing the membership, it also represents the taking of a stand for truth. Other churches in the area will learn of the stand, realize it's importance, and hopefully be encouraged to also stand for right.

Now to the matter of grace. The advocates of change have a lot to say about grace. In particular, they maintain that for many years the preachers in the churches of Christ have

largely ignored Biblical grace. They say that too much emphasis has been placed on obedience and justification by works, to the neglect of the cross and God's grace. We are hearing a great deal of what grace "covers", a phrase not used in the New Testament. I am convinced that we have never, as a whole, abandoned or lost sight of the wonderful grace of our Lord, and what place that grace plays in our salvation. No doubt there have been some who strayed away from the Bible, but as a whole it was not the case.

It should be understood, nevertheless, that whether or not preachers in the last 40 years have or have not preached the Bible an ANY subject, should have no bearing on our ability to study the Bible and correctly apply it in sermons today. Incidentally far too much is being said about what Lipscomb, or Campbell, or Stone wrote or said many years ago. We are not servants of theirs. We serve Christ. We won't be judged by the writings of men, but of the Holy Spirit.

There are some clear passages about grace which we would all do well to commit to memory. While others could be mentioned, I would suggest these: Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 6:1; and Titus 2:11-12. Let's consider them in order.

Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which He hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Simply put, we are saved BY grace, THROUGH faith. Grace, or unmerited favor, is God's part in our salvation. Without His wonderful grace

none of us could be saved. I cannot work hard enough in His service to pay off the debt of one single sin in my life. Only by His grace is my debt of sin forgiven.

Faith, expressed by my works, (James 2:20), is my part in salvation. While in these works of righteousness I do not earn my salvation, I do comply with God's requirements for salvation. II Thessalonians 1:7 says that one day the Lord Jesus will come to take vengeance on them that know not God, and those who don't obey His Gospel. We must obey. Does grace change that fact? No. I must be a Christian. I must be faithful as a Christian.

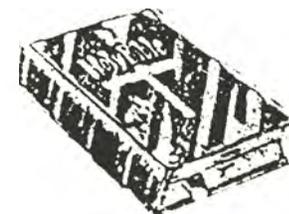
To illustrate, consider Noah and the ark. When God decided to destroy man because of his sin, He observed the faithfulness of Noah. The Bible says, "But Noah found GRACE in the eyes of the Lord, (Genesis 6:8)." Without that grace, Noah would have been lost with all the other people. With that grace, he could be saved. But what did that grace do for Noah? Did Noah go sit on a rock and wait for God to save him? No! Read on: "Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark... Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him so did he, (Genesis 6:14-22)." Noah, who was the recipient of God's grace, built an ark! Now what do you call that? Faith. "By FAITH Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, and prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world and became heir of righteousness which is by faith, Hebrews 11:7." (emphasis mine, GC) How are we saved? "For by grace are ye saved through faith..., Ephesians 2:8."

Next consider Romans 6:1. Evidently some who had heard of the wonderful grace of God through Christ Jesus had become confused about grace and obedience. After all, if grace covers all my sins, why shouldn't I just relax about doing right instead of wrong? The more I sin, the more grace He'll send! Paul writes, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How can we who are dead to sin live any longer therein?" Among the churches bent in following the ideas of the change movement it is common to find a relaxed attitude regarding the sins of divorce and remarriage. There is often a relaxed attitude toward the consumption of beverage alcohol. There is often a relaxed attitude regarding unfaithfulness to the worship assemblies. Unfaithful church members who from whom fellowship has been withdrawn are approached by the change people with this persuasion: "Come over to our church. We're different because we understand God's grace. We aren't like those Pharisees who don't know about grace." Then, when the impenitent man or woman comes into the change church, there are no questions asked. There is often a relaxed

attitude toward unauthorized worship practices and the sin of denominationalism. Understand please, that any teaching on grace which moves people to be less concerned and more haphazard about the sins in the lives of people is dangerous. Grace doesn't teach that. And while we are on that point, what does grace teach us?

The next passage for our consideration is Titus 2:11-12 where Paul wrote, "The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men; teaching us that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Did you know that Biblical grace is a teacher? It is. And look at what it teaches: Live soberly. Live righteously. Live godly. What will this grace, with it's teaching do? It will bring salvation to men and women.

Grace is a sweet and comforting reality to the people of God. However, if we teach a distorted grace instead of Biblical grace, we could be lost. Guard your heart and mind from grace which excludes works of faith.



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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. Genesis 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 person's 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,
- * 6890 babies are born at a low birth weight,
- * 67 babies die before 1 month,
- * 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 a 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) PARENTS 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" (Ephesians 6:4).

Involvement means knowing what is taught 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) PARENTS 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 (cf. Philippians 4:8).

When a PTA/PTO meeting is held, go and express the 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 fellows. The Gospel needs defending as much in a classroom as in the pulpit (Philippians 1:17; Jude 3).

(3) PARENTS 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 truth and righteousness (Matthew 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 (Deuteronomy 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 these wicked influences.

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 Samuel 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 (Genesis 19:12-24).

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). The perverted daughters are, too, if they did not repent.

The Lord will help parents who turn to Him, trust His grace, obey His Gospel, and live faithfully to His commands (Hebrews 5:7-8; 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 (Genesis 18:19). Let's raise up a generation that knows right from wrong and is willing to practice the truth.

Saved

Mike Benson

Ellis Cowart was an American soldier fighting in WWII. On one occasion, he and his comrades were in the middle of a fierce gun battle against the German army. "Bullets were flying everywhere...we were in the middle of a crossfire," he said. Suddenly, one bullet hit Ellis in the arm, one grazed his forehead, one hit the edge of his helmet, and one bullet

hit him squarely in the chest. As it turns out, Ellis had been keeping a small pocket New Testament in the front of his jacket. And this little New Testament prevented that last bullet from actually penetrating his chest. "The word" had quite literally saved his life. (The bullet stopped in the middle of Revelation).

Mr. Cowart's experience reminds me of a passage in

the Bible. James says, "Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to SAVE YOUR SOULS" (James 1:21).

Friend, you need to keep the Word of God near your heart (Psalm 119:24), because only there can it stop the attacks (i.e., "fiery darts") of the devil (Ephesians 6:16).

Most Of A Minute

The Rain And The Hosepipe

We may just get a nice spring shower today. The rain is good. The Bible calls it God's rain, and says that He sends it. We wouldn't live very long if He stopped sending the rain.

I saw something amusing the other day during a good hard rain. It was a real soaking rain. As I drove by a house I noticed that their sprinkler system was on and appeared to be in competition with the rain to water that lawn!

Now, I know that the owners had probably turned it on before the rain came, and just hadn't turned it off yet. But this makes a point. At face value it appeared that God was watering the grass, and the owner was not satisfied -- felt he could improve it a bit.

In our lives we sometimes ignore God's word, the Bible. We aren't faithful to His church, we don't work to be strong Christians. Implied in that lifestyle is that we know what's good for us a little better than God knows. As if to say, "I'll live in His world, my way." If that's you, I suggest you turn the sprinkler off, and live according to the Word of God. Titus 2:12 says that grace teaches us that "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

Glenn Colley

*A Christian is a mind through which
Christ thinks, a heart through which
Christ loves, a voice through which
Christ speaks, a hand through
which Christ helps.*

Enter The Closet And Shut The Door

W.A. Holley

"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matthew. 6:6).

Jesus is speaking to His disciples. Those who are not in covenant relationship with Christ cannot address God as their Father. Public prayer is not wrong but if we pray hypocritically, we are sinners nonetheless. We must not pray to be seen or heard of men. Even deeds of righteousness must not be done for self glorification. A word of warning is in order: "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: THEREFORE let thy words be few" (Ecclesiastes 5:2). Prayer is not to inform God, nor to impress the audience. Some prayers are so long till they put everyone to sleep.

Prayer is not the place to preach a sermon, nor to enumerate all of God's blessings available. God knows what we need before we ask of Him (Matthew 6:1-8).

Prayer is a very important act for the Christian. In the verse above quoted, Jesus draws a forceful distinction between the public display of prayer for the hypocrites and the private prayers of the true disciples. The difference between the two is motive: The hypocrite prays to be heard of men, but the true disciple out of a heart devoted to a sincere desire to talk with the Master.

All our thoughts, motives, aspirations and purposes should be under the control of Jesus. Jesus sees even the motives of our hearts and He will reward us according to our true motives.

We desperately need to commune with God, for we need to be in company with Him. We therefore need to enter the closet and shut the door where we can be free from distractions that may draw our attention away. In this manner we can focus on God's will; we can forget about what others may say and pour out the desires of our hearts to our Maker. To accomplish this goal there are some things to shut out and some things to be shut in.

When you enter the closet and shut the door, what are

some of the spiritual awards you can confidently expect to receive? Many seem to think that prayer is a waste of time. Job said to Zophar, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? And what prophet should we have, if we pray unto him?" (Job 21:15; Malachi 3:14, ASV).

But prayer is not an exercise in futility. We read, "Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working" (James 5:16, ASV). This passage has no reference to secret confessions to a priest. Hence prayer possesses a power to change things for the better. In the same context Elijah prayed for it not to rain, then, after three and a half years, he prayed for it to rain and it rained (I Kings 17:1 ff; James 5:17-18).

As a matter of fact all prayers are not answered. "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures" (James 4:3, ASV). But, we emphasize, all prayers of Christians are answered; sometimes, yes, or

no, or wait awhile. (For an example of a Christians unanswered prayer, read II Corinthians 12:1-10.)

What are the conditions of Scriptural prayer? (1) We must be children of God; otherwise we could not address God as our Father (Matthew 6:9; Romans 10:1).

(2) We must ask in the name of Jesus Christ (John 14:13; 15:16; Colossians 3:16-17).

(3) Prayer avails only when it is in keeping with the will of God (I John 5:14-15).

(4) We must confess and forsake our sins if our prayers are to be heard (Psalm 66:18; Proverbs 28:9; Isaiah 59:1-2).

(5) We must pray with the understanding that God will or will not grant our petition, depending whether or not it meets with His will (I Corinthians 14:15; Colossians 4:12; Acts 12:5).

(6) Prayer is properly addressed to God the Father (Matthew 6:6-7), but never in the New Testament is prayer ever addressed to the Holy Spirit.

(7) Prayer is answered when we pray with importunity---persistence

(Luke 11:5-8; 18:1-8).

(8) Prayer avails much when we ask in faith (James 1:5-8).

Many years ago I visited a brother in Christ who had been bedfast for 40 years. At first I thought he had lost count, but when I asked his wife she said her husband has indeed been 40 years in bed.

After I had prayed for him, he said, "Yes, this morning the pain was terrible; and I said, 'Father, if you are willing take away this pain.' But He didn't do it; the pain grew worse."

When you can't answer, it is always best frankly to say so. I told him I did not know why God had not answered his prayer and relieved him of his distress.

Then I told him of Paul's prayer...how Paul prayed three times asking for the removal of the thorn in his flesh. His prayer was not answered, but the Lord said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." (II Corinthians 12:9).

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Trust In The Lord

Johnny Ramsey

Yes, trust in Him at all times. The saddest scene on earth to me is to see a wife and children bereft of their beloved husband and father. Or, for a virtuous woman to be taken suddenly from the midst of the home by means of death. Or, for a small precious child to pass from this life thus removing the sunshine from many hearts. I have stood by the casket as loved ones passed for the final earthly view of their departed ones. I have heard the deepest expressions of

trust in the Lord on these occasions. I have been greatly stirred to see the spiritual stability of mature Christians during such moments of sorrow. The reality of Christianity is never more beautiful than when in the hour of tribulation we exclaim: "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" God is a refuge for us! One real tragedy is the strange situation of those who mightily depend on God in the hour of trial and then forsake Him in the day of

success. health and strength. Is our Father incapable of receiving our confidence when we have ascended from the valley of tears unto the mountain-peak of happiness Or is this human defection of forgetting the source of our blessing just another tool of the Devil? Success is the one thing that some people cannot endure. The Deceiver of the whole world (Rev. 12:9) knows it. Let us trust God at all times. Closely aligned with these thoughts are the words: Pour Out Your Heart Before Him.

The emphasis of the Hebrew language in Psalm 62:8 simply means to commit yourself wholly unto God! The phrase now under discussion includes prayer and spontaneous praise flowing from the created unto the Creator. In James, chapter five we read of the natural response of the spiritual life. Whether in sadness or in joy let the Heavenly Father know! He knows, He cares, He blesses. Isn't it thrilling to hear someone just talk with God when his heart is on fire with

love for eternal verities? Too much of the time our prayers are simply stilted, formalistic preachments. We desperately need more fervent communion with our Maker in prayer. Yes, in sorrow and sickness, in pain and bereavement, in success, happiness and victory -- Pour out your heart unto God. He is our refuge, our solace, our balm, our strength!

"Then trust in God through all thy days; Fear not, for He doth hold thy hand; Though dark thy way, still sing and praise; Sometime, Sometime, we will understand."

MAY 19, 1995

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(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

A Tribute To Fletcher Wade

By: Dempsey Jones

Elder At 6th Avenue Church Of Christ
Jasper, Alabama

Editor's Note:

Fletcher Wade served as an Elder at 6th Avenue Church of Christ in Jasper, Alabama for twenty-five years. He is now confined to his home, and has been inactive for several years due to ill health.

Having reached the octogenarian period of life, and having observed five wars and experiencing some hardships and many pleasures in rearing three children on the farm, Fletcher Wade is getting closer to his last sunset.

Whether his final

sundown of life comes soon or in a few more years, it will not seem such a catastrophe. Fletcher has served his Lord well and has seen many beautiful sunrises and countless brilliant days. I'm sure some were fantastic; a few were unbelievably great. All held surprises and blessings. I'm sure he never anticipated.

He was privileged to participate in a part of the drama of these years in his civilization. I'm confident that he has made a sizeable contribution to the church, his community, state, and country during the high

noon of his day.

I had the great privilege of serving with Fletcher Wade along with nine other elders for twenty-five years. They were H. G. Dill, Sam Evans, C.M. Karrh, A.C. McGlaun, Gus Nichols, Wayne Primm, E.R. Tarence, Henry Hyché & Lincoln Herzig. These Elders have gone on to their reward. Two of our present Elders, John Panter and David Beaird, also served with this group of Elders for a number of years. Some people may have lived richer lives in material goods, but I doubt that many have lived a

more rewarding life to this day, than Fletcher Wade.

His rewards and riches are embedded deep in the tunnel of love in his family "Goldmine". That "Goldmine" had it's beginning sixty-five years ago when he and Nelle were united in marriage. They have struck together through thick and thin. Their "Goldmine" earnings began to increase as three lovely children were born. They are Betty Plylar, JoAnn Kimbrell and David Wade. Then came ten grandchildren, and now eight great grandchildren to add to their "Goldmine" earnings.

Fletcher's wife Nelle, has stood beside him all those sixty-five years during their many bright sunrises and sunsets together. His great companion still stands by him twenty-four hours a day, even though his sunrises are not as bright to him as they use to be, due to his ill health. I'd like to pay tribute to Nelle, a tremendous lady and companion for the unspeakable love and dedication toward Fletcher, her husband and the entire Wade Family.

A Hasty Spirit

Dennis Gulledge

How often do we suffer regret for something we said or did because we acted too hastily? We are guilty of it many times.

A hasty spirit is a dangerous thing. Solomon said, "He that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly" (Prov 14:29b). The expression "hasty of spirit" corresponds in Hebrew to, "short of spirit." It means, "One that is easily irritated; and, being in a passion, he is agitated so as to be literally short of breath" (Adam Clarke). It is the

opposite of Paul's exhortation that we be "longsuffering" and forbearing" (Eph. 4:2).

Sometimes we are hasty with our words. A lesson in life is that the hurt caused by unguarded speech is difficult to correct. Solomon knew the extreme degradation of hasty speech, when he wrote, "Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him" (Proverbs 29:20). Sometimes we speak more from top of our head than we do from the bottom of our heart. Or, it may be that we

let slip that which is really in our heart, which ought not to be (Matt. 12:34-37). As long as we are less than careful to guard our heart and let our speech be "always with grace," we will have endless apologies to make though life, or, we will get by with fewer friends. In this connection James says, "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath..." (Jas. 1:19). It would seem that we have been given two ears and one tongue in order that we might be twice as quick to listen as to talk.

Sometimes we are hasty in our judgments. For this reason Jesus said, "Judge not that ye be not judged" (Matt. 7:1). The Lord forbids all unkind criticism resulting from a spirit of fault finding and censorious judgments. We must not judge rashly, nor hastily form conclusions against someone which have no basis in fact. Sometimes we are quick to decide evil against another before we even know the person, or whether there is any reason for such judgment. How much better the words of Paul

who said that love "endureth all things" (I Cor. 13:7). J.W. McGarvey said that this means love, "...takes the kindest views of men's actions and circumstances. It sees things in their brightest not their darkest, colors; and, as it consistently can, puts the best construction on conduct..."

It is never wise to be hasty in our temperament, words, deeds or decisions. We will suffer long due to our lack of consideration. Wise counsel is and always has been, "haste makes waste."

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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Change Movement #6

Glorying In The Bull's-Eye Gospel

Glenn Colley

Our readers would enjoy reading the passages in the Scriptures which contain the word "glory," or its derivatives. One Greek word for "glorying" is *Kaukeema*, and it is found, among other places, in I Corinthians 5:6. It is used eleven times in the New Testament. In the King James translation, five times it is translated "glory" or "glorying"; five other times it is translated "rejoicing," or "rejoice"; and once it is translated "boasting."

Now consider briefly the context of I Corinthians 5. Just what was happening in Corinth which prompted the Holy Spirit to have Paul write I Corinthians 5? Hear Paul:

"It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife."

This is not hard language to understand. Apparently, since the woman is not called the son's mother, but rather "his father's wife," the father had remarried, and the son was committing adultery with his stepmother. Adultery was being committed by a member of the church. The

brothers and sisters in Christ reacted by ignoring the sin. In fact, they gloried in their ability to continue on with him as if nothing was wrong.

It should be noted that Paul does not start from scratch when discussing what the church should do in this type of circumstance. He has taught this before. In verse 9 he says, "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators..." He is rebuking them in this chapter for not doing what they should have known to do. This is further demonstrated by Paul's criticism of their attitudes.

Now, let's get back to the verse containing the word *Kaukeema*, or "glorying." It is I Corinthians 5:6 -- "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven..."

This passage becomes very interesting when considering the current movement some in which are involved to change the church of Christ. The Corinthians were glorying. Glorying in what? They gloried in the wide spectrum of people whom they were broad minded enough to fellowship. They knew better

than to do this because Paul had taught them the truth: But, they chose their own standards of fellowship, standards broader than the Lord's standards. Now look at Paul's analysis:

1. Ye are puffed up, and ought to mourn, (vs. 2).

2. When you gather together, do what is right - deliver this one unto Satan, (vs. 4,5). Put away that wicked person, (vs. 13).

3. Your attitude, (glorying), threatens to weaken the entire church, (vs. 6).

4. If a brother is called a fornicator, or covetous, or idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; don't even eat with him, (vs. 12).

Do we find similar attempts to broaden fellowship today? We certainly do! In hopes of the church of Christ uniting with denominations, various leaders and advocates of the church movement have adopted what they call a "core" gospel, or a "bull's eye" gospel. By that they teach that if any religious group (Baptist, Catholic, Independent Christian Church, etc.) can be found to agree on the change agent's list of most important

doctrines, then we should have fellowship with them. Included in that list, according to Rubel Shelly, are doctrines "that relate directly to Christ, His substitutionary death on the cross, and our acknowledgement of Him in obedient faith." According to Rubel, "first order truths...relate to the meaning of Christ and His atoning death;" while "second-" order matters relate to "discipleship issues such as drinking wine verses teetotaling," and "third-" order matters are such "group distinctives as instrumental music verses acapella music." The basis of this "bull's-eye" list, (though it is flexible from speech to speech with these teachers,) is often said to be Ephesians 4:1-4. Paul there says that there is one body, and one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God. It is important to note a couple of things right here:

1. Paul never suggested or implied approval for his list to be used in the fashion the change-agents have used it.

2. If the truth were taught on these seven ones, the denominations of men would not be included in the fellowship of the Lord's

church, but rather excluded. There is not one denomination which agrees with every one of these seven items. If they did, they wouldn't be denominational.

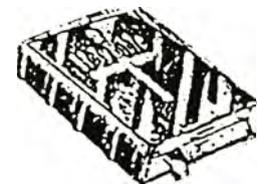
Now these pressing questions: What would the "change" churches of today, so filled with their newly-discovered grace and new broad ideas of fellowship, do if the adulterous man of I Corinthians 5 was a member of the same church of which they were members? Would their fellowship be broad enough for him? Would they smile and glory in the fact that they knew about grace?

And again, couldn't the sinful man of I Corinthians 5 fulfill the change-agent's requirements of the "core/bull's-eye" gospel, while still in his particular sin? If not, which part of Ephesians 4:1-4 would prevent him?

And still again, isn't it an interesting coincidence that among the "change" churches the adultery of which Jesus taught in Matthew 19:9 is typically reduced to the point that it wouldn't deny fellowship to almost anyone?

Brethren, we must awaken to the dangers of false doctrine as taught and

*A good way to forget
your troubles is to
help others out of theirs.*



The
Words Of
Truth

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Setting Priorities

Betty Burton Choate

I realize that not all Christians can give full time to preaching the gospel. I realize also that "vocational workers" can make tremendous contributions to the Lord's cause, and that all Christians are to be busy in His work. But I realize, too, that we have a problem in our thinking concerning priorities.

What is the problem?

Somehow, somewhere along the way, we have lost sight of what should be the most important thing in the minds of Christians. We have forgotten that the reason we were left in this world was to preach the gospel. We don't have heroes in the church: elders, preachers, and missionaries, that we teach our children to look to as examples of following God and as patterns for the height of service in developing their own lives.

Why not? We read about Paul and we admire his courage and dedication. He would be a wonderful example, a heroic example, to follow. We look at Peter, at Timothy, at Barnabus, and we see them as heroes of the First Century. Their heroic image lies not in the fact that some of them were apostles but in their desire to give their lives to the spreading of the kingdom. They were heroes because they were

willing to set aside secular pursuits and to devote their time exclusively to the preaching of the gospel.

Do we hold up this type of hero to our sons and daughters today? Do we really encourage them to develop into this type of hero for the 20th Century? Or do we, in the secret places of our hearts, feel subconsciously that sparks of secular talent must at all cost be fanned to a flame, and that when it all boils down, those who are left to preach the gospel are those very few who preach out of great desire or those who have no other particular talent?

People excuse themselves from the responsibility of preaching by reasoning, "I am just not cut out to be a speaker." But then, often, they will spend years of rigorous study and training to develop themselves in a secular field. What challenges must be met and overcome to be an engineer, a dentist, a lawyer, a doctor? If they had put the same desire and effort into training to preach the gospel, could they not successfully have learned to do that?

There would be a few exceptions, I realize, but I am convinced that almost any Christian could excel as a preacher if he was willing to invest the time and effort and energy into developing along

those lines that he invests in learning a secular vocation.

On the other hand, just how many would choose to preach if they were required to study eight long rigorous years in preparation? Or if they had to pass a very difficult bar exam before being allowed to preach? Or if they were required to work their way into the ministry through competition and winning over one challenger after another in order to be able to go on to the next, as in most sports? Or if part of their training was as agonizing and as shocking to the emotional system as the dissecting of a dead human body is in the training to be a doctor? Or if they would graduate from college with a \$60,000 to \$75,000 indebtedness on their education? Or if their lives would be committed, as is true in many fields, to a 12, 14 or 16 hour work day, and no time to really count as their own to be with their families?

Certainly, there is a difference in the pay scale, and doctors, lawyers and engineers make much more money than the average preacher. But money doesn't explain the drawing power of these professions for many people. What really appeals is that these are respected positions. The sole word "doctor" or "lawyer" or "engineer" establishes a

newcomers credibility in a community. We know that these people are "the cream of the crop." They are intelligent people of initiative and achievement, they are successful, they will be pillars in the community. In other words, these are our secular leaders, our "heroes," and a young man who pictures himself as scaling the top, as proving his intelligence and worth, pictures himself in one of these highly respected professions.

That is understandable in the world. But what has happened in the church? Anyone in the world, with a sense of integrity, can be a good doctor, a good lawyer, a good president. But no one, in the "world," can be a good preacher of the gospel. That work is left exclusively for God's children. And if we were truly aware of our special relationship with Him, and of the special work He has left us in the world to do, and of the teamwork we establish with Him when we go out to preach His gospel, then shouldn't our most intelligent people, our most successful people, our heroes, in the church be those who dedicate their lives to this work?

If we were training our children to view life through God's eyes wouldn't those sons who desire to prove

themselves most dedicated, most talented, most intelligent, most successful devote their time and energies to learning to preach the gospel? And for those who just cannot attain such a high goal, there could always be the second choice of becoming doctors or lawyers or teachers or engineers or some other secular worker.

If our thinking was molded in this way, preachers would have a high image of self-respect to live up to, and surely there would be few who would turn out to be hypocrites and scoundrels. If we trained our children in this line of thinking, surely more excellent people would preach God's word, and more parents would proudly send them out to work great changes in Satan's domain.

If we had more men (and wives) of such calibre, the world would be turned upside down through their dedicated efforts.

The effects of this thinking would be eternal. We claim to be a people who are spiritually alive. We claim to realize the value of the soul. We claim to believe in the gospel and in heaven and hell.

What has happened to our priorities?

Why Did Jesus Die?

Under this heading we shall discuss those forces that contributed to His death. We have noticed the necessity of Christ's life being taken from the earth. Now we will see why such a tragedy occurred. It was a combination of:

(1) The love of God. "He commended his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

(2) The weakness of man. The betrayal by Judas, the denial by Peter, the rejection of Jesus by the Jewish nation; all of these things brought about the death of our Lord.

(3) The Cowardice of Pilate. Even though he could find no fault with the man of Nazareth, Pilate condemned Him to death. Popularity meant more to him than principle.

(4) The humility of Jesus. The Son of God humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8). In Gethsemane He said humbly: "The will be done."

(5) Our desperate need of salvation. Certainly the major reason for Calvary was the despicable condition of mankind. "There was none righteous, no not one" (Romans 3:10). There was no hope apart from Christ Jesus. He gave His life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28). The Hebrew writer tells us that Christ "tasted of death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). A very grateful apostle Paul stated that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:15)

Let Us All Study The Bible More!

Johnny Ramsey

Most Of A Minute Salt Of The Earth

Did you ever hear someone say, "I'd be a member of the church if it weren't for the fact that I live better than some Christians I know?"

Distinctiveness is a word that means something has peculiar characteristics that separate it from something else.

- a trumpet playing in a band of guitars is distinctive.

- a VW in a lot filled with Cadillacs is distinctive.

- a rose bush alone in the middle of a vegetable garden is distinctive.

But sometimes a Christian in a world of alien sinners is not distinctive. Isn't it odd that Christians aren't odd in the way they need to be.

Please note how Jesus put it in Matthew 5:13:

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under the foot of men."

Are you distinguished from others in the right way?

God's Hospital

Allen Webster

When our bodies are injured, we know to go to the nearest hospital for help. When our souls are sick, where do we go? We will find no help at the regional medical center. Only God can help the soul and His hospital for the sin-sick is the church. How is the church like a hospital?

GOD'S HOSPITAL IS A PLACE WHERE YOU'LL FIND THE BEST MEDICINE. In heaven there is a special kind of tree with leaves which heal the nations (Revelations 22:2). On earth, God has no such tree, but He does have some "leaves" (pages) which contain His healing power (Romans 1:16).

God's hospital is the only place to receive spiritual help, though there are quacks in false religions who peddle snake oil. These are "physicians of no value" (Job 13:4) and make the situation worse instead of better (Mark. 5:26). Only Christ and His plain Gospel can save (Acts 4:12; Gal. 1:6-9).

What are the doctor's orders for sick folks? He has prescribed figs (Isaiah 38:21), roots and leaves (Ezekiel 47:12), and wine (I Timothy 5:23) at times for the body, but none of these can help the

soul. For emotional illnesses, He prescribes a merry heart (Proverbs 17:22). For sin He prescribes faith (June 3:16), repentance (Romans 10:9-10), confession (Matthew 10:32), and baptism (I Peter 3:21). For relapse, He prescribes repentance, confession, and prayer: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16, cf. Acts 8:22).

THE PATIENT HAS TO INITIATE TREATMENT.

Hospitals do not go door to door trying to drum up business! I've never received a circular from a hospital trying to get me to come by for a "trial visit." A person has to realize he is sick and needs help before a hospital can do much good.

Sinners, too, have to come to realize their condition. God rhetorically quizzed those in Jeremiah's day: "For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt...Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" (8:21,22). There was plenty of medicine, but the people did not even know they were sick (cf. Matthew 9:12).

God has ample medicine to cure all those sin-sick today. The bottle is labeled "Holy Bible." Again, many people do not even know that they are sick. They are like those the Doctor faced while practicing medicine on Jerusalem's streets: "For this people's heart is waxed gross (heart problems), and their ears are dull of hearing (ear problems), and their eyes they have closed (vision problems); lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matthew 13:15). Oh that all men might say with the Psalmist: I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee" (41:4).

THERE ARE RULES ABOUT ADMISSION.

A person does not just wonder in off the street and decide he will spend a night in a hospital room. They have rules. They have to make arrangements for insurance, liability coverage, and find out about allergies. You have to be admitted.

In the church, one also has to be admitted. We don't just "walk in off the street" and accidentally find ourselves a part of God's church. It

requires instruction (John 6:44-45). We must agree to "hospital policy" (go by God's rules, I Timothy 3:15).

PEOPLE CARE FOR YOU.

Good hospitals have caring staff personnel. They come around with a smile, a word of cheer, and genuinely want to see you comfortable and recovered. If there is a crisis, they'll stay overtime to pull you through. Doctors are willing to come in for emergency cases when they are not scheduled to work. There is an atmosphere of concern in a hospital.

In the church, similar care is shown to sinners seeking recovery. The Bible teaches "...that the members should have the same care one for another" (I Corinthians 12:25). Titus had "earnest care" for his brethren (2 Corinthians 8:16). Paul had a genuine care for the churches (2 Corinthians 7:12; 11:28) and found that care reciprocated: "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity" (Philippians 4:10).

As staff workers in God's hospital, we need to always let our care for patients be readily observable. "We then

that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Romans 15:1). (Since Christians are both staff and patients, it's a two way street.)

WHEN THEY'RE DONE WITH YOU, YOU GET TO GO HOME.

Some back-row-watch-watcher may see a pun here, but this has nothing to do with getting out five minutes early. It has to do with finishing our "treatment" on earth and being released into heaven. Nobody wants to stay in a hospital forever. It's temporary. Nobody wants to stay in God's hospital forever either: "For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven...For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened..." (2 Corinthians 5:2-4). Paul was ready to "get out and go home:" "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain...For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" (Philippians 1:21-23, 27; 2 Timothy 4:6-8).

"Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise" (Jeremiah 17:14).

Mistrial

Like many of you, I have grudgingly watched televised excerpts from the O.J. Simpson trial. And, like many of you, since the trial has been aired over the past several months, my faith in the American judicial system has waned at times.

Now the latest news from Los Angeles suggests that after months of testimony and millions of dollars, there is a real possibility of a **MISTRIAL**. Mistrial. Webster defines it as, "...a trial made void because of an error in the proceedings, or because the jury cannot reach a verdict." (Webster's New

World Dictionary, 1971 p. 480). While O.J.'s trial may suffer from mistakes and indecision, there is **ONE TRIAL** which will never be subjected to this kind of disorder. For at this trial:

ALL of the witnesses (Matthew 25:32) will appear in court (Hebrews 9:27; A. 17:31) to testify (I Peter 4:5).

There will be **NO MISTAKES** in the collection of evidence (Job 34:21-23; Jeremiah 23:23-24; Hebrews 4:13).

All of the **EVIDENCE**, including every secret thing, will be brought before the jury (Job 44:21; Ecclesiastes

12:14; Romans 2:16; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 10:26).

MOTIVES as well as **ACTIONS** will be brought to light (I Samuel 16:7; Matthew 12:36-37; Luke 6:8; John 2:25; I Corinthians 4:5; Psalms 139:28-29; Revelations 20:13).

Frivolous **OBJECTIONS** made by the prosecuting attorney/accuser (Revelations 12:10), will be thrown out of court (Romans 8:31).

The accused will have the most qualified defense **LAWYER/advocate** (I John 2:1) available; he/she will have proper legal council.

The **JUDGE A.** 10:42; 17:30-31; 2 Timothy 4:1-8; John 5:22-23) will carefully **WEIGH** all of the evidence in the balance (Revelations 2:3) of justice and mercy; He will be **IMPARTIAL** (A. 10:34); He will be dealing with **FIRST HAND** information (A. 17:27; Proverbs 15:3).

There will be no loopholes (Psalms 119:142; James 2:12) in the **LAW/gospel** (John 12:48); it will be a **PERFECT** standard (James 1:25).

The **VERDICT** (Matthew 7:21-23; 25:12-21-34-41) will be fair (2 Chronicles 19:7), and will not be overturned

(Matthew 25:46).

Those found guilty will receive the stiffest possible **SENTENCE** (Job 10:14; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Matthew 10:22); many will be **SURPRISED** at the ruling (Matthew 7:21-23).

THERE WILL BE NO MISTRIAL!

By the way, the court date has yet to be announced (I Corinthians 4:16), but could come at any time (Mark 13:32). Dear reader, are you ready for the judgement day (Mark 13:35-37; 2 Timothy 4:6-8)?

Mike Benson
Parsons, TN

• See Articles Inside:

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- The New Testament
- When Sin Was Dissected
- Cinderella Of The Bible
- Changing Views Toward The Church (No. 1)
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Volume 32 Number 19
(USPS 691-760)

The Words C Truth

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

with the
15

Elders Relationships With The Brotherhood

Elders, according to the scriptures, are to be very important, carefully chosen, mature men! They are entrusted with being under-shepherds, with Christ being the chief shepherd who has all authority (Matthew. 28:18-20). They are to be respected and loved for their work's sake by the congregation where they are chosen, and by Godly living they are to insure these results in those whom they lead. They are charged with feeding the flock of God which is among them, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. They are not to be lords over God's heritage, but are to be reasonable and good examples, as they persuade, lead, and rule by their own devotion and wisdom in upholding Christ authority in the church (I Peter 5:1-5; Hebrews 13:17). When Christ returns, the faithful elders are assured of receiving a glorious crown that fadeth not away!

Love And Help

No one stands more ready to give esteem and praise to Godly, faithful elders than this writer! They deserve to be lifted up when they have given so freely of their time, foresight, knowledge of the Word of God, wisdom, energy, and talent to the greatest Cause on earth, as they realize their heavy and responsible work. In my years of preaching it has been my pleasure to know some of the best, and only a few who were not so qualified, interested, or able. If anyone needs to be aware, and make others aware, to "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh

about, seeking whom he may devour," (I Peter 5:8-9), it is elders of the church.

A Craving Need

It will be a great day for the cause of Christ when the church sees the importance of encouraging and training up younger men to do the honorable work of elders. All of the exhortations by Paul to Timothy and Titus concerning the qualifications of elders and their wives (I Timothy 3:1-11; Titus. 1:5-11) needs to be taught and entrenched in the thinking of all young Christians! Elders are to be older men who have their feet firmly set in the Gospel. A "novice" or one young in the faith, should never be placed in the heavy position of the eldership "lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (I Timothy 3:6), and the church be harmed for many years!

Relationship To Unity

One of the high and important responsibilities of elders is in their relationship to the brotherhood. Since they are to endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," as they uphold the seven units of the Spirit's teaching in the New Testament, of the one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all, they must know, be informed, and interested in the flock they are charged with protecting!

What Do Elders Owe The Brotherhood?

Elders, owe the brotherhood a local congregation that is of one soul and heart as well as of one mind and mouth as they follow the example of the Jerusalem church! (Cf. Acts 4:32; Romans 15:6). They need

to "bloom where they are planted" in working for Bible unity in the local congregation they oversee, before they extend their labors out to others. This was the plan under inspired men and has not changed nor been improved! Elders owe the brotherhood and themselves "an honest and good heart" that is above lying or deceit. All who have been risen with Christ are exhorted by Paul to put off "anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man (sin) with his deeds" (Colossians 3:8-9). Elders who do not so act will not receive the respect of those whom they attempt to lead, nor God's help or approval.

Elders owe the brotherhood the best individual Bible knowledge possible. They must be assured in their hearts that the doctrine of Christ does not change (Hebrews 13:8-9), and that they are to "stand fast in the faith" (I Corinthians 16:13), not being "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). They should be diligent in their personal study habits, in order to know themselves what is right, to influence others to study, and to be able to take care of the house of God which they are charged to feed and protect under their oversight. In addition to their first priority, the Bible, a number of sound religious periodicals should be in their homes, along with other good books which are rich in information on Bible themes. These should be read and absorbed. If differing views

are presented these should be studied with the Bible to determine truth from error (John 8:32; I John 5:6). But above all, the Bible should be their (and our) constant companion!

Elders owe the brotherhood the obligation of knowing the current digressions and discussions of different teachers and teachings. Especially is this true where those under their oversight might become subjective victims of the wolves (false teachers) pretending to be sound, but who are just wearing the sheep skin covering! (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20; 28-32). All Christians are charged with having "no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11). No elder will be found guilty who has caused, or allowed others to cause, these "little ones who believe" to be lead into sin (Matthew 18:6-7).

Elders owe the brotherhood every support and cooperation within reason and in harmony with ability and opportunity. They should be able to say "no" to things that are not, in their judgement, that which is in the best interest of the brotherhood or things that are not scriptural. This should be in the realm of freedom without being "black-balled" by one or more men of congregations who have more zeal than knowledge.

Elders owe the brotherhood the honesty of working for the Lord without competition being involved! One rightly said, "Lighthouses are not in competition!" "Sheep-stealing" should not be named among us nor practiced, but rather abhorred by faithful brethren who are earnestly serving the same Lord of Glory.

ve attitudes which and presumption on the other hand and envy and jealousy on the other should be rejected completely as out of harmony with the seriousness of the great commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 61:15-16; I Timothy 4:16).

Elders owe the brotherhood the support and help of attending area lectureships, Gospel meetings, scriptural youth meetings and training series. If they themselves cannot attend, they should still pray for the efforts and encourage others to attend for edification's sake.

The Wonderful Work Of Elders

With great joy, praise, and glory, the faithful elder should rejoice daily in the Lord, who has given him the talent, opportunity, and distinctive place of labor in His kingdom. Let us all seek, whether we be elders, deacons, preachers, or Bible school teachers, etc., that with the Lord's gracious help, we will be the best in our positions of labor here on earth for our short span of years, that the blessings of Heaven allow! May we never forget whom we are serving as we seek to reach as many as possible with "the unsearchable riches of Christ"!

Gary Colley
Austin, TX



From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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Change Movement Series: The New Hermeneutic

Glenn Colley

Don't feel alone if you aren't familiar with the word "hermeneutic". My Webster's dictionary doesn't contain the word. Largely, the word has drawn attention in the churches of Christ during the last few years because of the change movement. The word means, "science of interpreting the Scriptures." It has to do with how we approach Biblical interpretation, and how we apply it's meaning and message in life and service to God. Most Christians, up until now, probably have given this little thought, but now we are being challenged by the change agents. "Through the years," it is often argued by the change agents, "We in the churches of Christ have seen the Bible as a pattern, or a blue print. That's wrong. We need to see the Bible as more of a love letter." Clearly the difference between the two is that one is concerned with strict obedience to God's will (Matthew 4:4), and the other takes a more laid back approach, placing a less urgent importance on the Scriptures.

To say "new hermeneutic" implies that there is an old one. It is interesting that so many folks have obeyed the Gospel, been active members of the church of Christ, died, and gone on to bliss, having never considered their personal "hermeneutic". Oh, they heard preaching about interpreting the scriptures, but it was in language they could understand, backed by scriptures they could understand. Understanding the new hermeneutic is both difficult (if not impossible), and

doesn't rely on any real scriptural backing.

Our actions in life must be authorized. Paul wrote in Colossians 3:17, "Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." In simple terms let's at the "old" hermeneutic. As you read, ask yourself what needs to be added to this or taken from it.

There are three different possible ways an action or activity may be authorized; by direct command, by approved example, or by necessary inference. Consider them individually:

1. Direct command.

This is easiest and most obvious. The Bible simply puts forth a command which is applicable to all people or to all believers, and I must then comply. After all, we are under a law today, the law of Christ (James 1:25, Galatians 6:2, I John 3:4). An example of a direct command in II Thessalonians 3:6, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly..."

2. Approved Example.

An action is authorized which has been shown in the Scriptures to meet with God's approval for New Testament Christians. For example, we eat the Lord's supper on the first day of the week because it is the only day authorized in the Bible. It is authorized by the approved example found in Acts 20:7 - "And upon the first day of the

week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them..." We do not find the early Christians eating the Lord's supper on any other day than Sunday. Therefore we have authority, through an approved example, to eat the Lord's supper only on the first day of the week.

3. Necessary inference.

Inference means "the drawing of a conclusion." We know, for example, that we have authority to build a meeting house for the church's assemblies because Hebrews 10:25 teaches we are to assemble. I Corinthians 5:4 shows again that the early Christians assembled, and yet there is no specified place given at which we should meet. We are just to meet. Therefore our necessary inferences would be that we must provide some place to meet, whether in a home, or in a warehouse, or in a church-owned building. Our necessary inference are properly drawn when God implies His will. The authority comes not in fact that we infer that an action is right, but rather in the fact that God has implied that it is right.

In a brief and very simplistic way we have discussed these obvious ways of interpreting scripture and learning what God authorizes through His word. Now let's consider the New Hermeneutic.

One of the finest works in print on this subject is from Dave Miller in his book entitled, "The New Hermeneutic: A Review and Response". It can be ordered from Dave Miller, P.O. Box 210667, Bedford TX,

76095. This is an excerpt from that book, page 2:

"Those at the forefront of the discussion within churches of Christ are extremely vague when it comes to identifying precisely the "new hermeneutic." One proponent admitted recently that the "ramifications of this new model...have not been worked out systematically." The primary concern of those clamoring for a "new hermeneutic" appears to be dismantling of the "old hermeneutic." Much of their effort has been spent criticizing what is deemed to be the shortcomings of the hermeneutical practices of the past, specifically the "command, example, necessary inference" triad. Little energy has been expended on their part in proposing a legitimate alternative (because there isn't one). The "new hermeneutic" is not the result of simple Bible study and sincere search for the truth. Rather, it is born out of a reactionary attempt to express dissatisfaction with the status quo and thus to undermine the past. If a new hermeneutic is needed today in order to understand the Bible and live the Christian life, then the members of the church who have preceded us have died without understanding the Bible. If, on the other hand, those using the "old hermeneutic" were able to understand the Bible enough to be saved, then

what need do we have for a "new hermeneutic"?

In A book entitled "among the Scholars", by David W. Hester, which I reviewed and recommended a few weeks ago, we read, "When one attempts to elicit a definition of the new hermeneutic from them, he finds it is an almost hopeless task. The leading proponents of this way of thinking have not clearly and concisely given a set definition. In fact, they are not in total agreement among themselves as to what they are promoting...What these men are united in, though, is their criticism of the Lord's church and our way of interpreting the Bible, (Pg. 29)."

Someone suggested that the best definition for the new hermeneutic is "hermeneutic agnosticism." That is, as an agnostic says, "We can't know there is a God," the agents of change are saying, "We can really know truth regarding the interpretation of Scripture."

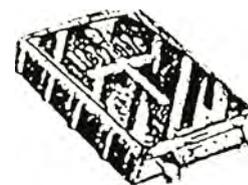
It is a worthy observation that the leading proponents of change in the churches of Christ realize that to win the day for their changes, they must first change the way people look at the Bible. Folks in the pew must take a looser view of the scriptures to be able to adopt the change agent's agenda.

We must warn our children our families, and the church about this movement of change. The fruit of the movement will

POSITION OPENING

We currently are seeking a man to fill a position with the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ in Jasper AL. He needs to be married, under 40 years old, and sound in the faith. The position responsibilities include heading up the youth program, some weekly radio preaching, occasional pulpit preaching, and editing of the church bulletin. Interested parties should contact the:

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The New Testament

Johnny Ramsey

There are several passages that tell us the purpose of the New Testament. Christ came to give us the abundant life (John 10:10) and this life is in the Son of God (I John 5:11). The four accounts of the life of our Lord were written that we might have eternal life in Him (John 20:31). The Old Testament, in 39 books, pointed to the coming of "the Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6), and on the Cross of Calvary peace was made through the precious blood that was shed there (Colossians 1:20). An outline on the 27 books of the New Testament will help us tremendously in ascertaining its message and its purpose:

Matthew - John	The Life of Christ
Acts	How to Become a Christian
Romans - Jude	How to Live as a Christian
Revelation	The Hope of the Christian

If I had to sum up in a brief statement the gist and thrust of the New Testament, in its entire emphasis, here is that summary: "The New Testament presents Christ and His gospel system as the hope of the world and the glory of God in order that sinful men might obey the commands of the Lord, follow His perfect example and thereby enjoy this life, glorify their Maker and go home to heaven by the grace of God through the blood of the Savior."

The first four books richly proclaim the birth, life, teachings, sufferings and victorious resurrection of our blessed Redeemer. The authority of the Lord is stressed in Matthew. His majesty in Mark, His perfection and loyalty in Luke, and the personal touch of Jesus is the beautiful impression that lingers in the gospel record by John. If there is one major verse in those dynamic books, it

would certainly be John 14:6 wherein Christ is set forth as "the way, the truth and the life" that lights the world!

The tremendously powerful section known as Acts is the history book of the New Testament. It contains the background for many of the books that follow it in the Bible. Background material for Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Thessalonians and Corinthians can be located in Chapters 13-20 of Acts. The spread of the glorious gospel of Christ is vividly set forth in Acts 8:4, "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." Salvation only in Christ is the cardinal teaching of this fifth book of the New Testament (Acts 4:12). Cases of conversion how people became Christians - give excitement to this book. The establishment of the Lord's church is found in Acts 2. Since God is glorified in the

church by Christ (Ephesians 3:21), the book of Acts is a bulwark of truth in the Bible.

The 21 epistles, Romans though Jude, enrich us in daily conduct with practical messages regarding the spiritual sojourn of children of God. No verse sums up these books better than Colossians 1:10, "That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

These 21 letters regarding the conduct of those who belong to the Savior tell us to have the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5) as we pursue the fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22). Such noble goals will cause us to have purpose, dedication and hope as we travel the road of life. How vain any other emphasis would be!

Finally, the book of Revelation closes the New Testament, with the radiant

joy of Christianity displayed in spite of intense persecution that surrounds it. "Be thou faithful unto death" (Revelation 2:10) is its major theme. The word "overcometh" is found 17 times in the 22 chapters. When saints of God do overcome the devil by God's word and the blood of Christ (Revelation 12:11), they can come over to spend eternity with the One who died to set them free (Revelation 1:5). How deeply grateful we ought to be for the clarity and challenge of the New Testament!



When Sin Was Dissected On The Table Of Truth

Neal Pollard

Jeremiah was a "prophet" for God (Jeremiah 1:5), meaning that he was God's mouthpiece and messenger (Jeremiah 1:17). God's Word is truth (cf. John 17:17). What Judah needed in Jeremiah's day was a refresher course about sin (Jeremiah 2:11-13). By inspiration, the prophet laid iniquity open to reveal its ugly inwards. What did he cause Judah to see? Note the textbook answers in Jeremiah 3:25.

THE FRUITS OF SIN. Did Jeremiah speak of sin's fruits with words like pleasure, fulfillment, and

ecstasy? Or, did he speak of sins "shame", "confusion", transgression, and rebellion? Yielding to iniquity brings an eternally unproductive harvest (cf. Jeremiah 8:20).

THE FOLLY OF SIN. According to this verse, sin sets us against God (cf. I John 3:4). It robs us of youth's innocence (cf. Matthew 18:3). Jeremiah says sin turns us from the safe and happy path (cf. Jeremiah 3:23; Matthew 7:21). Giving in to sin makes no sense (Jeremiah 5:25).

THE FULL EXTENT OF SIN. Yes, sin is, in one way, empty (Jeremiah

3:23). But, it is also full. Sinners "lie down in shame", immersed in the consequences of disobedience (cf. Ephesians 5:6). Sinners are covered in confusion, overwhelmed by illegitimacy. Sin can even capsize entire families and nations ("We and our fathers"; Proverbs 14:34). Sin saturates one with guilt, and weighs one down (Matthew 11:28).

Sin is unfruitful, foolish, and overbearing. The answer to sin is Gilead's Balm (Jeremiah 8:22)! The solution to sin is God (Jeremiah 31:33).

Most Of A Minute

Cinderella Of The Bible

The Cinderella story of the Bible, including an abusive home life ending in a marriage to the future king has to be the one surrounding the life of the beautiful Abigail in the book of I Samuel.

Abigail was married to a good-for-nothing, sorry ole' drunken rascal named Nabal. Nabal's name literally means, "a fool", and Nabal live up to his name!

David, soon to be crowned king, passed that way with his 600 soldiers, and kindly asked Nabal for some food and water. The very request made Nabal angry. The answer was "no", and came equipped with an insult. When David learned about the spiteful treatment, he gave the order to secure weapons. They were going after the wicked Nabal.

In the mean time, Abigail learned of what her husband had done, and how that David was headed their way. Little did she know that one day she would be wife to David the king. She gathered food together and went to meet David and his men. And do you know what she said? --oops, I'm sorry. I'm out of space. You'll have to read the rest for yourself in I Samuel 25.

**You Can't repent too
soon, because you don't know
how soon it may be too late.**

Changing Views Toward The Church (No.1)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

INTRODUCTION

Change is written on the wings of time. It is one of the most powerful terms in today's political arena. Elections are won or lost upon the basis of change and which party can promise the most change. The elections of 1992 and 1994 are cases in point as well as contrasts. The former was a change for greater liberalism in Washington with bigger and bigger government; the latter was a change for conversation with less and less governmental activity in the lives and pockets of Americans.

Change affects the religious climate of our day--Catholic, Protestant, cultic, occultic and the World Religions. I have watched in amazement over the forty-five years I have been preaching and writing at the changes that have come in all

these religions movements.

It would be a wonderful thing if we could say that churches of Christ have NOT been affected and afflicted with the yen for change. But this we cannot say. Change agents are about their diabolical and devilish work among us in ever increasing numbers, in ever expanding areas. They are duped devotees of the devil for a surety and any reader may feel free to quote me to ANY of them along this line of accusations. They are the twentieth century counterpart of those portrayed by Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 wherein we read, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall

be according to their works." We have them in our state capital--Nashville; you have them in your state capital where this paper is edited and published--Montgomery. Texas has them in its state capital--Austin with Abilene having more than its share. They are coming out of the wood work. Evidently, they feel the time is ripe for the public exposure of their cleverly laid plans of conspiracy for a takeover of churches of Christ. More and more we are calling their hand; we are shouting from the rooftops that "they shall not pass." Brethren, formerly silent and on the sidelines, are now entering the foray with their sword of the Spirit drawn and ready to do battle. Nashville preachers and churches are drawing lines!

William Woodson, who grew up in Words of Truth country, has written a definition volume depicting the strategy of men

like Rubel Shelly and Calvin Warpula and what their change agent agenda is. His book is plenty capable of breaking the back of the change agents in Nashville, Abilene or wherever they may be found. I recommend his book without reservation. You need a copy of it and especially if you are enamored with the Jubilee philosophy emanating from Nashville, Tennessee, which is such a blight on the cause of the Lord in my home state of Tennessee.

SOME BEGINNING SCRIPTURES

Three come readily to mind--one from the Old Testament and two from the New Testament. In the final book of the Old Testament, Malachi, we read, "For I am the Lord, I change not" 93:6). From the ever timely book of Hebrews we read, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for

ever...Wherefore we receiving a kingdom, which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire" (13:8; 12:28,29).

Jehovah is unchanging; the Lord Jesus Christ is unchanging; the church is unchanging; change agents are clamoring for changes on every hand. Who is so naive as to think that the unchanging God, the unchanging Christ and the unchanging Spirit of truth are going to approve of what the Change Agents have in mind for churches of Christ the rest of this century and on into the next century if such we have?

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The Value Of A Baby Doesn't Change

The following comments are not meant as a political statement, but they are meant as an indictment. Consider:

Only a short time following the bombing in Oklahoma City, President Clinton appeared on television to condemn the act itself as well

as as those responsible. In his response, Mr. Clinton characterized the bombing as an attack against "innocent children", as "evil", and as an act of cowardice.

I'm curious. Why is it evil and cowardly to kill innocent children in a day care center (which, by the way, it is -

Proverbs 6:16-17), but it is not evil and cowardly to kill innocent children while they are still in their mother's womb (Luke 1:39-44; 2:16-17)? If the killing of innocent children is evil and wrong in one instance, IT MUST BE evil and wrong in another. consistency demands it.

Friends, more innocent children are murdered every eight minutes (24) in the U.S. by an abortionist's knife than died cumulatively in the bombing in Oklahoma City. When our President begins to show concern and compassion for THESE innocent victims also, he'll then begin

to have the respect of us who consider life sacred, and who consider the intentional taking of human life to be murder. (Proverbs 14:34).

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A New Take On Fasting

From the Redwood Church of Christ in Redwood, California and a program called, "Manna International" comes a postcard stating, "What A Difference A Day Makes." It says, "Churches of Christ around the world are joining hands on June 4, 1995 to pray and fast for the helpless and lost." Their goal is to have 3000 congregations to set aside a special time of prayer during their worship on June 4th. They also want brethren to fast.

It is fine anytime a Christian wants to pray and fast. However, I always thought that fasting was intended to be a private enterprise and was for one's

own personal benefit (Matthew 6:16-18). Herein lies the new take on fasting which I see in the above ad. These brethren want to turn that which is essentially personal and private into that which is altruistic and public. If we are to truly help the helpless and the lost there are some additional steps which need to be taken. In addition to "prayer and fasting" we must reach out a helping hand to the helpless (Matthew 25:31-46) If not, our prayers will go unfinished and our fasting will be pointless. The way to help the lost is not to fast, but to take the gospel to them (Mark 16:15-16). Otherwise, while people are starving

(physically and spiritually) we are fasting (for an hour or a day). What good has been done? None whatsoever! While Jesus mentioned prayer and fasting in Matthew 6 he did not leave out giving to the poor (Vs. 1-4). These brethren seem to have overlooked that. Will the money not spent that day be used to help feed some of the hungry?

While the Bible mentions fasting, it is not taught as a part of the doctrine of Christ. Jesus Christ, in Matthew 6, removes it from the realm of public activity and classifies it as a matter of private devotion. In review of the fact that praying and giving are matters of public worship

(Acts 2:42; I Corinthians 16:1-2), and fasting is not, it seems obvious that fasting is a matter of private devotion, and is to be restricted thereto. Therefore, if June 4th (which is the Lord's day) is to be a "Day of Prayer & Fasting" it is an act of innovation if interjected into the worship.

The above announcement amounts to a public fast designed to promote a program. To suggest that such an approach is wrong is not to say that fasting is wrong. We must remember: (1) Jesus did not enjoin fasting upon the church as a public duty, and (2) he taught that if it is to be observed at all it is to be a matter of private devotion, without

revealing it to others and for the good of one's own soul. Therefore, one may choose to fast or choose not to fast, and neither decision is right or wrong. It has no special virtue so that all disciples must engage in it. One may find it beneficial to himself personally, while another may not.

Those brethren who are using fasting in promoting projects of one kind or another are guilty of misusing and abusing, if not altogether ignoring what the Bible teaches about fasting. When it is done it should not be with intent to make a show.

Dennis Gullledge
Mabelvale Ark

JUNE 2, 1995

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- Is There A "New" Grace

Volume 32 Number 19
(USPS 691-760)

The Words of Truth

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

forth the
:25

Why Not The Sabbath?

Brethren, some well-meaning yet misinformed people have gotten it in their heads that the approved day of worship to God is the seventh day of our week, rather than the first day. This of course, we deny and in this article we appeal to the Scriptures for the TRUE facts in answering this sabbath question. Brother Guy N. Woods has written,

" The Word 'sabbath' from the Hebrew 'sabbath', and the Greek 'sabbaton', is the transliteration of these words in the Old and New Testaments respectively, and means the seventh day." (The Gospel Advocate, May 11, 1967, p. 298)

This (the sabbath day) is what we are considering in this article. Please give careful attention to the Bible facts below.

FACT ONE:

Our GOD did indeed REST from his labor of creation on the seventh day as recorded in Genesis 2:2-3. But he did not command a sabbath day's rest of man until several thousand years later. (Exodus 20:2,8-11; Nehemiah 9:13-14)

FACT TWO:

The 'sabbath' per se is never mentioned before Exodus 16:23.

FACT THREE:

The sabbath was given at Sinai, not Eden. The covenant that included the ten commandments was not given until after Israel came out of Egypt (Exodus 20:1-2; 34:28). Also, the Bible specifically states that GOD made known his holy sabbath at Mt. Sinai. (Nehemiah 9:13-14) Thus, the ten commandments, one of which was the sabbath observance, were not being observed prior to that time. We do affirm without reservation that GOD did have a law, the patriarchal system, prior to the law given at Sinai. (Hebrews 1:1; Romans 4:15).

FACT FOUR:

The sabbath was not a universal law for all men, but was given exclusively to the Hebrew nation gathered at Mount Sinai. Moses wrote, "And the Lord said unto Moses, write thou these words, for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with

Israel." (Exodus 34:27) "The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." (Deuteronomy 5:3) Sabbatarians say GOD made this law with man all the way back at creation, and thus it is binding upon all men for all time. Yet, GOD does not say that in these verses or in any other.

FACT FIVE:

No where do the Scriptures affirm that the sabbath was a day of worship. Rather it was given to the Hebrew people as a day of rest and remembrance. (Exodus 31:13-17; Deuteronomy 5:15).

FACT SIX:

Under the law of Moses one was to be put to death for violating the sabbath (Exodus 31:14-15). Will our sabbatarian friends begin implementing this Mosiac stipulation?

FACT SEVEN:

Never do the Scriptures speak of the law having two separate and distinct parts, one ceremonial and the other moral, one the law of Moses

and the other the law of GOD, as modern sabbatarians claim. GOD never used these terms (ceremonial and moral) or made this distinction. Please see Nehemiah 8:1,8,18 where the law of Moses and the law of GOD are used interchangeably.

FACT EIGHT:

In Romans 7:4 the apostle Paul said, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become DEAD TO THE LAW by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto GOD." My question is this, dead to what law? The answer is found in verse seven, the law that said, "Thou shalt not covet". Brethren, this is the tenth of the ten commandments found in Exodus 20:17. I believe the logic of this point is clear.

FACT NINE:

The last mention of the sabbath is in Colossians 2:14-17, where the Bible specifically states that the law of Moses was nailed to the cross. Thus, the sabbath has come to an end. In fact,

the verses Paul says that one is not to be judged for not observing the sabbath (vs. 16).

FACT TEN:

The Christians of the first century did not keep the sabbath as a day of worship. What they did do was preach to lost souls on the sabbath and every other day (Acts 5:42) as a missionary effort. The clear pattern from the pages of the New Testament is of Christians assembling on the first day of the week to worship GOD. (Acts 20:7-11; I Corinthians 16:1-2)

Brethren, those who teach that we should keep the sabbath today are no doubt sincere people, but they are following a covenant that has been replaced (Hebrews 8:7; 10:9). They are thus promoting false doctrine and must be opposed. Let me assure you the sabbath day is not binding upon anyone today. I won't be keeping it. What about you?

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Bridle

Recently I had the opportunity to go horseback riding with one of the members of the congregation with which I serve. Never having ridden a horse before, needless to say, I was a bit

apprehensive about the experience. "Could I, in fact, CONTROL such a large animal?" As it turns out, my anxiety subsided when I learned one very important truth. Control the horses'

mouth and you control the horse.

In James 3 the Bible says, "For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect (mature) man, able

also to bridle the whole body. Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body"(James 3:2-3).

What's the point? Simply this. The man who controls

his life, has first learned to restrain/control his tongue. Have you learned to bridle your tongue?

Mike Benson.
Parsons, TN

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

POSITION OPENING

We currently are seeking a man to fill a position with the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ in Jasper AL. He needs to be married, under 40 years old, and sound in the faith. The position responsibilities include heading up the youth program, some weekly radio preaching, occasional pulpit preaching, and editing of the church bulletin. Interested parties should contact the: Sixth Ave. Church of Christ 1501 Sixth Ave. Jasper, AL 35501 (205)-384-6446

Change Movement #8

Women's Role In Today's Worship

Glenn Colley

It is not surprising that as the major proponents of the feminist movement flex their muscles of influence, we would gradually see people in the church challenging what we teach and what the Bible says. Some today are absolutely convinced that if the tide of society goes one way or another, the church is bound to follow that same tack. The agents of change often speak with a strong air of certainty regarding the expanding of woman's role in the church. Lynn Mitchell, in the Preachers' and Church Workers Forum at Freed Hardeman University in 1990 said publicly,

"What I say or do will have little effect on the movement for the re-examination of the woman's role in churches of Christ. That movement will explode among churches of Christ whichever side I might be on, or whether I am on any side at all. It's time has come. There is nothing anyone can do about it."

Such things are often heard by those who are clamoring to expand the role of woman in the church. We hear these days of churches whose women serve at the Lord's table, lead singing, lead in the reading of the Scripture, teach mixed Bible classes, and who are given the office of deacon.

Let's review some passages which have a bearing on these considerations.

The foundation for this discussion must begin in Genesis 2. God created Eve with clear purpose in mind: "But for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep go to

fall upon Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs..." Adam observed, "She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man, (vs. 23b)."

Eve, being tempted of the devil, ate the forbidden fruit, then convinced Adam to do the same (Genesis 3:6). When God meted out punishment for the sin, He said to Eve, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

Although we run the risk of being called traditional, consider that reading Genesis gives one the impression that God had different roles for men and women. They are equal in that they are both created by God, though created different ways. They are equal in that they must obey God. Nevertheless, Eve was made to be a helper suited for Adam. Furthermore, it appears that God is setting into motion a system of roles for men and women, husbands and wives. Is this just an appearance, or is it really the case?

I Timothy 2:11-14 says, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to usurp (have, GC) authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in transgression."

It doesn't matter if you or I see a connection between what took place in the Garden of Eden and woman's role in worship today. It only matters that

God sees a connection. What matters is not what the society about us will think if we have a more limited role for women than popular denominations. It only matters that God has spoken and made His will known.

Whenever a new area of service or leadership is considered for women the question should be asked, "Does this violate any teaching from the Bible?" Let's ask that question with regard to some specific areas:

1. Women deacons (or deaconesses).

The proponents of change quickly point to Romans 16:1 where Paul wrote, "I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea." The Greek word for "servant" in this verse is diakoneo. It is translated "ministered" in Matthew 4:11 when the angels came and cared for the Master after His temptation. It is applied to Jesus Himself in Matthew 10:45, in that He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." It is translated "deacons" in Philippians 1:1.

The key to this question is very simple. There is an obvious difference in people being deacons in the servant sense, and people being deacons in the official sense. Note please, that in I Timothy 3:13 this important phrase is used regarding deacons: "...the office of a deacon." In that office, an individual must, according to I Timothy 3:8-13, be the husband of one wife. Furthermore, deacons wives must be "grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things." A woman cannot

scripturally be a deacon. Incidentally, remember that God designed the Patriarchal system, not Matriarchal. There were no women apostles, and no women elders. May all appreciate that God is serious about the different roles of men and women.

2. Women song leaders, preachers, leaders in public prayer, leaders in scriptural reading, in our mixed assemblies.

I Timothy 2:12 forbids, as the KJV puts it, "usurping authority over the man." Some mistakenly assume that "usurping" means "taking by force", but it doesn't. It simply means "having authority."

Because a leader has a certain degree of authority as a leader, and because this passage applies to our worship, women may not take a leadership role as described in this point, and comply fully with God's word. She would be doing the kind of things which are prohibited by this passage.

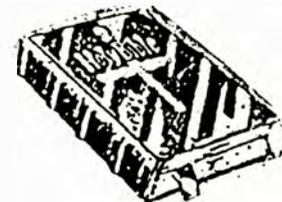
3. Serving on the Lord's table.

The argument is easily made: "By waiting on the Lord's table the woman is not leading. She is serving.

Therefore we are within our scriptural rights to use her in this capacity.

It is my personal conviction that using women in this way is a violation of the principle in I Timothy 2:12 and that the practice should be avoided. Although technically the woman is perhaps not leading, she is perceived as a leader in that worship. It isn't uncommon in church bulletins to see a major heading "Those privileged to lead in our worship", and beneath that heading find a list including those who will wait on the Lord's table. The perception of leading would make the Christian woman avoid the practice. Her mind is set not on feminism or equality of roles, but on the kind of submission God designed.

Just because a practice or teaching is familiar and old doesn't mean it can be improved by changing. Regarding our compliance with God's will, may we never be influenced to compromise to make ourselves more favored by the world.



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Changing views Toward The Church (No. 2)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.
 Three major points will preface our study before we get to the main point of our study--changing views toward the church. They will be noticed with brevity in this article.

Changing Views Toward Pattern Authority

The leaders of the change movement bash at every seized opportunity the "old paths" mentality as they are fond of referring to it. Jeremiah's precious plea in 6:16-17 falls on deaf ears as far as they are concerned. They reject any sort of rigid pattern concept except one of their own making and then they can be Papal-like in the bulls-eye, or really important doctrines, they hurl at those of us who stand where we have already stood and where they once stood. Shelly and I once stood together; we do not now. I have not moved; he has and to the left with rapidity. Pattern or blueprint authority inheres the New Testament.

The Romans had obeyed the form (pattern) of doctrine delivered them as per Romans 6:17-18. Paul left Timothy at Ephesus that he might charge certain ones not to teach another doctrine. Such would have been totally unnecessary if there had not been a norm, standard or pattern (I Timothy 1:3). Timothy was charged to hold fast the form or pattern of sound words (2 Timothy 1:13). Unless there is a pattern to which we must adhere in Christianity, it would have been a waste of words in Hebrews 8:6-13 for Paul to refer to Moses and the erection of the tabernacle at Sinai's base, viz., make it according to the pattern shown thee in the mount. Did God have a pattern for the tabernacle in the Old Testament but none for the Lord's church in the New Testament? In the absence of any and all patterns why were the instructions given to the elect lady and her children in 2 John 9-11? Why are we

forbidden to go beyond that which is written if there be no pattern or blueprint authority inhering Christianity (I Corinthians 4:6--ASV). It becomes clearer all the time why they reject blueprint authority. To affect changes which they have in mind, they have to destroy brethren's belief in, and respect for, pattern or blueprint authority in the word of the living God. Were I a Change Agent, this would be the very first point on my agenda. Everything else would be subservient to it for a surety!

Changing Views Toward The Godhead

To the Change Agents, God the Father is flexible, loose and lax with most anything they want to do. They serve a God of ALL goodness and NO wrath. There can be NO wrath in "grace-only" theology. If so, how, How, HOW? The wrath of God is a noxious misnomer to them. To them the Living Word (Christ) is all important; the

Written Word in the New Testament is on a back burner--a far back burner! It is the old fallacy of "the man and not the plan" dressed up in new garb. Some of them used to help us in refuting such sophistry; now they are advocating it. Liberalism causes people to do strange things. The Holy Spirit, they say, is unpredictable as He moves in and among them in direct fashion. They say they cannot be sure just what the Holy Spirit has in mind for them when a worship period is begun. The "Holy Wow" is all important. Worship in solemnity, sacredness and sanity is old hat--the unchurched do not want such and the baby boomers will not have it.

Changing Views Toward The Bible

Verbal, plenary inspiration of Sacred Scripture is a thing of the past with the Change Agents. They are far more interested in man-breathed words than God-breathed words. Shelly thinks Matthew

heard the Lord give the Sermon on the Mount many times, and from points jotted down on paper scraps, he wrote his rendering of that remarkable Sermon. No modernist ever expressed it better for the system of infidelity. The four gospel records are hailed as the real power, with Acts and the epistles bashed about badly, that is of course, until they need a passage from either of these two sections and then they opt for it in a hurry. Lost power and restored power is the game they play with Acts and the epistles! Their speeches (they do not deserve to be called sermons) are seldom ever saturated with much in the way of Scripture. The Lord has a mighty hard time getting His SAY into their speeches.

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The Power Of Darkness

Glenn Colley

Did you ever wonder about the Devil? What is he? Where did he originate? How powerful is he?

Hard, cold facts about Satan are really quite few. The Bible does offer a list of different descriptive names for this being, almost as long as your arm: "Accuser of our brethren" (Revelation 12:10), "Adversary" (I Peter 5:8), "Father of lies" (John 8:44), "Angel of the bottomless pit" (Revelation 9:11), "Enemy" (Matthew 13:39), "Evil Spirit" (I Samuel 16:14), "Lying Spirit" (I Kings 22:22), "Murderer" (John 8:44), "Old Serpent" (Revelation 12:9), "Power of Darkness" (Colossians 1:13), "Prince of this world" (John 12:31), "Tempter" (Matthew 4:3), to name a few.

Here are some things we do know about the Tempter:

1. There can be no question that the devil existed before creation. Just as the Bible simply assumes the existence of God in Genesis 1:1, it also assumes the existence of Satan in Genesis 3:1.

2. God and Satan had conversations. "And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil? (Job 1:7-8) This is difficult to picture. The One who is altogether good is conversing with the One who is altogether bad, but it happened.

3. God has some, if not complete, control over Satan. Do you remember the two times God set boundaries for the "Old Serpent" in the book of Job?

"And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord." (Job 1:12).

And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thy hand; but save his life." (Job 2:6) God's control is also suggested, I believe, in Matthew 4:1, "Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness...TO BE TEMPTED OF THE DEVIL". Was the devil accidentally at this place, and at this specific time to tempt Jesus? Certainly one can assume that God had a hand in this.

The question is, "Does God still have control over Satan today?" and if so, "Why doesn't He just bring

the devil's work to a screeching halt?" The answer is I Corinthians 10:13.

(Continued on Page 4)

Most Of A Minute

The Good Book

Have you read a good book lately? Books are marvelous. Through reading we can travel to all corners of this old earth seeing the people and lands on the vivid screen of our imagination. We can learn and obtain the knowledge that took others a lifetime to discover by reading their books.

If you had to pick one single book out of all the great stack of millions that have been written and read, which would you pull out and call the best-seller of all time? If you said the Bible, you're absolutely right. People have discouraged its use, prohibited its use and condemned its use. But it is still the best-seller of all time.

People have always needed to have some contact with their maker by learning His will for their life. People go to the Bible to learn about how to go to heaven. God intended for us to know how. That's why He gave us His book.

John. 8:32 "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Have you read the Good Book lately?

Glenn Colley

The Power Of Darkness

(Continued From Page 3)

"There hath no temptation taken you but such is common to man: but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

The word "suffer" means "to permit". Thus "who will NOT PERMIT you to be tempted above that ye are able". There is God controlling Satan. Just as God has harnessed Satan in the trials of Job, God restricts him in the tempting of us. The

second part of this verse says you can always escape sin. You can bear the temptation. How? By studying the will of your Lord and "growing in the grace and knowledge" of Him (2 Peter 3:18).

God permits us to be tempted of the devil for the

simple reason that He wants voluntary servants. He wants you to serve Him because you want to, and not because there was nothing else to do.

Take courage, brethren. To us the devil is simply someone to be rejected for One who is worlds better.

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

Glenn Colley

The Sin Of Compromise

Johnny Ramsey

In a famous poem a spider coaxed a fly into its parlor and the end result was one dead fly! Webster defines compromise thusly:

"Consent reached by mutual concession
.....to surrender....."

Henry Clay was known as "the great compromiser" in American History. Although he was famous as a Washington legislator no one wanted him for president. Clay never made it to the presidential mansion because too many citizens were suspect of his convictions under fire. At the famous battle of Waterloo a brilliant statement of courage reminds us of the need for conviction:

"We may die but we do not surrender."

And, we today, in the church of the Lord Jesus, should never compromise or surrender precious landmarks of righteousness. We have too

many folk making overtures and concessions toward sectarian groups in regard to points long ago established in the Bible. Hearing some brethren speak of "positive thoughts only" and forbearance makes me wonder how Christ was ever crucified by folk so angry with Him they hanged the Son of God between thieves!

When Sanballet tried to get Nehemiah into a compromising dialogue on the plains of Ono that great servant of Jehovah made it clear that he was too busy doing God's bidding to waste time in lesser matters. Had the Samaritans been interested in discussing heaven's will for mankind that would have been a different situation altogether. So should we be ready, publicly or privately, to study the Scriptures with anyone. But that is not the atmosphere we are speaking of now. Brethren, we might as well

admit that we are reaping what we sowed into the last generation. Many congregations pushed serious Bible study out and invited entertainment in for the young people. As a result, we now have 30 year olds who know very little Bible and few of the basic principles that made us strong in days past and gone. The concept of the value of the silence of the Scriptures must be taught all over again if we would salvage very many of the youth of yesterday. The idea that the church of the New Testament is unique and distinctive and not a denomination is not firmly entrenched in "the church of tomorrow." We have compromised with humanism, television and the hedonism of secular Hollywood-oriented philosophy as we idolize rock musicians, sports heroes and anti-government bums. Then we wonder:

"Where have all the

children gone?"

If we had more conviction and boldness in the pulpit and courage in the eldership and plain teaching in our Bible classes we might turn things around for God's cause in the next decade. But we will have to quit surrendering to the pressures of unconverted members who worry about what society will think of us for being so narrow-minded! Truth has always been absolute and therefore narrow. Ask Noah, Joshua, Daniel, Stephen, Paul—and best of all ask the Savior—if standing for the right way was ever popular. We should strive for respect from godly people and approval of our heavenly Father (Galatians 1:10).

Convenience has always been the mother of apostacy. Christians must come out of Babylon (Revelation 18) and be separate (II Corinthians 6:17) if that salt of the earth Jesus mentioned in Matthew 5

ever has its preserving impact upon a world gone mad with iniquity. When everyone does what is right in his own eyes (Deuteronomy 12:8) the Devil has a field day. We, today, stand in the valley of decision. Let us be sure we choose not the easy road but the correct one.

"All the way my Savior leads me,

What have I to ask beside?

Can I doubt His tender mercy

Who thought life has been my guide?"

Emerson had a classic reminder for us:

"Tis man's perdition to be safe

When for the Truth he ought to die."

Compromise, that great enemy of righteousness, should be banished from our presence never to rear its ugly head again!

Is There A "New " Grace

We are saved by grace. I've heard it all of my life, and I have preached it over and over. There's nothing man can do to earn his salvation. It comes as a gift from God. "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God." That's the gospel truth!

But much of what I am hearing today indicates that there is nothing for man to do, and nothing he can do, to affect his salvation. My Bible doesn't teach that! Think

about it. If that kind of grace saves, then God has the sole responsibility for man's salvation. I can blame God if I'm lost. Furthermore, if He saves you, and doesn't save me, then he has become a respecter of persons (Something which he is not). "And Peter opened his mouth and said: " Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34-35).

The scriptures tell us that

"Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Through His grace God warned Noah about the flood which was to destroy the world, and told Noah to build an ark. Grace showed him a way of escape. Noah believed God and was obedient to God's instructions. "Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him" (Genesis 6:22). As a result of obedient faith, God's grace saved Noah. Thus grace provided the blessing; it was accepted by faith; and obtained by the obedience of

faith. "By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, took heed and constructed an ark for the saving of his household; by this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness which comes by faith" (Hebrews 11:7).

A wonderful example of God's grace is found when "Philip went down to a city of Samaria, and proclaimed to them the Christ" (Acts 8:5). "But when they believed Philip as he preached good

news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12). Grace was extended through the gospel; faith accepted the message; and the people became obedient to the faith.

Paul speaks often of the grace of God, but he never eliminates obedience. He preached "according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith" (Romans 16:26)

John Gipson Little Rock, AK

JUNE 9, 1995

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Volume 32 Number 20
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

10

Revelation Reminders

Johnny Ramsey

The last book of the Bible is full of rich memories, vibrant passages and powerful points that remind us of the persecution of early saints, the horror of the Roman rulers and the victory of Truth - ultimately. The golden threads that weave together the canvas of life make us grateful for Christianity and more aware of the tyranny of wicked men. Truly, as Paul wrote in Romans 8:18, any suffering in the present time does not even compare with the glory that shall be revealed! Charles Gabriel, in a great gospel song, tells the story:

"Though the hills be steep and the valleys deep,

With no flowers my way
adorning

Though the night be lone
and my rest a stone, joy
awaits me in the morning."

Yes, first century Christians were sorely oppressed and constantly harassed by Nero and Domitian particularly. It was

not Easy Street they traversed but Tribulation Avenue. To follow Jesus honestly meant persecution and imprisonment. Death hovered over them and hostility surrounded them. The promise of the Lord was a beautiful echo of heaven's concern:

"Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life."

What a paradox! "Do you really want to live?" Jesus asked. "Then die for me and my cause and then you will truly live!" T.O. Chisholm discerningly wrote these words that demand our attention in song:

"Living for Jesus who died
in my place

Bearing on Calvary my sin
and disgrace

Such love constrains me to
answer His call,

Follow His leading and
give Him my all."

When a word is found seventeen times in 22 chapters one can ascertain the key thought in the book of

Revelation. That word is "overcometh." A pivotal mention of that concept is Revelation 3:21 wherein Christ promises victory to servants who overcometh even as He did. As a result, by God's grace such devotees can come over to live with Deity forever more! Alvy Ford, in a rich little volume, "The Bible in Verse", has this summary of the last chapter of Revelation:

River of crystal; the true
tree of life

End of all sickness and
sorrow and strife.

Enter right now; it will be
too late then.

Even so, come dear Lord
Jesus, Amen!"

One of the richest reminders from the Bible's final pages has to do with the defeat of Satan and his nefarious schemes. In 12:9 and 11 we learn of the Devil's awesome power and yet, the more dynamic tools we have, because of the Savior, to overwhelm the Adversary. Through the Scriptures and

the blood of the Lamb we can by genuine loyalty walk the golden street of glory one day! The temporal power of earthly empires and carnal kings will fade into oblivion but God's everlasting rule shall be undaunted (11:15-16; 21: 22-27). When the last curtain falls and we stand with the redeemed in the land of fadeless day we shall know the bliss of redemption and the reward of righteousness made possible by the blood stained banner of Prince Immanuel. When the Prince of Peace shall have conquered all foes and the last enemy, death, is put under His feet, that supernal realm will welcome home all faithful warriors who properly fought the good fight (I Timothy 6:12). We struggle against spiritual wickedness in high places (Ephesians 6:12) but not in carnal combat (II Corinthians 10:3-5). The truth of the gospel is not promulgated by force but exalted through godly living (Philippians

2:15-16). Out of the vast riches of the treasure house of Revelation we hear the thundering sound of Romans 8:37...

"We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." This world is not our home; it is not the final word. We look for better things; yes, eternal joys that never fade. Out of the sorrow and loneliness early Christians endured, a brighter horizon loomed. Revelation is rich in hope and promise and eager anticipation. For Christians in any age and every day this last book of the Bible cries aloud:

"God's tomorrow will be
brighter than today!"

When you have lost a loved one, had a rough day, experienced severe pain or have walked alone - let Revelation remind you that the door of heaven is still wide open (Revelation 4:1). Joy awaits us in that realm.

Where Does My Time Go?

Garvis Semore

Have you ever asked the question, "Where does my time go?" It seems that I ask that question several times a day. The old expression, "The faster I go, the behinder I get". It makes more and more sense to me.

According to the December 5, 1991, Chicago Tribune, six months of my time have been located! It reports that to be the amount

of time I will spend sitting at stop lights. They have also found another full two years of my time! That is the amount of time I spend returning phone calls. No wonder I just can't seem to get everything done! To make matters worse, some loud preacher reminds me of work that needs to be done for the Lord. "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16).

It is time for Christians to take a long look at our use of time. I have always found that I have just enough time to do what I really want to do. On the other hand, the things I am not really excited about tend to come when "I don't have enough time." My own feeble arithmetic reveals that if we attend every worship service of the Church from the time we are born until we are 70 we will have

assembled for about 20 months of our life. That's less time than we spend returning phone calls!

We are made to feel guilty and we wonder what to do to improve our "time sheet." Some will even decide to give up, thinking there is no way to "put in enough hours." Our thinking is badly clouded when we begin looking for time to "put in" as a Christian. When I realize that

I am a Christian 24 hours every day, 365 days a year and begin to live in the realization of that fact, I don't have to look for time. As Christians, we are "redeeming the time" every step we make and every breath we take, if we are truly "walking in the light." Where does all the time go? For the Christian it goes in the delightful life of following Christ.

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

POSITION OPENING

We currently are seeking a man to fill a position with the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ in Jasper AL. He needs to be married, under 40 years old, and sound in the faith. The position responsibilities include heading up the youth program, some weekly radio preaching, occasional pulpit preaching, and editing of the church bulletin. Interested parties should contact the: Sixth Ave. Church of Christ 1501 Sixth Ave. Jasper, AL 35501 (205)-384-6446

Change Movement, #9

Four Types Of Hearts In A "Change" Church

Glenn Colley

In the great parable of the Sower, Luke 8:4-15, Jesus observes that there are different types of hearts in those to whom the Gospel of Jesus Christ is presented. They are depicted as the wayside soil, hard and unpenetrable; the rocky soil, good and accepting, yet shallow; the thorny soil, good, yet challenged by so many other things that the good plant is choked out; and finally, the good soil which produces abundantly.

In a church, referred to in this article as a "change church", that is one in which leaders are bent on liberal changes, there are various hearts as well. It is important in the name of fairness and the golden rule, to note that not all people in the change movement are cut from the same piece of cloth.

First, is the leader in the church who is a change agent. He (or she) subscribes to "change" literature, supports and endorses change leaders like Rubel Shelly, Mike Cope, Randall Harris,

and others, and sees himself on a mission. He must do what he can to move the church away from where it has been to a new atmosphere. He is critical of sound brethren and churches. He wants Bible classes and sermons to contain less "doctrine" and more instruction on how to feel good about yourself. He endorses and encourages the work of denominational preachers without warning of any false teaching. He believes churches should never, ever, ever, practice church discipline today. He speaks euphorically of God's grace, he is tolerant of most anything in religion except those who warn that this path is liberal and unbiblical, in which case his frustration seems to peak.

Second, is the leader in the church who is not aware of the leaders of the change movement. He doesn't really understand the issues at hand. It matters little to him to consider what the scriptures say regarding the key matters in the division. He is simply

in favor of change. Perhaps at one time he had a disagreement with a decision an eldership made. Perhaps he has long wanted a greater degree of authority, but has been denied. Perhaps he has befriended a change agent, and has gradually come to echo the sentiments he hears from their conversations. He doesn't really know why he believes these various changes are right, he just knows that he is strongly in favor of change.

Third, are the members of the church who were confronted with this movement before really being grounded in the faith. They became Christians, are now happy in Christ, but have been swept into these changes by people whose teaching they believe they can trust. They don't really know enough to see "red flags" of danger when false doctrines are taught in classes or from the pulpit. They are not unintelligent people, just uninformed. They are babes in the faith. Had they been approached with this division

movement of change later in their Christianity, they would have rejected it without hesitation. But now instead they sit in chairs or pews every Sunday being convinced that these changes are healthy, God-pleasing, and absolutely necessary if the church is going to survive. They are taught to reject faithful preachers and elders with words like "Pharisee!" or "Traditionalist!"

Then there is the fourth category of church members in a change church. This member in this group knows the truth. This Christian has studied the Bible for years and knows God's will. He is in this change church, not because he is content with its practices and teachings, but because he still believes he should not give up on that church. He tries whenever possible to say a word of encouragement or correction to those who are drunk on the doctrines which make the Lord's church a denomination. He simply can't bear to think of this

church, and these people—some of them perhaps kin to him physically as falling into apostasy. Yet he sees the gradual decline. He sees the growing disposition of liberal change. He just keeps believing something will turn it around. "Surely," he thinks, "they won't let this thing get too out of hand."

Through this paper, and through other means, we are encouraging Christians to be aware of this division as it weaves it's way across the land. Be informed! Know what the change agents are saying, and more importantly, what the Bible says. Then take a stand for right. If you must leave a church which is following the change movement, then do so without feeling guilty for leaving. The trouble causer is not the one who "blows the whistle" and points out the error. It is the one who introduces the error in the first place.

Talent

According to Ripley's "Believe It or Not" a relatively small, yet plain bar of iron is worth about \$5. But if that same bar of iron was made into horse shoes, it would be worth about \$50. Again, if it was fashioned into sewing needles, it would be worth nearly \$5,000. And finally, if this plain bar of iron was converted into balance springs for fine Swiss watches, it would be worth approximately \$500,000.

The point is well taken. The iron bar is much more valuable when it is developed, than when it is left in its raw form. That is a biblical truth. God has given us all special talents to be used in His service. And while we certainly ought to be grateful for that which He has bestowed upon us, our primary concern should be on HOW we are using what we have. In the parable of the talents, the master told

the five and two talent servants, 'Well done, good and Faithful servant; YOU HAVE BEEN FAITHFUL over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord' (Matthew 25:22-23).

Good reader, what are you doing with the talents God has given you?

Mike Benson
Parsons, TN



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Strange Times

Dalton Key

We do live in strange times!

Too many folks of our day believe God is dead and Elvis is alive.

Many of us know more about baseball than we do about the Bible; more about cooking and crockery than about Christ.

And many of our neighbors say they can not

believe in the virgin birth of our Lord or in His resurrection, castigating such faith as "unreasonable" and "unscientific." Yet interest in reincarnation and in communicating with the dead is at an all time high, with a recent Roper poll revealing that close to a quarter of us believe in extra-terrestrial UFO's and astrology!

Yes, ours are strange

times, indeed.

America has long since exchanged the Testaments of God for the trashy tabloids of men. And like those of Hosea's day, we have sown the wind and are now reaping the whirlwind (Hosea 8:7).

What will it take to turn our society around. What will bring back the balance, the stability and sanity our world so desperately needs?

No, the answer is not more money or bigger government; nor is it to be found in a better public education system.

What our world needs - what we need - is deeper respect for Christ and a stronger appetite for His word. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom" (Colossians 3:16). "But grow in grace, and in

the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

Only in the inspired words of heaven will we find the direction, the perspective, the insight we need to make sense of a seemingly senseless world.

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Changing Views Toward The Church (No. 3)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Exactly what do the Change Agents have in mind for the church? It is a completely new overhaul. If you have been under the deluded impression that these sweet-spirited Change Agents are just out for a change of methodology or matters of procedure, you need to look more closely at their agenda. They are out to change the NOBLE NATURE of the church about which we read in the New Testament. In this and some subsequent articles I plan to spell it out in some detail.

ITS ORIGINATION

They view it as an experiment begun and carried on by religious zealots in the latter part of the 1700's and on into the 1800's. Hence, it is just one denomination among many others.

The church of which I am a member did not begin with Campbell and the Reformers. The Lord's church, according to Holy Writ, has existed in purpose (Ephesians 3:10-11). It has existed in promise and prophecy (Genesis 12:3; 2 Samuel 7:12-17; Isaiah 2:1-4; Micah 4: 1-3; Zechariah 6:12-13). It has existed in preparation during the respective ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus the Christ. From Pentecost in Acts 2 it has existed in resplendent perfection. There is not one single characteristic about this church that is peculiar to Stone, Campbell or any of the other Reformers or Restorers. Everything I preach and practice relative

to this church can be found in the Scriptures of the New Testament.

It is amazingly amazing that we should have to argue these salient points with our own brethren. There was a time, not too far removed either, when we stood as a solid phalanx in matters like these. Such is sad; inexpressibly sad.

ITS IMPORTANCE

Shelly grew up in church. His father was a long time elder of the church in Middleton, Tennessee, where I have done gospel meeting work more than once. Shelly used to have high regard for the church. I remember hearing him preach on the question, "What is the church?" A quarter of a century ago he viewed the church as the kingdom of God, the body of Christ, the family or household of God, etc. Now he speaks of the insufficiency of the church on page 70 of The Second Incarnation. In numerous places he has said in regard to the Lord's church, "We are about like a flea on the back of a large dog, on our way to becoming a dust mite on the back of a flea on the back of a large dog...My children will not stay with the church I grew up in. They will not be part of an irrelevance. They will not be part of a movement which wastes its time arguing and fighting and bloodletting and carping about things that are fundamentally irrelevant to the world's Christless condition." In 1983 at

Centerville, Tennessee, Shelly said there were devout, sincere and knowledgeable Christians scattered among all the denominations. This I deny with every fiber of my being. A Christian is a follower of Christ. How can one be a follower of Christ and go into something Jesus has not led him into at all? If a Christian is knowledgeable, he knows the difference between error and truth. If he is sincere and devout, he will not go into something or remain in something that is totally unauthorized by Sacred Scripture. This is what Shelly taught a dozen years ago. What is he doing now? He speaks frequently for the denominations who bid him a warm welcome and bashes the church of the Lord when he does much to their clapping delight. He is more at home with denominational people than the people with whom he once had fervency of fellowship.

One cannot read with care and faithful reception the great treatise on the church in the Ephesian epistle without being deeply aware of the high regard that Paul had for the church of the Lord. The blood was its purchase price as Paul told Ephesians elders in Acts 20:28. That makes it important. Pardon, redemption and reconciliation are found in Christ but being in Christ and being in His church are one and the same. We are baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27). We are baptized into

the body (church) of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13). In Christ or in His church we have access to all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3). The church was eternally purposed of God (Ephesians 3:10-11). Paul never sought to sever the Christ and His church. Quite to the contrary he spoke concerning Christ and the church in such great passages as Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23-27-32. In Ephesians 1-3 we have the wealth of the church; in Ephesians 4-5 we have the walk of the church; in Ephesians 6 we have the

warfare of the church.

God is the Grand and Great Architect of the church; Christ is its glorious builder; the Holy Spirit has revealed the truths we know about the church. Did they do all this relative to something that was/is irrelevant, something not important, something about to become extinct? Listen to the Change Agents and this is the church of your future!

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Ripley, Tennessee 38063

Most Of A Minute

O.J. And A Defense

I think we are all pretty weary of the O.J. Simpson trial. I guess most Americans are beginning to include this media circus among their personal trials of life. Those defending the superstar are arguing now one major theory. It is that someone other than O.J. killed the pair, and then the police quickly created a hoax to make it look like O.J. did it. In other words, the accused is accusing the accuser!

This has happened before, in fact it happened just after the dawning of time. After Adam and Eve had eaten the fruit, and thus disobeyed God, God said to Adam, "...did you eat of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" Adam said, "Yes, but the woman, WHOM THOU GAVEST ME, caused me to eat." Adam tried to turn the tables and accuse God himself.

You know maturity in life must include facing up to my sin, and dealing with it in the right way; not looking to find who I can pin it on, but rather to confess my wrongs and seek God's forgiveness. Acts 2:38 says of our sins, "Repent, and be baptized...for the remission of sins."

Glenn Colley

I'm A Visitor

Rick Maule

I am a visitor, and sometimes I see things your church members don't notice. I can appreciate things you take for granted and be repulsed by things you have learned to accept. Your building may be beautiful your sermon inspiring, and your church perfectly aligned with the Bible - but most of the time it's not these things, but the little things I notice.

When I walk in the door, I feel like a stranger - for that's what I am. So it means a lot when someone welcomes me with a friendly greeting. I don't mean just the preacher

or an elder, but one of the "regular" members. It's nice when they want to know my name, and even better when they want to know me. They try to help me feel at ease. They show me where my Sunday School Class meets. They introduce me to someone in my class. I make new friends.

I like Bible classes where there is love, excitement, and participation - where the people seem glad to be there. I like it when they introduce me as a visitor, when someone asks me to sit next to them, and when a person I've never met helps me find I

Corinthians 13 in my Bible. The class members are anxious to discuss the lesson and to see how it applies to their everyday lives and they talk about God in language I can understand. I'm not used to that in my old church. I leave class with some new understandings and some things I need to think about.

Someone from the class invites me to sit with him in the worship service. When the singing starts, I notice there is no organ, but it sounds beautiful anyway. My friend next to me is not a fantastic singer, but he sings out enthusiastically - like he

means what the song is saying. Everyone is participating and the people seem to be enjoying worship. I am not used to that, but it makes me feel good too.

When the preacher starts talking, it impresses me that the people all start reaching for Bibles and note pads. They follow along in the Bible and seem to be really interested in what is being said, so I listen too.

After worship, I usually figure it's time to head home to my paper and TV. But all the people around me make an effort to meet and welcome me. They invite me

to come back to visit again - they invite me home for Sunday dinner. They want to get to know me better. All of them seem to know and love each other, and I have a tough time getting through the crowd, so I stay and talk and meet more people. The TV and paper can wait.

When I get back home again, I often forget what the building looked like, or even the sermon was about. But I remember when I met people who loved God and each other; people who loved me. I want to come back so I can find out what makes them that way.

Premillennialism

Dennis Gulledge

As we approach a new millennium in less than five years the public is being bombarded with doomsday prophecies from those who are certain that Christ's return is imminent. Many people, because the year 2000 is near, feel that the second coming of Christ and the end of the world are also near -- as near as the millennium itself. A recent U. S. News & World Report poll suggests that millenarian views are not limited to the "religious fringe," and that 60% of Americans think the world will end sometime in the future, and more than 61%

believe that Christ will return to earth. Such millennial fervor is not new. Story has it that at the stroke of midnight on January 1, 1000, the whole country of Iceland converted to Christianity out of pure apocalyptic anxiety.

The doctrine of premillennialism takes its name from the Latin millennium, meaning "thousand years," and prae, meaning "before." Brother Foy E. Wallace, Jr., once defined it as follows: "Pre' means 'before,' 'millennial' means 'one thousand,' and, 'ism' means it ain't so." The word premillennial is not found in Scripture, neither is the

doctrine it represents, but the English equivalent to its Latin parent term is found five times in Revelation 20: 1-6. If one will read that passage he will know all there is to know about the millennium. This text is made to teach that Christ will return to raise the righteous dead ("Rapture"). God will regather Israel into Palestine for a "national conversion" of Jews to Christianity. This will be followed by a period of "tribulation" (seven years of trouble on earth). Christ will return again, with his saints to judge the nations. The battle of Armageddon will be fought and won by forces of

righteousness. Satan will be bound for a thousand years. Christ will have one thousand years of reign and glory on earth, then will follow the resurrection, judgment of the wicked and eternity. So goes the pseudo theory.

The basic problem of millennialism of whatever stripe is that it takes a false view of the Kingdom of God. It is the distorted view of a physical Kingdom which the Jews held in Jesus' day. The view teaches that Christ failed to establish his Kingdom at his first advent (what guarantee is there that he will successfully establish it the second time?). The

church is viewed as nothing more than a substitute until Jesus can establish the Kingdom. Premillennialism is a complete rejection of the truth regarding the Lord's Kingdom (Matthew 16:18-19 Luke 9:27; John 3:3-5 Colossians 1:13).

What harm is there in premillennialism? It is erroneous in that it repudiates many fundamental Bible truths and offers a false hope to those of Jewish descent in the promise of restoring national Israel. The real people of God are Jews inwardly, not outwardly (Romans 2:28-29).

When Hannah Turns 20

By Cindy Colley

When Hannah has put down the doll in her hands;
When the swing in my backyard is still;
When she's finished with hop-scotch and lemonade stands;
When the "dress up" she plays is for real;

When she looks for a prince instead of a toad;
When the fairies have all danced away;
I pray she's content as tomorrow's unfold
And as happy as she is today.

I hope she still knows there's a place she can go.
Where there's love, warmth and listening ears.
A place in my heart that she'll never outgrow
No matter what comes through the years.

I pray that she still wants to "grow up and be"
For dreams are the "stuff" of this life.
And that her ambitions still clearly she'll see...
A Christian --A mother --A wife.

I hope she's still looking for heaven
And thinking of how it might be
For Hannah thinks big things at seven
And sometimes has lessons for me.

I hope she still gets on her knees every night
And lays at His feet every care,
And trusting, believes it will all turn out right
When she leaves that sweet place of prayer.

I hope she'll look back at the trials she's known
Without any pain of regret;
For courage was knowing she wasn't alone.
The Saviour still walks with her yet.

When Hannah turns 20, I want to be there.
I want to know just what she'll be.
In the meantime I'll order my steps with great care,
For she likely will be much like me.

JUNE 16, 1995

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- "Think On These Things"
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- A Curiosity Surrounding The Offering Of The Gospel Invitation (Or Not)
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- What Did You Bring To Worship?

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The Words Of Truth

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

"Think On These Things"

W. A. Holley

A kind, gracious, cordial, affable, genial sister of the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, has requested that I give my attention to Philippians 4:8. She has grown old in years so have I, but she is still young in spirit, yet interested in gleaning strength and toughness from the Holy Scriptures.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest (good, admirable, becoming), whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

The entire Book of Philippians was addressed to the first church of Christ established in Europe (Acts 16:12-40). The City of Philippi was a very important city in Paul's day. Here Paul taught Lydia, cast out a demon from a woman, and baptized the Philippian jailer.

The purpose for writing the Philippian letter was to thank them for a contribution which had been sent to Paul. In this epistle there were no special problems to be

corrected. The only disturbance in the Philippian church was some friction between two women, Euodias and Syntyche. (Philippians 4:1-2) A fuss between two Christian women is always embarrassing and disconcerting! Are there certain members to whom you will not speak? (Ephesians 4:25-32). Memorize these verses.

In Philippians 4:8, we have these words; true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtue and praise. These may be represented as traits of character which must be possessed by each Christian.

"Whatsoever things are true," has reference to everything that is the reverse of falsehood. They were to be true to their promises, true to their word and true in their friendships.

"Whatsoever things are honest," refers to veneration of things sacred. It requires us to build a reputation of honor; we must not violate our conscience, nor compromise the law of God.

"Whatsoever things are just," teaches that we must always strive to do the right thing between man and man, woman and woman, and boy

and girl. Right will always prevail. Truth may be crushed, but it will rise again, in spite of all!

"Whatsoever things are pure," suggests those acts and thoughts which emphasize modesty and decency as to behavior and to dress as outward manifestations of an inward chastity and purity. There is something radically wrong with a man or woman who cannot blush.

"Whatsoever things are lovely," refers to those traits of character which makes it easy to love a person. Such an one is amiable, pleasing, agreeable, and pleasant. A Christian should not be sour, crabbed, having a temper always at flashpoint, ever ready to explode. Such an attitude will undo all the good that one attempts to accomplish.

"Whatsoever things are of good report," has reference to the moral laws of society. Throughout the history of man all nations have recognized God's moral laws. (Romans 2:13-14). It has always been sinful for man to steal, take another man's wife, to commit murder, and to spread falsehood (Exodus 23:1-3).

We are finding it increasingly difficult to be shocked. We are becoming more and more hardened. Verily, all moral obligation resolves itself into the obligation of conformity to the will of God.

"If there be any virtue," denotes a virtuous course of goodness, feeling, holy action, and moral excellence. The Christian is never to be satisfied with the mediocre Titus 2:11-12; Romans 12: 1-2; James 1:27).

"And if there be any praise," this portion of our study involves opening our eyes and looking for things praise worthy. Often times we become so negative in our outlook on life, we are blind to the good and beautiful things about us. One person said, "I feel so bad when I feel so good because I know when I feel so good I am going to feel so bad."

"Think on these things," refers to all the elements of truth as set forth in our verse now under study. To think, one must use his/her brain...mind. To think means to consider, to reason, to reflect upon, to meditate, to examine carefully our situation in life. Things may not be as bad as we see them. One's attitude toward life

will determine whether one lives a happy or an unhappy life. The verses immediately preceding Philippians 4:8, suggest that Paul is seeking to promote mental health. Listen to him. "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I say rejoice. Let your forbearance (Gentleness) be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. (Throughout the centuries, the Lord has always been at hand!). In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the God of peace, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:4-7 ASV).

The word "keep" is a military term. It means to guard or garrison. Using a metaphor Paul portrays the peace of God as a sentinel standing watch over the citadel of the Christians life...mind, will, and affections. With a voice of triumph, the great apostle Paul examined, "I can do all things in him that strengthens me." So can you, if you hold fast unto the end.

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Clothing Of A False Teacher

Mike Benson

What does a false teacher look like? Could you identify one if you saw him? What distinguished characteristics would set him apart from a teacher of truth? Would it be

the color of his shirt? Would it be the expensive suit that he wears? Or would it be the colorful tie that gives him away?

In Matthew 7:15 Jesus warned, "Beware of false

prophets, who come like you in SHEEP'S CLOTHING, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves." What does a false teacher look like? May I suggest that he looks just like you and me. For it is not his

physical appearance that sets him apart; rather, it is what he S A Y S (Jeremiah 23:16; Micah 3:5) that establishes who/what he is.

Good reader, let me caution you to listen very

carefully to anyone, including myself, who claims to teach "Just the Bible" (Galatians 1:8-9).

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

POSITION OPENING

We currently are seeking a man to fill a position with the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ in Jasper AL. He needs to be married, under 40 years old, and sound in the faith. The position responsibilities include heading up the youth program, some weekly radio preaching, occasional pulpit preaching, and editing of the church bulletin. Interested parties should contact the: Sixth Ave. Church of Christ 1501 Sixth Ave. Jasper, AL. 35501 (205)-384-6446

A Thought From Aunt Emily

Glenn Colley

Brother Joe Hyde was a faithful and strong-willed preacher of the Gospel. This grandson of C.A. Wheeler preached mostly in Alabama, in places and during times when preaching often meant struggling to make ends meet. He studied hard, and with his good wife by his side, taught and baptized many good people including Bobby Duncan, who preaches for the Adamsville Church of Christ. Joe's influence is still fondly remembered in many Alabama families today.

Brother Hyde died a few years ago, and his widow, Emily Hyde, resides in Jasper and is an elderly and faithful member of the Sixth

Avenue Church of Christ.

While visiting Aunt Emily's (as I affectionately call her), apartment recently, this kind Christian lady gently objected to a phrase she had heard me use. The phrase was "unfaithful Christian".

"Now brother Colley," she said, "a Christian is somebody that follows Christ. If a man isn't faithful, and therefore no longer following Christ, then he isn't really being a Christian. It would be better to say, 'Unfaithful church member'."

You know, I think she has a good and thought-provoking point. The only people you'll find called "Christians" in the New Testament are disciples, or

followers of Christ, Acts 11:26). That's all. A disciple is only a disciple so long as he is following the master. The master is not his master unless the disciple is following. Romans 6:16 says, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are..."

"Christ" literally means "Anointed One". People who are following the Christ can wear the sweet name "Christian." And following Miss Emily's line of thinking, if we aren't faithfully following Christ, we are unfaithful church members, but not unfaithful Christians. Only faithful disciples of Jesus are truly Christians. Think about it.

A Curiosity Surrounding The Offering Of The Gospel Invitation (Or Not)

Glenn Colley

Some time ago our editorial concerned the practice of some preachers among us to omit the plan of salvation when offering the invitation. In some circles it is apparently considered "with it" to phrase an invitation in broad, ambiguous terms like "Come to Jesus", or "If you have any need, come forward without explaining what is involved in obedience.

It is curious that the same folks who are critical of things which are connected with tradition would offer an invitation with a song, but would omit the explanation of just what a person must do to be saved; hear, believe, repent, confess, and be baptized. The reason it is curious is that singing an

"invitation song" is arguably a matter of tradition. Standing while the invitation song is sung is a matter of convenience and tradition. Having respondents come to front and sit is a matter of tradition. The one thing in the "traditional" offering of the invitation that can be said to have no real ties to tradition is the explaining of the Gospel and the invitation for folks to obey! If, then, one was opposed to doing things in a traditional way (even if that way is often the best way to do a thing), it seems what he would drop is everything BUT the offering of the plan of salvation! Yet, it is today often the other way around. The plan is dropped, and the song, standing, and aisle walk is kept. This is more tradition, and less Gospel.

"For What Will I Be Remembered?"

Don Williams

In a recent grief class, a new member of the class was discussing the bad health of her husband. She went on to say that both of them had a "living will", and that recently they had made arrangements for their funerals. She went on to say that she had picked out her pallbearers for her funeral, and even written her own obituary.

After this woman had finished talking, another member in the class raised the question that is the title of this article: "what will I be remembered for in life?" She went on to talk about the death of her college-aged son, and the attributes of his life that she remembered. She then said, "when I die, what will folks

remember about me? What will they say about me?"

This sobering thought is one that we should reflect on seriously. In reality, we are preaching our funerals everyday that we live. What can be said honestly at our funerals will be based on how we live in our present lives. I wonder, for what will folks remember you and me? Will they remember acts of kindness that we did for others? Will they remember visits that were made at "timely occasions", especially when they were not solicited or thought possible? Will they recall words of encouragement that were given at just the right time, when someone needed to know that we cared? (Psalm 142:4) Will they remember our interest in

lost souls, and how we tried to tell the gospel of Jesus to others?

How important it is to have a good name when that time of death comes to our lives. In Proverbs 22:1, Solomon wrote, "a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor than silver and gold." Again in Ecclesiastes 7:1, these words are found: "A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth. Thoughts often come to mind when certain names are mentioned. **WHAT THOUGHTS DOES YOUR NAME CONJURE UP? ARE THEY THOUGHTS THAT ARE GOOD, HONEST AND TRUE? HOW SHALL I BE REMEMBERED?**

**Mark Your Calender:
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The Changing Views Toward The Church (No. 4)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Change agents among us are mixed-up and messed-up relative to the origination of the Lord's church as well as its tremendously great importance. These I touched upon in our last article. More will now be added.

IT'S ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

It is nothing short of amazing and astounding how unclear some among us have become relative to a fundamental area where we once stood strong, uniform and minus any and all compromise. I have listened to more than one tape recently where men among us have espoused the worn out denominational dogma of salvation by faith only without further acts of obedience required. The ones doing such used to know better; now they have compromised with denominational error.

We used to be clear on the

proper role between grace and law or grace and obedience to the commands of our Lord. We had to go to denominational people and their preachers to witness grace only in theory and practice. Now we have misguided messengers among us who parrot the denominational dogma of salvation by grace only with man's obligation being zero. The Second Incarnation by Shelly and Harris is a Primer for Apostasy among churches of Christ. On page 207 of this infamous work they state, "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 have made hell totally unnecessary for any of Adam's race. The implication of this reckless assertion is universal salvation for a surety. God is no respecter of persons as per Acts 10:34,35

and Romans 2:11. His grace has appeared to all men as we learn in Titus 2:11,12. If one person is saved by grace only, then the whole wide world will be saved by grace only. Shelly and Harris both batted out in this one relative to Scripture and logic! Baptism is being tampered with again as touching its purpose. We are told that one does not have to understand at the time he received this watery ordinance that it is for the remission of sins. All that is essential, they assert, is that it be done with a Bible reason in mind. I think it would be rather difficult to find any sincere denominational member who would deny that his past baptism was lacking in any and all Bible reasons. Without exception they all would lay claim to this. Just how long does it take in the teaching process to tell a person that his about-to-be-performed-baptism is FOR the remission of sins? It did

not take Peter long when he preached Acts 2:38 or when he wrote 1 Peter 3:21.

The gospel plan of pardon is not safe in the hands of liberal preachers for a surety!

IT'S NAMES

Our plea has long been "to call Bible things by Bible names." This richly includes how we designate the church. We all recognize there are a number of such rich designations in Holy Writ descriptive of God's people collectively or in the aggregate. In Romans 16:16 Paul spoke of "churches of Christ." Each local congregation would be a "church of Christ" for a stately surety. Yet some no longer like this long worn designation. They just want to be known as a "Community church." How such a designation honors God and His Son is a bit difficult to understand. In that title or designation Community and Church are

both honored but Christ is left out in the cold. He has been ousted from His own appointed name. "The Family of God" is one of the favorite designations among the Change Agents. They put it as their logo on stationary and letterheads. They tell people by word of mouth that the Family of God meets at such and such a location. With such a description of the Lord's church we wouldn't necessarily disagree; however, wouldn't it be something if they began to say, "The army of the Lord meets here", since that too is a biblical description of the new Testament church? But engaging in the type of warfare Paul described in Ephesians 6, 1 Timothy 6, 2 Timothy 2 and 4 is NOT their cup of tea. Fighting is now beneath their dignity.

NOTHING about the church is safe in the hands of the Change Agents. P.O. Box 464 Ripley, Tennessee 38063

A Depth Of Human Sin

Dennis Gullledge

April 19, 1995 is a date that will go into history books as one of the saddest days in the history of the United States. Terror struck the heartland of America when a 4,800 pound bomb destroyed a federal building in Oklahoma City, OK. As I write this, exactly one week later, only about half of the expected dead have been recovered.

This is a horrendous human tragedy, not only from the standpoint of many lives being lost, but also from the perspective of the agony of the loss of loved ones that will leave a permanent scar in the lives of hundreds of people. Neither should we lose sight of the depth of human sin that would lead those responsible to commit such an unbelievable act of mass destruction. The political fallout from this is hot and heavy. It is unconscionable that some would use this tragedy to

advance their own political agenda, but that is exactly what has happened. The "Left" of the political spectrum has charged the "Right" with poisoning the minds of the violent perpetrators with hate and anti-government bitterness. Into that boiling pot of condemnation goes every American who holds conservative ideals. Every conservative thinker is indicted to one degree or another, even though political dissent in the arena of ideas is not an ally to hate-mongering.

The political wrangling over who hates whom is diverting attention away from the real tragedy; the depth of human sin. The contention that the fires of such aggression were probably fueled by talk radio only detracts from the fact that the criminals are personally responsible for their own actions. Whatever abusers of free speech there may be who

delight in wagging their tongues of hatred and venom over the air waves are to be pitied, and may their tribe cease to exist! I am sure that Satan feels a victory when people want to assign responsibility for this deed to everyone except the people who did it.

This event shows once again the heinousness of sin, and the depth of evil and degradation to which some will sink. How do you explain the actions of an Adolph Hitler, Saddam Hussein, Charles Manson or Jeffrey Dahmer? What drives some men to such galling extremes of sin? Some are eager to find some genetic predisposition, but some men in the world are just plain mean and wicked and show by their deeds just how bad sin really is. When evil men act, they are responsible and will be judged accordingly. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekial 18:4). God will take account of their deeds:

"Who will render to every man according to his deeds" (Romans 2:6). And such as these are deserving of justice swiftly and severely carried out: "But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for

beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Romans 13:4). And may it be so.

Most Of A Minute Oklahoma Lawsuit

I heard last week that a law suit is being waged by some of the families of the victims who died in the Oklahoma City bombing. No, not against the killers, but against the company who sold the fertilizer from which the bomb was made. The fertilizer company argued that everyone who knew fertilizer knew that it could be misused this way, and they had no part in this tragedy. They're right. If this lawsuit could be one over a fertilizer company because someone could use it to harm others, imagine the implications! A hardware store would have to stop selling pipe and hammers and screwdrivers and iron skilletts, since all these could conceivably be misused to harm someone. You see the folly.

These sad folks in Oklahoma are looking for someone to blame for this terrible tragedy. but they need to see, and we need to see, that man's greatest problem ultimately isn't bombs, or guns, or hammers. It's sin. Jesus said, "For out of the heart proceed evil thought, murder, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." (Matthew 15:19).

Glenn Colley

Repentance

Keith Kasarjian

Repentance was demanded by Jesus in Luke 13:3. It was preached by Peter in Acts 2:38 and in Acts 8:22. The Athenians were required to repent in Acts 17:30. In fact, the words "repent" and "repentance" are used 47 times in the New Testament. Surely we can see the great need for repentance as it pertains to salvation. But what is repentance? Even in our brotherhood there seem to be many questions about the true meaning of repentance. We hope to answer many of these questions.

Every time "repent" is used in the New Testament, with only two exceptions (2 Corinthians 7:8; Hebrews 7:21), it is the Greek word METANOEO. Vine says this word **always** involves a change for the better **and** an amendment. Thayer defines the same word this way, "to change one's mind for the better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one's past sins."

Based on the Bible, these

Greek definitions, and a touch of common sense, let us determine what true repentance requires of all men.

SORROW is required. This sorrow springs from the realization of one's sin. The prodigal son was sorry because he realized he had sinned against God and his father. Those present at Pentecost were told they were responsible for killing Jesus. Upon hearing this they were "pricked in their hearts". The NAS margin says they were "smitten in conscience". They realized their sin and were sorrowful.

This is the nature of sin. When a good and honest heart comes to the realization that he has been sinning against the God that created him and loved him, he cannot help but be full of sorrow.

CHANGE is required. Mere sorrow does not constitute true repentance. After Judas recognized he had betrayed Jesus, he felt remorse (Matt 27:3), but that sorrow did not mean

automatic repentance. If one is sorrowful for sins committed but does not change his mind, heart, and lifestyle, he has not repented. Remember our definitions. Both scholars agree that change is imperative to repentance.

Change is the very heart of repentance. The liar stops lying, the murderer stops killing, the thief stops stealing, the drunkard stops drinking, and the adulterer stops committing adultery. Repentance **DEMANDS** a change. That, at times, is very difficult. God, however, never said it would be easy, He just said it is necessary.

RESTITUTION is required. This is usually the part of repentance that causes the most difficulty for many, but the fact remains that restitution must be made where restitution is possible. Webster defines restitution as "a making good for loss of damage; a return to a former condition or situation". Once again we refer to our Greek definitions and see that an

amending is required. "Amend" is defined by Webster in the following way, "to remove the faults of; correct". Therefore restitution and amend carry much the same thought.

Illustrations of restitution as part of repentance are found throughout all of the Bible. We read of Zaccheus in Luke 19:8 where he spoke to Jesus saying, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone out of anything, I will give back four times as much." Zaccheus, being a chief tax-collector, knew that he had wrongly taken money from others and wanted to make that right. How would he do that? By giving the money back to it's rightful owner, and two thousand years later that is still the only way to make that situation right. Suppose Zaccheus had stolen money from you yesterday. Today he comes to you and says that he is very sorry and has repented of that wrong but refuses to give your

money back. Would you believe that he had repented? Of course no!

Restitution can be a very hard thing. To some it means returning ill-gotten gains. For others it requires no longer living with a spouse that is not scripturally theirs. Whatever the situation might be, God's will must be observed in all things. When one is truly sorry for the past sins and makes a change in his life, he will make restitution where it is possible.

The subject of repentance is directly related to our salvation and therefore demands that we place great emphasis on the study and practice of it. Through what we have studied, it is our belief that sorrow, change, and restitution are the three components of genuine, Biblical repentance. May God help us to continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord.

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What Did You Bring To Worship?

Kevin D. Beard

When people come to the worship services, they often bring a number of different things with them. Parents of small children make sure that they have a diaper bag with plenty of clean diapers and supplies. Most people make sure that they have brought their Bibles and their lesson books for class. But of all the things that you bring with you to worship on Sundays, did you make sure to bring the most important things?

1. Did you bring a reverent attitude? Worship is the expression of

reverence, devotion, and praise to God. He is the most holy One (Isaiah. 6:3). Therefore, because of the nature of worship and the nature of the one to be worshiped, the attitude demonstrated therein will be different from the attitude expressed at a football game. Yet many times one could not notice much difference in the two. Some cause a commotion by continually getting up and leaving auditorium, by talking, by passing notes, and by other common actions that take place during the worship.

God cannot be pleased with those who have so little respect and reverence for His divinity and power that they behave in such a way as this.

2. Did you bring an active mind? Worship is also something that must be done from the heart and that involves an active mind. God has always detested worship done simply from ritual (Isaiah 1:10-17; Micah 6:6-8). Worship is an active process, not a passive one. Singing is to "teach and admonish...with grace in your hearts" (Colossians 3:16). Giving is to be cheerful,

according to how one has purposed in his heart (2 Corinthians 9:7). The Lord's Supper is to be observed in memory of Jesus' death, anticipating His return (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Prayer is also an active process that each must do (James 5:16b). And of course the teaching and learning of God's word takes an active mind (Acts 2:42; 17:11).

3. Did you bring a pure life? One of the biggest reasons that God rejected Judah's worship was that their acts of worship were not done out of pure lives (Micah 6:6-

8). Such hypocrisy has always been and will always be wrong. Jesus even went so far as to say that if one comes to worship and realizes that his brother has something against him, he first should go and reconcile things with his brother, then go and worship (Matthew 5:23-24).

Of all the things that we may bring with us to worship, let us always make sure that we bring those things that are most important. To do otherwise is vain.

Kevin Beard
Newbern, Tennessee

Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.

Jeremiah 7:23

JUNE 23, 1995

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Volume 32 Number 22
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The Words Of Truth

" I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak
Words of Truth and soberness."--Acts 2

"What Is Man, That Thou Art Mindful Of Him?"

W. A. Holley

The caption of this article is taken from Psalm 8:1-8. The Hebrew writer quotes this psalm and applies it to Jesus Christ (Hebrews 2:5-10).

In the beginning, when God made man, He assigned him a place of honor, of dominion, of leadership, and responsibility over all nature (Genesis 1: 27-28). Hence, man is far more than a cat or a dog. Man is a single species (Acts 17:26). In the New Testament the Greek aner is used to distinguish between a man and a woman (I Corinthians 11:7; Mark 10:2). Anthropos is the Greek term which refers to both man and woman (Matthew 4:4; Luke 6:22; John 2:25).

God has placed "eternity" in man's heart (Ecclesiastes 3:11, ASV). This means, unlike animals, man can contemplate, plan, look into the future, and think about the consequences of his acts. No mere animal can do this, although there are some similar features. In the Bible the word eternity refers to the endless past, and to the mending future.

Man is the offspring of God (Acts 17:29). God is the Father of man's spirit (Hebrews 12:9). Man is not all flesh. Man has a body and a spirit. The spirit can live apart from the body (II Corinthians 12:1-10; Matthew 10:28). Man's spirit is not his breath, as some materialists assert. In Luke 11:24-26, Jesus an evil spirit out of a man, who then goes and finds seven other evil spirits worse than himself to dwell with him. Was this a case of halitosis? (See Matthew 12:43-45). James 2:26 should be read.

At death the body returns to

the ground, but the spirit returns to God who gave it (Ecclesiastes 1:6-7). Man possesses an incorruptible spirit which dwells within his body (I Peter 3:4; Matthew 10:28; Daniel 7:15; Zechariah 12:1). Hereditary total depravity is false (Ezekiel 28:15). There is an "inward man" that never grows old (II Corinthians 4:16-18). One's body dies but His spirit or soul lives forever either in hell or heaven (Matthew 10:28; James 2:26).

Does the spirit or soul of the righteous go to heaven? Yes, indeed. Jesus came down from heaven (John 6:38). At his ascension. He went back to the place where He was before He came into the world (John 6:62; Acts 1:9-11).

Paul wrote about "being with Christ" when death came to him (Philippians 1:23). Stephen saw Christ seated at God's right hand (Acts 7:55-56). One can be absent from the body and present with the Lord (II Corinthians 5:6-8).

Those who "sleep in Jesus" will be brought back with Him, at His second coming (Hebrews 9:28; I Thessalonians 4:13-17). The righteous living will have their fleshly bodies changed so as to be like Jesus' glorious body---body and soul will be reunited---and meet the Lord in the air, and so ever be with the Lord 9I Thessalonians 4:13-17; I Corinthians 15:51-52). We need not ask "how?", but simply accept this fact by faith (Hebrews 11:3; II Corinthians 5:7).

Will the spirit be conscious between death and the resurrection? Well the spirit is

conscious now. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" (I Corinthians 2:11). Simply read Luke 16:19-31 and see that the Rich man and Lazarus were conscious after death. Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration talking about Jesus' impending death (Matthew 17:1-5; Luke 9:28-36). Man's heart thinks, reasons, and understands; but the heart never dies (Mark 2:8; Matthew 9:4; 13:15; Proverbs 22:26). Hence, man is conscious between death and the resurrection!!

Furthermore, God is a Spirit, but He knows, is conscious, of understands, and rewards our deeds (2 Corinthians 5:10; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). Moreover, the Holy Spirit makes intercessions for the saints, yet He has never had a body of flesh (Romans 8:26-27). Even though Jesus Christ gave up his body of flesh, He is now conscious, possessing all authority (Matthew 28: 18-20).

When will the body be raised? It will be raised at the general resurrection when the good and the bad are raised in the same hour (John 5:28-29). The resurrection of the dead will take place at "the last trump" (I Corinthians 15:51-52), but there cannot be a 1,000 years after "the last trump." Again, the resurrection occurs at "the last day," (John 6:39,40,44,54), but the "last day" is the Judgment Day. How do we know? Listen, "He that rejects 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). Thus, the Judgment Day is the "last day." The finest commentary ever written concerning this matter is Matthew 25:31-46. Read it and learn. One cannot have a 1,000 years after the last day as the Premillennialists affirm...

As strong as it may seem, the word rapture is never mentioned in the Holy Bible. Many use Romans 8: 17-26 to teach that this earth is to be renovated when Jesus comes but such teachers are in error. When He comes the earth, the elements thereof, and the works therein shall be burned up (II Peter 3:9-13). All will be judged according to their works (Revelation 20:11-15).

Will the saints know each other in heaven? Yes, indeed! The rich man and Lazarus had not lost their identity, even though a great gulf separated them (Luke 16:19-31). Although Moses and Elijah had been dead for centuries they were still themselves when they appeared with Christ (Matthew 17:1-5). Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be themselves (Matthew 8:11).

Jesus taught that fleshly relationships will not obtain in heaven. The Sadducees tried to entrap Jesus by telling Him a story about a woman who had been married to seven brothers (Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-39). This is the law of levirate marriage (Genesis 38:6-11; cf. Deuteronomy 25:5-6). The purpose of this law was for the preservation of the family. Jesus charged the Sadducees with ignorance of the scriptures and of the power of God. Jesus cited Moses and the

burning bush as evidence of the resurrection (Exodus 3:1 ff). God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. 'God is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto Him! Hence Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still living somewhere.

Dear readers, if our memories perish and our identify is lost, how can we be judged for the works done in our bodies? In such an instance, we would not be ourselves. If you are not you, how can God reward you, in the Great Judgment, according to your works?? (II Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 16:27; Revelation 20:11-15).

A great reunion awaits the redeemed saints of all ages. There we shall see our Savior, the saved, the apostles and the prophets, and countless millions more. Get ready, make all necessary preparation (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:36-38).

How awful it will be to see the damned cast into eternal punishment. Hear the word of the Lord. "I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the Kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out" (Luke 13:27-28). These words are written for those honest and sincere souls who desire the truth of God

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

POSITION OPENING

We currently are seeking a man to fill a position with the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ in Jasper AL. He needs to be married, under 40 years old, and sound in the faith. The position responsibilities include heading up the youth program, some weekly radio preaching, occasional pulpit preaching, and editing of the church bulletin. Interested parties should contact the: Sixth Ave. Church of Christ 1501 Sixth Ave. Jasper, AL. 35501 (205)-384-6446

That Witch At Endor

Glenn Colley

The life of Saul is a fascinating progression from the very top of power and prestige, to the very bottom of despair and grief. Now, toward the close of his life, he is filled with trouble. Although the patriarch Job was not at fault regarding his troubles, and Saul was, the words of Job seem to so well express the unrest in the heart of King Saul:

"For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters. For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me. I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came." (Job 3:24-26).

In I Samuel 28:8-19 we are surprised to see the King deliberately pursue a witch. The sting of this visit is in the fact that Saul himself had publicly condemned the practice of consulting such people. When Saul made his

request of the witch, she said, not knowing who he was, "Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards out of the land..." He is doing that which he himself has before condemned!

Behold a God-forsaken Saul! Samuel has died, some say as long as four years before. Jewish tradition says four months. Because of his high-handed sin against God, (I Samuel 13:8-15; I Samuel 15:17-25), Saul now has no prophet from whom to seek counsel. No voice from God is heard. He has closed every avenue of information and consolation from the Almighty, and now faces a desperate battle. "And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim (Urim is an answer through the High-priest clothed in the ephod), nor by prophets." (I Samuel 28:6)

The enemy, the Philistine army, was pitched at Shunem on the Southern slope. Saul's army was at Jezreel. He had to pass the enemy camp to get to the witch. But he went.

After Saul convinced the witch to help with his plight, she asked, "Whom shall I bring up unto thee?"

He said, "Bring me up Samuel." (28:11) It is interesting that although Samuel had brought the displeasure of God to Saul in the past, now Saul desperately wants the truth that he knows Samuel will bring.

Evidently before the witch could begin her fanciful incantations, she looked and saw Samuel! Saul feverishly asked, "What did you see?"

She said, "I saw gods ascending out of the earth."

Saul asked, "What form is he of?"

She responded, "An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle."

Samuel's report is not of

victory, but of defeat: "Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me..." (28:19).

Did the witch bring Samuel back? Certainly not. Consider these facts:

1. Samuel was in a place of bliss, in the Lord's confines. Only the Lord could release him. Who else would have the authority?

2. The Lord didn't authorize or recognize witches or sooth-sayers. Thus, the witch at Endor is not working with the Lord's authority. "Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them; I am the Lord your God." (Leviticus 19:31).

3. The devil certainly couldn't override God in this matter.

4. The witch wasn't even sure what she saw at first, and said, "I saw gods

ascending out of the earth."

From the demise of King Saul we learn some practical lessons. First, that power and greatness aren't necessarily the same thing. Saul was powerful, but not great. Greatness is ultimately determined by how people humble themselves before God, and help others do the same.

Second, we learn a crown of gold impresses people, but not God. Perhaps Paul said it best in Ephesians 6:9 when advising the masters of slaves: "And ye, masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him."

Third, we learn that a legacy like Samuel's, of simple obedience, is infinitely greater than the riches and power of a king. With which of these two men would you be most willing to trade places today?

Procrastination

Brian K. Giselbach

It was just after a terrific downpour and a man was driving down a lonely country road when he came upon an old farmer surveying the ruins of his barn. The man stopped and asked the farmer what had happened.

"Roof fell in," said the old farmer. "Leaked so long it finally just rotted through."

"Why in the world didn't you fix it before it got to this state?," asked the visitor.

The farmer scratched his head. "Well, it just seemed I never did get around to it. When the weather was good, there weren't no need of it, and when it rained it was too wet to work on."

The old farmer teaches us a valuable lesson in what can happen if we allow procrastination to rule the day (and the next day, and the next day, and...). What is procrastination? Procrastination is putting off till tomorrow what we know we ought to do today.

To some degree we all procrastinate. I don't know why we do it, and maybe it doesn't matter so much if we procrastinate in those areas that don't affect us and others to a great extent. But in doing things that pertain to "oughtness" (implying moral and spiritual obligation), we should do our utmost not to put things off!

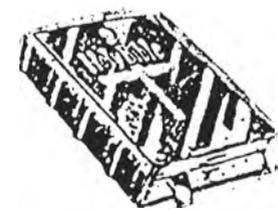
Let's talk about Bible study—daily Bible study. We ought to study the Bible as often as we can; preferring even to put off less important things (like going to the supermarket, or watching our favorite TV program, etc.) in order to familiarize ourselves with those words which are able to make us wise unto salvation (II Timothy 3:15). The idea of Bible study just bursts with the sense of "oughtness." Bible study needs to become a priority for every member of the church—and we ought to "prioritize" it in the minds of our children.

If Bible study does not become important to us the

consequences will be eternally devastating. Entire congregations have been destroyed because members

did not know what the Scriptures taught about false doctrine, getting along with

(Continued on Page 3)



The Words Of Truth

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Procrastination

(Continued From Page 2)

others, and resolving conflicts. Families have been destroyed because family members did not know what the Scriptures taught about husband/wife relationships and parent/child relationships. Lives have been destroyed because men and

women did not know what the Scriptures taught about their obligations to the Lord and to others.

Obedience to God through the Scriptures is important. Procrastination can affect our obedience. Before we can believe and obey the Lord we

have to learn His will (Romans 10:11-17). Jesus once said, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matthew 22:29). Hosea warned God's people, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6).

Temptation is coming your way (I Corinthians 10:13). Jesus prepared Himself for the temptation He knew He would face by knowing God's word and using it effectively (Matthew 4:1-11). Can we afford to do less?

Procrastination, then, can

keep us from being able to resist the devil and falling into sin. So don't take procrastination lightly when it comes to studying God's word! Let's overcome this "put off till tomorrow" attitude and serve God today!

Cincinnati, Ohio

Making Adultery "Legal"

B. J. Clarke

I couldn't believe what I was hearing! While watching late night television recently, I learned that the Governor of Connecticut had just signed legislation repealing a law on the books which said that adultery was against the law in the state of Connecticut. I was flabbergasted! Just who does the Governor of Connecticut think he is to make "legal" what the Supreme Governor of the Universe long ago declared to be illegal?

Both inspired testaments testify to the illegality of adultery in the eyes of Almighty God. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus, 20:14; Matthew 19:18). The penalty for committing adultery was severe. "And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death" (Leviticus 20:10). The penalty for committing adultery is still severe, for no adulterer shall inherit the

kingdom of God (I Corinthians 6:9-10). Paul classified adultery as a work of the flesh and then noted that those who practice such works of the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21).

The tragic response by many to the previous paragraph would be simple rejection of the Bible as having authority to govern our lives. "So what if the Bible condemns adultery! The Bible is an outdated volume of ancient literature which is simply out of touch with our modern world. Things are different now than they were when the Bible was written. After all, God is love and he would want people to be happy". So goes the constant drivel which flows from the mouth of human beings who seek to make their ways God's ways and their thoughts God's thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Even more tragic is the fact that some of our own brethren have found their own ways to "legalize" what God has made illegal. They will not go so far as to say

that the Bible has no authority to govern our lives. Rather, they will pick and choose the parts of Scripture that are authoritative, or else they will engage in "hermeneutical gymnastics" to explain away the plain teaching of the sacred writings. No passage has been more mutilated in recent years than Matthew 19:9. A verse that was so easy to understand in the past has suddenly become complex. The complexity of Matthew 19:9 is exactly proportionate to the cultural attitude of our time toward what God has said about adultery. The more disrespect some show for the teaching, the more diluted some preachers will present it. After all, we have to bring souls to Jesus don't we? Why let what Jesus taught about adultery get in the way? Is not this the attitude that some are cheering on today? Why can't we see that we have not truly converted someone to Jesus unless we have converted them to honor and respect all that he taught about every subject including marriage, divorce and

remarriage?

The Governor of Connecticut is not the only one seeking to repeal the illegality of adultery. Is it not sad but true that many churches of Christ have become refugee camps for adulterers and adulteresses who have fled there because they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts have heaped to themselves teachers and having itching ears have turned away their ears from the truth so that they might listen to fables (2 Timothy 4:3-4)? Some churches which do not actively teach error on Matthew 19:9 and other such passages, still sin against a holy God by accepting with open arms those who are involved in adulterous relationships. We are to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness". Rather, we are to expose them or lay them bare (Ephesians 5:11). Paul admonishes Timothy, "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear" (I Timothy 5:20). Rather than be involved in rebuking

adulterers, some churches appoint them to wait on the Lord's table and to serve in the public worship service. If a church is going to allow impenitent adulterers and adulteresses into its midst without exhorting them to repent, it might as well put up a sign outside the church building announcing that they have made adultery "legal".

Jeremiah declared in his time that the land was full of adulterers (Jeremiah 23:10). The church is too! For "whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matthew 19:9). The Bible is plain. Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge (Hebrews 13:4). He will also judge those who make their illegal act "legal" by bidding them God speed and partaking of their evil deeds (2 John 10,11).

We Can Understand

Dalton Key

Have you ever felt misunderstood? Perhaps you have felt a kinship with the man who in frustration exclaimed, "I know you believe that you understood what you think I said, but I'm not at all sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant!"

Such faulty commun-

ication is common to mankind. As imperfect, fallible creatures, we are all too often guilty of less than perfect communication.

But such is not true with God. He has spoken, has spoken with authority, and has spoken clearly. We have no reason to misunderstand the commands and promises of our all wise God.

To the Ephesians brother, Paul wrote, "Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is (Ephesians 5:17). Either we can understand the Lord's will or we can't. Paul's position, guided in word by the Holy Spirit, affirms our understanding of divine will as not only possible, but necessary.

Again, Paul wrote Timothy

commending this young man's earlier training, encouraging, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou learned them; And that from a child thou has known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy

3:14-15). Observe that Timothy had known "the holy scriptures" for some time, yea "from a child." Surely if Timothy had been able to know the scriptures from childhood, we, as adults can understand the clear teachings of this Book of Books. 801 N. E. 15th. Amarillo, Texas 79107

Changing Views Toward The Church (No. 5)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

No fundamental facet relative to the blessed church of our God and His only begotten Son is safe from the tampering hands of Change Agents. This I am proving item by item as we proceed in our meticulous study of a topic very timely in our day.

ITS EXCLUSIVE NATURE

If Change Agent Country has a capital, then it would be Nashville, Tennessee, for a surety. The July Jubilee in that city each summer has become a sounding board for Change Agent Agenda. If you are a patron or participant in this annual affair, then you are lined up in the wrong camp for a surety. Shelly and Jubilee are synonymous names. Think of the one and the other comes readily to mind. He has been one of its definite masterminds.

Jubilee is a disgrace to the cause of our Lord in Nashville and Tennessee. Over a twenty year period between the early 1920's and the early 1940's there were a total of five historic meetings in Nashville in which the late and lamented N. B. Hardeman did the preaching. Minus quarrel or quibble from any informed person among us,

they were honorable and did much to lift churches of Christ to new heights of esteem among Tennessee citizens. Here is what Hardeman said in one of his great sermons in that very first one, 'Now, a denomination-- what is it? I think the following will prove true: A denomination is a religious organization larger than any local church on earth and yet smaller than all the Christian people on earth. Think of the statement thus made. What is a denomination? It is a religious organization larger than a local church, smaller than the redeemed in the aggregate. Therefore it comes in between, separate and distinct from the church of the Bible at both ends of the line. How is the church used? It is either a local congregation or it embraces all Christians. Now, a denomination stands between these, and, therefore, it is a thing unheard of and unknown in the Bible; and I say that cautiously, and yet firmly.

"Well, then, does a man have to become a member of a denomination in order to be saved? Why, there is not a man on earth that would tell you he does. Get it! If I can, therefore, be saved from sin and be saved

in heaven without becoming a member of a denomination, then what reason is there upon the earth for the existence of a thing that is admittedly nonessential to the salvation of the souls of men?

"Well," says, one, 'try the church in that line. Can a man be saved and not become a member of the church?' Now, I appreciate the fact that there are those to the contrary; but let me say it: No man yet, under the banner of Christ, under the reign of Jesus Christ as King, has ever been saved except by virtue of the fact that he has become a member of the church of the Bible. Salvation is not in the devil's territory. Salvation is not in the kingdom of His Satanic Majesty, but salvation is in God's family, and there are just the two." (Hardeman's Tabernacle Sermons, Vol. I, pp. 226, 227). Be it recalled that the Nashville Tennessean and the Nashville Banner, newspapers of our capital city, carried these sermons daily. The former carried both noon and night sermons in full; the latter carried the noon sermons in full. Both papers had a combined circulation of between 80,000 and 90,000. How long would a

person have to attend Jubilee and hear Shelly, Flatt or Phillip Morrison before he would hear the clear line between denominationalism and the Lord's church so clearly delineated? If Shelly preached in Nashville during the 1990's like Hardeman did in that same city a generation or more ago, he would be invited to address denominational group after group as is currently the case. Were N.B. Hardeman alive today, would Woodmont Hills, Antioch, Madison or Donaldson invite him to come for a ten or twenty day meeting and duplicate the same lessons he preached at Ryman Auditorium in 1922? Furthermore, would they be happy to have these same two Nashville newspapers, were they of the disposition to do so, report in full all of these distinctive, dynamic lessons? I think most of us know the answers to these questions.

Hardeman and the brethren in Nashville back then believed in the EXCLUSIVE NATURE of the Lord's church and viewed denominationalism as a blight and curse. The boys along Change Agent Avenue in our capital city of Nashville today do not subscribe to such. That is

not their cup of tea. They are of a totally different breed than was Hardeman.

Is the Lord's church exclusive? Is salvation in it and it alone? Let the Bible answer by turning and reading Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2:47; 20:28; I Corinthians 12:13-20-27; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23-33; Colossians 1:18-24; I Timothy 3:15.

The Change Agents are not preaching the same things now Paul and the apostles preached in the first century or that the inimitable N. B. Hardeman did in his day.

Many years ago I visited Sister N. B. Hardeman when she was living in Columbia, Tennessee. Brother Hardeman had already passed away. She related a little story to me that I took and wrote into an article that appeared in the Gospel Advocate some twenty-five years ago. She said in the latter part of brother Hardeman's life he would often get requests like this, "Brother Hardeman, we need YOUR kind of preaching!" AND DO WE EVER IN OUR DAY!!

P.O. Box 464
Ripley, Tennessee 38063

How Shall We Refer To The Church?

Virgil L. Hale

I never thought that in my life time I would hear brethren saying that to refer to the church of our Lord as "the church of Christ" is denominational, but it has happened and is happening more and more. My question is this: what is denominational about referring to the church in a way that it is referred to in scripture? Paul, in referring to a number of congregations said, "The churches of Christ salute you" (Romans 16:16). Did he use the term in a denominational sense? If a number of congregations can be referred to as "churches of Christ" cannot one congregation be designated as a "church of Christ"? What is denominational about so doing?

But some say, "People in the world use the term in a denominational sense, and thus this makes it wrong." We cannot

help how people think of the Lord's church, nor how they use the designation, this does not make it wrong to use it in the right way. I am well aware of the fact that some, even in the church, use the term in an unscriptural way. For example, they speak of "church of Christ teaching" or "church of Christ preachers" etc. However, when I say that I am a member of the church of Christ, I simply mean that I am a member of the church that belongs to Christ. "Of Christ" denotes ownership.

Let us look into God's word to see what relationship the church sustains to Christ, and when this is done, I am convinced that it will be evident that there is nothing denominational in using "church of Christ" in distinguishing the Lord's church from every other church in the world - those that had their origin with man and

not the Lord.

First of all, may I suggest that contrary to what many teach. the church of our Lord was not an after-thought. It was in the eternal purpose of God (Ephesians 2:11). Jesus was the builder of the church, and he referred to it as "my church" (Matthew 16:18). Jesus purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28), and "gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25); He is the foundation of the church (I Cor. 3:11); "he is the saviour of the body" (Ephesians 5:23); which is the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). It is in the church that God receives glory through Christ (Eph. 3:21). It is in the church that Christ reconciles people of God (Eph. 2:16). The Lord's church is "the house of God, which is in the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy

3:15). There are other points and other scriptures that we could use, but these should suffice to show the relationship that our Lord sustains to the church. In view of all of the things that have been mentioned, what better term could ever be used in referring to the church than to simply refer to it as "**the church of Christ?**"

There is a move among us to destroy the church as we know it, and to make of it just another denomination. In fact, based upon what some are teaching and practicing, this has already happened in far too many places. However, there are some of us determined to stand against every onslaught, and to meet it head-on with God's word. We must be ready, willing, and able to "fight the good fight of faith" (I Timothy 6:12); to be "set for the defence of the gospel" (Philippians 1:17). As Jude

knew the need to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3) in the first century, how badly such is needed in the twentieth century. Let us truly use "the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17) to fight against the devil and those who are being used by him to try and destroy the church for which Jesus loved and gave Himself. May we never be guilty of running from the enemy, nor in any way compromising the truth of God's word. We are truly in the Lord's army. As His soldiers, let us "endure unto the end" (Matthew 24:13); and truly be "faithful unto death" (Revelations 2:10) in order that we might receive the "crown of life (Revelations 2:10) or as Paul called it "a crown of righteousness" (II Timothy 4:8). Can the Lord count on YOU???

JUNE 30, 1995

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Volume 32 Number 23
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

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Alleged Contradictions In The Scriptures

In an effort to discredit the inspiration of the Bible, skeptics love to point to portions of the Bible which they view to be contradictory. A legitimate contradiction found in Scripture would indeed disprove inspiration. However, there is a monumental difference an "alleged" contradiction and a contradiction in fact. One such alleged contradiction is Proverbs 26:4, 5 which says, "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit." Foes of the faith have often marked this text as one that proves the existence of contradictions in the Bible.

They find it impossible to reconcile the two seemingly contradictory statements.

Actually, the proximity of the two statements is an argument against there being a contradiction. It is clear that the author of this passage did not regard his words to be contrary to reason. What then is the meaning of the passage? There is more than one plausible harmonization of this text. In his book, Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible, Haley notes, "...the two texts may refer to different cases, thus: In certain circumstances, do not answer the fool at all. Silence is often the most fitting answer to a foolish question or remark. In other cases, answer the fool

with sharp reproof, exposing his folly as it deserves."

There are times when the fool's remarks are not worth the dignity of a reply. Paul warned Timothy, "But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes" (2 Timothy 2:23; 1 Timothy 6:3-5). Contrariwise, there are times when the fool's position must be completely exposed and unmasked. The man who has said in his heart that there is no God, is a fool (Psalm 14:1). If scripture forbids us from ever answering a fool, then we could never answer the arguments of an atheist, for in doing so we would be answering a fool. Surely, this is not the meaning of the

passage. Haley also cites the explanation of Andrew Fuller who makes the meaning of the text depend upon the turn given to the words, "according to his folly". In the first text, he takes this phraseology as implying in a foolish manner; "in the second as signifying, in the manner which his folly requires." Consider the example of how Moses answered folly in a foolish manner (Numbers 20:3-11); whereas Job answered his wife's foolishness, not in kind, but in the manner it deserved (Job 2:9, 10). The apostle Paul felt foolish in commending himself to the Corinthians and yet he knew that his silence would have

supported their foolish charges (2 Cor. 11:16-12:12).

Menasseh Ben Israel summed up the passage nicely. Concerning the fool and our responsibility to him per Proverbs 26:4,5, he wrote, "Correct and mend him, that he may know his folly and madness. Imitate not his passions, errors, and improper words." With this explanation before us, we can readily see that the alleged contradiction in Proverbs 26:4, 5 is simply one more vain desperate attempt by the skeptic to destroy the credibility of the Book of Books, The Bible.

B. J. Clarke
Southaven, MS.

"We Will Be Glad And Rejoice In His Salvation"

Neal Pollard

The prophet Isaiah, having foreseen the judgment and general resurrection (Isaiah 24), begins an anthem of praise to God in Isaiah 25. He begins by remembering the past and God's faithful and true "counsels of old" (25:1), His wonderful works (25:1), and His divine benevolence (25:4). In the present, Isaiah sees man's responsibility to his gracious God, to glorify and fear Him (25:3). Isaiah's praise then centers largely on the future reward (25:5-12). In verse nine, Isaiah refers to the judgment day and prophecies,

"And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he

will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

In verse eight Isaiah details the joy of the salvation to be realized when time ceases. Three things will have happened. He is sure of them, for the "Lord hath spoken it."

He will swallow up death in victory. Old Testament saints also longed for the realization of the hope that God would "redeem them from death" (Hosea 13:14). Yet, the possibility is more fully felt in New Testament times after Christ's resurrecting triumph (cf. Acts 3:13-15). Paul wrote in the great resurrection chapter,

"So when this corruptible

shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory (1 Corinthians 15:54)."

Paul is quoting Isaiah. John confidently speaks of that victory in Revelation 20:14. The Hebrews writer goes further in describing this victory by pointing out the adversary, "the devil", who will have been defeated (Hebrews 2:14).

And the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces. Isaiah does not include everyone in his "all". Obviously, he does not mean

"all willful sinners" (cf. 2 Corinthians 7:10) or "all hypocrites" (cf. 1 Timothy 4:1-2). He must be referring to "all faithful saints". Centuries later, John basks happily in that understanding and confidently promises that "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Revelation 7:17; 21:4).

And the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth. While persecution was an oppressing problem for the early church (cf. Acts 8:1, 3-4; 1 Peter 1:1-7), and while persecution comes to the godly today (2 Timothy 3:12), Christians can bear up under such adversity and

patiently await the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls (cf. 1 Peter 1:8-9). Thus, Christians can cling to a living hope" (1 Peter 1:3), trusting the power of the resurrected Christ to "take away. . . the rebuke of his people" (Isaiah 25:8). Isaiah, in this verse, trusts his God to make it so.

Are we as confident as Isaiah? Are we hopeful of death succumbing to eternal victory? Are we encouraged that sorrow will yield to eternal joy? Do we believe that rebuke will fall to eternal reward? If we are faithful Christians, we can (cf. 1 John 5:13).

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

POSITION OPENING

We currently are seeking a man to fill a position with the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ in Jasper AL. He needs to be married, under 40 years old, and sound in the faith. The position responsibilities include heading up the youth program, some weekly radio preaching, occasional pulpit preaching, and editing of the church bulletin. Interested parties should contact the: Sixth Ave. Church of Christ 1501 Sixth Ave. Jasper, AL. 35501 (205)-384-6446

Job And Christian Suffering

Glenn Colley

Although we all as Christians must taste of suffering during some time in our life, and perhaps often, there are moments when we consider it somewhat inconsistent with the blessings we enjoy as God's children. There may be moments in which we reason, "If I am God's child, and He is all powerful, why does He let me suffer so? Why doesn't He do something to help me?" It isn't that we wish to criticize the Almighty, or to bring His wisdom into question, but simply that we don't always understand His purposes.

The book of Hebrews is helpful. Putting the question on a level which even a child can understand, chapter 12:6 says, "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure

chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye illegitimate, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?"

The book of Job also offers much strength to the suffering Christian. It will help us to understand the purpose of suffering, and God's wonderful power and blessing when we retain our faithfulness through the fires of trial.

In his book entitled, *Explore the Book*, (Zondervan, 1970, volume three, pp. 26), J. Sidlow Baxter introduces the book of

Job in this way: "In a general sense the design of this book is to justify the ways of God to man, by correcting certain misconceptions which arise from men's imperfect knowledge: but the special object is to show that there is a benevolent Divine purpose running through the sufferings of the godly, and that life's bitterest enigmas are reconcilable with this benevolent Divine purpose, did we but know all the facts. Could Job but have seen into the counsels of heaven just before his trial came, as we are permitted to glimpse into them, in the prologue to the poem; and could Job but have foreknown the outcome of his ordeal, as God for knew it, and as we now see it in the epilogue to the poem, how differently would he have reacted to it all!

But then that is just the

point which gives the whole book its meaning for us. Job did not know; and, simple as this point may seem, it is through failing to appreciate its significance that most readers miss the message of the book. Get the picture. Between the prologue, which shows how Job's trial originated in the counsels of heaven, and the epilogue, which sows how Job's trial eventuated in enrichment and blessing, we have a group of patriarchal wiseacres theorizing and dogmatizing from incomplete premises and deficient data. They knew nothing about the counsels of heaven which had preceded Job's trial; and they knew nothing about the coming epilogue of compensation. They were philosophizing in the dark. It is in this that the book has its message to us. We are meant to see that there

was an explanation, even though Job and his friends did not know it. So that when baffling affliction comes to ourselves we may believe that the same holds good in our own case --that there is, indeed, a purpose for it in the counsels of heaven, and a foreknown outcome of blessings."

Do not foolishly assume that when you suffer it is because God doesn't care for you. He does. he loves you, and knows what is best. As James wrote, "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various temptations; knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." (James 1:2-4).

Is The Purpose For Baptism To "Obey God"?

There is much debate these days over the question, "How much must a person understand in order for their baptism to be acceptable to God?" Must one understand that baptism is "for the remission of sins," i.e., that a alien's sins are forgiven when he is baptized into Christ? (Galatians 3:17). Or, is it sufficient for one to know that the Bible emphasizes baptism and that in order to 'obey God' one should be baptized regardless of his idea of his sins being forgiven before and without baptism?

The popular writer F. LaGard Smith, wrote "In our choosing to be baptized, the important factor is the purpose for which we do it. And the purpose of every faith motivated baptism is to obey Christ" (Baptism The Believers Wedding Ceremony, p. 94). That statement sounds

good and it is correct if obeying Christ is properly defined. If "obey Christ" means submitting to the physical act of baptism because Christ taught it, regardless of one's reason for doing so, that does not mean obedience has taken place. if one feels saved at the point of faith only (or, by grace alone as some brethren insist) and submits to baptism in order to "obey Christ," has he really obeyed Christ? Some brethren would say, "yes." The Bible would say, "no." Does one "obey God" who ignorantly, or otherwise, substitutes human reasons for divine ones in his response to Bible commands? One does not obey Christ in the matter of baptism who does not understand Jesus' words, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"

(Mk. 16:16). Jesus taught belief + baptism = salvation. To view it otherwise is not to obey him.

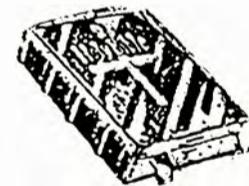
On the other hand, if "obey Christ" means doing what the Lord said to do, in the way the Lord said to do it and for the reason or reasons the Lord said to do it, then, obedience has taken place. One does not obey Christ in that matter of baptism who is not baptized "for (in order to obtain) the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Yet, because of the urgency that some have in broadening the horizons of fellowship in the sectarian world and eroding the distinctiveness of the New Testament church, I am confident that this is not what is meant by "obey God" in many contexts. With some the idea of obedience takes on some vague significance of doing what the Lord said to do, and even in the

way the Lord said to do it, but not necessarily for the reason or reasons the Lord said to do it.

No one will argue that one must know all there is to know about baptism in order to be baptized, else there would be no room for growth. Yet, if one

does not understand baptism to be for the remission of sins he does not understand baptism at all.

Dennis Gullede
Mabelvale, AR



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Only One Life

Johnny Ramsey

The Psalmist, in a familiar passage, urges us to use our days wisely because "our life is but a tale that is told." James informs us that our life is like a vapor that soon vanishes away. Job vividly states that our days flee away and Peter bluntly relates that all the glory we may gain on earth fades quickly away.

Nearly four hundred years before Christ a man named Epicurus taught that man is totally mortal and when death comes that is the absolute end of His existence. His followers said: "Therefore, eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die." Paul, inspired of God, had a much better message in Philippians, chapter one.

"For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain."

Made in God's image (Genesis 1:26) we are here to glorify our Maker (I Chronicles 16:29) as we bend to His blessed will (Isaiah 6:8). Truly, the following message is worthy of our thoughtful meditation.

"Only one life
Twill soon be past
Only what's done for
Christ Will last!"

Outside of Christ there are no spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3) and no real light (Luke 1:79). Empty and without meaning, purpose and depth is the sojourn devoid of heavenly thrust. God's grace is in Christ with eternal glory (II Timothy 2) and Jesus is the only way to the Father (John 14:6). Man cannot please the Creator by human invention or finite machinery (II Cor. 3:5). Only through the name of Christ can our lives find glory and joy (Acts 4:12).

WHAT WOULD HE SAY?

If Christ should come today
And find my hands so full
Of future plans, however fair,
In which my Saviour had no share,
What would He say?
If He should come today
And find my love so cold,
My faith so weak and dim
I had not even looked for Him
What would He say?

Those who once walked with Jesus down the road of life and then returned to the pollution of the world will regret that decision. Others, on the verge of obedience to the Son of God will die short of the peace salvation brings. Yes, some will live too long

and some will die too soon!

"How many days are there to live? How many nights to sleep? How many moments yet remain? For labor and for love I wish they were as countless As the silver stars above."

Better for some had they never been born is the solemn warning of Mark 14:21 and John 8:21. Why do so many wander so aimlessly while the blessings of the gospel are available? The crafty work of the Devil is the problem (I Timothy 3:7). That great enemy of the soul disguises his intentions and soon overwhelms many in the quicksand of sin and shame. Promising fame and glory but delivering eternal ruin is the end result of doing business with Satan.

"Out of this life I am unable to take things of silver and gold that I make. And I often wonder what I shall own In that other realm where I go alone. At the last shall it be mine to find all that I worked for I left behind?"

The old serpent, "the father of lies," has sold millions on a perverted view of life and death while covering over the consequences of shallow

conduct and improper decisions. When his servants finally reap what they sowed, the tragic reminder of Jeremiah will ring in their ears:

"The summer is ended, the harvest is past and we are not saved."

What is your life? It can be beautiful and full of depth and vibrant meaning or, conversely, it can be one great big zero. Frank Huston wrote cogent words in his famous gospel songs: "It pays to serve Jesus Whatever may betide It pays to serve Jesus Whatever you may do 'Tis riches of mercy in Him to abide, It pays to serve Jesus each day."

The clock of life truly is wound but once. Now is the only time we have. We dare not squander such golden moments in the pursuit of anything less than the best (Philippians 1:10). Christianity now is too valuable to overlook. Heaven is too sweet to miss. It is appointed unto us once to die. Let us be sure we die in the Lord (Revelation 14:13).

Tennyson, in a classic refrain, lends credence to the

serious, sublime subject before us:

"Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!

And may there be no sadness of farewell

When I, when I embark."

One century ago Anton Chekhov wrote these pungent comments so typical of many on our very subject of life and its purpose:

"Why do you always wear black?"

I am in mourning for my life.

I am unhappy."

Today, millions express the same sentiments but they do not have to. Were they to obey the Lord, partake of the divine nature and accept the more abundant life they could even look forward to the valley of the shadow of death (John 10:10; Psalms 23:4). R. Baxter wrote these powerful words in hymn:

"I hold to the hand that is steadfast and sure, No other foundation is ever secure, I look for the home that will ever endure; I hold to the hand of my Lord."

The only life worthwhile is the one centered in Christ!



(Ecc. 3:1-8) You Have Time

Glenn Colley

How long is a man's life? Well, you would say, "that depends on the man and the length of his individual life". But, let's say I'm considering 70 years. Now how long is this man's life? That depends on whom you ask. Ask a 16 year old boy, and he'll say that its long, long time. However, if you ask a man who is actually 70, he'll say, 70 years lasts only a heartbeat.

Life, even if it sees 100 years of history is really quite short.

In Ecc. 3, Solomon looked at his life and dismissed the subject of time. "To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven."

Solomon decided that he as an adult had just enough time to do all the important things.

Next time you say to yourself "I'd like to be a faithful Christian, but I really haven't the time," remember Solomon's wisdom when he saw that he had "a time to be born; and would have a "time to die."



Most Of a Minute Evil Companionship

Once in a while people will create a saying that just happens to contain truth that is in the Bible.

One is: "If you run with the goats, you may start smelling like them." It's true, you know.

How many wives have set weeping at the desk of a marriage counselor with the words, "Everything was alright until he started running around with those men who influenced him to hang around the local taverns and bars. He just isn't the same man I married."

Parents, don't you sometimes worry that your son or daughter might someday take up with the wrong crowd?

We are people who can be influenced by our peers if we aren't careful.

Now I don't know too much about people who spend their days romping with the goats, and how they might smell, but I do know what I Cor. 15:33 says: "Evil companionship corrupt good morals." Let's have an open policy about people we will help, teach; and be kind to. But let's be more selective in the people we choose as our companions.

Glenn Colley

Changing Views Toward The Church (No. 6)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

ITS WORSHIP

Notorious change in worship is on the front burner of the agenda of the Change Agents. They bash at every opportunity the stately type of dignified worship long characteristic of churches of Christ. To them it is old hat; it has no appeal to the unchurched; the baby boomers are turned off by such; urban people with sophisticated manners and moorings have little in common with songs tuned to an agricultural setting. In The Second Incarnation Shelly and Harris state on page thirteen, "The tired, uninspiring event called worship in our churches must give way to an exhilarating experience of God that simultaneously exhibits and nurtures life in the worshippers." Later, they wrote, "Second, we must allow the Spirit of God to quicken our assemblies with freshness and life. Our assemblies need not be dull exercises in boring ritual" (p. 105). Still later we read,

"When the Spirit of God is present, it will not always be possible to determine the atmosphere in advance. Leaders may intend and prepare for service of one sort, and God may bring about another end to his glory" (p. 135). Song content needs an overhaul according to Shelly and Harris. They wrote, "Urban churches continue to sing hymns built on agricultural and nautical metaphors when neither is our context any longer. In examining one widely used book of church songs, we were able to find only one out of 600 that had a clearly urban setting. Praise ought to be in relevant words and images, and it needs to set to contemporary music" (P. 136). On this basis one could find fault with the parables of our Lord. Just how many of them have urban imagery back of them? Shall we reject all that the Lord taught with shepherd and sheep background because urban people today are not familiar with such? Shall we do the same with the Vine and Branches in John 15:1 ff

because relatively few Americans are husbandmen in our urbanized society? Shall we reject the Parable of the Sower of the Soils because not many tend the soil today and few are familiar with sowing and reaping operations?

Preaching really comes in for a bashing from the change agents but it is always the preaching of others--never of themselves. They are ever relevant and fresh in approach; the rest of us are boring, behind the times and constitute a gigantic TURN OFF among our sophisticated auditors. preachers arrayed in dark suit's with book, chapter and verse sermons flowing forth out of their mouth are not just where it all is as per their views.

Singing is tampered with coming and going. Congregational singing is old hat. Now the going thing is a solo or a chorus to perform while others simply watch and listen. Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19 mean but little to the Change Agents among us in Nashville, Abilene and other places. The

clamor now increases for mechanical music.

The Lord's Supper is not left intact. It has to be beefed up by singing while it is being observed. The Change Agents need to go back and read again and believingly what Matthew wrote in chapter 26, what Mark 14 has to say, what Luke penned in Luke 22 and what Paul delivered to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 11.

Tampering hands are not removed from prayer. Less and less reverence is expressed in prayerful addresses to the Father and the petitions sent to Him. Some are now dissatisfied with prayers addressed to the Father. Now they want to address Jesus and pray directly to Him. What will be next--prayers addressed to the Holy Spirit? Can prayers addressed to Mary and the invocation of saints, Catholic style, be very far down the road for some of these Change Agents?

Worship ceases to be a period of praise, adoration and awe expressed. It ceases to be a period of teaching and

admonishing each other such as in our songs. It ceases to be a cementing force binding hearts of worshippers together and bonding them into a united people. Now worship has to be an encounter with God. This is a rather strange word for our brethren to throw around so carelessly. I would urge every reader to turn in your dictionary, as I have just done in mine, and see how many of the definitions reflect a skirmish, hostility, opposition, conflict, etc. Surely, there is more accurate term than encounter they could use. It is a word we never or seldom heard used among us until recent times.

For one, I wish they would leave the Lord's blueprint for the church as he left it. This is inclusive of His pattern or norm for the worship of His people. I think most readers of Words of Truth will join me in the expression of this wish.

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Fifth And Bedside

Mel Futrell

While a student at Harding College, one of the young men in my dorm (Keller Hall) regularly bragged, upon being asked where he had gone to church, that he had attended services at Fifth and Bedside. Now, although that may appear humorous on the surface it actually displays a severe lack of seriousness regarding our responsibility to assemble. Without a doubt the young man's attempt at wit and humor was exceeded by his indifference to divine command. And mind you brethren, we are command to assemble.

The author of Hebrews declared by inspiration:

Let us hold fast the professions of our faith without wavering; for He is faithful that promised. 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 we see the day approaching. For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." (Hebrews 10:23-26) within this context, and for that matter the whole book, the inspired writer is writing to encourage faltering Christians and to show them the

absurdity of forsaking Christianity and returning to the law. (see also Hebrews 6:1-6; 10:1-4; 12:1-3. etc.) You say, "well that's all good and fine but what does that have to do with our responsibility to assemble?" Please take a closer look.

Brethren, verse 25 is of course the focal point, at least of our discussion, and the word "forsaking" there is deserving of a little space. The Greek word translated "forsaking" is defined by the lexicons as abandon or desert. Bible scholar A.T. Robertson makes this interesting comment that touches on the point we're trying to make: "Already some Christians had formed

the habit of not attending public worship, a perilous habit then and now." (Word Pictures, 1932, p. 412)

Who could say it better? Brethren, some of these brethren just weren't showing up for the assembly. They had indeed forsaken and deserted the assembly. And as Robertson noted, this habitual behavior should be regarded "a perilous habit then and now".

I would ask you at this point to please reread the quotation from Hebrews 10:23-26 above. the purpose for this should be clear to you now. There was and is a definite connection between forsaking the assembly (vs. 25) and the sin of apostasy in

verse 26. When one fails to assemble with the saints that individual has manifested indifference towards living the Christian life and is well down the road to apostasy. Sadly, every week thousands of Christians across our great brotherhood attend the Fifth and Bedside service. These who forsake the assembling of ourselves together are those who are overtaken in a trespass and need to repent and be restored (Acts 8:22; Galatians 6:1) I wonder, are we communicating to our people the necessity that is theirs to assemble with the saints?

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JULY 7, 1995

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Volume 32 Number 24
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The Words Of Truth

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

Paul's Sermon Outline

W. A. Holley

At the time Paul preached the sermon to which we refer, he was a prisoner in Caesarea, Palestine. Paul spent two years in prison there; yet he was not idle but took advantage of his opportunities to preach Christ and His word. Caesarea was the seat of the Roman government at that time.

Paul was invited to address a very distinguished audience: Felix and his wife, Drusilla. Felix was Governor, his wife was an adulterer, who, according to history was a very beautiful woman. Drusilla was the daughter of Herod Agrippa, who was bitten by an angel because he failed to glorify God (Acts 12:20-23). Tradition says that Drusilla died in the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. Apparently, she never obeyed the commands of the Lord.

Paul, a former persecutor of Christ, but now a faithful preacher of the gospel, was a teacher who pulled no punches: "I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His judgment: preach the word, be diligent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will creep to themselves teachers who, after their own lusts; will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables" (II Timothy 4:1-4, ASV).

Hence, this has been a

problem with churches of Christ and preachers throughout the centuries. Jesus talked about "wolves in sheeps clothing" (Matthew 7:15). Paul warned the Ephesian elders of the dangers of departure from the truth (Acts 20:28-31). The demise of the seven churches of Asia bear witness to the truthfulness of Paul's warning (Revelation chapters two and three). God, sometimes uses false teachers to put his people to the test (Deuteronomy 13:1-5; Matthew 24:24-28). Peter warned of false teachers who would bring "damnable heresies" and of their "pernicious ways," for the purpose of leading with "feigned words," the gullible astray. John the apostle, cautions, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). There is truth and there is error (I John 4:6).

What was Paul's sermon outline? It is stated in Acts 24:24-25. It contains three propositions:

- 1) Righteousness,
- 2) Temperance, self-control, and
- 3) The Judgment to come. If ever a sermon was appropriate, this one was. Paul reasoned with those who heard him. What Paul preached was not learned in some school of higher education. He said, "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it or man, neither was I taught it, but by

the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:11-12). Paul was an educated man, but he did not preach his education. He preached the word of God. This writer once heard a preacher present his entire lesson in Greek, when hardly anyone present knew the meaning of what he said. Why? Because he was proud of his education.

God, through His revealed words of inspiration has made foolish and useless all kinds of human wisdom, ancient or modern. "The way of man is not in himself" (Proverbs 14:12; Jeremiah 10:23; Isaiah 55:8-9). God's Divine Revelation cannot be improved. Additions, subtractions and emendations of the Holy Scriptures must be frowned upon (Jude 3; Revelation 22:18-19).

We have those preachers who are determined to change the church at whatever cost, even if it means destroying the church as we know it. Diotrephes might have been an elder or a preacher whose domineering attitude made him an obstacle to the progress of the church. We should remember that pride and love of preeminence are the devil. His power still works in "the children or disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2).

Dear Reader, we are taught to "mark" and "avoid" those who "cause divisions and offense contrary to the doctrine" (Romans 16:17-18). This is what Paul did when he wrote into the divine record for all time, the names of Hymenaeus and Alexander and Philetus (I Timothy 1:19-

20; II Timothy 2:17-18). These were false teachers who "over-threw the faith of some." Read these texts. No false teacher should be spared! Today, false teachers are busily engaged in their nefarious work of destruction!

What is our problem? Are the Scriptures authoritative? Does the Bible say what it means and does it mean what it says? Rubel Shelly and his sympathizers are working hard to convince people that there is a new way to interpret the Scriptures. They talk much about a new hermeneutic, but there is nothing new about it. It is a way to explain away the true meaning of God's word. Denominationalism and Roman Catholicism have been following this method for centuries.

What do these false teachers want? They want to modernize the Lord's church. What does this mean? It means women used as preachers and elders; it means organs, pianos, solos, choirs; it means hand clapping, applause, speaking in tongues, the dedication of babies. Some have gone so far as serving the Lord's Supper at funerals and weddings. Brethren, when the Scriptures have been stripped of its authority, any thing goes.

Why should faithful brethren be deeply concerned about these things? Well, we are living in the midst of an apostasy---renunciation of our religious faith. We now have some brethren who can "go to church" with anybody.

This is what Solomon could do. He "loved many foreign women," and "clung to these in love." He had 200 wives and 300 concubines, and his wives "turned away his heart after their gods." He built places of worship for false gods to satisfy his brethren and wives. (I Kings 11:1-40; Nehemiah 13:24-26). Please note, Solomon's name is not found in God's Great Hall Of Fame. Read Hebrews chapter eleven. What Solomon wanted with all these women, this writer will never know!!!

Modernism, liberalism, and radicalism, in its various shades and colors, can already be seen. Many churches of Christ, so-called, have already crossed the line. Somehow, we must stem the tide. We can do it by standing strong and steadfast in the faith (I Corinthians 15:58; Daniel 12:3).

Brethren, take warning: The church of Christ can be lost the third generation from those of us who now live. Here is the Biblical principle: The people served God as long as Joshua lived, and as long as those who knew Joshua lived; but, in the third generation there arose another generation who knew not the Lord (Joshua 24:31; Judges 2:7-10). The gospel of Christ must be preached to each succeeding generation (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). If this not done the next generation grows up in ignorance. "The burden of Dumah, Watchman, what of the night?" (Isaiah 21:11-12).

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

POSITION OPENING

We currently are seeking a man to fill a position with the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ in Jasper AL. He needs to be married, under 40 years old, and sound in the faith. The position responsibilities include heading up the youth program, some weekly radio preaching, occasional pulpit preaching, and editing of the church bulletin. Interested parties should contact the: Sixth Ave. Church of Christ 1501 Sixth Ave. Jasper, AL. 35501 (205)-384-6446

By the late brother Gus Nichols

"What Of The Thousand Years?"

Gus Nichols

Please get your Bible before you read this article and read the references as you read the article. Turn first to Revelation 20:1-7. What about the thousand years here spoken of and of the resurrection before and after the thousand years? The statement of the one thousand years reign is only found in the book of Revelation, a book of symbols and signs. (Revelation 1:1). Much of the book is without doubt hard to be understood. Many things therein found are revealed in figurative language, such as "key", "chain", "serpent", "pit", "seal", "thrones", "beast", "prison", "corners of the earth", etc. No doubt the "thousand years" and the "resurrection" referred to in Revelation 20:1-7 are also figurative expressions.

What Is Not Mentioned

The passage under study does not mention the things injected into it by many. It does not mention the second coming of Christ, but rather says an "angel" came down from heaven (Revelation 20:1). It also says nothing about a resurrection OF BODIES, but rather John saw "THE SOULS OF THEM THAT HAD BEEN BEHEADED", etc. (Revelation 20:4). He does not say he saw bodies that had been raised. (See Revelation 6:9-11). Furthermore

"souls" are not literally raised, for they do not die. It says "souls of them", etc. (Revelation 20:4; Matthew 10:28). It was, therefore, a figurative resurrection that John saw, and not a resurrection of bodies from the grave. Also the passage says nothing about a reign upon the earth. Speculators add this to the passage. Christ is now reigning over his kingdom, which is Spiritual and not literal. (John 18:36; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 1:9). Christ has all power and authority now. (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 3:22-23; Ephesians 1:20-23). Christ is reigning now, and faithful Christians are reigning with him, helping him to rule over men by teaching his word and by their influence. We reign with Christ "in life", right now (Romans 5:17). The unfaithful members should be reigning with him, and would be if they were faithful (I Corinthians 4:8).

The Resurrections

A literal resurrection of the bodies of all the dead will take place when Jesus comes in the same hour or period of time. (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15). The literal resurrection of the saints will be on "THE LAST DAY", (John 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 11:24-25). The wicked will also be raised and judged "AT THE LAST DAY", (John 12:48).

Hence, the good and bad will be raised and judged at the same time, when Christ comes (Matthew 25:31-46). The people of Nineveh who had repented and become righteous will stand in judgment WITH THE WICKED and condemn them. (Matthew 12:41-42). THE WICKED men who crucified Jesus will rise from the dead and see Jesus WHEN HE COMES, together with the righteous. (Revelation 1:7). Christ will judge the living and the dead WHEN HE COMES. (2 Timothy 4:1). The wicked will be punished in the fires of perdition in the "END OF THIS WORLD" age and not at the end of an age to follow this. (Matthew 13:40-42). Those who obey not the gospel will be punished "WHEN" Jesus comes and not a thousand years later. (II Thessalonians 1:6-10). THE TRUMPET that will sound to WAKE UP THE RIGHTEOUS DEAD is called "THE LAST TRUMP" (I Corinthians 15:51-53). There will be no literal resurrection a thousand years after the resurrection of the saints "AT THE LAST TRUMP" (I Corinthians 15:51-53).

Figurative Resurrections

It is obvious therefore, that the two resurrections of Revelation 20:1-7 are figurative resurrections, and not

resurrections of bodies. ONLY THE MARTYRS--those who had been beheaded for being Christians--were mentioned as being in the first resurrection of Revelation 20:1-7. It was not a resurrection of all dead saints, but only of those beheaded for Christ's sake. John saw their souls reigning with Christ. He does not mention the bodily resurrection in the passage. It was a figurative resurrection mentioned. There are passages in the Bible which speak of a resurrection in a figurative sense (Isaiah 26:19; Ezekiel 37:11-15; Hebrews 11:17-19; Romans 11:15; Malachi 4:5 with Matthew 17:12-13). Souls can be raised figuratively without first dying. (Matthew 10:28). Souls can live up in heaven without a resurrection of their bodies (Revelation 6:9-11; 2 Corinthians 5: 6,8; Philippians 1:20-24; 2 Corinthians 12:1-7; Acts 7:55, 59). The body of the souls in heaven will not be raised until the souls or spirits return when Jesus comes (I Thessalonians 3:13; 4:14; Jude 14:17; Joshua 2:26).

What Of The Thousand Years?

The thousand years is a period of time--perhaps expressed figuratively--after the "souls of" the Martyrs had their figurative resurrection, and before the figurative

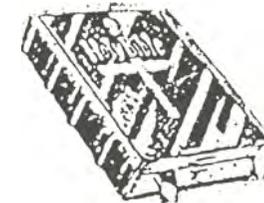
resurrection of the influence of the wicked who would eventually take over and again ruin the world before the end of time (Revelation 20:1-7). This equals the time when Satan would be shut up for a period and then be loosed a little season. Some think the thousand years started when the reformation was effected. If and the thousand years were to prove to be a literal thousand years, there would be only a few more hundred years till the end of the world, and till Jesus will come (II Peter 3:1-15). If the thousand years is figurative we know not how long the period of time signified, nor when it would end. Just remember the two resurrections, with "thousand years" between cannot be literal resurrection for the reason that the good and bad will all be raised in a literal resurrection when Jesus comes (John 5:28-29). There will be no other trump after the resurrections of the righteous (I Corinthians 15:51-53). There will be no more days upon earth after the resurrection of the righteous (John 6:39-54). And there will be no earth for anyone to live upon after the coming of Christ (II Peter 3:1-15). Instead of beginning to reign up the kingdom to the Father (I Corinthians 15:20-26).

Hudson Nichols Passes Away

With great regret we wish to inform our readers that after a long bout with cancer, Hudson Nichols passed away on June 16. He was a faithful Gospel preacher who preached for various congregations in his lifetime, including Gospel meetings in at least 14 different states. His widow, Marilyn, and son, Joe, are members of the Sixth Avenue Church in Jasper. Hudson was one of the sons of the late brother Gus Nichols, who preached for the Sixth Avenue church for forty-six years, and began the publication you now hold in your hands.

The funeral for brother Hudson was held in the Sixth Avenue building on June 18. His brothers in the flesh and in the Lord, Flavil and Hardeman, conducted the service. He will be greatly missed.

Glenn Colley



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Changing Views Toward The Church (No. 7)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr. ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

Men have never been content very long with the simple organization proposed by the Lord and inscribed into the divine blueprint. Just subsequent to the close of the apostolic age one of the very first changes was relative to church organization. They had Change Agents back then also! Bishops and deacons constitute God's plan of church organization as per Philippians 1:1. Qualifications are given by Paul relative to both in 1 Timothy 3. In ancient times they began to elevate one man making him THE bishop while others remained elders or a bit lower. Shelly came along expressing his views that men do not have to be fathers or even married to serve in this capacity. The New Testament knows nothing about bachelor bishops or elders who have never been fathers. Don Finto comes along in Nashville and lays claim to being a modern day apostle. Others come along and deny any authority inheres

the eldership with the exception of "example" authority which amounts to NONE at all! Lynn Mitchell and Robert Randolph come along and see nothing wrong in having women in the eldership. They argue publicly for such in the following statements.

I have no problem with women serving as elders today. I think that effectively that is what the older women were doing referencing Titus...I would not take any exception to what brother Randolph said. I think we do need to look at the biblical material on the elderesses that are mentioned in Titus and Timothy and try to find out what the functions were of the males who were called elders and females who were called elders" (Gender and Ministry, pp. 74, 75).

For a long, long time there have been misconceptions relative to elders. Some have placed elders and deacons on the same par with both groups overseeing the church. Others have said elders were over the spiritual aspect of the church and deacons over the physical.

It is becoming popular now to have a rotation of elders serving one, three or five years and then allowing others to do the same. Some have claimed there is really no appointment to this work but that men just somewhat grow into it. Some have even argued that one cannot really be sure who the elders are. Paul and the Ephesians did in Acts 20. So did the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13. So did the Hebrews in Hebrews 13:17. Some have said "once an elder, always an elder." This makes no more sense than "once in grace, always in grace."

God has revealed His pattern for organization in the church of His son. We had better adhere to it if we except to please Him and His Son.

Mission Changes

Change Agents are not content to leave intact what Heaven outlined as the mission of the Lord's church on the earth. The threefold work of evangelism, edification and benevolence is old hat to them. Such concepts are out--WAY OUT as far as Change Agents

are concerned. Entertainment is IN; recreation is IN; meeting the needs of the whole man is IN; making the church something like a social club in IN; turning it into a glorified country club in IN; making people feel good is IN; preaching an old fashioned gospel that afflicts the comfortable and comforts the afflicted is OUT. The old church we have known and loved is on its way out as far as men in masse are concerned. The door is opened wide and with a fond welcome awaiting for the cultural church to emerge into reality. I recently read of one person changing from conservative church to a more liberal one. The reason, as given in essence, was, "I now am in a place where grace really operates. We can do anything here we want to and God's grace will cover it." Do you wonder why this grace-only philosophy is capturing people right and left? Here it is spelled out clearly! People do not have to feel bad about their sins anymore. Rules, regulations, restraints and laws

are too cumbersome. Grace only erases all such.

Change agents have declared war on sermons that deal with how to identify the church and differentiate it from denominationalism.

They are right at home speaking at denominational services as keynoters and singing heartily with mechanical music in the cooperative services. Nashville has it; Florence has it; Abilene has it; San Antonio has it. Just moments before typing these lines a sound and solid gospel preacher in Mississippi called to tell me that it has now hit his area of the state. Neither the church nor its mission is distinctive anymore among many of our members. Read it and weep! 'Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law...I beheld the transgressors and was grieved; because they kept not thy word" (Psalm 119:136-158).

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Ripley, Tennessee 38063

...God Made Woman

A Christian woman has the potential of reaching the pentacle of influence in the home, the church and society. In the world drowning in sin, Christians women can heal and preserve (Matthew 5:13).

Some today are asking, "What is a woman's role? What are her limitations?" To understand these and the many other questions, we must look to the beginning. Why did God make woman? Let us observe:

I. God made woman to fill a need. Woman was created as a "help meet" for man (Genesis 2:7-18). She is a helper properly suited for him. Through all the animals Adam searched, but an help meet was not found (Genesis 2:18-19). So, "...the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam...and he took one of his ribs...and [of] the rib...made he a woman, and brought her unto the man."

II. God made woman as the

glory of man. Man, the Bible says, was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). Paul expounds on this by saying, "For a man...is the image and glory of God" (I Corinthians 11:7). Woman is also the image of God (Genesis 1:27), but she is "the glory of man" (I Corinthians 11:7). Thus, a woman's role should be based upon this placement in creation.

III. God made woman in subjection to man. Genesis records how the woman was beguiled by the serpent. She brought sin into the world by her failure to obey (Genesis 3:1-6). Paul wrote that "...Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into the transgression" (I Timothy 2:12-14). As a result of her sin God told Eve, "...thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

IV. God made woman to bear children. This point

should not be considered as chauvinistic, at least not in this context, but rather as a recognition of the privilege and honor granted by God. It is by the seed of woman that the Savior entered into the world (Genesis 3:15). The multiplication of pain came as a result of sin, but the resultant honor is not diminished (Genesis 3:16; I Timothy 2:15). It is recognized that some women are medically hindered or incapable of bearing children, but such exceptions would not nullify the rule. Paul revealed God's ideal plan for women when he wrote, 'I desire, therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, rule the household, give no occasion to the adversary for reviling" (I Timothy 5:14). Eve was honored with her name as the "mother of all living" (Genesis 3:20).

V. God made woman with

purpose: well defined, extraordinary, essential purpose. Husbands should honor and love their wives. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for it..." (Ephesians 5:22-23). Godly women should be given

the respect they deserve as the fill their role as the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13).

M. Floyd Bailey, Jr.
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Most Of a Minute Prayer To Home

Occasionally, my preaching will take me out of town and away from home. When that happens, several things occur. I very quickly miss my family, and all the security, warmth, and love in my home. I also find myself making phone calls often if I'm gone any length of time. Reason? I just can't help keeping in touch with my home.

Did you ever consider that Christians are that way with prayers? Philippians 3:20 says that "our citizenship is in heaven."

It's only natural that a New Testament Christian would "pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17). He (or she) loves the city which hath foundations, heaven, and must keep in touch with that heaven. Because it's home.

Prayer for a faithful Christian is the fulfillment of the need to keep in touch with that home.

Glenn Colley

How Do You Spell Disappointment?

Some might say it was rotten, no-good, dirty, Monday. You know, the day when everything that can go wrong does go wrong. Although it was not that bad of a day for me, the news I received from others was not that good.

A message on the answering machine at the office revealed that a preacher friend of mine in the local hospital, a victim of a three-wheeler accident. As I visited him, he shared with me that "today had been a bad day." He had broken his leg in three places, and the doctor had suggested to him the possibility of him being "out of commission" for a year. He said, "It was a minor thing, but my I.V. came out and they could not find a

vein. When they did, it came out again. I told them just to cover me up, and leave it out." Needless to say, the wreck could have been worse, but it was hard for him to deal with (and rightly so).

Other news throughout the day was not so good. Ben (our son) was diagnosed as having two nodules upon his vocal chords (a common problem among preachers) He is not to talk for a month, and hopefully by then they will have gone away. Another friend called me, stating that he had just received the message that he had been terminated from his job.

How Do You Handle Disappointment? Someone has suggested that there is only one place for people who are problem-free, "it is

called the cemetery." What are some things that we can think upon to help us with the problems and trials of this life?

1. Realize that Christians and good people will have problems. Paul put it this way when he wrote 2 Timothy 3:12 "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Or Jesus spoke these words of encouragement to us when he said, in John 16:33 "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

2. Accept the premise that things could be worse. In the three cases that I

mentioned above, the situation could have been worse, or in my preacher friend's situation, fatal. Often, there is a silver lining in the clouds. We know that God will make the best of a bad situation. In Romans 8:28 He tells us, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose."

3. Realize that we have a Savior and friends who can be of help to us. In grief classes that I have taught, I have heard folks say so many times, "I did not know I had so many friends until I really needed them." It is only proper for us to see the needs of others and try to help them. Paul admonishes us in Galatians 6:10, "As we have

therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Above all, we have a Savior who we can "cast all our care upon, for the careth for you." (Peter 5:7) According to Hebrews 4:15-16 we do have a Savior that understands the trials, frustrations, and heartaches of this life. We do have the promise that we can pray through him unto his Father for help and aid.

May these words help us as we go through the trials and challenges of this life. **Heaven will surely be worth it all!**

Don Williams
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Killen, AL. 35645

"Brother, Why Do You Preach?"

Neal Pollard

Church discipline. Complainers. Hypocrisy. Standing "alone" on an unpopular issue. Counseling the extremely troubled and hurting. Problems. Up close views of sinful humanity. So many things slither by the preacher in local work. There are a few days in the life of every preacher when he asks himself, "why do I preach?" Most can, even in days of depression, list many reasons why he should persevere in his "profession".

This writer is often asked, "So, why did you 'take up' preaching?" or "how did you get into 'this line' of work?" All preachers are asked this, not because their motives are suspect but rather because the tasks related to preaching are unlike any other "job". The former student of Gamaliel and persecutor of Christians (Acts 22:3-4) is converted to Christ (Acts 22:16). Thereafter, he zealously

devotes himself to preaching the gospel (2 Timothy 4:6) despite the "great things he must suffer for [Christ's] name's sake" (Acts 9:16). His sufferings are well chronicled (see Acts 21:27-28:31; 2 Corinthians 11:16-12:18; 2 Timothy 4:10; et al). Sadly, some still seemed to question Paul's integrity and motivation.

Paul's purpose among the Thessalonian church was seemingly questioned. Gaebelien suggests that Paul was 'subjected to a constant barrage of accusations, and Thessalonian Christians may easily have begun to question Paul's sincerity' (The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol. 11, 249-250). Indeed, Paul writes, "for our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile..." (I Thessalonians 2:3). Raymond Kelcy rightly notes that uncleanness here means "unclean, impure motives" (The Living Word

Commentary, Vol. 13, 40). Perhaps his brethren were silently wondering, "brother, why are you a preacher?" As if to answer his silent critics, Paul cites his motives (and motives which should drive gospel preachers today). Observe this great text (I Thessalonians 2:1-20). Herein are the reasons one should preach.

"I Am A Steward Of The Divine Word" (I Thessalonians 2:4). Paul says, "we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel..." The preacher will give an account of whether he has preached truth or error (James 3:1). Not every one that preaches will be rewarded with heaven (Matthew 7:21). Paul realized what all God's preachers must, that we are entrusted with a divine message, the word of truth and soberness (Acts 26:25), and the standard by which we one day will be judged (John 12:48).

"I Love The Souls Of Men" (I Thessalonians 2:8). Words like "affectionately desirous" and "dear" described Paul's feelings toward those to whom he preached. Hear the Pauline approach to preaching. To Corinth, he wrote, "and I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; if I love you more abundantly, am I loved the less?" (2 Corinthians 12:15, ASV). Paul was eager himself for souls (8), labor night and day (9), and constantly encourage the hearers (11). Why? Paul loved souls (read Romans 9:3)!

"I Am Devoted To The Kingdom" (I Thessalonians 2:12). The kingdom is that precious institution, also known as the church (Matthew 16:18-19), that place of safety (Acts 2:47), and that planned body from before clocks were wound (Ephesians 3:9-10). The kingdom, by Paul's inspired

attestation, is the property of God (His "kingdom", 14). Can you imagine Paul belittling the church, poking fun at it, or undermining divinely ordained things like elderships, acapella music, or baptism?

Paul told the Philippians (1:15) that some preach "Christ even of envy and strife." Paul told the Philippians (1:16) that some preach Christ insincerely. Paul told the Philippians (1:18) that some preachers preach "in pretence" ("using the name of Christ as a cover or mask for personal and selfish ends", Rienecker p. 546). Such preachers may successfully lead souls to heaven, but sad will be the preacher who stands before Christ having preached him from impure motives like "fame", "fortune", or "gain".

"Brother, why do you preach?"

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

(Psalms 16:10)

JULY 14, 1995

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- Blessings In Christ
- Romans 13 Answers Some Of America's Problems (Part 1)
- Changing Views Toward The Church (No. 8)
 - Don't Give Up - Don't Ever Give Up
- Baptism Is Essential For Salvation
- An "Also" Religion

Volume 32 Number 24
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

he

Blessings In Christ

Johnny Ramsey

The most vivid contrast I can find in the Bible is that of Christ's words to Laodicea and Paul's sublime writing in Romans the eighth chapter. It is manifestly true that the lukewarm Laodiceans had everything but the Lord. That tragic truth becomes even sadder when one realizes they were heir to all spiritual blessings. Living beneath their privileges caused them to be spiritually blind, miserable, naked and wretched. To the contrary, Romans 8 tells us that in the fullness of Christ there can be found no desolation, hesitation, separation, exasperation, condemnation or desperation!

It is true, of course, that externally, persecution and oppression can come to the Christian. But, to the loyal follower of Jesus such things "move us not" (Acts 20:24). In fact, I Peter 1:7-9, indicates that these matters actually draw us nearer to the Lord of Glory:

"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: Whom having not seen ye love; in whom though now ye

see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of the your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

Is it any wonder that the inspired apostle thus wrote in Romans 8:18:

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Truly, the gem of the grand treatise known as Romans, if not indeed the choice section of the entire Bible, is Romans, chapter eight. Sublime, profound, spiritual, stirring, sweet, inspirational, enthralling, captivating - - all these descriptive terms, and more, set forth the beauty, scope and grandeur of this provocative section of Holy Writ.

This passage begins with the phrase: "In Christ Jesus" and ends with the same expression. In between these opening and closing verses one can find at least 14 specific blessings which belong to all those who are faithfully serving the Redeemer. We can now understand better Isaiah's enthusiasm for the coming Messiah as found in Isaiah 25:9:

"And it shall be said in that

day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us; This is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

Let us now give notice to the privileges, joys and blessings found for Christians in Romans 8:

1. No Condemnation
2. Freedom
3. Life and Peace
4. Christ In Us
5. Glorious Resurrection Anticipated
6. Being Led By The Spirit
7. Children of God
8. Joint-Heirs With Christ
9. Help In Prayer
10. All Things For Our Good
11. Conformation To Christ's Image
12. Nothing To Separate Us From The Lord
13. We Are More Than Conquerors

Such grand and glorious benefits ought to make us fully aware of the rich heritage that belongs to the disciples of the Galilean. As we contemplate the abundant joys of the religion our Lord made possible we must exclaim with the songwriter:

"I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene and wonder how he could love me a sinner, condemned, unclean."

Truly, the love of God

cannot be fathomed by us (Romans 11:33-34) but it can be so deeply appreciated that we will rejoice in the language of the Psalmist: "From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God" (Psalm 90:2). This great section of God's Word, in the very heart of the book of Romans, tells us of consecration and dedication on our part, of intercession and salvation on God's part, and of inspiration, exception and eager anticipation. These words typify the power-packed nature of the chapter. One of the key words is hope. It would seem that the poet, Phoebe Cary, captured the essential sentiment of this setting in a poem called Nearer Home:

"One sweetly solemn thought Comes to me o'er and o'er: I am nearer my home today Than I ever have been before-

Father, perfect my trust; Let my spirit feel in death, That her feet are firmly set On the rock of the living faith!"

As Romans 8 rushes to its graphic, swelling close, one cannot keep back the exuberant spirit of gratitude for the Lord of Glory. Truly the way of the cross leads home and the Christ of that cross, in His compelling love,

will grant us the victory. For "he that is in us is greater than he that is in them" (I John 4:4) and "this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4). Christ Jesus, in his resplendent beauty, and the power of the righteous faith form an unbeatable combination. We Are More Than Conquerors Through Him Who Loved Us!

"Christ will me His aid afford, never to fall, Never to fall,

While I find my precious Lord sweeter than all, sweeter than all.

Jesus is now, and ever will be, sweeter than all the world to me,

Since I heard his loving call, sweeter than all, sweeter than all."

Let the Book of Revelation have the last say. The Son of Man has passed through the clouds unto the Ancient of Days and now a great multitude extols His powerful presence:

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom and strength and honor, and glory, and blessing." (Revelation 5:15). When nothing can separate us from such a Savior Divine we are truly more than Conquerors!

POSITION OPENING

We currently are seeking a man to fill a position with the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ in Jasper AL. He needs to be married, under 40 years old, and sound in the faith. The position responsibilities include heading up the youth program, some weekly radio preaching, occasional pulpit preaching, and editing of the church bulletin. Interested parties should contact the: Sixth Ave. Church of Christ 1501 Sixth Ave. Jasper, AL. 35501 (205)-384-6446

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Come and worship with us at
Sixth Avenue Church of Christ

We hope to see you soon!

Romans 13

Answers Some Of America's Problems (Part 1)

Glenn Colley

While many governments through the centuries have become corrupt, government in theory is a good and necessary concept. Society needs law to regulate and govern human conduct. We all believe that. Even hardened criminals, who through their lives have often broken and scorned the law, invoke the law for protection when they feel they've been unjustly treated.

Romans 13 teaches us some important things regarding Christians and civil government. First, consider the broad, sweeping introduction to this chapter: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." Simply put, we are all responsible to obey the laws of the government under which we live. God doesn't necessarily approve all decisions made by a particular government, but He does approve of the existence of government over us. God has primary authority, and of course we must obey Him first, even when other authorities contradict Him (Acts 5:29).

For this study in part one we will consider that there are two major responsibilities of government to its citizens.

Then next week, in part two, we will consider the three responsibilities which this chapter teaches citizens have to their government.

Two Responsibilities The Government Has To Its Citizens:

I National Safety. This is done Biblically by protecting the community, and by punishing the lawbreaker. Verse three says, "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenge to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

Punishment of crime is clearly a Biblical concept. It is right to resist the criminal element in our communities. Have you ever considered that there was no prison system in Israel? We read of cities of refuge, yet of no prison. Why, then, weren't they quickly overrun with corruption from crime? Why didn't they quickly look like some of the "battle zones" of Americas inter-cities? Simply because they eliminated the criminal. Simple. Prisons

were a Roman concept.

Governments also have a responsibility to protect its communities. Verse three uses the word "terror", and is applied to those who would consider doing evil, or breaking the law. The only people who should live in fear under this kind of government are those who break the law. Governments are to effectively restrain the evil, not to create or protect it. I read recently an article which related an interview with a man from Ethiopia. The Ethiopian talked of the terrible turmoil his government has experienced. He was then asked about the crime situation there. He said that three years ago there was a rape in the capitol, Addis Ababa, a city of a million people. Then he added, "There hasn't been one since, because the rapist was hanging in the marketplace the next day." Don't misunderstand me. I'm not interested in adopting all the government ideals from this man's homeland. I'm proud to be an American. But they do seem to understand something that is taught in Romans 13. The government should protect its citizens by making punishment a terror to those who would threaten the community.

A few months ago the

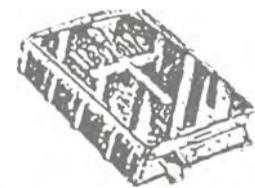
news was filled with talk of a vandalist teenager who destroyed some property over in Singapore. He apparently considered it sport. Caning was the punishment. Some in America were outraged at this kind of punishment. They would prefer the way such crime is handled over here. Caning works in Singapore. It would work in America. We would have less crime, vandalism, and property destruction if criminals were afraid of the punishment for crime.

Incidentally, Romans 13 teaches that governments have the Biblical right to capital punishment. Verse 4 says, "...for he beareth not the sword in vain..." Capitol punishment is clearly implied and endorsed. You don't use a sword for spanking, or just for incarceration. You kill with the sword. The sword is a symbol of death. Crime enslaves an individual and a nation, and we will never be able to deal with crime in America as long as criminals don't truly fear the punishment given by our government.

II National Solvency.

Solvency simply means that a government is able to pay its legal debt. A government, like individuals, should never make a debt it cannot pay. How does a government pay its debts? By exacting taxes. I don't know anyone who enjoys paying taxes, and most of us complain once in awhile about them. Yet, taxes are a Biblical teaching. Romans 13 says, "For this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." (verse 6,7) "Tribute" was direct taxes. "Custom" was toll or tariff on certain goods. On at least two occasions Jesus paid taxes, Matthew 17:24-27, and Matthew 22:17-21.

Next week this column will be part two of this examination of how Romans 13 answers some of America's problems.



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Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these. Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:19-21

Hudson Nichols Died June 16

Hudson Nichols, 65, of Jasper, Alabama, died at his residence June 16. He had suffered from Leukemia about two and one-half years. This illness eventually forced his retirement from preaching. he moved back to Jasper, where he grew up. Death claimed him less than three months later.

His first eleven years of schooling were at Jasper, where his father (the late Gus Nichols) preached for forty three years. For his senior year Hudson attended David Lipscomb High School, then graduated from Freed-Hardeman College. However, this did not terminate his studies, and in the ensuing years he amassed a library of hundreds of volumes.

At the age of fourteen, Hudson preached his first sermon, and (like his father) he spent the rest of his life preaching the gospel of Christ. he served as local minister for churches of Christ in Armory, and Iuka, MS, Rayville, LA, Savannah,

TN, Oxford, AL. Gastonia, NC, Owensboro, KY, Evansville, IN, and the Yeaman Church of Christ, Falls of Rough, KY. In addition to his local ministry, he preached in revivals in at least fourteen states.

Hudson also taught in the School of Biblical Knowledge, Evansville, IN, for four years. He served as the Director of that school for fifteen months. At the same time he did "mission" work at Oakland City, IN. All this work was under the oversight of the elders of the Oak Hill church in Evansville.

For many years Hudson served on the board of Central Alabama Christian Youth Camp ["CACY Camp"]. As a teacher, and a counselor, as well as by personal friendship, he touched the lives of countless young people. Even in his later years he served on the Board, and also as a teacher, at West Kentucky Christian Youth Camp, Marion, KY.

Funeral services were

Sunday, June 18, at the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ in Jasper. Two of his brothers, Hardeman Nichols, of Dallas, TX, and Flavil Nichols, of Jasper, spoke. Brad Dillingham, of Corinth, MS, Hudson's co-worker in North Carolina, in 1980-1981, conducted the graveside rites in Walker Memory Gardens, at Jasper.

Hudson is survived by his wife: Marilyn (nee: Harwell, who grew up in Corinth, MS, whom he met at Freed-Hardeman); and by two sons: Hudson Ray Nichols (and his wife Sherry), of Owensboro, KY, and Lindsey Joe Nichols (and his wife Cathy), of Jasper. He leaves also one grandson: Derek Nichols, of Jasper, and two granddaughters: Lauren Nichols, of Jasper, and Amanda Nichols, of Owensboro, KY.

Other survivors include three sisters: Gracie (Mrs. Frank D.) Young, Pulaski, TN, Bertha (Mrs. G. Rile) Blackwood, Jasper, Carrie

(Mrs. W. T.) Hamilton, Waxahachie, TX; and by three brothers: Flavil H. Nichols, Jasper, Foy W. Nichols, Indianapolis, IN, and S. Hardeman Nichols, Dallas, TX. His mother-in-law, Mrs. Kate Harwell, of Corinth MS also survives him.

Hudson was proceeded in death by an infant unnamed son in 1952. A daughter, Sharon Sue Nichols, died in 1979. His parents, Mr. & Mrs. Gus Nichols, predeceased him, as did also one sister, Vodie (Mrs. A. J.) Kerr.

The last Sunday He was able to attend worship, the church at Yeaman gave him and Marilyn a plaque, which reads:

Presented to Hudson and Marilyn:
You came in 1990, and worked with us until 1995. You leave us stronger in faith.
Our love and respect go with you.
Yeaman Church of Christ
April 9, 1995.

The Yeaman church also gave all that contributed that day above their budget to start a "Retirement Fund" for Hudson and Marilyn. Every congregation in Grayson County sent to this fund (either then, or later); and other churches and individuals (some of whom are not Christians!) have subsequently contributed to it.

Gifts in Hudson's memory may be sent to the Sharon Sue Nichols Memorial Scholarship Fund, Freed Hardeman University, Henderson, TN 38340. Before her death, their daughter was a kindergarten teacher, and this fund helps train Early Childhood Education majors.

Marilyn may be contacted by telephone at (205) 384-9229, or at P.O. Box 1724, Jasper, AL. 35502.

—Submitted by Flavil H. Nichols, Route 9. Box 541, Jasper, AL. 35501.

Don't Give Up - Don't Ever Give Up

By Allen Webster

The late Jimmy Valvano was a respected coach and TV sports commentator. He took the North Carolina State Cougars to the Final Four and was the unlikely winner of the 1983 national basketball championship over Houston's "Phi Slamma Jamma". In his fight with cancer, Coach V's battle cry was heard 'round the world - "Don't give up. Don't ever give up."

Perseverance pays in all areas of life, but especially in the realm of spiritual things. The Scriptures sometimes compare living the Christian life to running in a race. "Wherefore. . .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" (Hebrews. 12:1; cf. I Corinthians. 9:24-26). It is not a sprint or a dash, but a marathon. It requires discipline and stamina. *Quit* cannot be on the Christians vocabulary list.

There are many different areas where quitting can be fatal.

- Are your overtures to win a lost husband or wife rejected? Don't give up. Don't ever give up (I Corinthians 7:16; I Peter 3:1-7).

- Have you been trying for years to convert a friend? Don't give up. Don't ever give up (Proverbs 11:30; Matthew 16:26).

- Having trouble with a teenager? Don't give up. Don't ever give up (Luke

15:10; I Corinthians 13:4).

- Having problems keeping your marriage together? Don't give up. Don't ever give up (Matthew 19:6-9; Malachi 2:16).

- Feeling spiritually weak and worn out? Don't give up. Don't ever give up (Galatians 6:9).

- Is the church where you worship drifting into liberalism? Does the tide seem too strong to stem? Don't give up. Don't ever give up. You may be able to save at least some from going the way of Balaam (Jude 11; read the letters to the churches, Revelations 2-3).

- Is an unfaithful Christian resisting efforts to win him back?

(Continued on page 4)

Most Of a Minute Baptism Is Essential For Salvation

One of the most interesting and most confused subjects in the Bible is that of baptism. There are two major ideas among people. One, is that we are saved before we are baptized; the other is, that baptism is an act that is essential for salvation. Which is true? Consider these verses on baptism and then decided.

--Jesus: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16).

--Paul: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27).

--Peter: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38).

Annanias: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins..." (Acts 22:16).

It's not hard to see that baptism is essential for salvation.

Glenn Colley

Don't Give Up - Don't Every Give Up - Continued from Page 3

Don't give up. Don't ever give up (James 5:19, 20).

•Having physical problems and having to expend great effort to attend worship services? Don't give up (Hebrews 10:25).

Coach Valvano was only echoing what the Bible had said all along. Paul wrote, "Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory" (Ephesians 3:13). "But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing" (II Thessalonians 3:13).

Eternal life is promised "to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality. . ." (Romans 2:7). Jesus said, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13). James instructed: "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain" (5:7).

According to local legend,

on a dark night in 1803 all the servants on a Virginia plantation were quiet, for the master's wife, mother of three children, was dying. Since burials were fast in the south at that time, the young wife was laid to rest by the next afternoon in the family vault under the great house. Her husband retired to his room to sorrow in silence. Only her sister was left to carry on the duties of the great plantation.

When evening came, though she knew no one would eat, this sister went down into the food

cellar, next to the long passage which led to the burial vault. There, in the dim light, she suddenly stood petrified. She distinctly heard the sound of hollow pounding. She screamed. In a moment heavy footsteps beat down the stairs and the husband burst into the cellar. Again the unmistakable sound of beating fists upon a coffin lid. With one bound he broke open the door to the burial vaults, rushed to the coffin, and yanked off the lid. A white-clad figure sat up, reached out lily-white

arms and clasped them around his neck!

Amazingly, the young wife was alive! Victim of a strange coma known as catalepsy, she had been buried alive. She regained her health and four years later gave birth to a son--and not just any son--Robert E. Lee, whom some say was the world's greatest military genius. They had given up on her too early and it almost proved fatal.

Does the road to heaven seem too long? *Don't give up. Don't ever give up.*

An "Also" Religion

Winfred Clark

One will find the word, "also", many times in the Bible. It means, "in addition" or "even as", depending upon the context in which it is found. It is interesting and enlightening to trace this word through the New Testament. You will find it provides some very interesting things concerning the religion of Christ.

1. There is the "also" of worldwide concern.

When Mark recorded some of the words and works of Jesus he had occasion to record a statement of our Lord that gives due emphasis to this. "Let us go into the next town that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth" (Mark 1:38). Did you notice the word "also"? In this case it means "in addition to". He had already preached in the town of Capernaum (Mark 1:21). But there is more to the world than Capernaum. Jesus would include other towns and villages also.

Paul said, "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also" (Romans 1:15). He had just spoken of the fact that he was "debtor both to the Greeks and the Barbarians; both to the wise and the unwise" (Romans 1:14). But he bore a concern for those who were in Rome "also". The concern that he expressed was the kind of concern that is found in the commission of our Lord. Remember that he said, "Go into all the world" (Mark 16:15). Paul and others

worked under the compulsion of that commission. There was of necessity, a worldwide concern.

2. There is the "also" of brotherly love.

As you trace the word "also" in your search for new insights you will find it attached to the subject of brotherly love. Listen to our Lord. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34). You will see that the word "also" means "even as". Jesus had just a commandment concerning their love for one another. Then he moved on to speak of the kind of love that is to be true of his disciples (John 13:35). This kind of love is to become the badge for his disciples. Jesus insisted that the kind of love he showed to his disciples should "also" be the same kind that they are to show to one another.

John the apostle surely learned this lesson about brotherly love. He had so much to say about this subject in his later writings. Over and over he emphasized the love that brethren are to have for one another. He remembered what Jesus had said and such is evidenced by "And this is the commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment" (I John 3:23). John had not forgotten the thing that his Lord had commanded. Again he said, "Beloved, let us love one

another" (I John 4:7). Again he said, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (I John 4:11).

John was a believer in the premise that the love of God for us ought to beget love in us for one another. If we really appreciate that love which God had for us then we will not have much problem loving our brethren. When we think that some of our brethren are difficult to love we need to remember that God still loves them and us. In fact, he loves us when others may not see very much in us that is lovable.

3. There is the "also" of stewardship

This is seen in Paul's language to the church at Corinth: "Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, in utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us. see that ye abound in this grace also" (II Corinthians 8:7). This is Paul's appeal for them to be faithful in their promise to give as they have been prospered (I Corinthians 16:1-2). They had made a promise a year before to have a part in the effort to help those who were in need (2 Corinthians 9:2). Yes, they possessed a number of good qualities such as faith and love. They needed to also show the same kind of spiritual concern in the matter of stewardship. Paul wanted those at Corinth to practice "also" religion.

4. There is the "also" of unity.

Jesus set forth this idea in his attempt to teach a group of Pharisees. He said, "And other

sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd" (John 10:16). This verse ought to be read as one thinks of the effort on the part of denominational people to justify division by what is said later in this book of the vine and the branches (John 15:1-6). In so many cases these verses are used as if the Bible would justify religious division. This is surely not the case with our Lord. His strong emphasis was upon the idea of unity. This is plainly taught in his saying, "and there shall be one fold and one shepherd" (John 10:16). In fact he is showing the Jews that they will be in the same fold with Gentiles. There would not be one fold for the Jew and another for the Gentile. There would be one fold. There would only be one Shepherd.

5. There is the "also" of Consistent Teaching

This is surely a vital thing in the religion of Christ. You can be sure that you will not find duplicity in the gospel of Jesus Christ. That which was taught by Jesus and the apostles was always the truth. In fact, Jesus is the very embodiment of truth (John 14:6). The apostles were guided by the "Spirit of truth" (John 16:13).

That which was taught as truth in one place to one group was also taught in another place and to another group as truth. This is underscored time and again in the new testament in passages like (Acts 15:27):

"We have sent therefore Judas and Silas who shall also tell you the same things by mouth". This assurance has to do with the letter that had been written in Jerusalem concerning the place of the Gentiles in God's scheme of things (Acts 15:23-29). These men who came with the letter were Prophets. They said "also" the same thing that the letter said. They would not have the right to say anything else. If they are going to be faithful to their mission such would be required.

We need not think that the change of time has changed the content of truth. It is the same in every generation and in every nation. This is a lesson that many of our day would surely need to learn. With all the clamor about "baby boomers" and what they want, many are trying to fashion the church and the truth to suit their desires. There is talk of our "connecting". This is simply fashioning religion so that it will fit what this modern generation will accept. But that is not the way it is with the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ. The change that must be made is on the part of men to meet the requirements of the gospel. The teaching of the gospel is to remain the same. In fact, Jesus announced: "...the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

Yes, Christianity is an "also" religion.

JULY 21, 1995

• See Articles Inside:

- * Some People Who Touched Paul's Life
- * Romans 13 Answers Some Of America's Problems (Part 2)
 - * The Personal Touch
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- * Things Left Within Our Trust
 - * What Will They Say At Your Funeral?
 - * Allegiance

Volume 32 Number 25
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

h the

Some People Who Touched Paul's

There are at least 100 different men and women named in Acts and Paul's letters, as a part of his circle of friends and fellow laborers. Paul could not do the job by himself. A number of these are listed in Paul's last book, actually in his last chapter (2 Timothy 4:11-13). He is sitting in a prison cell, knowing that death is near, and he muses about those who have touched his life. Here are some of those he names and a lesson we can learn from each.

Luke (4:11), the loyal laborer. He is the "beloved physician" (Col. 4:14) who had constantly traveled with Paul since the stay at Troas on the second missionary journey (Acts 16:8-11; cf. to Philippi, Acts 16:10-12; to Jerusalem on the third missionary journey, Acts 20:5-21:17; to Rome, Acts 27; during first imprisonment, Col. 4:14; Phile. 24). Being a doctor, he was probably a great help to Paul as he faced numerous injuries in his labors. Paul may have even dictated this letter (2 Timothy) to Luke (being a doctor, Luke must have appreciated Paul's reference to gangrene, 2 Timothy 2:17). Luke may have stayed to testify in Paul's behalf. All others had either forsaken Paul or been sent on errands, "only Luke is with me." From Luke we learn that being dependable is one of the chief characteristics of a good servant of God. Ability is good. Availability is better.

Crescens (4:10), the anonymous co-laborer. He was likely sent by Paul to Galatia. We know nothing else of him, but gain encouragement that he was there to help Paul in the hour of need. The RV margin gives Gaul as an alternative

reading here; and, if that is correct, Crescens' going there may have indicated that Paul on the trip to Spain (which he very probably made between the first and second imprisonments), might have established congregations in Gaul (France) (Coffman). From Crescens we learn that we do not have to be noticed to be helpful to the Lord's cause. Let God have the glory and we care not who gets the credit.

Titus (4:10), the trusted "troubleshooter." Paul's close associate was first taken, probably as a recent Gentile convert, to the Jerusalem Council as a "test case" regarding circumcision (Gal. 2:3). He had been involved in helping straighten out the problems in the Corinthian church (2 Cor. 2:12,13; 7:6, 13-16; 8:16-24). Paul, during the first Roman imprisonment, had left Titus in Crete to straighten out the problems in the churches there (Tit 1:5). Titus had met Paul at Nicopolis during the period between Paul's arrests (Tit. 3:12). Now Paul had summoned him to Rome and sent him to Dalmatia, across the Adriatic Sea from Southern Italy (modern Yugoslavia). From Titus we learn that we can help the Lord's cause by smoothing out problems that develop between brethren (cf. Mt. 5:9).

Mark, the "come back" kid (4:11). He was a cousin of Barnabas, Paul's first partner in missionary service (Acts 13:1-3). His mother was a noted Christian in Jerusalem (Acts 12:5, 12) and he was chosen to travel with Paul on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:5). He was an "assistant" (hupereten, a keeper of

documents in the synagogue, cf. Lk. 4:20). Unfortunately, John Mark failed on that journey (Acts 13:13). Paul refused to take Mark on the second trip, and this led to a falling out between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36-41). However, Paul would not close his portion of the Bible without a full "reinstatement" of Mark. Paul had twelve years earlier mentioned him as a worker during the first imprisonment (Col. 4:10; Phil. 24). Mark was also involved during this time with Peter in Rome (1 Peter 5:13). He now admitted that John Mark was a valuable (profitable, euchrestos, 2 Tim. 2:21; Phile. 11) worker ("ministry" is diakonian), and he wanted Mark with him in Rome. How Mark must have felt to finally here words of commendation from Paul! The one who had had no use for him now said that he was useful! How good it is to know that one failure in Christian service need not make one's whole life a failure. Tradition says that Mark was a pioneer in Egyptian mission work (Alexandria) From Mark we learn that one mistake, even a serious one, does not keep one from being of valuable service in the kingdom.

Tychicus (4:12), the "relief pitcher." Tychicus was a believer from the province of Asia (Acts 20:4) who willingly accompanied Paul and probably ministered as a personal servant to the apostle. He was one of the messengers (apostoloi) who carried the contribution to the poor saints in Jerusalem (Acts 20:4; 2 Cor. 8:23). Since he was from Asia, Paul sent him, along with Onesimus, with letters to Ephesus (6:21:22) and Colossae

(4:7) during his first imprisonment. Paul may have sent Tychicus to Crete to relieve Titus (Titus 3:12). Now he was sending him to Ephesus to relieve Timothy. A relief pitcher may not get much glory, but he wins a lot of games! From Tychicus we learn that someone needs to be there to continue a good work after it has been going for awhile. There are some who are good at starting, but we need "finishers" as well.

Each of the men mentioned to this point (except Luke) was sent to an area that Paul had personally evangelized. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that Paul wanted to send a last message to each of these regions and also to have his companions to explain the situation to them. Also, Paul had been left alone in Rome (with Luke), and this may have been his own devising. Perhaps he was fearful of the imprisonment and execution of his friends.

Carpus (4:13), who shared what he had with God's servant. Carpus lived at Troas and showed Paul much hospitality. Paul must have departed in a hurry (perhaps being sought for arrest) because he left his cloak and books behind (or perhaps the weather was warm and he did not want to carry the cloak or need the books). Carpus was a faithful brother; he would guard them until somebody picked them up to take Paul. Even such so-called menial tasks are ministries for the Lord. As Timothy hurried to Rome, he could stop in Troas and get the cloak. He also wanted him to bring the books, and parchments, which may have been with Timothy all along (the grammatical structure

seems to indicate this, 4:13). Paul probably left them there in haste to depart. Some have speculated that he was arrested there and not given time to get his things.

The *cloak (phailones)*, only here in the new Testament) was a coarse, circular cape which fell down below the knees, with an opening for the head in the center. It had no sleeves and somewhat resembled the pancho popular in south Texas and Mexico. The cold in the Roman nights, even in summer, is well known; and Paul's prospect of possibly spending the winter in a dungeon without heating or proper clothing was not a welcome thought. We are not surprised that a scholar such as Paul wanted material for study and writing. Paul was a student until the very end of life. The first word *books (biblia)* probably refers to papyrus rolls and scrolls which likely contained Old Testament Scriptures. (Our word *Bible* come from this.) The second word *parchments (membranas)*, only here in the New Testament) literally means "skins" and refers to scrolls made of animal skins. It is not known for certain if the parchments had materials written on them (like New Testament books) or if he needed them to write letters to friends and churches. It may have been something he needed for his legal defense.

None of these men became as famous as Paul, but they all labored in the cause for which he died. He could not have done what he did without the assistance of others. Thanks be to God for co-workers.

...Allen Webster
Jacksonville, AL.

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Make this summer the most joyful ever when you spend time wrapped in the glory of Christ's love for us all.

Study the Word with us weekly.

Sixth Avenue Church of Christ
1501 6th. Avenue
Jasper, AL. 35501

Romans 13 Answers Some of America's Problems (Part 2)

Glenn Colley

In last week's article we considered two responsibilities which a government has to its citizens. Today let's study from this same chapter three responsibilities Christian citizens have to their government.

First, citizens are to comply with the laws of their government (Vs. 1-5). The passage reads,

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must

needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."

We are to obey the law. Naturally Paul presupposes that the law doesn't *require* the Christian to sin (Acts 5:29), and that the officer is enforcing the law, not *violating* the laws. Verse five gives two reasons that Christians should obey the laws of the land: "For wrath's sake," and "for conscience sake." We should obey civil laws because we are *afraid* of what happens to people who break the law. God has little sympathy for the man who suffers because he broke the law. I Peter 4:15 says "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed."

Note also that verse four says that the civil authority "beareth not the sword in vain." This is a clear endorsement of capital punishment. We should fear the consequences of breaking the law of the land.

Second, we should comply

with the laws of civil government for conscience sake. That is, we obey simply because God's commands us to obey. While some Americans consider compliance with civil laws as a matter only between themselves and the authorities, Christians hold a more weighty outlook. Compliance with the civil law is between the Christian and his God. We see this same Christian perspective with regard to servants and their masters (Col. 3:22), and wives to their husbands (Eph 5:22). Our relationships are all to some degree affected by our dedication to the Word.

The second responsibility Christians have to their government is to pay taxes. Verse six says "For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing." Benjamin Franklin said in 1789 "In this world nothing is certain but death and taxes." While having to pay taxes sometimes seems almost unbearable, the alternative is worse. To

refuse to pay our taxes is sinful. It causes grief in any society.

Furthermore, implied in this text is that we must pay our taxes even while disagreeing with the way our government uses tax revenue. The Christians to whom Paul was writing were to pay their taxes to Rome! Imagine all the sinful ways the Romans government spent revenues. Yet, the Christians were instructed "...pay ye tribute also..."

The third responsibility Christians have to their government is to be upstanding citizens. Verses seven through ten say "render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is

briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

How do you describe a good citizen? Good citizens pay their taxes. They respect authorities. They pay their debts. (Incidentally, this passage does not prohibit the making of loans. A man who makes the payments on a car loan or house loan as agreed, does not owe that debt at the time. This *would* however prohibit the failure to make payments as agreed upon.) They love other people, and wish to do no one any harm.

In America we have grave concerns. What direction is our government taking? What will America be like for our great grand children? In those times when your heart is filled with concern, stop, be quiet, and remember that he is the Lord (Psa. 46:10). His word is right and everlasting. We will obey and submit to Him, and He will care for us.

REMINDER: THE WORDS OF TRUTH LECTURESHIP SEPTEMBER 6-9, 1995

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The Personal Touch

Johnny Ramsey

We come today to discuss the book of John, the fourth account of the life of Christ, written to all mankind, stressing the Deity of Christ and his interest in the individual human being. The emphasis is on the human touch of Christ. The book of John is different from the other three accounts of the life of Christ because it was written much later than the other three and it indicates the reaction of the world to Christ and his kingdom. It also corrects errors that had arisen through the years since the establishment of Christianity on the day of Pentecost. It was written by the dearest friend the Lord had, the one to whom Christ committed the care of his mother in John chapter 19. It is a unique and beautiful book. In fact the opening stanza of the book of John is one of the richest. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God." We read that "He was the light that shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not." He came unto his own and His own received Him not. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." And we learn that the Law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ. All this in the prologue, the first 18 verses, of the beautiful first stanza of the book of John. John the immerser said in John 1:29 of Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin

of the world." And in this opening chapter of John, Jesus begins his human touch, his interest in the individual, in Andrew and Simon Peter, in Philip and Nathanael. In John 1:49 the explanation "Rabbi", thou art the son of God; thou art the king of Israel" is indicative of what we'll find in the rest of the book. In the last verse of the first chapter of John, we learn that Christ is our leader to Heaven, and by him and through Him we ascend and descend in the heavenly places. In John chapter 2 we read that Jesus knew what was in a man. And at the beginning of His personal ministry as well as at the end of it, he cleansed the temple, indicating the vanity, the worldliness, the shallowness, the profane nature of the Jewish nation in the 1st century. In John 3, we read of Nicodemus who is mentioned again in chapter 7 and in chapter 19. Jesus made an impact upon this ruler of the Jews who came to Jesus by night. Jesus said to him, "You must be born again to enter the kingdom. Born of water and the spirit." We have the beautiful verse 16 of John 3, well known to all Bible students. But verse 17 of John 3 is even more dramatic. "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." In John 4 we're introduced to the BAD Samaritan, the Samaritan woman who came to the well alone. Jesus told her all things that she had ever done. We have the famous statement in John

4:35 "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white already unto harvest." In John 5 Jesus' troubles begin as on the Sabbath Day he heals a lame man. In chapter 5, verse 28 and 29 we learn that when the Lord comes, all that are in the grave shall hear his voice and come forth. There will be one resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust. (Acts 24:15). In John 6 we have the famous sermon in Christ. He is the bread of life, contrasted with the manna in the wilderness. In John Chapter 7 his brothers tried him, saying "If you're really who you claim to be, go to the feast of the Tabernacles openly and show forth your claim." But Jesus let them know that he was on the Father's time schedule, not on theirs. And yet when he did go to the feast and begin to teach, this statement is indicative of the reaction of the people: "Never a man so spake as he!" (John 7:46). One of the beauty spots of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John is John 8:12. Jesus said: "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." And then the famous utterance of John 8:32. Christ said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." In John 9 he healed a man born blind and then went back to him to take care of his spiritual blindness. In John 10:10 we have a magnificent utterance! Christ said, "I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly." In John 11 at the

graveside of Lazarus he said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he die, yet shall he live. he that believeth in me shall never really die." And then in the climactic statement of John 12:48, Jesus said, "He that rejected 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." But if I had to choose just one verse in the whole book, that emphasizes the importance of Christ and His message, it would be John 14:6, where Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." In John chapter 15 we learn the practical nature of Christianity. In verse 8 of that chapter Jesus said, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." In John 16:13 he promised that the Holy Spirit would come and guide the apostles into all truth, and in John 17:17 he identified that truth as God's Word by saying "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." To Pilate he said in John 18:36, "My kingdom is NOT of this world." In John 19:30, suspended between heaven and earth he cried, "It is

finished!" He had finished the work God gave him to do. (John 6:38; John 17:4). And then in John Chapter 20, one of his friends exclaims at the empty tomb of Christ, "They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him." Today men HAVE taken away the authority of Christ, the church of Christ, the example of Christ, the worship Christ ordained, BUT they'll pay for it in the day of judgment. They rob themselves and become bereft of the best things this life affords by removing the Lord. Of course his body had not been stolen away from the grave. By the power of God, he had arisen. The last few verses of John 20 state the purpose of this book and of the three preceding ones in the New Testament: "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." And finally, in the last chapter, John 21, the haunting question asked three times of Simon Peter still yet rings in our ears as well--Christ said, "Lovest thou me? Lovest thou me? Lovest thou me?" Surely a study of the book of John ought to cause us to say, "Yes Lord, we love thee

Most of A Minute A Secret For Happiness

Everyone wants to be happy, but unfortunately we often look in the wrong places and do the wrong things. Our pursuits of happiness often land us in a bed of misery. However, the Bible offers people happiness through serving Christ, and I want to show you one of the secrets of happiness Jesus taught.

It's found in Luke 17:17. The context is of ten men who had the dreaded disease of leprosy. It must have been miserable. If a leper had a sick child, he couldn't care for it. If his wife died, he couldn't attend the funeral. He wore a cloth band around his head to warn people of his terrible disease. Jesus healed all ten. Now they can go home! Yet, only one turned back to say thank-you to Jesus. Jesus asked, "But where are the nine?"

Listen: One great secret of happiness in life is learning to express gratitude. Can't you think right now of people in your life to whom you owe a word or a note of thanks? Try it. You'll be glad you did. And while you're at it, remember God's blessings and what 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, "Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks."

Glenn Colley

SUBMITTING ARTICLES FOR PUBLICATION IN THE WORDS OF TRUTH

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Glenn Colley, editor
1501 6th Avenue

Things Left Within Our Trust

Paul often referred to Timothy as his son in the faith. Paul first visited Lystra, Timothy's home town, in Acts 14. Was it here that the young man responded to the gospel preached by Paul? He is truly one of the great men of the Bible. Read the compliment Paul gave of him in Phil. 2:19-24. Many great charges does Paul lay down to the young man Timothy. Among those is in I Timothy 6:20. "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust." This is a valuable lesson till this day. The Lord gave a parable in Matt. 25: 14-30 that again teaches accountability of the things entrusted his servants.

Hopefully, we realize that the Lord has entrusted us with some things. The Lord has gone on His journey; one day the day of reckoning will come. Will it be triumph or tragedy for us when that day comes? Read Matt. 25:21-26. See that the difference was made in the way the servants used that which was entrusted to them. Notice with me some of the things left within our trust.

I) THE SOUL: The soul is yours to lose or save (Matt. 16:26). It is worth more than the whole world. Only you can save yours (Acts 2:40). It is left in your trust. You have an eternal spirit made in the image of God. This spirit will live forever. You have

been entrusted with this greatest of possessions. Where will your soul live in eternity? The Bible speaks of the saving of the soul (Heb. 10:39) and saving the soul from death (Jam. 5:20). Friend, keep on guard for your soul. Obey the Lord's will and be faithful; there is no other way to keep the soul.

II) OUR CHILDREN: Children are an heritage from the Lord (Ps. 127:3). If you are a parent, think what has been entrusted to you. You bear the responsibility and the accountability of bringing them up in the ways of the Lord (Eph 6:4). All parents will one day be judged by the Lord as to how

they cared for this valuable possession placed within their trust.

III) THE GOSPEL: The context of I Tim. 6:20-21 seems to point toward the fact that here Timothy was entrusted with the gospel. He was to live it faithfully and teach it faithfully. Paul spoke of having this treasure in earthen vessels (II Cor. 4:7). We must live by it (Phil. 1:27), defend it (Phil. 1:17), and teach it to others (Mk. 16:15). It is a sobering thought to be entrusted with the gospel.

IV) OUR TALENTS: The parable of the talents surely could represent our abilities, privileges, opportunities, monetary capabilities and so

on. Think of all the things in this area committed to our trust. The parable of the talents teaches us that we are responsible for what we could be doing. We are called upon to do our best (I Cor. 15:58). Are you using your abilities and possessions for the Lord? We are stewards of them (I Cor. 4:2). Are we taking advantage of doors opened by the Lord (Rev. 3:8).

Friend, guard that which is committed to your trust. Won't it be grand to hear the Lord say, "Well done"!!

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What Will They Say At Your Funeral?

B. J. Clarke

If the Lord lingers in returning for his second coming, then all of us will someday die and be put to rest. The vast majority of us will have a traditional funeral with our body prepared for viewing by a mortician. Friends of the family will come, look upon us, and discuss our lives.

Have you ever stopped to consider what your family and friends will say about you at this time? Will they smile as they look back upon your obedience to the gospel? Will they speak of your faith, virtue, diligence, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love (2 Pet.

1:5-11)? Will they remember with fondness how you went about doing good (Acts 10:38)? Will they recall the many times that you used your opportunities to do good unto all men, especially those of the household of faith (Gal. 6:10)? Will they reminisce of how love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance blended together to manifest the fruit of the spirit in your life (Gal. 5:22, 23)? Will your wife remember that you loved her as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:25)? Will your husband rejoice to recall your love for him? Will your children remember your godly example and

spiritual training provided on their behalf (Deut. 6:6ff; Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:1-4)? Will your parents have reason to rejoice and be glad at your love and obedience toward them and your heavenly Father (Prov. 23:24,25)?

Someday the silver cord will be loosed, the golden bowl broken, the pitcher broken at the fountain, the wheel broken at the cistern. Then the human spirit will return to God who gave it and the judge of all the earth will do right (Eccl. 12:6,7; Gen. 18:25). You are presently determining by the way that you live the things that people will say about you when you die. Though Abel is dead he continues to

speak by virtue of his righteous life (Heb. 11:4). A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches and is better than precious ointment (Prov. 22:1; Eccl. 7:1). Your good name will live on long after you are gone from this life.

I have a friend who is a gospel preacher who related to me some years ago a discussion he had with an alcoholic friend of his. In essence the preacher said, "Now Bill, I know that you will want me to preach your funeral someday because you have told me so. Now I want you to write down on this sheet of paper what kind of things you want me to say about you." The

alcoholic fidgeted and fumbled and realized that he hadn't given the preacher much good to say about him because of his manner of life.

When you pass from this life will the man who preaches your funeral have to search long and hard for good and comforting things to say? Will the friends who came to support your family struggle to remember positive things to say about you? Or will there be an abundance of good things to say because of the abundance of good Christian living you have done? Consider it dear friend -- **WHAT WILL THEY SAY AT YOUR FUNERAL?**

Allegiance

Michael Hodgen tells a rather humorous story about a man dressed in a devil outfit who was on his way to a costume party when suddenly he got caught in a rain storm. Searching for cover from the downpour, the man rushed headlong into the first building he

came to. As it happened, he had unwittingly turned into the auditorium of a church building during the worship assembly.

When the church members saw who they thought was the devil they all panicked. And all scrambled out of the room,

except for one unfortunate lady who found herself pinned under the feet of this confused fellow. Fearing for her welfare, she looked up into the devilish face and pleaded, "You know...I've been on your side all along!"

While I enjoy a good laugh, may I suggest that

there is a more serious side to this story. You see, it is possible for me to claim allegiance to the Lord, when in reality, I am a covert disciple of the devil. Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be

loyal to the one and despise the other..." (Matthew 6:24a). Good reader, **WHOSE** side are you on (Exodus 32:26; Joshua 24:15; I Samuel 12:10; Matthew 12:3)?

Mike Benson
Parsons, TN

JULY 28, 1995

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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

Religion And The State

Dennis Gullede

The graduation festivities are now over. School superintendents cringed at the possibility of someone leading an unsolicited prayer at a commencement ceremony. Undoubtedly some spiritually minded valedictorian has transgressed and the appropriate legal reprisals are now in the works.

Over the past 30 years the U.S. Supreme Court has handed down a line of rulings designed to insure a "wall of separation" between the affairs of religion and the state. In 1962 the Court said that an officially sponsored prayer recited in the New York public schools was an affront to our freedoms.

This prayer, read in its entirety says: "Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence on Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers, and our country." The U.S. Supreme Court viewed this as a violation of the First Amendment clause prohibiting the "establishment of religion." This prohibition has in recent years been expanded to include reading the Bible or reciting a prayer on a public school campus. Did our founding fathers intend it this way? Was religion as odious a thing to them as it is to liberal leaders of our country today?

The fact is that American culture in that period was infused with religious zeal.

The "establishment of religion" clause signified an official church which was vested with certain powers of the state denied to others, and was supported from the public treasury. An example of such at that time was the Church of England. This did not deny the colonies the privilege of having state run churches. In 1775 nine colonies had such arrangements. Systems of local state churches included Congregationalist and Episcopal churches. In other colonies there remained a network of officially sanctioned beliefs, namely that one profess a certain kind of "Christian doctrine" in order to hold public office. The 1778 Constitution of South

Carolina said, "the Christian Protestant religion shall be deemed...the established religion of the state." The Maryland Constitution of 1776 enforced "a general and equal tax for the support of the Christian religion." In 1780 Massachusetts provided a tax to support "public Protestant teachers of piety, religion and morality." The official support of religious faith and state religious requirements continued long after the First Amendment was drafted. On June 12, 1775, Congress called for "a day of public humiliation, fasting, and prayer," wherein, "we offer up our joint supplications to the all-wise, omnipotent, and merciful disposer of all

events." This was to become our Thanksgiving Day. During the Revolutionary War, Congress supported military chaplains, recommended that officers and soldiers attend religious services and threatened court martial for any who misbehaved on such occasions.

The fact remains that our founding fathers were not a bunch of left-wing extremists with an ACLU ideology, much less secularists and Deists. They were a people who felt that we should rely upon the God in heaven for guidance. What is wrong with that?

Young People Making Moral Decisions

Decisions you make have definite repercussions as you grow older. Your life is nothing but the unfolding of your decisions. While good decisions send you toward happiness and success, foolish decisions will launch you toward despair and misery. Therefore, make wise moral decisions. Consider the following suggestions for making moral decisions.

1. Make the Bible your moral code. Everyone is going to live by some moral code. The moral code you choose will influence your

decisions. Therefore, choose the Bible as your moral code. It will guide you in making the RIGHT decisions; decisions that will help you make heaven your eternal home. Solomon said, "Let us hear the conclusions of the whole matter: fear God and keep his commands; for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13). Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

2. Choose your friends wisely. If you choose your friends foolishly, chances

are, they will bring you down to their level of standards quicker than you can bring them up to your level of morals. Paul said, "Bad company corrupts good morals" (I Cor. 15:33). Screen your pool of friends, culling the evil ones and making the good ones your comrades. Good friends will help you make good moral decisions. I once saw a sign that read, "Show me your friends and I will show you your future." Good advice!

3. Set your standards ahead of time. Make moral decisions long before sin

presents its ugly face. Decide your actions before you places in an awkward position. Joseph had set his standards ahead of time regarding obedience to God. When Mrs. Potifar tried to seduce him, he was quick to say, "how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:7). His relationship with God was more important than a few hours of pleasure. He was able to say, "No," because he had set his moral standards ahead of time.

When making moral decisions, you will never go

wrong if you always ask the following question: "What would Jesus do?" A small boy, who loved and admired his father asked, "Daddy, how can I be good just like you?" The father replied, "Try to be just like Jesus, son." That father knew the value of making good moral decisions.

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Make this summer the most joyful ever when you spend time wrapped in the glory of Christ's love for us all.

Study the Word with us weekly.
Sixth Avenue Church of Christ
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Jasper, AL. 35501

The Day The Lord's Church Became A Denomination

Glenn Colley

A man recently asked, "In a nutshell, what is this change movement in the churches of Christ all about?"

I thought for a minute and then answered, "The root purpose of the change movement is to convince church members that denominationalism is preferable over simple New Testament Christianity. I really believe these men want to make us into just another denomination."

Perhaps the agents of change in the church would disagree, and wouldn't publicly claim this as their objective, but the evidence is compelling. Think with me. What would have to change in the Lord's church for it to one day be just another denomination, or to make it "fit in" with all different denominations? Well,

1. We would need to change the weight of matters such as the origin of the church, the foundation of the church, and the organization of the church. We would need at least convince church members that while we preach and believe that the one church of the Bible (Eph. 4:4) originated at Pentecost in Acts two, and has Christ as it's foundation (I Cor. 3:11, Matt. 16:18), and has Christ as it's head and no other (Eph. 1:22,23), that we are also accepting of religions which originated in Manchester New York, or London, or Switzerland. We would need to be accepting of religions which are built on men or women who founded the various denominations. Is

that what they are asking people to do?

"Join 50,000 Middle Tennessee Christians and take to the streets proclaiming Jesus Christ is Lord over Nashville." This is a quote from Love Lines, the newsletter from Woodmont Hills Church, of Christ May 24, 1995, promoting the "March for Jesus", described as an interdenominational day for all denominations to celebrate their faith and unity among churches. A Nashville Tennessean article quoted Rubel Shelly, preacher for the Woodmont Hills Church: Shelly remarked of the unusual sight of so many Christians assembled together on a Saturday morning. He said, "You look around and you see people who aren't part of your particular church experience --but they're part of God's experience, which is why we have to broaden our horizons a bit."

2. We would need to change the activities of our worship assemblies. To be like the mainstream denominations we would need to incorporate instrumental music into our worship, or at least be accepting of those who already use instrumental music. Furthermore, we would have to surrender the truth about the authority of the Scriptures; that is, only that which is authorized for our worship is appropriate for our worship (Col. 3:17).

Is that what they want?

"In my opinion, I must not judge the state of a fellow Christian who, in good conscience, approves singing

with an instrument. To do so would place myself in jeopardy of grievous sin indeed; judging a brother by my opinion." (Jeff Walling as quoted in Behold the Pattern, Colleyville, TX: Goebel Music Publications, 1991, p. 215)

"To make use of an instrumental music in praising God from the heart is neither wrong nor sinful in and of itself." (Larry James, Theme Speech in Instrumental Music: Faith or Opinion, Huntsville, AL: Publishing Designs, Inc., 1991), 8.

3. We would need to change what we teach regarding the necessity of baptism. Because there are a variety of baptisms practiced in the denominational world, to preach "one baptism" (Eph. 4:4), would not be politically correct. We would need some scheme to maintain that even those who were baptized with words like "I now baptize you because God for Christ's sake has already pardoned your sins", and who were taught that their baptism was NOT for the remission of sins, were forgiven at baptism nonetheless.

Is that what they are saying?

"That we may have a practical application for our conclusions, let us now suppose that a Baptist presents himself for the membership with us, and we attempt to decide upon the validity of his immersion. We find out he was a believer, and a penitent, before he was immersed...He believed that his sins were pardoned before

he was immersed, and said so: but this was a mistake, not an omission of any duty, unless it be the duty of understanding the scripture. But this duty is not peculiarly connected with immersion, and we have seen that its omission cannot invalidate the immersion. Now, then, the man had performed every duty appointed for him in the scripture, and, as we have argued above, it is most unreasonable to suppose that his sins are still unforgiven...I conclude, therefore, that the supposed Baptist brother is a pardoned man, though he is mistaken as to the time of his pardon, and should be instructed upon that point." (Jimmy Allen of Searcy, Arkansas, and author of Re-Baptism. Quoted by permission by Dobbs, Firm Foundation, Feb. 1992, p. 24).

4. We would need to put less importance on what things are called. For example, the idea that the church of Christ should only be called by a scriptural designation as "The

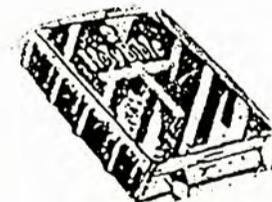
church"(Acts 8:1), or "The churches of Christ" Rom. 16:16), or "The body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12), would have to go. Furthermore, those who believe that God's people should only be called by scriptural names like "disciples" (Acts 20:7), or "brethren" (I Cor. 15:6), or "children of God" (I John 3:1), or "Christians" (Acts 11:26), would simply have to change their thinking. As we moved into denominationalism we would need to accept names for the churches and religionists which are not in the Bible. Otherwise we would not be accepted by or accepting of, our fellow denominationalists.

Is that what they are saying?

(See previous quote from Jimmy Allen)

5. We would need to change as many things about the atmosphere of our worship assemblies to be as much like the denominational bodies around us. An emphasis on entertainment in worship would be important.

(Continued On Page 3)



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The Day The Lord's Church Became A Denomination

(Continued From Page 2)

Our church members should not feel too uncomfortable in any denominational worship.

Is that what they are trying to do?

A "raucous celebration, spontaneity." "Individuals, groups, and entire congregations," (singing) "Unavoidable" worship, "shouts", "dances". "jubilation with applause and cheering." "The church must be open to the invigorating presence of the Spirit's fresh breezes." "When the Spirit of God is present, it will not always be possible to determine the atmosphere in advance. Leaders may intend and prepare for service of one sort, and God may bring about another end to His glory." (From The Second

Incarnation, Rubel Shelly and Randall J. Harris, West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing Co., 1992, pg. 139, 132, 119, 140)

6. We would need to change women's role in our worship. We would have to demote passages like First Timothy 2:11,12 from current-day relevance to simply yesteryear traditions. After all, the modern trend is certainly to unlock the Biblical "shackles" placed upon women in the church.

Is that their objective?

"We will appoint deacons for this church on Pentecost Sunday 1990. Deacons will be male and female. On Sunday nights and Wednesday nights and Sunday morning Bible

classes, shared leadership in the services will continue, men and women can occupy any roles in the leadership of our fellowship. For years 1991-94 we, the elders, will initiate gradual change in the Sunday morning worship assembly. Each year we will increase the freedom of women to participate in the worship." (Plan from an Alabama congregation. Quoted by Willard Collins, Gospel Advocate, Feb. 1992, p. 24)

7. Naturally, to make all these changes, would have to make an overall change in the way members of the churches of Christ view scripture.

Is that what they want?

"There is no secret code. The Bible is a love letter as

opposed to a blueprint. You don't read a love letter the same way you do a blueprint." (Max Lacado, as quoted in Behold the Pattern, p. 114)

I am aware of the fact that the change movement almost always works gradually in a church. For that reason, many churches whose leadership favors the change movement may not have gone as far as some of these quotes indicate. Nevertheless, Christians must be clearly aware of the direction the leaders of this movement are going. Articles like this one are not just exercises in imaginary church division and false doctrines. This movement is real, and is happening now.

The concept of denominationalism originates with

men, not God. The concept is as wrong today as it was when Paul wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, "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...Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name." (I Cor. 1:10,11).

Gods That Cannot Deliver

Johnny Ramsey

A unique and challenging chapter in the Old Testament is Second Chronicles 25. The major character in this dramatic setting is King Amaziah of Judah. He began to rule at age 25 and reigned until he was 54 years old. Although Amaziah often sought to do the will of Jehovah this sad comment truly depicted his over-all manner of life:

"But not with the perfect heart."

As the years passed by Amaziah became less spiritually alert. The influence of his reign degenerated as he found refuge in idolatry and failed to give glory to his Maker. Notice the lamentation of Second Chronicles 25:27:

"Amaziah did turn away from following the Lord."

Earlier, in verses 14-16 of that chapter, we see the lowest moment in the king's life. He actually bowed down before the gods of the Edomites and burned incense unto them. Jehovah sent a true prophet unto Amaziah

with this stern rebuke for the ruler:

"Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand?"

Later that bold prophet informed Amaziah that he would be destroyed because he had not hearkened unto the counsel of heaven presented by God's spokesman, the prophet! The atmosphere within the camp of Judah was strong. Jehovah was able to provide the King and his army "with much more" than even money could buy; but due to lack of purity and devotion on their part the Lord could not bless them. Amaziah sought help from Israel and its leader instead of being fortified by strength emanating from the Creator. In fact, God plainly told Amaziah that "The Lord is not with Israel."

How foolish and ill-advised Judah was to seek help from folk who were impoverished spiritually. Amaziah was his own worst enemy. The last two verses of

Second Chronicles 25 tell us that for such foolish decisions and ungodly actions Amaziah was slain in Lachish and then "buried with his fathers in the city of Judah."

Let us notice pertinent lessons learned from this section of Scripture. Romans 15:4 and I Corinthians 10:11 tell us such matters were written for our learning to serve as examples unto us.

First of all we learn that seeking the Lord with less than the whole heart will not get the job done. Jeremiah tells us in 29:13 of his grand treatise that the only way to find God is to "seek Him with the whole heart." Amaziah failed in that regard. Thereafter only trouble ensued because his life was segmented and his loyalty divided (Matthew 6:22). Folk who give a little of themselves to the Lord usually wind up giving nothing (2 Tim. 3:4).

Secondly, this chapter reminds us that we are extremely unwise to worship the very idols that have given no peace or spiritual success

to the world about us.

What an unusual quirk of mind Amaziah displayed in bowing before the gods of Edom that were so weak they could not keep the Edomites from losing in battle to Judah! Instead of giving God the glory the king offered homage to pagan deities.

How often mankind today makes the very same blunder. Why do we almost worship mundane pleasures that have never given peace to their devotees?

(Continued On Page 4)

Most of A Minute

"I Know What I Said..."

The other day I was cruising down the highway enjoying my drive at 55 m.p.h., when suddenly a white, late model van whizzed by me. Now, normally I wouldn't have given this a second thought. After all, a lot of people drive over the speed limit. It was the bumper sticker which caught my attention. It read, "55; a law we can live with." This guy came by so fast he blew my hair, and my windows were rolled up!

Now, I know he might have had a justifiable emergency, but this does illustrate an important point. We need, to the best of our ability, to practice what we preach.

In Matthew. 23, Jesus condemned the sin of hypocrisy seven different times!

We say so much more to people with our actions than we do with our words. The important thing I want you to remember today is to make those actions and those words agree, and to make that agreement be on the truth of God.

Glenn Colley

Gods That Cannot Deliver

(Continued From Page 3)

Why do we seek help from sectarian sources instead of searching the Scriptures (Acts 17:11)? Why do we almost deify theologians who teach error and look with disdain upon godly brethren who are really Bible scholars? As Jehovah told Amaziah so it is today--gods which could not deliver their own people are

not to be trusted and revered! "Some build their hopes on the ever drifting sand; Some on their fame, their treasures and their land; mine's on the Rock that forever shall stand ;Jesus, the Rock of Ages."

God is able to give much more than the world will ever be able to offer (Ephesians 3:20).

Last of all the saga of Amaziah and the Almighty shows us that seeking the counsel of men is always inferior to God's revelation of Truth. If all the brethren in the world agree to something heaven has not sanctioned we had better have the wisdom and courage to stand with the Lord. Why not just let the

Bible direct us in the first place? Did not Jesus make it clear that sanctification and freedom come from adhering to the Word of God (John 8:31-32; 17:17)? May we never be guilty of rejecting divine guidance in exchange for worldly wisdom. In Paradise Lost Milton mentioned the sum total of

man's advice:

"Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy." Let us therefore, worship our Maker in the beauty of holiness, seek His counsel and obey His blessed will (Proverbs 7:2).

The Work of A Preacher

(Part 1)

"But watch Thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." (2 Timothy 4:5)

I would never try to leave the impression with you that this one verse says it all with reference to the work of a preacher. but certainly it is a cornerstone passage and is deserving of our careful attention. I can think of no better place to begin than with the words of my late grandfather, F.W. Gould, a gospel preacher for 62 years.

He wrote: "Whatever a good, sincere, devoted person does, he wishes to do well. He wants to be as good as any, if not the best, in his field. Our conceptions and opinions differ with respect to

the preacher. What he MUST BE and Must Do are matters of no little concern if he is a success in his field of labor." (Sermon Outline, *Heaven's Description of a Good Minister*)

With these excellent remarks in mind, let's delve into an examination of 2 Timothy 4:5.

Brethren, this short verse is composed of but twenty words in the King James Version, but is rich with information about what a preacher must be and do. Immediately upon reading the verse (from the KJV), four verbs jump out at once WATCH, ENDURE, DO, and MAKE. I suggest we view this verse by allowing each of the four verbs to serve as a point in stressing

the work of a preacher.

First, the preacher must watch. The American Standard Version renders this phrase, "But be thou sober in all things...". What is it then to be sober or to watch? Gingrich and Danker in their Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament, p. 132 say it is to be "Well balanced or self-controlled". In other words, the preacher must take heed to himself as Paul had said earlier in 1 Timothy 4:16. Remember this man is speaking for the Master and thus, he must be morally good and doctrinally sound. Preachers of the past as well as the present have fallen prey to immorality and liberalism. So Paul's admonition should be heard and heeded as a preventative

measure.

Second, the preacher must endure. The American Standard Version renders this as "suffer hardship." Just a few chapters before this Paul had instructed Timothy:

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." (1:8)

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2:3).

The serious import of Paul's words are better understood when one realizes that this was his last letter and that it was written from Roman imprisonment. He was in the midst of enduring affliction. As a young gospel

preacher, Timothy no doubt would have a great deal of enduring and suffering on his hands. Any gospel preacher, young or old, who thinks things are always going to be peachy has pulled the wool over his own eyes. Affliction, hardship, suffering, and persecution are "necessary evils" of the Christian existence. (Matthew 5:11-12, 2 Timothy 3:12, James 1:2-3, etc.) and especially so for those who "live of the gospel" (I Corinthians 9:14).

Mel Futrell

Part 2 will follow next week

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Exclusion

When God specifies that we do something a certain way, do we have the liberty to ADD TO or CHANGE what He has commanded (Colossians 3:17)? For instance, if I hire someone to paint my office white, and he responds by painting it white and Tennessee orange, would I have reason to be disappointed in his performance? What if he said, "Well Mike, you didn't say I couldn't paint it white and Tennessee orange." My answer would be, "You are correct, I didn't say you couldn't paint it orange, but when I specified WHITE that EXCLUDED using any color, including the one you arbitrarily added."

Dear reader, when God specified that Noah use gopher wood in the ark (Gen 6:14), that excluded using cedar or pine. When Jesus specified unleavened bread and fruit of the vine for the Lord's Supper (Mt. 26:26ff; 1 Cor. 11:23-26), that excluded using Lay's potato chips and 7up. Likewise, when He commanded us to SING during the worship assembly (Eph 5:19; Col. 3:16), that excluded us from adding to or changing that which He specified. Question: Why then do many people use pianos, organs, guitars, etc. in their worship? Aren't THESE additions/changes to what God has specified (Rev. 22:18-19)? Think about it.

How would you like it if someone painted your office white and orange?

Mike Benson - Parsons, TN

Hell will be populated by two classes of people: Those who will do anything, and those who will not do anything.

AUGUST 4, 1995

• See Articles Inside:

- Legarde, Smith, Baptism, And Eternal Judgment
- The Immodestly Dressed Woman
- Approved Of God
- Learning About Heaven
- Contribution
- Followers Of Men Rather Than Christ

Volume 32 Number 27
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

Lagarde Smith, Baptism and Eternal Judgment

In Lagarde Smith's book *Baptism: The Believers Wedding Ceremony*, brother Smith illustrates baptism as the uniting act which brings unbelievers to Christ. Much of what is taught in his book is wonderfully accurate. Yet in concluding his argumentation in making the case for baptism he unravels just about everything he attempted to tie for the truth about baptism. On page 201 of the same book this statement is made, "None of us can presume to know about the eternal destiny of anyone, on the basis of any question of doctrine - be it predestination, charismatic gifts, the washing of feet or even baptism. All we can do is give our best efforts to knowing God's will, as revealed in His written word."

Then on page 206 our brother goes on to say, "Are unbaptized believers destined to hell? Are those who have received only infant baptism in eternal jeopardy? Only God knows." On one level, these are questions we have no right even to ask. As seen in this study, there is an abundance of scriptural language that, on its face regards baptism as an essential part of our turning to God. Never the less, I would hope that God might apply the "common law marriage" approach for those who have lived a lifetime of service in His name without having participated in the wedding ceremony of baptism.

There are some very serious ramifications of brother Smith's teaching on baptism and there are several things that need to be said in response to his errant affirmations.

First, to affirm that no one can know the eternal destiny of

anyone regarding any doctrinal position is simply not true. Belief in God and accepting the inspiration of the scriptures is itself a doctrinal position. In the epistle of I John, John refuted the false doctrine that suggested Jesus did not really come to this earth in the flesh (I John 1:1-3). Those who denied the truth of Jesus were called liars (I John 2:22). In the previous verse, John affirmed that "no lie is of the truth" (I John 2:21). In commenting on these false teachers, John said, "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" (I John 2:19). Then John declared, "whosoever denieth the Son the same hath not the Father" (I John 2:23). The God-breathed revelation pronounces eternal judgment upon the basis of a doctrinal issue.

Consider Hymenaeus of 2 Timothy 2:17. Paul denounced the false doctrine he and fellow false teacher Philetus were promoting. Their doctrine denied a literal resurrection. This false doctrine was regarded as blasphemy and Paul said that he had delivered Hymenaeus over to Satan (I Timothy 1:19-20). Until Hymenaeus would repent of his false teaching he would remain in the clutches of Satan who is the father of all lies (John 8:44). To be delivered to Satan is to be disfellowshipped as Paul told the Corinthians, "to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Corinthians 5:5). The very process of delivering one to Satan suggests two kingdoms; God's and Satan's. Once one is removed

from the fellowship of the people of God one has only the association of Satan's kingdom left. This process is to ultimately regain the soul of the one being disciplined so the "spirit may be saved." Those that are withdrawn from scripture are lost brothers and sisters. Hymenaeus was lost because of his false doctrine concerning the resurrection. The scripture again affirms that one can know the eternal destiny of an individual regarding a doctrinal matter. The marking of false teachers (Romans 16:17-18) is proof that the eternal destiny of false teachers can be known.

Second, to suggest that we can not know the eternal destiny of those accountable individuals who are not baptized is to deny plain Bible truth. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Knowledge of truth is a prerequisite to salvation. How can one deny that which Jesus demands? Brother Smith's doctrine is very similar to another false doctrine being circulated in the church that says one needs to know the biblical purpose of baptism to have its biblical purpose. Such doctrine denies the heart of Bible teaching. When Jesus affirmed, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16), he set forth the conditions of truth in a way that could be understood by those that sought the truth. Jesus said again, "If any man will do his will, he shall know the doctrine" (John 7:17). Baptism is a fundamental doctrine which is mentioned as one of the seven planks of unity in Ephesians 4:4-6. Paul said there is but "one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5). If we

do not know the eternal destiny of those who submit not to the Biblical doctrine of baptism, then we have no business making baptism a test of Christian fellowship. If God will extend his grace to those who do not obey his will, then His church certainly should do no less. Yet when the Pharisees and lawyers were not baptized of John they were said to have "rejected the counsel of God" (Luke 7:30). Will brother Smith suggest that we do not know the eternal destiny of these Pharisees and lawyers?

Third, the argument that God will perhaps accept some "common law" Christians is to undermine the very nature of God. God has promised us that he can not lie (Hebrews 6:18). The Bible affirms that all and every spiritual blessing is found in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-7). There is but one way in Christ (Romans 6:3-4). If God can be more lenient than His last testament and will states, how do we know that He will not be more stringent than His will teaches? Will God change His law? God has promised that He will not (Matthew 24:35; Titus 1,2).

To press the "common law" marriage from the civil realm is to try to prove a case from illustration. Illustrations can only clarify a position. Suppose a couple is considered married by the state after living together for seven years? Should we then accept couples who intend to live together for at least seven years? If one of the couple dies before the seven years are completed, were they married in the state's eyes? Remember, Christians are to conform to "every ordinance of man" (I

Peter 2:13), so Christians are to be married with a ceremony according to the states' laws. The "common law" marriage begins in disobedience to God. God has promised to judge "adulterers" (Hebrews 13:4). Brother Smith attempts to show that God might accept disobedience because the state does. This simply does not follow. The Blood of Christ flows only within His body (Ephesians 5:23). Since we are baptized into the body (I Corinthians 12:13) no one can be saved without being baptized because no one can be saved without having received the benefits of Jesus blood (Hebrews 9:22).

The basis of the Christian religion is a knowledge of salvation. To suggest that one cannot know the eternal destiny outside the church is also to suggest that one cannot know one's eternal destiny within the church. The scripture is written that Christians may "know ye have eternal life" (I John 3:13). We must know that we have "passed from death unto life" (I John 3:14). Since sin causes death and all have sinned (Romans 3:23; 6:23), we can know all are lost without a knowledge of the truth and obedience to the truth. Paul said, "who will have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4). Yes, we can know the eternal destiny of those promoting false doctrines and it is a presumptuous thing to deny what God has revealed for us to believe and practice.

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Make this summer the most joyful ever when you spend time wrapped in the glory of Christ's love for us all.

Study the Word with us weekly.

Sixth Avenue Church of Christ

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Jasper, AL. 35501

The Immodestly Dressed Woman

Glenn Colley

As a preacher of the good news this subject always makes me sad. I wish it never had to be discussed. It is sometimes embarrassing to the one teaching, and to the hearers. It sometimes evokes anger among hearers who like to dress immodestly, and they feel they are being insulted. They hastily make arguments which skirt (pardon the pun) around the real issues. But it must be discussed. Whether or not we admit it, the woman of the church who goes in public scantily clad in shorts or short skirts or low cut blouses or too-tight clothes, is doing something that's inherently wrong. She's taking the total picture of man, woman, husband, wife, and distorting it. She, perhaps unknowingly, takes the sexual impulses designed by God to draw husbands and wives closer together, and allows them to be cheapened.

God didn't accidentally design woman the way He did. There is as much careful purpose in Eve as there is in the starry sky or in the delicate of the animal kingdom. God incorporated into this man called Adam, and into all his sons forever, the attraction to woman. Why? "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." (Gen. 2:24-25) The reason man is sexually impressed by, and attracted to woman is because of God's design.

But God does not mean for the purpose of this attraction

to be distorted or misused. Jesus said, "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matt 5:28)

Not the difference between the physical attraction of a husband and wife, and that of a man who is physically attracted to a stranger on the beach, or at the pool, or at the mall. Of one He says, "Let thy fountain be blessed; and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving deer and graceful doe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou enraptured always with her love." (Prov. 5:18-19) Of the other He says, "Whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matt 5:28)

Although some might quietly rationalize to themselves, "Well, so long as nothing physical happens, nothing wrong has been done." Yet, the Book of Christians says different. God is not only concerned with our overt actions, but also with our hearts. (Matt 5:28)

A Christians woman will be concerned about the effect she may potentially have on the hearts of the men about her. She didn't create the physical, visual attraction, but she accepts its presence. She may not even understand it's strength, but she accepts its strength.

In 1 Timothy 2:9-11, Paul discusses women and their dress. He puts as their objective when they dress themselves, that they would appear as "women professing godliness". (1 Timothy 2:10)

With this in mind he says, "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." (1 Timothy 2:9)

The term "modest apparel" uses the word modest in a way different from that to which we are accustomed. It literally means "that which does not call undue attention to one's self". It is more in line with what we think about when we consider a "modest" house, or a "modest" car. From this teaching the Christian woman would not be prohibited from wearing pretty clothes, but would be prohibited from wearing the outlandish. This would hold true for whatever culture or century the woman happened to occupy. This word would also forbid her from wearing that which drew undue attention to her because so much skin was being exposed.

Now consider "shamefacedness". It literally means that women are to have a sense of shame, a natural sense of embarrassment with regard to being ill-clad before men to whom they aren't married. It is shamefacedness which makes a woman blush and take cover when a closed door is accidentally opened at an *inopportune* time. The problem some women in the church have is that they have been conditioned to believe that since the Bible doesn't draw specific lines of "too short" or "too low" that they are free to wear immoral women's wear. They can *pretend* that men have seen so many bathing suits, or so

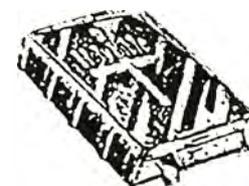
many short shorts, or so many tight clothes that they don't notice, and therefore this discussion is reduced to what the woman *prefers* to wear for comfort or the accepted style of the setting. That pretending is childish and foolish. A woman who believes that needs to ask her husband the truth. Then he should *tell* her the truth. She needs to ask herself why pornographic magazines make millions. She needs to ask herself why everything from fast cars to soft drinks are sold with pictures of sexy young women. She needs to consider what she knows about her own husband. Then she needs to re-think what she wears in view of others.

The next word in 1 Timothy 2:9 is "sobriety". One version translates this "with... propriety", another says "with...good sense." This clearly implies that there are important things a woman must consider when she decides what to wear. By connecting this to "shamefacedness" Paul tells us the sense in which he is discussing dressing with sobriety or propriety. It is with regard to those things

which are, or should be, embarrassing to the woman professing godliness. When she dresses, she has a choice of dressing in a way which reflects sober thinking, or in a way which reflects a *lack* of sober thinking.

Romans 12:2 says, "Be not conformed to this world..." Daddy, are you passively sitting by while your teen-age daughter is leaving the house in clothing that shows too much? Are you acting blind in order to please her preferences instead of standing for what you know is true? It is amazing that daddies and husbands *know* what they know, and still remain silent on this subject in their house. Mothers, your daughters will be respected more by their boyfriends if they dress modestly, and you want them to be respected.

There are beaches which are private. There are pools with fences and privacy. There are clothes which are airy and yet not immodest. We *can* dress modestly if we want to, and suffer little for it. Or saying it another way, we can dress in such a way that God will not be ashamed of us.



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Approved Of God

Tommy Blewett

"Thus saith the Lord, Because ye have faithfully kept my commandments, and so diligently searched my word, and so carefully studied it to gain understanding, and because ye have so persistently taught it and done so in the face of opposition, and tried the false teachers by it and found them in error, and because you have centered your life around my statutes, I speak this warning against you. Unless you loosen your hold on my word and take more liberties in your interpretation and application of it and speak less dogmatically on your proclamation of it, I will

bring judgment against you in the day of judgment and pour out my wrath against you in the last day" (1 Solomon 18:21-24).

Before I go any further, the Lord did not say this. There is no such book in the Bible. I made it up to express the attitude of many. The Lord never criticized anyone for being too faithful! He never warned anyone about keeping His commandments too obediently. He never promised judgment against those who proclaim His word because they did so with more care and concern for truth than He intended. In fact, the Bible teaches just the opposite. "Blessed are they

that keep His testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart" (Psalm 119:2).

New Testament Christians prayed "that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Colossians 4:12). Paul encourages us, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving" (Colossians 2:6-7).

What does it mean to walk in him, to be rooted and built up in him, to be established in the faith? It means your daily routine of life is like His. You

express your love for God by your obedience to His Word, John 14:15. You love your fellowman as yourself, Matthew 22:39. You stand on the foundation of His gospel and by it you determine truth and error in all things. You know what God's Word teaches and you strive for faithfulness to it. It means you meet the teachers of false doctrine head on and truth still reigns in your heart. You teach the truth in love, Ephesians 4:15, as you have been taught, not boastfully, but with a prayerful attitude, thankful to Him for providing mankind with this work of grace.

God never rebuked anyone

for living too faithfully or for proclaiming His Word exactly as He gave it. In fact, He detests "lukewarm" faithfulness in living and teaching His Word. See Revelation 3:14-16.

Some are willing too boldly to defend the Gospel because of their love for the truth and the souls of men. We must encourage and support their efforts and appreciate the fact that if these men are silent we'll find that "...truth is fallen in the street" (Isaiah 59:14). Only our best efforts will do if we want to be approved by God.

Learning About Heaven

The Lord said in Luke 13:24 to strive or agonize to enter in at the strait gate. The hope of heaven serves as an anchor to the soul in this present world (Hebrews 6:18-19). What does heaven mean to you? Do you see beyond this world? Are you preparing to go to heaven when life is no more in this world? The Lord wants you to go. It is not His will that any miss it (2 Peter 3:9). The sad but true reality is that few will be saved compared to the many that will be lost (Matthew 7:13-14). If you have not, I hope you will even today begin your preparations for heaven. The Bible description of that place should motivate you to want to go. The only alternative to heaven (hell itself) should challenge every soul to do all within his or her power to make heaven the home of their eternal spirit.

Notice with me five traits of that wonderful place.

1) HEAVEN IS A PLACE THAT IS REAL: Notice John 14:1-2. "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you". Jesus wanted His disciples to be convinced of the reality of heaven. Heaven is tied to the ability and faithfulness of God in promise (Titus 1:2). The hope of heaven is a lively one (1 Peter 1:3). Thus, heaven is not the figment of one's imagination and not some fairy tale, "pie in the sky" in the by and by, without validity. Heaven is real. Tie yourself to this glorious hope.

2) HEAVEN IS A PLACE OF REUNION: Again in John 14:1-3, Jesus spoke of being with the Father and the Son. David spoke of going to

his son in reunion (2 Samuel 12:23). Paul spoke of all the faithful being given a crown (2 Timothy 4:6-8). As we often sing, "what a day, glorious day that will be." Jesus spoke of sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matthew 8:11). Read Hebrews 2 and unite that with the faithful you have known who have gone on. Don't you want to go?

3) HEAVEN IS A PLACE OF REST: Rest is sweet to those who have toiled. There is a rest to the people of God (Hebrews 4:9). The Lord promised rest to the troubled and persecuted (2 Thessalonians 1:6). Jesus again promised rest in (Matthew 11:28-30). Those who die in the Lord go to a place of rest (Revelation 14:13). Think of those we have seen in life with bodies worn and tired. The joy and

peace of rest is wonderful. No wonder we sing, "Won't It Be Wonderful There".

4) HEAVEN IS A PLACE OF REWARD: The Lord told suffering disciples to rejoice and be exceedingly glad because they had a great reward in Heaven (Matthew 5:10-12). Hebrew Christians were being persecuted and their goods destroyed. They were reminded of the great recompense of heaven as the reward of their hope (Hebrews 10:34-35). Eternal

life is a great gift made possible by the Lord and His grace. (Romans 6:23).

Friend, Jesus died to make heaven possible for you and me. We must be obedient to His will (Matthew 7:21). Christ saves only the obedient (Hebrews 5:9). We must patiently endure to make heaven our home (Hebrews 10:36).

Vance Hutton
Double Springs, Al.

Most of A Minute Contribution

A minister was asked to preach on Sunday for a church that had the reputation for being tight fisted when it came to financially supporting the works of the congregation. After the sermon, he passed his hat for the offering. It came back empty. Just to make sure, he tipped it upside down and shook it, but nothing came out. "Now let us give thanks," he said to the curious congregation. They wondered what he could possibly give thanks about. "I thank Thee Lord," prayed the minister, "That I got my hat back."

Some churches sponsor raffles, and bake sales, and yard sales, and bingo, and other things to generate funds for the support of the churches work. But that's not really true to the pattern of the early church. The money necessary to carry on the work of the church came from the pockets of the members. Period. I Cor. 16:2 says to Christians, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, ad God hath prospered him..." It worked then, and where faithful Christians are involved, it will work now.

Glenn Colley

*Jesus never said it
would be easy.
He only said it
would be worth it!*



Followers Of Men Rather Than Christ

"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" (I John 2:19).

The apostle John, who is often called "the apostle of love," refers in the above scripture to those who have left the church and who are thus engaged in walking by carnal sight rather than by spiritual faith. Contextually, he sounds a warning to the New Testament church concerning the "anti-Christ," whom he describes as anyone who by standard of conduct and belief has set himself in opposition to the teaching of Jesus. John further describes as anti-Christ those who were formerly disciples of the Lord, and members of the church.

Brother Guy N. Woods has aptly portrayed:

They became apostates from the fold by going out. They were not "of" the disciples, i.e., they did not possess the same spirit of obedience characteristic of the disciples, for if they had "they would have continued with" the disciples. In going out, i.e., in apostatizing from the faith, they were "made manifest" (shown to be, not of the disciples)...Others, like those of this text, adopt false and heretical doctrines, forsake the church, and make shipwreck concerning the faith (I Timothy 1:19).

The Bible presents varied and articulate reasoning concerning the infection and spread of the disease of apostasy. In fact, both Testaments are replete with examples of this spiritual

affliction. Therefore, we turn our attention to the query: "Why do some leave the faith?"

DECEPTION

A potent weapon which the forces of evil have used against men and women of every generation is that of deception. Paul, in writing his second letter to the church at Corinth, noted that satanic deceivers were then present among the body of Christ in that locality, and he fully described their mission and method as they attempted to divide the church. As he sought to characterize the false teachers of Corinth, he pointed out that they feignly posed as pious and informed brethren, yet because of their lack of true Bible knowledge, they were void of any true spirituality (I Timothy 1:19-20; 6:4). He further informs the faithful at Corinth that such teachers were mere impostors of those possessing true Christian maturity. "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is not great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness: whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Cor. 11:14-15). Centuries earlier, Hosea the prophet of God to Northern Israel, cried: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6), and because of this, they too were easily led by false teachers into similar ruin.

The Bible also points out that many will be deceived into believing doctrinal error because they choose to

follow personalities rather than the teaching of Christ (2 Timothy 4:1 ff; Matthew 7:21-23). This has well been illustrated in our own century when during the great premillennial heresy of the twenties and thirties, many were deceived into error by "that sweet-spirited preacher," R.H. Boll. Many remember as well the "kind and meek" attitude which continues to be displayed by the father of the modern "Unity and Diversity" heresy, W. Carl Ketcherside, (as well as by his disciples, Leroy Garrett, Rubel Shelly, and Don DeWelt). How many are there among the church today who are guilty of similar human loyalty rather than fidelity to Christ (John 14:15,23).

DESIRE FOR PREEMINENCE

The carnal desire for preeminence is a strong driving force among some "professing" Christians who are bent toward a course for the control of things divine. Some have ventured so far in their quest for power that they have sought to undermine the authority which God has provided within the eldership by encouraging congregational rebellion toward that body.

The apostle John recounted to Gaius the sad state to which Diotrephes had fallen in that he loved to have the preeminence among men (3 John 9). From verses nine through twelve of John's third epistle, we learn that Diotrephes desired to be the petted and pampered pilot of the church, so much so in fact, that because of envy he refused to receive the beloved John as a fellow brother in Christ. No doubt, Diotrephes believed that he

had risen to new heights of spirituality, far superior to that of the aged apostle from whom he had personally withdrawn.

When a man's goal is to achieve the control of individuals or the church by force, while still desirous of receiving unto himself the accolades of his petted disciples, then such a one is as guilty of the sins of pride and division as was the puffed up Diotrephes of ages past. To him, the end always justifies the means. Such a perverted spirit would rather rip asunder the body of Christ than mend; divide rather than graft; yea, split apart rather than seam.

DESPISERS OF DOCTRINE

Since the beginning of ancient patriarchy, there have been those who have openly defied the will of the Lord in regard to prescribed worship (Genesis 4:5; Leviticus 10:1-2), and in regard to revealed organization (Numbers 16; Jude 11). Such a lack of respect for the authority of God has forever been associated with the dispositions of contempt (Psalm 107:11), injustice, corruption (Isaiah 1:23), and stubbornness (Deuteronomy 31:27).

Some in the church today are despisers of doctrine and are seeking to amend the will of God in order to make it mold and conform to their notion of "progressive" Christianity. This system, without scriptural precedent, transforms the desires of men into dogma, and tempers the teaching of Christ with the dross of human will worship (Col. 2:23; 2 John 9). However, the Bible clearly teaches that Christians should attend

unto doctrine (I Timothy 4:13-16); that Christians should be nourished up in doctrine (I Timothy 4:6); that Christians should continue in doctrine (I Timothy 4:16); that Christians should hold in sincerity the doctrine of Christ (2 Cor. 2:17; Titus 2:7; 2 John 9); that Christians should hold steadfastly to doctrine (2 Timothy 1:13; Titus 1:9); and that Christians should speak that which befits sound doctrine. (Titus 2:1).

DIVISION AND SEPARATION

It is not the truth of God's Word that divides, for indeed, the bedrock of Christians' truth is that which is incapable of division, and when the hammer of error and innovation falls upon the wedge of discord, it shall recoil at once against the seasoned stone to faith, but will instantly fragment the unstable sandstone of human ambition. Thus, error and weakness are the cause of division.

We are living in a time in which the winds of change and doctrinal discord are beating fiercely against the Ship of Zion, and even though the end of the squall is not in sight, there have been many spiritual casualties and many more have simply abandoned ship. Therefore, we are saddened to realize that we can no longer walk in fellowship with some whom we have counted as friends, because they themselves are not longer walking in fellowship with God (I John 1:1-7).

Joseph D. Meador
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AUGUST 11, 1995

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- If For One Day God Failed To Bless
- The Communications Revolution
- Do You See The Mud, Or The Stars?
- The Balance At The Foot Of The Cross
- The Hope Of Glory

Volume 32 Number 29
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

" I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak
Words of Truth and soberness."--Acts 2

Words Of Truth Lectureship

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7:00 P.M.

"His Grace Reaches me"

Dan Winkler

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Director: Glenn Colley
205-384-6441

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Make this summer the most joyful ever when you spend time wrapped in the glory of Christ's love for us all.

Study the Word with us weekly.

Sixth Avenue Church of Christ

1501 6th. Avenue

Jasper, AL. 35501

Wasted Lives

W. A. Holley

"...What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26).

"...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).

"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we shall carry nothing out" (I Timothy 6:6-7).

"There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death..." (Ecclesiastes 8:8).

The lesson is this; wealth cannot permanently forestall death.

Of course, money is important, but it must be used properly, or it becomes a curse. Money has wings that cause it to be scattered far and wide (Proverbs 23:5).

Throughout the centuries,

millions have thrown their lives away. Think of those who lived before the flood (Genesis chapter 6-8. Think of those who perished in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis chapters 18-19). In these cities ten righteous souls could not be found. Solomon, even though a great and wise king, allowed sin to wreck his life (Nehemiah 13:23-28).

God's law of sowing and reaping can never be repealed (Galatians 6:7-8; Romans 2:6). To use a more modern illustration, we shall cite as an example a certain woman who had been her nation's First Lady, who had lived in a castle, with all that goes with such a life-style, but who lost everything. She was reduced to "one dress, one hat, one old pair of shoes...she is now living in a shack in the woods with no running water and few resources." We must learn not to trust in uncertain riches but in God Almighty (I Timothy 6:17-19; Luke 12:13-21).

We live in a materialistic

nation. We tend to think that money can solve all our problems, but such is not the case. Jesus taught that we cannot serve God and mammon (riches, money) Matthew 6:24; and Luke 16:13.

If overnight, each of us received a million dollars, we'd be worse off than we were without it. A farmer with a million dollars would not be sowing and reaping. Bakers and canners, with a million apiece, wouldn't bake or can. Storekeepers would not open their stores. If everyone had a million dollars, all business establishments would be closed. No millionaire would weave cloth or mine coal. With a million each, we'd stay cold and hungry until we learned that money is useless unless goods that it will purchase are produced for sale.

To have to work for a living is one of man's greatest blessings. Even in paradise, Adam was required to keep and dress the garden (Genesis

2:15). Even, in the garden of Eden God never intended for man to be inactive. Man's work contributes to his moral, physical and spiritual wellbeing. Work solves many psychological problems. Your Bible teaches that if one will not work he should not eat (II Thessalonians 3:6-10).

There is but one way to heaven. Jesus Christ is that way (John 14:6; Matthew 7:13-14; Ephesians 2:12-22). Through Him we can enjoy salvation in the world to come. Milestones that lead us on are faith, repentance, confession of Christ, baptism, obedience, honesty, cleanliness, discipline and the love of God and His church or kingdom (Mark 16:15-16; Hebrews 5:8-9; John 14:15-23; I John 5:3).

It is not too late for those who read this paper. Sin in all of its shapes and forms can yet be laid aside (Galatians 5:19-21). Bad habits need not overwhelm you.

There is such a thing as the code of morals, as respect

for our marriage vows, respect for truth and fair dealing, as minds unclouded by drugs, and righteousness exhibited each day of one's life. Money is not the most important thing to save. It is better to save your faith, your self-respect, your honor, your pride in being, your health. Remember that worldly fortune and honor are but fleeting clouds.

The greatest need of our modern society is to learn to distinguish between the material and the immaterial, the true and the false, the temporary and the eternal.

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).

P.O. Box 274,
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If For One Day God Failed To Bless

If for one day God failed to give, Our daily blessings as we live, Like day and night, sunshine and rain, With time to heal the hurt of pain.

There'd be no light, no breezes blow, The wells be dry, no water flow. We'd have no breath to make request, For what we need, there'd be no rest.

With no time then, for us to find, The hope of peace for soul and mind, Our strength would fail, weak fall the frame, The cause be lost for which Christ came.

For just one day if God forgot, To think of us, and loved us not, The heart would stop, no eyes would see, What a fearful day that would be.

Let every soul rejoice and sing, Because he lives and he's our King. Without his blessings there's no way, For us to live a single day.

Let us be careful what we do, Give praise to God he'll see us through, be not dismayed, be not afraid, The universe by him was made.

He'll not forsake us that's for sure, He's in command, he's everywhere, For wrong we do we may regret, But not one day will he forget.

Eva Nell Naramore



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The Communications Revolution

For some time now a revolution has been going on around the world. It is not a violent one and may not be readily recognized, but it is changing lives, countries, and all of mankind. I refer to communications: the ability to get information out of the masses. The printed word, radio, audio tape recorders, television, video, the satellite, the computer, fax machines--all of these things are informing masses, influencing individuals, and unifying nations as nothing else has done in the history of mankind.

As the Lord's people, what a wonderful age we live in, to have all of these tools available to help us carry the gospel to every creature under heaven! Amazingly, they are not just in the hands of the rich and most influential people, but they are even available for the common man to use! They are within the grasp of Christians!

The Lord knew that in the last part of the Twentieth Century there would be five billion-plus people on this globe of ours, and so He has provided us with the tools to preach the gospel to them. What a shame, though, that Christians have allowed the political and business worlds, and false religious leaders of our day, to dominate the use of these means of communication instead of seizing the countless opportunities that are ours to use them in evangelizing.

One of our main problems in dealing with all of these communication outlets is that with the passing of time we become so familiar with them, and so accustomed to using them secularly, that we grow complacent and indifferent about them. Think of all the people we could reach with the gospel through radio, television, and literature, for example. That is still an exciting prospect to me! As much as Paul was

able to do in his time, just imagine what he would do now if he had access to modern-day communications! But here we have them, and for the most part we are ignoring them. What a crime against all of humanity!

Take, for instance the video. *Time Magazine* recently reported that the video machine is having a great influence on the world, and especially in third world countries. The *Voice of America* reported that some countries which have in the past controlled their people through controlling the information given to them are finding it difficult to deal with this machine. Video clubs have sprung up everywhere. If videos are not welcomed, they are smuggled in, and they make their way even to distant and isolated places. In time they will influence languages, dress, eating habits, and every phase of life. They will introduce people to rest of the world, to

political leaders, to sports figures, and numerous other things, some of which will be good and others will be bad. Still, for good or bad, the videos are here, and we have not seen the end of their influence yet.

But if this be true in the world, why can't we as the Lord's people see the potential of videos for the cause of Christ? They are being used now in a limited way, but we need to get busy and produce a variety of them on a large scale, and make them available at prices aimed at evangelism rather than profiteering. Tapes are so cheap, and wherever they go they will be in great demand. They can be used in homes and meetings houses. They can be used to teach individuals or groups. Libraries and video clubs will often be happy to stock them. They could even be sent or given to our better contacts. Especially in the mission fields around the world, they

can be used to great advantage.

Even audio cassette tapes can still be used as a powerful means of reaching people with the gospel. The fact is, we have the opportunity to take the initiative in putting so many different types of communication to work the Lord. We ought to be leaders in this field. We have the Good News to get out, and these communication tools will enable us to get it to the masses in the shortest possible time.

Brethren, let's wake up. There is a revolution going on around us and all over the world. We should not be conquered by it, but we should use it to win souls in the world for Christ.

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Do You See The Mud, Or The Stars?

Don Williams

The story is told of a daughter who married a man and shortly moved with him to an Indian Reservation in the west. His job kept him away from home much of the time, and the new wife grew very lonely. The ways of the Indians were strange to her. She did not understand their language nor their customs, and felt like a real stranger among them. One lonely day, she wrote her mother, saying that this was not the life for her and she would be coming home shortly. Her mother wrote back saying that she needed to stay with her husband and make a life for herself there with him. She sent this poem along with the letter:

Two men were found in a worn-out cell; Each man down on his luck.

One was there for the crime he'd committed; The other had tried to pass the buck.

That night each looked out of iron-clad bars; One saw the mud--the other saw the stars.

The daughter got the message! Life would be as happy or as lonely as she would make it. She began to try to understand the ways of the Indians and learned their language. Within a few months they were teaching her to make baskets and other such things. Her life improved and she began to teach them ways concerning her culture.

What about us? Are we accustomed to seeing only the bad things that happen to us, or do we see the stars and the blessings we have in Christ? The Apostle Paul was one that could enjoy life, no matter how many "lemons" were handed to him. His philosophy is found in Phil. 4:11 when he writes, "Not that I speak in respect of want, for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am,

therewith to be content." He continues by saying that there have been good times and bad times occasions of hunger and need as well as periods of sustenance. Paul would not worry about this for he had a power that sustained him constantly throughout his life. This is the power: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil 4:13) It is the same way today. If we faithfully serve Christ, He will be there at all times to give us the energy to go on and do our best. In Acts 27, Paul is found on a ship that is about to run aground and be destroyed. For two weeks the men on board have been in fear for their safety. In the midst of all this, verse 35 says that Paul "took bread, and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all." At a time when many would be cursing their ill-fated luck, Paul prayed to God, thankful that they had bread to eat.

Let us be thankful for the blessings God has given us and make the most we can of them even the "lemons", realizing that Christ will be there to strengthen us and

give us the power we need! Look for the stars, not the mud!

Most of A Minute

THE BALANCE AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

"Balance." Maybe we think of Japan, and the imbalance of automotive trade. or perhaps we think of trying to gain better balance in our world for different minority groups. Or maybe we would like to think along the lines that presidential hopefuls are thinking, and consider how to balance the system of taxation between the rich and the middle class.

Consider the balance suggested in the Bible. The ground at the foot of the cross is all level ground. That means that we are all sinners in need of the forgiving power in the blood of our Savior Jesus Christ. Rich, poor, black, white, sick, healthy, educated, uneducated - all are equal here. We are lost without Him and saved in Him. Romans 5:8 says, "But God commended his love for us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

Glenn Colley

The Hope Of Glory

In Colossians chapter one, we have a vital and potent chapter. This section of scripture exalts Christ and the Church over which He rules as head (1:15). The opening stanza of this magnificent book of the New Testament contains at least ten vibrant points pertinent to Christianity. The challenges and blessings of the gospel system radiate from these verses. Let us notice a few of the major contributions this page of the Bible provides for our edification.

In the first nine verses of this chapter of Colossians we learn of the beauty of faith, hope and love in the sojourn of a Christian. They truly loved one another in a life based upon genuine faith and bolstered by a living hope they took the gospel to the world of their day. In verse five we rejoice in hearing the phrase **"The Truth Of The Gospel"**.

this is the truth that captivated their joyous service before God. Paul prayed for the church in Colosse that they "might be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." It is significant that he did not mention any requests for fancy buildings, financial success or popular appeal!

In many ways the verse

that serves as a catalyst is verse ten wherein a brilliant three point sermon is found.

(1) Walk Worthy of the Lord

(2) Be Fruitful in Every Good Work

(3) Increase in the Knowledge of God

When brethren ardently follow this arrangement the true dynamics of Christianity will bless the earth! But, we cannot grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ and bear fruit to His glory until and unless we abide in Him (John 15:1-8). We must be rooted and grounded in the love of God found in Christ Jesus our Lord. Somewhere I read these cogent words on the subject:

"Plant good deeds and you will reap a harvest of blessings." Those who are barren and unfruitful in the realm of divine knowledge are truly miserable (II Peter 1:8-9). Real happiness is a by-product of service and most members of the church are just as happy as they make up their minds to be. That is another way of stating the old maxim:

"We get as much out of something as we put into it." this is especially true of Christianity. Colossians 1:10 affirmed that theme nearly 2,000 years ago!

Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit made it clear in verse thirteen that there is a vast chasm between Satan's

domain and the kingdom of God's dear Son. One realm features darkness and the other is the epitome of light. What a blessing it is to come out of the long, dark tunnel of sin and shame into the marvelous freedom and resplendent sunlight of the love of God found in Christ Jesus! The very next verse (1:14) informs us of the cleansing power in the redeeming blood of the Savior and verse twenty enriches our very souls by speaking of the peace made possible by the power of the Cross.

Oh, how much we owe the Master.

"How I love the great Redeemer who is doing so much for me."

In the heart of the chapter we have several significant points. Let us mention them and then blend all of them into a spiritual mural that portrays the devoted life of a follower of the Lamb of God.

1. The Preeminent Christ
2. The Glory of the Church
3. Suffering on behalf of the

Lord

4. Enemies in the Past; Now

Reconciled

5. Christ In Us -- The Hope of Glory!

Any emphasis in religion that fails to put the Savior in the spotlight is a false system. Ant preacher who evaluates self instead

of preaching Christ (I Cor. 2:2) is foolish indeed. Any focus that bypasses Jesus of Nazareth is a misnomer. Since our Lord is now in heaven (Hebrews 9:24) there could be no earthly headquarters for His church. In the gospel system He has all authority (Matthew 28:18) and finally, the words of the Master will judge us (John 12:48). The church belongs to Him by right of possession (Acts 20:28) and must submit to the One "who gave himself up for it" (Ephesians 5:22-32). Christ is the prototype of creation, in both the physical and spiritual realms. All things were made by Him and for Him! Since Jesus is the head of the church we gladly follow heaven's directives and even willingly suffer for His righteous cause. Sacrifice and surrender in the life of a Christian truly are transformed into joy and contentment because of the mobility of the cause we serve. Some wise person left these words of wisdom:

"If you do not know it is more blessed to give than to receive, it is because you have never given sacrificially."

In verses 21-23 of Colossians chapter one, we see a vivid contrast and a vibrant hope. Though these people had once been so vile as to be classed as

aliens and enemies of God they now, by obedience to Truth, were reconciled, holy and without blame. What power the good news holds. These devoted followers of the Redeemer were continuing in the pursuit of righteousness and were grounded and settled in the highway of holiness. Their light was shining brightly for things divine! Such loyalty causes Christians today to heartily sing:

"I'm pressing on the upward way, New heights I'm gaining every day."

As we come to the end of this highly beneficial section of the sacred text we learn that a mystery has been solved. In the New Testament the word mystery means something once hidden is now revealed. What does Paul refer to here? The prophet had foretold the coming of the Messiah (Revelation 19:10; I Peter 1:10-12) and now He had arrived! But not as a pompous austere monarch. He came to live in us and give us the radiant hope of glory. Christianity is life and that more abundantly!

"Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, sweetest name I know Fills my life with sunshine. Keeps me singing as I go."

Johnny Ramsey

*Choose you this day whom ye will serve;
but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.
Joshua 24:15*

AUGUST 18, 1995

The Words Of Truth

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- The Bible Alone Has Salvation
- Homophobic
- Are "Mondays" Killing Us
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Stones Of Stumbling

W. A. Holley

In the Bible "a stone of stumbling" is used of any object over which a person might trip the foot, and hence the stone is the cause of ruin or disgust (Isaiah 57:14). In Zephaniah's time idols were stumblingblocks that caused the Jewish people to fall from God's grace (Zephaniah 1; Ezekial 7:19). Their idols were lifeless, powerless and, thus could not save them.

What is idolatry? It is the ascribing of divine honors to any created thing, as the sun, moon, stars, stones, trees, men, money, etc. Jesus, in His contest with Satan, said, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10). When John the Apostle was about to worship an angel, he was warned, being told, "See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: Worship God" (Revelation 22:9).

In fact, Jesus became "a stumblingblock" to the Jews because His words and deeds offended them as they did not correspond to their pre-conceptions of what they thought the Messiah should be (Romans 9:32; I Peter 2:8).

In Isaiah's day God became a stumblingblock to Israel because they put their faith and trust in an idol rather than in Him who created all things and who inhabits (Isaiah 8:13-15, 57:3-5, 14-15,20).

From a figurative point of view there are many modern stumblingblocks. What are some of them?

(1) The one church, the church that Jesus built, the church that is mentioned in your Bible, has become a stumbling block to many honest and sincere people. But it should not be so. (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:4-6; Romans 16:16). Why not accept what your Bible says about the church?

Denominationalism, in all its shapes and forms, is not found in your Bible. Jesus does not want His followers divided; rather He wants them united (John 17:20-23; I Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:1-6; I Corinthians 11:18). One famous preacher, in his prayer, said, "I thank God for religious division, that we may have church for everyone's choice..." Friends, Jesus could not have voiced such a prayer!! Justification of denominationalism is a slap in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ!!

Some words of wisdom are in order: From a Bible point of view, there is but one true church, but there are many counterfeit churches, churches not mentioned in God's Holy Bible.

The church of Christ is unique. On what grounds? The church of Christ accepts the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible as the foundation of all that we teach and do in worship and service to God Almighty. We are taught that we must not add to or subtract from what God has commanded (Revelation 22:18-19; Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:6).

Dear Friends, do not stumble over the Biblical church! We, the members of the church of Christ, wish to restore the primitive simplicity of the New Testament church in our day as it on the First Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection (Acts 2:1-47; Luke 8:11). The same seed planted now will produce the same fruit it produced then (Luke 8:11; I Peter 1:22-23).

(2) One should never stumble over the Lord's command of water baptism; yet countless thousands do. Many preachers spend their time in devising facetious arguments endeavoring to get around the Lord's command of baptism (John 3:3-5; Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5;

Acts 22:26).

Why should one stumble at baptism? Why object to a commandment of the Lord? (Acts 10:48; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; I Peter 3:20-21). Was not Jesus baptized? (Matthew 3:13-17). Jesus was not baptized for or in order to receive the remission of sin, nor was he baptized "because of remission of sin." Why was Jesus baptized? He was baptized to "fulfill all righteousness." (Matthew 3:15). One fulfills "all righteousness," when one keeps the commandments of the Lord (Psalm 119:172). Baptism depicts in three steps...going to water...going into the water...coming up out of the water (Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:4). Sprinkling or pouring could never satisfy the demands of Scripture.

John the Baptist baptized great numbers of people (Mark 1:1-13; Luke 3:3). Those who refused John's baptism, "rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him" (Luke 7:29-30). Why stumble at the Lord's command of baptism? On the birthday of the church, the First Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection about 3,000 men and women were baptized (Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-47).

Some who were baptized with John's baptism after it expired were required to be baptized a second time. (Acts 18:24-28; 19:1-7). Even today, if one has been baptized because he was already saved, needs to be baptized a second time for, unto, in order to receive remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Matthew 26:28). It is not a question of whether you are satisfied with your baptism, rather, the question is: Is God satisfied with your baptism??

(3) Do you stumble at Acappella music in church worship?? Just read the New Testament and you will see organs, pianos, orchestras, a

chorus, quartets, solos, et al. are not even mentioned there.

Please read: Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; Romans 15:9; I Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12; and James 5:13. These verses teach singing--not the use of some mechanical instrument of music. God has specific and generic commands. When God commanded Noah to build the ark of gopher wood, all other kinds of wood were excluded. (Genesis 6:14). When God ordered Naaman to dip seven times in the river Jordan, He excluded the rivers of Damascus (II Kings 5:8-14).

While instruments were available for use on the First Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection, the church of Christ did not use them. Consult The American Encyclopedia, Vol. 12, P. 688, which says, "Pope Vitalian is related to have first introduced organs into some of the churches of Western Europe about 670..." The Greek Orthodox Church has never used it. The Lord's church was established in A.D. 33 (Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 42-47).

We are not trying to be different. We are contending "earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3)...To show that some prominent

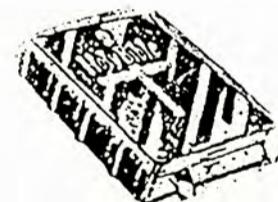
scholars have expressed thoughts which support the biblical exclusion of instruments view, we shall quote from their writings. We shall submit a few quotations:

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, said, "I have no objection to the organ in our chapel, provided that it is neither seen nor heard."

John Calvin, a great leader of Protestantism, said, "Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps, and the restoration of other shadows of the law."

Adam Clarke, in his great Commentary, VI, p. 686, wrote: "I am an old man, and an old minister; and I here declare that I never knew them (instruments of music) productive of any good in worship of God; and have had reason to believe that they were productive of much evil. Music, as a science, I esteem and admire; but instruments of music in the house of God, I abominate and abhor."

True worship requires man's best effort and that must conform exactly to God's directives (John 4:24; Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-47). God, not man, initiates and controls the boundaries and activities of worship acceptable to Him. Those who try to worship God according to their own way can never please God



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Brownlow's Book: A Scriptural Apologetic

In 1945 Leroy Brownlow published the well known book entitled, *Why I Am A Member Of The Church Of Christ*. This year marks the golden anniversary of that marvelous volume. That book was among the reading materials at home while I was growing up for as long as I can remember. It has been in my library for as long as I have had a library. I have used that book for a text in teaching Bible classes. It is the best of its kind.

It is among a genre of books which were written by men who have and had a profound respect for that blood bought institution of

the New Testament. From page to page it takes the reader through a "book, chapter and verse," "thus saith the Lord" kind of response to the basis premise of why I am a member of the Lord's church.

It is interesting to know that brother Brownlow did not "grow up" in the church. His parents were of mixed religious background. In 1937 Leroy Brownlow began preaching the gospel he obeyed in 1931. His preaching caused him to focus attention on what the church is, what we believe and why we exist. Paul C. Brownlow said of his

father, "He believed that everyone would become a member of the church if they really knew what we believe. *Why I am A Member* was not written to be, nor should it become, a creed for our brotherhood. It is a tool to help God-loving, religious people study that Bible and follow God more closely" (*Gospel Advocate*, June 1995, p. 38).

Undoubtedly there are those who would castigate this book by saying that it amounts to nothing more than a creed, or, a sectarian apologetic at best. It is far from being either. This book was not written by a man who conceived of

churches of Christ as merely another denomination. He is not demeaning of the distinctive church. He does not view the church as the "Church of Christ" ("born of the American Restoration Movement"), as distinguished from the "church of Christ," the organism founded by Jesus Christ. These, and kindred views, are monopolized today by the militant liberals who see truth as a threat to unity and "change" as the cure for every ill. Brother Brownlow's book is nowhere tainted by such sick and corrupt views of the church.

If no one is a member of the Lord's church it is only proper that he should know why. In fact, Scripture says, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (I Peter 3:15). That means that we must be ready to make our defense of the hope that is in us. The world has a right to ask why we are what we are. We have an obligation to offer a Scriptural apologetic (defense). Nothing more. Nothing less.

Dennis Gullede

The Bible Alone Has Salvation

Bro. Elwood Holt

Everyone needs salvation. All accountable persons share this need. Through the transgression of Adam the devil was successful in thrusting sin and death into the world which God had made for man. Every person is born into a world where sin is. Accountable persons, by transgressing God's will, become sinners: All accountable persons become involved in sin. Hence, Paul declares...for all have sinned, and fall short of the Glory of God (3:23). John says, "If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us" (John 1:10). Yes, man needs salvation.

There are many erroneous views about man's salvation. Some hold that salvation is wholly a matter of God's grace, and the individual can do nothing. Others say salvation requires a miracle - that faith is the result of a direct operation of the Holy Spirit in the human heart.

Thousands say: "It doesn't make any difference what you believe." The devil will never make Heaven, and he believes. Many hold to the view that all that God requires is sincerity and a good moral life. (How wrong they are according to God's word.) Numerous "plans of salvation" are preached by religious leaders. It is little wonder the world is confused. We must go "back to the Bible" for its message of salvation.

The Bible plan of salvation is plainly set forth in the great commission. In Matthew 28:19, the Lord said, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." In Mark 16:15,16 we have, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned."

In Luke 24:45-47, we read: "Thus it is written, that the Christ should

suffer, and rise from the dead again the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem."

A summary of this commission would be as follows: The Lord commanded the gospel to be preached to every creature, and promised that the person who was brought to believe that gospel, repent of his sins, and be baptized would have his sins remitted. The Lord stressed this plan would be preached first in Jerusalem.

According to the terms of the great commission the bible teaches (1) that men must hear the gospel message or story (Romans 10:17), (2) Believe on the Christ (Acts 16:31), (3) repent of their sins (Acts 2:38, 17:30), confess their faith in Christ (Matthew 10:32, Romans 10:10), (5) be baptized for remission of sins (Acts 2:38, 22:16), (6) and thus by baptism enter Christ (Romans 6:3, Galatians 3:27), (7) where

salvation is (2 Timothy 2:10).

This is God's plan - The Bible plan - for man's salvation from alien sins. May God help us to respect it, to be in harmony with it, and to proclaim it. God has never offered any other plan of salvation in His Holy Word. There will never be another plan by

God. God's great plan for man's salvation cost Him the life of His only begotten Son. All this for man's salvation. How could anyone ask God for more? Jesus was obedient to His father in Heaven. It is time all accountable persons become obedient to the Saviour of all.

Most of A Minute HOMOPHOBIC

Once in a while someone will use the word "homophobic", a word used to describe the mentality of those who oppose homosexuality. If someone uses the word to describe a person who hates homosexuals, I'm not homophobic. Christ teaches us to love all people, even to the apparent extreme of loving our enemies. If, on the other hand, someone uses the word to describe a person who is opposed to the practice of homosexuality, and believes it to be a sin, then I am a homophobic. You see, I believe the Bible to be the word of our Creator, and in Romans 1:26 He says, "...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 committing that which is shameful...." Verse 26 calls this "vile passions". I don't decide right from wrong. He does - and I can't call Him "Savior", if I'm not willing to call Him "Lord".

Glenn Colley

Are "Mondays" Killing Us?

Don Williams

You have heard it stated in various ways: "It's a typical Monday" or "I'm having a pretty good day...for a Monday," or just simply, "It's Monday!" What does it mean? It suggests that Monday can become a no good, low-down, terrible day, complete with headaches, machine break-downs, and problems. But it can also mean something else.

While visiting the hospital, a preacher ran into a college chum of his. As this pal (now businessman)

learned that his friend was still preaching, he urged him to do more preaching on behavior, conduct and Christian living. The reason--his assessment was--that "**Mondays are killing us!**"

How easy it is to sit and hear the sermons of Sunday and yet not take them to heart for our Monday. How painless is it to be viewed as a Christian light on Sunday, and yet refuse to shine on Monday in the business world of dog-eat-dog. How easy it is to react to those who jerk on our

chain, giving them a piece of our mind, when that mind is not spiritually secure. or singularly approved by God!

Jesus said that our Christ-like lifestyle must be continual: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23) We must be the salt of the earth and the light of the world always, not on certain days of the week.

How do we do it? How do we maintain our religious discipline, even on

bad days?

(1) **Live One Day At A Time!** (Matthew 6:34) Block the day out into increments of time. Try to act as Christ would in every moment throughout the day.

(2) **Act, Don't React!** "See that none render evil for evil unto any man, but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. (I Thessalonians 5:15) Do not allow obnoxious people to pull you down to their level. Treat them as you would desire to be treated. (Matthew 7:12).

(3) **Pray Regularly!** (I Thessalonians 5:17) A plaque on my desk reads, "God help me to remember that nothing is going to happen to me that you and I together can't handle."

(4) **Reflect!** Re-think the sermons preached last Sunday, listening for that which can be of great value in the battles we must face.

(5) **Glorify Christ!** (Matthew 5:16) May we live and conduct ourselves in such a way, so that Christ and his church may be uplifted and exalted. Let's not allow any day to kill us!

Preaching: Profession Or Passion?

Johnny Ramsey

The urgency of preaching is often diluted when brethren expect the wrong things from an evangelist and thrust petty matters upon him that keep the servant of the Lord from "making full proof of his ministry." (2 Timothy 4:1-5). We all need to understand that gospel preaching is a passion and not a profession. Denominational folk have categorically made pastors out of preachers thus relegating much of their work to drinking coffee with thy brethren and politicking with society. No teaching of the Bible upholds such shallow concepts but, still millions believe it to be so. Even in the church of the Lord we have thousands of brethren who are misled on these serious matters. If we ever even come close to world evangelism we must return to New Testament teaching and example concerning proclaimers of the glad tidings. When men who should be reading, studying, praying and teaching are diverted into social, physical, secular pursuits the cause of our Lord is threatened. (I Timothy 4:12-16).

Parallel to the prophets

of yesteryear are the true preachers of today. Their main work is to "bubble forth" the message of God to a lost and dying world. (Jeremiah 20:9; 22:29).

"O earth, earth, earth, Hear the word of the Lord."

The writer of a great gospel song was correct: "O spread the tidings around.

Wherever man is found The Lord is King of kings." The sweet message of redemption should circle the earth as waters cover the sea. And, it would if we would release gospel preachers to preach the gospel in season and out! Let us notice what an evangelist is and what he is not.

A Preacher Is Not: A Professional Pulpiteer:

The concept of fancy cathedrals and expensive clothing never entered the minds of Amos, Jeremiah and Habakkuk. They did not talk to fill up a thirty minute sermon so they could pick up a check and go home to "a comfortable parsonage." Their very lives centered in telling heaven's message regardless of what the people thought. Three centuries ago DeFenalon wrote these challenging words:

"Nothing is more despicable than a professional talker who uses his words like a quack uses his remedies."

All faithful proclaimers of Heaven's will should concur with sentiments expressed by Richard Baxter in 1650: "I preached as never sure to preach again and as dying man to dying men." Yes, verily, woe is unto us if we preach not the gospel. (I Corinthians 9:16).

A Parrot or a Pouter:

When a man fails to search the Scriptures for himself and due to laziness and tradition merely mouths the words borrowed from his forefathers he ceases to be a genuine person and becomes, sadly, a parrot. Nothing is so spiritually invigorating as personal pursuit of righteousness as we dig out for ourselves the grand and eloquent message of redemption. We all receive help from other preachers--outlines, books, and advice--but may we never be guilty of a second-hand religion. We must believe what the Bible says and not what the brotherhood labels "kosher." One of the gravest mistakes preachers make is to waste time pouting when

someone disagrees with them or gives constructive criticism. We must not become petty and childish and popish in expecting everything we say--even our opinions - to be received verbatim just because we are preachers! Let us be mature enough to see the real value of criticism and honest enough to realize we may have made an error ourselves. After all Christ was the only perfect One and he also is the only High Priest in Christianity.

A Powder Puff:

Unless we have deep conviction we will not last long as proclaimers of the good news. So many will desire that we speak smooth things (Isaiah 30:10) and they will flatter us when we do. (I Thessalonians 2:5). But, remembering that Jesus warned us that only false teachers are popular with the masses. (Luke 6:26). When we know and preach the Truth we dare not allow weak brethren to dissuade us. We are not in the people - pleasing but the God - serving business called Christianity. Young men who decide to preach need to know that being loyal to the Lord will not get them a trophy for most popular man in town. It

might provide a platter for their head. Ask John the Immerser or Jeremiah about that. In spite of these solemn truths however, a crown of righteousness awaits faithful evangelists who had rather please the Savior anyway. (Galatians 1:10 and 4:16). James Rowe has helped us with this great song:

"Ring out the word over the land and sea, Still far from Jesus many live In sin and doubt.

Ring out the news that makes men free

To all the lost of every nation

Ring the message out."

As we "speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11) we are powerful, persistent, pungent, pure, prayerful, practical, prepared and provocative. Never forget that Habakkuk says to preach it so plainly that those who read may understand it!

When we can say with Paul that we are debtor to preach it, ready to preach it and not ashamed to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ we will make the angels rejoice and the demons in Hell tremble. Indeed: **PREACH THE WORD!**

AUGUST 25, 1995

• See Articles Inside:

- Special Music In The Church
Ephesians 5:19
- Are You Talking To Yourself?
• Scriptures
- A Bible School Teacher Wonders
• Queen Elizabeth's First
Baseball Game
- Guardian Angels
- The Death Of A Great Leader
Joshua 1:2

Volume 32 Number 31
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

Words Of Truth Lectureship

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

7:00 P.M.

"His Grace Reaches me"

Dan Winkler

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

9:30 A.M.

"Saved By Grace Through Faith, Ephesians 2:8"

Dan Winkler

10:30 A.M.

"Jesus Christ, Full Of Grace & Truth, Jn. 1:14"

B.J. Clarke

1:00 P.M.

"What Grace Teaches Me, Titus 2:11-12"

Mel Futrell

7:00 P.M.

Congregational Singing - Paul Wylie Directing

7:30 P.M.

"Why I Am Thankful For God's Grace"

Glenn Posey

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

9:30 A.M.

"Receive Not The Grace Of God In Vain,
II Cor. 6:1"

Kelby Smith

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

10:30 A.M. - Split Session

Men: "Paul - By God's Grace, I Cor. 15:10"

Don McWhorter

Women: "Paul's Thorn, II Cor. 12:7"

Carol Boyd

1:00 P.M.

"Shall We Continue In Sin?, Rom 6:1"

Jerry Jenkins

7:00 P.M.

Congregational Singing - Paul Wylie Directing

7:30 P.M.

"I'm Heavenbound By God's Grace"

Bob Duncan

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

9:30 A.M.

"Grace Versus Works, Rom. 11:5"

Bob Duncan

10:30 A.M. - Split Session

Men: "Noah and God's Grace, Gen 6:8"

Allen Webster

Women: "Grow In Grace, II Pet. 3:18"

Lois Duncan

Director: Glenn Colley
205-384-6441

Make Your Plans to Attend

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Make this summer the most joyful ever when you spend time wrapped in the glory of Christ's love for us all.

Study the Word with us weekly.

Sixth Avenue Church of Christ

1501 6th. Avenue

Jasper, AL. 35501

Special Music In The Church Ephesians 5:19

Today good brethren often have questions about special music in our worship. By special they mean different from the congregational singing in churches of Christ. Some churches now are having one man singing to the congregation, or perhaps a trio or a quartet performing for the church in worship. Some churches of Christ we understand, now have their own choirs which perform during the worship assembly. Is this pleasing to God? There is but one way to find the answer. We can't call the Lord on the phone as we can one another. We can't use the postal service or fax line or E-mail to send and receive messages. God doesn't verbally and personally answer questions as He once did. But He has given us the answers regarding worship which we need! For this we are thankful. Without God's instructions revealed in the Bible, we would live our lives in aimless curiosity feebly trying to please Him. The Bible is the complete, authoritative, inspired word of God (2 Tim. 3:16, Jude 3, 2 pet. 1:3; Jn. 17:17). Through His word God teaches us how to worship Him, and then expects us to comply with His

desires (Jn. 4:24).

The book of Ephesians was written to the members of the church at Ephesus. The first verse of this great book says, 'Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus...' These truths then, are applicable to individual Christians and to the church as a whole. Thus the information taught herein about Christian worship is very valuable and interesting.

Consider Ephesians 5:19. It reads, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." The passage is similar to what the inspired apostle wrote in 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 hearts to the Lord."

By breaking down these phrases we can see more clearly what is and what is not permitted by God with reference to music in New Testament worship today.

1. "Speaking"

This shows that the music

authorized in the New Testament must be vocal, and verbal. The greek word for speaking is *laleo*, and is found 295 times in the New Testament.

It is translated speak, spake, say, told, talked and preached. Therefore the music described here must be in words.

What kinds of things would this, by implication, prohibit?

A. Instrumental music. Though some might prefer playing (on an organ or piano), the instruction specifies speaking in song. Colossians 3:16 says this must be singing which teaches and admonishes. A mechanical instrument of music can never speak, teach or admonish. Humans do that when they sing Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to one another.

B. Humming, whistling, or clapping. None of these harmonize with speaking or teaching.

2. "Speaking to yourselves".

This shows that our singing must be reciprocal. That is, people singing to one another. Since all are told to sing, (this teaching is for every member, 1:1), and to "speak to yourselves", the picture is clearly congregational singing. There

is not another scenario which will fill the bill.

What would this teaching prohibit by implication?

A. Settings in worship in which a small group or choir of people sang while everyone else just sat and listened. According to Paul, everyone is to be singing.

B. Solos or small groups singing to the larger group while the larger group sat and quietly listened. Again, all are commanded to sing. While in a song which has a bass lead, then an alto lead, there may be momentary pauses between lyrical lines, those involved are still doing that which complies with "Speaking to yourselves...singing..." On the other hand, a setting in which one group sings the song while everyone else sits without singing is a violation of this teaching.

3. "...in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs..."

This describes the lyrics of approved music. Psalms are scripture set to music. Hymns are songs of praise to God. Spiritual songs describe those which are designed around spiritual themes and which motivate singers and listeners to greater spiritual service..

4. "Singing and making

melody in your heart to the Lord."

This is what we are to do with reference to music in worship. Sing! Make melody in your heart to the Lord. The true expression of Christianity is not a sigh, but A song. What, by implication, is prohibited by this teaching?

A. Playing a mechanical instrument for music in worship. Playing isn't singing, and furthermore playing is making melody in and on something other than your heart as he instructed.

B. Entertainment oriented music which, in reality, is to please our ears without serious regard for what is truly pleasing to God. We are to sing. We are to sing to the Lord or to his liking. When our worship has no higher goal than just pleasing the worshippers, that's how far up it will go.

May our worship, whether public or private, be totally motivated by a sincere desire to please our God. As Jesus taught, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24)."

Glenn Colley

Are You Talking To Yourself?

Sometimes we chuckle at the idea of someone talking to himself. Although we find humor in others doing it if hard-pressed, we all would have to plead guilty to talking to ourselves at one time or another. It is very interesting that God commanded Joshua to talk to himself. Notice:

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein" (Joshua 1:8).

The Hebrew term that is

translated "meditate" is a word which means "to speak with oneself, murmuring and in a loud voice, as is often by those who are musing" (Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament).

When we learn to talk to ourselves as we search the scriptures, we will be doing more than just reading or studying, we will be developing a relationship with God's word. The Bible is more than just a text to be studied, it is a companion (Proverbs 6:21,22)!

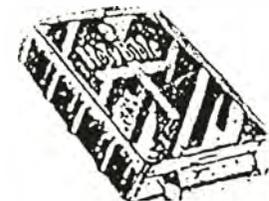
When we read the

account of Philip and the eunuch in Acts 8:26-31, we see that as Philip approached, he "heard the eunuch read the prophet Esaias" (V. 30). The eunuch was reading aloud although he was alone.

Educators know that some people are visual learners, but most are auditory learners, and everyone does better when there is a good balance of both visual and auditory stimuli. When you read the Bible and speak out loud, you enhance your ability to learn the scriptures. So maybe we all should talk to

ourselves more as God's word talks to us. Try it, you might like it!

M. Floyd Bailey, Jr.
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Salem, VA 24153



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The following list of scriptures was submitted by Bura Lowrey. Sister Lowrey has been a faithful member of the Cleveland church of Christ in Bankston, Alabama for many years. Her husband, George Lowrey, who served that church as an elder for decades, has recently passed away at the age of 83, and will be greatly missed.

I have heard of children being taught the A-B-C's of scripture, and recently sister Lowrey gave me this list. I think it is a wonderful way for people of all ages to memorize twenty-six verses which, with a little practice, will be easy to recall at any time.

If you would like to write to Bura Lowrey, her address is Rt. 1 Bankston, AL. 35542

Glenn Colley

<p>A A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. Proverbs. 15:1</p> <p>B Be ye kind one to another. Ephesians. 4:32</p> <p>C Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Psalms 51:10</p> <p>D Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. James. 4:8</p> <p>E Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father. James. 1:17</p> <p>F Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. Ecclesiastes. 12:13</p> <p>G Give us this day our daily bread. Matthew. 6:11</p> <p>H Honour thy father and thy mother which is the first commandment with promise. Ephesians 6:2</p> <p>I If ye love me keep my commandments. John 14:15</p> <p>J Judge not that ye be not judged. Matthew. 7:1</p> <p>K Keep my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking guile. Psalms. 34:13</p> <p>L Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. I John 2:15</p> <p>M My son forget not my law. Proverbs. 3:1</p>	<p>N No man can serve two masters: Matthew . 6:24</p> <p>O O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good - Psalms 107:1</p> <p>P Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing praises unto our God - Psalms 147:1</p> <p>Q Quit you like men, be strong - I Cor. 16:13</p> <p>R Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people. Proverbs 14:34</p> <p>S Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you. Matthew 6:33</p> <p>T Thou God seest me: Genesis. 16:13</p> <p>U Unto thee O God, do we give thanks. Psalms 75:1</p> <p>V Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.</p> <p>W What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. Psalms 56:3</p> <p>X Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Luke 13:3</p> <p>Y Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. John 15:14</p> <p>Z ...That he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Titus 2:14</p>
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A Bible School Teacher Wonders



When the children I teach have become young adults;
When school books no longer control;
When the games of their childhood are all put away;
And to conquer the world is their goal.

Will they remember that God must come first
In all that we do every day?
Did I stress it enough in the classes I taught?
Did I make important to pray?

Will they still assemble with saints every week,
And worship in spirit and truth?
I wish I could see how my students will be
When adulthood takes over their youth.

I try to impress them with searching God's Word
For the answers to problems they need.
Will in childhood I planted the seed?
When in childhood I planted the seed?

I hope I'm around when they become young adults,
And can see that their faith has grown strong.
I know that my efforts will not be in vain;
For sowing God's Word can't be wrong.

I know that my teaching, in ways, has come short;
But I'm striving each year to improve.
And I pray that next year their teacher's impact
On their lives my shortcomings remove.

Grace Lowrey 763 Lundy Lane Mobile, AL. 36606-4926



Most of A Minute Queen Elizabeth's First Baseball Game

I enjoyed reading one time about Queen Elizabeth's first American baseball game in Baltimore. Escorted by the President and Mrs. Bush and the baseball commissioner, the Queen sat in VIP skybox and enjoyed a pre-game buffet of crab cakes and blackened smoked turkey. She stayed for two innings.

Now, I'm not so sure Elizabeth has been to a ball game yet. After all, what's a baseball game without nine innings, hard bleachers and expensive hot dogs?

This illustrates an important spiritual point. When God sent His only begotten Son Jesus into the world, He could have placed Him in a palace with jewels and crowns and servants. He didn't. Instead, He gave Him the dirt roads of the common man. And Hebrews 4:15 says Jesus was "tempted in all points such as we are". He's a Savior who can understand the hardships of our lives. No wonder the Bible says the "common people heard Him gladly" Mark 12:37.

Glenn Colley

Guardian Angels

John T. Polk, II

There is an appealing doctrine that says everyone has a specially-anointed heavenly angel to "guard" or miraculously intervene in each person's life in times of temptation, weakness, suffering or death. Popularized in movies like "Its a Wonderful Life," this idea is prevalent even among those who believe in God's Word! Unfortunately the concept was taught by the Devil, not God!

"Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: "He shall give His angels charge concerning you, and, In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone. Jesus said to him, It is written again, You shall not tempt the Lord your God" (Matthew 4:6-7).

The Devil mis-applied Psalm 91:11-12 to make it appear that Jesus would be prevented from harming Himself because angels sent for that purpose would "guard" Him. First, Jesus' response was to quote Deuteronomy 6:16 to show that no man, not even God's Only-Begotten Son, can recklessly disregard God's Laws to test God's resolve. Hurling oneself headlong toward hurt is no test of God's will to help, but is a test of a person's "common sense" and knowledge of the law of gravity. According to Deuteronomy 6:16 and Jesus' use of it, God will not be dared to respond. Secondly, Psalm 91 stresses dwelling, abiding, taking refuge, and making "the Most High your habitation (verses 1,4,9). It says that one who conceded to God's Laws is safe, not one who challenges. God tempts no one with evil and He "cannot be tempted by evil"

(James 1:13). Since James 1:13 in the New Covenant teaches the same truth about God as Deuteronomy 6:16 in the Old, then God still will not send angels to guard those who disregard his will!

Matthew 18:10 says, "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven." This cannot be teaching the "guardian angel" doctrine for:

(1) It has already been shown to be a doctrine of the Devil;

(2) These angels are in Heaven, not on earth;

(3) Jesus teaches that He, not angels, saves (verses 11-14);

(4) God's will is that no one perishes (Matthew 18:14), but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9); that all should come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4), but God does not guard everyone from

being lost;

(5) where have the "guardian angels" been for: the children in the Oklahoma City bombing (1995), Susan Smith's sons she drowned (1994), POW's/MIA's of W.W.I, W.W.II, Korea, Vietnam, et. al., and millions of other victims past and present who have suffered in this life? Since "there is no partiality with Him" (Ephesians 6:9), why have "guardian angels" supposedly been sent with partiality? If "guardian angels" are taught, then experience doesn't confirm Bible truth for the very first time in the history of mankind!

Angels sinned (2 Peter 2:4) and served the Devil (Matthew 25:41). Maybe the "angel" someone thought was helping them actually was weakening their resolve to serve God by making them think "God will bail them out" so they could disregard God's Laws. If it is the

Devil's doctrine, maybe it is also the Devils angels. If not, why not?

God's angels are "sent forth" (Hebrews 1:14) but not assigned "to minister for those who will inherit salvation." If an angel is sent from heaven for any purpose he would be

(1) on an exceptional mission, not a routine assignment;

(2) "unwittingly entertained" (Hebrews 13:2), not identifiable;

(3) unable to change any of the Bible's stated teaching (Galatians 1:6-9).

Jesus' disciples were in error when they supposed that Peter had an angel, for it was actually Peter, himself (Acts 12:15). Many today also are looking for an angel from God when they should be seeking to be with the disciples (Matthew 28:18-20)!

125 The Trace
Dover, TN 37058

The Death Of A Great Leader

Joshua 1:2

I. THE BIRTH OF A GREAT LEADER.

1. He was born of faithful parents; Hebrews 11:23.
2. He was born during a time of trial; Ex. 1:11,16.
3. He was born for a purpose; Ex. 2:10.

II. THE CHOICE OF A GREAT LEADER.

1. He chose to be unyoked with Egypt; Heb. 11:25.
2. He chose to suffer with God; Heb. 11:25.
3. He chose to live by faith; Heb. 11:27-29.

III. THE VISION OF A GREAT LEADER.

1. He had a vision of the burning bush; Ex. 3:2-6.
2. He had a vision of God's power; Ex. 14:21,22.
3. He had a vision of the Promised Land; Deut. 34:1.

IV. THE CONTACT BY GOD TO A GREAT LEADER.

1. God revealed His plan to him; Ex. 3:7-10.
2. God commissioned him; Ex. 3:16,17.
3. God gave him power; Ex. 11:3.

V. THE PROMISE TO A GREAT LEADER.

1. He was promised God's presence; Ex. 3:12.
2. He was promised God's instruction; Ex. 4:11,12.
3. He was promised victory; Ex. 3:10,17.

VI. THE WORK OF A GREAT LEADER.

1. He had a message from God; Ex. 7:2.
2. He worked as God's deliverer; Ex. 12:31,32.
3. He worked to deliver God's commandments; Ex. 34:4; 35:1.

VII. THE DEATH OF A GREAT LEADER.

1. He died at 120 years; Deut. 34:7.
2. He died after being a blessing; Deut. 33:1-3.
3. He died according to God's plan; Deut. 34:5.

By: Elwood Holt

SCRIPTURES MAKE IT CLEAR

*that we grow from difficult experiences,
and that we should accept them as blessings in disguise.*

SEPTEMBER 1, 1995

• See Articles Inside:

- Miserable Comforters
- Giving It Our All (II)
- The Secret To Church Growth
- Give Flowers While They Yet Live
 - Air
 - The Psalmist's Limit
- What Can Be Done And Called "Worship"?
 - A Bad Thing

Volume 32 Number 32
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

h the

Words Of Truth Lectureship

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

7:00 P.M.

"His Grace Reaches me"

Dan Winkler

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

9:30 A.M.

"Saved By Grace Through Faith, Ephesians 2:8"

Dan Winkler

10:30 A.M.

"Jesus Christ, Full Of Grace & Truth, Jn. 1:14"

B.J. Clarke

1:00 P.M.

"What Grace Teaches Me, Titus 2:11-12"

Mel Futrell

7:00 P.M.

Congregational Singing - Paul Wylie Directing

7:30 P.M.

"Why I Am Thankful For God's Grace"

Glenn Posey

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

9:30 A.M.

"Receive Not The Grace Of God In Vain,
II Cor. 6:1"

Kelby Smith

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

10:30 A.M. - Split Session

Men: "Paul - By God's Grace, I Cor. 15:10"

Don McWhorter

Women: "Paul's Thorn, II Cor. 12:7"

Carol Boyd

1:00 P.M.

"Shall We Continue In Sin?, Rom 6:1"

Jerry Jenkins

7:00 P.M.

Congregational Singing - Paul Wylie Directing

7:30 P.M.

"I'm Heavenbound By God's Grace"

Bob Duncan

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

9:30 A.M.

"Grace Versus Works, Rom. 11:5"

Bob Duncan

10:30 A.M. - Split Session

Men: "Noah and God's Grace, Gen 6:8"

Allen Webster

Women: "Grow In Grace, II Pet. 3:18"

Lois Duncan

Director: Glenn Colley
205-384-6446

Make Your Plans to Attend

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Make this summer the most joyful ever when you spend time wrapped in the glory of Christ's love for us all.

Study the Word with us weekly.

Sixth Avenue Church of Christ

1501 6th. Avenue

Jasper, AL. 35501

Miserable Comforters

The book of Job is good reading. Reading it isn't simple or quick, but deeply interesting. This is naturally true because it is part of God's revealed word to man and teaches priceless truths about the suffering of the righteous; but it is also true because of the personality of the book. Reading the first two chapters puts the reader in the position of knowing what the characters in the book do not know: that Job's suffering is not due to his rebellion, but rather to a trial of his faith. God believed in Job. He was willing to put Job's faith to the fiery test of suffering. Through most of the book however, Job's friends swirl about him with their theories. They believe that such suffering is always the result of grievous sin. Job disputes their theories. He doesn't claim perfection, but knows he hasn't fallen into unrighteousness.

Job's friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, never discovered the right answer. Job knew they were wrong in their assessment, but he didn't know the answer either. In Job 16:1 he "answered and said, 'I have heard many such things:

miserable comforters are ye all. Shall vain words have an end?'"

Job was right. They were miserable comforters.

Sometimes we are miserable too, but for a different reason. Interestingly enough, Job's friends were good at something we are often poor at doing. Upon seeing Job's suffering, they surmised that he was living in sin, and was experiencing the result of God's displeasure. After the silence of shock upon seeing Job's disease, these three began a relentless attempt at persuasion for Job to repent. They were wrong about his sin, but to their credit, they loved God and Job. There is no motive in their arguments except concern for the welfare of Job's soul.

They made their mistake out of ignorance of God. They had an incomplete revelation. God had not yet revealed Himself in a complete way, and they were basing their view of Job on supposition. I Corinthians 13:9-12 makes us reflect on times like these by saying, "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come,

then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known..."

Today we have the complete word from God. (Jude 3, II Peter 1:3). But do we go to our brothers and sisters in sin and encourage them to repent as Job's friends did? Usually we do not. We have instruction to do so: "Brethren, if man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted (Gal. 6:1)."

Why are we so hesitant to talk with our wayward brothers or sisters about their souls? There are a variety of reasons. We fear rejection. Perhaps the close friendship will be irreparably damaged. Perhaps the person will become angry and say hurtful things. Perhaps he will find other friends who comfortably ignore his sin. Perhaps this friend and

brother will respond as did David to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord..." (II Samuel 12:13), or, on the other hand, he might respond like Ahab did to Elijah "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? (I Kings 21:20)."

Sometimes we are hesitant because we have little confidence in our knowledge of the Bible. We are afraid that we might correct someone and later learn that we were the ones who were wrong.

Other times we fail in this because we recognize our own weakness. We know we are far short of perfect, far short of what we would like to be. We fear that we won't say the right words to keep us from sounding "holier than thou." Ironically, the stronger Christian a man is, the more aware he is of his sin. The agnostic reprobate can sin without batting an eye. The strong Christian cannot. He has put to death the old man of sin (Rom. 6), and cannot sin without the pain of conscience.

While these excuses for never approaching a brother or sister with their sin may seem strong, they are only excuses! We are commanded

to confess our faults one to another (James 5:16). Christians are not policemen in their relationship with one another. Furthermore, most Christians are not elders, charged with overseeing the flock. However, there are times when we will have an influence no one else may have. We should use that influence for Christ. When the sins are from one Christian to another, the offended brother is to go privately to his brother and ask him to repent (Matt. 18:15-17). When someone in the church is living in sin, the faithful are to go to the weak brother and encourage his repentance (Gal. 6:1).

Interestingly enough, Job's friends were miserable comforters because they operated on a limited revelation from God. We may be miserable comforters because we imagine all sorts of reasons why we should not talk to brothers and sisters about their souls.

Go in love. Speak kindly. Encourage supportingly. Let us help one another to go to heaven.

Glenn Colley

Giving It Our All (II)

Neal Pollard

So many live in the passive tense, but insubordinately toward God at the same time. In giving in to the world, these wait for their desires to come to them while watching their lives go by them. True Christians, through diligent faith (Hebrews 11:6), actively pursue God's pleasure. They give it their all! Peter describes another way that is accomplished.

WE MUST NOT ONLY LOVE, WE MUST LOVE FERVENTLY (I PETER 1:22). It is definitely true that love does not seek limits, only outlets. Understanding this, a Christian loves to the uttermost and prays for the

capacity to love in an even greater measure. Peter gives three principles in I Peter 1:22 relative to fervent love.

1. **This fervent love is preceded by gospel obedience.** A child of God had to have had a fervent love to follow God's plan of salvation. Remember that Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John. 14:15). John offers a definition of love, affirming, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3). Jesus can spot a true lover of Him. In John 14:21, He told His followers, "He that hath My

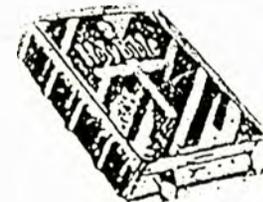
commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me..."

2. **Fervent love is practiced by pure hearts.** Pure-hearted people are blessed (Matthew 5:8). Truly, a pure heart and a loving heart are really two chambers working together. Therefore, let love be without hypocrisy (Romans. 12:9). Let love be practiced in relationships, working no ill to his neighbor (Romans 13:10). Let Moses' proclamation be our plea, that we love the Lord God with all our heart, soul, and might (Deuteronomy 6:5).

3. **Fervent love is powerful by its nature.** Do you know what fervent love

is? Fervent means intense. That suggests that if I put my whole heart into loving my brethren, I can help depressed brethren be happy, suffering brethren find comfort, sinful

brethren come back to Jesus, and hard-hearted brethren become concerned. God realized how powerful fervent love is. That is why He wants His children to



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The Secret To Church Growth

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 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 (Jn. 16:33; Acts 10:38). Read how He demonstrated His love for the lost (Mk. 10:21; Jn. 15:13). Read of how He spoke the truth in love without ever compromising (Mt. 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 (2 Cor. 11:23-28). Note the duties and qualifications of elders and deacons (1 Tim. 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 live out that which we have read.

What is the secret of church growth? When preachers speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15) and reprove, rebuke and exhort with all longsuffering (2 Tim. 4:2), the church will grow. When elders shepherd the flock properly under the direction of chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:1-4), the church will grow. When

deacons serve well, it will be well with them and the growth of the church (1 Tim. 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 it's share (Eph. 4:16). This is God's plan and it will not fail!

B. J. Clarke
Southaven Church of Christ
Southaven, MS

Give Flowers While They Yet Live A Tribute To Lois Pounds

Floyd Rodgers

I was recently reading Romans 16 and noticed that Paul saluted many people. Several were men, and many were women. Great women like Priscilla and Phoebe are interesting. Phoebe was a lady who was ready to help the needy. She was a "good Samaritan". Priscilla was also a great woman of God. A Christian man named Aquila was blessed to have a wonderful wife who worked by his side, hand to hand with him. She was a Christian lady who allowed worship assemblies to be held in her home.

It is wonderful to read about good Christian women. (I realize that many of you said "Amen".) I know you feel as I do.

I want to introduce you to a truly unique Christian

lady. This Christian woman is very modest, and many of you already know her. I had the opportunity to meet this wonderful woman while at camp. As I talked with her and saw all she had to offer I was impressed. The Bible knowledge she has is just outstanding.

Many people claim to read, study, understand, and know the Bible. Yet, it is so important that we be able to see the influence of God's word in the way they live. In 2 Corinthians 3:2 Paul wrote, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men." This is so true. People read Christians every day. As soon as one becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:7), people begin to read his life. He becomes, in a sense, a letter which others

read about Jesus.

As I talked with this unique lady, I realized that she is truly a great influence. I thought about all young people she had taught over the years. I came to the conclusion that sister Lois Pounds should receive her flowers while she yet lives. All of you that have been in her classes over the years were blessed to be in her presence. Indian Creek Youth Camp is a great place and it is not just because of the great outdoors. It's great because there are people who set the examples of how to live a Christian life. I know people who were taught the bible when brother Gus Nichols was alive and spent time at the camp. I now know that there has been a continuous trend of great Bible teaching.

In Proverbs 31:30 the Bible says, "Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies." I know that there are many women who meet this Biblical quality. This lady, however, teaches, and has taught, many young people every day and each year.

May God continue to bless sister Lois Pounds.

(EDITORS NOTE: If you'd like to sister Pounds, her address is:

I'm sure she would enjoy receiving mail from her friends.) **Lois Pounds**
515 Huggins Rd.
Cordova, AL. 35550

Most of A Minute AIR

Perhaps nothing is so vast as the air of our atmosphere. It contains so many seldom considered invisible entities.

-Naturally it carries the oxygen necessary for you and me to breath.

-It sometimes contains pollutants...especially in Americas great cities.

-Over 1.5 million families have invested big money in the unseen properties of the air. According to U.S. News & World Report that's how many Americans have satellite dishes...expecting to attract television entertainment from those airwaves.

-The Bible uses the idea of air to illustrate vastness. It's in Ephesians 2:3 - "And you has He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins; where in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of power of the air..."

The prince of the power of the air is the devil. This verse shows that his damning influence is everywhere...none of us can totally escape his daily temptations to sin.

We aren't without a solution however. James 4:7 - "Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

Let's always work to resist temptation when we face it...and hopefully clear the air.

Glenn Colley

**THE LOVING GOD WE SERVE
has immeasurable compassion and
tenderness toward each of us
throughout our lives.**

The Psalmist's Limit

Mel Futrell

From time to time I have the opportunity to do some non-religious reading. Just this month I began reading a volume containing the speeches, letters, miscellaneous writings, presidential messages and proclamations of Abraham Lincoln. In the book under the date of November 21, 1864 I found this personal letter of Lincoln's to John Phillips, a 104 year old resident of Sturbridge, Massachusetts. I believe you'll find it insightful.

My dear Sir,

I have heard of the incident at the polls in your town, in which you bore so honored a part, and I take the liberty of writing to you to express my personal gratitude for the compliment paid me by the suffrage of a citizen so venerable.

The example of such devotion to civic duties in one whose days have already extended an average life time beyond the Psalmist's limit, cannot but be valuable

and fruitful. It is not for myself only, but for the country which you have in your sphere served so long and so well, that I thank you. Your friend and Servant (Lincoln Speeches and Writings 1859-1865, Don Fehrenbacher editor, The Liberty of America, 1989, pp. 644-645)

I realized a long time ago that when reading just about anything from the pen of Abraham Lincoln one is going to regularly encounter references and allusions to Biblical and religious matters. The above letter is no exception to this. But what a contrast it is to present day Presidential speeches and writings. At this time I want to call your attention to two phrases in the above Lincoln letter.

First, the phrase "the Psalmist's limit" is an allusion to Psalm 90:10 which reads:

"The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength

labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

Psalm 90 is generally believed to have been written by Moses. In fact, most Bibles I have checked have a superscription that reads something like this, "A Prayer of Moses the man of GOD". Although we understand that the superscriptions themselves are not part of the inspired record they usually represent the accepted author of the inspired work. Contextually, "the Psalmist's limit" denotes an approximate lifespan of seventy to eighty years for mankind. But there are many exceptions to this. In my own family just this year my great-great uncle Artie passed away at the age of 107. And three of my grandparents remain to this day all being over 80 years of age; I thank the Lord almost daily for this blessing. But the fact still remains that even today with all of our medical advancements the average American man lives to be

72.7 and the average American woman to be 79.4 years of age. So "the Psalmist's limit" stands today, even though we like Lincoln recognize the exception to the general rule.

Second, the phrase, "you have in your sphere served so long and so well" is worthy of mention. There is a verse in Psalm 90 that I believe connects very well with the aforementioned phrase, it is verse 12.

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

Within our sphere of existence and during our allotted time here on earth Christian duty demands of each of us that we serve well. Old Matthew Henry who first published his commentary on Psalm in 1710 said in Psalm 90:12:

"We must so number our days as to compare our work with them, and mind it accordingly with a double diligence, as those that have no time to trifle." (p. 677).

Think of the elderly members of the church of Christ with whom you worship that truly have served so long and so well. Also look well on passages like Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 17:10; 1 Corinthians 4:2, 15:58; Revelation 2:10 etc., for some New Testament requirements that fit the Psalm 90:12 admonition.

Frequently one hears adages like, "Here today and gone tomorrow" and "Life is short, death is sure, and eternity is forever". These express our understanding of the principle communicated by Moses in Psalm 90:10-12. We would do well to remember that James said life is a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes. And Peter said flesh is as grass that withers (James 4:14; 1 Peter 1:24). I see no reason for Christians to be ignorant of "the Psalmist's limit", which is the arithmetic of life.

What Can Be Done And Called "Worship"?

William Woodson

Three articles - **Time** 4/5/93; **Newsweek** 8/9/93; **Tennessean** 11/14/93 - echo the latest religious news on the national and local scene: Doing Strange Things Called the Worship of God. All indicated these activities are used in the name of what is called relevance or "luring" the crowds. Whether in the name of trendy churchianity, reaching the "Baby Boomers," or connecting with the unchurched, the menus are

virtually the same all over and the only real distinction seems to be what is the most outlandish thing a church can/will do in what is called worship to top the last "act."

On the outer fringes of the unusual, several vie for the top honor, which is your pick from the following: Have communion for 1,000 worshippers in just five minutes; have the actress of the year do a skit "in the sanctuary," have a room

remarkably empty of religious paraphernalia in which, on a riser, behind the pulpit, a giant teddy bear sits in the background; have the preacher sit on a stool instead of standing behind a pulpit or have him/her change clothes between the first and second services to identify better with the people. My own pick varies between the church which offers a "pet ministry" for adopting stray animals, the one where the songs run the

gamut from "Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'" to "Danny Boy," and - perhaps best - the one whose preacher, clad in sneakers, closed the service with a round of hugging by the audience, raised his arms high in deeper spirituality, and boomed, "Hey, God, make my day! Go for it." Then, again I've read all three articles.

One is not required to know many Bible verses to realize these or other weird efforts have nothing to do with the worship of

God revealed in the New Testament.

What is one to make of such doings in the alleged name of "reaching this generation"? Perhaps Martin E. Marty, prominent America church historian, summed it up best: "To give the whole store away to match what this year's market says the unchurched want is to have the people who know least about faith determine most about its expression." There's more than a clever turn of

A Bad Thing

Consider the recent publicity surrounding Hugh Grant. Grant, you may recall, is the 34-year-old actor from England who was arrested for lewd behavior with a known prostitute. The swirl of

publicity has focused on what impact his behavior might have on his future movie career as well as his relationship with his girlfriend, Elizabeth Hurley.

It's interesting to me to

note that Grant has as much as admitted that he was wrong. In fact, in a recent interview with Jay Leno, Grant said, "I know what's a good thing and what's a bad thing. It was a bad thing and there you

have it." I'm curious. How is it "bad" to engage in lewd behavior with a prostitute, but it is not bad to have a live-in girlfriend?

The Bible warns, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who

put darkness for light, and light for darkness..." (Isaiah 5:20). Good people, let's be sure that we don't confuse right and wrong, good and bad.

**Mike Benson
Parsons, TN**

Come, and invite a friend to join in our assemblies this week!

SEPTEMBER 8, 1995

• See Articles Inside:

- The Indestructible Book
- Blasphemy In Nashville
- The Lord's People Must Contend For The Faith
 - Giving It Our All (III)
- New Book Just Released!
 - Going Beyond That Which Is Written

Volume 32 Number 33
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

I the

The Indestructible Book

W. A. Holley

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

God's law is written in God's book. "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me), to do thy will O God" (Hebrews 10:7). Jesus knew that saving faith comes through the reading of God's word (John 20:30-31; Romans 10:17).

God's word can never be destroyed no matter how hard men may try. If men could change God's law concerning day and night, he might consider changing other decrees of God; here men are powerless (Genesis 8:22; Jeremiah 31:35-36; 33:20-21).

Through out the ages men have tried to destroy God's word. For example, nearly three thousand years ago, Jehoiakim, King of Judah, took a penknife and cut Jeremiah's prophecy into pieces and cast it into the flames of fire, but it was rewritten, along with other additions (Jeremiah 36:1 ff).

The King who tried to destroy God's words, died in disgrace. "Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning Jehoiakim the son of Joshua king of Judah: They shall not lament him, saying, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not lament him, saying,

Ah Lord! or, Ah his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem" (Jeremiah 22:18-19).

In the 4th century, Diocletian, a Roman Emperor, began a bitter attack against the Bible. He tried to find and burn every Bible he could put his hands on. Two years later, he erected an inscription over the ashes of the burned Bibles which read: Exincto Nomine Christianum--- "Extinct is the name of Christians."

But twenty years later, Constantine was urging all Christians to put the Bible in all the churches of the Roman Empire.

Voltaire, a famous atheist, predicted that within one hundred years after his death the Bible would be a forgotten book. But his house was soon used as a distribution center for Bibles.

Furthermore, Robert Ingersoll, an American lawyer and agnostic, said, "In fifteen years I will have this book in the morgue." But, in fifteen years he was in the morgue, the Bible marches on and on.

An old man was packing his bag for a long journey. When asked, "What have you put in the bag?" He said, "All I have put in the bag are a guidebook, a lamp, a

mirror, a microscope, a telescope, a volume of fine poetry, a few biographies, a book of songs, a sword, a hammer, and a set of books I have been studying." He then placed his Bible in the suitcase and closed it." (cf. II Timothy 3:15-17; Ephesians 6:17; II Peter 1:3).

Poetical Testimony

"Mock on, mock on, Voltaire, Rousseau;
Mock on, mock on, 'Tis all in vain!
You throw the dust against the wind,
And the wind blows it back again. ---Blacke.

"They burned the truth in the market place
And thought their work completer;
But next day, with a smiling face,
They met it on the street.

They threw it in a dungeon damp,
And thought it was no more;
But lo, it walked with lighted lamp
Among them as before.

They scorned and ostracized it,
And ordered it to depart;
But still it dwelt in all the land
And challenged every heart. --Flynn.

A.Z. Conrad paid the following tribute to the Bible:

"Century follows century---
There it stands.
Empire follows empire---
There it stands.
Dynasty follows dynasty---
There it stands.
Kings are crowned and uncrowned---
There it stands.
Despised and torn to pieces---
--There it stands.
Storms of hate swirl about it---
--There it stands.
Agnostics smile cynically---
There it stands.
Profane punsters craicature it---
--There it stands.
Unbelief abandons it---
There it stands.
Higher critics deny its inspiration---
There it stands.
Thunderbolts of wrath smite it---
There it stands.
An anvil that has broken millions of hammers---
There it stands.
Flames are kindled about it---
--There it stands.
Arrows of hate are discharged against it---
There it stands.
Radicalism rants against it---
There it stands.
Fogs of sophistry conceal it temporarily---
There it stands.
The tooth of time gnaws but cannot dent it---
There it stands.
Infidels predict its abandonment---
There it stands.
Modernism tries to explain it away---
There it stands."

"Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89). Hence, God's purposes for time and eternity have already been determined. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever" (Isaiah 40:8).

Your Saviour and mine, said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

The word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12-13), cutting deep into the human heart.

The word of God will be present at The Great Judgment. "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). Will you believe, repent, confess Christ, be baptized in the name of our Saviour, and live a faithful Christian life unto death? Do not wait until it is too late.

"The book of God will stand secure when the sun and stars decline; Its ageless truths will still endure To prove its source divine."

--Moncrief.

How Does The Scriptures Read?

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SCRIPTURES MAKE IT CLEAR

That we grow from difficult experiences, and that we should accept them as blessings in disguise

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.

Romans 8:28

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Stay on track with life's most important values.

Be true to family, friends and Church.

See you on Sunday!

Sixth Avenue Church of Christ

1501 6th. Avenue

Jasper, AL. 35501

Blasphemy In Nashville

In the efforts to change the church of Christ the "contemporary" preachers among us have been forced to adopt a new hermeneutics. **Hermeneutics** simply means "science of interpreting the scriptures." Whenever someone reads his Bible and comes to an understanding of how it applies to his life, he has employed hermeneutics.

Suppose a man's objective is to melt the church of the New Testament together with the many man-made denominations. The biggest road block he faces is tall, and wide, and deep, and long. It is the Bible! The word of God will not support the denominational concept which one must adopt to be a member of a denomination, or to fellowship denominations. Yet, this is the root objective of our brotherhood change agents. (Incidentally, "change agents" is a name they have created for themselves.)

So, the change agents have no choice but to get around the Bible. The major difference between the church of Christ and denominations through the years boils down to this: Members and leaders in denominations have made no secret of the fact that the scriptures come in second place to their feelings, preferences, and inner guidings. On the other hand, in the church of Christ we have always sought for, and depended upon, a "thus saith the Lord" to answer all questions of teaching and practice.

The doctrine among the agents of change, doctrine resulting from their agenda, is called the "New Hermeneutics". The out-

standing characteristic of this new way of looking at the scriptures is that it is thus far beyond real definition. It is hard to define a method of interpreting scripture which includes these two major components: 1. People's inner feelings have a role in what the Bible is actually saying, thus subjectivism and, 2. We cannot know definitive truth.

While embracing a hermeneutics which boasts of these two requirements, those who are bent on changing the church of Christ today claim they have discovered grace.

Now just how far can this go? How far will the leaders in this movement carry the new hermeneutics? Will they be willing to follow it to it's logical conclusion? Brace yourself. Take a deep breath and read on.

The following information is from the Nashville Tennessean, August 14, 1995, page 1 A, in an article entitled *Spiritual Leaders United by Faith*, written by Ray Waddle, the religious editor for the paper.

The article is about an event involving three religious leaders. The event was conceived by Joe Freedman, who was Jewish. He claimed that from time to time his Protestant acquaintances would tell him he was going to hell (presumably because he rejects the deity of Christ). He said, "I think the reason so many sects think Jews or Muslims are going to hell is because they haven't met many...It occurred to me that a forum of discussion and dialogue between the three faiths might open people's eyes."

And so it was organized.

Stephen Fuchs (Freedman's Jewish rabbi), a willing minister", and a Muslim Imam, who was described as an "Islamic spiritual teacher" were selected to participate. According to the article, the three were to meet at The Temple to discuss how to get to heaven, and stay out of hell. Here are the sound bites going into this dialogue:

The Jewish rabbi said, "There's more than one way to heaven --and mine isn't the only way."

The Muslim, whose name is Muhammed, said, "We're a little behind in this area, (referring to a lack of these kinds of open discussions). Many people who say, 'You're going to hell' just aren't listening to the other person. Leaders need to get together and show dialogue can happen."

And then the Christian. His name is Rubel Shelly, and he is the minister for the Woodmont Hills Church of Christ in Nashville. No one who has looked into the change movement would deny that Shelly is one of the major spear headers in this movement today. What did the "Christian" religious leader have to say when asked for comment? The article continues, "Shelly said Christians have no right to be 'blindly dogmatic' and judgmental, because the business of judging the final destination of people's souls is God's, not ours. 'As a Christian, I believe the position I hold is true and correct that Jesus fulfilled the Messianic expectation fully and literally. But I believe Jesus reserved the right of judging the world for himself. The task he gave the church is to bear witness to him. We must be careful not

to confuse the roles."

Read it again. What did he just teach?

1. To say that people who reject that Jesus is God's Son (as Jews and Muslims do) will be lost, is blindly dogmatic.

--"Blindly" means we are dogmatic without basis. But I thought we had the Bible! Isn't the Bible true? Can't we be sure about anything in the scriptures? Jesus said, "If ye believe not that I am he ye shall die in your sins (John 8:24)."

2. Perhaps people who deny Jesus will be saved.

--But Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no man cometh unto the Father but by me (John 14:6)."

3. To use the Bible to warn a person about his lost condition, even a religious leader who goes about teaching others that Jesus isn't really the Son of God, thus blaspheming, is judgmental.

--(II Tim. 3:16) "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 maybe complete, thoroughly furnished unto all good works".

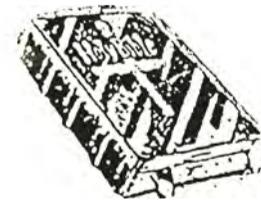
4. The Bible doesn't

necessarily represent God's will. Even if statements were made in the Scriptures which affirm a truth, we must be open-minded. There is the possibility of Him changing His mind, or perhaps we were wrong about what He said when he said it. Maybe we misunderstand phrases like, "...no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Perhaps that was only our interpretation.

--(John 17:17)-- "Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth."

Elders, preachers, and other members of the church who support this movement need to open their eyes to the direction of their leaders. The most common response I have received when asking "contemporary" church preachers about Rubel Shelly is this: "Well, I don't support everything he says, but I think he's done a lot of good." Folks, that implies endorsement of a movement which has proven to have it's ship sailing toward total disregard for God's authority. These men don't need to be partially endorsed. They need to be totally marked and avoided (Rom. 16:17).

Glenn Colley



The Words Of Truth

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The Lord's People MUST Contend For The Faith

Guy F. Hester

"It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

When Jude made the statement that the Lord's people "should earnestly contend for the faith," the use of the word *should* does not imply, in any way, that it is a matter of option. There are many things that a Christian *should* do. He should attend all the services of the church (Heb. 10:25). He should *live soberly, righteously, and godly*" Titus 2:12).

He should eat the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). He should give of his means (I Cor. 16:1-2). Are any of these a matter of option? Neither is contending for the faith optional.

The Lord's people *must* contend against *denominationalism*. The Bible teaches there is one church (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:4; I Cor. 12:13-14,20; Rom. 12:4-5; Col. 3:15).

Denominationalism

divides but Christ prayed for unity (John 17).

The Lord's people *must* contend against *materialism*. We are living in a materialistic age. Most people are pleasure and money mad. They think more of money and things than they do of heaven. Even the church has become materialistic. Our materialistic society is deceiving and undermining our brethren. The Lord's people *must* by all means contend against the sin of materialism (Matt. 6:19-21, 24, 33; 16:26).

The Lord's people *must* contend against *indifference*. The Lord condemned the church at Laodicea because they were indifferent (Rev. 3:15-16). Why did he spew them out of his mouth? "*Because thou sayest, I am rich...increased in goods...have need of nothing*" (v. 17). Many members of the church say, "I'm not bad, I don't curse, lie, steal, murder, etc. I'm doing alright; I don't need to attend all the services, study, help the needy, give of my means, do personal work, etc." The Lord says:

"*Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.*" How sad it will be for them in the judgment to hear him say, *Depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire*" (Matt. 25:41-46). Indifference is one of the great things that the Lord's people *must* contend against.

The Lord's people *must* contend against *worldliness*. One of the greatest problems in the church today is worldliness. Divorce among brethren is a major problem (Matt. 19:3-9). Drinking is common among some church members (Prov. 20:1; Heb. 2:15). Even the awful sin of homosexuality is being practiced by some *professing* Christians (I Cor. 6:9-11). A Christian cannot love the world (I John 2:15-17). Worldliness most certainly *must* be contended against by the Lord's people.

The Lord's people *must* contend against *liberalism*. Liberalism is the greatest single threat to the church today. Liberalism is hard to define because it

takes on so many faces. About the best simple definition of liberalism is: "The undermining of the authority of the Scriptures." What are some of the things that the liberals are teaching?

"*That there are saved people in the denominations.*" "*That one can be saved by denominational baptism.*" "*That it is not a sin to use mechanical instruments of music in worship.*" "*That hand clapping is acceptable in worship.*" "*That women may preach, teach, lead prayer, lead singing, etc., with men present in the assembly.*" The Lord's people *MUST* contend for the faith against liberalism in the church.

The Lord's people *must* contend against the enemy of *self*. Often times we are our own worst enemy. Living the Christian life is not always easy. Jesus said if one would follow him that he must "*deny himself*" (Luke 9:23). We must present our bodies as a "*living sacrifice*" (Rom. 12:1-2). There are times when all of us become

discouraged, but "*no man having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God*" (Luke 9:53). Perhaps it is harder to contend against self than any other thing because we are too much in love with self (Rom. 12:3). Sometimes it is not easy to put self on the cross and Christ on the throne in our lives. We become prejudiced in favor of our own ways and beliefs. Our ways are right in our own lives (Prov. 21:2; 12:15). It takes a lot of spiritual strength and courage to contend with self.

The Bible is right. It has, does, and will stand the tests of the ages. It will stand when this old world is engulfed with flames. All the world, including church members, will be judged by it. By the standards of the Bible we will be justified or condemned. May we all persevere in living right and in *contending earnestly for the faith* until we are overtaken by death.

Giving It Our All (III)

Neal Pollard

Seeking, one can find God (Mt. 7:7). To find God is to find the epitome of true, fervent love (I Jn. 4:8). One seeks and finds God in the Bible. Naturally, then, our attitude toward the Word should be favorably intense. Christians are set apart as defenders of the Bible's truthfulness and power. That requires *giving it our all*.

WE MUST NOT ONLY CONTEND, WE MUST EARNESTLY CONTEND.

That is the admonition of the gospel defender, Jude, in Jude 3. Incidentally, to contend is not to be obnoxious or vicious. Yet, it definitely

means that we are to intensely fight for God's Word to preserve the truth of the Gospel!

There are reasons why we are to be so earnest in our contending for the faith, per this verse. Jude sets forth a pattern for Christians to follow. Remember, Jude's were not the words of the disgruntled or disenchanted church-goer. This was an inspired writer. Note what he says.

1. We are to earnestly contend for the faith because it contains the way of salvation for everyone. Paul's words in the book of Romans are complementary.

He said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). The Bible reveals the "common salvation".

2. We are to earnestly contend for the faith because it is the only way. It is the "faith". Paul so affirmed this (Gal. 1:6-9). So did our Lord (Jn. 14:6).

3. We are to earnestly contend for the faith because it was the highest of gifts, delivered from heaven to earth. Jude tells us it was delivered to the saints. We know that the Bible could

only have come from the perfect God. Paul informs us that "every scripture is God-breathed" (2 Tim. 3:16, FHV).

4. We are to earnestly contend for the faith because it is ever subject to the attacks of those in error. Jude devotes much of the book exposing the characteristics of such individuals. Jesus, whose omniscience is not matched by the most intelligent of mortals, warned, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves" (Mt. 7:15). As human nature is a constant,

men in every age attempt to devise a less demanding doctrine than that which was once delivered unto the saints.

Mediocre? Not hardly! Lukewarm? Not possible! Half-hearted? Not acceptable! The Christian life is one lived in extreme craving, caring, and contending. The kind of life revealed in Hebrews 11:6, I Peter 1:22, and Jude 3 will lead one away from "radical" and "liberal" factions. It will rather lead one to the lost and to heaven's reward! **GIVE IT YOUR ALL!**

New Book Just Released!

Although there were many fine books now circulating among our brotherhood which seek to combat the onslaught of false doctrines contained in the change movement, we did not know of a single book designed with the Bible class in mind. This new book, *Loose Change*, is just such a book. Although it is useful for personal study on the subject, it's thirteen chapters with questions at the end of each chapter makes a perfect study for a thirteen week quarter.

Chapter headings include, "The church of Christ versus denominationalism," "Worshiping to please God," "Is it a sin to play the piano in worship?", "Saved by grace," "The New Hermeneutics", "Hearing Jesus speak on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage," "Fellowship and the Bull's-Eye Gospel," "Baptism into Christ," and "Women's role in today's worship."

The price is \$3.95. Discounts for orders over ten.

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Going Beyond That Which Is Written

Dennis Gullede

While doing some study recently on the possibility of apostasy I was checking the statement in the *Westminster Confession Of Faith* (1647), which says, "They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace: but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved." *The Book Of Confessions* which contains this creed was given to me a couple of years ago by a local Presbyterian minister. I noticed in the endnotes section of the *Westminster*

Confession, this very interesting statement:

GENERAL NOTE: At several points the Confession of Faith is more specific in its statements than the Scriptures. These statements are influence drawn from the Scriptures or from statements based on the Scriptures, or from the experience and observation of the Church.

It is a very interesting admission that many of the statements in the creed are "more specific...than the Scriptures." That is tantamount to saying that what is contained herein goes beyond the Scriptures, contrary to Paul's dictate, "Now these things, brethren,

I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in use ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (1 Cor. 4:6, ASV). It is the same as saying this creed teaches more than God teaches in his inspired and all sufficient word. It is equal to saying that what is believed herein is outside the realm of that which is inspired of the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16-17). A fascinating admission indeed!

Anyone who ever felt the need for creedal statements of any kind must have felt the Bible to be deficient in

truth. As L.W. Wilkes wrote in *Lard's Quarterly* (January 1866), "He that makes or accepts a creed, a human thing, a monument of impudent folly, thus rejecting the Bible, virtually and actually, as the creed of the party to which he belongs, must assume one of the following positions, one horn of a four-horned monster:

1. The Bible, as a creed, is too short; or does not contain enough.

2. The Bible, as a creed, is too long; or it contains more than should be found in a creed.

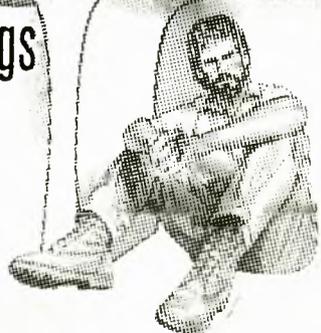
3. The Bible, as a creed, though it contains, as to quantity and quality of matter, neither, more nor less

than should be found in a creed, is not the very best form.

4. His party is, in some way or by some means, authorized to make the addition, subtraction, or emendation demanded" (p. 15).

Therefore, if a creed contains more than the Bible it contains too much; if it contains less than the Bible it contains too little; if what it contains is equal to the Bible, it is irrelevant, because we already have the Bible!

All Things
Were
Made
By Him



All things were made by Him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

John 1:3

All things, including faith, proceed from and are offered unto Him.

Join us for weekly services of worship and adoration.

• See Articles Inside:

- Freedom
- Love Letters
- So Much Has Changed Over The Years
- Giving And Receiving
- The Nameless Church
- Some Thoughts Regarding Angels
- Give Up The Loins Of Your Mind

Volume 32 Number 34
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The Words Of Truth

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

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FREEDOM

Johnny Ramsey

No nation ever stressed the blessings of liberty and genuine freedom more than the United States. Precious indeed to every American is this concept and ideal. For over 200 years the dark, ominous cloud of oppression and tyranny has been battled successfully. Still, however, due to crime, bureaucracy, and ignorance, thousands of our citizens longingly seek for freedom. Bondage of various stripes and intensity lingers in the daily struggle of many folk who yearn for an existence void of restraint and pressure. This is certainly true of billions in countries less fortunate than ours. However, absolute freedom and ultimate joy can be found only in Christ Jesus!

*"Only in Thee,
O Savior mine
Dwelleth my soul in
peace divine
Peace that the world,
though all combine,
Never can take from me."*

In Ephesians, chapter four, verse eight, we learn the beautiful fact that our Lord, in his powerful death, released the captives and defeated the antagonist, Satan! When Jesus tasted of death for every man, by the grace of God, the evil's dominance over mankind since Eden was destroyed (Heb. 2:8-15) Sin and death no longer hovered over the creation as a promise of doom (Rom. 5:12). Our blessed Redeemer removed the sting of death by bearing our iniquities upon the cross (I Peter 2:24). Jehovah laid on him all of our sins (Isa. 53) that we might have hope of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:21). Oh, what a matchless love!

*"In loving-kindness
Jesus came
My soul in mercy to
reclaim
And from the depths of
sin and shame
Through grace he lifted
me."*

We must not use such

liberty as a cloak for sin (Gal. 5:13) as some libertines have tried to do. Actually, such grace ought to compel us to loyally serve the "one who died for all" (2 Cor. 5:14).

*"Souls in danger look
above Jesus completely
saves He will lift you by
his love Out of the angry
waves."*

When we bring every thought into captivity under the banner of the Savior (2 Cor. 10:5) we enjoy freedom the world cannot begin to fathom (Rom. 11:33). Thinking properly is a virtue and a sweet release from the filth and mental garbage that chokes our lives today (Phil. 4:8). When the Son of God makes us free we are truly free indeed (John 8:36). By continuing in his word we know the truth that makes us fully unshackled from the traditions of the world and the rudiments of men (John 8:31-32; Col. 2:8). Paul told the Galatians to stand fast in the liberty

wherein Christ had made them free!

*"Out of my bondage,
sorrow and night
Into thy freedom
gladness and light
Jesus, I come to Thee."*

But, no passage is more comprehensive on this subject of release from bondage and subsequent entry into exquisite freedom than Romans, chapter six. The inspired penman reminded brethren that they were no longer slaves of sin, ruled and dominated by evil. Conversely, they were now ashamed of their sinful past and had crucified the flesh and its lusts. Through obedience to the gospel system, from the very depths of their hearts, they were now the "servants of righteousness." Verily, they had been made free from sin! Peace pervaded their souls and joy emanated from within because God's love had been "shed abroad in their hearts" (Rom. 5:5). Even though they had been

dead because of trespasses and without hope in the world, the blood of Jesus had brought them back to God and now they were reigning with Christ in absolute splendor (Eph. 2:1-16!

*"Heaven came down
And glory filled my soul."*

Purveyors of debauchery might promise happiness and liberty but such misguided folk are at that very moment the bondslaves of sin and shame (2 Peter 2:19). Prodigal, wayward leaders of rebellion and licentiousness always sooner or later wind up in the pig pen of their own misplaced values and shallow priorities. Would we really possess freedom? Do we honestly yearn for a closer walk with our Creator?

*"There is a place
of full release,
Near to the heart of God."*

3304 Hanover
Arlington, TX 76014

Love Letters

Mike Benson

I'm told that former President Harry Truman was a "dyed-in-the-wool" romantic. It seems that he pursued a lovely young lady by the name of Bess and vied for her affections

back in 1911. But it was not until nearly seven years later that she finally agreed to marry him.

Once he married her, Mr. Truman continued to court and romance his wife. And while he was frequently

away on governmental business and the affairs of his political office, he never failed to write Bess and to tell her how much he loved her. Did you know that when Bess Truman died back in the early 1980's,

more than 1,200 letters were found in her name? Harry never stopped courting Bess.

The Bible says, "Husbands, LOVE your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave

Himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25). Fellow husband, when was the last time that you told your wife just how much you love and appreciate her (Proverbs 27:5)?

Parsons, TN.

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

*Stay on track with life's most important values.
Be true to family, friends and Church.
See you on Sunday!
Sixth Avenue Church of Christ
1501 6th. Avenue
Jasper, AL. 35501*

So Much Has Changed Over The Years

U.S. News and World Report for August 28, 1995 included a list of comparisons between Americans in 1900, and Americans in the 1990's. While we all know things have changed, somehow seeing them on paper has a way of making them look looming and enormous, according to the article,

- The population in 1900 was 76 million. Today it is 262.6 million.

- The overall life expectancy in 1900 was 47.3 years. Today it is 76.3 years (projected).

- The number of owner-occupied housing units in 1900 was 7.2 million.

- In 1995 that number had grown to 64.7 million.

- The average household size in 1900 was 4.76 persons. In 1994 that number had dwindled to 2.67 persons.

- In order, the leading causes of death in 1900 were pneumonia and influenza, tuberculosis, intestinal ulcers, heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, all accidents, cancer, senility, and diphtheria. In order, the leading causes of death in 1993 were heart disease, cancer, stroke, lung disease, accidents, pneumonia and influenza, diabetes, HIV, suicide, and homicide.

- And speaking of homicide, in 1900 the murder rate was 1.2 per 100,000 people. In 1993, the national murder rate was 9.5 per 100,000.

- The average workweek in manufacturing jobs in 1900 was 59 hours. In 1994 it was 42 hours.

- The average yield of corn in 1900 was 25.9 bushels per acre. In 1995 it is 125.6 bushels per acre.

- Those 25 years or older who had four years of high school in 1910 was 13.5 percent. In 1993 it was 81.5 percent.

- This previous statistic becomes increasingly interesting when compared with this tidbit:

In 1900, 10.7 percent of Americans could not read or write a simple message in any language. In 1993, 21 percent of Americans were functionally illiterate.

Makes you sort of dizzy doesn't it? Reading lists of statistics like these leaves you feeling good about this human race one minute, and cynical the next. Regardless, it seems we are spending more time these days measuring and pondering the changes which are occurring about us.

We must remember that while so much is changing, some things remain the same.

They must. The most important of these is Jesus Christ. The Hebrew writer observed by inspiration, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8)."

From the aforementioned list of changes, I offer these considerations:

First, observe that there are some things upon which cannot be improved upon. We have obviously improved in medical technology and food production. People live longer. We've improved upon our creature comforts, and are typically not so crowded in our houses. There are more Americans, and in some fields of work we keep fewer work hours per week. Some changes are good, and make life easier.

Yet the list doesn't mention changes in the Lord's plan of salvation. That's partly because this wasn't meant to be a religious article. But even if it was, the scheme of redemption would not be in the list of changes. It cannot be changed. People have tried, and are pretending to have succeeded with words like "Pray this simple prayer and Jesus will save you". Nevertheless, to change it is to reject it. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have

received, let him be accursed (Gal. 1:8)." A man today will obey the gospel by faith (Heb. 11:6), repentance (Luke 13:3, Acts 2:38), confession (Rom 10:10), and baptism (Mark 16:16), just like folks did in 1900, or he won't be saved. The gospel must be obeyed if we will have heaven (II Thess, 1:7). And it hasn't changed one bit.

Secondly, consider and appreciate the fact that we must determine to serve our Lord in the generation in which we were born. Things are different today. Much has changed. People have grown so accustomed to the 90's life that they can't even imagine a time when things were different.

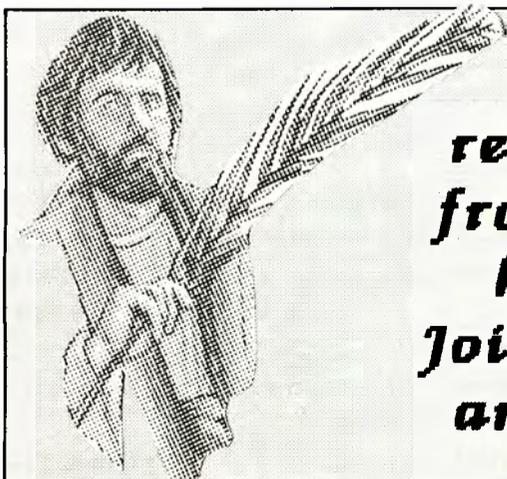
However, Christians must realize that they have a purpose for Christ in this part of history. I must not try to live in the past, and it is foolish to live in the future. Let us cease the fretting about how things used to be, how many were converted, how long the Gospel meetings were, etc. We are here. Let us do His will in faithfulness this day to the best of our ability. Abraham's world wasn't the same as Paul's. Paul's wasn't the same as ours. Yet each generation must now take the sweet message of Christ's sacrifice and His church to the people and society about

them. We do not waste our time trying to change His will to fit modern thinking. That's folly, for instead of saving souls we will lose them. We must determine to implement His will in purity and truth in our generation.

Thirdly, please remember that whether the life expectancy is 40 years or 140 years, it is only a moment compared to eternity. Paul wrote, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." How old is a hundred year old man compared to eternity? He is a babe just barely born. Surely we will respond to this reality in faith and faithfulness. Forever is just around the bend. Hang on. Stand for truth in Christ. Study His word, applying it to your life. Pray often.

Reading lists of statistics which compares our history with our today may send our minds into lofty calculations and interpretations. Prayerfully studying God's word will keep our feet on the ground where they need to be.

Glenn Colley



*God's power to
restore and lead us
from the wilderness
knows no limit.
Join us for gladness,
and Thanksgiving.*



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Giving And Receiving

B. J. Clarke

Paul reminded the Ephesian elders that Jesus had once said, "It is more blessed to give than receive" (Acts 20:35). We are often so wrapped up in our own problems and cares that we expect to receive everyone else's attention, sympathy and concern. Yet Paul cautions us, "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each one of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others" (Philip. 2:3-4). Paul proceeded to point us to the example of Jesus who was

more interested in giving than receiving. He emptied himself and gave the supreme sacrifice by humbling himself and becoming obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross (Philip 2:5-8).

We must remember that it is more blessed to be a servant than it is to receive service. "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). To turn a phrase a little differently than it is normally quoted, we should ask not what the church can give us but what we can give the church. We should ask not what our brother or sister can give unto

us but rather what can we give unto them. We should not only ask what God can give us but focus on what we can give the Lord.

Let us zero in on some acts of giving we can practice on a regular basis.

1. I can give my time to God by attending every service, reading my Bible daily, praying regularly and telling others about the gospel (Heb. 10:25; Matt. 6:33; I Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:15; Col. 4:2; 2 Tim. 2:2).

2. I can give the church my support by giving my time to build its programs of service. Faith without works is dead (James 2:17) and I have been created in Christ Jesus unto

good works (Eph. 2:10). My responsibility is to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord (I Cor. 15:58). I can serve by giving my time to go out and visit and encourage those who are in need both physically and spiritually. I can build up the educational program by giving my time to teach God's word. I can give in every area of work where assistance is needed.

3. I can give my brother and sisters a shoulder to lean on in time of trial (I Cor. 12:25; Rom. 12:15). I can give them a pat on the back in time of joy (Rom. 12:15).

4. I can give the widowed and lonely some company

(James 1:27; 1 Thess. 5:14).

5. I can give my family the attention it deserves by being there for my spouse and children (Deut. 6:6ff; Eph. 5:25ff).

The list could literally go on and on. The marvelous truth about giving is that it blesses the giver with happiness and joy. Jesus gave when he washed the disciples feet. He admonished his disciples to perform similar acts of giving service. "If you know these things, happy are ye if you do them" (John 13:17). What will you give today?

The Nameless Church

We must know that the church of the New Testament is neither denominational, nor sectarian. We must also know that there is no single, exclusive name in the New Testament identifying the church. This is a part of its uniqueness. In this connection brother Hugo McCord wrote:

"The New Testament church is unique in that it has no proper name. Denominations have proper names. The word 'denominate' means to 'name' something. But the New Testament church is nameless. Though it is called the house of the Lord, the family of God, the body of Christ, and the Kingdom of Christ...yet it has no proper name" (*These Things Speak*, page 121).

Denominations and denominational names originated in religious differences which sprang up after the New Testament was written. The divisive principles always suggested the party names, whether those principles had to do with ordinances, particular church theories, methods of work and worship or personal preference as to distinguished leaders. One writer put it this way: "Soon they began to differ among themselves, and it was necessary that some terms be used to express these

differences. In this way different denominations arose." Thus we have the many different denominational names that we all hear and know. The justification for such seems to be this: How are you going to distinguish one Smith from another, without some sort of given name to express these differences? It seems not to have occurred to many people that distinguishing one Smith from another is the one thing we do not want to do. Rather, in keeping with the Lord's prayer in John 17 all the Smith's should be one! For this reason all these "given names" not found in the New Testament should be abandoned. The Lord's church today knows nothing of them because it is nameless.

Exactly what do we mean by the "nameless church"? We simply mean that the church which Jesus promised (Matthew 16:18) and built (Acts 2:37-47) had no given name. The denominational names which exist today have no root in Scripture. But, the church was known by various designations, and some of these we will give attention to here.

1. "The church" (Matthew 16:18). The word which Jesus used and which is translated "church" in this passage has

no religious meaning in and of itself. The work in the Greek is *ekklesia*, and means "a called out group." In the New Testament this word was employed to describe an angry mob (Acts 19:32,41, "assembly"), and a "lawful assembly" (Acts 19:39). It is translated in Matthew 16:18 by the word "church" and refers to those people whom Jesus called out of the world to live for him (Matthew 11:26-28; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; I Peter 2:9).

2. "Churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16). In this passage Paul is speaking of a collection of local congregations, each of which is a church of Christ. This term shows ownership. Those congregations (churches) were His by right of ownership as they belonged to Him.

To use the designation "church of Christ" is entirely proper and scriptural, but it is not a proper name. To speak of "church of Christ" congregations, "Church of Christ" preachers, etc., is to take a scriptural designation and use it in a way entirely wrong. As Hugh Fulford has so well noted, "Christians no more constitute a 'Church of Christ' congregation than they constitute a 'Church of God' congregation or a 'Body of Christ' congregation! All of

these terms carry equal weight and equal meaning in the New Testament" (*Gospel Advocate*, 10/7/82, page 596).

3. "The Churches of God" (I Thessalonians 2:13-14). This designation also shows ownership. They are congregations (assemblies, churches) of God, who is owner of all things. These are the same as "churches of Christ." They are not a different group of Smiths! (That is, those mentioned in the previous passage).

It is worthy of note here that just because a church somewhere may wear this or any other scriptural designation, that does not mean it is the Lord's church. A scriptural designation is fine and a step in the right direction, but if a congregation is unscriptural in its organization, work, worship, purpose or doctrine, it is not the Lord's church.

4. "The Kingdom of God" (I Thessalonians 1:3-5). This is one of the most frequently employed designations of the church in the New Testament (some 68 times). The church is called a kingdom, and we must think of God's people as citizens in that kingdom (John 3:5; Col. 1:13), with Jesus Christ as King (I Timothy 6:15).

5. "House of God" (I

Timothy 3:14-15). This house is God's family--"the church of the living God." Christians are "of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19). They are "children of God" (2 Corinthians 6:17-18) and brethren of Christ (Hebrews 2:11-12). No one is able to "join" the church of our Lord, rather he is "born again" (John 3:5) by his obedience to the truth (I Peter 1:22-23), being baptized for the remission of his sins (Galatians 3:26-27; Acts 2:38), and the Lord then "adds" him to the church (Acts 2:47).

Such is the way a person becomes a member of the church of Christ today.

Do not think the New Testament church is deprived in any ways simply because the Lord has chosen to leave it nameless. God has not given His church a proper name, and neither should any man presume to do so. As churches of Christ we wear the name of our owner to show whom we represent. Whom or what do you represent by the religious name you wear? You may be interested to know the origin of the religious name you have taken. Check it out!

Dennis Gullledge
Mabelvale, Arkansas

Some Thoughts Regarding Angels

W. A. Holley

Angels are celestial beings created a little higher than men (Psalm 148:1-5; Colossians 1:16). There are thousands of them in Revelation (Revelation 5:11-14). Only two of them are named in the Bible--Gabriel and Michael (Luke 1:19; Revelation 12:7). Angels are always spoken of in the masculine gender. There are good and bad angels (II Peter 2:4; Jude 6). The words principalities, powers, thrones, and dominions are words used in your Bible with reference to angelic activity. It seems God uses angels as His guardians or representatives in His concern for others (Matthew 18:10; Acts 12:15).

"But of which of the angels hath he said at any time, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of my feet? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?" (Hebrews 1:13-14). Satan is the grand adversary of God and man (John 8:44; I Timothy 3:6; I Peter 5:8-9). Satan has "his angels" (Matthew 25:41). It seems that the outburst of demonic activities during the personal ministry of Christ was Satan-inspired (Acts 10:38).

God the Father has employed the angels to punish the wicked people of Sodom and Gemorrah. Two men (angels) visited with Abraham regarding the future of these two cities (Genesis 18: 1 ff; Hebrews 13:2). In this connection two angels appeared to Lot to protect him from Sodomites who wished to ravish his family (Genesis 19:1 ff). This incident has an important

bearing for those of us who live today (Luke 17:26-32).

When Hagar was wandering in the desert, God sent an angel to strengthen and encourage her (Genesis 16:7-11; 21:17). God used angels to communicate with Moses (Exodus 3:2) and with Balaam (Numbers 22:23-35) and when Israel rebelled, God sent an angel to rebuke her (Judges 2:1-5).

During the time of Gideon, God sent an angel to help him and his people win a great victory over the Midianites and the Amalekites (Judges 6:1-38). Too, when the sweet singer of Israel, David, had taken a census of his people contrary to the will of God, an angel of destruction was sent to bring havoc on the people of God. David repented of his sin and the people were spared (II Samuel 24:1 ff). Elijah, the great prophet had won a great victory Jezebel's prophets. Jezebel threatened his life. Elijah became frightened and fled all the way to Horeb, where he asked to die. But God sent an angel to revive his faith and confidence in God. Elijah was just such a person as are you (I Kings 18-19; James 5:17-18).

The New Testament has much to say about angels. An angel of the Lord appeared to Zacharias announcing that Elisabeth should become a mother (Luke 1:11-15). John the Baptist was born. The angel's name was Gabriel (Luke 1:19). Later, an angel appeared to Mary who became the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26-38). Again, an angel appeared to Joseph to reassure Joseph that his marriage to Mary the virgin was appropriate--that he should not falter on his

promise (Matthew 1:18-25).

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem the angels came as a "heavenly host" to praise God (Luke 2:8-20). Just after Jesus' baptism, with the memory of the Holy Spirit falling upon Him, and after hearing the voice of God commending Him, he was thrust into temptation (Matthew 4:1-11). When Jesus had successfully resisted all three mighty temptations, the angels came and ministered unto Him. Toward the end of Jesus' earthly journey, in the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus was suffering in agony an angel came to strengthen Him (Luke 22:43).

When Jesus had finished His earthly ministry, He ascended into Heaven (John 17:4; 19:30). Read Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50-52). Acts 1:10-11 tells us that when Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven "two men stood by them (the apostles) in white apparel..." Acts 1:10-11). The two men were angels in human form. Thus, angels bore witness to Jesus' glorious resurrection (Luke 24:1-7; John 20:11-13).

Angels, after the establishment of the church, had an important role in its early growth. For example, when the apostles had been arrested and placed in prison, angels unlocked its doors and sent them back to the temple to continue their preaching (Acts 5:17-23). An angel instructed Philip, saying, "arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert" (Acts 8:26 ff). Although the angel directed Philip to go to a certain geographic location, he did not

do the preaching; rather, it was Philip who did the preaching (Acts 8:26 ff). God uses human instrumentality to preach His word; not angels, not the Virgin Mary, nor any other celestial being. Jesus could have summoned a myriad of angels to proclaim the word of God had He so chosen (Matthew 26:53-54). Men are to preach the gospel of Christ (II Corinthians 4:7; Mark 16:15-16).

It is a sin to worship angels. John, twice attempted to worship angels but he was rebuked both times (Revelation 19:10; 22:8-9). "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" said Jesus (Matthew 4:10). If Jesus had worshiped Satan, He would have acknowledged the Lordship of Satan. Scripturally, one cannot worship Peter, Mary, money, or any other thing.

Jesus is now in Heaven (Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24: 50-53; Acts 1:9-12). But, one day He will return a second time (Hebrews 9:28; Titus 2:13; II Peter 3:10-15). All His holy angels shall return with him (Matthew 25:31). For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (I Thessalonians 4:16-18).

Dear Readers, in view of the forthcoming Judgment, there are lessons which we must learn. Jude was a brother of Jesus

Christ (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3). Jude wrote the book of Jude. Some ungodly fellows had intruded into the church. These were heretics who entered secretly under a banner of being loyal Christians. These were false teachers who appeared as angels of light (II Corinthians 11:13-15). Jude uses three men--Cain, Balaam, and Korah--to illustrate his point: Cain substituted his plan for God's plan (Genesis 4:1-8). Now many of our brethren want to substitute their own way for they think their way, is better. Balaam represents those who love deceit and money (Jude 11). Many preachers love popularity and praise; hence, they bend when it serves their purpose. Korah represents those now who rebel against the authority of God and the elders (Numbers 16: 25-35). Many will not submit to the authority of God and His word (Matthew 28:18-20; II Timothy 3:16-17).

Listen to Jude as he describes these false teachers: "These are they who are hidden rocks in your love feasts when they feast with you, shepherds that without fear feed themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved for ever" (Jude 12-13) If God punished angels who sinned, will He not punish those backsliding children who die in their sins?

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Gird Up The Loins Of Your Mind

Peter admonishes that Christians should "gird up the loins" of their minds (I Peter 1:13). "Girding" is a reference to the style of dress characteristic of people in ancient oriental lands. When performing tasks, running or taking a long journey, they gathered up the loose ends of their outward garb and tied them into a girdle or belt. The "girding" enabled them to walk, run, or perform certain work without being impeded by their

clothing.

In employing this illustration, Peter was encouraging Christians to gather their loose thoughts, and tighten their mental activity in order to perform the work of a Christian. A modern day translation of Peter's illustration could be, "roll up the sleeves of your mind."

Christians are to gather their loose and disjointed thoughts and prepare themselves for spiritual work, which demands

study, reflection and meditation. Paul said, "Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). The need of mental discipline is ever present. Whether it be for preparing for Bible study, or praying, or simply avoiding evil, the Christian needs to learn how to think.

Ultimately, our happiness will depend on how we are able to discipline our minds for the

service of God. The apostle Paul promised through the Spirit that God would keep our hearts and minds and also give us a peace that passes understanding (Phil. 4:7). However, the reception of that promise is contingent upon what he said in the very next verse. Notice what is said, "Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever

things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

We ought to work on good Bible study habits, as it is the best way I know to do what Paul has instructed us in Philippians 4:8.

Holger Neubauer
Forest Park, GA.

SEPTEMBER 22, 1995

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Volume 32 Number 35
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

h the

The Preacher And His Work

There is no work in all the world just like the life and endeavor of the gospel preacher. In a paramount way an evangelist of Truth is God's servant -- and yet some brethren think of him as their paid errand boy. A person who is a professional clergyman will perform whatever the parishioners desire because he has a job and not a commitment. Biblically, preaching is not a profession but a passion. It is not a duty demanded but a divine calling. To preach the Word is the greatest challenge a sin-cursed earth knows. Speaking as the oracles of God when men's hearts are fascinated by fables takes all the fortitude humanity can muster. To refuse to be burdened with "trivia" may cause some consternation to worldly members but it will mean that the preacher is attending heaven assigned tasks and not "church tradition." It will probably shock some members to learn

that not one line in the Bible even remotely infers that gospel preachers are responsible for performing marriage ceremonies or conducting funeral services. It would be nearer a Scriptural basis if elders took care of those matters and also did the baptizing. Deacons should be doing much of "the leg work" usually expected of preachers. All of this would leave the evangelist free to do what God ordained for him to do as related in I Timothy, chapter four:

1. Study
2. Pray
3. Preach
4. Live An Exemplary Life
5. Teach others the Gospel

Believe me, that is a full-time task and genuine challenge! Men who truly love the Lord and the souls of lost humanity are hard to find. The additional burden of striving to keep the church pure and thoroughly indoctrinated demands hours of preparation and

tremendous courage in the face of abject liberalism and worldliness today.

In Revelation 10 we find the marvelous illustration of John "eating up" the Word of God. It was a joyous privilege to be entrusted with the glorious Gospel but it was also an awesome responsibility to realize the devastating power of the message and its resultant consequences upon ungodly men. Ezekiel had experienced the exact phenomenon during his work as a fiery prophet in the solemn days of Babylonian Captivity. Jeremiah is the epitome of a preacher of righteousness in love with the indispensable task of speaking for God to the people. It was a rocky road of sacrifice and surrender for the weeping prophet. His lamentations over Jerusalem form some of the finest moments in sacred literature. He once was tempted to quit preaching but quick reflection caused him

to exclaim:

"His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones...and I could not contain..." It was too late to stop. Jeremiah had preached the Truth too long to quit. Every sincere proclaimer understands both of Jeremiah's emotions. The greatest preacher who ever lived was Jesus Christ. Yet, the Son of God, earth's only perfect specimen, certainly did not please everyone. In fact, He pleased very few (John 6:67) and offended many (Matthew 15:12). Truth exposes imperfection and as one old brother once commented to me, "When I'm pinched I just have to holler." The burden of preaching and the sorrow attending man's defection from God saddened the Lord. It caused Him to weep over the city that rejected His plea (Matthew 23). A preachers family often shares the brunt of rejection and the snide remarks of those who ought to bolster

the work of an evangelist but, who instead, specialize in criticism and complaint. In every congregation are those who are more concerned with the social aspect of life than with the spiritual. As long as the preacher drinks coffee with them and plays "42" with them or goes fishing with them it matters not whether he studies, preaches or knows the Bible! It must be a temptation to many preachers to cater to the whims of such brethren because many pulpits are lifeless. Angels in heaven rejoice when Truth is obeyed (Luke 15:10). Demons in hell tremble at the shattering power of the gospel. Grateful brethren and redeemed sinners praise God for the shining glow of Truth. This more than offsets the grumblings of the unconverted.

Johnny Ramsey

Someone Needs You!

If you're feeling sad and lonely;
There seems nothing you can do;
Just take courage and remember,
There is someone needing you.

You were created for a purpose,
For a part in God's great plan;
Bear ye one another's burdens,
So fulfill Christ's law to man.

Are you a father, son or daughter?
You've a work none else can do..



Are you a husband, wife or mother?
There is someone needing you.

Someone needs your faith and courage;
Someone needs your love and prayers;
Someone needs your inspiration,
Thus to help their cross to bear.

Do not think your work is ended;
There is much that you can do.
And as long as you're on earth,
There is someone needing you. **AuthorUnknown**

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

*Stay on track with
life's most important values.*

*Sixth Avenue Church of Christ
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How Christians Build Respect On The Job (Part 1)

Peter and Andrew were fishermen. Paul was a tentmaker. Lydia was a seller of purple. Demetrius was a silversmith. Jesus was a carpenter. People have always had jobs. The righteous have always known that living a godly life would not relieve them from having to work for a living. They have always had to live right while working hard.

But the day-in-day-out working world is often hard on Christians. Often fellow-workers have no respect for God. As one brother who had taken a new job said, "Their language is so bad; but everyone seems to talk like that. I think if I say anything to them they'll run me out." Sometimes co-workers are hostile to all Christian concepts. Surely Jesus thought of such times when He uttered, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of this world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil (John 17:15)."

Let's consider some practical thoughts with reference to living the Christian life on the job, and gradually gaining respect from our co-workers. These truths come from Ephesians 4:23-32.

First, Ephesians 4:25 says, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor; for we are members one of another." To build respect on the job we must always tell the truth.

This verse was written to the Ephesian Christians, but lying was almost a universal vice among the heathen world. One missionary said, "No confidence can be placed in their statement; and where there is the slightest temptation to falsehood, they practice it without remorse." These Ephesian Christians had recently been converted, and were working to build a good conscience.

Lying is of the devil. "...When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it (John 8:44)." Lying insults people and manipulates them. It destroys trust and respect. Lying on the job comes in different forms. One who says "Tell them I'm not home" when he is home; One who says, "Tell them I'm sick." when he is not; One who intentionally colors stories to make them interesting; One who circulates flippant rumors without concern for all of the exact truth; One who is in the

habit of making promises and then disregarding them, are all lying. I spoke with an elder of the church who owns an automobile dealership about his employees. He said, "I've learned about people. So many don't have any hesitation about lying. They just don't think anything of it."

The blackness and seriousness about lying is sometimes hard to see when I am thinking of how I feel when I lie to someone. It is best seen when I think of how I feel when people lie to me. The truthfulness of a Christian employee will shine brightly in a world which sees so many lies.

Second, Ephesians 4:26 says, "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath." To build respect on the job we must be in control of our anger. All animals have the ability of protection in some way. It is true of humans too. As one man said, "Anger is a reaction to something that makes me need to protect myself. Anger is an excitement or agitation of mind produced by the reception of a real or supposed injury, and attended commonly with a desire or

purpose of revenge. To a great extent the sudden excitement on the reception of an injury is involuntary, and consequently innocent." Jesus became angry at times (Mark 3:5). The secret, of course, is to control yourself when you are angry. That's hard. It is difficult to be respectful when you are angry. But only respect begets respect, and doing right when you are angry shows Christian character.

When does anger become sinful? Let's consider some times: When it is excited without sufficient cause. Some folks have a hair-trigger temper. It is easily tripped, and extreme. The outbursts of temper do not fit the size of their agitation. Anger is sinful when it transcends the cause. A couple of years ago a woman was smoking in the non-smoking section of a restaurant. Other patrons complained to the manager. The smoker left, then returned a few moments later with a shot gun and killed the chief complainant.

Anger is sinful when it is against the person rather than the offense. In anger I desire not just to rectify the problem, but I also want

revenge. Romans 12:17 says, "Render to no man evil for evil." John 18:22, 23 says, "And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, 'Answerest thou the high priest so?' Jesus answered him, 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?'" Jesus wasn't seeking revenge, but rather fairness from his accusers.

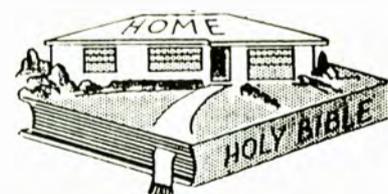
Anger is sinful when it is cherished and heightened by reflection. Anger has an interesting attraction to be kept quietly away in the inner chambers of our soul and cherished. It can be cultivated and heightened by reflection. That's dangerous. The anger can become a cancer to a persons character. What is the answer to that potential harm? Don't let the sun go down upon your wrath. Do what is rightfully within your ability to correct the problem, and then be satisfied. Don't let wrath have it's way with you. Other employees will respect a Christian who has control of his temper.

Glenn Colley

The Love Of God Provides us With The Blaze Of Autumn



With the heat of the summer beginning to wane
And the signs of the year growing old,
Comes a season providing the frost and the rain
While the leaves change to scarlet and gold,
For a moment of glory before they turn brown
And descend to the earth everywhere,
As a cold gust of wind sends them fluttering down
Where the bonfire smoke fills the air.
It's time for the harvest of orchard and field
While the earth's brilliant colors appear;
Then the love of the Lord is so brightly revealed
When the season of autumn is here. Gloria Nowak



The Words Of Truth

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"So Great Salvation"

W.A. Holley

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" (Hebrews 2:1-4, KJV).

Hence the salvation in which we are interested was identified and spoken of by the Lord Jesus (Mark 16:15-16). It is a certified salvation (Galatians 1:10-12; Hebrews 2:3-4).

Your Bible teaches rather than neglecting your salvation, you should "work out your own salvation (Philippians 2:12." How does one go about working out his salvation? One does so by obeying those commands of the Lord (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38). After one becomes a child of God one

must remain faithful to Him until death (Titus 2:11-12; Revelation 2:10). Backsliders are not working out their salvation!! Salvation has a present and future aspect: Present salvation comes when the sinner is baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:36-38; I Peter 3:20-21); future salvation refers to the day when one is ushered into heaven at the last day (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). Whether we like it or not, I Peter 3:21 says, "Baptism doth also now save us..."

Why is the salvation of our text so great? It is much greater than the salvation of Noah and his family from the flood (Hebrews 11:7). The salvation offered by Christ is far greater than the salvation of Moses and the Israelites from Egyptian bondage (Exodus 14:13-18, 30). Other salvations might be mentioned, but this will suffice.

The "So Great Salvation" refers to salvation from sin. Matthew 1:21, Jesus came to save his people from their sins." The word sin means to miss the mark. "For all have sinned (past tense), and come short of the glory of God (present tense), (Romans 3:23). If we say we have not sinned, we make God

a liar (I John 1:6-10). Sin represents adversity, humiliation, disgrace, and shame (Galatians 5:19-21). Think of the Young woman and her two little boys!! Think of what could have been: joy, peace, happiness, contentment, and tranquility---a wonderful world!! But alas...In one sense one turns his/her life into a hell on earth.

What does this Great Salvation cost?

(1) It cost God his Son, and it cost Jesus his life (John 3:16; II Corinthians 8:9). Think of the dark scene of Golgotha (Matthew 27:33; Mark 15:22). Hebrews 5:7 gives us a description of that ugly scene: "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard, in that he feared." (See Acts 20:28).

(2) It cost us the appreciation of the value on the soul. ONE soul is worth the value of the whole world (Matthew 16:26) Your soul needs to be saved from eternal death (Matthew 10:28; James 5:19-20). "Receiving the end of your faith, even salvation of your

souls" (I Peter 1:9).

(3) The salvation of the soul brings great blessedness of peace and contentment. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul..." (Psalm 19:7). Here read the FIRST PSALM and see that there are two ways to live life. Jesus declared, "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). Jesus is the way (John 14:6). After the establishment of the church of Christ, those converted to Christ were spoken of as being of "the Way." (Romans 16:16; Acts 9:2; 16:9,23; 22:4; 24:14,22). The "Way of the Lord" has never been popular--witness those passages that tell of persecutions even unto death (II Timothy 3:12; II Thessalonians 1:4). Here guilt is removed and joy takes its place.

Great salvation is extended to all sinners. "For the Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Jesus declared, "He that

believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

(4) The Great Salvation is conditional. The sinner must hear, believe, and obey God's plan of salvation. One can neglect to obey the truth (Hebrews 2:3; 5:8-9). King Agrippa was almost persuaded to obey Christ but never did (Acts 26:27-29).

Negligence keeps good, moral persons from being saved. They intend to obey before they die, but somehow they never do. One need not be the most lecherous person in town to be lost, but so-called little sins can and will bring damnation unless they are repented of and forsaken. What are some of these little sins? We shall list a few of them: Deceit, slander, using curse words, mistreating one's wife/husband, temper out of control, difficult to live with, social drinking, and hypocrisy. Look at Ephesians 4:22-32.

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I Want To Pray

All spiritual blessings are in Christ (Eph. 1:3). Christians are those people who are in Christ (Gal. 3:26,27; Rom. 6:3). Thus, God's people enjoy the spiritual blessings He offers. The vilest of sinners enjoys so many of God's physical blessings. One of many great blessings that the Christian enjoys is the privilege prayer. Prayer was not a privilege of the unrighteous under the Old Law (Prov. 28:9; Ps. 66:18). The New Testament plainly teaches that prayer is a privilege given the Christian (I Pet. 3:12; James 5:16). Lack of prayer on the Christian's part reveals some things about his or her heart and has some very profound results. We will notice some of these and this should motivate us all as Christians to examine our status of prayer before God.

I) LACK OF PRAYER REVEALS SOME SERIOUS CONCLUSIONS ABOUT US:

A. Lack of respect for God:

Prayer is another opportunity to bestow upon the Lord the honor due Him. Notice in Matt. 6:9 how Jesus honored the Father in prayer.

B. Lack of recognition of need for God: Prayer is the reaching up to God and pouring the heart out of God (I Sam. 1:15) because we need Him.

C. Lack Of compassion for others: Prayer gives us access to some assistance for others such as the sick that we can get no where else. Part of scriptural prayer is selfish petitions for others.

D. Lack of gratitude for blessings received: Prayer is an opportunity to partially fulfill the commands to be grateful. When we fail to pray, this is the utmost of ingratitude toward Him who has blessed us so immensely.

E. Lack of concern for cleansing from sin: To a Christian, prayer has a vital part in keeping forgiven of sins. We

must confess, repent, and pray (I Jn. 1:9; Acts 8:22-24).

F. Lack of obedience to a plain simple command: Prayer is a divine precept or command from God (I Thess. 5:17). The obedient will enter heaven (Heb. 5:9). Let us obey what the Lord says on all subjects.

II) LACK OF PRAYER LEAVES SOME VERY PROFOUND RESULTS:

A. Blessings not received: James said we have not because we ask not (4:2). By not asking, we hurt ourselves and deprive ourselves and others of things that could benefit us.

B. Sins not forgiven: Christians will continue to stumble and falter at times. We are in dire need of cleansing.

C. Found to be disobedient: This too is a very serious result. Those who failed to obey will be lost (II Thes. 1:7-9).

Prayer, O what a wonderful privilege. O how sad to live beneath the blessings available

through prayer. Give careful consideration to what the Lord has said on this marvelous

topic.

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Most Of A Minute

Keeping A Good Conscience

How important would you say is keeping a clean conscience? Well, let's do a little values check on you. Suppose you had the choice between two things today: A clear conscience, free from guilt, or \$500.00. Which would you pick? If you said \$500.00, you blew it.

Conscience is a blessing when we do right, a curse when we don't. I like what an Indian wrote about it: "It is a little three-concerned thing in side of me. When I do wrong it turns round and hurts me very much. But if I keep on doing wrong, it will turn so much that the corners become worn off and it does not hurt me any more."

The Apostle Paul said, "...Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men (Acts 24:16)."

When I do wrong, and refuse to make it right, the hardest person to live with may be myself. I'm thankful that Christ has brought me a way to have my sin --all my sin --forgiven so my conscience can be clear, and I can get better sleep at night.

Glenn Colley

A Christian Just Like Paul (No. 1)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

The chosen text for this short series of Scriptural studies is the latter part of Acts 26 wherein we read, "And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, 'Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.'

But he said, 'I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.'

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.'

And Paul said, 'I would God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such I am, except these bonds (Acts 26:24-29).'"

THE SETTING OF THIS TEXT

The Scriptural setting of our short series of lessons on being "A Christian Just Like

Paul" takes place in Caesarea, the Roman capitol of Palestine. It was near the end of Paul's two year imprisonment there. In this courageous chapter Paul is given the liberty of defending himself, but decides to promote with fervency the Christian Cause and makes a supreme effort to convert the young King to the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords--the Lord Jesus Christ. What a signal triumph for the gospel's power that would have been if the chasm could have been spanned that day in Caesarea that long had separated the Herodian family, to whom Agrippa belonged, and Jehovah's family, to whom Paul belonged.

I think you will find this series of studies to be more interesting if you know something of the background of the young king before whom Paul spoke and who he tried to convert to Christ. This Agrippa in Acts 26 was the great grandson of Herod the Great, the very one who built the city where Paul and Agrippa were then present and the one who sought to kill the Christ child some

sixty years earlier. He was the grand nephew of Herod the tetrarch who had slain John the Baptist and before whom our Lord was arraigned in Luke 23. He was the son of Herod Agrippa I who slew James the apostle with the sword in Acts 12 and fully intended to slay Peter also but the Lord's angel intervened to save Peter's life. That Herod died a horrible death as we learn from the latter part of Acts 12. It is a bit more correct therefore to refer to this monarch in Acts as Agrippa II.

This Agrippa in Acts 26 had a sister who had married Felix the Governor and is mentioned by Luke in Acts 24:24-25. Paul had proclaimed righteousness, self-control and judgment to come to this wicked, adulterous couple some two years earlier. This same Agrippa had another sister by the name of Bernice who is mentioned with him in this overall context.

NO CONVERTS MADE THAT DAY IN CAESAREA

Nobody that day cried out with the question, "Sir, what must we do to be saved?" as in Acts 2:37; 9:6; 22:20 or

16:30. No confessions or immersions crowned the day's efforts on the part of Paul. Though he did not make Christians out of any of his audience upon that occasion, nevertheless that was the purpose that prompted his supreme efforts. Agrippa realized quite knewly that if he obeyed what Paul preached to him, that he would become a Christian--not a Pharisee, Sadducee, Essene or some other religionist of the day. So would have all others in the audience. Paul strongly desired them to be just what he was--a Christian. he listed only one exception. He would wish his Roman bonds or chains upon no man.

Though there were no conversions to Christ that day, the fault lay not at Paul's feet or with the gospel so eloquently and elegantly proclaimed that day. The fault lay with human wills that refused to bend to divine directives. For years I have been hearing some of our brethren, say, 'We can take the world for Christ anytime we get ready to!' The statement, at best, is reckless. There are three wills involved

in World Evangelism: the Lord's, ours, and the world's will. We know what God's will is as stated in such passages as I Timothy 2:3,4 and 2 Peter 3:9. He does not wish for any to be lost. Our will, and His children, should duplicate His will perfectly. We desire all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. but there is another will heavily involved--that of hearers. Like those in Paul's audience at Caesarea in A.D. 60, they may will not to obey the gospel. Being a religion of persuasion and not one of coercion, we cannot force the faith we possess upon the unwilling. It is much more correct to say, "We can preach the gospel to the world when we get ready to do so!" They did not convert everybody who heard in the first century and neither shall we in the twentieth century.

How was Paul a Christian? I shall answer with six major points in some seven subsequent articles.

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You Might Be A Laodicean If...

Keith Kasarjian

Comedian Jeff Foxworthy has become famous and rich, I'm sure, because of his comedy act and books entitled, "You Might Be a Redneck If..." Thousands across the country, including this writer, have enjoyed his hilarious rhetoric. There is something, however, much more serious than being labeled a "redneck". We will call it Laodiceanitis. In Revelation 3:14-20, as Jesus concluded his address to the seven churches of Asia, He had words of admonition for the brethren in Laodicea. It is interesting to notice that, no matter the situation, Jesus was always able to find some reason to praise the other six churches. Not so with Laodicea. Nothing but

warning and reprimand for this congregation. Because of the dreadfulness of Laodiceanitis, we shall examine some of the symptoms.

You might be a Laodicean if you are indifferent toward Jesus and His church. (16) Laodicea's water supply was brought in from nearby cities by a sophisticated aqueduct system. Sunlight heated the water to lukewarm, which was the basis for this analogy. [The Bible Almanac, p. 541] The members of the church in this city were described by our Lord as nothing more than "lukewarm". They were only "keeping house". No enthusiasm. No real concern for what really matters. Jesus was angry about it. He was

sick about it. Maybe the Laodiceans thought a half-hearted effort was better than no effort at all. They were dead wrong. God has never been pleased with an apathetic attitude toward His will. If we find ourselves suffering with this symptom, we would do well to treat it as soon as possible.

You might be a Laodicean if you trust in material possessions. (17a) The Laodiceans were wealthy, no doubt about it. The city was located on a trade route that made it a major banking center. Great wealth was theirs but no great spirituality. Perhaps this was the cause of their apathy. They didn't need God, they had their "things". You can't help but be reminded of the

rich farmer in Luke 12. He was so caught up in appraising his affluence (material) that he gave no thought to his soul (spiritual). Many are in danger of doing the same thing today. As a nation we have been blessed, no doubt about it. We had better beware though, lest our gain causes us to lose the most valuable thing we own.

You might be a Laodicean if you are spiritually destitute. (17b) Though they thought they had everything they needed, Jesus quickly pointed out that they were actually, "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked". These terms described not their physical condition but their spiritual. They had the most of what they needed the least,

and lacked what is needed most. How tragic! When it comes to spiritual matters, may we never be described as were the Laodiceans.

It could be that you find yourself suffering from Laodiceanitis. If so, the cure is given by Jesus in verses 18-20. The cure for this disease is as follows:

- (1) Value the spiritual more than anything - 18
- (2) Be zealous toward good things - 19
- (3) Repent - 19

If you have been suffering from Laodiceanitis, you need to see the Great Physician. He will help. He can cure. He will forgive.

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SEPTEMBER 29, 1995

The Words Of Truth

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

Has God Changed?

Jim Gillaspie

"Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day..." (Deut 11:26-28a).

"And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him;" (Heb. 5:9).

All through the Bible is a common theme: God expects obedience. Not only does He expect it; He requires it (Matt 7:21). Not only does He require it, He demands it: "Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the Lord thy God, and do His commandments and His statutes, which I

command thee this day" (Deut 27:10).

When did God change? He didn't! (Heb 13:8, Jas 1:17). When did obedience become unnecessary? It didn't! (Gal. 5:7). His word means the same thing today that it meant 25 years ago. It means the same thing today that it meant nearly 2000 years ago (Matt 24:35). If the word hasn't changed, then what has?

(1) OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD MAY HAVE CHANGED. Perhaps we do not fear Him as we once did. 'Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man,' (Eccl 12:13, see also 1 Pet 2:17). A common belief today is that God will not punish anyone (see 2 Thess. 1:7-9) because He is

a loving God. (Should a child not expect to be punished when he does wrong because his parents 'love' him?) The Bible presents God as a tender Father (Luke 15:11-32), but also as a righteous Judge (2 Tim 4:8). He is a God of mercy (Luke 1:50), but also a God of justice (Psa 89:14). Our view of God may have become distorted, but God has not changed.

(2) OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BIBLE MAY HAVE CHANGED. Many in years gone have recognized the greatness of this book. It helped shape and mold character in their lives. Does it have the same effect upon us? How much are our lives influenced by the Bible? "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..." (Hosca 4:6a). Our attitude toward the Bible may have

changed, but the Bible has not changed.

(3) OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD WORSHIP MAY HAVE CHANGED. There has been a shift of focus in worship in recent years. The focus has gone from God to us. Many expect the worship services to be a spiritual pep rally. The preacher is to be a talented story-teller or a comedian. Sermons are to be short and positive. The concept of heaven and hell is viewed as old-fashioned. It is not stylish to teach and preach on judgement and repentance. We live in the multimedia age, and we want to be entertained. The word "worship" means to prostrate one's self, to fall down in humility, to ascribe worth to. We are to worship God (John 4:23-24). We are to come before Him and realize His greatness and our

smallness. We are to focus on things that are holy and righteous. "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (Psa 29:2). Our attitude toward worship might change, but true worship doesn't conform to man's opinions (Matt 15:8-9). It is time that we took a closer look at our present beliefs. Just because many may believe something to be true does not make it true. There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death" (Prov 14:12). May God help us to have the courage to reexamine our attitudes toward these things, for God has not changed (2 Cor 13:5).

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My Loyalty

Psalm 119:40: "Behold, I have longed after thy precepts..."

Psalm 119:72: "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver."

Loyalty is a wonderful virtue. It is essential to the saving of one's soul.

Unfortunately, many fail to attain true loyalty to the Bible.

Some are loyal to time-honored traditions of men (Colossians 2:8); others are loyal to false teachers (II Timothy 4:2-4). Only loyalty to the truth will set men free (John 8:32). It is

the "God-breathed" word that is "...profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work," (II Timothy 3:16-17). To this we must be

true. Christian men and women will "...give diligence to present [themselves] approved unto God, [workmen] that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth," (II Timothy 2:15).

To whom or what are

you loyal? Let us all proclaim with David of old our love for God's word. "Earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3). Be ye "set for the defense of the gospel," (Philippians 1:17).

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Come visit with us and bring a friend this Sunday!

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Stay on track with life's most important values. Be true family, friends and Church. See you on Sunday!
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How Christians Build Respect On The Job (Part 2)

For most Christians, working in a job is part of life. We work to support ourselves and our families, and hopefully to make a meaningful contribution to the society about us. But for a Christian, entering the work place day after day poses interesting challenges. We are in the world, but not of the world. We try to influence those about us with the grace and truth of Jesus, while at the same time avoiding the temptation to be influenced ourselves by the worldliness and corruption so often present in places where Christians work. That's a real challenge.

For this two-part series we want to draw lessons from Ephesians 4:23-32. How can I, as a Christian, build respect for Christianity on my job? In part one we considered that we should always tell the truth, and that we should work to control how we act when we are angry. Now let us continue.

Thirdly, Ephesians 4:28 says, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." We gain respect on the job when we always refuse to steal from anyone. The

contrast here is plainspoken. Stealing versus honest labor. Both may produce material good, but one is right and the other wrong. Christians are people who believe that honest labor is not a curse, but a blessing. Note that the verse teaches that our jobs are "the thing which is good". It is good to be involved in honest labor.

Stealing, like lying, comes in various forms. The Christian worker avoids taking things which belong to the company or business. Others, reasoning "it will never be missed" may take things daily, but the Christian respects the fact that these things don't belong to him. The Christian doesn't hide income from the Internal Revenue Service. He knows that he is required to pay his legal taxes (Rom. 13:6,7). To do otherwise is a form of stealing. The Christian doesn't steal from his employer by failing to work as he has agreed. In simple terms, the employer has agreed to pay a salary to a man or woman who has in turn agreed to work. It is a trade. Just as the employee would object to the employer keeping some of the money rightly owed to the worker, the worker must not hold back the

labor he has agreed to produce.

Nobody respects a thief. If Christians are to have respect on the job, they are going to have to avoid all stealing.

Incidentally, it may be hard for us to clearly see the blackness of stealing when we picture ourselves taking from another and benefiting materially from the stealing. It is easy to see the seriousness of stealing when I picture myself being robbed by another.

Fourth, Ephesians 4:29 says, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." Christians gain respect on the job when they are careful to control their tongues. The word corrupt means, "bad, decayed, rotten, and is applied to putrid vegetable or animal substance." Thoughts and words can also be corrupt. As one man said, "The passage of an impure thought through the mind leaves pollution behind it."

Christians who desire a healthy respect from their co-workers simply must control their tongues. When speaking of the power of the tongue James said in chapter three verses five and six, "How great

matter a little fire kindleth." He said that it is a "world of iniquity," and that it will "set on fire the course of nature." That is, the tongue can be used to describe and encourage every single sin ever committed or imagined. It will "set on fire", or cause problems throughout a man's entire life if it is not controlled.

The workplace is often a haven for foul talk and foul jokes. The Christian who wants to gain healthy respect on the job must avoid this practice. In addition, many folks are prone to spend much of their time carping and complaining about their circumstance. This too is a poor way to spend time and the use of our tongues. Gossip is a popular pastime on the job. People will listen to anything if you whisper it. Interestingly enough, gossip, like lying and stealing, is most clearly seen for it's evil when I think of how I feel as someone gossips about me, and not when I think of how I feel when I gossip about another. Let's work to control our tongues.

Finally, Ephesians 4:31,32 says, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And

be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." If Christians are to gain respect on the job, they must work to resolve problems, and then let them go. This old world is filled with grudges and vengeance. Some people are too. We must work to grow past that spirit. The Master told us in Matthew 18 that "It must needs be that offenses come...". They have come. They will come. How will I react when I face the injustices of life? Paul is teaching that we don't just react, we ACT! We choose the path we will walk through life, and then we stay on course. We know trials will come. We will not be deterred from our purpose.

People need to know that in Christ this is mercy and forgiveness. Those Christian workers who fully and freely forgive build respect on the job. They show that they aren't governed by the same motivations as are other people. They follow a great Master. Their faith is real.

May God bless us as we daily strive to be His faithful servants every day of our lives.

Glenn Colley

Arguing Cause And Effect Except Toward Eternity

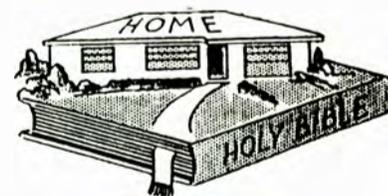
I want to make an observation about actions and their consequences. Americans are great believers in warning of dangers connected with various practices. We are told to cut down on fatty foods because of problems it will cause our heart. We are going to huge expense to have a new style of automobile air conditioner because of fear that the old way would hurt the Ozone layer. We stay away from tobacco because of

danger to the lungs. We try to get enough exercise --no couch potato -- because of the danger of getting flabby and unhealthy.

What amazes me in this society so filled with warnings about how we should live and what we should and shouldn't do is that we as a society hesitate to apply it to eternal questions. The most important thing of all, whether we go to heaven or hell, is directly tied to how I choose to live, and

yet we hesitate to warn people.

Listen: People who know God and obey the Gospel are going to go to heaven. People who don't, aren't. II Thess. 1:7 says "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."



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A Christian Just like Paul (No. 2)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

With this article I continue my study with readers on the stately and sublime subject of being a Christian just like the apostle Paul. This is what he desired of Agrippa and all his audience as per Acts 26:28,29. But how was Paul a Christian? I propose in this and a few articles to follow to give you six rather comprehensive answers all based squarely upon Sacred Scripture. How was Paul a Christian?

HE WAS A CHRISTIAN IN NAME

He was present in Antioch of Syria when the noble name Christian was first given in Acts 11:26. It was there that the disciples of Deity were first called Christians. The name was not given by enemies of Calvary and it's Christ; they would not have given a name honorable and glorious in all its attractive aspects. The name was not conferred or coined by mere human authority, i.e., the disciples on their very own. They were not in the business of calling the shots, so to speak. Their hearts and ears were open to Heaven's mandates--Not the dictates of

their own hearts. Actually, it was a striking fulfillment of Isaiah 62:2 that promised when Gentiles had seen Jehovah's righteousness, in Acts 10, with the rich inclusion of pardon extended, that God's people would begin to wear a new name which the mouth of the Lord would authorize and make known. The Gentiles did indeed experience God's righteousness in Acts 10 with the inclusion of Cornelius and his family into the fold of the faith. The very next chapter, Acts 11, contains the account of their beginning to wear the noble name Christian.

Paul urged Agrippa to be a Christian in Acts 26. Agrippa decided against the ardent acceptance of Christianity but he sensed in Paul's moving message that if he obeyed it's import, it would make of him a Christian. Paul sought to persuade people to be Christians--not Pharisees, Sadducees or Essenes. Were he here today, he WOULD NOT persuade people to be Roman Catholic, Protestant, cultic, occultic or World Religionists. He would still be in the beautiful business of

persuading people to be Christians--nothing more--nothing less. In Acts 26 he was not interested in "Grecianizing" or Romanizing" his audience; he was deeply zealous in seeking to "Christianize" his auditors that day in Caesarea of Palestine.

Like his great and admired brother, James, the Lord's brother, he viewed this a worthy name to be worn by sons and daughters of God (James 2:7). A name that honors a mere man, a geographical location, a religious ordinance or a form of church government could not be designated as a worthy name, could it?

Like his fellow apostle, Peter, Paul viewed this as a name through which God could be honored, Christ glorified, the Spirit pleased, all disciples united and the cause of truth spread abroad. Peter referred to this attractive appellation in 1 Peter 4:16--the only occurrence of the name outside the book of Acts.

In 1 Corinthians 1:10-16 Paul strongly forbade the wearing of party names. Some were doing that very thing at

Corinth with his name, Peter's name and the name Apollos. Such greatly displeased Paul. Peter and Apollos would have been of like mind, without doubt. Paul used razor-sharp logic in dealing with this sinful matter among them. Wearing party names could only be right if Christ be divided. He is NOT. Wearing party names could only be right if they had been baptized into the name of Paul, Peter or Apollos which had NOT occurred. Wearing party names would have been right only if Paul, Peter or Apollos had been to Calvary for them. But Paul, Peter or Apollos had not been to Calvary in their stead. (Incidentally, we have here an unanswerable argument that we may wear Christ's name ONLY IF WE HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED INTO HIM. Those who have not been baptized into Him have no Scriptural right at all to wear the name of Christ). In this Corinthian context we have three cogent reasons why the wearing of party names in religion is wrong, grossly wrong!

Paul would have had no sympathy at all for those who

cry, "there is nothing in a name," and that "one name is as good as another". Even the religious leaders parroting such do not believe it. If you think they do, try calling one of them by the name of the most ungodly man or woman in the community where they live and see how quick is the offense they register. It will be quicker than streaked lightning! Paul knew better than to pawn off such on his Caesarean audience that day. He knew, and knew well, that there is something in a name. Foolish is any religious leader who so contends today. Not the first one of them would so contend if they were not wearers of names totally without warrant or authorization in God's Holy Bible.

Paul was just a Christian--no prefix before and no suffix afterward. This prefix and suffix business would develop after digression took its heavy toll among religious people.

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Great Faith Is Not Always Strong

Dennis Gullede

All of us can relate to Proverbs 18:14, "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; But a broken spirit who can bear?" We can endure anything as long as we have the will-power and drive. If we lack this we can succeed in but little.

The people we read about in Scripture were not unlike the rest of us. They differed from us only in time and culture. Otherwise, people are people. They had good days and bad days. They sometimes were downcast, depressed and discouraged. Several Old Testament examples include David (I Sam. 30:6), Jeremiah (Jer. 20:7-9) and Elijah (1 Kgs. 19-4).

Who is there among us who does not get discouraged? You may feel your hard work goes

unnoticed. You may think our family takes you for granted. Do your friends ignore your problems? We all have moments of melancholy and days of discouragement. The lesson here is that great faith is not always strong. That is not an excuse for weakness, but a recognition of it (Mt. 11:1-60. It's an acknowledgment that we all have feet of clay.

Take time to read I Kings 19: 1-18. Ask yourself, "Why was Elijah, great prophet that he was, discouraged?" The lessons may help you.

The Opposition Of Enemies (Vss. 1-2). Ahab and Jezebel had introduced Baal worship to Israel. God through Elijah had struck a decisive blow against it. Jezebel vowed retaliation against the prophet. Enemies are a presence even in the Christians life (Mt. 5:11, 44;

Jn. 15:18). They can find our weak points and with them as his instruments Satan can press hard against us for his own advantage.

Fear (Vss. 3, 10). Jezebel had promised to destroy Elijah and she meant business. Whether the threat was real or not, he thought so. She had already killed many of God's prophets (18:4). Sometimes we become downcast with fear: fear of persecution, fear of unpopular public opinion, fear of failure, fear of death, etc. The Christian should not be caught up in the grip of fear (2 Tim. 1:7, 1 Jn. 4:18).

Lack Of Support (Vs. 18). In times of the greatest degeneracy God had always had a faithful remnant. The faithful are few in comparison to the degenerate race. What are 7000 compared to the thousands of

Israel? What are a few compared to many? (Mt. 7:13-14). God strengthened

Elijah and is still the God of all comfort.

Most Of A Minute

I'm Married To An Angel

So what do you think about angels? I can hear the husbands now responding with a grin "What do I think about them? I'm married to one!"

A recent poll showed that 75% of Americans believe in angels. That's interesting, because it reflects a 22% increase since 1988.

The sad thing about it is that, like so many Biblical subjects, fact has been given up for fable, truth is traded for myth, and people don't really know what God's book says. For example, did you know that angels are always described as male, and not one time as female in the Bible? Did you know that Jesus said that angels are never married? Matt. 22:30 says, "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." Did you know that the Bible only names two of the angels, Gabriel and Michael?

In other words gentlemen, your wife may be as pretty as a flower and sweet as molasses, but she's no angel.

Glenn Colley

For Young Preachers

Johnny Ramsey

We all need help along the way as we live for Jesus and His great cause. Older preachers taught me valuable lessons when I began to proclaim the glad tidings. The challenge me to greater heights and deeper insights. Four decades later it is now my opportunity to pass on advice to young men who carry on under the banner of the cross!

Recently it was my privilege to address the graduating class at a School of Preaching. The subject was Balance For Preachers. Here were the major points we stressed

1. Look forward to heaven but pay your bills along the way.
2. Be loving and kind but never compromise Truth.
3. Put God first but never neglect your family.
4. Rebuke error but love the lost.
5. Point men to eternity but enjoy this life.

6. Be independent of brethren but grateful for them.

7. Be totally committed to Christ but never self-righteous.

8. Keep the church pure but love those who must be rebuked.

9. Remember that you are a preacher, not a policeman.

So many preachers have hurt the cause of the Lord by not paying their bills. To be honorable servants of God in any community we must take care of our debts. We are not special clergy demanding preferential treatment. Truth, proclaimed in love (Ephesians 4:15) should always be our goal. Caustic attitudes with unpleasant disposition does not advance the gospel. When we convey the concept that it is a joy to "peel the hide" and "skin the sectarians" we tend to forget that Paul "labored day and night with tears" (Acts 20). Preachers who do not pause to reflect upon their blessings

and who do not seem to enjoy being a Christian can be a detriment to the church of the Lord. If Paul could rejoice in prison (Philippians 4:4) because he was serving his Savior - surely we can!

"There is sunshine in my soul today and peace and hope and love. For blessings which he gives me now For joys laid up above."

Sadly, many preachers have neglected their families. God must come first in all of our lives but a brilliant divine arrangement is the home. Our responsibility to provide for wife and children is set forth in many Bible passages. While we are striving to save others we will desire to reserve time and interest so that our home can be a foretaste of glory divine. Children are an heritage from the Lord (Psalm 127:3) and we do not want to stand in Judgment as one failed to care deeply for the destiny of those in our trust. Though we dare not depend upon

brethren to the extent that we are compromised by their wishes or weaknesses should certainly express our sincere gratitude for their support and encouragement. Too many evangelists fail to say thank you often to those who sustain them financially, emotionally and prayerfully. Some young preachers demand so much and give so little in return.

Total commitment is scriptural teaching (Romans 12:1-2) but it must never produce self-righteous egotism in the soldiers of Christ. Serving Jesus was designed to make us humble and not arrogant (James 4:10). A "cocky" preacher is worthless. Let us glory in the cross (Galatians 6:14).

Sometimes, sadly, we despair when those who have heard us preach do not immediately put into practice what was taught. We tend to try to enforce our message. But, thankfully, God wants us to preach the Word and not

police the brotherhood! We can be deeply concerned when brethren refuse to follow divine precepts but remember: Even God does not force men to obey! He invites and implores and knocks at the door of men's hearts (Revelation 3:20) but He does not force entry and twist arms. Every soldier in the Lord's army is a volunteer.

There is no greater work a young man can do than to spread the good news. Both God and the brethren will enrich and bless your life. Every day be sure to count your many blessings, pray for wisdom and go forth valiantly to a lost and dying world with a optimistic heart, filled with love for the souls of men. Persist in this endeavor and, down yonder at the end of the way, you will have cause for no serious regret!

Are You Dressed Or Undressed

We would hope that everyone would agree that clothing is important. One just can't run around naked, can He? It must be granted, however that many come very close. Friend, from the beginning man has seen the necessity of clothing his physical person with garments of one sort or another (Genesis 3:7,21). GOD'S design from the beginning has been that man be modestly and appropriate attired. That divine design has not changed today, despite the fact that some people think it has. But isn't it of even more importance to be spiritually clothed? Sure it is! When one buys new clothes and begins wearing them he she sometimes feels and looks like a new man. We might even consider ourselves to have new status as we walk about dressed

anew. BUT when we clothe ourselves with Christ, we are new men (Romans 6:6,17-18; 2 Corinthians 5:17) and we do have a new status as the children or sons of GOD (Galatians 3:26-27; 4:4-5).

Maybe you are asking yourself, "How might I be clothed with Christ?" Dear friend, we are fortunate to have the Bible, so we do not have to guess at the answer to this question. The inspired penman, the apostle Paul, provides us with the answer in Galatians 3:26-27. Hear him out. *"For ye are all sons of GOD, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ"* (ASV) Paul here declares the value of baptism and says we "put on Christ" by being baptized into Christ. You may find it interesting (I hope you do) that the phrase "put on

Christ" may be rendered "clothe yourselves with Christ". Ralph Earle says of this language:

"The Greek verb is endyo. It is used most naturally of putting on clothing. This meaning occurs in the papyri. In modern Greek a similar verb form means 'dress'. Paul says that the believers 'have put on Christ.' Probably a better translation would be, 'Ye clothed yourselves with Christ'. [Word Meanings in the New Testament, 1991, p. 279]

What effect should this declaration of Paul concerning baptism have on the minds of Bible readers? Briefly stated, it should cause them to believe that baptism is necessary for salvation. And no one, dear friend, is in Christ until He has been baptized into Christ for the

remission of his sins (Acts 2:38). Baptism is representative of both death and life, the ending of an old relationship and the beginning of a new one (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Baptism in the New Testament was immersion in water. The word itself has the meaning of "dip" or "immerse". Joseph Henry Thayer in his Classic Lexicon has this to say about the Greek words Bapto, Baptisma, and Baptizo:

"to dip, dip in, immerse; immersion, submersion; to dip, submerge." [A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament, n.d., pp. 94-95]

Without taking the time to quote many other authorities available, let me add that the lexicons and dictionaries are unanimous in affirming this meaning of the word. It is evident then that nothing

short of immersion, such as sprinkling or pouring, will qualify as Bible baptism.

When one is baptized into Christ he puts on Christ, just as man puts on a coat. The practical meaning of this is to become Christ-like in every way. One becomes so identified with Christ that he is a new creature. Can you see the importance of baptism? I'm sure you can. Baptism is essential to your salvation and it cannot be neglected or changed in form. Without submitting to baptism you cannot put on Christ. So the question remains; "ARE YOU DRESSED OR UN-DRESSED?"

Mel Futrell
Daphne, AL

OCTOBER 6, 1995

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 - In A Hurry To Obey God
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 - They Will Not Inherit God's Kingdom`

Volume 32 Number 37
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

Identifying Christ's Church

Dalton key

The church of Christ of New Testament times was built by Christ (Matthew 16:18), saved and healed by Christ (Ephesians 5:25), and stood alone and unique as His body (Ephesians 1:22,23; 4:4).

Today's church, in order to be Christ's church, must be identical in fundamental and substantive particulars to that church about which we read in the New Testament. The

Bible provides no license for doctrinal mutilation or creed-based mutation of this divinely bought body.

The church of Christ was clearly identifiable and distinctive during ancient times. Imagine this: what if there had been a First Church of Apollos, teaching only the baptism of John (Acts 18:24-28)? Would this have been the church Jesus promised to build? Could His church have been distinguished from such

a group? What if there had been a Church of the Divine Circumcision, promoting Old Testament adherence and justification through obedience to Moses' law (Galatians 5:1-4)? Would this "church" have been confused with Christ's church? What about a Will-Worshipping Church, teaching "the rudiments of the world" (Colossians 2:20-23)? Could the church of Christ have been distinguished from

such?

The first century church of Christ was easily identifiable, and clearly unique, as a body which, among other factors, "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine..." (Acts 2:42). They realized that leaving or going beyond this teaching, which was tantamount to the doctrine of Christ, would result in their separation from the very God who had saved them (2 John 9). Thus, they spoke "as the

oracles of God," and "the things which (became) sound doctrine" (I Peter 4:11; Titus 2:1).

Can Christ's church be identified as His one body, and distinguished from other religious organizations, in the same manner today? If not, why not?

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Jacob

Jacob was six, maybe seven years of age. He was a handsome, blond headed little boy with seemingly endless energy. I was first introduced to Jacob when I noticed him "terrorizing" the other children as they entered the new play area at McDonalds.

I became even more acquainted with him over the next 45 minutes or so. You see, Jacob's mother must have called his name two dozen times or more urging him to "come on out" and "put on his shoes" because it was "time to go". Instead, Jacob would rush quickly back into the maze of tunnels

and slides, ignoring his mother all together.

Eventually his mother's pleas turned into threats with promises of punishment if he didn't obey. Still no response. In fact, I noticed that each new threat brought renewed vigor inside the play area. And nearly an hour later Mom was still waiting for Jacob to come on out.

Finally, mercifully, Jacob's mother, now red-faced, irritated, and obviously frazzled, walked over to the tunnel, and grabbed her son by the arm. I witnessed no discipline, no punishment, no nothing. Just Jacob - smiling

as he laced up his shoes.

That occasion at McDonalds brought to memory something I had read years ago in a very helpful book on parenting. While the book was written initially to fathers, the advice applies equally to mothers. Listen to what the author says:

"Effective [parents] practice CERTAIN sounds; they mean what they say. Delayed obedience is considered disobedience. The effective [parent] doesn't count to ten; he/she doesn't raise his/her voice; he/she doesn't repeat that which he/she is sure was heard the

first time. The request is made once in clarity and in certainty. No one has any doubt as to what the response should be...the first time."

That's biblical. The Bible teaches, "children obey your parents" (Ephesians 6:1). Of course, a seven-year-old will never obey until he is first trained to do so. And while empty threats and countless urgings have little or no effect, certain words, certain sounds, followed with loving, and yet firm discipline, (Proverbs 13:24), can work wonders.

As I think about it, I don't know who I feel sorry for the

most. The mother who is controlled and manipulated by her seven-year-old, or the seven-year-old who will undoubtedly learn one day, the hard way, the folly of an undisciplined life (Proverbs 1:8; 15:20; 19:26; 29:15; 30:17).

Mike Benson
Parsons, TN

I Gordon McDonald, "A Fountain of Life," The Effective Father, Tyndale, p.73.

*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;
and all these things shall be added unto you.
Matthew 6:33*

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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WHERE DO CHRISTIANS GROW BEST?

I remember as early as my childhood hearing preaching about the work of the church being divided into three major categories: Evangelism, benevolence, and edification. It is still valid. We are familiar with the meaning of evangelism, the taking of the Gospel to the lost; and we are familiar with what benevolence means, hearts and actions which care for those in need. But what do you know about edification? What exactly does it mean?

The Greek word for edify is *oikodomeo*. It is most often translated in the KJV "build", or "built". For example, when Jesus taught us about the wise and foolish men, He said, "Whoso heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house on the rock...". The word "built" in this verse is elsewhere translated "edify".

In Luke 12:18 Jesus taught the parable of the rich fool who used this word when he said, "I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones..." This is why we sometimes refer to a building as an "edifice."

Buildings are not the only things which are built up. Christians are built up or edified.

Paul wrote, "Rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught...", (Col. 2:7)." In II Corinthians 13:10 he wrote, "Therefore I write things...to edification, and not to destruction."

In what atmosphere do Christians grow best? In what atmosphere are we best edified?

Christians grow best in an atmosphere of Peace.

In Acts 9:31, after the wicked Christian-hater Saul had repented and been baptized, the Bible says, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified." Peace in the body of Christ is not more important than truth being taught and believed, and when truth is being challenged it must be defended (Jude 3). Sweet peace among brethren is often sacrificed in the process. No one enjoys that fact. Yet, if we forfeit truth in order to have peace, we will have a peaceful existence

which accomplishes little and profits nothing.

Having noted that, we should realize that peace is of great value. Christians need to be edified, and are edified or built up best in an atmosphere of peace in the church. Paul wrote in Romans 14:19, "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify one another."

Christians grow best in an atmosphere of Sound Doctrine.

A popular and grievous mistake is to believe that churches which aren't concerned about any doctrine over which there is some controversy, will grow better. It isn't true. Edification is not just found in socialization and pot lucks. It is more substantial than that. It is to speak and write and encourage one another with reference to right living and faith in the Lord. Paul wrote in I Timothy 1:3-4, "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables

and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith."

Christians grow best in an atmosphere of selflessness.

I Corinthians 14 is primarily known as a chapter about the miraculous ability to speak in tongues, and the will of the Lord regarding it during the time miracles were being practiced in the early church. But look at the chapter again. A strong argument can be made to support the idea that this is a chapter about edification! The word, or it's derivative, is used six times, (Verses 3, 4, 5, 12, 17, 26). Paul is making the point in this chapter that to preach or prophesy is much to be preferred over speaking in tongues because preaching/prophesying edifies the whole church, and speaking in tongues does not. Perhaps the one with the ability to speak in tongues would enjoy showing his great ability, but Paul maintains, "...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. 19). Edification occurs in an atmosphere of unselfishness.

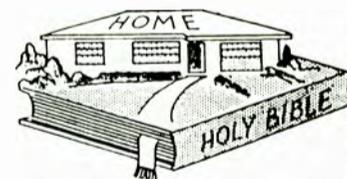
With reference to the eating of meat which had been sacrificed to idols, the apostle wrote, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not, (I Cor. 10:23)." While we might be prone to shout, "My rights! My rights!", Paul teaches that what is good for edifying our brothers and sisters in Christ is more important. This should be a governing consideration with all Christians as they make daily decisions. We must ask ourselves "Is this productive or counter-productive to edification in the Lord's church"?

May we all work in Christ's kingdom as those who deeply value the ability we have to edify one another

New Classroom Book By Glenn Colley

Out of concern for the problems now dividing so many churches. I have written a 13-lesson class book called, *Loose Change*. Cost is \$3.95 plus postage. There are discounts for classes which order. This book is great for teaching fundamentals and exposing some of the righteous changes being thrust upon Christians today by change "agents". *Loose Change* is suitable for mixed adult classes, ladies classes, teenage classes, etc.

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A Christian Just Like Paul (No. 3)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr

So far, note has been made of the setting of our text in Acts 26, the background of the king to whom Paul proclaimed the Christ and the first response to Paul's beautiful brand of Christianity--one who was a Christian in name. Relative to this last mentioned point Paul wore the name and encouraged others to wear it also. he did that which allowed him to wear this name of nobility. He did not usurp the name; he had Scriptural authorization from wearing it. Again, I raise the query and add another delightful insight--how was Paul a Christian?

HE WAS A CHRISTIAN IN FACT

This article and the subsequent one will explore this point in some detail as it is one of the most vital of the entire series. Cruciality is linked with this answer as we touch his conversion. Luke thought it was important enough that he, by the supervision of the Revealing Spirit of Holiness, dedicated Acts 9, 22 and 26 in it's depiction.

He became a Christian by his obedience to the gospel of

the Lord of glory--Jesus the Christ. The simple and yet sublime fact that he saw Jesus on the Damascus Road about noon one day did not make of him a Christian. Many saw Jesus with eyes and heard Him with ears who were NEVER His disciples. Some today claim they have seen a vision of Jesus or of an angel assuring them of salvation. Such is not so in either claim, but even if it were, this would not make of them Christians. A business man, knowing that I was a preacher, once told me how his daughter had been visited by an angel as she slept one night. He was absolutely positive that this was her blessed assurance of current redemption.

A preacher friend and I once taught rather thoroughly the gospel to a lady and we baptized her into Christ after the final study. Sometime later I visited her in the hospital. She told me how she had died there in the hospital and had been brought back to life. With total assurance she said this was the Lord's way of assuring her she had been saved. I thought we had taught her better than that but evidently we had not!

Paul never based his

salvation upon anything close of kin to the foregoing. He did not make a decision for Christ and leave out one, two three or four of pardon's stipulations. He did not become a Christian by "faith only," "grace only" or any other only "ism." He did not sign a pledge card giving himself to the Lord or raise his hand that he wished to be saved at a given signal from some high-powered preacher thriving on raw emotionalism with objective truth significantly absent.

He did not bow and touch a radio or TV set as people are now encouraged to do by the mega media preachers of our emotionally charged era. There were no radios or TV sets between Jerusalem and Syria in Paul's day!! He did not turn on the headlights of an automobile in order to signify his desire to be saved as occurred in a northern capital city in the early 1970's. Some religious people went together and rented an outdoor theater for a religious crusade. They brought to town a high-powered preacher. When he was ready to extend HIS invitation one night, not the Lord's, he told people in their cars to turn on

their headlights when he gave the signal if they desired salvation right there in their automobiles! I went to that same city a short time later to preach in a gospel meeting and brethren informed me of this cheap evangelistic strategy. My initial response was, "Here I have been preaching on conversions in Acts all these years, every single one of them time and time again, and yet I have never seen any headlight conversions in Luke's second treatise of truth!" We had a radio preacher in Tennessee some years back who appeared on his program telling his audience that Saul was saved between the time he fell from his stallion and before he hit the Syrian ground. Maybe that preacher owned a copy of Bratcher's Good News For Modern Man which has a line drawing in Acts 9 portraying that very thing. Such ridiculousness caused one of our knowledgeable preachers to quip, "Have I been reading Acts 9 all these years and missed a thing in that chapter as big as a horse?" No horse is mentioned in the chapter. Even if Saul traveling by such, he was not saved in mid

air between the back of a horse and an impact on Syrian ground. When prostrate on the ground Saul had to inquire of the identity of the one appearing to him as per Acts 9:4,5.

Paul did not become a Christian by simply receiving some literature, having a prayer prayed over him and returning to his friends in the stadium as millions are now encouraged to do "a la Grahamism." Neither the Lord on the road nor Ananias in Damascus told him to pray the sinner's prayer, "Lord, come into my heart and save me" as millions are told to do today. He was not saved by pulling over to the side of the Damascus road and asking the Lord to save him right there and then. He was not saved on the back pew of a church building as one man claimed for his moment of salvation or pardon.

Any or all of the foregoing in aggregate would have been repulsive to sincere and sensitive Saul in his holy quest for salvation in the Saviour.

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"With My Luck..."

Keith Kasarjian

I've heard that expression all my life. In an effort to complain about how bad their luck was, a person would say, "With my luck...I would never get that kind of a break" or "With my luck... that (something bad) will probably happen to me." I used to talk like that until I began to think about my "luck".

With my luck, I was born into a Christian home in the greatest country the world has ever seen. With my luck, my parents loved me, provided for me, and showed me a godly example. As luck would have it, I had a happy and healthy childhood. I was able to go to good schools and receive an education most people in the world could only dream about. With my luck, I was able to go to a Christian college and be

associated with the finest teachers and fellow students one could ever know. While in college I met a terrific Christian lady, we fell in love and got married. Together we have had opportunities to work with congregations that loved us and treated us right. We have a beautiful, healthy daughter and another child on the way. With my luck...I have never lost my health, been without any money, or even gone hungry. Now you understand why I no longer say, "With my luck..."

What I suspect is that those who do say "With my luck" have been blessed much like I have been. Why would they have such an attitude? The world is negative, pessimistic, and unthankful. Christians must be different! The Bible commands us "in everything

give thanks". (1 Thess. 5:18) The Israelites grumbled all the way from Egypt to Canaan. I can hear the ungrateful Israelites now. "With my luck...I'll never get as much manna as that guy". Still another says, "With my luck...I wasn't allowed to just die in Egypt".

We need to watch our attitude. Many today grumble from the cradle to the grave. What are we complaining about? What are we bemoaning? How is it that life is so hard on us? Regardless of our circumstances, we have much to be thankful for. May we never take for granted the blessings God has given each of us.

With my luck...I thank God every day!

100 W. Brooks St.

Most Of A Minute

IN A HURRY TO OBEY GOD

We live such rushed lives. One man observed that he lives his life like an ambulance -- always speeding from one emergency to another, sirens blaring, lights flashing. Those of us who live busy, hurried lives enjoy quite times when things slow down.

Can you think of the command of God which people wanted to do in a hurry? The answer may surprise you. It was the command to be baptized. Although people and churches sometimes put it off, baptism was something in the New Testament which was to be done right away. In Acts 16, the Philippian Jailor was taken "the same hour of the night" and was baptized. In Acts 22:16 Ananias said to the penitent Saul, "And now why tarryest thou? (Or, what are you waiting for?) Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins..." In Acts 8 the man known as the Ethiopian said to his teacher Phillip, "What hinders me to be baptized?" He was told that if he believed he could be baptized right then. He said, "stop the chariot!"

Why would people be in a hurry to be baptized? Simple: They knew it was for the forgiveness of their sins, and they desperately wanted forgiveness.

Glenn Colley

Basic Rules For Effective Bible Study

Guy N. Woods

(The following is an excerpt from "How To Study the New Testament Effectively" by the late Brother Guy N. Woods. It is reprinted here because of its great practical value to all who would have greater knowledge of GOD. The apostle John said, "And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments," 1 John 2:3. I know you will enjoy it and benefit from it--Mel Futrell)

We should recognize in the outset of this effort that there is a great deal of difference between reading and study. True, one cannot study without reading; but one may certainly read without studying; and, unfortunately, this is the extent of what most people today do. We would be far--very far--from discouraging any one in reading the New Testament devotionally; all of us ought daily to read a portion thereof for the spiritual sustenance it provides and for the elevation

of spirituality it produces; but, it is a fact that one may read devotionally for a lifetime and never acquire an in-depth knowledge of the sacred text.

Much of that which goes under the guise of study is far short of it. Our eyes may move along the page and the words pass one by one through our minds with little or no residual benefit. When the book is closed or the speech to which we have listened is over, we are able to recall but little or nothing of that which we have read or heard. This, though common, is unprofitable, and may not be properly classified as learning from study at all.

A second level is that in which we clearly apprehend that which we have read or heard; and we conclude that we have indeed mastered the matter; but, tomorrow, or next week, when we attempt to recall these things earlier considered, we discover that they are no longer with us. We then understood that with

which we were interested but did not retain it in memory. Why this occurs we shall determine later. It is sufficient for our purpose at the moment to note that this level of "study" may not properly be classified as learning.

The highest, and really the only true level of learning is that in which we not only fully understand that which we have heard or read, but we are able to recall it with ease thereafter. This is the litmus test of all learning: the ability to recall the details later.

There are one hundred and four weeks in two years. Approximately one half of the subject matter of the New Testament--about one hundred chapters--was written by Paul, apostle to the Gentiles. One with only average intelligence and no more than a grammar school education, by following the simple system of inductive study now to be considered, and by devoting fifteen minutes a day to the effort, may become familiar with a

chapter a week, in which case, half of the New Testament will have been mastered in two years.

But, suppose it takes twice as long--four years--and to this let us add one more year for good measure--five years--the student will have become familiar with every word of half of the New Testament in five years by devoting only fifteen minutes a day to the effort. Five more years of fifteen minutes a day in the other half of the book and one will have become familiar with every word in the New Testament in ten years.

What an easy and enjoyable effort it becomes using this method of study to the enrichment of our own minds and hearts and to the acquisition of the ability to introduce others to the Way of Salvation! What a small price to pay for the wisdom we are able thus to obtain for ourselves and the power thus acquired to assist others to find the way to heaven! Is it possible that any reader of

these lines is unwilling or unable to give this much time to the study of the message of the Cross and the story of Redemption? The possibility is surely well within the reach of us all. Arise fifteen minutes earlier; take fifteen during the day from some task not important or claim for this a few moments otherwise wasted and acquire and use this inestimable blessing of knowing thoroughly the divine will and the wonderful privilege of being able to teach it to others.

Three steps are absolutely essential to the implementation of this system of study:

- 1) One must study regularly--fifteen minutes every day.
- 2) This study must be done under strict conditioned circumstances.
- 3) One must have and use the basic books necessary to such study.

They Will Not Inherit God's Kingdom

Once upon a time not so long ago our society had a healthy respect for the God-ordained differences between men and women. Perhaps it sprang from a knowledge of God's word: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:27). It also had a healthy disdain for any form of sexual perversion: fornication, adultery, and homosexuality. These were not even discussed in "mixed company", and if mentioned, done with shame and disgust.

But times have changed. Now television and Hollywood seek to glorify that which does not glorify God. It started out a few

years ago when smutty jokes and nudity began to appear on the screen. But that was not enough. Soon homosexual characters began to appear in comical yet likable roles. Now the homosexual lifestyle is being promoted in the movies and on television as an "alternative lifestyle". And anyone who objects is accused of bigotry and called a "homophobe".

Hollywood's latest attempt to "educate" the American public in **Sexual perversion** is a comedy entitled, "To Wong Foo, Thanks For Everything, Julie Newmar". It is about three homosexual men who travel to California by car wearing women's clothes. They are

"transvestites" or a persons who derive sexual pleasure from dressing in the clothes of the opposite sex (Webster's Unabridged Dictionary). They are stranded in a small town and go about humorously solving everyone's problems. Using humor the director of this movie seeks to wear down society's traditional values and blur the distinction between the sexes.

Solomon said it best almost 3,000 years ago, "there is no new thing under the sun" (Eccl. 1:9). **Five hundred years** earlier the lawgiver, Moses, had recorded that to God it was an "abomination" for someone to practice transvestitism (Deut. 22:5). An abomination

is something which is disgusting to God. In antiquity this perversion was usually associated with sodomites, the male cult prostitutes which were part and parcel with idolatry. The Old Covenant not only forbade such practices but punished the practitioner with death by stoning (Deut. 17:2-5).

We are not under the Law of Moses today (Col. 2:14). But the **abhorrence** of immorality and perversion is just as strong under the New Covenant. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, strongly condemns homosexual behavior as "unclean" and a dishonoring of one's God-given body (Rom. 1:24-32).

He wrote that "it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" (Eph. 5:12). While not referring to transvestites directly he does refer to the "effeminate" as part of the "unrighteous" who "shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 6:9). The only hope of salvation for such individuals is the cleansing blood of Christ gained by obedience to the gospel (I Cor. 6:11; Rom. 1:16).

Roelf L. Ruffner
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The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction

Proverbs 1:7

OCTOBER 13, 1995

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- When You Feel Like Ahaziah's Third Captain

Volume 32 Number 38
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

the

A Christian Just Like Paul (No. 4)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Paul was a Christian in name; he also was a Christian in fact. In the previous article I covered this latter point from a negative angle. In this article we shall be looking at it from a positive position of practicality. This matter will be covered in both a general way and then more specifically.

Paul became a Christian by being born again or born of water and the Spirit. Jesus told Nicodemus, his night visitor in Jerusalem, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God...Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God...Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3: 3, 5, 7). He became a Christian by being "obedient to the faith" as were Jerusalem priests in Acts 6:7. He became a Christian by doing as he later would tell the Roman saints, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but

ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:17,18). Just as Christ died, was buried and was raised, they duplicated that in dying to sin, being buried in water and then in being raised to walk in newness of life (Cf. Romans 6:3-5). He became a Christian by obeying the gospel.

He was not one of such he would later describe in Romans 10:16, "But they have not all obeyed the gospel." He had obeyed it and promptly as we see in Acts 9,22,26. He became a Christian by doing what the Colossians had done and to which Paul alluded in Colossians 1:13-14, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins..." Paul became a Christian by being added to the church of the

Lord as were obedient believers in Acts 2:47, "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Paul became a Christian by being added to the Lord as were those in Acts 5:14, "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women."

But can we be sure specifically just how (Paul or Saul) became a Christian? Incidentally, I am of the strong persuasion that he had both names from birth--Saul his Hebrew name and Paul his Roman or Greek appellation. The gospel plan of pardon is intently inclusive of hearing, faith, repentance, confession of Christ and immersion in water for or unto remission of sins (Romans 10:17; Matthew 17:5; Acts 16:31; 17:30; Romans 10:9,10; Acts 2:38). Was Paul submissive to all these requirements? Indeed he was and I now produce Scriptural proof and logic in affirmation of the same.

There is no doubt about his hearing the truth. He heard the crystal/clear instructions of Jesus in Acts 9; he heard what Ananias told him in Acts 22:13-16. There is no doubt that he believed; he did what the Lord told him to do; he did not quibble about any instructions given him by the Lord of glory and later Ananias. In the next place Ananias would not have immersed in water an unbeliever. Ananias had too much respect for the great Commission than to do such an unauthorized act. There is no doubt that he repented. Three days of misery spent in total fasting and the fact that he did not do in Damascus what he went there to do (Acts 9:1ff) combine to prove his heartfelt penitence. Furthermore, Ananias would not have immersed an impenitent person. The Great Commission forbade such, Luke 24:47. There is no doubt about his confessing Christ. Recall that he said as firm faith blossomed in his now moved heart, "LORD, what wilt thou have me to

do?" (Acts 9:6). The precious parallel in Acts 22:10 reads, "What shall I do, Lord?" Paul, years later, would write Roman saints to the effect that "confession is made unto salvation" (10:10). Since confession of Christ stands between the alien and pardon, and Paul surely was pardoned in Damascus, then it is cogently logical that he must have confessed his faith in the Christ. Minus such he would have remained unsaved. Absolutely no doubt exists relative to his baptism. In Acts 22:16 the God-sent Ananias commanded him to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." His response is stated with crystal clarity as he "arose, and was baptized" (Acts 9:18).

His conversion was real and genuine. No pretense accompanied it at all!

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But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captian of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Hebrews 2:9-10

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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The Seven Baptisms In The Bible

The apostle wrote in Ephesians 4:4, "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."

Consider that at the time of this writing, Paul taught that there was an important sense in which there is only one baptism. Only one. He didn't say there was one baptism, past tense, but that there is one baptism. That is very interesting when one considers all the different baptisms in the Bible, and all the different baptisms being openly practiced today. Just what is the one baptism? Since it is included in a list of eternally important persons and things, we would naturally assume that the one baptism is very important to understand. Let's examine the seven different baptisms in the Bible.

1. THE BAPTISM UNTO MOSES

Although this occurrence is not called baptism in the Old

Testament where the incident transpired, it is called baptism in the New Testament. "Moreover, brethren, I would not have you to be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, (I Cor. 10:1,2)." This passage has reference to the deliverance of Israel out of Egyptian bondage as they crossed the Red Sea in Exodus 14. Remember that baptism means immersion. The Israelites were immersed in the dual element of the cloud overhead, and the walls of the sea on either side. This occurrence of the word baptism is symbolic and not literal. This is obviously not the one baptism of which Paul spoke in Ephesians 4.

2. THE BAPTISM OF FIRE

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear. He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire, whose fan is in His hand, and He will

thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire, (Matt. 3:11-12)." What is the baptism of fire? Consider the obvious facts: It was administered by Christ, not man. The fire was destructive, not purifying (as in passages like I Peter 1:3-7). It will occur when the Lord gathers His "wheat" and separates it from the "chaff". See that this passage is very similar to the judgement scene in Matthew 25:31-46. The Lord will face all nations, and separate people one from another as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. The righteous will go into life eternal, but the unrighteous into everlasting destruction. The destruction is hell, and it is clearly a place of fire. Jude 23 says, "...others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire..."

The baptism of fire refers to the future fiery immersion in torment reserved for the lost. II Thessalonians 1:7 says, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus

shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power, when He shall come to be glorified in his saints..." Surely there cannot be a thought as sobering or frightening as of hell fire. Luke 16 graphically states that the rich man lifted up his eyes in torment.

As our continued study will demonstrate, the baptism of fire is not the one baptism of which Paul wrote in Ephesians 4.

3. THE BAPTISM OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear...(Matt 3:11)." John the baptist, or baptizer, prepared the way for the Lord. He was the forerunner of Christ.

People considering John's

baptism should familiarize themselves with these facts:

A. This was baptism of repentance unto remission of sins. "As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, (Mark 1:2-4)."

B. This baptism pointed forward to the coming of Christ, and to His baptism.

C. After Pentecost (Acts 2), anyone baptized by John's baptism had to be baptized again in the name of Christ, Acts 19:1-5.

Since John's baptism is no longer valid, it cannot be argued that John's baptism is the one baptism discussed in Ephesians 4.

Next week's editorial will continue this study of the seven baptisms in the Bible.

Glenn Colley

Remember - The Special Heart

Celine Sparks

She painted a picture;
 She showed it to you.
 You kept washing plates
 There were TWO stacks to do!

She spotted the puppy
 And said, "Oh, can I pet her?"
 You said, "Put her down!
 You'll get hair on your sweater!"

"May I have a quarter
 to put in the plate?"
 "Tie your shoe. Hurry!
 We're all running late!"

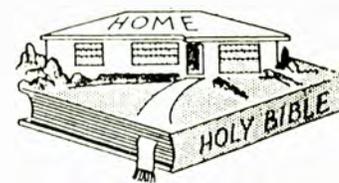
While shoes and dishes
 and sweaters are tended,
 And floors are vacuumed
 And recipes blended,

Her heart feels a sting
 Like the stick of a pin.
 It's not very big, but
 Oh, there it is again!

And that's why I'm here,
 Just a heart made of cotton,
 And fabric and stitches
 And one little button.

My heart is perfect
 For needles and pins,
 But hers is for love
 And laughter and grins!

*Ladies, here's a super favor
 for your next ladies day.
 Just pin this poem to a
 heart-shaped pin cushion
 and you're sure to get the
 "point" across!*



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Double Honor

Guy F. Hester

The apostle Paul wrote in I Timothy 5:17, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine."

When we examine the context of this passage the obvious meaning is that an elder may be paid by the church. It is just as scriptural for an elder who devotes his entire time to laboring "in the word and doctrine," to be paid as it is for a preacher to be paid for "full time" work in "the word and doctrine." The next verse says, "For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his

reward" (I Tim. 5:18).

However, I believe that we can, without doing violence to the actual meaning of this expression, use the term "double honor" to illustrate some of the reasons why Godly elders are worthy of a double portion of our honor and respect.

Elders are worthy of "double honor" because they are always under a "double light." The spotlight is always on them. Elders and their families live in "glass houses." They are always under observation by members and non-members alike, hoping to find some flaw that they can pick and criticize. We are instructed: "Against an elder receive not

an accusation, but before two or three witness" (I Tim. 5:19). Many are they who would not hesitate to fabricate a lie if they thought they could destroy the influence of one who serves in the eldership.

Elders are worthy of "double honor" because of the "double standard" that many have set for them. It is just as much the responsibility of every member to "Live soberly, righteously and godly" as it is the elders. Every qualification of an elder applies with equal force to any Christian with the exception that an elder must be a man (male) of mature years who is not a new convert, must be married

and have believing children.

Elders are worthy of "double honor" because of the "double portion" of their time that they must devote to the work of the church. While others are relaxing with family, socializing with friends or sleeping; the elders are planning the work of the church, working on budgets, trying to restore wayward church members, praying over church problems, not to mention the sleepless nights because of the worry and concern they have for "the flock of God" that has been entrusted to their care and keeping.

Elders are worthy of "double honor" because of their "double

accountability." They must give an account of their own souls as well as the souls of those who are under their oversight and care. "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" (Heb. 13:17).

Thank God for godly elders! Let us pray for them, hold up their hands and do all that we can to make their task easy and their burden light.

Let us give them the honor and respect that they deserve.

Your Heart

Dalton Key

Your heart is a wonder. This marvelous muscle, about the size of your fist, beats an average of 72 times a minute as it pumps life-giving blood throughout the body. Those 72 beats per minute become almost 37 million beats in a year's time and a whopping 2.6 billion beats in a life of threescore and ten years. Your health - your very life - depends upon the monotonous regularity of these slightly more than one a second pulsations. A few

observations:

1. Such intricate working suggest divine workmanship. the Psalmist proclaimed, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well" (Psalm 139:14).

2. The heart is content to pulsate one beat at a time. Were it more like it's owner, it might literally worry itself to death over the prospect of beating millions of times over the coming years with no

vacation and without fail. Just think of the tremendous responsibility! Life hangs in the balance! And yet the heart does not anxiously concern itself with the responsibilities of next week or next year; it takes life one beat at a time. Jesus taught, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:34).

3. The heart is content to pump blood. It does not envy

the brain for thinking, the eyes for seeing, or the ears for hearing. The heart does not threaten to strike because of its dark and damp working environment. It just keeps on pumping, doing what it does best, and seems content to do no more. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one

of another" (Romans 12:4-5).

Yes, take a few moments to consider your physical heart. You just might learn something. And while you're at it, you might as well examine your spiritual heart as well. It will be with you a lot longer. And remember, "A sound heart is the life of the flesh" (Proverbs 14:30).

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Most Of A Minute

Gambler's Grace

Recently a Dothan Alabama newspaper ran an article about Pat McGregor, wife of the infamous gambling tycoon Milton McGregor. You'll perhaps remember that it is Mr. McGregor who has poured mega dollars into politics in hopes of legalizing casino gambling.

But the article was about Mrs. McGregor, and how she was dealing with all this spiritually. "For years", she said, "I thought Milton was sending us all straight to hell." But after Bible study and reflection she saw things differently. She quoted the Bible: "Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds. There is a lot more grace in Las Vegas than there is in Montgomery, Alabama. When you know the Lord's grace you know the Lord."

This is common but foolish misunderstanding about God's grace. It says, "I can continue in sin. In fact, it's beneficial in one way. The more sin there is, the more grace there is. God, give us more grace!" This idea couldn't be farther from the truth of the Bible. Mrs. McGregor may not know it, but she has seriously misused the Holy Scriptures. Two verses after the one she quoted we read, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid, (Romans 6:1)."

Titus 2:11 says about grace, "The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men; teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

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When You Feel Like Ahaziah's Third Captain

Neal Pollard

It all began when Israel's idolatrous king fell in his upper chamber in the royal dwelling of the nation's capital. Superstitiously, he sent men to "enquire of Baalzebub, ["Lord of the Flies"], "the god of Ekron," as to whether he would recover or not. The angel of the Lord alerted God's man from Tishbite, Elijah, to the situation. When Elijah intercepted the messengers, he sent them back to Ahaziah to rebuke him and foretell his certain death.

When Ahaziah ascertained the prophet was Elijah, he sent a captain with fifty men to retrieve him. "...Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty" (2 Kings 1:10). An insistent second captain and his fifty were likewise destroyed (cf. 2 Kings 1:11-13). Apparently undaunted by the first two episodes, Ahaziah sent a *third* captain and his fifty men (cf. 2 Kings 1:13).

At this point, one might do well to examine the function and responsibility of these captains. Though the monarch was wicked, the army still fought under the banner of Israel. They were still God's people, though their Sovereign was about to disown them with the arm of captivity. And, even as the whole of her people was immoral, there were still good people in Israel (cf. 1 Kings 19:18). Each of these captains might have been wicked, too. The first two, no doubt, showed no respect for Elijah and had seemingly little for the God he represented. The captains were given an order by his superior, and they were disposed to obey.

One wonders how

enthusiastic the third captain could have been about the king's order to him. After all, with words Elijah had slain 102 men who came to "bring him in" to Ahaziah. The captain faced death if he disobeyed his king. He faced death if he went up to Elijah. One might say, "He should have taken the chance of dying by refusing the King's order." That would have been the ideal response (cf. Acts 5:29-31). Yet, without benefit of being in that dilemma, most could not truly say how they would, but rather how they would hope, to respond.

One cannot help but think of a fallen brother or sister in Christ who has followed the directive of the dictator of darkness by succumbing to temptation. Facing God and brethren after doing something contrary to His will, knowing of how others' lives were destroyed by similar circumstances and unsure of how fellow-Christians might react, would fill one with dread. Perhaps many circumstances in life parallel the problem faced by the third captain. The unfolded events of the future can cause such dismay. The worries of life might leave one with the panic of what might be. So often, life can bring us to our knees. Consternation is a conqueror!

Can we not relate to what the third captain does when he gets to Elijah? He "fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight. Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties: therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight" (2 Kings 1:13b-14).

Thus, the choruses of "what am I going to do?" "how can I face up to this?" "there's no way out!" fill the air in the choir of the

unnerved. Like the captain, we can find ourselves in situations that are not merely worries but seeming inevitabilities. What can we do in times of fearfulness?

The third captain was not too proud to be humble! He was not too distrustful to throw himself before the mercy of both the prophet and his God. The man was not so confident that he could not hide in the rock of faith.

With the help of the angel of the Lord, the captain and his men were spared. Whether he was righteous man thereafter, Inspiration does not say. Did he go on to faithfully follow God's law? Only eternity will reveal it. Life has multiple valleys of dread. We will come to what seems the end of our rope more than once. Even the ungodly will turn to God in crisis. But after the tempests are calmed, most of them forget whatever pledges they made in despair. What should distinguish Christians from non-Christians is that children of God turn to him regularly, do not make vain promises in the valleys of life, and rest their confidence in Him to deliver them from the most imposing perils.

When life undoes us, let us lean on God for repose. **Plus** magazine tells the following true story:

"Horatio G. Spafford, a successful Chicago lawyer, lost most of his wealth in the financial crisis of 1873. He sent his wife and four daughters on a trip to France, but on their way, their ship was struck by another, and sank. Of 225 passengers, only 87 of them survived.

Mrs. Spafford was among the survivors, but the four daughters perished. As soon as she reached land, she telegraphed to her husband: "Saved alone. Children lost. What shall I do?"

Spafford left for France to join his wife and return her to Chicago. In the depth of this

bereavement, he wrote his only hymn: **It is Well With My Soul.** Perhaps the words of the first stanza will take on new meaning for you, as you ponder them:

When peace, like a river,
attendeth my way,

When sorrow like sea
billow roll;
Whatever my lot,
Thou hast taught me to say,
"It is well, it is well
with my soul."
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- The Seven Baptisms Of The Bible, Part 2
- A Christian Just Like Paul (5)
- Redeem, Redeemer, Redemption!
- A More Important Message
 - Happy In Denver
- God Is On The Throne Not On Stage

Volume 32 Number 39
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The Words Of Truth

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

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Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery

W.A. Holley

Adultery is a very serious sin. In God's list of "Thou shalt nots," It is put next to murder. Cast a penetrating eye on the Lord's ten commandments (Exodus 20:1-17). All these commandments are repeated in the New Testament with the exception of sabbath-keeping (Colossians 2:14-17). Under New Testament law the first day of the week is "the Lord's day" (Revelation 1:10; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Acts 20:7).

What is adultery? Jesus declared that remarriage of a divorced man or woman to be adultery (Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18). Matthew 5:27-28 teaches that Jesus even takes into account the roving eye: "...Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Thus, the sin of adultery lies deeper than the overt act. Hence, any sexual experience outside of marriage is adultery.

Why is adultery wrong? It is wrong because God says it is wrong. Adultery hurts many innocent people. Because of adultery many children never have their real Mamas and Daddies. Don't think these kids do not know it! Much of the agony, pain, suffering and anguish is caused by adultery. One of the better examples can be learned from the outrageous behaviour of David, the King.

David took another man's wife, had her husband killed, and lived under the cloud of misfortune for the remainder of his life (II Samuel 12:9-14). He wrote, "For I know my transgression; and my sin is ever before me" (Psalm 51:3, ASV).

Another reason why adultery is wrong is because it destroys the sanctity of marriage as ordered by the God of the universe. "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). Jesus taught: "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6). Modern society should understand that marriage is the fundamental principle upon which it is built.

Men and women can find all kinds of excuses justifying the second, the third, or more, marriages. Marriage has become a sort of a game. Recently, one man claimed he had been married more than forty times. Seated by his side was a woman who claimed she was engaged to him. Those who obtain an unscriptural divorce and marry the second time are simply doing wrong with a license. It is argued by some that divorced and remarried people cannot live in sin, but your Bible teaches differently: "Wherein ye also once walked, when ye lived in these things" (Colossians 3: 5-11). Read the entire context. The conduct, the

course, and character of men can be good or evil. We make the choice. The high divorce rate seems to indicate that the modern girl cannot make up her mind whether to have a man for a hubby or a hobby.

For any marriage to succeed there must be two things present: (1) There must be a solid affection, a love that is different, a love for each other entirely different from the love for any one else. (2) There must be complete trust in each other. Adultery destroys both these factors.

Jesus said, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matthew 19:9). Here Christ allows divorce and remarriage only for the innocent person whose companion has committed fornication. Fornication is a general term for all forms of sinful sexual conduct. Thus, to divorce and remarry for any other reason is to enter an adulterous relationship.

Whether we approve or disapprove the modern approach to marriage, divorce and remarriage is filling the church with those members who have divorced and remarried numerous times. Almost every family has been shaken by this trend. The elders have difficulty dealing with the problem. Gospel preachers sometimes refuse to discuss the subject.

People change churches looking for a place where they will not be forced to hear what they do not want to hear. As an example: We had a young man attending the services where I preached. One day I saw him on the street. I told him that were missing him attending our services. His reply was, "I don't like your kind of preaching. I don't wish to listen to your condemn my way of living: I will not be back."

But friends, the truth is the truth, whether we like it or not. One can know the truth (John 8:32). "The truth of the gospel" is available (Galatians 2:5). God's word has absolute force (John 14:6; 17:17; 18:37-38;). Ephesians 4:21, reads as follows: "As the truth is in Jesus."

Should one be living in an unscriptural relationship, what can be done about it? Such a one must repent of his sins (Luke 13:3-5; 17:3-4; II Peter 3:9). To repent means to stop, turn around, go in the opposite direction. One cannot repent of sin and go on living in it. Here is an illustration: Suppose I want a New Cadillac but I don't have the money to buy it. I steal one, bring it home and store it in my garage. I then go and be baptized for the remission of sins? How long can I keep the car?? If I repent of my sin for stealing the car, I will have to take the car back. I cannot keep the car.

Those who are determined to have their way can justify,

vindicate, palliate or condone almost anything. After a time one's conscience doesn't bother him any more. "But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded (seared, KJV) in their own conscience as with a hot iron" (I Timothy 4:1-2, ASV). Cf. Ephesians 4:17-20.

Adultery is wrong because it destroys marriage. Think of the promises which were made to each other. Sacred then, but now broken. Keep yourself to him; to her, for as long as we both shall live upon the earth.

One of the sweetest and most consoling statements concerning human relationships is found in the book of Ruth.

*"Entreat not to leave me,
And to return from following
after thee,
For wither thou goest, I will
go,
And where thou lodgest, I
will lodge.
Thy people shall be my
people,
And thy God my God.
Where thou diest, will I die,
And there will I be buried:
Jehovah do so to me, and ore
also,
If ought but death shall part
thee and me." (Ruth 1:16-
17).*

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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The Seven Baptisms Of The Bible, Part 2

Today we continue our series on the various baptisms of the Bible. In the previous article we considered three, the baptism unto Moses, the baptism of fire, and the baptism of John the baptist. If for some reason you did not receive part one, please write for a free copy.

4-5. TWO BAPTISMS FOR JESUS

Have you considered that there are two baptisms which were experienced by the Christ? The first, and most obvious, is in Matthew 3:13-17. Here Jesus persuades a hesitant John the baptist to immerse Him. John reacted to the request as perhaps we would. How could a sinful, fallible, mortal man assist God in such an action; an action which portrayed humility to God!

This baptism was not for the remission of sins. Jesus had no sin to forgive. "For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, (1 Pet. 2:22)." The baptism of Christ, in his own words was "to fulfill all righteousness, (Matt 3:15)." This simply means that Jesus was baptized to fulfill every righteous command. The Psalmist observed, "All Thy commandments are righteousness, (Psa. 119:172)."

The second baptism in which Jesus participated was the baptism of suffering. Consider Luke 12:50: "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" The explanation of this baptism is found in Matthew 20:20-23:

Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said

unto her, 'What wilt thou?' She saith unto him, 'Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.' But Jesus answered and said, 'Ye know 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.' And he saith unto them, 'Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.'

The baptism here is the immersion in suffering awaiting Jesus on that old rugged cross. 'Oh My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me, nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt, (Matt 26:39).' What an amazing and unsettling description of the cross! Sometimes people today in the last stages of bone cancer, or those whose bodies have been severely burned, are immersed in suffering. We are thankful for modern drugs which relieve so much suffering in our world, and yet Jesus was willing to quietly step into the pool of pain and submit to the world's meanest baptism.

6. THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

How many books and how many sermons have been preached on this subject. And yet, how much of the religious world is wrapped in false, manufactured, spiritualism based on a misunderstanding of this important baptism. Hopefully these few paragraphs will help their reader to carefully consider some helpful logic.

Three passages which

discuss this baptism are Matthew 3:11-12, Acts 1:5, and Acts 10:16-17:

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the holy Ghost, and with fire; Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire, (Matt. 3:11-12)."

"For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence, (Acts 1:5)."

"Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. For as much then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? (Acts 11:16-17)."

To baptize means to plunge; to dip; to immerse. Keep in mind that Jesus promised the Apostles that he would send the Comforter to them, the Holy Spirit. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you, (John 14:26)." "But when the Comforter is come, whom will I send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of Me, (John 15:26)." "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak;

and he will show you things to come, (John 16:13)."

Pentecost came. The apostles were "filled with the Holy Spirit", Acts 2:4, and thus immersed in his power. This power enabled them to perform miracles, and to lay hands on others in order to impart various gifts, (Acts 8:17)."

Now ask, could this baptism of the Holy Spirit be the one baptism spoken of by Paul in Ephesians 4? No indeed. Consider please, that the baptism of the Holy Spirit couldn't be the one baptism for these reasons:

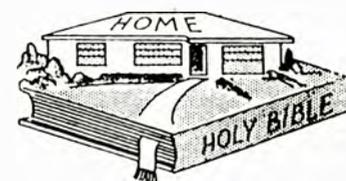
A. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was a promise, not a command. The baptism taught after this time, (Acts 2:38; Acts 10:48; Acts 22:16), was a command. There is a world of difference between something promised, and instruction commanded.

B. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was administered by Christ. The baptism commanded later was administered by men, (i.e.

Acts 8:38).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit that was given to the apostles is never given again in the New Testament with the same power. Although it is said in Acts 10:47-48 and Acts 11:17 that the house of Cornelius was given a "like gift", it clearly was not alike in all ways. For example, Cornelius couldn't transfer the gifts to others as could the apostles. Furthermore, what happened to the house of Cornelius regarding the Holy Spirit was followed by this: "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord, (Acts 10:48)." Whatever may be one's opinions with reference to the house of Cornelius, this is inescapably clear: All that was done by humans and by God led to water baptism by the authority of the Lord.

Glenn Colley



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A Christian Just Like Paul (5)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

For the sake of Scriptural emphasis I repeat again the six verses in the latter part of Acts 26 which serve as a Biblical foundation for this needed study, this practical contemplation of Paul as an example for us (Cf. I Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17). Luke wrote in Acts 26:24-29, "And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I

would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."

To date we have considered Paul as a Christian in name and in fact. Again, I ask, How was Paul a Christian?

HE WAS A CHRISTIAN ON LOCATION

He became a Christian in Damascus of Syria as per Acts 9,22,26. Subsequent to that he went into Arabia for a brief period of time and made a return trip to Damascus (Galatians 1:17). From there he went to Jerusalem, on to Caesarea and then to Tarsus, his home area (Acts 9:26-30). From Tarsus he went to Antioch, Queen of the East in that era (Acts 11:25-26). From there he and Barnabas made a trip, benevolent in nature, to Jerusalem and then returned again to Syrian Antioch. From this Antioch he began each of his three missionary trips fulfilling his great mission to the both Jews and in particular

the Gentiles. These journeys took him to Cyprus, much of Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece. Later he made a trip, as a Roman prisoner, to far-flung Rome, capital of the Empire. He even envisioned a trip to more distant Spain as per Romans 15:28. He preached in such great cities of the first century as Damascus, Antioch, Jerusalem, Ephesus, Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica and even Rome itself. Villages and rural areas likewise heard his clarion proclamation of Christ and Him crucified. The wide sweep of his preaching circle is expressed in these words of weight, "so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15:19).

Whether Paul was in a large city or out in the country he was a Christian on location. Whether he was a person of liberty or was bound with a Roman chain, as here in Acts 26, he was a Christian on

location. Whether he was among strangers who did not know him at all or among brethren and friends who knew him well and best, he was a Christian on location. Crossing a boundary line into another country did not change his basic and beautiful brand of applied Christianity. Being far removed from home and close friends did not change his Christian steadfastness one iota.

Too many, far TOO many, professing Christians today are not like Paul. They are not Christians on location. They appear to be Christians at home yet anything but Christians while in strange places, while on a business trip, while away at college or while in the military service of one's country.

One man left home for a few months to work among perfect strangers. Upon his return back home he boasted, "I was among loggers in the northwest for three months and not a single one of them

found out I was a Christian!"

A man in construction work usually left home Sunday evening or early Monday morning returning home the following Friday; he went where work was available. I was a visitor in his home one Sunday as he was packing to leave. He mentioned to me and my wife something that impressed both of us. He said there were two things he ALWAYS took with him on every away-from-home-trip-- his Bible and a picture of his wife. I think that man knew something about being a Christian away from home. He was not ashamed of his religion.

Someone has well stated that if we are not going to be Christians EVERYWHERE, it is doubtful we will be Christians ANYWHERE!

Paul was a Christian on location.

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Redeem, Redeemer, Redemption!

Dennis Gullede

One of the most wonderful words of sermon or song is the word *redeem*. We read it in Scripture: "But when the fullness of time was come God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law..." (Gal. 4:5). We sing it in the beautiful sentiments written by Fred A. Fillmore: "I know that my Redeemer lives, and ever prays for me; I know eternal life he gives, from sin and sorrow free."

The very term *redeem* presupposes loss or forfeiture and, applied to man in the Scriptures, implies his merited loss of the favor of God and the loss of his title to all the happiness of eternal life. Thus, through sin man has become the object of redemption. Now, the only hope of redemption from this misery and of restoration to favor is revealed to have

sprung from God; who afforded it to the first human transgressors almost as soon as they had been seduced from their obedience to him (Gen. 3:15). This hope was repeatedly revealed both under the Patriarchal and legal dispensations. But one ordinance in particular, under the latter economy, appears to have been instituted for the express purpose of pointing out how this gracious work of salvation was to be undertaken and effected. This ordinance was the right of *redemption* which belonged to the Jews under Mosaic law, and it finds expression in the Hebrew word *goel*, translated, *redeem*, *redeemer*, *redemption*.

The *goel* to the Hebrews meant, 'next of kin.' Boaz was a "near kinsman" (*goel*) to Ruth, but there was a kinsman nearer than he (Ruth 3:9-12). In the Old Testament the *goel* (redeemer) had three rights:

(1) To restore the forfeited inheritance for an Israelite who, owing to poverty had sold his land (Ruth 4:3-4).

(2) To ransom his kinsman from slavery to a foreigner (Lev. 25:47-49).

(3) To avenge the death of a slain relative, as a point of honor (Num. 35).

In all three of these aspects Jesus Christ qualifies as our Redeemer. First, by his coming into the flesh he saves us from eternal disinheritance (Heb. 2:17). Second, we are ransomed from the damning power of sin by his redeeming blood (Eph. 1:7; I Pet. 1:18-19). Third, by avenging us in his death by overcoming the one who had the power of death (Heb. 2:14).

Therefore, when we sing, 'I know that my Redeemer lives...' we speak of he, who to the Christian, is the nearest kin of all. There is no kinsman so near as Christ. He is voluntarily so; not forced to

be a brother, but by his own choice of our nature; therefore more than a brother (Prov. 18:24). He is unashamedly so: "He is not ashamed to call

them brethren" (Heb. 2:11). He is eternally so. Who shall separate us? (Rom. 8:35).

Most Of A Minute

A More Important Message

My wife recently flew to Alaska on a big jet. As they were taxiing down the runway, there were two messages given by the flight crew. The first one was instructions on what to do in case the plane went down. There were oxygen masks. The seat cushions made good floatation devices when pulled out of the seats in the demonstrated way. The passengers paid this message little or no attention. People conversed. They read their papers.

The second message was on the little television screen. It was a preview of the evening's movie feature. The plane got quite. All eyes and attentions were directed to that preview.

Imagine that. One message which could be of life and death importance, and the other pertaining to a bit of entertainment. The entertainment takes the award. And consider how often we are little concerned about the big messages and more concerned about the little ones, like with the Gospel of Christ. II Thessalonians. 1:7 says we must obey the Gospel of Christ or we'll be eternally lost. Have you obeyed the Gospel? If not, what messages will you pay attention to today which are more important?

Glenn Colley

Happy In Denver

Mel Futrell

Some months back, on a Wednesday night, I was handed a newspaper clipping by one of the brethren. It was a letter to Dear Abby. I quickly read it to those present for our auditorium class, but made no additional comment. Below I have reprinted the article in its entirety and also included a brief critique.

Q: DEAR ABBY: I am an independent, fun-loving woman. For several years, I drifted from church to church, trying to find one that suited me. One Sunday, I visited a new church, hoping it was for me. I'd never seen such a mixed congregation. They had a wonderful common denominator--their joy at being in a house of worship on Sunday, and welcoming smiles for me.

A few weeks later, I was invited to attend their church picnic in a nearby park. When I saw the minister (a woman) having a beer, I said to myself, "MY GOD...she's human!" I was greatly impressed that she had the courage to

be herself in front of her congregation. Everyone had a good time, and no one was judging anyone else.

I am delighted to have found a church where I can worship and be myself, without fear of condemnation. --HAPPY IN DENVER

First, it is regrettable at best that so many people have fallen prey to the "church of your choice" mentality. This logo appears in newspapers, on grocery bags, and a host of other places. So many people have bought in to the notion that one church is as good as another. On the other hand, their Scriptures are clear in affirming that there is but one true church. Paul affirms that:

(1) Christ is the Savior of the one body [Eph. 5:23 and Eph. 4:4].

(2) But the body is the church [Eph. 1:22-23 and Col. 1:18]

(3) Therefore Christ is the Savior of only one church.

Rather than trying to find a church that suits them, people ought to be

conforming their lives to the New Testament pattern and thus allow the Lord to add them to his church [Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47].

Second, there is simply no Bible authority for women to serve as public ministers or preachers in a congregation. I'll treat you here to a taste of the writing of Guy Woods.

"It is not possible for a woman to qualify as an elder (I Tim. 3:1-6), as a deacon (I Tim. 3:12), as an evangelist (Titus 2:15: I Tim. 2:11-12), which creates a strong presumption that it was not God's intention that women should be involved in the oversight of the church, nor actively engage in its public ministrations; there is no hint of such activity by women in the records of the early church; and, those instances involving public always specifically indicate that men, not women, participated. (I Tim. 2:8; Acts 20:7-12). [Questions and Answers, Vol. 1, 1976, p.362]

Special attention should be paid to Titus 2:15 and I Tim. 2:11-12. It is so

important that we respect the authority of the Scriptures in this area as more and more people, even within the Lord's church, are calling for women to accept leadership roles in worship.

Third, the Dear Abby inquirer was apparently impressed with the female minister having a beer in front of her congregation. This made her human and truly herself. There is no support to be found in the New Testament for the imbibing of intoxicating spirits, whether it be done socially or not. The only possible exception to the above would be I Timothy 5:23; and even then one would have to assume that the wine in that verse was an intoxicant. One should remember that in the Bible, the term wine is generic and can refer to either fresh juice or a fermented beverage; the context must decide the matter. What Christian would ever want to encourage the use of alcoholic beverages to any degree or in any place? [According to a December 15, 1994 ABC News report, in 1993 approximately 6000

15-20 year olds died in traffic accidents; 40% were alcohol related.]

Fourth, our fun-loving Denver woman when saying: "and no one was judging anyone else" and "I can worship and be myself, without fear of condemnation" was reflecting the erroneous sentiments of most of the religious world. I may not be able to judge your motives but I can judge your fruit [Matthew 7:15]. Frequently appeals are made to Matthew 7:1 in an effort to squelch all judging. But what is not stated by many are the next four verses, which put verse one in context and qualify wrongful judging as that which is hypocritical. Take a look at the words of Jesus in John 7:24 and the words of Paul in I Corinthians 5:12 and 6:2 if you want a much more complete picture of the responsibility to judge.

Brethren, substituting our wills for GOD's will, will never be right.

God Is On The Throne Not On Stage

Dalton Key

The God we serve is an august, spiritual being both deserving and desirous of our deepest respect. Though described in Scripture as a friend to man (Isa. 41:8; James 2:23), he is not some sort of "good buddy" to joke with or about. Our God is still on the throne (Psalm 45:6), his ways remain higher than our ways (Isa. 55:9), and his authoritative Word still promises to judge us in the Last Day (Rev. 20:12).

No measure of self-appointed, flippant familiarity with the God of heaven detracts one bit or whit from his inherent majesty. Our God is eminently worthy of our

reverence, thus we must serve him "acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12:28). Truly, reverence is the "very first element of religion" [Charles Simmons].

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

We agree that our worship services should be permeated with expressions of joy and thanksgiving - they should not come to

resemble a congregational visit to the dentist; but neither should the reverent worship of our heavenly Father be confused for a carnival or a rock concert. Whether our worship is that offered during a Sunday morning service, that which involves a lectureship assembly, or that which is engaged in by a zealous throng of young people attending a youth rally - regardless where, when or by whom the worship is performed - it must be characterized by reverence and decorum. "Let all things be done decently and in order" (I Cor. 14:40).

The worship assembly is not the proper setting for screaming, whistling, clap-

ping and stomping the feet in response to a speaker's message. We do not gather to pay homage to men, but to worship God. We do not come together as a football game or a stage-band concert. We come to worship God. We do not assemble with the intent of being entertained or sensually excited; we come to worship God. And assembly of saints with the intent of worshipping and praising God of heaven should reject that which emphasizes the carnal emotions and minimizes the spiritual man. An outsider should be able to attend one of our Sunday assemblies, or one of our many youth gatherings, and see a

marked difference between the worship of God and the Johnny Carson show.

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

Remember, **OUR GOD IS ON THE THRONE-NOT ON STAGE.**

OCTOBER 27, 1995

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- "I Just Wish I Could Die"

Volume 32 Number 40
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

the

Making Our Way Through Gloom And I

ess

W.A. Holley
GOD IS THE BEGINNING.
THE CAUSE. THE
SOURCE OF ALL THINGS

"In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:1-2). "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of the things which do appear" (Hebrews 11:3).

I MUST LEARN
TO PERMIT GOD TO
SHEPHERD MY LIFE

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

GOD'S PERFECT
RULES FOR EACH DAY

"Thou shalt have no other God's before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in

vain. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Honor thy father and thy mother. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Thou shalt not covet" (Exodus 20:1-17).

OUR WORLD NEEDS
TO TALK TO GOD

"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver from evil" (Matthew 6:9-13). Now read John 17:20-23; Ephesians 4:3-6).

WE MUST MAKE ROOM
FOR THE BEATITUDES
IN OUR LIVES

'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:1-12).

RECOGNIZING AND
HONORING THE BIBLE
CHURCH

"...That thou art Peter, and

upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:18-19). "The kingdom of Christ and of God" are one (Ephesians 5:5).

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13-14). "The churches of Christ salute you" (Romans 16:16).

WE MUST REMEMBER
THAT THE GREAT
COMMISSION IS AGE
LASTING

Jesus Commanded, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: TEACHING them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:18-20). Mark's record reads as follows: "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).

Luke's record of the Great Commission reads: "Thus it is

written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-47).

An example of how the Great Commission began to be executed can be seen in Acts 2:36-40, 41-47. Thus, the execution of the Great Commission began on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection and will continue unto the end of the world.

WE MUST EXHIBIT THE
GRAND SYMPHONY OF
CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

"Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge self-control; and in your self-control patience; and in your patience godliness; and in your godliness brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from old sins. Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter 1:5-11, ASV).

PREPARE FOR
EAT APOINT-
WITH DEATH

...asmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27, ASV). Death resulted from the introduction of sin unto our world (Genesis 3:22-23; Romans 5:12) Death is the inevitable fate of human beings except for those who are alive when Jesus returns (I Corinthians 15:51; I Thessalonians 4:15). One's preparation for eternity must be made before death (Matthew 25:5-10; II Corinthians 5:10).

AS AN INDIVIDUAL ONE
STANDS BEFORE GOD.

"He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, he shall be my son. But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death" (Revelation 21:7-8, ASV).

"Thou wilt show me the path of life: In thy presence is fullness of joy; In thy right hand there are pleasures forever more"
(Psalm 16:11, ASV).

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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The Seven Baptisms Of The Bible, Part 3

Two weeks ago we began this series on the baptisms of the Bible. If for some reason you have missed the first two, simply write to us and we will gladly send you copies, free of charge. Today we consider the last of the seven.

7. THE ONE BAPTISM IN WATER

The one baptism which was being preached and practiced after the creation of the church in Acts two is in water, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remissions of sins, effecting entrance into Christ, whereupon God adds the baptized one to his church. Please note some characteristics of this baptism:

A. It was commanded by Jesus. (Mark 16:16)-- "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be

condemned." Those who love the Lord will obey him, (Jn. 14:15).

B. It was commanded by Peter on Pentecost and at the house of Cornelius, Acts 2:38; Acts 10:48.

C. It was commanded by Ananias to Saul of Tarsus, Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

What are the benefits of this baptism?

A. By baptism, one becomes a member of the body of Christ, his church. We are baptized into that body. People who have not yet been baptized, even those who have confessed Christ, are not yet part of the body. "For by one spirit are ye all baptized into one body, I Cor. 12:13." (See also Acts 2:42, 47)

B. We are first baptized,

than saved. No one is saved until they have been baptized. Jesus taught, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..." (Mark 16:16)."

There is a real sense in which baptism saves us. "The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us... (I Pet. 3:21)."

C. We are baptized into Christ. Therefore, people who haven't been baptized according to the scriptures, are outside of Christ. "We are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; for as many of us as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ...(Gal. 3:26, 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, (Rom. 6:3-4)."

D. We are baptized for the remission of our past sins. "Repent, and be baptized, everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins...(Acts 2:38)." "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins...(Acts 22:16)."

This baptism was taught by Jesus himself in the great commission, and was to be administered by men: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world, (Matt. 28:19)."

The one baptism of Ephesians four is Christ's water baptism. Paul wrote, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all, (Ephesians 4:4-6)." All accountable men and women must humbly submit to His baptism if they are to be saved. No accountable people today will be saved who refuse His baptism, whether by choosing instead a man-designed baptism which contradicts Christ, or by simply refusing to be baptized at all. May God bless us all as we strive to do His will, and teach that will to others.

Gun Control or Heart Control?

This is not a promotional ad for the National Rifle Association, nor is it meant to imply that I am somehow "anti-gun" in my sentiments. But a few weeks ago I read a statement in Time magazine that caught my attention. The author, a Mr. Robert Wright, said, "In a typical year, guns kill 38,000 Americans..."

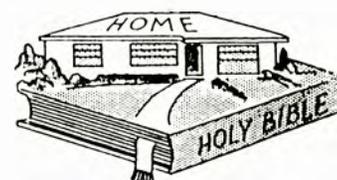
Without trying to sound either pro or anti

gun, I feel compelled to ask, "Are guns actually responsible for these deaths?" "Are guns capable of aiming themselves at people, and are they somehow adept enough to pull their own triggers and then send bullets hurling into the bodies of defenseless victims?"

Listen to what Jesus said, "For out of the H E A R T proceed evil

thoughts...MURDERS..." (Matthew 15:19a). may I suggest that the weapons responsible for 38,000 annual deaths are not guns, but hearts! And not until we can learn to control T H E S E mechanisms will the death toll in our nation begin to radically decline.

Mike Benson
Parsons, TN



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A Christian Just Like Paul (No. 6)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

To date three responses have been given the query of our study. Paul was a Christian in name, in fact and on location. Again, I ask, how was Paul a Christian?

HE WAS A CHRISTIAN IN PERSECUTION AND SUFFERING

Damascus was the city of his conversion. Yet soon he was in serious jeopardy in this Syrian city and to escape he had to leave the dangerous city in a basket let down by the city wall (Acts 9:22-25; 2 Corinthians 11:32-33). From Damascus he went back to Jerusalem, the city of his education and wherein he once majored in Christian persecution himself. His sincere efforts to reach his former colleagues in lethal Phariseism were not successful and they went about to slay their former champion (Acts 9:28, 29). He and Barnabus were expelled out of Pisidian Antioch in Acts 13:50. This dynamic duet of gospel proclaimers did not fare even this well at Iconium where they were assaulted, despised and plans

to stone them were in the making before they fled this perilous place (Acts 14:5-6). He was stoned in Lystra and presumed dead by his would-be murderers (Acts 14:19). He was beaten publicly and jailed in humiliation in Philippi in Acts 16:19-24. They mocked him and his preaching in Athens as we read in Acts 17:32. Infidelic Jews did not take kindly to him at all in Corinth and sought legal sanctions against him (Acts 18:12-16). His welcome in the Jewish synagogue in Ephesus was short-lived indeed (Acts 19:8-9). He wrote I Corinthians from Ephesus as we learn in I Corinthians 16:8. In his great resurrection chapter he gives us an insight into some the perils he faced while at Ephesus. He wrote, "if after the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die" (I Corinthians 15:32). In the book of Acts, Luke relates his imprisonments in Philippi, Jerusalem, Caesarea and

Rome. From all the assembled evidence it appears strongly to be the case that he was imprisoned twice in Rome. Very obviously, there were other imprisonments as he mentioned in 2 Corinthians 11:23 of being in prisons frequently. Paul wrote this before he was imprisoned in Jerusalem, Caesarea and Rome either of the times.

Here are some of his own summations of sufferings personally incurred in behalf of Christ and the church, "Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13). "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in

perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (2 Corinthians 11:24-28). "From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Galatians 6:17). "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church..." (Colossians 1:24). "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake,..." (2 Timothy 2:10). Timothy knew personally of the "Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured; but out of them all the Lord delivered me" (2 Timothy 3:11). He wrote in 2 Timothy 4:6 how he was ready to be offered. This was from Rome and there he was

martyred for his beloved Master perhaps around the years of A.D. 67 or 68. Regardless of any persecution or sufferings he endured, any of them or all of them in aggregate did not wear him from Christ or destroy his dedication to duty and firmness in the faith.

Is this article being read by someone today who has allowed personal persecutions or a life of grave suffering to detour you from the Saviour's cause? If so, why not look at Paul and return to the first love you have abandoned by walking the route of repentance, prayer and confession? This is the way back home for the erring child of God. If you have never obeyed the gospel, then you need to hear Christ, believe in His Deity, repent of your sins, confess Him with courage and conviction and be immersed in water for or unto the remission of your sins.

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It's The Execution

The following story is told about Kanute Rockne, one of the greatest football coaches who ever lived. Other coaches knew he never had a secret practice. In fact, he sometimes would put up a sign for visitors that said, "Secret practice today: come and bring your notebooks." One time when a scout for the Army football team missed a train connection and didn't get to the Notre Dame he was to cover, Rockne obligingly sent him the plays he planned to use against the West Pointers. He explained his actions by saying, "It isn't the play that wins,

it's the execution." All great coaches agree. Championship teams are made by majoring on the fundamentals blocking and tackling. Occasionally a team may win a game by trick or gimmick. But they will not be a consistent winner that way.

Great churches are built the same way--by majoring on the basics. The spiritual fundamentals for the church are teaching, prayer, and visitation. Occasionally one may hear of a minister seeking to build a congregation by promoting some spectacular event or gimmick. It is true that

these may succeed for a while but seldom do the results last. People soon get wise to gimmicks. The trouble with spectaculars is that one must continually try to outdo himself by searching for a more spectacular thing to do next. There is no limit to how strong a congregation can become when the leadership strives to build on the basis--Bible study, prayer, and visitation. Remember--the secret is not in the play but the performance.

Edited from John R. Vaughn

Most Of A Minute

All The Music

In the Birmingham newspaper on Sunday is a syndicated column called, "Ask Marilyn." She is apparently a mathematical genius. A man from Virginia asked recently a question about music. He said that he looked at music as being mathematical, so at some point every song will have been written. No more new one. Every possible combination will have been tried. Is that sad possibility possible?

The expert gave a wonderful answer. She said that in simple terms, if you strike one piano key after another in varying combinations, you'd eventually run out of songs. She said furthermore, "If there are a finite number of words, at some point every sentence (of reasonable length) will have been written." But she added, "it doesn't matter". Although there's a limit to the number of combinations of many things, there's an even stricter limit to the number of hours in your day. You will never have time to experience all the songs ever written, nor all the paintings ever painted, nor all the books ever written.

This demonstrates again to me that this world is beautifully balanced in a way that makes it accommodating for man. As the writer of Ecclesiastes wrote, "to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven." (Ecc. 3:1)."

Glenn Colley

Let All Things Be Done Decently And In Order

Restoration leader Alexander Campbell correctly stated back in 1835, "The house of GOD necessarily is, and ought always to be, the most orderly assembly on earth." [Millennial Harbinger, 1835, as quoted in T.W. Brent's "Gospel Sermons", 1891, p. 356]. With this appraisal we whole heartedly concur. And thus we are no less concerned with the directive of 1 Corinthians 14:40 than those of the first century.

Today, even though the miraculous element is not present in our assemblies the admonition that all done in those assemblies be done in a decent and orderly fashion still has principle application. Language scholar A.T. Robertson said of "decently and in order":

"That is surely a good rule for all matters of church life and worship." [Word Pictures in the New Testament, vol. 4, 1931,

p. 185]

One need not dwell on it for very long to know that the opposite of decently and in order is indecent and out-of-order. And this rule is not to be violated.

Chapter 14 of First Corinthians furnishes us some real insight into the expectations of GOD for his church in worship. No less than six times in chapter 14 reference is made in one form or another to one purpose of the assembly—the edifying of the church (see verses 3, 4, 5, 12, 17, 26). Edification or edifying is used here in reference to "the promotion of Spiritual growth" [Vine's Expository Dictionary, vol. 2, pp. 17-18].

But that spiritual growth was not possible as long as there was misunderstanding (vs. 16), madness (vs. 23), confusion (vs. 33), and disorderliness (vs. 40) in the assembly.

Within chapter 14 we find

three admonitions given to three different groups concerning their conduct in the assembly. All three admonitions concern a limitation of that group's participation in the assembly at some time or another, with the focus of the limitation being silence. In verses 27-28 the tongue speaker was told to be silent in the assembly if there were no interpreter. Without one to interpret no one could understand and thus be edified. Confusion would result. Verses 29-32 limit the prophet. He is expressly forbidden to speak if another prophet receives a revelation (vs. 30). And all prophesying according to verse 31 is to be done one at a time. The purpose for this is so an orderly, learning, exhorting, and comforting atmosphere may be achieved for the church to worship correctly. Then in verses 34-35 women are told to be silent in a context where

public teaching (both in native and foreign languages) and translating were being discussed. It seems clear that women must remain silent, as one writer put it, "in the sense of not disrupting the teaching session, or attempting to occupy a teaching position inconsistent with their gender." [Jackson, Women to the Glory of GOD, p. 464]. In failing to be silent, she forsakes her role of subjection (Genesis 3:16) and becomes guilty of violating I Timothy 2:11-12.

Brethren, GOD is not and never has been the author of confusion (vs. 33). And the lesson on worship conduct found in I Corinthians 14, with its summation in verse 40 is just as appropriate today as it was 1900 years ago. With churches of Christ around the country promoting an expanded role for women in the church into areas Scripture says are gender specific to the male; with

more congregations moving towards entertainment and performance "worship", etc., the time has long since come for us to challenge every unauthorized innovation into the church's worship and to get back to the practice of simple New Testament Christianity in every area of our lives.

Over a hundred years ago brother T.W. Brents said:

"Our acquaintance with human nature teaches us that when men take a position before the public, and fortify themselves in it, they rarely ever recede from it." [Gospel Sermons, 1931, p. 353].

Let us hope and pray that those who have adopted unscriptural positions will indeed recede from them before judgment begins at the house of GOD (I Peter 4:17).

Mel Futrell

"I Just Wish I Could Die"

Most Christians are interested in spiritual growth (2 Peter. 3:18), but a few appear only interested in spiritual death. So, if you are numbered among those who "just wish they could die," there are four certain ways to commit spiritual suicide.

DO NOT STUDY

"For when the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (Hebrews 5:11-14).

God once declared, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..." (Hosca 4:6) and the same, if you wish, can be said of you! You will die spiritually if you do not regularly read, study and meditate upon the Divine precepts (Psalm 119:9-11). There are far more interesting things to do each night than to get out the old Bible and read. Further, you probably

could not understand the archaic language anyway. So, just let it wait until Sunday.

It would also be best for you to find something else to do on Sunday nights and Wednesday evenings. Oh, and certainly your physical rest is better for you than spiritual exercise during the Sunday morning Bible class! By so doing, you can be assured that you will never be numbered among the blessed for their "delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law" do they "meditate day and night" (Psalm 1:2; cf. Matthew 5:6).

LOVE THE WORLD

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15-17).

Those in Corinth had been able to remain babes in Christ for years because they were carnally minded (I Corinthians 3:1-3) and if you continue to long for worldly

pleasures, you can also remain a "spiritual baby!"

But, "know ye not the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4). This friendship can be observed by the way one acts, talks, and dresses.

NEVER COMMIT YOURSELF

"So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:16).

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine..." (Ephesians 4:14). If you do not want to grow, it is imperative to lose any moral convictions you may have. You should just "go along" with the crowd and you will "get along" with them easily. Laugh at their dirty jokes, dress in their skimpy fashions, go with them to their places of sinful

recreation, drink their drinks and speak their language, but, "be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners" (I Corinthians 15:33).

Further, do not stand strong on any doctrinal point. Baptism is not really necessary for the forgiveness of sins: instrumental music does not really corrupt worship; sprinkling is just as good as immersion; a loving God would never keep anyone from heaven; baptizing babies is not very much different from praying for them; and, it is not actually important how often a person partakes of the Lord's Supper.

Do not look to Paul for your example in this, for he was "set for the defense of the gospel" (Philippians 1:17). Try to forget, also that Christ will not bless those who abide not in His doctrine (2 John 9-11).

FORGET TO PRAY

"And he spake a parable

unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke. 18:1).

You are a busy person! Prayer really seems useless, anyway. I mean, when is the last time you actually saw a prayer answered anyway? Leave the praying to the old folks and preachers. This "without ceasing" business takes too much commitment (I Thess. 5:17).

These four things will help stunt your growth as much as anything you can do. What cancer is to the body, ignorance is to the soul; what poison is to the bloodstream, worldliness is to the spirit; and what cataracts are to the eyes, lukewarmness is to the Christian life. So, if you just wish that you could die, these ideas will help you! But, pardon the rest of us if we don't join you, we're trying to live forever!

Allen Webster

NOVEMBER 3, 1995

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 - Mistaken Identity
 - Dead or Alive

Volume 32 Number 41
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

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The Seed Of Woman

Johnny Ramsey

In Genesis 3:15 God made a solemn promise to Satan that the seed of woman would destroy the power of evil. Sin and death had just entered the world through the deceitful ploy of the devil (Romans 5:12). Mankind would be separated from Jehovah for centuries because of iniquity introduced by Adam and Eve (Isaiah 59 1-2). Not until Christ died at Calvary would reconciliation be a reality (Ephesians 2:16). Truly, the One born of woman (Galatians 4:4) tasted of death by God's grace for every man (Hebrews 2:9).

In the Bible, elsewhere, and in the books of the world, offspring are referred to as the seed of man. But here, uniquely, Genesis 3:15 speaks of the seed of woman. In Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6 we learn that God would give this child, this Son, as a sign. Born of the Virgin (Matthew 1:21-23) in Bethlehem of Judea, as Micah 5:2 predicted, the prophecy of Genesis 3 was fulfilled. Is it any wonder that Revelation 19:10 tells us that "the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus"?

In Jeremiah 31:22 we learn that a strange thing would happen in the land. Yes, a woman would

compass - or go around a man - to bring a child into the world. In that setting Jeremiah refers to "Rachel weeping for her children." The fulfillment of this weeping is mentioned in the background at the birth of Christ in Matthew 2. The mediator of the New Covenant that Jeremiah mentions in 31:31-34 would be born of woman! Careful study of these points would help us to understand the discussion in Timothy 2:9-15. Just as woman introduced sin into the world (it was first Eve, not Adam who was deceived by the devil), so woman also brought the sin-bearer, Christ, into the world!

There are many passages that enlighten us regarding Genesis 3:15. First, let it be admitted that Satan is very powerful. From the moment God had a plan for man, the devil had one to contradict it. Throughout the Bible this tumultuous struggle ensues. Though Satan has the ability to hinder or thwart heaven's plans, that Adversary shall not be ultimately successful. As Romans 16:20 affirms so we ardently proclaim: "God shall crush Satan under your feet shortly."

Christ, the seed of woman, was able to enter

the domain of the devil and spoil his goods (Mark 3:27), cast out the prince of evil (John 12:31), and give us the victory (1 John 5:4). In fact, that is exactly what Emmanuel came to accomplish (1 John 3:8). God rules in the kingdom of men whether the world recognizes that authority or not (Daniel 4:25; Matthew 28:18; Romans 13:1; Revelations 11:16).

Even though Satan could influence evil men to plot together the death of our Lord, this covenant of death, this refuge of lies, was not successful (Isaiah 28:14-18; Romans 1:4). Through death the seed of woman crushed the power of Satan (Hebrews 2:14). Paul ties the promise God made to the devil in Genesis 3:15 to the consummation of all the power in Christ when we read the words of 2 Corinthians 2:14: "We are always led in triumph in Christ."

The gates of Hades cannot hold the Prince of Peace (Matthew 16:18). Up from the grave He arose in victory over sin, death, Hades and hell. Isaiah 53 tells us that even though the One born of a virgin ("root out of dry ground") had all the burden of the world's sin upon Him still much seed would be born

unto the heavenly cause.

In Luke 2:49 Jesus acknowledged that He had to be about the Father's business. As a very young man Jesus realized Joseph was not His father. He was born of woman by the power of God (Acts 4:26-30). No wonder the demons believe and tremble (James 2:19).

Because of the awesome power contained in the promise God made to Satan in Genesis 3:15, we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (Romans 8:37) and not even death can separate us from God Almighty. The grave holds no victory because Christ burst asunder the bands of death and is indeed our forerunner to heaven (1 Corinthians 15:57; Acts 2:24; Hebrews 6:20). Through the veil of his flesh, we are heirs of the new and living way as Hebrews 10:19-20 beautifully proclaims. If we are lost in the Day of Judgment, it will be in spite of all that the Lord has done for us. If any child of God does fall from grace, it will be in spite of Romans 4:25 and 6:23: "He was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our jurisdiction... For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is life

rough Jesus
ord."

spel song tells
orious victory

God's promise in Genesis
3:15 provides:

Triumphant through grace

I shall some day stand,

With Jesus at home

On that golden strand,

His face in its beauty

At last to see

My hand in the hand

That was pierced for me.

When Mary and Joseph brought Jesus for the purification rites, aged Simeon took the baby in his arms and gave a marvelous speech as recorded in Luke 2:25-35. Clearly enunciated in that brilliant oration was the truth that Christ would be the hope of Israel and a light to the Gentiles also. Sadly, Simeon also warned Mary that sorrow would come to her life as well as the joy of knowing she had powerfully cooperated with the eternal purpose of Heaven. Satan was able to "bruise the heel" of the Savior but when, in the fullness of time, God sent His Son, born of a woman, it was due time for the devil to realize he had lost the battle (Galatians 4:4; Romans 5:6).

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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If Christ Came To Earth Today

Pope John Paul II came to the U.S. a few weeks ago. Eighty thousand people endured hours of driving rain to celebrate Mass with him in a football stadium in Baltimore. Estimates are that there are 60 million Catholics in his flock in America, and they believe he is the vicar of Christ on earth. Vicar, according to Webster means, "A substitute in office; a representative of another." According to an October 9th article in the Birmingham News, Ramon Damian, a Mexican immigrant, was among 20 people who shared a meal with the pope during his visit. Afterwards Damian remarked, "God came to me today."

Even a casual observer is a bit taken aback by this kind of reaction to the pope's visit, because polls continue to show widespread disagreement with his policies in the Catholic church. That's very interesting. They believe him to be the world's substitute for the Son of God, yet they don't like or necessarily follow what the pope teaches.

This is, it seems to me, a rare opportunity to view how people would react if Jesus came back to earth in the flesh today. After all, the Catholics view the pope as the vicar of the Lord. What if Jesus did come back for a few years? What would happen? Can we predict?

To do this we must begin with a large assumption. Assume that He came in such a way that it was widely believed that He really was the Son of God returned.

(It should be noted here that the pope is not really the vicar of Christ. The Bible doesn't authorize the existence of any pope ever. Peter, who is said by the Catholics to be the first pope, once saw a man fall down at his feet as people do daily for today's pope. Peter said to the man, "Stand up, I myself am also a man [Acts 10:26]." Furthermore, remember that in reality, Jesus will never stoop his foot on earth's surface again. Paul wrote in 1st Thessalonians 4:16, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a

shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.")

If Jesus came to walk the earth again today there would be great fan fare. Think of the news coverage. All the major networks would carry footage of the Son of God. --CNN, NBC, CBS -- Dan Rather, Brian Gumbal, and the rest would be interrupting regular broadcasts to bring special bulletins regarding Christ's coming to the earth. Body guards would be required by the Federal police. *Time and Newsweek* would run full color covers of close-up photos of God's only begotten Son.

His first speech would be to hundreds of thousands. Picture thousands of weeping, cheering people. When He began to speak, a hush would quickly fall over the crowd. No one would want to miss a single syllable falling from His divine lips. Mr. Clinton, and other world leaders, would beg to meet with Him first for a photo opp., and second for His coveted public support in their national agendas.

Then, after three or four weeks, the critics would surface. They would enjoy His presence until He really began to teach. While the picket carrying atheists would be mostly ignored, the dissenters from the religious community, and the experts in the fields of journalism and psychology would draw media's attention as they began to analyze His teachings. The governor from this state or that, and a mayor from one big city or another, would say He was too idealistic, and that they needed more consideration as they tried to deal with their cities and states.

The criticism would soon crystallize into two major contentions: "He was so important during the first century, but not now. He's grown significantly out of touch. He's just been gone too

long," and, "He is an impostor. This isn't the Jesus we were taught as children."

If Jesus would stick to "love your neighbor," and the golden rule, the people would love Him, But He wouldn't. He didn't just speak these things back then, and He wouldn't today.

Initially, the pope would fall at His feet. Then Jesus would begin peeling back the layers of superficial tradition and chastise the so-called "vicar" as He had before done the Pharisees. The Pharisees were the sect of the Jews which traded the purity of the Law of Moses for their traditions. Thus, Jesus often condemned their religion as vain (Matt. 23. Jesus would perhaps ask the pope why he tolerated the people referring to him as the vicar and with terms like "Holy Father." Jesus would say, "I explicitly told you in my word to "call no man your father on the earth, for one is your Father, which is in heaven! (Matt. 23:9)" The pope, and his people, would be in a sad fix.

Jesus would speak of "My church," and people would know immediately it wasn't the Catholic church. They would soon hear Him condemn the denominational concept as He spoke of building "His" church. He would cry, "Why do you honor me with your lips, but your heart is far from me? 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."

He would devastate 95% of the denominational preachers when he taught that to be saved a person must "believe and be baptized" (Mark 16:16). They would know that for years they have been teaching that a man believes and is saved without baptism. They've been baptizing people for years with their own non-essential, non-saving baptism.

It is surely true that at first the great religious leaders of the world would clamor to get His public endorsement. But before long they would realize the sad truth that they had for years worshiped and taught a Christ made after their image,

to keep their religion as it was would mean rejecting this visiting Christ.

Can't you hear Him preach? He would speak to matters like marriage, divorce, and remarriage, just as He did in Matthew 19. In what churches would He be welcome then? He would talk of the sin of lust as He did in Matthew 5:28. How would the movie, television, and magazine industry treat Him then? He might point out, as the Bible does, that He saw no difference in the value of an unborn baby and a born baby. How many political candidates, how many in the White House, how many in congress, would speak His name in reverence then?

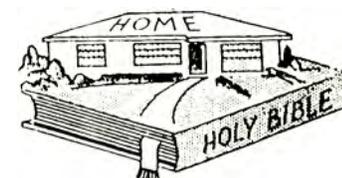
Jesus couldn't change the doctrinal message of the new Testament. He would have to preach the same truth. Hebrews 13:8 affirms clearly. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever." In John 12:48 He declared, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken the same shall judge him in the last day." He would have to be true to what He had preached in the pages of Holy Writ. he couldn't contradict the writings of the Apostles, for He made sure that their guide was the Holy Spirit Himself! (John 14:15-26) The Bible says, "Whoso transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God (II John 9)."

So who would love Him? Who would cling to Him unflinchingly? That answer is

simple. It would be those who wouldn't be a bit surprised by any of His teachings! It wouldn't be those who had openly or privately rejected Jesus in the past --the intellectuals who were above Christianity. It wouldn't be those who had adopted religions which placed traditions or false teachings ahead of Christ's teachings in the Bible. It wouldn't be those who were part of faithful church but were unfaithful themselves. It would be those humble, faithful members of the church of our Lord, the one's to whom the Lord looks, "even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word (Isa. 66:2)." It would be those who had rejected the religions of men to be simple, undenominational disciples of Christ.

Jesus would love and support His people. "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted (Heb. 2:18)." He would love the children, the widows, and the orphans of all nations. He would offer sweet redemption to all who would listen and obey the gospel. Perhaps the common people would again hear Him gladly (Mark 12:37).

May we today be so close to our Savior through His divine Word, that as others gradually left Him and despised Him, we would remain solid in His service saying, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life... (John 6:68)."
Glenn Colley



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A Christian Just Like Paul (No. 7)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

In Acts 26 Paul sought to persuade Agrippa to obey the gospel and thus become what he was religiously, viz., a Christian. In this series I am exploring with you, esteemed readers of Words Of Truth, Paul's brand of vibrant Christianity. To date we have contemplated him as a Christian in name, fact, on location and in persecutions and privations, in trials and tribulations. Again I query, how was Paul a Christian?

HE WAS A

CHRISTIAN IN ZEAL

Burning zeal was part and parcel of his Pharisaic background as we see in Acts 7:58; 8:1-3; 9:1-2; 22:3 and Philippians 3:6. In that period of his life, as he sought to exterminate the budding Christian movement, his was a zeal minus knowledge (Cf. Romans 10:1-3). His zeal needed to be channeled into an acceptable framework, into a realm of right. This needed channeling occurred in his conversion and that

period subsequent to that great turning act of his life. His zeal did not diminish in the least when he became a Christian; in fact it greatly increased.

His flaming zeal began to exhibit itself immediately subsequent to his conversion to Christ and Christianity. The Bible tells us in Acts 9:20 how that "straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." Through the remnant of his life he was zealous as a preacher. In fact he carved out a new dimension for preaching. Except for the Christ preaching has NEVER had a greater or more faithful personification than we find in Paul. He made three great missionary journeys to preach the gospel and to teach men en masse about the saving Christ. Paul knew that gospel preaching--not skits, drama, etc., --constituted God's power to save (I Corinthians 1:17ff).

Paul was zealous as a

writer. If Hebrews be his epistle, as I long have believed it was, the apostle to the Gentiles wrote over half of the new Testament books--some fourteen in all. He wrote an even one hundred chapters of the two hundred-sixty chapters gracing the New Testament.

Paul was zealous as a doer of good and promoting good works in others. Good works constituted a marvelous major in his own life; he encouraged countless others to be of likemind. At all times he had sympathy for the poor (Galatians 2:10). While on his third missionary journey he spearheaded a drive to gather a great contribution from among Gentile congregations to be carried to Palestine for helping the poor in that famished land. This was no "saint-only" endeavor on his part and the part of contributing congregations. He came to bring alms to his nation as per Acts 24:17 and nation is of wider coverage than poor saints in Palestine.

A passage in 2 Corinthians 9:13 serves as an excellent commentary on Acts 24:17. This great benevolent work is described in dynamic detail in 2 Corinthians 8,9.

He was zealous in his worship. A number of times in the book of Acts he remained at places for seven days though often in haste to get to other places. How may we account for such in view of traveling urgency? At no place in those days where there was a congregation of God's people would he have to stay more than seven days to have the great privilege of worshipping with then upon the Lord's Day as he and his traveling entourage did in Acts 20:4-12.

He was zealous in his prayer life. Opening and closing chapters of his various epistles and many of the ones in between attest to this. It was he who told the Colossians and the saints at Thessalonica respectively, "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with

thanksgiving;...Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (Colossians 4:2; I Thessalonians 5:17-18). Paul knew that prayer moved the hand of Him that moves the Universe. He knew that more things are wrought by prayer than this world has ever envisioned.

He was zealous in the training of younger, talented men to carry on the Lord's work when he was no longer here. Timothy, Titus, Silas, John Mark, Tychicus and others come promptly to mind.

It would be a total misuse of words to link lukewarmness, apathy, indifference, heartlessness and listlessness with the zealous name of Paul. Truly, Paul was a Christian in zeal.

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High wind. Big thunder.

No rain.

The dark storm clouds which hung over our city some weeks ago remind me of a story about an old American Indian who went to hear a preacher one Sunday morning. Unfortunately, the preacher's message lacked a scriptural emphasis, but it did include a good bit of shouting and pulpit pounding. In fact, one astute observer suggested that the preacher had "preached up

quite a storm." After the service, someone asked the Indian what he thought about the rather enthusiastic sermon. Thinking for a moment, he summed up his opinion in six words, "High wind. Big thunder. No rain."

Friends, when the scriptures are neglected, when presentation is placed over content, when emotional pleas are held above biblical truths, there may be high

wind and big thunder, but there is no rain. Only when preaching is based upon the word of God are people truly blessed and refreshed. The Bible reminds those of us in the pulpit to "Preach THE WORD" (2 Timothy 4:2a). When was the last time you "got drenched" in a sermon?

Mike Benson
Parsons, TN

Most Of A Minute

Colin Powell and Family Values

I don't like what the media is doing with Colin Powell one bit. Right now he's probably getting more good publicity than any other candidate in the presidential race. Now, you know that this isn't a political format, and what I'm about to say isn't politically motivated. I don't care if you vote republican, democrat, or independant, so long as you vote based on solid Biblical principles, for the man who you think will best uphold those principles.

But back to Powell. The media is promoting him as a "moderate, a centrist, who is strong on family values." You say, "Yes, but isn't that good?" It would be, except that when Colin is asked about abortion in America, he clearly stands on the pro-choice side! I will never see how being in favor of legalized abortion, and family values can mix! Imagine that! Family values and killing the babies inside of pregnant mothers.

Watch'em folks. They want you to let down your guard on morality. How does someone accomplish that? One way is to re-define terms. We call homosexuality an alternate lifestyle. We call drunkenness a chemical dependency. We call a man who is pro-abortion, strong on family values.

The Bible will always read the same, and you and I are still responsible to our God. "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." (Rom. 12:9).

Glenn Colley

*If you meet me and forget me,
you have lost nothing.
But if you meet Jesus and forget him,
you have lost everything.*

Mistaken Identity

Neal Pollard

It happens frequently. Someone comes up excitedly and says, "Hey, Elrod, I haven't seen you in so...oh, I'm sorry. I thought you were someone else!" We chuckle. We empathize. Everyone has waved at a stranger, thinking him to be a friend. It is embarrassing to mistake someone's identity.

Sometimes, God's people can have a mistaken concept about the function and responsibilities of a preacher or the elders. With a good heart and honest intentions, they might expect these men to be or do something not in their "job description." What do we mean?

SOME THINK OF THE ELDERS AS CATERERS. There are usually certain members in a congregation who are of the mindset that the leadership exists to "cater" to

their whims. These members believe they are the ones with the good ideas. They are the only ones with the valuable opinions. Such can fall prey to the ideology of "my way or no way." They fail to see that the elders, though commanded not to lord over the flock (I Peter 5:3) nor to shun the feelings and ideas of the church, have an equal responsibility to all sheep (Acts 20:28) and a primary responsibility to lead the way the Bible instructs (Matthew 6:33).

SOME WANT THE PREACHER TO BE A COMEDIAN. For a sermon to be "good," a select group of church members believe that it should be doused with humor and lighted with stories. "Ear-scratchers" (2 Timothy 4:3) make one feel "good." To a few, the funnier the sermon, the better it is. No doubt, humor

can be effective in preaching. Yet, if it dominates and takes "center stage" in a sermon, humor hides the cross, obedience, hell, sacrifice, commitment, and a host of first-principles vital to gospel preaching. How does one reprove and rebuke through a chuckle and constant guffaw? It is antithetic!

SOME REGARD THE ELDERS TO BE CUSTODIANS. Some confuse the work of elders with works in which all should be involved. If a few in the church were asked, "who should straighten the song books, fill the communion trays, and cut the grass?", they might answer, "the elders, of course." With their various spiritual tasks, deacons are constrained to take the lead in those chores, too. Some members are not involved in any "church work" and could be

useful servants by doing these things (cf. Isaiah 6:8)!

SOME VIEW THE PREACHER AS A COMPUTER! While preachers should care enough about those to whom he preaches and with whom he serves the Lord to be informed about and involved in their lives, he may occasionally forget a name, overlook some good deed, or fail to have the answer. From time to time there arises a member who is amazed at such. Preachers should try their best to remember names, dates, and certain facts. Yet, he will never know the correct response to every question on the spot in the Bible class or remember every detail of every conversation he has. He is only "human."

A preacher is in trouble if he is expected to be the caretaker of a dying church, a curator to supervise the flock (the

denominational idea of the preacher as "pastor"), or crier to spill the beans to the congregation busybodies. Elders cannot function successfully as cops on a beat--policing the members' actions, coddlers begging Christians' involvement, or contractors, bidding against the world, the denominations, or sister congregations for members.

God will hold preachers (James 3:1; 2 Peter 2:1) and elders (I Peter 5:1-4) accountable for their divinely-outlined responsibilities. But, let us try to avoid placing expectations upon them which do not belong there.

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Dead Or Alive?

The Vietnam Veteran's Memorial is striking for its simplicity. Etched in a black granite wall are the names of 58,156 Americans who died in that war. Since its opening in 1982, the stark monument has stirred deep emotions. Some visitors walk its length slowly, reverently, and without pause. Others stop before certain names, remembering their son or sweetheart or fellow soldier, wiping away tears, tracing the names with their fingers. For three Vietnam veterans--Robert Bedker, Willard Craig, and Darrall Lausch--a visit to the memorial must be especially poignant, for they can walk up to the long ebony wall and find their own names carved in the stone. Because of data-coding errors, each of them was incorrectly listed as killed in action (Larson). *Dead, but alive...* isn't that a perfect description of the Christian?

Do you remember how we were before we became Christians? We did whatever made us satisfied--whatever fulfilled our needs. Our recreation, our jobs, our spare time--everything we did--was centered around self. But then one day we died. One day the gospel touched our hearts and we keeled over, as we submitted in obedience to the good news of Christ. Paul writes that when

we "were baptized into Jesus Christ," our "old man" was "crucified" (Rom. 6:3-6). We put him to death, buried him in that watery grave, and came out of that tomb a new man. At that point we became dead to self. As a result, we are no longer living to please self. We surrender that freedom and are now willingly submitting ourselves as slaves to a new master, Jesus Christ. Not slaves held against our will, but bond-servants who voluntarily surrendered ourselves to lives of service. That means that when our will conflicts with our Master's will, we do as He desires. That means that we have the attitude of Christ in the garden, as He prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39). You might say we committed a kind of spiritual suicide...*dead to self, but alive to Christ*.

Being dead to self leads to another kind of death as well. Paul says that the old man is crucified so that "the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:6). He continues by stating, "For he that is dead is freed from sin" (6:7). When we put on Christ we "died unto sin" (6:10). So not only must we be dead to self, but we must

also be dead to sin. The apostle had just finished discussing the marvelous grace offered through Christ and how that although many "were made sinners" as a result of Adam's sin, many shall be "made righteous" through Christ (Rom. 5:19). He stressed that the matchless grace of Christ could certainly overcome the effects of the sin of one man. Some of them might have responded to this discussion of grace saying, "Well, we can just do whatever we want and let grace flow more freely! If grace is so wonderful and can cover every sin, why don't we just give it plenty of chances to work?" But, in order to correct this possible misunderstanding, he answers their question before they even ask it. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" (6:1). Does the liberty we enjoy in Christ mean doing whatever we please? "God forbid. How shall we, *that are dead to sin*, live any longer therein?" (6:2). Having died to self, we must also die to a lifestyle of sin. As Christians we have turned our backs on the practice of sin, using our bodies as "instruments of righteousness unto God" (6:13). It certainly doesn't mean we are perfect, but it demands that we walk in the light, repenting of and

confessing our sins as there is the need (I John. 1:7-10). *Dead to sin, but alive to righteousness*.

Once we submitted ourselves to a new Master (death to self) and changed the course of our lives (death to sin), we also put to death one big influencing factor on our direction of life: the world. Christians are dead to the world. Paul writes: "And be not conformed to the world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2). In other words, we don't let the world squeeze us into its mold. We don't let it dictate how we act. We refuse to allow the world to tell us what we need to be happy, to be successful, to be self-confident. We "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (I John 2:15). Our lives are transformed by the renewing of our minds, which is accomplished by letting God's word, the "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," be the influencing factor in every decision we make (Hebrews 4:12). That means we allow it to dictate the mate we choose. It serves as our "Marriage and the Family" guidebook. The Bible influences our career choice. it governs our work ethic. it

guides us we choose recreational activities. It is our acid test for all matters of right and wrong, whether moral, ethical, or spiritual. Our minds are completely renewed by what it teaches is acceptable, rather than by what the world holds up to be good or bad. In every aspect of our lives we allow a new set of values to guide our lives. *Dead to the world, but alive to God's word*.

With all this talk of death, some people might think we are rather morbid people. But that couldn't be farther from the truth, for we are alive and well in every important way. Concerning that which we serve, we are certainly dead to self, but we will live forever in our service of a new Master. Pertaining to our lifestyles, we are no doubt dead to sin, but we are full of a living righteousness through Christ. As touching our sphere of influence, we may be dead to the world, but our vibrant lives are guided by the living word of God, which will stand forever. *Dead but alive...the perfect description of the Christian*.

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NOVEMBER 10, 1995

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Volume 32 Number 42
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

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How's Your Vision?

Chuck Webster

In certain spots on the earth the contour of hills gives a tremendous illusion that the law of gravity is askew. Near Los Angeles is a hill where thousands of motorists stop their cars shut off the engines, release the brakes and seemingly roll up hill. But a plumb level placed on the ground where the cars "roll up hill" will show immediately that the cars are actually rolling down hill.

The eye can be deceived; the level cannot.

It's interesting that a similar phenomenon occurred in the days of the judges, only in that time it was not physical, but moral and spiritual. "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Jud. 21:25). The people had rejected God's authority and were basing their view of right and wrong on how they saw things rather than how God saw them. Amos compares God's standard to a "plumb line," an instrument similar to a level, except a plumb line was used to measure the vertical perfection of a wall (Amos 7:7-8). It was the measuring tool, God's word, that had been rejected by the people in favor of their own personal

perspectives. The result was subjectivity, which always ends in moral and religious chaos. If only they had realized that the eye can be deceived, but the level cannot! Although the period of the judges ended some 3,000 years ago, there are some amazing similarities between the situation then and the existing moral and religious world today.

The eye can be deceived in matters of morality.

It's alarming that certain actions which were once almost unanimously considered wrong are now being accepted by the majority, even in many religious circles. According to a recent newspaper article, a high number of openly gay men and women are being ordained by the Episcopal Church. One supporter of this practice says that opponents of homosexual clergymen threaten to "push the church back into the 19th century" (AP, August 29, 1995). Another article asserts that matters of morality threaten to tear up many religious groups, many of which are in turmoil over homosexuality and abortion, among other issues (AP, September 10, 1995). Why is this the case? Can they not see that their eyes are

being deceived? Is their vision so distorted that they cannot see that God's "level" explicitly condemns homosexuality (Rom. 1:26-28)? Are they so near-sighted that to their eyes the Bible's emphasis on the sanctity of life is blurry? Can they not see that all sexual immorality is condemned by God's standard (I Cor. 6:9)? If only they understood that ***the eye can be deceived; the level cannot!***

The eye can be deceived in matters of religious unity.

One can hardly pick up any tape of denominational writing without reading something of the need for unity among all the "Christian" religious groups. Even in many brotherhood publications, this plea for "unity in diversity" is asserted as the only type of unity that is possible among the people of God. Yet once again, instead of allowing God's measuring tool to guide their viewpoints, they're doing what is right in their own eyes. Jesus' prayer for unity is answered only when men agree to disregard every man-made creed, tradition, practice, and opinion and let the Bible alone guide them in all matters of religious faith

and practice. Paul understood that true unity is achieved only when men "speak the same thing" (I Cor. 1:10), and how can that possibly happen without one accepted standard? If a group of men were trying to level a foundation for a house, and each man had a level that read differently from the others, how could they accomplish the job? They would have to discard all the faulty levels, and accept the one that reads true. How true that is in the religious world as well! ***The eye can be deceived; the level cannot.***

The eye can be deceived in the matter of the gospel plan of salvation.

How many times have you heard someone say, "I wouldn't trade this feeling in my heart for a stack of Bibles this high!"? Sadly, this is too often the case. People trust their eyes or feelings rather than the Bible. It is spiritual blindness when one cannot see that baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), that it puts one into Christ (Gal. 3:27), and that it is necessary for salvation (Mk. 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21). How can anyone not see that works of obedience are necessary to please God (Jam. 2:14-26)? Yet many

trust their eyes without reading what the levels say ***the eye can be deceived; the level cannot.***

The eye can be deceived in matters of worship. "But I don't see anything wrong with mechanical instruments in worship to God!" "I just feel like women ought to be able to lead in worship just as men do." Unfortunately, when it comes to questions pertaining to how God wants us to worship Him, many again trust own their senses over His word. Is it so difficult to see that God requires authority for all that we do (Col. 3:17)? The New Testament does not authorize manmade instruments in worship. It forbids women from taking the lead in worship (I Tim. 2:11-15). It teaches that we should worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). It tells us to worship "in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24). If only we could get people to accept the Bible as their only standard, regardless of what the "pastor" says or what "feeling" they have. Isn't this true? ***The eye can be deceived; the level cannot.*** God expects us to use His level when we decide what's straight and what isn't. Let's give His word the place it deserves!

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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How You Say It

Great movements in history were sparked and promoted by clear statements of purpose which others could hear and ponder and then follow. Such was the case with the restoration movement. In his little book *Up to Bethany*, a book about the restoration movement for the church of Christ, Howard Winters wrote, "The return to the original pattern meant that it would be mandatory to go back to the Bible as the complete and only authority in all matters religious--back to the Bible for every article of faith and every act of conduct. This concept had been well stated by Thomas Campbell even before Alexander came to America. Thomas Campbell, who was a well-respected Presbyterian preacher, had seen the devils of division and responded to it by writing what is known as the *Declaration and Address*, in which he set forth the Biblical principle of unity and the means by which it could be attained. A few rallied to his support. Robert Richardson, the biographer of Campbell, says that a special meeting was called by them in order to elicit a clear and distinct statement of the principles they had accepted and were advocating

Thomas Campbell proceeded to rehearse all the progress that had been made up to that time and then concluded his remarks by saying, "That rule, my highly respected hearers, is that, that where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." This became the slogan of the movement because it stated precisely and concisely the Restoration Plea--the plea to go back to the Bible as the only divine source of faith and practice and to restore the church just as it was in apostolic times."

What a profound goal. To "speak where the Bible speaks" was simply to suggest that they should let God do the talking when it came to deciding what they would do in their religion.

There were other similar "slogans" which gradually surfaced such as, "Do Bible things in Bible ways, and say Bible things in Bible terms." For this short article let's focus on this one, and especially the last half. What is the value in our saying Bible things in Bible terms? That is, when we preach and discuss where we stand with reference to the particulars of Christian living and pleasing God, what is the value in using specific terminology straight out of the Bible?

Why should we say Bible things in Bible ways?

1. It puts our teachings most clearly in line with Bible teachings.

Many have become comfortable with the delusion that preaching can be good with little or no quoting from the Bible. It simply isn't true. In fact, sermons which contain little or no scripture are somewhat dishonest. By calling them sermons we imply that this is guidance from God. However, without the scriptures the sermon is not from God.

Furthermore, even if what we are teaching is in agreement with what the Bible says, we clarify that teaching when we refer to and quote the specified passages involved. Whatever else we say, we should make sure to clearly speak the passage.

2. It is a way to let the Lord speak through us.

Brother Gus Nichols once chastened a young preacher by saying that in his sermons he wasn't letting the Lord get a word in edgewise! That makes a strong point. Whether in our private discussions regarding spiritual matters, or in public teaching, saying Bible things in Bible ways by quoting the scripture lets the Lord speak through us.

3. It motivates us to be more accurate and honest with our application of the Scriptures.

This is simply and obviously the case. It is much

more difficult for a man to pervert a doctrine when he is quoting the passages of scripture relative to that subject. Of course he can quote and pervert at the same time (The devil does that, Matt. 4:6-7), but it takes more deliberate and deceitful strategy.

All who week to week prepare sermons and classes should be dedicated students of the Bible, and should pray often before study, "Father, help me to learn exactly what this passage is teaching so I may teach it to others."

4. It often makes it easier for communication to take place.

The best way and clearest way, according to the apostle Paul, to "reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine" is to "Preach the word" (II Tim. 4:2).

It is appropriate of course for preachers to read a passage of Scripture and then in his own words give the context and practical applications. In Nehemiah 8 Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood and "Opened the book in the sight of all the people." Verse 8 says, "So they read in the book in the of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." It is right to "give the sense." Yet, we must never forget that simple statements directly from the Bible are the most important tool to help illuminate the minds of our listeners to what God wants from them.

5. It reduces the tendency for people to rely on a particular preacher instead of the Word. Preacher Peter told a kneeling Cornelius to get up saying, "I myself also am a man" (Acts 10:26). Then Peter went about to teach them "all things that are commanded thee of God (Acts 10:33)."

Although we may not like to admit it, a church tied to it's preacher more than to the Word is a grievous sight indeed. It is right to love and appreciate the preacher (I'm glad for that!), but when he

leaves them through moving or death, though they are sad, their faith shouldn't be hurt one bit. Saying Bible things in Bible terms builds faith (Rom. 10:17). That faith will stand and be renewed every time they read the Bible, Rom. 12:1-2, regardless of the individual who happens to be preaching that word.

6. It creates the circumstances in which other Bible believers can quickly correct our errors, thus benefiting us and our students.

We hear a lot today from religious teachers, who though they are very educated, claim they have been frequently misunderstood in their sermons and writings. While we have all found times we are misunderstood, this is suspicious. Words mean something. Consider please that when we speak the "oracles of God", Bible things in Bible terms, we are clearly conveying thought. We may be wrong in our application of that passage of Scripture, but even that misapplication would be clear because we had pointed to a specific scripture and claimed that we were teaching truth based on that. If our application is right we are right. If it is wrong, we are wrong. Either way, we speak clearer when we affirm that the Bible is truth, quote from the Bible, and then make the application.

7. It shows an appreciation of what our Master said in

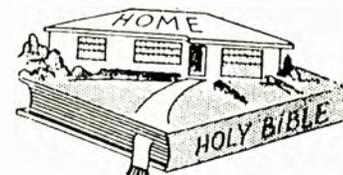
John 8:32, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

This statement from Jesus ought to motivate every preacher and teacher of the Bible to say Bible things in Bible terms. In the truth is where lies freedom from sin and destruction. And the purest form of truth is the Word of God. Every word is important. Jesus wouldn't have been pleased with statements today which promote a more laid-back approach to the Bible; statements like "The Bible is not a blueprint or pattern for our lives, it is a love letter." Jesus said, "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4)."

The word of God is truth, (John 17:17): "Sanctify them through thy truth; Thy word is truth." I Tim. 2:4 says, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." Without truth people won't be saved, and how can they hear without a preacher to teach that truth? "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?...So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:14-16)."

It is best to say Bible things in Bible terms.

Glenn Colley



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Thank The Lord For The Church

J.C. Choate

Thank the Lord for the church, and I am referring to the one and only church, the one that Christ built, the one that belongs to him. This church is the only one that you may read about in the Bible, and only that church exists today with the Lord's approval and blessings. Yes, there are many churches, but that means only that there are many false churches, many man-made organizations that claim to belong to the Lord when he does not recognize them as being his. If you are a member of some church that you do not read about in God's word you need to leave that religious body and seek to know God's will, obey the Lord, so that he may add you to his church, and you can be assured of the fact that he will not make any mistakes but will add you to the right church -- his church. Read Acts 2.

Let me make it clear to you that the church is not the saviour, since the church is made up of the saved (Acts 2:47).

Christ is the saviour and only Christ can save us (Titus 2:13). At the same time, Christ built the church (Matthew 16:18), died for it (Ephesians 5:25), and purchased it with his own blood (Acts 20:28). We are told that he is saviour of the body, and the body is the church. Paul said, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is head of the church, and he is the saviour of the body"

(Ephesians 5:23). He goes on to explain, "And he is head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead: that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Colossians 1:18). Then we are told that as there is one God, one Lord, one Spirit, and there is only one body (Ephesians 4:4-6). Now if there is only one body, and that body is the church, that means that there is but one church. Also, if Christ is the saviour of the body, the church, it follows that if we expect to be saved we must be in that body or church. Of course when the Lord saves one, he adds that saved soul to his church, meaning that the church is made up of the saved. As members of that church we are to practice pure religion, strive to walk in the steps of Christ, living good moral lives, and being faithful to the Lord in all that he requires of us as his children. The Lord wants us to live as his church so that one day "he might be present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27). We are told that the Lord will send his angels in the last day to "gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity" (Matthew 13:41). The kingdom here is the church (Matthew 16:18-19). Keep in mind that one must obey the Lord to be

saved, to be added to the church, and then to go to heaven. In addition, a member of the church must be faithful to the Lord unto death (Revelation 2:10). Don't think you can become a member of the church and live just any way and still go to heaven. Remember that Christ is saviour of the body, the church, and one must not only be saved to become a member of it, but must remain saved, faithful to the Lord, to be eternally saved.

How thankful we should be to be members of that church, the very church that Christ built, the one that he died for, the one he gave his blood for that it might be saved. As members we have all of the privileges and rights that accompany membership. We are the children of God, have access to God the Father through prayer by Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:26-27); I John 5:14), have the Lord's promise to be with us always (Matthew 28:19-20), enjoy all spiritual blessings in Christ (Ephesians 1:3), and above all, the hope of eternal life (John 14:1-3). Not only that, but as members of the church we have brothers and sisters in Christ locally and throughout the world. We are able to worship and associate with the finest people in the world. We are in position to have fellowship with one another, help one another, encourage one another, and to work together for the greatest cause. In our

worship to the lord, and in our Christian lives, we are able to get spiritual training and benefits that will carry over into our jobs and relationships with those with whom we live and work. Even our marriages or our children's marriages may be involved with members of the local congregation or those of other congregations in the area or in the country. We may be, however, too close to these things or to those individuals to even be aware of the effect they are having on us. We would be wise from time to time to sit down and reflect on these matters and to count the many blessings that have come to us as a result of being members of the Lord's family, the church.

Think of the church in relation to the world as a whole. The Christian is said to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:14-15). That being the case with one such person, think of all of the members of a local congregation, and the Christians in the whole

world, and all of the lights they would represent, being the only lights that shine in a world of darkness (I John 1:5-7). Now what if those lights were not there? Then the world would be in complete darkness, there would be no one to represent the Lord, and there would be no purpose for the Father to allow the world to stand. That means then that the world continues to exist today because of the Christians, members of the church, and the church itself that lives within it. The world cannot imagine such, and even many members of the church are not aware of this, but it is true. If one and all only knew the value of the Lord's people in the earth then how thankful they would be for the existence of the church.

With the foregoing in mind, no wonder Paul said, "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Ephesians 3:21).

Most Of A Minute

A Better Way To Do It

I read recently of two men, members of the same church, which had a disagreement. One heard through the grapevine that the other was talking about him in a bad way to others. So, he approached the man and said, "Will you be kind enough to tell me my faults, so I may profit from your Christian candor and work to rid myself of them?" "Yes," replied the other. "I will do that."

They went to a private place and the first one said, "Before you begin telling what you believe is wrong with me, let us kneel and pray that my eyes may be opened to see my faults as you reveal them to me. Will you lead that prayer?"

After the prayer, the first man said, "Now, tell me, in what have you found that I have wronged you?" The other man looked at him and said, "After praying over it, it looks so little that it is not worth talking about it. In fact, by going around and talking about it the way I have, I have been serving the devil myself, and I need for you to pray for me." The disagreement was dissolved.

Jesus said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you (Matthew. 5:44)".

Glenn Colley

***But if I terry long, that thou mayest know
how thou oughtest to behave thy self
in the house of God, which is the church
of the living God, the pillar and
ground of the truth.
I Timothy 3:15***

A Christian Just Like Paul (No. 8)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

In Acts 26 Paul addressed a number of people who never would have attended the Caesarean congregation--King Agrippa, Bernice, Governor Festus and a number of unnamed dignitaries. He sought to convert them and thus make them into spiritual royalty--sons and daughters of the King of the Universe. Paul was confident that Agrippa believed the import of Hebrew prophets as stated in verse 27. Agrippa confessed that Paul almost made of him a Christian. Paul told the moved monarch that it was his supreme wish that all who heard him that day were both almost and altogether what he (Paul) was religiously with but one exception--he would wish Roman bonds on no man. Paul was a Christian and he sought to persuade others to be the same. To date we have discussed Paul as a Christian in name, fact, on location, in suffering and in zeal.

How was Paul a Christian?

In the final point of this extended series I answer that:

HE WAS A CHRISTIAN TILL THE END OF HIS LIFE

He was fully cognizant of how vital lifetime faithfulness to the Christ was. He knew he could be lost. That is why he informed the Corinthians that he buffeted his own body lest after having preached to others he should become a castaway or be rejected (I Corinthians 9:27). Like Simon Peter expressed in 2 Peter 2:20-22, Paul knew that a person can be lost and that the latter end becomes worse than the first. In fact, it is better never to have obeyed the gospel in the first place than to obey it and abandon it in apostasy dying out of the Lord and removed from His saving grace. To the precious people at Philippi he wrote, "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" (3:13-14). Unlike John Mark, Paul did not defect temporarily (Acts 13:13; 15:37-38). Unlike Demas, Paul did not turn back to the world as a lover of the same (II Timothy 4:10). Unlike surface disciples in John 6 Paul did not consider the sayings of Jesus too difficult to follow; he did not turn his back on the One who went to Calvary in his stead.

Paul began well; he continued well; he concluded victoriously his life as a Christian. To Timothy in his final chapter he wrote, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

How tragic for one to be a Christian in youth and middle age only to cast it totally aside in one's sunset years. This Paul did not do.

CONCLUSION

The major focus of these eight articles has not been on Paul as an apostle; in this we cannot emulate him. It has not been upon him as one baptized with the Holy Spirit; in this we cannot emulate him. It has not been upon him as one who could transmit miraculous powers by the imposition of the apostolic hands; in this we cannot emulate him. It has not been upon him as a wonderful worker of mighty miracles; in this we cannot emulate him. It has not been upon him as an inspired man; in this we cannot emulate him. It has not been upon him as a writer of Scripture; in this we cannot emulate him. The major focus has been upon Paul in areas wherein we may and should emulate him even as he emulated or imitated the

Christ (Cf. 1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17). We may and must emulate him in being a Christian in name, in fact, on location, in suffering, in zeal and to life's end. (Six of these eight articles were written while engaged in a gospel meeting with the Cottdale congregation (Tuscaloosa area). This great congregation takes a bundle weekly of Words Of Truth for their members to pick up and read. The Cottdale elders, Dupree Galloway, Ernie Kimbrell, Charles Lollar, Morris Prater, Jack Waldrop and Max Wheeler, know they are putting excellent, solid and sound material into the hands of their members by this congregational action. I strongly commend their example. The good editor of Words Of Truth and his family drove down one night and supported this gospel meeting).

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WHY BAPTISM?

Jerri Manasco

In the New Testament, baptism is *never* said to be because of the remission of sins or as a result of salvation. Some have even gone so far as to say that you never baptize a sinner, for baptism is for those who have already experienced the renewing of their souls. What does the Bible say in answer to this?

Are sinners the ones who are baptized? Why would we not baptize a sinner when sinners are the ones who were baptized in the New Testament? "Repent, and baptized every one of you in name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38). If baptism is for "the remission of sins," then sinners are the ones to be baptized! Their sins are not remitted prior to baptism. "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Who but a sinner has

sins to be washed away? Therefore, a sinner was about to be baptized!

The fact that we are baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3) indicates that sinners are the ones who are baptized, for we are outside of Christ until we are "baptized into" him! Who but a sinner is outside of Christ?

The argument is often made that since baptism is the "answer of a good conscience toward God" (I Peter 3:21), then only those who are pardoned are the ones baptized. At first glance this may have the appearance of having some merit, but closer examination will reveal quite the opposite! One can have a "good conscience" in the general sense that he or she is doing to the best of his or her ability what is considered by that person to be right. Furthermore, such a person will respond to truth when such truth is given to them clearly and he or she

acknowledges that it is the truth. Saul of Tarsus in his persecuting zeal against the church of the Lord had a "good conscience" while he engaged in that repulsive activity. His own lips uttered, 'I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth' (Acts 26:9). Furthermore, this good apostle of Jesus commented, "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16). In other words, Paul was honest in his religious persuasion! The "conscience void of offense" that he maintained proved that he was not at any time insincere in his actions. This explains why he would later channel his zeal toward the cause of the Christ. Yes, they who in "good conscience" want to please God will be baptized, but they will be baptized for the reason given in the New Testament:

"for the remission of sins."

One must remember that the one who penned the words that baptism is "the answer of a good conscience toward God" (I Peter 3:21) **is the same man** who by the same Holy Spirit said to "Repent, and be baptized...for the remissions of sins" (Acts 2:38). Remember that in Acts 2 Peter was speaking to **devout Jews** (Jews with a good conscience just like Saul of Tarsus!) from every nation under heaven. These are the ones who were conscientious enough to be "picked in their heart" by the message Peter proclaimed (Acts 2:37). These were the ones who "gladly received his word" and were baptized (Acts 2:41). Like Paul, these were people whose sole desire was to satisfy God in all things.

As further observation, please note that the people cried out to Peter and the other apostles, "What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). The answer was

not, "Come forward for prayer." The answer was not, "Pray the sinner's prayer." The answer was not, "Ask Jesus to come into your heart." The answer was not, "Bring proof of the inward work of grace in your heart." The answer was, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remissions of sins." (verse 38). The only answer that can be given to an alien sinner "in the name of Jesus Christ" is just that which Peter gave in Acts 2. Any other answer to an alien sinner is in the name of a man or of a church or of a creed, but not "in the name of Jesus Christ." Today if an alien sinner were to ask me, "What shall I do?" I would reply just as Peter did! **This would be the Lord's answer, for it is the Bible answer.** Is this the answer your preacher gives to this great question?

236 Stardust Drive
Boaz, Alabama 35957

NOVEMBER 17, 1995

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Volume 32 Number 43
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

1 the

The Army Of The Lord

W.A. Holley

Whatever things written in the Old Testament were written for our learning and admonition (Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:11). The New Testament is fixed firmly to the hopes and expectations of the Old Testament. Jesus came to fulfill the promises, the promises of the Old Testament (Matthew 5:17-19; Luke 16:16-17). Many New Testament passages could never be understood if we did not have the Old Testament. For example, Jesus commanded, "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32). This would be an impossible command if we did not possess the Old Testament. Read the 19th chapter of Genesis.

The word Sabaoth is used twice in the New Testament (Romans 9:29; James 5:4). This is a Hebrew word which means hosts or armies.

God won a great victory at the crossing of the Red Sea under the leadership of Moses (Exodus 15:3, 13-18). Thus, God is able to give great blessings to those people who know, respect and obey Him. In Exodus 15:3 we read, "The Lord is a man of war; the Lord is his name."

Again, the conquest of Canaan represents God as fighting in the background to win over idolatry and paganism. These forces were in full bloom throughout Canaan when the Israelites entered it (Genesis 15:16; Leviticus 18:24-28).

As Joshua was preparing

to attack Jericho, he saw a very strange sight. He saw a man with a drawn sword in his hand. He identifies himself as "the prince of Jehovah's host--the Lord's army. "The prince" represents himself as the "captain of the host (army) of the Lord am I now come." Hence, God did not want Joshua to think he could win through his own prowess (Joshua 5:13-15; 6:1ff).

This explains why King David was punished for numbering the Israelites (II Samuel 24:1-25).

The thrilling story of the two most famous prophets of the Old Testament show how

God demonstrated the power of His army to accomplish His mighty purposes (II Kings 2:8-12; 14-21).

The Syrians were wreaking havoc on the Israelites. They thought that the situation was hopeless. Elijah prayed, "Fear not; for they that are with us are more than they that are with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Jehovah, I prayed thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And Jehovah opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire about Elisha. And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto Jehovah, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness..." (II Kings 6:16-19).

The wonderful story of Gideon shows how God can fight for His people. The

Midianites had made the Israelites lives so difficult, they were forced to live in dens, caves, and strongholds. The Midianites had an army of about one hundred and twenty thousand men (Judges 8;10). Gideon had an army of thirty two thousand men, but the Lord told Gideon that he had too many soldiers. Who ever heard of any general having too many soldiers? But Gideon's army, at the command of the Lord was reduced to three hundred men. God wanted to teach Gideon to rely upon the Lord for victory, not upon power and strength (Judges 7:1 ff). Hence, it was "The sword of Jehovah and Gideon" that won the battle. The New Testament teaches that "...foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (I Corinthians 1:20-25).

Perhaps these thoughts will help us to understand how Sennacherib's army of 185,000 were slain in one night. We are told, "It came to pass that night, that the angel of Jehovah went forth and smote the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore and five thousand: when men arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies" (Read the entire chapter of II Kings 19:1-37).

When we come to the New Testament the situation is changed. "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (Hebrews 7:12).

II Timothy 2:15, teaches us to rightly divide God's word. The Old Testament is no longer applicable (Colossians 2:14-17; Ephesians 2:11-22; Hebrews 9:15-17). Now the Old Testament has been replaced by the New Testament (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:7-13).

The land promise which God made to Israel has been fulfilled (Joshua 22:43-45; 23:14-15). The land promise before the cross was physical but the Israelites forfeited their right to the Land of Canaan when they departed from the law of God and served idols. Deuteronomy 28 discusses the fearful consequence of their disobedience. Read it and see for yourself! The law of "if you do not, and if you do" is clearly stated. The land of Palestine no more belongs to the Jews than it belongs to you.

Now God's kingdom is the church, and is spiritual. God's kingdom is worldwide and age lasting. Jesus uses church and kingdom to refer to the same institution (Matthew 16:18-19). One cannot be in the church and out of the kingdom. Hebrews 12:18-29, contrast the events of Sinai with the events of Mount Zion. Today, we have Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, hosts of angels, the church of the first born. God is the Judge of all. Just men are made perfect. Jesus the mediator of a new covenant. Those who obey the gospel of Christ are in the

process of 'receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved (Hebrews 12:28-29)." Today the Lord's church or kingdom has no earthly boundary.

At the birth of Jesus Christ God sent His heavenly host to protect Him: "And this is the sign unto you: you shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace good will toward men" (Luke 2:12-14).

Now, under the New Testament, the army of the Lord are those who have become soldiers of the cross, Christians, the children of God. Their armor is described in Ephesians 6:10-17.

Christ is their Captain (Hebrews 2;10). The last orders Jesus issued are His marching orders. We suggest that our readers commit to memory these divine words (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47).

We have no right to wait for sinners to come to us; we must carry the gospel of Christ to them. Many object to the Lord's command of baptism, but why should an anxious soul draw back unto perdition? Many do not mind being baptized into a church, but they object to being baptized into Christ (Romans 6: 3-4; Galatians 3:26-29). WHY??--P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL. 35580.

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Sixth Avenue Church of Christ
1501 6th Avenue
Jasper, Al. 35501

A Letter To The Prodigal

My Dear Son (or Daughter)

You are, and have been since your conception, the joy of my life. I cannot tell you how much I love you. I've watched you develop into a fine adult. My heart is flooded with the memories of you as I watched you grow through the years.

This morning as I was praying, I talked to God about you. I always do.

Since you left the church, He's heard your name from me often. I beg Him to help you come back. I tell Him to be merciful to you.

Even though it has been some time now since you have been a faithful Christian, I have never lost hope. I never will. I can't. I want you back in the church, whatever it takes. I know it sometimes takes a great tragedy to bring some back. Even still, I

believe it would be worth it.

I lie awake at night trying to think of what I have left unsaid...what I might say more...I can't help believing that I've failed you. I think of the past and wonder which year it was that I made my mistake with you. Proverbs 22:6 used to be a comfort to me: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not

depart from it.", but now it haunts me. Maybe this is my fault.

I live my life in hope of heaven. I dread however the time of judgement when we will be separated if you are lost. I don't know how the good Lord could wipe away all my tears.

I was reading in my Bible the other day about a man of whom it was said, "It had been good for that

man if he had not been born." I can't imagine what my life would have been like without you, but I would rather have never had you than to raise you to be eternally lost.

I love you and Jesus loves you. Won't you please come back to His church?

Your loving mother

Daddy, It's Your Fault

We were going into Wal-Mart just like we do about every day, when my four year old daughter asked the question again. "Can I get my ears pierced?" Of course it has been bad old Daddy who has not allowed this child to sit in the sunshine up to this point. So this time I said, "Go ahead, I don't care!" Then I walked away, realizing it was about to be pandemonium.

A few minutes later I heard Anna crying. It had been fun in games until the first ear was pierced, then she decided not to have the

second one pierced. Everyone was trying to calm her down, so I thought I would put my two cents in on the situation. "I tried to tell you it was going to hurt." For some reason that didn't help. She continued to cry and that is my soft spot. So Daddy got her and held her and tried to make things better. We tried to figure out whose fault this was that Daddy's little girl was hurting and before the conversation was over Anna said, "It's your fault. You shouldn't have said yes." After the second ear was pierced she realized it

was not as bad as she thought and now is happy that she had her ears pierced. I also realized that those words, "It's your fault," are some haunting words.

Could you imagine on the day of judgement your children saying, "It's your fault!" It's your fault because you didn't carry me to worship. "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" (Heb. 10-25).

It's your fault because you didn't study with me. "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 shalt 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" (Deut. 6:5-7).

It's your fault because you never showed me the

way of salvation. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

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

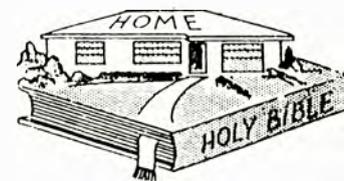
**WILL IT BE YOUR
FAULT THAT YOUR
CHILDREN ARE
LOST?**

Ronnie Hayes
Barn Creek Church of

Death Announcement For Mary Lou Corkren

We regret to announce the passing of Mary Lou Corkren, 67 years old from Jasper, AL. She was the faithful wife of Cecil Corkren, and passed away after an extended illness. She died while with her family in Flint, Michigan. Mary Lou was a strong and faithful Christian. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her. Brother Corkren will be residing in Michigan, near his family.

Cecil Corkren may be contacted at: 5203 Don Shink Dr.
Swartz Creek, MI 48473



**The
Words Of
Truth**
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"Pray Without Ceasing"

Dalton key

We wear ourselves weary with worry, we line our stomachs with stress induced ulcers, we slowly dig for ourselves premature, fretful graves - and all because we have lost sight of the purpose and the power of prayer. We seem to have forgotten the truth of I Peter 5:7, which encourages, "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you." We appear oblivious to Paul's admonition to "Pray

without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17).

Convinced that God exists, that he is omnipotent, and that he deeply cares for us, we must return to this wonderful avenue of prayer, taking the good example of the Bible's prayerful characters to heart. Observe the history of the ages! Great men of God have always been great men of prayer. Issac prayed in a field (Genesis 24:63); Jacob, by a

brook (Genesis 32:22-24); Jeremiah, from a dungeon (Lamentations 3:55); Daniel from a den of lions (Daniel 6); Jonah, from a fish's belly (Jonah 2:1); Peter, on a housetop (Acts 10:9); and the inspired record reveals the apostle Paul, a mighty man of prayer, petitioning God from a prison cell on more than one occasion.

And what of our Savior? Was he not, while in the flesh, a man of prayer? Did

he not spend many long hours, yea sleepless nights, engrossed in earnest supplication? So impressed were his disciples by our Lord's prayer life, that on one occasion, when he had finished praying, one of them asked, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:10). His prayer recorded in John's seventeenth chapter, the prayer which probably should be termed "the Lord's Prayer," reveals the true depth

and richness of his prayer life. These all, "of whom the world was not worthy," along with countless others not here mentioned, recognized and realized an important biblical principle which too many of us have foolishly, faithlessly laid aside. These all believed - firmly believed - that "the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). - 801 N.E. 15th, Amarillo, TX 79109

Measuring The Value Of Life

Neal Pollard

Recently, outside the Bulgarian Embassy in Washington, D.C., the son of a former embassy member lost his life. Walking with his friends, he was confronted by muggers. Apparently, however, his murder could have been averted! The thieves only wanted his jacket. He resisted and fought until one of the agitated criminals slew him.

Without benefit of an opened police report, one's imagination awakens. What was so special about that jacket? What made the coat worth a human life to its young, foreign possessor--its age, its design, or its material? Why did he not just **give up** the jacket!?

Tragically, mankind has

made this same mistake, giving up something so valuable for something less important, since the dawn of his existence. Adam and Eve gave up their life for a piece of forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:6-7). Lot's wife gave up her life for a single glance back at Sodom (Genesis 19:26). Korah gave up his life for a run at power (Numbers 16:31-35). Achan gave up his life for, among other trifling things, some "Babylonish garments" and a bit of wealth (Joshua 7:21-25). Samson gave up his life for relief from the nagging of a wicked, heathen woman (Judges 16:17-30).

Absalom gave up his life for a seat on a throne (2 Samuel 18:14-15). Ahab gave up his life for a vineyard of grapes (I Kings

21:19; 22:29-38). Haaman gave up his life for a bow from Mordecai and his own foolish pride (Esther 3:2ff; 7:9-10). Judas gave up his life for approximately twenty dollars (Zechariah 11:12; Acts 1:18). Ananias and Sapphira gave up their lives for an infinitesimal percentage of the world's riches (Acts 5:5-10). Some Christians give up their lives for brief pleasure (I Timothy 5:6).

The soul is worth far more than anything of the world with which we might compare it (Matthew 16:26; I John 2:15-17). So many fritter away their spiritual selves in pursuit of the transient (Luke 12:15). Life is so worthless to many!

Supposedly, two pre-teen boys came upon a rushing

river in which a little rabbit, trapped upon a rock, was about to be swept away by the current. One of the boys, feeling sorry for the hare, jumped into to save it. Swimming against the rapid flow of the water, the boy arrived at the little creature. The fast-moving river grew quicker, and the boy placed the animal in his coat, cradling the bunny and attempting to swim the river one-handed. But, the undertow and rush of the river took him under and drowned him. Would-be rescuers pulled him from the

water, asking the dead boy's friend and the sole eyewitness why the boy drowned. The friend, brushing tears from his eyes, reached into the coat and pulled out the dead rabbit. He held it up and cried, "My friend gave his life for this!"

If one is lost to materialism, he is spiritually dead. When called before the judge, will he watch Christ hold up his cars, houses, bank accounts, boats, pleasures, and unforgiven sins and say, "My friend gave his life for this?" May it never be so!

Direction

are heading. However, on the brighter side of the picture, I'm sure you'll be glad to know that we are making excellent time!"

I have observed that many people today "fly" at top speed. They make excellent time, they involve themselves in a flurry of activity, but their lives lack real direction.

Each of us need a single, long range goal to unify our life. Paul wrote, "forgetting those things which are

behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13b, 14). Dear reader, it is important to make good time, but it is also important to know **WHERE** you are going. From an eternal perspective, do you know where you are going (Colossians 3:1-2)? How do you plan to get there?

Most Of A Minute

What is the purpose of life? 40 years ago, (September 1955), James Dean, the "Rebel without a Cause" was killed in a sports car he was driving. The famous movie in which he starred featured a teenager sorting through those confusing years, and looked at them with a negative, bewildering viewpoint. As a parent, the last thing I want to do is to raise children who will grow to be rebels without any cause.

Contrast this James Dean movie character with a Bible character called David. Probably only a teenager himself, he heard Goliath taunting the Israelite army, and defying them and their God. Will no one fight in the name of Jehovah? David saw an army of men who were scared to death. They were shaking in their boots. David asked them, "Is there not a cause?" (I Sam. 17-29). Then he went, with God's help, and slew that giant called Goliath.

Love your children. Show them faithful Christian living in parents who have a cause; a cause bigger than themselves. Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, strength and mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." (Luke 10:27). John later wrote, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments..." (I John 5:3).

Glenn Colley

Mike Benson

The loudspeaker of the big jet clicked on and the captain's voice announced in a clear even tone, "Now there's no cause for alarm, but we felt you should know that for the last three hours we have been flying without the benefit of radio, compass, radar, or navigational beam. This means that we are, in the broad sense of the word, lost, and not quite sure about which direction we

Something In A Name

Johnny Ramsey

There is something in a name, and this maxim is true especially in the spiritual realm. Let us be Christians only, nothing more, less or else.

In 1951 in Waterloo, Iowa, a man died and left \$70,000 in his will for "those of my relatives who are fundamentally Christians." As a result of this wording, a strange court case ensued involving a number of the kinfolk of the deceased.

In the final summation, Judge Charlton of Iowa City declared, "As a result of the testimony heard in this court, I concluded that a Christian can believe almost anything or nothing." The judge gave the \$70,000 to charity. *Time magazine* covered the trial in two issues under the striking heading: "Who is a Christian?"

What a travesty upon the religion of Christ it was when no one during the trial opened the New Testament to search for God's definition of a Christian. What a shame it is when men no longer can tell who is a Christian.

The sadness emanating from that Iowa court case was not the money no relative could claim, but it had to do with the almost universal misunderstanding of how to become a Christian. More people would learn from the Bible how to become a Christian if we could show them the great benefits of Christianity.

Why should a person be a Christian, and how is such a relationship begun and sustained? Although countless reasons can be given for being a servant of Jesus, this article will focus on five of them.

First, upon becoming a Christian, one can wear the

grandest name. James 2:7 explains that the first century followers of Christ were persecuted for the worthy name by which they were called. In Acts 4:12 we find that salvation is in the name of Christ alone.

Jehovah promised to give His people a new name, which the mouth of the Lord would bestow, once the Gentiles received the righteousness of God (Isaiah 62:1-2). God kept His promise after Cornelius and the Gentiles had become citizens of the heavenly kingdom. The new name is found in Acts 11:26 where the disciples were called Christians.

Enemies of the truth did not originate that name in derision. God gave the name in honor of His divine promise. We glorify the Lord in that name (I Peter 4:16). Christ has a name that is above every name (Philippians 2:9), and Paul zealously tried to get King Agrippa to be just a Christian (Acts 26:28-29).

Second, a reason to be a Christian is to possess the greatest influence. A Christian is the salt of the earth and light of the world (Matthew 5:13-14). Following in the foot prints of Jesus causes one to lead men out of darkness into light (I Peter 2:21; Acts 26:18). Possessing the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5), results in a new creation in which old things are passed away (2 Corinthians 5:17).

In this wicked world, just abstaining from evil is not enough; we also must shine as lights in the midst of a perverse generation (Philippians 2:15). The far-reaching impact of a godly life will reverberate throughout eternity.

The apostle Paul was very definitive in I

Corinthians 11:1 when he wrote that the Corinthians were to follow him as he followed Christ. Parents certainly need to be loyal subjects of the master so their example of leadership will guide their children home to glory.

Third, being a Christian requires one to meet the highest challenge. Most noble men rejoice in a challenge. The rugged call of pristine religion always is pointing us to a higher, richer and more demanding life. We must surrender our wills (Ephesians 4:20-24), reshape our thoughts (Romans 12:1-2), and sacrificially follow the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 14:33).

To be a disciple of the Redeemer, we daily must take up our cross and follow Him (Luke 9:23). Lackadaisical living will not meet the high standard of the One who said, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14 KJV).

The abundant life Christ brings is rich, full and demanding. Christianity is not a game for weaklings or fortune seekers. To be loyal in the service of the Savior means we will live soberly, righteously and godly (Titus 2:12).

Not very many are willing to pay the price of spiritual growth as demanded in 2 Peter 1:4-9. The greatest victory we ever can achieve comes when we surrender to the captain of our salvation (Hebrews 2:10).

Fourth, we are Christians in order to sustain the dearest relationship. One of the most glorious reasons for being a child of God has to do with the results of this union. We become sheep in

His fold (John 10). The Good Shepherd protects us from harm and leads us into verdent fields of service. Isaiah 58:11 points out that He shall guide us continually.

As Christians we are branches in the vine (John 15). We are partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). We are students of the Master Teacher, for John 8:31 reveals that if one continues in His Word, then he is a disciple indeed.

God is our Father; Christ is our elder brother; and the redeemed of the ages are our fellows in the family of God (Romans 8:17; Hebrews 3). As members of the church we are citizens in the unshakable kingdom (Hebrews 12:23-28). We are soldiers in the army of the Lord as we fight the good fight of faith in a warfare that is not carnal (Ephesians 6:10-17; I Timothy 6:12; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

One of the sweetest of all dimensions in this relationship is with Christ - our high priest - as we, in the royal priesthood, serve Him diligently (Hebrews 7:26; I Peter 2:9). Is it not grand to be a Christian?

Fifth, we become Christians because of what we are. Gratitude is one of the basic responses in our lives. However, often we forget to express deep appreciation for the richest benefits of all. The psalmist asked, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?"

One of the best-known ballads of World War II days sang the praises of a young soldier who gave his life for four of his buddies. But we sing of one who died even for His enemies.

Truly in a reciprocal devotion, each person

ought to become a Christian. In Romans 6:1-5, Colossians 2:12, and Galatians 3:27, we learn we must be baptized into Christ unto the remission of our past sins if we wish to arise to walk with the Lord in a new life - the life of a Christian. In the language of Acts 22:16, "Why tarriest thou?"

Acts contains a collection of conversions in the first century (2:38; 8:12, 35-38; 16:31-34). From Pentecost in Acts 2 through Paul's own account of his conversion in Acts 22, we read the clear terms of pardon God has set forth for the gospel era. Acts 18:8 sums up the situation powerfully: "And many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."

From reading John 15:4 we learn we cannot bear spiritual fruit unto God until we are first in Christ. Galatians 3:27 and I Peter 3:21 show that this process is culminated when we are baptized into Christ. If you have not yet attended to this essential, delay no longer. "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16).

The most wonderful reason for us to be Christians is so Jesus can save us from the heavy load of sin. The most precious part of us is our eternal spirit. May we allow nothing to jeopardize our salvation.

Christ is the Savior of the whole world (I John 4:14). He tasted of death for every man (Hebrews 2:9). He died for all (2 Corinthians 5:14). Let us gladly do whatever He tells us to do (John 2:5) lest for us He died in vain.

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- The Parable Of The Arrows
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 - Rated "R" Movies
- Why Do The Wicked Prosper?

Volume 32 Number 44
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The Words of Truth

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

th the
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Is Jesus Coming Soon?

Guy F. Hester

Since New Testament times, there has been much speculation about the time of the second coming of Christ. Many are saying that his coming is very near, or that "He is coming soon." This is one of the favorite themes of the false teachers on radio and television. According to them everything that happens, whether it be an earthquake, trouble among nations, a presidential election or a federal building that is bombed in Oklahoma City, is a sign that the coming of the Lord is going to be soon.

Even in our song books we have a song, "JESUS IS COMING SOON," written by Mr. R.E. Winsett, a Pentecostal, based upon a false view of Matthew chapter 24. The words of the song teach that since "Troublesome times are here...Love of many cold, losing their home of gold, This in God's Word is told...When these signs come to pass, nearing the end at last, It will come very fast...Jesus is coming soon." Since we are to teach and admonish one another in our singing (Col. 3:16), it is just as wrong to sing a false doctrine as it is to teach a false doctrine from the pulpit or in the class room.

Now we have no argument with any one over the fact of the second

coming of Christ. I certainly believe and teach this. When we take the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week, it is not only to remind us of his suffering but also a looking forward to his return (I Cor. 11). If we had no hope of his second coming, we would not be Christians at all (Jn. 14:1-3; Heb. 9:28; Ac. 1:9-11; I Thess. 4:16-18; Mt. 25:31-46; 2 Thess. 1:5-10).

The point that we wish to make is that the time of the Lord's return has not been revealed. We *do* know that it is getting nearer all the *time*; it is just as certain as death. But we do not know when he is coming! It could be soon or late. Jesus said, "Ye know not when the time is" (Mk. 13:33). The time of the second coming is one of the "secret things" which belongs "unto the Lord our God," and not to us (Deut. 29:29). "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mk. 13:22; Mt. 25:13; Mk. 13:35). Therefore, no man knows that Jesus is coming soon; neither does any one know that his coming in the far distant future. We just do not know when it will be! To say (or sing) that we know that it will be soon, is to say that we know more about it than the

angels of heaven or even the Son of God himself (Mk. 13:22).

Many have tried to set the time for the return of the Lord, but just as many as have tried, have failed, and have been proven to be false prophets. William Miller set the time to be 1843, but Jesus did not come. He moved the time up another year, his coming would be October 22, 1844, but still he didn't come. Mrs. White predicted that he would come in 1856. She told those who were present at a particular conference that some of them would "be alive and remain upon the earth to be translated at the coming of Christ." That was in 1856, 139 years ago. All of those delegates have long since been dead, and Christ has not come. While the Bible teaches that we are to live in view of the Lord's coming, it is unscriptural to set the time as either soon or in the far distant future.

Connected with every war since his ascension back to heaven, there have been predictions of his return. These are based upon a perversion of a passage which in fact says that wars are no sign of his soon returning. Jesus said, "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not

yet" (Mt. 24:6). The time-setters think we ought to be "troubled" when we "hear of wars and rumors of wars." But Jesus said, "See that ye be not troubled...the end is not yet."

While no man knows the time of the Lord's return, the Father does know - it is set in his own mind (Mk. 13:32-33). When Jesus comes, the judgment will take place (Mt. 25:31-46). But the time is set. "He hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world" (Acts 17:31). This "appointed" day has not yet come. When God gave the New Testament he knew that Christ would not come before 1995, for he had the day "appointed," and, to date, it has not arrived. Therefore he did not teach the Christians of the first century that Christ would come in their day. In light of the fact that Christ has not come yet, we know that God has never taught any one that Christ was coming prior to 1995. God never teaches falsely. Therefore, God did not teach people through the New Testament in the first century that Christ was coming in their lifetime.

Since the New Testament did not teach, when it was written in the first century, that Christ was coming before 1995, It did not then teach that he would come soon. The

New Testament teaches now as it did then. It still teaches nothing as to the time of the second coming, other than, "Ye know not when the time is" (Mk. 13:33). If the New Testament did not teach when written that "Jesus is coming soon," it cannot teach it now; for it has not changed its teaching and meaning since it was written.

But there is another passage, often perverted to mean that Christ will "soon" come. Jesus said, "And the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come" (Mt. 24:14). The "end" here referred to is the end of the Jewish nation, which came in A.D. 70. By that time the gospel had been preached "to every creature which is under heaven" (Col. 1:23; Rom. 10:18; Col. 1:6).

No one knows when the coming of the Son of God will be. Whether it will be soon or yet thousands of years in the future. We do know that he will come, and that he will come quickly, suddenly and without warning. The thing for each of us to do is live so that we will be ready, whether it be in our life time or hundreds of years after our bodies have turned to dust (Mt. 24:44).

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Sixth Avenue Church of Christ
 1501 6th Avenue
 Jasper, Al. 35501

Asking The Right Questions

Recently this interesting story appeared in the church bulletin from Salem, Virginia:

A man was killed at a railroad crossing one summer evening in 1891. His relatives sued the railroad, claiming negligence on the part of the watchman. During the ensuing trial, the watchman was called to the witness stand. The prosecuting attorney asked him several questions:

"Were you on duty at the crossing at the time of the accident?"

"Yes sir, I was."

"Did you have a lantern?"

"Yes sir, I did."

"Did you wave your lantern in warning?"

"Yes sir, several times."

Having answered in the affirmative to every question, the watchman helped the railroad win its case. An officer of the railroad came to see him later to thank him for giving evidence in favor of the railroad. The officer inquired, "Tell me, Mr. Jarvis, were you nervous during the questioning at the trial?" The watchman replied, "Yes, I feared every moment that he would ask, 'Was the lantern lit?'"

This compelling story brings thoughts of the current change movement which is dividing churches of Christ across our country. Sometimes what prevents godly elders from

dealing with the proponents of unscriptural change in the church, is the fact that their questions to the people involved often produce all the right answers. The elders than may shrug their shoulders, sigh, and say, "Well, I don't guess there's anything we can do." Even among the most well-known change agents (a name they call themselves), there are many good questions which faithful shepherds could ask and receive correct, Biblical answers. For example we might ask, "Do you believe in baptism?", or, "Do you believe in acapella singing in worship?", and get strong affirmative answers.

However, there are occasions in which more specific questions are necessary in order to get to the root of this problem. For example, an eldership concerned about an individual or group of people in the church, and what they were privately teaching regarding changes in the church, might be better served to ask questions like these:

1. Do you believe a person must be baptized for the remission of sins to be saved, and that baptisms of denominations, which teach that remission comes to a person before baptism, are in fact invalid baptisms? (Acts 2:38, I Pet. 3:21, Acts 19:3-5)

2. Do you believe the church of Christ is a

denomination? (Matt. 16:18)

3. Do you believe there are faithful and devout Christians scattered among the denominations? (Matt. 7:21, Matt. 15:13, I Cor. 1:10-15)

4. Do you believe that music in worship must be singing, not playing, and that it is sinful to play mechanical instruments today in worship? (Jn. 4:24, Eph 5:19, Col. 3:16)

5. Do you believe that it is sinful for women preach in our public assemblies, teach in our mixed adult classes, lead singing in mixed worship assemblies, or to serve in the office of elder or deacon? (I Tim. 3:1-13, I Tim. 2:8-14).

6. Do you believe God's grace will let people continue living in adulterous marriages if they tell God they are sorry for entering the marriage? (Matt. 19:9, Rom. 7:1-3)

In Lynn Anderson's book *Navigating the Winds of Change, How to Manage Change in the Church*, a sort of "how-to" book for those who want to divide the church with the change movement today, we find these words:

"Strategy one

Weave! Alternate between safety and disequilibrium. Teach new ideas a while, stretching your church out beyond comfort zones and into fresh thinking. At first you may hear, "Wow"! I never

noticed that in the Bible before!" This is only mild disequilibrium. But when you feel your church approaching the limits of tolerance, back off! Talk about familiar and safe things for a while. Then, move back out to the cutting edge again. Weave out an in --weave out with new ideas, then weave back in with talk of comfortable things. Then weave out again by implementing new practices; then weave back to some old practices that feel safer. Weave! Two steps forward and one step back".

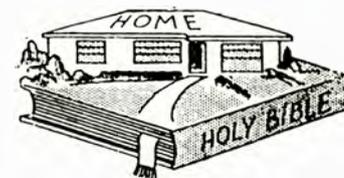
We would assume that if the faithful elders of the church were to ask a change agent in the church questions about their private/public teachings, that it would be a time when the agents of change would want to do some major weaving -- broad, sweeping waves -- to keep from crossing the "limits of tolerance". Another way

to phrase what Lynn Anderson is saying, is, "Dodge the questions." For that reason, churches, and especially elders, need to be aware of the issues at hand, and know some pointed questions to ask.

Incidentally, to-the-point questions like these would perhaps be suitable for a questionnaire to be given to all preachers who are being considered for an upcoming Gospel meeting or special event. In the Sixth Avenue church of Christ we have such a practice.

The many church splits across the land among our brethren are so troubling. Pray that they will stop, and that brethren will unite on the truth (I Cor. 1:10-15). And remember, the one who divides isn't the man who exposes false teachings; it is rather the men who invent and introduce the false teachings.

Glenn Colley



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Parental Guidance

Neal Pollard

Recently, Dr. Laura Achlesinger related from Reader's Digest the story of a father who devised a pretty good system for his dating, teenage daughters. He required each young man who took out his daughters to leave a twenty dollar deposit. If the boy brought home his girl before midnight, he was given back his deposit. If not, the father pocketed the bill. Every suitor has gotten the girls in on time, and the father has cut down on worrying. Though admittedly unorthodox, the man's system is to be admired. He obviously cares about his children. For far too long, many parents have taken a "hands off" policy with their offspring. Some have adopted the "don't ask/don't tell" approach to childrearing.

Moms and dads have a tremendous and divinely-given responsibility to their children. What does it mean to "train up a child in the way he should go" (Proverbs 22:6)? How does a parent "bring them up in the nurture

and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4)? Studying God's word on this topic and searching out Bible answers helps provide parents with the tools to give children the guidance they desperately want.

Begin with discipline. Proverbs abound about this need. The "rod" of discipline, including, corporal punishment, shows one's love of their children (cf. Proverbs 13:24), one's recognition of the responsibility in molding his or her children's character (cf. Proverbs 22:15), one's concern with the ultimate outcome of the child's spiritual development (cf. Proverbs 23:13), and one's involvement in providing his or her children with the skills necessary to face the world and the judgment (cf. Proverbs 29:15). That discipline, in whatever form or forms are found to be most effective and reasonable, must be consistently administered to be effective. Children want guidance. They want to know the consequences of their actions,

and what they should not do.

Be involved. Parents must take time with their children. They need an abundant supply of hugs and "I love you's." They need parents who are willing audiences, eager co-participants, and concerned supervisors. Too often, when asked about their children's lives, parents are found answering, "I don't know." As stewards of their precious souls, parents must be aware of what goes on with their children. An unknown poet wrote the following lines:

Take a moment to listen today to what your children are trying to say; Listen today whatever you do or they won't be there to listen to you. Listen to their problems, listen for their needs, praise their smallest triumphs, praise their smallest deeds; tolerate their chatter, amplify their laughter, find out what's the matter, find out what they're after. But tell them that you love them, every single night and though you scold them, be sure you hold them: Tell them "Everything's all right;

Tomorrow's looking bright!" Take a moment to listen today to what your children are trying to say; Listen today, whatever you do, and they will come back to listen to you.

Be united. Unity blesses the church (Ephesians 4:3). Unity is the oil that greases the wheels of progress in government. Unity is, likewise, the glue that holds together parental guidance. Children often try the game, "play one against the other." If parents cannot agree about the necessity and severity of discipline, the rules governing the household, the order of the home's priorities, and the decisions made by their spouse, children become emotionally lost. Too, disunity between parents creates hostility and resentment that permeates every facet of home life.

Put God first. On moral questions, parents must search out Bible answers. In the area of faithfulness, parents must demonstrate that God has top priority (Matthew 6:33). In decisions

of recreation, God must always remain the center of the home. And, always, God's Word must be the constitution which governs the family! Children will learn that, in every situation that life presents, God's way is the right way (cf. Galatians 2:20). In the process, the everlasting souls conceived by loving parents and given by God's handiwork will have guidelines they can give their children and take all the way to the grave into eternity (cf. Psalm 119:105). "The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have of him. Thy mother and thy father shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice" (Proverbs 23:24-25). Who are the glad, rejoicing parents in these two verses? They are parents who teach that righteousness and instill that wisdom in their children. With the Bible as their guide, parents can guide their children to serve, obey, and please the Lord.

The Parable of the Arrows

Two arrows were sent into the air,
Each the same time as the other.
One belonged to a warrior well-
trained the other to his careless
brother.

The first was thoughtfully crafted
With the proper tools and plans.
It was meticulously hewn and
carefully sharpened to glide
smoothly from the warrior's
hands.

A target to reach had been
chosen. The pathway to it was
made clear, And the arrow was
fashioned in such away that the
wind would not make it veer.

The warrior selected his best bow
And made sure the tension was
tight; Then he carefully aimed the
arrow and shot it with all his might.

The second was constructed
quickly, no time to deliberate so.
It was hastily put together
In hopes that it would go .

Too rushed to look for the target,
he thought it was somewhere
nearby, The brother grabbed up
his worn old bow, And shot it into
the sky.

The arrows were sent into the air.
One reached its goal and hung
sound. The other wavered, caught
by the wind, and finally fell to the
ground.

Sami Nicholas
Burnsville, NC

"As arrows are in the hand of a
mighty man; so are children of
the youth". Psalm 127:4

Most Of A Minute

Learning The Other Half

When you think about this relationship we call marriage, aren't you sometimes amazed? For those of us who believe and follow the Bible, marriage is for life, until "death do us part". In most cases the decision of who this life-long companion will be is made while we are in our early twenties. Then, if health permits, we live with that individual for fifty or more years!

Someone has observed that when we first began knowing our spouse, first began dating, we very quickly learn half of what there is to know about that person. If we are impressed enough with that 50%, we marry. Then we spend the rest of our lives working to learn the other 50%! I suppose there's validity to that. It implies something that is found in the Scriptures, I Peter 3:7. Speaking to the husbands, Peter writes, "Dwell with them (your wives, GC) according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel..." Dwelling with them according to knowledge, or living with them and knowing them well, is not something which can be fully accomplished in a month or a year. It takes a lifetime. And according to the Bible, and to an awful lot of mighty fine old folks, it's well worth the investment.

Glenn Colley

Rated "R" Movies

Why is it that when a movie at the theater bears the "R" rating folks flock to see it? Why is it that if a movie receives a rating of "G", the movie makers consider it a nail in their coffin? Why is society, and even members of the church, so casual about "R" -rated movies?

The answer to all the above questions can be summed up in one small word --sin! Sin has so hardened our minds and consciences that we can no longer blush. *"Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they*

blush" (Jeremiah 6:15).

The "R" stands for the word "Restricted". It is interesting that the restricted movies often have a larger audience than the movies for "General" audiences. It seems that the restrictions are discouraging no one. Parents often allow their teens to attend "R" movies and attend them themselves. Other parents think that the movie theater will stop their under-aged teen from seeing restricted shows, but should realize that they DO NOT.

If you were to attend an "R" movie, what would you expect to see and hear? If you're going to see clean, fun

humor, you're in the wrong place. If you're going to see people treating others with respect and where family values are upheld, you're in the wrong place. What you will see is *"unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covet-ousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful"* and anything else that will offend Christian principles. Oh, by

the way, if you think that the above statement contains scripture, you're right, it's Romans 1:29-31.

Sometimes folks will say, "But I've done none of those sins by just watching a movie. Romans 1:32 says that God's judgment is upon those who commit such things.

In fact, it says they are *"...worthy of death"*; but don't get comfortable yet, because the verse continues, *"...NOT ONLY DO THE SAME, BUT HAVE PLEASURE IN THEM THAT DO THEM"*. If you get pleasure out of an "R" -rated movie, then you fail into the category of the condemned. If you don't get

pleasure out of it, don't go!

Let me state it unconditionally: Christians have NO place at an "R" -rated movie. Whether you are renting it to watch at home, paying for it on HBO (Hell's Best Offer) or CINEMAX (SIN_TO_THE_MAX) or going in the theater doors, it's still an attempt at getting out of sin. If the Lord were to return while you were watching sin on the screen, how would you answer? Don't jeopardize your soul; stay away from "R" movies.

M. Floyd Bailey, Jr.

Why Do The Wicked Prosper?

Johnny Ramsey

An ancient Greek thought-provokingly said: "Life is a theater in which the worst people often have the best seats." It is a strange phenomenon to many that evil men do seem to have the best of it. Even the Psalmist and Jeremiah asked: "Why do the wicked prosper?" As the fifth seal was broken in the Apocalypse John beheld martyrs who mouthed essentially that same ageless question. They wanted to know how long sinful men would dominate the affairs of earth! Any person, with average curiosity, has pondered this problem of life. The Bible is abundantly clear in telling us that the Creator graciously bestows sunshine, rain and bountiful crops upon all mankind (Matt. 5:45; Acts 14:17). What then is the answer to the riddle?

Why do the ungodly prosper? Perhaps the following points will clarify the issue:

1. DO THEY REALLY PROSPER?

I deny that sinful men actually have true prosperity. The meek inherit the genuine pleasures of earth. Uncouth men like Al Capone may have acquired untold wealth financially, but they lived in constant fear of assassination or imprisonment. In Capone's "roaring twenties" a humble milkman in Chicago could sleep better at night than the bootleg baron of America. Wicked men seldom know the tranquil joys of the quiet, unadorned life. In many ways it is still true that the best things in life are free. Andrew Carnegie stated that "rich men seldom smile and never sing." There is another

thought to ponder —The real point is this: What do the unrighteous miss in their all-out quest for material prosperity?

II. IN WHAT DO THEY PROSPER?

It cannot be successfully affirmed that men of evil intent prosper in any worthwhile endeavor. Should they engage in charitable enterprise to cover their atrocities they rob themselves of the true joy of serving others in sincerity. They certainly do not prosper in building homes that bless a community or in leading lost souls from darkness into light. Their influence is forever opposed to those dimensions of life that clearly bring the peace that passeth all understanding (Phil. 4:7). When this earth and its works are burned up and dissolved they will realize the vanity of their emphasis in life (Rev.

18:17).

III. WHAT IS THE DURATION OF THIS PROSPERITY?

Since the wicked prosper in earthly things and have no treasures "laid up in heaven" (Matt. 6:20) they must adopt the Epicurean philosophy of "eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." But J. Paul Getty, the world's richest person, freely admitted twenty years ago: "I am miserable. You can just paint the town red so many times and get drunk just so many times. Then you sit at home alone and realize that money cannot buy happiness." A humble Christian, on a vegetable farm, doing the best he can do with what he has, often has that elusive quality called happiness that escapes the grasping clutches of those whose love of money chokes them (Luke 8:14). In AESOP'S

FABLES one can read these lines: "He that serves God for money will serve the Devil for better wages." Truly, "success" has ruined many a man!

IV. SHOULD THE RIGHTEOUS REALLY CARE?

In view of all that we have said it really reflects upon our Christianity for us to even concern ourselves with the rather selfish inquiry: "Why do the wicked prosper?" Surely we are not interested in that kind of prosperity. Longfellow's Psalm of Life has the classic reminder:

"Life is real! Life is earnest! And the grave is not its goal 'Dust thou art; to dust returneth' Was not spoken of the soul".

As John Wycliffe affirmed so we earnestly believe: "In the end, truth will conquer!"

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DECEMBER 1, 1995

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- **You Know You're In Trouble When The Preacher Begins With...**

Volume 32 Number 45
(USPS 691-760)

The Words C Truth

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

orth the
15

Reasons For Being A Preacher

Johnny Ramsey

As I look back over the past 35 years I am so glad I chose to become a gospel preacher. Many things have changed in this old world-- and even in the church-- but the message of redemption is still the same and the whole world needs to hear it! What a blessed privilege it has been to proclaim Christ and him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2). God is so good to those of us who teach the glad tidings and most brethren are gracious toward us as well. There are many features to the sojourn of a gospel preacher that are unbeatable. I truly believe that those of us who serve as evangelists ought to search out young men with ability, encourage them to become preachers of the Word (Titus 2:1), and then help them personally as they pursue this noble calling. Preaching must always be a passion with us and not a profession! One young man who thought he wanted to be a preacher told me he chose that ideal so he could "preach weddings and funerals and travel around the world." It would appear that his concept was shallow. Perhaps he really should be a mortician or a pilot! But there are proper reasons in seeking the life of an evangelist (2 Timothy 4:5). The rewards along the way and at the end of the road are absolutely overwhelming rich. The

following points sum up my appreciation for the golden opportunities preaching the gospel provide.

(1) *The Joy Of Exalting Christ:*

The key to successful preaching is the lifting up in our messages the Savior of the world. (1 John 4:14.) Christ must be formed in us. (Galatians 4:19.) We must center our lives in the Redeemer (Colossians 1:27), and deepen in his matchless love (Ephesians 3:17). To be able to share the brilliance of Jesus makes life worth while.

(2) *The Opportunity To Study The Bible More:*

Preachers ought to be very grateful for the support brethren give that enables us to spend precious hours in the Scriptures. We should never abuse this time. To have the opportunity and freedom to schedule hours of study in the Bible, church history, word studies and other vital areas, is a genuine blessing. May we never be guilty of wasting these golden moments (2 Peter 3:18).

(3) *The Privilege Of Saving Souls:*

The greatest work on earth is snatching sinners out of the grasp of Satan (Jude 23). Paul told a young preacher to so conduct his life that souls could be saved from death (1 Timothy 4:16). In 1 Corinthians 9:22 we learn the importance of doing all we can that some

might be redeemed. Not enough preachers spend time doing personal work-- one-on-one evangelism-- especially in view of the time and opportunity they have.

(4) *Helping To Strengthen The Church:*

Since the Lord's church is the bulwark of Truth (1 Timothy 3:15), we as proclaimers of the truth assist in earth's most marvelous arrangement. Faithful preachers contribute much to the world's betterment and to the edification of the body of Christ. This is an honor beyond measure. Since truth never dies and cannot be bound (2 Timothy 2:9), we can send it on its way to bless the lives of millions. The church of today owes a huge debt of gratitude to preachers of the past who were loyal to God!

(5) *The Opportunity To Write:*

The power of the printed page cannot be esteemed too highly and yet so many preachers squander their time and never put in writing the valuable message of the Cross (Galatians 6:14). We need to quit using "Selected" and "Anonymous" and "Borrowed" to pen all the bulletin articles. Let us broadcast the hope of the world far and wide. May we never forget the impact of John 20:31, "These things are written..."

(6) *To Be Humbled By Criticism:*

It is true that some brethren relate to Shakespeare in Othello who said: "I am nothing if not critical." Preachers of plain truth often receive their share of negative statements. But this is not all bad. In fact one strange blessing received by preachers is the humbling, introspective value of such criticism. First of all, much of it is deserved and needed. We should never think we are above making mistakes. Secondly, it gives us opportunity to manifest the spirit of Christ toward others. It also will cause us to grow in areas the average person never is tested in. When real tribulation comes we should be better prepared. Some preachers quit because of criticism. That is a mistake.

(7) *To Be Encouraged By Great People:*

Sometimes we tend to forget the other side of the criticism coin. No one gets more compliments than those who speak as the oracles of God. (1 Peter 4:11). Through the years I have been bolstered by the kindest, sweetest and most generous-hearted folks on earth. It may come from an old lady or a little child, a godly elder or a fellow-preacher or in a letter from some person who has read an article I wrote--but such encouragement, to me, is a

part of the providence of God. Let us be thankful. We should never complain. (Philippians 2:14.)

(8) *To Put Matthew 6:33 To The Test:*

A conscientious evangelist will not always live in fancy surroundings and enjoy big salaries. Out in the needy fields, meeting in rented halls, helping to support himself-- he will learn in a practical, personal way the value of what he preaches to others. Is seeking first the kingdom really enough to provide our needs? Or, is that just pulpit talk? A closer walk with God, through the years will make a preacher a better man.

(9) *To Know Time Has Been Spent Well:*

Finally, when the faithful gospel proclaimer comes to the end of the way he can look back on a life of purpose, dedication and commitment to the better things in time and eternity. He will have cause for no serious regret. he will have reason for rejoicing. The fruit of his labors will refresh his memory and delight his thoughts on a rainy day. Longfellow's famous lines say it beautifully: "We can make our lives sublime."

How true those words are concerning true gospel preachers!

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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God Is No Idol

The humble harpist of the Bible, David, wrote of the idolatrous people and their gods,

"Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they see not; They have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not; They have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not; neither speak they through their throat." (Psalm. 115:4-8)

Then David makes this deeply provocative observation: "They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusts in them." In other words, these gods, idols, are like their makers! We shouldn't be surprised. If one were to reject Jehovah to create his own god, he would naturally make that god to suit him. After all, the reason people leave Jehovah is because God doesn't act to please them. They want more control; they don't want to submit to His will over theirs. They want to be religious, and answer the spiritual longings in their souls, but they choose to embrace the freedom to sin with idols, instead of the freedom from sin in the Lord. So, the idolatrous "god" desires nothing but happiness for its worshippers. He flexes and bends incessantly to whatever position his human maker desires. He's a god who always goes along with his maker. As David said, "They that make them are like unto them."

Can this attitude occur without actually constructing an idol? Can it even happen in members of the church of Christ? Certainly so. Have you ever heard a

member of the church decide to live in a marriage which Jesus would call adultery, with this reasoning: "My God wants me to be happy." Have you ever heard of someone leaving a faithful, strong, Bible-believing church for a flighty, laid back, everybody-do-their-own-thing, contemporary church in which folks can be comfortable in their sin, and say, "My God wants me to be happy, and I'm happier in this new church!"?

Does God want His children to be happy? Is happiness His ultimate desire for His children? That depends on what you mean, and it deserves more than a yes or no answer. "Happy" is from the Greek word "Makarios", and means "fortunate, blessed, well off, supremely blessed." The Hebrew word suggests basically the same as the Greek. Consider what Christ said of happiness, and then we will consider some inspired men:

In John 13:16 Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither is he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if you do them." Jesus is teaching that happiness directly results from faithfully doing His will.

Paul demonstrated that happiness came for him when he was able to tell others about Jesus Christ: "I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews."

James 5:11 says, "Behold, we count them happy which

endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." Suffering Christians are happy if they endure and hang on to what is right and true. I Peter 3:14 says, "But and if ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye; and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled..." "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye...(I Peter. 4:14)."

The Lord wants us to be happy doing His will. The converse is also true however. If we do not choose to do His will, He does not want us to be happy. He wants us to repent (II Peter. 3:9). If happiness can be the standard by which we determine right from wrong, couldn't other people do the same thing? A thief who breaks into your house may feel happy as he counts the stolen money. Does God therefore approve? A man and woman living together without marriage may be extremely happy with their arrangement. Does God therefore approve? A drunkard goes for a while without drinking alcohol. Then when he finally turns up another glass he may smack his lips and feel happy to have his booze back. Does God therefore approve?

The conclusion to this is simply that God does not want me to be happy if acquiring happiness for me means pursuing sin. For a person to continue in any sinful activity and say, "God wants me to be happy" is an invalid argument.

I do not know the author of the following list, but I gladly submit it for your consideration:

1. If it takes sin to make you happy, the God doesn't want you to be happy. Sin separates a person from God. Isaiah 59: 1,2 says, "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear; But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

2. If it takes embracing false doctrine to be happy, then God doesn't want you to be happy. Jude verse three says we are to "contend earnestly for the faith."

3. If it takes causing another person to stumble to make you happy, then God doesn't want you to be happy: "It must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man through whom the offense cometh, (Matthew. 18:1-6)."

4. If it takes bringing reproach upon the body of Christ to make you happy, then God doesn't want you to be happy. The church must be without spot or wrinkle (Ephesians 5:24-33).

5. If it takes fraternizing or

associating with evil to make you happy, then God doesn't want you to be happy. We must abstain from all appearance of evil (I Thessalonians 5:22).

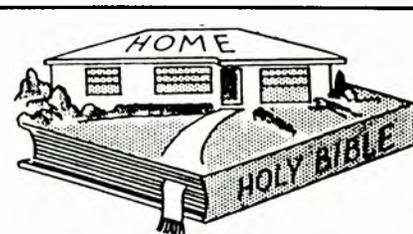
6. If it takes following your own lusts to make your happy, then God doesn't want you to be happy. Following one's own lusts leads to spiritual death, (James 1:13-17): "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed."

7. If your happiness depends upon damaging or destroying your body, then God doesn't want you to be happy. Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost (I Corinthians 6:19,20).

Don't reduce God in your heart to the same measly status as those lifeless idols. Jehovah isn't a God to whom we dictate our wishes. He is a Father who teaches us, commands us, blesses us, and promises us heaven if we will obey Him.

Let's seek to live in such a way that we will be happy, and that our happiness will be God approved.

Glenn Colley



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Discrimination

W.A. Holley

In our day of equal rights, discrimination is a bad word. We have no right to discriminate against races as far as the gospel of Christ is concerned (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 10:34-35). Discrimination, as we use the term, means to distinguish and select the excellent, the appropriate, the true. The words discern and discerned mean to see and identify by noting differences (Hebrews 5:14; Genesis 31:32). Ezekiel commanded that differences were to be pointed out (Ezekiel 22:26; 44:23, cf. Malachi 3:18).

All things are not the same. There is the good and the bad, the true and the false, the right and the wrong. It is a sin to mix all these things together (Isaiah 5:20). The saint and the sinner grow together until Judgment Day (Matthew 13:24-30).

"Discerning of spirits" refer to those in apostolic times who possessed such a miraculous gift. But miraculous gifts have long since ceased (I Corinthians 12:8-10; 13:8-13).

King Solomon prayed to be able to "Discern between good and bad" (I Kings 3:9). There are many things that are similar shades, colors, brands, et al. The world is flooded with false religions, false teachers, false promises, false theories. It is said that a new

religion begins every night. Verily, truth and error are often scrambled. Think with me, if you will for example, of some areas in which we must discriminate:

(I) The world needs to discriminate between the authority of the Holy Bible and man's word. It seems that the masses put little confidence in God's word, but much confidence in the doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:13; II John 9). Isaiah urged people to tremble at God's word (Isaiah 66:2). We should pay no attention to Popes, the Billy Grahams, other famous or infamous denominational preachers, but we should believe and obey God's word even if in doing so we make every man a liar (Romans 3:4). Sadly, we see people putting their human creeds above the Word of God (II Timothy 3:16-17; Galatians 1:7-9). There is but "one faith." We must contend "for the faith" at all costs (Jude 3).

(II) True followers of Christ must discriminate between the New Testament church and the denominational churches. The church you read about in your Bible is as much unlike the denominational churches as they are unlike each other. The denominational churches were established by uninspired men. The New Testament church was

built upon Christ (Matthew 16:18) He paid for it with his own blood (Acts 20:28). Jesus is HEAD of his church--not churches established by men. The Pharisees were offended at the teaching of Jesus. In their view they were reverend gentlemen whose word should have been accepted, but Jesus' answer shows that He rejected their doctrine: "Every plant which my Father planted not, shall be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13).

The apostles never belonged to any denomination. In New Testament times the disciples were only Christians and Christians only (Acts 11:26; I Peter 4:16). The process that made them Christians also made them members of the church of Christ (Romans 16:16). The terms of membership are the same today (Acts 2:36-47).

(III) We must discriminate between the church and the world. Some members are so worldly that it is difficult to discriminate between those in and those out. We must understand that the church is still a divine institution even though the human element in it is very imperfect. The church at Corinth had many problems, but it was, by Paul, addressed as "the church of God which is at Corinth." (We suggest that the entire 1st chapter be read). Jesus taught that the

least member in the church is greater than the greatest man on earth outside the church (Matthew 11:11).

(IV) We need to discriminate between the Christian and a church member. They are not always the same. One is saved and a Christian at the time he becomes a member of the church, but of ungodly words and deeds he may cease to be a Christian. Ananias and Sapphira were Christians when they first became members of the church, but they became liars and died in their sins (Acts 5:1-11). It is not impossible to for the church members to turn back and walk no more with Him (John 6:66). Those who cease to be faithful will be gathered out of the kingdom at the Great Judgement (Matthew 13:41-43). It is not enough to be a member of the church, one must be a faithful member (Revelation 2:10). "Once in grace, always in grace," is never

taught in the Bible.

(V) We need to discriminate between reputation and character. Jesus possessed the greatest character ever found among men, but among the Jewish leaders of His day, he had little or no reputation. They are certain to think of these things again when the last Great Day comes Revelation 1:7.

Brother H. Leo Boles says there are four men in one: (1) The man I think I am. (2) The man my enemies think I am. (3) The man my friends think I am. (4) The man God sees me to be.

The true measure of a man's character is what he would do if he knew he would never be found out.

Character can be tested in various ways. In the business world the test is integrity. On a journey to the North Pole it would be dogged determination. In marriage, loyalty.

P.O. Box 274

Most Of A Minute

The Current Abortion Debate

The eyes of America are on the conservative congressmen and women who are even right now working to show this country the real truth about abortion. How are they doing it? How can they do it with a media which refuses to use the words "Pro-life" for fear that it will imply that others are "Pro-death", and a media which uses the word "fetus" instead of "baby" so that people won't be so uncomfortable with the idea of killing?

They are exposing the pro-choice side by working to outlaw the most gruesome abortion of all. The one in which the baby is half-way born, then the doctor with a sharp object punctures the baby's brain, and then finishes delivering the child.

This particular abortion procedure forces people to say the word murder. And then it makes them ask, "What about a day before that --would killing this child be alright then?" The pro-choice people know if they give in to this, the law will now have at least one time when that baby in the womb is protected by law, so they oppose it. They can't change the fact however, that murder is always wrong.

Psalm 127:3 will always say, "Children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is His reward."

Glenn Colley

Opportunity

Mike Benson

Charles Harvey was on his way to an important job interview when he noticed a middle aged woman stranded on the side of the road with a flat tire. Running late, and in a hurry, Mr. Harvey stopped nevertheless and changed her tire. "My conscience made

me stop," he said.

When he was finished, Mr. Harvey drove on to the Personnel Director's office and submitted his application, despite the fact that he was nearly an hour late. And to his surprise, he got the job. It seems the personnel Director turned out to be the very same

woman whose tire he had just changed!

The Bible says, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all..." (Galatians 6:10a). Friend, when was the last time you stopped and helped someone in need (James 4:17; Luke 10:29-37)?

The Trouble With Hypocrites

Hypocrisy is an insidious evil. As a societal issue it is viewed with disgust and disgrace. As a scriptural issue, it is the causal effect of many damning actions. Hypocrites are exposed by scripture; they *outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within...are full of...iniquity* (Matthew 23:28). *"When he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart"* (Proverbs 26:25). Let us notice what scripture reveals concerning hypocrisy.

I. A hypocrite has heart trouble.

"This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me..." (Mark 7:6). As we noticed earlier, he has seven abominations in his heart. This is a person who is not "real". He is an actor in a play. He seeks to deceive others by not revealing his true heart, but God, who knows the hearts of men (Luke 16:15; Revelation 2:23) shall reveal him at the last day.

II. A hypocrite has head trouble.

"Purify your hearts ye double-minded" (James 4:8). A hypocrite reveals in the thought he's gotten away with fooling the

masses. Sadly, while he is fooling others, he is being made the fool by God (Proverbs 10:18). His head fails to discern righteousness. Jesus said, *"Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time? Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"* (Luke 12:56-57).

III. A hypocrite has hearing trouble.

Rather than hearing the teaching of God, he hears the teachings of devils and obeys it. Notice: *"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the 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).

IV. A hypocrite has hope trouble.

"Why?" you say. Because he has none. Job revealed much about hypocrites when he said, *"...the joy of the hypocrite [is] but for a moment"* (Job 20:5). Later Job asked, *"For what is the hope of the hypocrite...?"* (Job 27:8). In answer to his own question he said, *"Those who remain of him*

shall be buried in death: and his widow shall not weep..." (Job 27:15).

Why hypocrites continue is discouraging to many, but that hypocrites exist cannot be denied, even in the church. Jesus was very clear in demanding a change in the hearts of the hypocritical Pharisees (Luke 23). We, too, must lay aside all hypocrisy (I Peter 2:1) lest we find ourselves with heart, head, hearing and hope trouble.

M. Floyd Bailey, Jr.
1705 Starview
Salem, VA 24153

Sin May Be Cheap, But It Is Not Free!"

Don Williams

On a recent trip to Knoxville, I was amazed at the great amount of huge billboards that were found along the interstate. Many of them depicted sights and attractions one might see (See Rock City, etc.,) or places to visit (Crazy Ed's Fireworks, the home of the 50 foot rubber Dinosaur).

Sadly, some of the billboards told of places that good people would not want to frequent. There were signs giving advertisements of "adult entertainment", complete

with free drinks and food. Other billboards told of Casino gambling establishments in Mississippi, again offering free dinner and drinks. Later, I thought of the irony of this. Certain things are offered free, because by doing so they can get you to pay for that which is sinful and wrong (gambling and immorality.) In fact, they offer Alcohol to you free in the hope that this would break down any inhibitions one might have.

Today, the world would have us to believe that sin suffers no consequences.

As long as we do not break any laws or hurt anyone, it is right and proper to gratify one's pleasures. What we have to remember is that Satan is handing us a line that is untrue. **SIN MAY BE CHEAP, BUT IT IS NEVER FREE!**

Sin may be cheap, but it's pleasures are only for a season (Heb. 11:25). Folks who enter into sin often never think of the end result, and learn too late that their sinful actions do carry consequences (wrecked homes, destroyed lives, possible

disease, reproach on God and his church).

Sin may be cheap, but it has been paid for at great expense. God, because of his great love for us, gave his only Son as a remedy for the sin that you and I commit. In Romans 5:8, Paul writes, "but God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Sin may be cheap, but there is a payday someday! Sadly, some in this life may not pay for the terrible sins they commit. We sometimes

wonder and sing about how that "the wicked prosper, year after year." God is taking into account how we live and he will settle all accounts at death and Judgment. The Hebrew writer warns, "for we know him that saith, vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence, saith the Lord. And again, the Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

May we be wise as serpents, and not fall to the ploy that sin is cheap and sometimes even free.

You Know You're In Trouble When The Preacher Begins With...

"Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking..."

"Here are the notes for the sermon I was going to give, but I've decided not to give that message and

simply to say some things that need to be said..."

"Although my wife doesn't like this sermon, I decided to preach it anyway..."

"Cereal boxes don't normally lead to sermon ideas, but this morning..."

"At first glance, variants between the Septuagint and the Masoretic Text don't

seem all that interesting, but..."

"This morning's lesson has eighteen points..."

"Last night I had a dream of footprints in the

sand..."

"There are some topics that just cannot be covered in just thirty minutes."

Adapted from the Chester, WV bulletin

• See Articles Inside:

- God's Preacher
- Who or What is God
- We Love Him Best At Christmas Time
 - Giving
- Salvation By Grace Through Faith
 - The Sinners' Prayer
- Using Excuses To Cover Up And To Justify Ourselves
- Peace From The Prince

Volume 32 Number 46
(USPS 691-760)

The Words of Truth

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

Birth the
25

God's Preacher

Johnny Ramsey

The great prophets of the Old Testament were truly men of God. Regardless of the difficult circumstances of the day Jehovah could count on Jeremiah, Daniel, Amos and Habakkuk to unselfishly stand for the right way. Oblivious to comfort and ease such stalwart men of valor placed their very lives in jeopardy to promulgate truth in the midst of a decadent world. Rulers could not bribe them; weak brethren could not deter them; the world was not worthy of them (Hebrews 11:38). God's preachers today are challenged to evince the courage of deep conviction also.

I Peter 4:11...Speak as God's oracles!

II Timothy 4:2...Preach the Word urgently!

Titus 2:1...Sound doctrine is demanded!

I Corinthians 2:2...Christ must be heralded!

Romans 1:16...The gospel must go forth!

God's preacher cannot compromise the message of salvation in order to please the world. Sinners can never be saved by watering down the story of redemption. Striving to please men nullifies the thrust of heaven's message. God's preachers have integrity, backbone and loyalty toward the message of the Cross. What are the ingredients that provide the

proper composite traits for preachers of righteousness? True evangelists are God's:

Mouth - Jeremiah 1:9

Minister - Acts 5:29

Messenger - I Kings 22:14

Man - Luke 9:23

Mirror - Acts 4:13

Magnifier - Philippians 1:20

When we genuinely believe we will just have to speak up for Jesus (II Cor. 4:13). Preaching those things we know to be true (Acts 4:20; 26:25) will draw honest seekers to the Savior. Compassion for lost souls will demand we speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). A gospel song cogently reminds us:

"Lend a hand to help a brother who is striving hard and true, don't forget that in the valley there is someone needing you."

It may be that we will need the boldness of Nathan as we rebuke those in high places or the tender power of Daniel to stand up for God in the midst of infidels. We may have to courageously call for national penitence as Amos did or remind multitudes that they stand in the valley of decision as Joel did long ago. Whatever God's preachers need to accomplish, under His will by heaven's power, we must humbly be ready to do!

"I am resolved to follow the Savior faithful and true each day; heed what He sayeth do what He willeth He is the living way."

We will, as evangelists stirred by the mandates of glory, preach so clearly that those who run can comprehend it and pass it on (Habakkuk 2:2). While others rise up early to commit iniquity we will be busily engaged in noble service to our King (Zephaniah 3:7). As watchmen on the walls of Zion we will give the world clear warning from the God we serve (Ezekiel 3:17). God's preachers will never waver but rather grow bolder as heaven draws nearer!

Who, Or What Is God?

Dennis Gullede

We all have our idea of what we think God looks like, or who God is. The kindly old gentleman with a beard motif seems to fit most people's conception. The Bible doesn't describe God's appearance.

Were I to ask you, "How many God's are there?" you would say, "One." So the Scriptures affirm (Dt. 6:4; Jas. 2:19). We are also told of the Godhead (Col. 2:9). Each person in the Godhead is called "God." The Father is called God (Jn. 3:16). The Son is called God (Jn. 1:1). The Holy Spirit is called God (Acts 5:3-4). Therefore, God

is the name of the Divine nature. There is but one Divine nature and therefore one God. This answers the question, 'How is it possible for there to be three persons in the Godhead and yet one God?'

The New Testament reveals all three members of the Godhead and their role in our redemption. Below is a brief summary:

1. The Father is God. He is Jehovah, Almighty, Lord God. He is supreme in wisdom, power, love, mercy, justice and authority. He is to sinful man unseen and unapproachable (Jn. 1:18). From the moment of man's

sin in Edenic paradise God has demanded a sinless intermediary between God and man as mediator. Under former dispensations that was a lamb without blemish and without spot. Now, it is still a lamb, the lamb of God (Jn. 1:29).

2. The Son Is God. In the fullness of time God sent forth his Son to reveal God to man (Jn. 14:8-9). The Bible reveals Jesus Christ in various states or periods of activity. First, the pre-existent state (Jn. 1:1-3; 8:58; Phil. 2:5-12). These passages teach that Jesus is from everlasting to everlasting, establishing his eternal nature. Second,

the Old Testament period of activity. He was creator in the beginning (Col. 1:16). He was called 'Lord' (Isa. 40:3; Mt. 3:3). Other Old Testament names referring to Christ include Immanuel, Most High, Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Messiah, Branch, Rock, etc. Third, the incarnate period of activity (Phil. 2:5-8). He was the same nature as the Father. He was equal to the Father (Jn. 5:18-27). Forth, his glorified state (Jn. 17:5; I Jn. 3:2). He now reigns assuming regal powers over his Kingdom (the church) and rules unto this very hour (Eph. 1:20-23). Fifth, in the

ages to come, the last of his enemies being subdued, he will return the Kingdom to the Father (I Cor. 15:22-26).

3. The Holy Spirit Is God. The Holy Spirit is co-eternal with the Father and the Son (Gen. 1:26 note the plural "us"). Peter, in accusing Ananias of lying to the Holy Spirit seconded that by saying that he lied unto God (Acts 5:3-4). The Holy Spirit is said to indwell the faithful child of God (Rom. 8:11), and this would be precisely the same manner as the Father and Son indwell us (I Jn. 4:15; Col. 1:27). We do not understand that to be liberal, personal or abstract.

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

*We wish you a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year!*

*Sixth Avenue Church of Christ
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Jasper, Al. 35501*

We Love Him Best At Christmas Time

While preachers, including this editor and others, will again make the valid point this year that celebrating the Lord's birth at Christmas time is traditional and not a Biblical practice, and that we do not know when the Messiah was born because the Bible does not say, there are other observations which need to be made. For example, have you considered that the race of man in this century loves Him best at Christmas time? The reason is that we love the baby Jesus most. During Christmas time various stores will sell little nativity scenes which surround a tiny baby Jesus. In December that's commonplace and no one considers it particularly odd. However, if the same stores had special sections and sold books and figurines of the adult Jesus in July, they might be considered more a religious store. Why is that? Because we love the baby

better.

The baby Jesus comes before the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5,6,7), and the cleansing of the Temple (Matthew 21:12). He comes before the Jesus who taught the necessity of baptism (Mark 16:16), or the damnable sin of adultery (Matt. 19:9). He comes before giving being better than receiving (Acts 20:35), the necessity of repentance from sins (Luke 13:3), and the teaching that more will ultimately be lost than saved (Matt. 7:13, 14). To many, the baby Jesus represents only what the angels sang at his birth, the sweet anthem of peace: "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men (Luke 2:10)." How sweet is that sight. The Prince of peace sleeps quietly in the secure

arms of His mother. Only a cruel heart would view this scene with anything but thankfulness and joy. In this unspeakable gift of Gold to man is the humility and love of our Creator. Born of a woman he came to the earth which He Himself had created. One day Simeon prophesied to Mary, "A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also...", pointing into the future of betrayal and crucifixion for her son, but for now they are quite in that manger. And it is natural and right to love the Christ child; yet and still, it is unnatural to love Him more as a baby than as a man.

It is inconsistent for people to love the baby more. Occasionally we do this with people we know. Imagine in our family, or in someone's family, a man is a black sheep - a blemish on his family's name and on society. We are grieved more than

others if we happened to have known that individual as a baby. In our heart we compare that sweet infant we held in our arms to that grown man whose heart is now set on evil.

But that is not the picture of Jesus --one who began one way and then changed to be another way-- He never changed (Heb. 13:8). The Son of God had a purpose which began long before He was growing in Mary's womb (Ephesians 3:11). When we see Him in that manger we should see that purpose. He maintained that purpose consistently through His childhood, His adulthood, and through the day of His resurrection to the Father. Jesus came to "seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

Let us love Jesus, all of Jesus. A man who proudly displays a nativity scene and sings "Silent Night" at Christmas time, and then

refuses to obey the Gospel of Christ by repentance, confession and baptism is not being consistent. A woman who tells her children of the Christ child on Christmas eve, but doesn't show them devotion through the year to the body of Christ, the church, is not being consistent. A man who sends Christmas cards to his friends with caricatures of baby Jesus, but speaks the name of God in derision and slang during other times of the year, is not being consistent.

We don't know when Jesus was born. If He had wanted us to know He would have certainly told us. Maybe the reason He didn't tell us is because He knew if He did we would do something foolish like praising Him as a baby and ignoring Him as a Master.

Glenn Colley

Giving

Some time ago I read about a man who had received a rather harsh letter from one of his creditors demanding immediate payment. He wrote back to the firm and said, "Dear Sir, Every month I take all the bills I have and put them on the table, shuffle them, and pick out six, which I pay. Now, if I have any more

trouble out of you, next month I'll take you out of the shuffle entirely!"

As humorous as this story sounds, I am guessing that it may well touch a nerve in many of us. Dear reader, what place does God have in your budget? Do you give Him priority over everything else? Does He get just the leftovers -- the few dollars

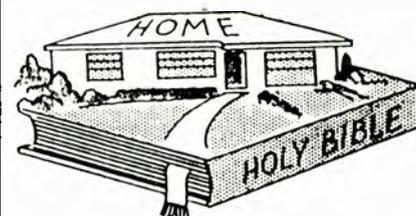
you can easily spare? Or does He get taken out of the shuffle entirely?

Remeber God said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3). Whatever we put before God is our God...and is sinful.

Mike Benson
Parsons, TN

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The Christmas Season is a time for giving.
Give someone the advantage of experiencing

the many gifts the Lord gives us.

Invite a friend!



Salvation By Grace Through Faith

W.A. Holley

What is grace? Grace is that unmerited favor that God bestows upon all men, whether saint or sinner. Is it not true that God loves the world (John 3:16)? Grace represents all God has done for the human family. Faith represents what we do for God in our obedience unto Him.

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" (Romans 6:1, ASV). Some uninformed, folks ask the same question today. It seems that their notion was "the more sin, the more grace". Many people are searching for an excuse to sin. If grace abounds when we sin, why not simply keep on sinning? A sinner dies to sin when he becomes a child of God; that is, there is one less sinner in the world. After Paul's conversion he wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20). Hence, the Christian is not a sinner as the Bible defines the term.

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12). We shall take the foregoing phrases and comment upon them:

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men," The grace of God is available to all, not just the few chosen ones as taught by the Calvinist. The following quotation from Westminster Confession is diametric to Bible truth: "God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own free will freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass...By the

decreed of God, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life and others fore-dained to everlasting death, and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished." Truly, the Gospel is addressed to every creature in all nation, to whosoever will may come (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; Revelation 22:17). Those who come and drink of the water of life shall never thirst again (John 6:35).

Teaching us. Grace teaches or instructs us in the right way of the Lord. We must study, meditate, on and investigate God's holy word (I Timothy 4:13-14; II Timothy 2:15).

Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly. These words urge the Christian to set the finest example possible before men (James 1:27; Romans 12:1-2).

In this present world. Men and women, boys and girls, live in the physical world. Food and exercise are required. We must exercise our senses (Hebrews 5:14). Too, we must exercise ourselves in godliness, rather than modern approaches to restructure the Lord's church or kingdom (I Timothy 4:7). Physical exercise may help temporarily, but activities in godly living are what really count. The author of Acts states in these words: "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:37-44).

Dear readers, the grace of God may be abused and misused. It is possible to make a perversion of GRACE! Listen, "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of

old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, (Emp. mine, WAH) and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4).

False teachers always come in "sheeps clothing." (Matthew 7:15). False teachers never reveal their true motives; they work undercover; they are dangerous because they are unrecognized (II Peter 2:1-2). These teachers are a constant menace to the church. Please read the following Scriptures: Matthew 24:5,24; Acts 20:29-30; I Timothy 4:1 ff; II Timothy 4:1 If, I John 4:1. Many teachers or preachers pretend to magnify the grace of God but they wreck and destroy it by using it as an umbrella to justify sundry departures from Biblical teaching.

These false teachers think the Bible is too strict.

They want a more liberal approach so as to introduce activities which they contend would make the church more popular to the masses. The church of Christ has never been more popular (Matthew 7:13-14; Revelation 3:4). The devil is always on the job, sows seeds of discord, accuses the brethren (Revelation 12:9-10), sifts them as wheat (Luke 22:31), and brings physical death (Acts 12:1-19). It is true that the church began with about three thousand members, but the hand of persecution soon lay heavily upon it. Read the book of Acts and you will see Satan at work (I Peter 5:8).

Many want a compromising disposition. Such has weakened the present generation. Its fruits are seen on every hand. Look at all our violence; look at our growing divorce rate; look at those who lose their lives because of drugs and alcohol;

look at those who compromise their virtue and honor. As a result we have thousands of children who have been brought up without fathers and mothers; it is true because their parents had no regard for the holy bonds of matrimony. Any football team without discipline is a loser (II Timothy 1:7. ASV).

The church of Christ is not a democracy where things are settled by a vote. Christ is the Head of the body or church; the New Testament is its constitution; we must not add to nor subtract from its demands (Ephesians 1:22-23; Matthew 26:28; II Corinthians 3:6; Hebrews 9:15-20).

According to Peter, we are required to grow in grace. "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and ever. Amen" (II Peter 3: ASV).

But one cannot grow in grace by adding mechanical instruments of music to the Bible ordered worship (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; I Corinthians 14:15).

The addition of women preachers and elders can never be sanctified by God's grace (I Timothy 2:8-15; Titus 2:3-4). Unity at any price is a sin because it rules out any withdrawal of fellowship (II Thess. 3:6, 14-15). We must not sit by while others are trying to turn the church of Christ into a denomination (3rd John 9-11).

Yes, the sinner is saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). Salvation is a gift of God but it is a conditional gift (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; I Peter 3:20-21). We are saved by working the works of God (John 6:28-29). We can not earn, merit, or deserve salvation.

Yet, faith without works is dead (James 2:17-26). One works righteousness by obeying the commandments of God (Psalm 119:172; Acts 10:34-35).

We sincerely urge our readers to believe and obey the Lord's truth today.

P.O. Box 274

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Most Of A Minute

The Sinner's Prayer

It's interesting and disturbing to learn of Bible truths which have been altered over the years to the point that they are used to teach something completely different than what God originally intended.

For example, how many times have you heard a preacher say, "Pray the sinners prayer if you want salvation!" Then he will quote something like this: "Lord be merciful to me a sinner." Well, you should know that this prayer is in the Bible, but it won't make you a Christian, and it won't save you if you haven't obeyed the Gospel. The passage in which this prayer is found in Luke 18. A humble publican, who lived before Jesus even died, and before Jesus told what people needed to do to be saved in His church; a man who lived and died under the Old Testament law, prayed this prayer. Is it a good thing to pray? Certainly. But if you aren't a Christian, this sinners prayer won't make you one. Here's what Jesus actually said about you being saved: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...(Mark 16:16)."

Glenn Colley

Using Excuses To Cover Up And To Justify Ourselves

J.C. Choate

People are prone to try to justify their actions. For example, we often hear the statement, "Every one is doing it." Whether it be lying, dishonesty, immoral sex, accepting bribes or bribing others, or a thousand other things, the one who is doing the wrong will offer the excuse that everyone is doing it. He thinks that since others are guilty, that makes it all right for him to behave in the same way. Of course everyone is NOT doing it, but suppose everyone was; would that make it right? If a thing is wrong, it is wrong, regardless of how many may be doing it. If a thing is right, we should do it even if others are not. Even though we may be among the few who do the right thing, the people of the world will generally respect us for doing right and refraining from that which is bad and wrong (Romans 13:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:12).

Sometimes we use excuses to try to justify

NOT doing good things. In the church there are those who will tell you that it is a waste of time to invite people to worship. They say that they have invited their friends and people in general many times but they have no interest in coming to worship or study. Such Christians have given up on evangelizing. But the problem is that they have heard others say that people are not interested so often that they begin to say it too. This is Satan's propaganda and most of the Lord's people have fallen for it. What if a business man used that kind of reasoning? "There is no need to try to sell my product because no one is interested and will buy it." If he reasoned that way he would soon be out of business and would be going hungry. Successful salesmen do not so reason. They have something to sell, they believe in it, and they work at it. They may be turned down again but they believe that if they will work they will be successful in selling their

goods, and so they are. If we believe in Christ, that he is the Son of God, that he died on the cross for our sins, and that he can save us, then we will go forth with excitement and zeal for that message, and we will be able to win souls to Christ, encourage our friends to attend worship, to study the Bible, or whatever else we are trying to accomplish. Read Acts 8.

There are those who will not let it be known that a Bible correspondence course is being offered by the church of Christ. They say that people are prejudiced and will not take a course if they know that it is from the church of Christ. Yet, in most cases the church is hardly known in the particular area. How could people be prejudiced against it when they know little or nothing about it? Maybe we are the problem because of the way we have presented the church to them. But the point is, sooner or later they must learn about the church if they are going to be taught

the truth. That is simply because the truth concerning Christ also includes the truth about His church. That church wears the Lord's name, and therefore if one obeys Christ and is saved, Christ is going to add him to his church, making him a member of the church of Christ. Read Acts 2. Now how can you offer one a Bible correspondence course, or teach one the truth, without these things coming out? If a person is prejudiced against the church, and you start off without identifying it, such a person may not appreciate it once he finds out that you are representative of the church of Christ. Why be ashamed of the Lord and his name? Furthermore, if a person is that prejudiced against the Lord and His church, he probably will not be a very good prospect for conversion.

The fact is, in all of this, there are those who try to justify their actions on the basis that the majority do it, or the majority don't do it,

or they are afraid that someone will not accept the truth for what it is. We must remember, however, that the Lord is the way to heaven, the only way, and His way is narrow (John 14:6; Matthew 7:13-14). We must do what he wants us to do whether anyone else does it or not. Or if the Lord forbids that we do a thing, we cannot do it and be acceptable to him even if the whole world is doing it. Furthermore, when we really believe in the Lord and we are ready to put him first in our lives; we are going to find many opportunities to teach and convert souls to Christ. The offering of excuses for not doing so will be the furthestmost thing from our minds. We will love the Lord, freely acknowledge him, proclaim him to the world, serve him faithfully, and bring forth fruit to his honor and glory. In all of these things, it is a matter of what we believe, how strong our faith is, and how much we want to go to heaven.

Peace From the Prince

Vance Hutton

Isaiah likened the wicked to the troubled sea when it cannot rest (Is. 57:20). There is truly no peace to the wicked. How many times have we ourselves had our peace destroyed by sin. I have often been reminded of the peace enjoyed in Christ when I see a large peaceful body of water. The Prince of Peace (Is. 9:6) offers us a peace different than anything the world can offer (Jn. 14:27). There is a God of peace (Phil. 4:9) who extends to man a peace that passes all understanding (Phil. 4:7). The gospel is a good message about the peace of Christ (Eph. 6:15). Do you

enjoy this peace? It can be yours. In almost every letter penned by Paul, he will remind his readers of the blessing of the peace from the Lord. Notice some things that make for such peace.

I) COMING TO KNOW GOD: To know God and Christ is life eternal (Jn. 17:3). In Christ, there is peace and outside of Him one has no hope (Eph 2:12-16). Realizing that He is creator and we are creatures, we want to please Him. Pleasing Him extends to us peace. Learning of Him and His desires prompts us to believe and obey. In this, there is peace. To know

Him is to love Him and to love is to obey (I Jn. 5:3). This makes for peace. Can there be peace when we are displeasing to the one to whom we must give account?

II) COMMITTING TO FAITHFULNESS: Only false assurance and false peace can be had if we are not faithful. We cannot be right with our God unless we are faithful. Faithfulness and dedication bring assurance of being acceptable at the judgment. Peace is embedded in knowing that all is well with the soul. I Cor. 15:58 assures us of reward for faithfulness. II Pet. 1:10-11 promises entrance into

heaven for faithfulness. Are you faithful?

III) CONSECRATING ONESELF TO PURITY:

Having a conscience void of offense brings peace (Acts 24:14). Living in holiness before God and man brings peace (I Thess. 2:10). One cannot enjoy calmness within while living in sin. Thinking pure thoughts, saying proper things, doing appropriate deeds, and treating people right make for peace. Is your peace being destroyed by a realization of improper actions as regarding purity?

IV) CHOOSING SPIRITUAL PRIORITIES: It is not possible to enjoy peace that God offers unless we

put spiritual things first. Without such, we are disobedient to God and no peace can be enjoyed by such people. Do we love God supremely? Are we first giving ourselves to the Lord? Are we seeking first the kingdom and the Lord's righteousness? Are we most interested in laying up treasures in heaven? Are we raising our families to be giving to spiritual matters? Is the soul more important than the body? Is heaven more important than the earth?

Do you know true peace? It can be yours! Have you obeyed His will? Are you faithful?

Double Springs, AL

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- Rockwell's Honesty Painting
- The Courage Of Amos

Volume 32 Number 47
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

Adam A Type Of Christ

W. A. Holley

"Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him that was to come" (Romans 5:14, ASV). The foregoing quotation does not mean that those who lived from Adam to Moses did not sin at all--there are many accounts of sin charged to those who lived then--Cain, the antediluvians, Sodom and Gomorrah, et al---but it does mean that the people did not commit the same sin as Adam. Hence, we are not guilty of Adam's sin. Man is not born a sinner (Ezekiel 28:15). We are not born away but we do go astray (Psalm 58:3; Jeremiah 50:6; Ezekiel 14:11).

The word similitude is translated likeness in the American Standard Version. Hence, there is a resemblance, analogy, affinity, when we compare Adam and Jesus Christ.

We suggest that I Corinthians 15:45-47 be read. Here you will see a comparison made between Adam and Christ.

(1) Adam was not born into this world; he was created miraculously. "And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and brethren into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7, ASV, Isaiah 7:14).

Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary. He, therefore, did not enter into the world in the ordinary way. "Now the birth of

Jesus Christ was on this wise: When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Spirit...And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins (Matthew 1:18,21).

(2) At first Adam had no wife. He had to be put sleep and suffer giving up a rib in order to have a wife (Genesis 2:21-24).

At first Jesus had no church, but had to suffer on the cross, shedding his blood for the sins of the world. (John 19:31-37; Hebrews 9:22-28; Romans 6:23). Jesus shed his blood in order to purchase the church which is his bride. See Matthew 16:18-19; Ephesians 5:25; Acts 20:28; Revelation 21:9; Romans 7:4.

(3) Adam was put into a deep sleep, but he finally awakened and revived (Genesis 2:21-24). Here we have the first surgery in the history of the world. God made Adam a suitable companion. It has been said, "That woman was not taken from man's head to rule over him, nor from his feet to be trampled upon, but from his side, under his arm, to be protected, and closest to his heart, to be loved."

Jesus Christ in a true likeness slept the sleep of death, revived and now lives forevermore (Acts 1:22; 2:31; 4:33; Romans 1:4; 6:5; Philippians 3:10; I Peter 1:3; 3:21). Some to whom Paul wrote thought the resurrection

was already past (II Timothy 2:18). The resurrection of Christ was a tremendous conquest: Christ through his resurrection gave man victory over the law of Moses, for it was nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14-17; man was given victory over sin, for He made atonement for sin (Hebrews 7:27): Jesus resurrection became the first fruits or the down payment of all humanity (I Corinthians 15:20-28).

(4) Adam had but one wife, Eve. Polygamy was sinful and is still so in God's sight. When a man and a woman are married Scripturally, they become one flesh because God joined them together, and what God joined together man must not cut asunder (Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:11-12). Marriage is the fundamental principle of social order. We are seeing the evil fruits of sex without benefit of marriage. Marriage is stronger than parental relationships. In marriage the pair become one flesh, so that man is as much joined to his wife as he is to his own body.

In comparison, Jesus has but one bride, the church. We suggest that II Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 22:17, be closely scrutinized. Dear reader, is Jesus married to all denominational churches? If so, Jesus becomes a polygamist. Jesus has but one church (Matthew 16:18-19; Ephesians 4:4-6). Denominationalism is sinful (John 17:20-23; Matthew 15:13).

(5) The woman wore

Adam's name. "Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created" (Genesis 5:2). Hence, their names were Adam and Eve Adam

Those who are married to Christ are named after Him. God's family includes those saints who have gone on and those saints still living on earth. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and on earth are named" (Ephesians 3:14-15). The word CHRISTIAN is used three times in the Bible (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Peter 4:16). The name Christian is never used as an adjective.

Thus, Adam was the head of his wife and her only rightful ruler. Adam ruled over no other bride.

Christ is the head of His church which is His body (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 4:4-6; Colossians 1:18). Jesus rules over no other religious body, society, or organization.

(6) Adam and Eve were miraculously created. but their children were born according to God's natural law of reproduction (Genesis 1:28).

Just so, Christ was miraculously begotten, and His church or kingdom was established by miraculous power on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection, when the apostles as charter members were set in the church, by power from on high (Acts 2:1-36; Ephesians 4:11-12; I

Co 2:28-31). Mi eased when the shed their pu ians 13:8-13). Now all things are perpetuated by divine law (Psalm 19:7; I Peter 1:22-25; Romans 1:16).

(7) Adam was commanded "to be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Genesis 1:28).

The church of the Lord is commanded to preach the Gospel of Christ to all the world (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47).

(8) Another important likeness is: Cain and Abel did not join Adam's family. Rather, they were born into it.

Note, the church is God's spiritual house (I Peter 2:5). Jesus taught that one enters the church or kingdom through the door of the new birth (John 3:3-5). In birth there must be a begetal and a bringing forth into the family relationship. Sinners are spiritually begotten by the word of God (Luke 8:11; I Peter 1:23). It is then that faith is produced in the human heart (Romans 10:17; I John 5:1). Birth occurs when the sinner is raised in baptism to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-4 16-18; Colossians 2:12). In New Testament times no one ever "joined the church of his choice."

These words are written for those honest souls who truly wish to know the truth.

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From The Editor

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The Definite Article "THE"

From March 20, 1970 By The Late Gus Nichols

In confessing his faith in Christ, Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16:16). Jesus is not merely "a" Son of "a" living God. Neither is he merely "a" Christ --one among many Christs. But he is "THE" Christ, "THE" Son of "THE" living God. There is but one Christ who is the Only Son of the only true and living God. (John 1:1-14; 3:16). Peter believed in and confessed only one Christ. It would have been very foolish if some one had asked him which Christ he believed in. There was only one Christ for any one to believe in and serve. (I Corinthians. 8:6). The only choice any one could have was a choice between "the Christ, the Son of the living God" and "False Christs". (Matthew. 24:24; 16:16). No one wants us to preach to him a false Christ. All want to hear and learn more of the Christ of the Scriptures, the true Christ! We are not narrow when we preach that Jesus is "THE" Christ, "THE" Son of "THE" living God. (Matthew 16:16). We have never heard any one say that one Christ is "AS GOOD AS ANOTHER," and that all should simply believe in and obey "THE CHRIST OF HIS CHOICE."

"THE BIBLE SPEAKS OF THE CHURCH - NOT CHURCHES. Christ built only one church. (Matthew 16:18). He did not build various kinds of churches so his followers might be scripturally divided. (John 17:20-23; I Corinthians. 1:10). As the scriptures speak of "THE CHRIST" they also speak of CHRIST

AND THE CHURCH" -one Christ and one church (Ephesians 5:32). There are as many Christs in the New Testament as there are kinds of churches in that Book. The church is the body of Christ and there is only one body (Ephesians 4:4).

Paul says there is "But one body" (I Corinthians. 12:20). He also says the church "Is His Body" (Colossians. 1:18-24; Ephesians 1:20-23). We have the same expression: "THE CHRIST" and the THE CHURCH", the same definite article is used in relation to both. Paul says, "Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25). Again, "The Lord added to the church" (Acts 2:47). Again, "Unto him be glory in the church" (Ephesians 3:21).

The local churches were the same in faith doctrine and practice, and were simply "Churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16). Each congregation was a part of the one church in the general sense of the word. All want us to preach the Christ of the scriptures, yet many want us to preach a church not in the scriptures.

As a Christ differing from the Christ of the scriptures would not be the true Christ, a church differing from the church of the scriptures would not be the true church. As "THE CHRIST" means one Christ, the true Christ, so "THE CHRIST" means one church, the true church. Thus we have the one true Christ and the one true church in the New Testament. All other Christs and all other churches are false Christs, and false

churches (Matthew 24:24; 16:18; Romans 16:16).

"THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH"

Christ is called "The head of the body, the church." (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:20-23; 5:23). There is "THE HEAD" --one head of the "one body" (Ephesians 4:4; I Corinthians 12:20). And this "One body" "Is the Church" (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18-24). The "one body" does not need a plurality of heads. Neither does Christ, "the head" need a plurality of bodies, or churches through which to function (Ephesians 5:24). All this adds up to one Christ, one head of one church, or one body of which Christ is the saviour (Ephesians 5:23). Neither the Pope nor any other man can be head of the church of Christ in the New Testament. There are no more bodies or heads, nor churches in the New Testament than there are Christs in that Book.

"THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST"

Just as we find "the Christ", one Christ in the New Testament, so we find "The gospel of Christ", only one true gospel in that Book. Paul says, "I am not ashamed of THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST: for it is THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION" (Romans 1:16). Everyone should want us to preach the gospel of the New Testament, not some false gospel, just as all want us to preach the Christ, and not a false Christ. The scriptures speak of "THE GOSPEL". (I Corinthians 15:1-4). It is "THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST". There are as many Christs as there are

gospels of Christ.

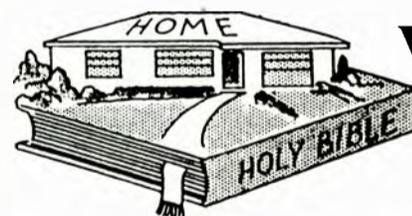
Of course there are four books which men call Gospels," but these add up to one gospel - they are not contradictory, nor different gospels in the final analysis. The curse of God will rest upon man or angel who preaches a different gospel from that preached by the apostles (Galatians 1:6-9). No one has the right to the gospel of his choice any more than to the Christ of his choice. All people must believe the gospel of Christ, and obey it to be saved (Mark 16:15-16). No other gospel will do.

"THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST"

The scriptures speak of "THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST", and not a plurality of doctrines of Christ. His teaching was a unit, a harmonious system of doctrine. "Whosoever

transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God" (2 John 9-11). But we do read of plurality of doctrines - "doctrines" and commandments of men. (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:3-13; Colossians 2:20-23; 2 Timothy 4:2-5). The doctrine of Christ makes Christians only - it is the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11). Other doctrines make sectarians and denominationalists (Acts 11:26). No one has a divine right to the doctrine of his choice. There is "THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST" - one doctrine, as there is "THE CHRIST, - one Christ. There is also "THE WAY", (Matthew 7:13-14; John 14:6), one way unto life, and "THE FAITH", one faith (Ephesians 4:4-5; Jude 3). There are as many doctrines, ways and faith as there are Christs - one of each.

Glenn Colley



The Words Of Truth

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Miracles Of Moses

A few years back, while living in Missouri, my mother-in-law mailed me a newspaper clipping from the Mobile paper advertising a "SCHOOL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT". Humorously, below the ad she wrote, "wanna enroll?" But in all seriousness brethren, many probably attended this "Defining and determining 20th Century prophets in the Church" seminar that intended on "teaching and portraying different levels of the prophetic ministry". Like many, I am deeply concerned by the mass of misinformation that is being decimated these days on and about the Holy Spirit. Of course we have come to expect that of those in the denomination world. For centuries now, untold thousands have bought-in to the teaching of Augustine (which was further expanded and prompted by John Calvin) called Irresistible Grace. The Westminster Confession of Faith (1648) explains that doctrine like this:

"All those whom GOD has predestined unto life, and those only, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and

savingly, to understand the things of GOD; taking away their heart of stone, and giving them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ, yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace."

Allow me to translate that creedal; jargon for you. This doctrine holds that the Holy Spirit has directly, immediately, and personally deposited the grace of GOD into their hearts of certain ones; and that this process is completed by the Holy Spirit in a way which is above and beyond and in addition to the Word of GOD. I say we simply must reject this concept and anything akin to it as being totally foreign to the teaching of the New Testament. The Scriptures are clear that the Holy Spirit, a person, uses His instrument the Word of GOD [Ephesians 6:17] to convict, convert and to sanctify a person. The Spirit is not the word and the word is not the Spirit, but the Spirit through the medium of the word begets us [James 1:18; I Peter 1:21-23]. Asserting that the Spirit does something, here on earth, for the individual in addition to the word nothing but detract from the word and denigrate the Spirit. It was the Spirit

himself that affirmed that the Scriptures are GOD's power unto salvation [Romans 1:16], active [Hebrews 4:12], and all sufficient [2 Timothy 3:16-17]. About thirty years ago brother Perry B. Cotham wrote these lines:

"In meeting denominational preachers on the question of the operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion, we say the Spirit is a person and the word is the instrument. The Spirit quickens (John 6:63) and the word quickens (Ps. 119:50). People are born of the Spirit (John 3:5-6) and they are born again of the word (I Peter 1:23). One is sanctified by the Spirit (I Peter 1:21; Romans 15:16) and one is sanctified by the word (John 17:17). (These examples of what the Spirit does and what the word does could be extended.) This does not mean that the word does some things and then the Spirit does something over and above the word. The sinner is not converted by the word and by an additional direct influence by the Spirit. The gospel is GOD's power unto Salvation (Romans. 1:16), and it is impossible to show from the Scriptures any additional influence in conversion." [Firm Foundation, June 21, 1966, p.391]

Whether one realizes it or not, when he contends that the

Holy Spirit prepares the heart for conversion apart from the word of GOD, he is advocating a position that would require a miracle. And it amazes me that apparently some can't grasp the connection between what they are contending for and the miracle it would take to deliver it.

Now it occurs to me that some light might be shed on this subject from the examination of Luke 16:19-31. You will remember this text as dealing with our Lord's statements about the life, times, and hereafter of the rich man and Lazarus. Verses 27-31 printed below will suffice to make our point.

"Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house. For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said Nay, father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

Now get this brethren, it's very important; what did Abraham say they had to direct them into a right relationship with GOD? Was it Moses and the prophets? Of course, they didn't literally have Moses or the prophets, this being but a figure of speech known as metonymy. What this demonstrates though is that the brothers of the rich man had access to the writings or teachings of Moses and the prophets. Brethren, Abraham's statement as voiced by Jesus Christ himself is that even if a miracle were available (one rising from the dead, verses 30-31), this would not make a difference in the lives of these men for what they needed to save them from the same fate as their rich brother was the word of Moses and the prophets.

Likewise today, the inspired testimony is that we have and what we need in the here and now to turn people to GOD is not a miracle, but the writings of Jesus and the New Testament authors. Take comfort in the knowledge that the sword of the Spirit is still the Word of GOD.

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Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

1 Corinthians 13:8-10

Most Of A Minute

Rockwell's Honesty Painting

What price tag would you put on your integrity? I mean, how high would the stakes have to be before you would do something unethical or dishonest?

One of Norman Rockwell's paintings showed a woman buying a turkey. Both the woman and the butcher watched the scales as the turkey was being weighed. Behind the counter the butcher's thumb was pressing down. On the other side of the scales, the lady's finger was under the scales pushing up. Rockwell had a way of making a picture say more than its usual 1000 words. The point I want to make is this: Put a high price on your integrity and your honesty. The wisest man who ever lived said, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." And Revelation 21:8 says that the dishonest person will receive eternal punishment.

Glenn Colley

The Courage Of Amos

Johnny Ramsey

Not many truly great people come across the stage of life in any given generation. Such a rare jewel was the prophet from Tekoa, the courageous Amos. Few books ever written capture the heartbeat of a nation, but the sterling quality of the Old Testament message of Amos is definitely in that category.

Although removed from our present society by nearly 3,000 years, the dynamic drama of Amos is still vibrant, fresh and needed. For a treatise to never die, its salient points must be practical indeed. Such a book is the nine-chapter powerhouse known as Amos.

Preachers of today need a double portion of his courage, conviction and commitment. He was not an after dinner speaker but, rather, a before-judgment proclaimer. Amos provoked men to think, pricked their conscience to action, or prompted audiences to plead with the preacher to move on to other regions and leave them alone.

Three of the most insistent servants God ever had on the subject of repentance were Ezekiel, Amos and John the Immerser. They were also three of the most unpopular men who ever lived.

What a debt we owe to the unbending courage of Amos. The literature in the Bible bearing his name is a veritable storehouse of brilliant loyalty toward Jehovah and love for the very people who despised the unprofessional prophet who could not be hired or fired by men. Though a simple herdsman and fruit-gatherer, Amos proved to

be a profound spokesman for God with a sermon long overdue.

In the first stanza of Amos, enemy nations are rebuked sternly for their shameful actions. Many transgression had been committed by Edom, Egypt, Ethiopia, Moab, Syria and Philistia. God would not have wasted time rebuking them if (as some today erroneously say) the Gentiles were not answerable to Him.

As the book of Amos continues, the prophet rebukes Israel and Judah for their failures in the spiritual realm also. Not only were they guilty of mistreatment of the poor, but their covetous hearts choked out spiritual growth and they dishonored God.

Adding to their sin-hardened hearts was another heinous crime - they discouraged the spiritual leaders of their day. Both the prophets and the Nazirites, who walked close to the Creator, were mocked by the contemporaries of Amos.

Today in the church we often see weak, worldly members make light of godly brethren who will not partake of Satan's delights. We ought to be very careful lest we dishearten folk who strive to walk hand in hand with Jesus. When the cause of Christ is bereft of spiritual giants, we are all in a terrible state of affairs. If we were all as worldly as some brethren are, the army of the lord would soon perish from the earth.

Amos 3:3 makes it clear that unless we agree with our Maker, we walk alone down a rocky, rugged road.

One of the most misunderstood verses in

the Bible is a famous one in Amos 4:12, "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel."

The passage simply sets forth the pronouncement that, because of their overt wickedness, Israel only had time to meet God in judgement. They would not be able to escape punishment and bondage, but would shortly reap as they had sown (Hosea 8:7). Words of an old gospel song are apropos on this issue:

Too late, when death has barred the door,
Your wailings can be heard no more!
Rejected there, thy soul will be -
Shut out for all eternity.

One of the classic chapters in the Old Testament is the fifth stanza of Amos. In this part of the brilliant book, we learn of vain worship, pretended devotion, misplaced values and the scourge of materialistic pursuits. That which was offered as homage and devotions was called "noise" by Jehovah. The people had become so corrupt they could not escape punishment for sins that separate them from their heavenly Father.

A day of doom was coming, and Israel felt the retribution for iniquity, indifference and insincerity. Similar to the rich man of Luke 16, they had fared sumptuously for a long while, but now a time of torment awaited them. Though Israel had been "at ease in Zion," the time of Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah 30:7) was just around the corner.

Captivity on enemy soil would be their lot for many years because of lack of spiritual perception that caused them to run roughshod over their

fellows. Being insensitive to the need of others would result in years and tears of loneliness. Their actions, deeds and thoughts had alienated them from divine mandates and had dashed their vibrant hopes. What a tragedy it is when children of God squander blessed moments and opportunities.

Austin Taylor wrote a grand hymn on the other side of the ledger:

O blessed hope of life eternal

When my work on earth is done.

There will be no sin my soul to trouble

When my work on earth is done.

My soul will reach its glad fruition,

At home I'll live in peace forever

When my work on earth is done.

But, alas, Israel in the time of Amos, turned their back upon God, disregarded the needs of their neighbors and pursued a life of earthy pleasure. The measuring rod of heaven's will (Amos 7:7) was forsaken, and the standard of the world was followed. Even the religious leaders disdained the messenger of Jehovah and urged the valiant Amos to leave their region and stop preaching to them. Many a great preacher has been run off by weak people through the years. In many cases, leaders would do better to keep the preacher and get rid of the unspiritual complainers. Amos told Israel they were like a basket of summer fruit - rotten, bad smelling and useless.

Then the man of Tekoa added insult to injury by predicting a famine in the land. This famine would

not be of bread and water but of the Word of God (Amos 8:11-12). What a drought, and it is back with us today. Many pulpits are devoid of scriptural preaching, and many lives are bereft of deep Biblical emphasis. This is our gravest problem in this decade. When we participate in this sad decline of teaching and practicing the sacred text, we are truly and absolutely spiritual criminals.

Give me the Bible, lamp of life immortal;

Hold up that splendor by the open grave.

Show me light from heaven's shining portal;

Show me the glory gilding Jordan's wave.

If Amos were with us today, would it be possible to find a place that would accept his urgent preaching? Would brethren invite him to go elsewhere with such stern teaching?

Would that fearless prophet find much of the same message needed in our day? Have we really learned with profit what the courageous man of old boldly stated?

Are we, too, at ease in Zion? Is our worship just merely noise? Is our day embroiled in another famine that plagues our land with an absence of the Word of God? Are we on the brink of bondage and totally unprepared for what our indifference will bring inevitably to us? Amos did live 750 years before Christ, but we surely need to listen to his sterling message now.

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DECEMBER 22, 1995

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Volume 32 Number 48
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

I Love Thy Kingdom Lord

Keith Kasarjian

I could not agree more with these words, written long ago by Timothy Dwight. In the ecumenical times in which we live, those of us who do love the church of our Lord need to stand up and be counted. There are those who seek to minimize the church by saying, "I can go to Heaven without being a member." There are those who seek to blur the distinctive nature of the kingdom by proposing, "One is as good as another." And still there are those whose lack of love for the kingdom is painfully obvious by their lack of activity in, and support of the church of our Lord.

If we do, in fact, love the kingdom of God, let us

not become timid or intimidated by the aforementioned. Instead, let us rise up as the children of God and publicly proclaim our love for His church.

I love thy kingdom Lord because you have allowed me to be a member of it. I realize I have not earned the privilege nor do I deserve to be a member of the church of our Lord. I know it is only through the grace of Almighty God that my sins can be forgiven. I am fully aware that without the blood of Jesus I am still outside of Christ and most miserable. My realization of these things makes me love and appreciate, even more, the Lord's church.

I John 3:1 says, "Behold, what manner of

love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God..." How can anyone feel anything but gratitude for the blessing of being adpted as a child of God.

I love thy kingdom Lord because it is your body. That the church is the body of Christ is one of the most plainly taught doctrines in all of scripture [Col. 1:24, Eph. 1:22-23, I Cor. 12:27]. This fact has at least two major implications for the Christian: (1) I am to be an active member of the church. Cor. 12:14-27 teaches that every Christian is a member of the body of Christ, and as such, each member must pull his load and play his part. When members are not active as they should

be, the body does not function as it was intended to. (2) I am not to malign the church. "Church-bashing" has become popular among some brethren, but not among those who realize that the church is the body of Christ! When one sees the church as it really is, they recognize that when they malign and criticize the church they strike a blow against the body of our Savior! May no such charge ever be brought against us!

I love thy kingdom Lord because of the price you paid for it.

usually place a value on something based on the price we pay for it. For example, if we pay \$1,000 for a watch we believe it to be valuable. Are you aware

of the price paid for the church? Acts 20:28 says, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, **which he hath purchased with his own blood.**" What a high price! How precious the church must be! When people come to appreciate the price paid for the church they do not minimize it or think it to be no better than a man-made institution. Instead, they love it, serve in it, and seek the best for it.

Can we honestly agree with Timothy Dwight? Do we really love the kingdom of our Lord?

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Compromise

Maybe you've heard about the family that became fed up with life in the big city, so they decided to move to the country and try their hand at living in the wide open spaces. Intending to raise beef cattle, the family

purchased a large, western ranch. About a month later, some friends came to visit and inquired as to what they had named the ranch. The husband said, "Well, I was partial to the Flying-W. My wife wanted to call it the Suzie-Q. One of our

sons liked the Bar-J and the other suggested the Lazy-Y. So we compromised and now we call it the Flying-W, Suzy-Q, Bar-J, Lazy-Y Ranch." When one of the friends asked, "Where are all of your cattle?" The man

replied, "Uh...we don't have any. None of them survived the branding!" Friends, some things should never be compromised. That's especially true when it comes to our MORALS. The Bible says, "Teaching

us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live SOBERLY, RIGHT-EOUSLY, and GODLY in the present age" (Titus 2:12).

Mike Benson
Parsons, TN

"Thy word is a lamp..."
(Psalm 119:105)

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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The Honesty Test

The people at *Readers Digest* wanted to see how honest Americans are, so they concocted this scheme: They took 120 wallets and into each deposited \$50, a name, a local address, a phone number, family pictures and miscellaneous notes and coupons., They then quietly dropped the wallets in parking lots, shopping malls, restaurants, gas stations, office buildings and side walks, and watched what happened.

The stories are fascinating. Like this one: "A small, silver-haired woman picked up our wallet at the entrance to a midtown tower, immediately took it into the ground-floor office where she worked, and handed it to the receptionist. Wallet hand, the receptionist walked through the building's lobby, past the security desk and up the escalator to a restroom. Emerging five minutes later, she came down the escalator and turned the wallet in at the security desk. We immediately recovered it -- but the \$50 was missing."

Or this one: "In Dayton, Ohio, a leatherly-faced man in his 60's, wearing a Cincinnati Reds cap and walking with a limp, picked up our wallet outside the Dayton Mall and took it in to the desk at the Hyatt Legal Services Office. 'Dad worked hard to raise nine of us,' Rick Tekulve declared. 'He taught us always to pay bills and be

honest.' Tekulve refused our offer of the \$50. 'I don't want a reward for doing something I knew was morally right.'

"Philip Taylor found our billfold beside an escalator in the Famous-Barr Department Store. He left it at the store's customer service office. Why? Taylor, an investigator for the city's Civil Rights Enforcement Agency, told us, 'I'm a Christian, and though I have financial concerns, I have a higher authority to account to.'

When the results were tallied, out of 120 wallets, 80 were returned -- 67 percent. The citizens in small towns were overall more honest than those in big cities. A large number who returned the wallets cited their belief in God, and researchers came to this abundantly proven conclusion: Our moral compass is set early by the example of our elders.

Let's make some Biblical observations.

1. Honesty is a fundamental teaching of the Bible.

Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:28, "Let him that stole steal no more; but but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." Peter wrote in 1 Peter 4:15, "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters." When the deacons were

chosen in Acts 6, this was stated: "Look ye...among you seven men of honest report...".

What would the world be like without the influence of Christianity? As the article demonstrates, there are many people who are like Cornelius of Acts 10, are good people, influenced by God's righteousness, and are yet not Christians. We should be thankful for their kindness and honesty, and thankful for the far-reaching effects of God's word throughout many generations.

We should be thankful that we serve an honest God who demands and loves honesty. Imagine what our lives would be like if He didn't.

2. Christians view honesty in a totally different way from those who aren't Christians. When an honest man who isn't a Christian finds a wallet with money and identification he reasons,

"This person has lost his wallet, and will appreciate my returning it. I want to be honest with my fellow man."

When a Christian man finds a wallet, he reasons, "My Savior, whom I serve, has taught me to be honest, and is watching to see how I handle this circumstance. I'm going to do the right thing and please Him. Won't this man be happy when I return his wallet and his money?"

The man who isn't a Christian must see this as a matter between the wallet's

owner and him. That's all. The Christian, on the other hand, sees a triangle. This is a matter between God, the owner, and him.

There are other times in the Scriptures when this triangle principle is used. In Colossians 3:18 wives are told, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord."

The wives obey this not just because they love their husbands, but also because they serve the Lord. Verse 22 of the same chapter says, "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye service, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord." Our lives and relationships are laced together with our service to our God.

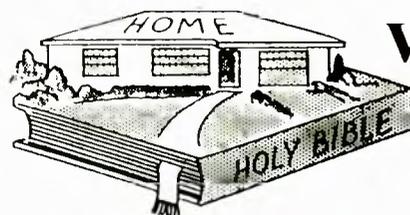
3. Honesty and morality come from our Creator.

People who believe humans originated by a colossal accident in nature must be troubled by the implications of experiments like the one *Readers Digest*

did. Why? Because the evolutionist who won't believe Genesis one and two has a problem figuring out where morality came from. If humans really are just smarter animals, and there is no soul and no after life and no God, then why don't we act like animals? This experiment again demonstrated that most people--even non-religious people--have a sense of morality. The *Digest* notes that "Most everyone still has a conscience. All the furtive glances and attempts at concealment we observed from those who intended to keep the money indicated that they were doing wrong."

How many animals have a conscience? How many would look for the real owner of a bit of lost food before eating it? We are not animals. We are humans--humans with a sense of morality which has no reasonable explanation except in the truth of creation.

Aren't you thankful God is honest and teaches us to be likewise?



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"Let him that stole steal no more; but but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."

(Ephesians 4:28)

Wolves In Sheep's Clothing

W.A. Holley

In Palastine, in Bible times, much of the people's wealth consisted of flocks of sheep. The danger of wolves was soon recognized. Thus, wolves became symbols of destruction.

Jesus, in sending forth his disciples under the limited commission, warned them, saying, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16-20, ASV).

Hence, Paul, the Apostle, warned the Ephesian elders of the danger "greivous wolves" entering the flock or church and leading away disciples after them (Acts 20:17-35). Persecutors and false teachers are compared to wolves. Jesus warned, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15). All religious teachers claim to be teachers of truth...No false teacher would tell his hearers that his purpose is to deceive them. Our duty is to compare what is said with what the Bible teachers (Acts 17:11; I John 4:1-3; II Corinthians 11:13-15). It is only in this manner that we can know the truth (John 8:31-32).

We shall now identify the names of these "wolves in sheep's clothings." Of course, they claim to be teachers of truth, but they are not (Romans 16:17-18). Hence, they use "good words and fair speeches" to entrap the unsuspecting. These wolves always think it is unChristian to "reprove or rebuke any one. (II Timothy 4:1-8; Titus 1:13). Who are some of these fellows? Rubel Shelly, Jeff Walling, Lynn Anderson, Max Lucado, Randy Harris, Joe VanDyke, and Randy Mayeux. These men and others like them have dedicated themselves to "sowing discord among the

brethren" (Proverbs 6:14-19).

Is it a sin to unmask false teachers? Certainly not! For example, Paul wrote the names of Hymenaeus, Alexander and Philetus into the divine record where they shall remain forever (I Timothy 1:19-20; II Timothy 2:17-18). Again, Paul called attention to the man who had married his father's wife. He was known to every member of the Corinthian church (I Corinthian 5:1-13; II Corinthians 7:10-12). Jesus never failed to condemn the sins of the Pharisees, Sadducees and Scribes (Matthew 23:1-39). Jesus rebuked the Sadducees because the "knew not the Scriptures nor the power of God" (Luke 20:27-38). John the apostle boldly wrote the name of Diotrephes, a church boss, into God's eternal record (III John 9-11). Let us take warning!

Who should know about these "wolves in sheep's clothing?" The elders, the preachers, and every loyal member of the Lord's church. We cannot stand by with folded hands and permit "the wolves" to devour the flock (John 10:1-16). If godly elders have the courage, the determination, the will to protect the flock, they can stop those who try to destroy God's flock or church (Acts 20:28-35). Any preacher who will not preach the unvarnished truth should be dismissed, forthwith. The ordinary members of the church should support only those elders and preachers who contend for the "old paths." (Jeremiah 6:16).

What are some of the changes these "wildcat" preachers want? We shall see.

(1) These false brethren seek to turn the church of Christ into a denomination. They say, "Let's modernize the church and thus bring it into the 21'st century." Hence, they constantly talk about "unity in diversity." Their

idea is to "agree to disagree." But such contentions do not fit with Bible teaching (John 17:20-23; I Corinthians 1:10; II Corinthians 13:11). Ephesians 4:1-6 is another powerful statement that weighs heavily on your mind.

(2) These false brethren have joined the Calvinists in asserting that the sinner is saved by "grace alone." Rubel Shelly says, "Our salvation arises entirely from grace...not by one act of duty...not by one deed of obedience, not by one righteous thing we do. It is entirely of grace through faith." With this statement in mind, please read, Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 5:8-9.

(3) Those who modernize the church of Christ would add pianos and organs and orchestras and the like to the worship service. Rubel Shelly claims that there is no pattern prescribed by the Scriptures. Listen to him, "I reject pattern theology...I am not looking for a pattern..." But, what about II Timothy 1:13; Hebrews 8:5; Acts 7:44. Verily, a cappella music is the only kind of music authorized in the New Testament for the worship of God "in spirit and in truth" (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; John 4:24).

(4) Some of the Christian churches are celebrating the Lord's Supper on any occasion that seems proper to them. For example, some are serving the Lord's Supper in connection with weddings and funerals. We predict that before long, you will read of some so-called churches of Christ following in their tracks. You see, if one surrenders the authority of Christ through the Holy Scriptures, any thing goes (Matthew 28:18-20; Colossians 3:17; Acts 2:38).

(5) Many of these false brethren are determined to place a women in the eldership and in the pulpit. They say, "Don't rush into it...do it by degrees." We

sincerely request our readers to peruse I Corinthians 14:34; I Timothy 2:11-12. God assigned a certain role to men and a certain role to women. Read the Scriptures and you will see that this is not a cultural situation because Inspiration goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden.

(6) These false teachers argue that there are faithful, knowledgeable Christians in Denominational churches; but such is not the case, because obedience to denominational dogma cannot produce Christians. For example, "faith only," or "grace only" cannot lead to salvation (James 2:24; Ephesians 2:8-9; Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:36-28). If former members should be found among denominational churches, they would be, according to the Bible, backsliders who had departed from the faith (Hebrews 6:4-6; II Peter 2:20-22; Luke 8:12-13; I Corinthians 9-27).

(7) These wolves in sheep's clothing subscribe to what they

call the New Hermeneutic. What is this? It is a new way of interpreting the Bible, but it is not new because denominational preachers have been using it for centuries. When these teachers get through with the Bible they have removed its true meaning. The Bible no longer means what it says. It is a sin to add to or take from the teaching of the word of God (Revelation 22:18-19).

(8) These wolves in sheep's clothing want more enthusiasm in our worship services. What kind of enthusiasm? Well, more foot-stomping, hand-clapping and loud talking, where the audience is worked into a violent mental or emotional agitation. But, how does this sort of situation fit with John 4:24?

We humbly suggest that the church's obligation is to stand for all truth and to oppose all error (I Corinthians 16: 13-14; Matthew 7:15-16; Acts 20:29-31). P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL. 35580.

Most Of A Minute

Lazy In Modern Times

It would seem that the only limit to what computers can do is man's imagination --but what I heard about the other day takes the cake! Perhaps you are familiar with the fact that computers play games. These games, like solitaire and one called minesweep, and a hundred others, are challenging, fun, and to some folks addictive; and one more thing --when an employee is supposed to be working at his desk, these games are a waste of time. What's the answer for the game-playing employee who wants to play while the boss is away, but who is always afraid the boss will come into the room and find the incriminating truth?

They call it the "boss button". Should the boss enter at the inopportune time, one quick push of this button flashes an important looking spread sheet on the computer screen. The boss sees it and believes you are fully in engrossed in that which will surely benefit the company.

I think the Holy Spirit who gave us the Bible anticipated this. Listen to Colossians 3:22 "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye service, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God; And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men."

Glenn Colley

The Abortion Controversy

Mel Futrell

"It's A Child Not A Choice" was a bumper sticker I saw a couple of years ago in a parking garage in St. Louis, MO. Unfortunately, abortion is viewed by many today as being just another medical choice. But in reality, abortion means murder. Friend, you can throw all the restrictions in the world at pro-abortionists (twenty-four hour waiting periods, spousal or under-18 parental consent, no government funding, etc.) but it still won't stop the unwarranted destruction of human life. These things may curb it, but they won't stop it. The battle against abortion must be fought on many fronts; the one which most concerns us is spiritual and Biblical in nature. By that I mean we must educate people from Scripture about the moral error of abortion.

Brethren, we've got a fight on our hands over abortion. This issue more than any other is presently dividing and disrupting our great country. And it doesn't take an Einstein or Rush Limbaugh to figure out that television coverage and the print-media are

heavily biased towards the pro-abortion position (naturally they would prefer we refer to them as pro-choice). All of this makes our job of preaching the Word more difficult when Joe Blow out on the street has been shown and told a thousand times over by the liberal media that the "right" to abortion is comparable to the rights of free speech and assembly contained in the first amendment to our Constitution.

One of the questions at the center of this country's debate over abortion is, "Is what is inside a mother's womb a human life that deserves protection?" The Bible declares that it is! But before listing some Scripture on this let me tell you what we're up against. Our heathen and humanistic society has now for over two decades (Roe v. Wade-1973), argued for fetal viability over humanness as the principal determinant in the "right" to abort. In other words, since the fetus (unborn child to Bible believers) is rarely if ever viable outside the womb in the first two trimesters then it must not be human, and

thus, it would not be murder to terminate the pregnancy. Friend, that's the kind of prattle we're up against. It's that kind of thinking that has resulted in over 31 million abortions having been performed in the United States alone since 1973. Nearly 200,000 2nd and 3rd trimester abortions are performed annually - 17,000 of these occur after 5 months of pregnancy. Prior to 1973 the percentage of pregnancies that ended in abortion was 12.9; since that time it has stabilized at about 25 percent. Now to some Scripture.

In Job chapter 3 we find Job cursing the day of his birth [vs.3], and the day of his conception. Note the language used:

"Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, there is a man child conceived."

A little later in verses 11 and 16, Job regrets that he didn't die at birth nor was he stillborn. Clearly the implication from these verses is that what was inside his "mother's womb" [vs.10] was human, not just a glob of tissue to

be forfeited for convenience sake.

Further evidence of the unborn child's humanity can be seen from the following verses:

"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" [Jeremiah 1:5].

"And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb" [Luke 1:4]

It seems clear to me from these passages (and others like Psalms 139:13-17, where David describes his existence prior to birth), that the unborn is truly human, and only a murderer or an idiot could be convinced otherwise. Interestingly, in the passage from Luke, the word babe is from the Greek "brephos" denoting a living, breathing, nursing infant. The same Greek word is found one chapter later in Luke 2:21 in reference to the eight day old child named Jesus. Brethren, I readily concede that I can't speak with Scientific or Medical

expertise on embryo genesis, conception blocking, fetal viability or the abortion pill. But I do know what the Bible says about the sanctity of life, even unborn life. And the dictates of Scripture will always prevail in my thinking.

Friend, pro-abortion people have believed a lie when accepting as true the dogma that life begins sometime between the beginning of the third trimester and birth, rather than at conception. It boils down to this, pro-choice in abortion means a mother murders her own child. A child with different cells, different genes, and possibly a different gender from its mother. I must concur with the Arkansas citizen writing to the editor of the Arkansas Gazette a few years back when he said, "My only suggestion to this group is that they perform metaphysical abortions instead of ripping the arms and legs off unborn babies in the name of "choice".

The World Needs More Ambassadors

By Neal Pollard

By inspiration, Paul emphasizes that the world needs true ambassadors. In I Corinthians 1:18, the apostle credits God with the idea of using saved, though sinful men to teach the lost. Remember, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

An ambassador is unlike the Old Testament "redeemer" or "revenger" (cf. Ruth 2:20; Job 19:25). In ancient, oriental culture, such a representative (usually the "next of kin") would buy back a relative's property or marry his widow. The "revenger" ("kinsmen") represented someone with less power, ability, or voice than

himself.

The ambassador speaks on behalf of a higher authority. The ambassador cannot, of himself, make decisions or legislate anything not authorized by the one being represented. Rather, he carries out the directives and laws of another.

Kittel explains that Paul "describes his preaching as an embassy" in II Corinthians 5:20 [Volume 5; 682]. That is, as a proclaimer of the good news, Paul speaks of his function for Christ. What, in this text, was Paul's divine mission? This is *important*.

When one is faithful to the word of Christ, one is serving as a "transmitter" who teaches the word. From

prison, Paul wrote that he still served as an ambassador of "the hidden truth of the gospel" (Ephesians 6:19, 20). The source of the gospel is God. The ones who need the gospel are those lost in the world. The faithful preacher and teacher is merely an ambassador or, again, "transmitter."

During one of the world wars, a national leader was made aware of an immediate crisis of country which made necessary an immediate radio address. The operator in the radio room was also alerted to prepare to broadcast the speech. Then, seconds before the leader hit the air waves, the technician, in horror, noticed that the transmitter wire had burned in two. With no

time to mend it, the young man remembered that the human body is an excellent conductor. He picked up the two frayed ends just in time. For the entirety of the critical speech, the message literally went through this individual.

This is the exact picture of the Christian's task, as outlined by the inspired penman in II Corinthians 5. Please notice:

1. **THE AMBASSADOR'S MINISTRY:** "reconciling the world unto Christ" (19).

2. **THE AMBASSADOR'S MESSAGE:** "the word of reconciliation" (19)

3. **THE AMBASSADOR'S MOTIVATION:** "he is a new creature" and "old things are passed

away" (17)

4. **THE AMBASSADOR'S METHOD:** "implore" ("pray", KJV) (20)

God is begging the world to make things right with Him in view of the ultimate *sacrifice* (21), the *unavoidable judgment* (10), and the *unchanging nature of the Lord* (11). He is beseeching them through Christians (20). He has willed it so. This plea will permeate the lost and dying souls of men only to the extent that the ambassadors for Christ are faithful to their charge! **Are you actively engaged in the work of ambassador for Christ?**

- See Articles Inside:
- The Ministry Christians Have
- New Year's Resolutions
- Remember Where The Power Is
- By Which I Judge
- Ain't That A Shame
- "The Glory Is Departed"

Volume 32 Number 49
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

The Ministry Christians Have

Neal Pollard

In the first epistle to Corinth, Paul wrote both to defend his apostleship and to condemn the rank immorality of some in the church. He called for their repentance, and he sent Timothy to help straighten out things there. The tone of the second letter is much different.

The second epistle to Corinth is one of thanksgiving and teaching. Therein are wonderful, practical lessons on Christian living revealed. We have presented, in this epistle, the Christian's:

Directions (3:6ff)--*Follow The New Testament*

Destiny (5:1ff) -- *An House Not Made With Hands, Eternal in the Heavens*

Delight (5:11-16) -- *The Constraining Love Of Christ*

Department (Behavior) (5:17) -- *As A New Creature*

Duty (5:19-20) -- *Serve As Ambassador For Christ*

Distinctiveness (6:14-7:1) -- *Temple Of The Living God*

Disbursal (8-9) -- *Liberal, Willing Giving Of His Means*

Discerning (13:5) -- *Spiritual Self-Examination*

Naturally, chapter four is filled with practical content for Christian living. Introducing the ideas of the chapter with the word "therefore" (1), Paul appeals to the power of the New Testament to urge members of the New Testament church to be ministers for Christ.

Notice that Paul is not

speaking merely to a group of preachers. He is addressing Christians generally. Thus, we have the idea that all of us who are Christians are also ministers. "Ministry", in the sense here used by Paul, indicates an office or service, especially as teachers. Obviously, there are significant occurrences of the word in its primary sense in which reference is being made to "preaching" (cf. Romans 15:16; Ephesians 3:7; 1 Timothy 4:6; et al). In the present consideration, however, is the "service" incumbent upon all Christians.

Paul describes the Christian's ministry in 2 Corinthians. It is a beautiful ministry (4:1 -- our message is "Christ"). It is a bridging ministry (5:18 -- its theme is "reconciliation to God"). It is to be a blameless ministry (6:3 -- its execution is to be "Christ-like"). As ministers of Christ, what are we to do?

WE RENOUNCE HIDDEN THINGS (2-4). Like Paul, Christians are to renounce (or, reject) certain things. Like Paul, we, as Christians, are to renounce **Hidden Immorality** (2). The particular immorality is identified by Paul as "handling the word deceitfully" and "walking in craftiness." It is unavoidable that anyone who attempts to lead others away from the truth must use immoral means to do so. Not one ounce of religious error

would exist except that immoral people must dishonestly deal with what the Bible says. Jude warns of and condemns such ones (Jude 4).

Like Paul, we, as Christians, must denounce **Hidden Agendas** (2). Some may preach what is right, but for the wrong reason. Of some Paul wrote, "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel" (Philippians 1:15-17). We must have Paul's desire to teach the right thing and for the right reason.

Like Paul, we, as Christians, must denounce a **Hidden Gospel** (3-4). Those who follow the god of this world hide their eyes from the one gospel. In view of this, we cannot be ashamed or ignorant of the "Good News" of the Word.

WE PREACH NOT OURSELVES, BUT CHRIST...(5-7). What a useless message we make for the whole world. We must proclaim Christ. Such results in making us valuable servants (5). God cannot and will not use any Christian who seeks self glory. How dangerous to be so caught up in "self"! How will we, as Christians, be remembered? Do you know how the Bible

remembers Moses? 16 times the Old Testament refers to him as "the servant of the Lord." Oh, to go down in heaven's record book as "the servant of the Lord"! We can be so remembered by lifting up the living Savior!

Additionally, only the message of Christ leads to the knowledge of God, the Light of our pathway (6). He commanded the light. He shines it in our heart through the Bible. He gives light of the knowledge of His glory through Christ, the light (cf. John 8:12). Old Testament writers (Psalm 119:105) and New Testament writers (2 Timothy 1:10) uphold the illuminating force of God's Word!

Because the power is God and not us (7), the Christian, as Christ's minister, proclaims the Lord. What an honor God has given to allow us to teach the gospel to man! The message is a "treasure", something so valuable and expensive. Yet, the messengers are so "worthless." We are cheap, fragile pottery. But, this valuable treasure is contained in these worthless containers. Thus, realizing the nothing we are without God, we are anxious to share the something we know (the Gospel).

WE REVEAL CHRIST BY OUR BEHAVIOR (8-12). Having declared teaching the gospel a privilege, Paul reminds Christians of our

responsibility, accountability, and vulnerability. So, we are admonished to show others Christ by our deeds. We reveal In our perseverance (8-9). Paul reminds us that we face opposing forces, but these problems are manageable. Notice brother McCord's translation of verses 8-9: "*In everything we are troubled, but not crushed; uncertain, but not despairing; persecuted, but not abandoned; cast down, but not destroyed.*" Others see how we, as Christians, manage difficulties. Behaving like Christ amidst trials shows the world a tangible picture of our Lord.

We reveal Christ in our service And commitment (10-12). Do you know what happened to the 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independance? Five were captured, tortured, and killed by the British, accused of treason. Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned. Two lost their sons in the Revolutionary Army and another two saw their sons captured in that war. Nine dies from wounds or hardship during the Revolutionary War. There was a tremendous price to be paid for freedom, then and now!

What does our Christianity cost us? First-century Christians were never free from danger.

(Continued On Page 3)

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Sixth Avenue Church of Christ
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 Jasper, Al. 35501

New Year's Resolutions

The way the years are swiftly yet quietly passing by ought to make us more determined to make good, solid New Year's resolutions. If we are going to do with our lives what we really should, some resolve should be made now. There's not a day to lose.

Millions have read and been moved by the resolve of Daniel in his youth. The Bible says, "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank...(Dan. 1:8)." One who makes resolutions does so based on his imagination. He imagines himself in the future in a positive light, and makes resolutions to move toward what he hopes to be.

This is a great time of the year to be making resolutions. The beginning of a new year is one of life's mile markers which has a way of giving us a fresh feeling about our days. Let's consider some great suggestions for resolutions:

I resolve to love the Lord with all my heart, soul, strength and mind. Jesus taught us that to love God was the first and greatest commandment, (Matt 22:37). This kind of love isn't in words only, but in actions. James 1:22 says, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." Beginning this year I will seriously work to "seek first the kingdom

of God and His righteousness...(Matt. 6:33)." I will be devoted to the work of the church which is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23).

If I haven't yet obeyed the gospel by repentance, confession, and baptism, I resolve to start this new year as a new Christian. Time is wasting. Eternity is forever. I am lost. I will obey (Luke 13:3, Acts 12:38, Rom. 10:10).

I resolve to love my neighbor as myself. Jesus taught us that this is the second greatest commandment! I will work to do good unto all men (Gal. 6:10). I will remember that Jesus taught the parable of the good Samaritan in response to the question, "And who is my neighbor?"

I will be a kind, tenderhearted person. Even non-Christians understand that Christians are people who are gentle and kind. The scriptures are plain spoken on this point: "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Eph. 4:32). The great apostle said, "Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ...(II Cor. 10:1)." I will repent of times when my anger becomes hot and my tongue becomes sharp. When I stand for what is right I will do so with love.

I will not hold grudges against anyone. Paul wrote "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and

clamor, evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice (Eph. 4:31)." Colossians 3:8-10 says, "But now ye also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communications out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds. And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge of him that created him." Jesus wrote, "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned; behold the judge standeth before the door (James 5:9)."

I will forgive everyone whom the lord will forgive this year. Luke 17:3-5 says, "Take heed to yourselves; if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him. And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith." Jesus taught me how to forgive by offering forgiveness to me.

I will apologize when I am wrong. The Proverb writer wrote, "A reproof entereth more into a wise man than a hundred stripes to fool (Prov. 17:10)." I want to be wise and not foolish. The Bible says, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed...(James 5:17)." To whom do I owe an apology?

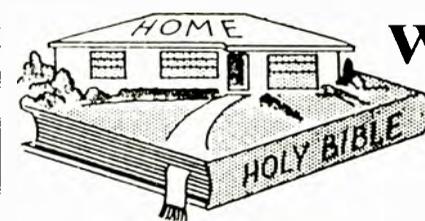
I will not just feel appreciative of others, I will also express my gratitude. The question of Jesus in Luke 17 should motivate us all: "but where are the nine?". I resolve to do better. I will think to thank God for all He does for me, and likewise thank the people about me. Expressing gratitude costs so little and is so valuable in building a sterling character. Furthermore, he who is not grateful for the good things he has would not be happy with what he wishes he had. I have a God to thank, and I will not neglect it. Probably the worst moment for the atheist is when he feels grateful and has no one to thank.

I will pray for my erring brothers and sisters. While I cannot pray that anyone will be saved in their sins, I can pray that something will be said or done which will touch their hearts so they will turn from their

destructive course. "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it (I Jn. 5:16)." "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme (I Tim. 1:19-20).

While we may all wish to improve our characters, that improvement doesn't occur with just wishful thinking. We must make decisions which are girded with rock-solid resolve. Let's make resolutions which will make Jesus the center of our lives!

Glenn Colley



The Words Of Truth

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The Ministry Christians Have

(Continued From Page 1)

Yet, they continued bearing Christ in their bodies. Our Christianity will never mean much to us if it never costs us anything!

WE CANNOT BUT EXPRESS OUR FAITH (13-15). We must have conviction (13). Our desire to share Christ must be as uncontainable as was Jeremiah's. The tearful prophet, in spiritual anguish and discouragement, wrote, "Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jeremiah 20:9). We must not determine our convictions by which ever

way the winds of *popularity, culture, or denominationalism* might blow!

We should also have **confidence** (14). Christ is our ever-living, risen Savior. Thus, we are not left without hope (I Corinthians 15:19)! Further, Christ is present with us (cf. Hebrews 13:5-6).

WE DO NOT FAINT (16-18). That is not to suggest that we cannot faint, as Christians. The Bible does not teach the "impossibility of apostasy" (cf. Galatians 5:4; 2 Peter 2:20). Rather, our text gives Christian "ministers" the keys preventing our "fainting" in the Christian walk of life.

We understand that we must have daily renewal (16). Notice, to be acceptable ministers of

Christ, we must focus daily on our soul. If we are not daily *Bible students*, if we do not *pray daily*, and if we do not *daily* put the word into practice, we will have no spiritual stamina to do the will of God. We are spending **thousands** of dollars every day to make this physical body look more youthful and live longer, but do we renew our spirit day by day?

We realize that we have left afflictions (17). They last only for a while. They cannot compare with the exceeding and eternal weight of glory awaiting faithful ministers of Christ.

We know that we have a lofty, but attainable goal (18). We see that goal with the eternal vision we also know as "faith" (2

Corinthians 5:7). We put that goal in its proper perspective, comparing it with this life. When we do, notice the change in outlook. As we look at our houses, let us see it as only temporary shelter. Some day, we will have a mansion in heaven (2 Corinthians 5:1)! As we look in the mirror and see our bodies, let us see it as only the temporary home of our soul. Some day, we will be clothed with immortality (2 Corinthians 5:4)! As we look at our earthly father, let us remember that we have a heavenly Father who we have not yet seen, but for whom we look! As we go to our jobs, let us remember that it is only temporary duty. Some day, we will get to serve our Creator forevermore! When we possess

the ingredient called "faith" (the eternal eye), we will not faint or fall (cf. I John 5:13).

We are ministers (servants) of the Lord. As Christians, then, we reject the hidden things of the world, we lift up the crucified Lord, we reveal Him by our behavior, we eagerly teach His word, and we remain faithful through the eye of faith and the promise of eternal life! The pattern of the Christian's life is beautifully laid out in the inspired instructions Paul gave Corinth church of Christ in what is now recognized as 2 Corinthians 4.

Neal Pollard

Remember Where The Power Is

How strange to contemplate that 12 faithful men in the first century formed the nucleus of the most successful stab at world evangelism the Lord's people ever engaged in. "Their sound went out into all the world.. all creation heard..They went everywhere preaching the Word."

It is not wrong to use every energy and avenue of scriptural endeavor to extend the Truth but when we think the plan of God, the One who rules the kingdom of men, (Daniel 4:25) needs help from our schemes and fancies we are sadly mistaken. (Acts 7:48-50.)

The church purchased with divine blood (Acts 20:28) is fully capable to discharge every obligation incumbent upon it and to meet every opportunity of scriptural expression confidently. Whether in the fields of benevolence, evangelism or edification, the Lord's church, at work, can always get the job done. (Acts 6; 1 Timothy 3:15; 2 Peter 3:18.) Christ equipped this is-sufficient organism with the power and plan to train it's own preachers, care for it's own impoverished and strengthen it's membership spiritually. (2

Timothy 2:2; I John 3:17; Acts 20:32.)

The most unique feature of Christianity is it's all sufficiency in things pertaining to life and godliness. (2 Peter 1:3.) The cause of our Lord needs no bolstering from the projects and promotional agencies of men. The gospel of Jesus Christ can stand on its own merits as the one and only message of redemption. (Romans 1:16.) The Holy Scriptures truly supply us with the complete revelation of all that mankind needs for time and eternity. (2 Timothy 3:16-17.) The system of faith, once delivered, shall never need replacement or repair. (Jude 3.) Therefore, the sectarian notions of "still, small voices," "direct operation of the Holy Spirit," "an inner light" or superior philosophies are, at best, redundant, superfluous and vain. Factually, however, they are anti-biblical. (2 John 9.)

This brief introductory material ought to be well-known by anyone espousing the religion of the Son of God. Perhaps we have taken for granted that such foundation stones were solidly laid in the hearts of all brethren. It is

exceedingly clear, as one reads the New Testament, that God's power does not rely upon our creative minds. We are made clean by his word (John 15:3; I Peter 1:22), not by our wisdom.

In the eternal mind of our Creator was embraced the glorious church of our Lord. (Ephesians 3:9-11.) Once established it was destined to manifest unto the powers in heavenly places the everlasting purpose of God. This being true, surely the church can let all earthly beings know the will of the Father. May God help us to be content with the perfection of his plan. We do not need that echo of the past; in "Give us a king that we may be like the nations round about us."

One step away from the all-sufficiency of Christ, the church and the Word, can remove us from the ancient landmarks that adorn the paths of God's highway of holiness. Fellowship in the church of the Lord is based upon allegiance to Truth - not loyalty to men and their programs. In closing let us notice an awesome parallel. Centuries before Roman Catholicism existed God ordained marriage as a divine

institution. It is therefore the height of ridiculous fancy for property to infer that no one is *really* married unless Romanism sanctions it. Also, centuries before our projects, schools and papers began, Christ and the apostles established another divine organism, the church. Can we seriously suggest the church will fail without our wisdom?

No congregation belonging to the Savior need ever feel dependent upon secular enterprises.

Let us *preach the word*, live the Christian life and give God the glory. (I Corinthians 10:31.) Box 235, Rowlett, TX 75088.

Johnny Ramsey

Most Of A Minute

By Which I Judge

Sometimes politics are sort of silly. I read an article recently which suggested that the reason Texas once went with Jimmy Carter instead of Gerald Ford had to do with the eating of a tamale. That's right, a tamale. You see, in 1976 Jerry Ford stood in front of the Alamo and a crowd of Texans and ate his tamale without removing the cornshuck covering. To them it was like going to Maine and eating a lobster, shell and all.

Sure it's silly, but who would deny that such things influence our impression of candidates. For that matter, we don't always do so much better with non-politicians. Think about it: By what standards do you commonly judge those around you? Do you for instance determine peoples worth by external things like choice of clothes or color of skin?

May we walk thru our days forming our opinions of people on real things...like integrity, compassion, and honesty with God and man. May we always remember what the good Lord said in Matthew 7:1 - "Judge not that ye be not judged; for with what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged."

Glenn Colley

Aint That A Shame

During the last year of the three and one half years I preached in Poplar Bluff, Missouri, I began to notice that the beer trucks that made their runs in and around the city had on their back doors a sign reading thus:

**TAXES
ON THE BEER
DELIVERED IN THIS
TRUCK ADD
\$115,000/YR.
FOR BEER IN
MISSOURI
TO LEARN MORE, CALL:
1-800-BEER-TAX**

Now aint that a Shame? Brethren, I'm not saddened a bit that these "poor" beer companies are being taxed so

heavily. Really brethren, If they think for even a minute that they can successfully elicit sympathy from me concerning their tax plight, which according to them inevitably effects the price one pays for beer, they're dead wrong.

The type of taxes involved in this issue have come to be known as "SIN Taxes" (aptly named, no doubt). And since it is true that sin pays wages (Romans 6:23), let me ask you this question, "Can you ever tax sin enough"? The answer should be obvious to all Christians, ABSOLUTELY NOT! Frankley brethren, I could care less if these peddlers of death had to

pay ten times that much in taxes every year.

To the Christian the matter boils down, not to an issue of taxes more or less, but the issue of what is right and what is wrong. With the exception of legitimate medicinal purposes (I Timothy 5:23) it is never right for one to engage in the consumption of alcoholic beverages. In the long ago Solomon said, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whatsoever is deceived thereby is not wise." (Proverbs 20:1).

Even to one with only a limited knowledge of GOD's Word. It should be clear from the above passage that only

fools consume "wine" or "strong drink". Three chapters later Solomon describes alcoholic beverage and those who use it in these terms.

"At the last it biteth like a serpent. and stingeth like an adder.

Thine eyes shall behold strange women. and thine heart shall utter perverse things.

Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.

They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not; when shall I awake I will seek it yet

again." (Proverbs 23:32-35).

My judgment is that the beer companies would be better advised to place this warning on the back of their trucks, rather than the former:

**WAGES
ON THE SIN DELIVERED
IN THIS TRUCK ADD
ETERNAL DEATH
AS THE PRICE YOU PAY
FOR ENGAGING IN SIN IN
MISSOURI
TO LEARN MORE, READ:
THE BIBLE**

Mel Futrell

"The Glory Is Departed"

The nation of Israel was in one of her lowest pains. The Israelites were in battle with the Philistines, the ark of God had been captured, and the two evil sons of the high priest had been killed. The wife of Phineas gave birth to a son at the moment all this was occurring and named him, Ichabod, which meant "The glory is departed from Israel" (I Samuel 4:21-22). The loss of the ark of God was monumental in the annuals of Israel! Yes, the glory is departed" when things go badly! We might well see some appropriate parallels to this in our own times.

The glory of Christian living is departed when you can scarcely detect the difference between "Christians" and the world! When Christians begin to partake of the world's lifestyle, the glory is no longer present. "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past

feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Ephesians 4:17-19). There is no glory in lasciviousness. The bright light of the Christian life fails to shine when blindness seizes the heart.

Christians are not to be like the world, but are to be as lights in the world (Ephesians 5:9-11). The glory of the light is departed when their light no longer shines as living testimony to their relationship to Jesus (Matthew 5:16). The glory is departed when the Christian no longer shows the way to light (Philippians 2:15-16). The Christian life has lost its gleam when Christians are content to conform to the ways of the world (Romans 12:1-2). The glory of Christian living is departed when a Christian returns to his old lifestyle to run with the world as he once did (I Peter 4:3-5).

The glory of the church is departed when the church of the New Testament becomes like all other churches. The Lord built but one, and that is his church (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 4:4, 5; I Corinthians 12:20). The glory

of the Lord's church is departed when preachers compromise the truth of salvation and make the way broader than Jesus makes it (Matthew 7:13-14; Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:41-47) There is a marvelous glory in simple gospel preaching without the "interpretations" of human creeds. The glory is departed when we cease to clearly show the difference between the church of the Bible and the churches of human origin (Matthew 15:13-14).

The glory of a nation is departed when sin becomes the accepted rule. "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). This is a simple observation, but it has proven true multiplied times! Consider the history of great political powers in the pages of history. The Egypt of the Pharaohs, the great empires of ancient and modern times, the marvelous progress (or digress) of modern nations truly confirm most strongly that proverb. Paul's description of the decay of human society because of perversity in Romans 1:18-32 rings loudly and echoes over and over in the course of the human story. One needs only

to behold the present decay of American society in the eyes of unbiased evaluation to admit the truth of the principle that sin robs a nation of its glory.

Sin is indeed becoming the accepted rule in our nation! When officials in high places put their stamp of approval on the homosexual lifestyle even though the Bible condemns it (Romans 1:24-26), the glory is departed! When it is becoming more the rule than the exception that such a lifestyle can be taught in schools to young children as simply a valid alternative, the glory is departed. When people in positions of influence recommend that illicit drugs be declared legal in order to make it no longer a crime to use or distribute such, then the glory is departed. When "experts" invade the privacy of the homes and declare that parents have no right to discipline their own children, then the glory is departed. When the murder of an unborn human baby is considered a respectable method of "birth control" but abuse of ducks, geese, whales, and monkeys is punishable by stiff fines and public ostracism, the the

glory is departed.

The glory of the home is departed when its function and harmony have vanished. Parents are responsible for training their children (Ephesians 6:4; Titus 2:4-5). The home is responsible for providing recreation and entertainment! The glory has departed when the church and society are blamed for the failure of the home! The glory is departed when divorce and remarriage is reaching an all time high and young couples enter into "marriage" (??) with the understanding they can dissolve it if "things don't work out."

To put it all very simply: The glory is departed when all sense of personal responsibility has become an antiquated relic of the past! The time will come when we, or our children, will be standing in the dust of what once was a glorious society and we will hear the cries of those who mocked as they blindly and foolishly wonder, "WHAT HAPPENED?"

**Jerri Manasco
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JANUARY 5, 1995

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Volume 32 Number 50
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

Some Recommendations For The Aged

"Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth" (Psalm 71:9-18) "Yea, even when I am old and grey headed, O God, forsake me not, until I have declared thy strength unto the next generation, thy might to every one that is to come." Now you should read Psalm 90:10.

There are about 30 million Americans over sixty-five. We have heard it said that "life begins at forty," but why not at 70, or 80, or 90? Old age does not mean that he/she is any less human. In fact, age should be regarded as an asset. One's knowledge, experience and practical observations should count for something. With vision it is impossible for one to die young at 95 or 100. It is not a sin to grow old. Think of Adam, Noah, Methuselah, Abraham, Moses, et al.

It is better for elder citizens to provide for themselves a place to live. Jesus ask John to provide for his mother (John 19:25-27). Try to remain as independent as possible. Health problems may intervene at some point making it necessary to accept help from others (Acts 6:1-6; Titus 2:2-5; I Timothy 5:10).

Old people are creatures of God. You were created in His image (Genesis 1:26-27). There is a spark of divinity in each of us. It is the soul that never shall die. See Matthew 10:28.

Although you are old in years make yourself useful. Find a service that needs to be rendered and stay busy. What

can an old man or woman do? Well, give the less fortunate a pat on the back. Speak words of encouragement to those whom you meet. Be a good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Make telephone calls, write notes to the sick and the bereaved. Work, never retire...simply change jobs. Never expect to receive much personal attention but bring showers of love to young and old alike. You cannot do all things, but you can do some things. Whatever your circumstances, never feel sorry for yourself. A miserable, wretched person is unable to help others. A person who is extremely un-happy or abjectly despondent because of want, grief, oppression, affliction, anxiety, or the like, is in no mood to encourage others. Paul wrote, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). Again, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he..." (Proverbs 23:7).

It will be a great blessing to understand that life is both good and bad. Into each life dark shadows must fall. David, one of the greatest men of the Old Testament, suffered much because of his and others departure from God's will and way (II Samuel 12:10). Psalm 51 shows David in anguish and pain when he remembers his sin with Bathsheba. But the sun shines, still. We live in the real world, not the ideal world. Smiles, tears, and pain are common to us all.

Exercise is all important (Acts 24:16; Hebrews 5:14).

Physical and spiritual exercise is a must, if one wishes to control anxiety, nervousness and worry. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto thee" (Matthew 6:33). Never borrow tomorrow's problems for today.

Be mature. Although one may have grown old in years, one may still be a "cry-baby." Be strong spiritually. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity" (I Corinthians 16:13-14). Wear a warm and friendly smile; do not turn people off by the expression on your face. Remember, it is not so much what you say, but how you say it.

Older people must take pride in themselves. Be presentable in dress so as to make the finest impressions on those whom you chance to meet along the way. It is said, "A beautiful girl is an accident of nature, but a beautiful older woman is a work of art." Be as attractive as possible; turn on your charm. You can win friends and influence people.

Watch your words; they can get you into all kinds of trouble. Gossip is Satan's most powerful tool. It is easy to pass on evil reports with such phrases as, "Have you heard?" "Do you know?" "They tell me," "Keep this to yourself, but--" "I don't believe it's true, but I heard so and so say." "They say." Aaron Burr advised a friend to never use that expression. He said, "It has

broken more hearts than any other."

Be aware of the unholy use of the telephone. One can sit in one's home, with the doors all shut and use his/her telephone to spread rumors and gossip and tales all over town.

We shall listen to the apostle Paul. "Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak the truth each one with his neighbor: for we are members one with another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need. Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:25-32, ASV).

Old people should never sour on the world, the church, or their family. A grouchy disposition will surely turn others off. Constant complaining, together with fault-finding will soon cause many to abandoned you. One is a hypocrite who tries to remove a mote (a speck) from his

brother's eye, when a beam (a crosstie) is in his own eye (Matthew 7:1-5). Fault finding is one of our great faults.

Have your will drafted by an attorney. Hang on to your possessions until you are dead. Do not decide to give your possessions away. Your are somebody (in the mind of others) as long as you have your estate.

Older people are approaching the end of life. "For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith..." (I Timothy 4:6-7, ASV).

Spend your remaining days in reading the Holy Bible (II Timothy 2:15). It's message will be a source of comfort until your last breath. Pray frequently (I Thessalonians 5:17). Through the night meditate on what your Bible teaches (I Timothy 4:15).

Note: If you are not a child of God obey the Lord's gospel today (II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2: 36-47).

If you have been a faithful Christian in times past, but now you have fallen away, you must repent of and confess your faults in order to be restored to God's saving grace (Acts 8:22; James 5:16; I John 1:6-10). Do it today. P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL. 35580.

W.A. Holley

(Editor's Note: Brother Holley is 84 years old.) GC

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Sixth Avenue Church of Christ
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Jasper, Al. 35501

The Most Important Principle In Any Denomination

The plea of faithful members of the church of Christ is just that --that we would be the church of Christ. We want all who will to unite with Christians in being the church of which Jesus spoke when He said, "On this rock I will build my church (Matt. 16:18)." But that commitment implies something very important. It is that we indeed can understand the church of the New Testament enough to be that church in 1995. Can a man today be just a Christian? Can he be a member of the church of Christ? Can he shun the trappings of the religions of men and just be what the Bible says? Of course he can! Jesus said the truth was attainable (Jn. 8:32). We can be involved in the faith, and contend for it (Jude 3). People really can be moved out of darkness into the church of God's dear Son (Col. 1:12,13)!

Is this an arrogant, prideful desire? Does this plea imply a "holier than thou" attitude? Certainly not. It didn't when Jesus taught it (Matt. 7:24-29), or when Paul taught it (I Cor. 1:10, I Tim. 3:15), or when Peter taught it (I Pet. 2:9-10), and it doesn't now. In fact, among serious minded Christians this purpose implies the opposite. It is a spirit of gentle humility combined with a firm confidence in Christ (II Tim. 1:12), and a love for His word to guide us (Matt. 4:4; Psa. 119:105).

There have always been threats to this simple concept, to be Christians only and members of the church of

Christ. Some were threats stemming from within, as Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5), and others have been from without. Perhaps the greatest threat to the simplicity of New Testament Christianity has been the concept called "denominationalism". To "denominate" means to divide into several different parts. With reference to religion it pertains to the philosophy that all the different churches, with all their different practices and beliefs, are all part of the big whole of the church. Have you ever considered what the term denomination carries? It carries the idea that all faiths, so long as they claim some tie to Christ, are equal in validity, and equal in the eyes of God. Although most people have never stopped to consider it, the main conviction in this philosophy is that the we can't really know the truth about pleasing God in religion. Without this conviction the philosophy of denominationalism crumbles.

In this philosophy of religion, it doesn't particularly matter what you do in religion, provided you claim to be a "Christian" religion. But think: To be a member of a denomination, and thus in support of denominationalism, man must adopt this belief: The New Testament isn't a blue print for men to follow to be Christians and to be part of the Lord's church. It is a book which men may ignore, criticize, twist, alter, and do so without any consequences. The Bible has to be of relatively little importance,

and without that one single major conviction, the Philosophy of denominationalism cannot continue to exist. It falls. Should people start believing that the Bible is our guidebook for folks to be the church of Christ, and that that is a worthwhile goal, they would quit rejoicing in the massive division in "Christendom" today.

The infancy of denominationalism stated during Paul's time in Corinth. Here's his reaction:

"Now 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 judgement. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I apollo; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (I Cor. 1:10-13.)

How serious a matter is this? It is of pearly gates importance. It is so serious that the Apostle went on to say, "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name (vs. 14,15)." Now let's ask ourselves, if Paul were here today, would he rejoice in the great spirit of tolerance among the many denominational churches?

Would he unite with those voices who maintain that we all can and must be Christians and members of the church of the New Testament?

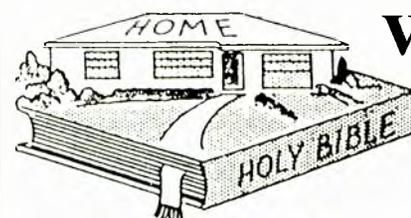
This is exactly why members of the church of Christ become so upset when preachers in our pulpits start calling the church of Christ a denomination. We cannot sit quietly while some work through pulpits and publications to change the church into a group which slowly melts into the "doctrines don't matter" arena called denominationalism. Doctrines *do* matter: "Whoso transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God (II Jn. 9)."

The most recent issue of *Wineskins* magazine, edited by Phillip Morrison and Rubel Shelly, a magazine designed to change the church of Christ, contains an article by Lynn Anderson, who wrote the "How to" book of change in the church,

"*Navigating the Winds of Change*". The article is entitled, "Big, Sick, Denomination: Revisited". In 1973 Anderson made the statement that the church of Christ was "A big, sick, denomination". Much to his surprise, it caused somewhat of a stir among several members of the church. Christians who love the New Testament and the blood-bought church don't appreciate slurs against the body of Christ. But, many years have passed. What does brother Anderson say about this now?

"Do I think the church spoken of in the Bible is a denomination? No! Of course not. But it was big. And, in many situations it was sick. Do I consider "our brotherhood" (non instrumental Churches of Christ) a denomination? Yes. But, not always 'sick'..."

(Continued On Page 3)



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The Most Important Principle In Any Denomination

(Continued From Page 2)

"Well, do you embrace denominationalism? No. Oh no. I embrace Jesus. And brothers and sisters in Jesus scattered throughout most denominations. And I embrace my local church which even with its many imperfections, is a local expression of the body of Christ."

".I love my heritage, warts and all. I have no plans to leave it unless the

day should come that it should hinder me in being faithful to God and in extending fellowship to all of God's children. And I don't expect that."

This smoke-and-mirrors talk is deceiving. If the way denominationalism is defined in the first half of this article is correct, then brother Anderson is in fact supportive of exactly what a man must believe to be denominational. He believes

the philosophy of denominationalism. He preaches the philosophy of denominationalism. He will leave his "heritage" (church) if he can't continue to support the philosophy of denominationalism. His statements clearly imply that people can be faithful in churches which have worship, church government, and teaching which is contrary to the New Testament. And remember: That's the one, very

important, can't-miss-this, you-gotta-have-this belief that one has to adopt to be denominational.

The men in our brotherhood who are seeking to change the church of Christ are enjoying some success in their ill-directed cause. Many churches are splitting. Yet, while they may convince some churches somewhere to adopt the "major conviction" of denominationalism, they will never be able to change

this one simple truth: The church of the New Testament is not a denomination. It is the church; the one true church; the church built by and for Christ. Whether or not we choose to become members of that church is beside the point. It still stands. Truth never weakens because people deny it.

Study your New Testament. Obey its truth. Be a member of the church you read about there.

Learning Right Things

Christianity is a taught religion (Matt. 28:19). Christians are to be a learning people always (Rom. 12:2). We ought to be learning the things that are of the very greatest in value. True wisdom is ours when we learn the things God would have us to learn. We should learn from our experiences in this present world, that we should learn more and more knowledge of the Bible, and that we should learn contentment. Let us notice three areas where learning ought to most certainly occur.

I) LET US LEARN CHRIST AND GOD: Jesus said to come unto Him and learn of Him (Matt. 11:29). Paul told the Ephesians some things not learned from Christ but embedded in the message is that they needed to learn Christ (Eph. 4:20). Jesus spoke of hearing and

learning of the Father (Jn. 6:45). In a prayer, Christ said life eternal had roots in knowing God and the Son (Jn. 17:3). We must so learn Christ and allow Him to live in us (Gal. 2:20). Such has bearing upon the very hope of glory (Col. 1:27). We wear the name of Christ (Acts 11:26) and we must follow in His steps (I Pet. 2:21), His walk (I Jn. 2:6), His mind (Phil 2:5), His image (Rom. 8:29) and so on. There is a God-likeness that we must develop (Tit. 2:11-12). This should prompt us all to continue in the Lord's word (Jn. 8:31) and truly be learners of God and Christ. Such will develop within us love and respect for God. This will in turn mould our lives to the kind of people we should be.

II) LET US LEARN OBEDIENCE: Our perfect

example, Jesus Christ, was divine but also man (Jn. 1: 1, 14). The man Jesus Christ (I Tim. 2:5) learned from his sufferings the duty and necessity of obedience (Heb. 5:8). His will was to do the Father's will (Jn. 6:38; Matt. 26:39-42). His meat was to do such (Jn. 4:34). His coming to earth was to obey his Father's desires (Jn. 6:38). He did always the things that pleased God (Jn. 8:29) and finished what he was sent to do (Jn. 17:4, 19:30). We must learn also to ever be obedient. The obedient will be the beneficiaries of the grace of God (Matt. 7:21). The obedience will have right to Heaven (Rev. 22:14). May we all learn to obey God rather than any man (Acts. 5:29). We will gain a jewel when we learn obedience.

III). LET US LEARN TO

DO GOOD. Titus 3:14 is a challenge and a command for us all to learn to maintain good works. Isaiah 1:17 said learn to do well. I Timothy 5:4 challenges us to learn to care for our families. We have been blessed well and likewise charged to be rich in good works (I Tim. 6:18). The Bible equips us to the good that we should do (II Tim. 3:16-17). Jesus went

about doing good (Acts 10:38) and so must we. Let us learn to take advantage of every such opportunity (Gal. 6:10). Are you filled with zeal for doing good (Tit. 2:14)? Learn to do good and not evil.

We will be wiser in heart and life when we learn more and more about God, Christ, obedience, and doing good.

- Vance Hutton

Most Of A Minute

Procrastination

I heard recently about National Procrastination Week. I intended to mention it to you, but I didn't get around to it.

The Procrastinator's Club of America planned a full schedule of activities for the week, but they didn't get around to carrying much of it out. The week was promoted as a week to catch up on procrastination, especially for people who have been putting it off.

Most people admit to being procrastinators. Most of us are painfully aware that we don't get everything done that we should. We think about doing something only to decide to wait and do it some other time. Even when we vow to do better, we are frustrated by the fact that there seem to be more things to do than there is time to do them. Our "do today" lists grow longer and longer, as yesterday's undone items are added to today's.

There are some things however, about which only a fool would procrastinate. Things like our relationship to our Lord. Some people really do shout "Someday I will obey the Gospel", all the way to the moment of their last breath, with out actually doing anything about it. Does that pretty well described you?

If so, let me offer a verbal push from plain Bible reality. Hebrews 9:27 - "It is appointed unto man once to die and after this cometh the judgement."

Glenn Colley

Promiscuous

Richard Holloway, Bishop of Edinburg, recently sent shock waves through the Anglican church when He said, "He [God] has given us promiscuous genes." In essence, Mr. Holloway is saying we should fault God when a man for example, cheats on his wife.

But is it really God's fault?

Did God, in fact, create us with a genetic makeup that predisposes us to adultery? Can we point a finger toward Heaven and blame the Father for our unfaithfulness to our spouses? The Bible says, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He

Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his OWN desires and enticed" (James 1:13, 14).

Promiscuous genes? Absolutely not (Habakkuk 1:13; I John 1:5; Isaiah 6:3).

Mike Benson.

Arrogance or Conviction?

Michael Johnson

In a recent meeting with a preacher from the Independent Christian Church, a man made the following statement - *"I see the Churches of Christ as people who think that they have a corner on the definition of truth. To believe that your way is the only way or to believe that there are not sincere people in all the religious churches who can contribute to your understanding of truth is nothing more than arrogance."*

The attitude that conviction equals arrogance is the underlying thought behind his statement. It is the attitude that is the basis of most (if not all) of the current departures from the faith which are being seen in the church as more and more people seem willing to "hold hands" with the Independent Christian Churches and even the denominational world at large. But what about his statement?

#1 - We are not claiming that we have a corner on the definition of truth. However, we do claim that the Bible is the only standard of faith and practice, and with that in mind we do believe that the Bible has the corner on the truth and we are following that truth as the

Bible reveals it (Gal. 1:6-9; II John 9-11). Is this arrogance or conviction?

#2. - We are not trying to get people to follow "our" way. We want people to follow the Bible way. But we do believe that we are following the Bible and have no shame in calling to the people of the world to come into the church wherein is a haven from the penalty of sin (Acts 2:38-47). Is this arrogance or conviction?

#3 - There is no question but that there are sincere people in other religious groups. But sincerity does not equal truth or salvation (consider Paul in Acts 23:1). Our question is not with their sincerity but with their belief and practice of error before God. Is this arrogance or conviction?

#4 - We also do not reject the opportunity of being able to learn from anyone who can help us in our understanding of the truth of God's word. But that is a far cry from being willing to adopt just anything that they say (I John 4:1-3). Is this arrogance or conviction?

#5 - Such a statement makes arrogance a requirement for freedom and salvation. Jesus said, *"And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you*

free" (John 8:32).

#6 - To make such a convicted statement (concerning the churches of Christ) makes him arrogant as per his definition conviction= arrogance. And what is his proposal as to the attitude that ought to characterize all Christians? In other words, how can we be pleasing to God without being arrogant? Notice these quotes:

"I would never tell anyone that they were wrong on something."

"To say that God will not or cannot save everyone is to limit God. I will not do that. I will let God be God."

Does he really think that he has the power to limit God or to keep God from being God? Why can we not understand what the Bible reveals about God without being arrogant? If we cannot ever tell anyone that they are wrong based on Scripture, why is he preaching? What does he expect to accomplish when he ascends the pulpit?

Finally, in response to all of this concerning his "conviction = arrogance" stance, consider these things. First, by definition this attitude is wrong. Arrogance is the noun form of the verb "arrogant." This word arrogant means to "assume,

demand, or appropriate unduly or presumptuously."

Conviction is the noun form of the verb "convict." This word means to "prove." Once something has been proven it is not accurate to accuse someone of presumption or arrogance for claiming a thing proven to be correct. Conviction is the result of the gathering of facts and the proper assembling of them in order to find the truth. Arrogance is holding to something in spite of the truth or without all of the truth assembled. Second, if the above expressed attitude is true then the Bible is the most arrogant book ever written and Jesus is the most arrogant person who has ever lived. Consider the following Scriptures and their "arrogance" - John 12:48; 14:6, 15: 17:3.

Third, this attitude is really universalism in disguise. I asked him how that preaching anything short of universalism does not, in fact, "limit God" or "keep God from being God." He said he would never state that universalism is a false teaching. But he said that he believes that universalism is false and those who believe such will be lost. Thus, if he does not preach what he believes, he is a hypocrite. If

he does preach what he believes, he is arrogant according to his own statements. Neither a hypocrite nor an arrogant man has the right to stand before people and proclaim God's word.

As I was leaving I made reference to the fact that these same discussions (instrumental music, the grace of God, the purpose of baptism, etc.) are taking place in the churches of Christ. He seemed genuinely shocked that such would even be discussed within the churches of Christ and even more shocked that there were people within the churches of Christ who would have the same thoughts as he has. However, when I mentioned that in some places there is the current move to have women elders, deacons, and preachers in some churches of Christ he vehemently stated *"as long as I am here we will not have women doing those things."* What method of Bible study led him to that conclusion? Is this arrogance or conviction?

Michael Johnson preaches the gospel in Richmond, Kentucky.

A Preacher's Priority

One area of study which I really enjoy is that of restoration biography, that being the life histories of some of the great gospel preachers of the past. I find biographies to be instructive with regard to both the bright and dark sides of life. While reading the biography of one great preacher of the recent past it was noted that he was extremely busy in evangelistic work, that he was single-minded in his purpose to preach the gospel and that much of his life was devoted to conducting gospel meetings. In fifty-six years of preaching he baptized between 8,000 and 10,000 people into Christ.

One of his sons recalls that

it was always a happy occasion when dad returned home between meetings, but that after the first moments of happy greetings his preaching father would withdraw into his own world and did not spend a lot of time with his children. Such strikes me as a sad postscript to an otherwise successful life of bringing people to the Lord. It makes me wonder, how well taught were his children and where was dad as the spiritual leader in their lives?

A preacher can easily lose sight of what is perhaps his highest priority and that is his home and family. He may find himself active internationally but a failure domestically. He may labor to

make his name great, but there is no place on earth where his name is more important than at home. A preacher may glory in the fact that he is a speaker on one of our big brotherhood lecture-ships, and when he comes after slaying the giants of liberalism and digression in some far away pulpit his family is not reveling in the fact that he was one of the chosen few to address the masses, or that he rubbed elbows with some of the greatest names in the brotherhood, or that he has a chapter in a beautifully bound lectureship volume. What matters to them is "where is daddy at the dinner table?" "Where is daddy to play

catch?" "Where is daddy to read a bed-time story?" "Where is daddy to tell the story of Jesus and teach them to pray?"

It is easy for a preacher to be pulled away from his family with just the normal responsibilities of his work. There is endless study to be done. There are gospel meetings to preach. There are funerals and weddings to perform. There are visits that must be made. There are those ever recurring Sunday and Wednesday deadlines. One can almost become a stranger to his family without even trying. A man's work can become his own form of escapism, even for a preacher. He can easily

remove himself from responsibilities at home and immerse himself in many "important" obligations elsewhere. Yet, if we are able to save the whole world and lose our own families, what have we really accomplished? Isn't that where we have failed in so many cases? Isn't that where apostasy begins? The one who preaches that fathers should bring their children up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" may fail of doing that very thing himself.

Dennis Gullledge

JANUARY 12, 1996

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The Words Of Truth

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Glenn Colley

Sixth Avenue Church of Christ
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Jasper, Al. 35501

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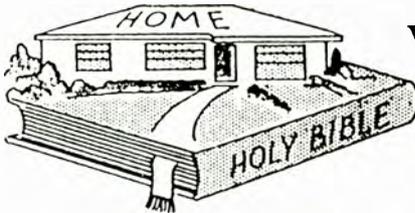
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Are You Following The Pattern?

When man became so sinful that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Gen. 6:5), God was grieved very deeply, and decided to destroy the world with a great flood. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (Gen. 6:8). He was instructed to build an ark according to the plan that God gave him. In Genesis 7:1, Noah is instructed: "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." Noah and his family would be saved from the awful deluge. But just before Noah was told to enter the ark, the Bible

records these words: "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Gen 6:22).

When the Tabernacle was to be erected, God again supplied many intricate details of its construction. And the Bible records concerning Moses: "Thus did Moses: according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did he."

When the prophet Haggai stirred up the people to rebuild the temple, the Bible says they "obeyed the voice of the Lord their God" (Hag. 1:12), and when they obeyed, God said "I am

with you" (Hag. 1:13). When Paul wrote to Timothy, he admonished him to "hold fast the pattern of sound words" (2 Tim. 1:13 NKJ). Throughout the Bible this theme is repeated time and time again: Follow the pattern! Yet we live in a time when many do not want to follow any pattern.

Those who still cling to Biblical authority are looked upon as being out of date and old fashioned. The present religious condition is much like what is described in the last verse of Judges; "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man

did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25).

Today, Jesus is our King. But He has been dethroned in the classroom, in the workplace, in our homes, and in our nation. And when we don't allow Him to reign supreme, we will do that which is right in our own eyes - and the pattern will be neglected.

Are you the friend of Jesus? "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 14:15). Do you love God? "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not

greivous" (I John 5:3). It is time to remove "I think" and "I feel" from our spiritual vocabularies, and go back to "Thus saith the Lord!" You can almost hear our Heavenly Father weep as He says: "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" (Deut 5:29)

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JANUARY 19, 1996

• **See Articles Inside:**

* **Woman's Role In The Church**

* **The Fig Tree Cursed By Jesus**

***Public Prayer**

***Not Mine To Begin With**

* **"Be Sure Your Sin Will
Find You Out"**

Volume 32 Number 52
(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

Woman's Role In The Church

In today's world there is a lot of emphasis on women's rights. There is a call for equality with men in the work force, on the pay scale, and in the social, political, and religious fields. Most are familiar with the "Women's Liberation Movement" in the U.S.A. and other western countries. This has spilled over into the rest of the world in a milder form.

It is true that many of the women of the world still live in subservient societies where they are little more than objects and servants, they have very few rights, they are kept in the background, and even out of sight. While this is wrong and needs to be corrected, many women in the western world are not seeking equality but superiority. Their emphasis is so strong that they have made man and woman to become enemies, to compete with each other, and to even change positions with woman becoming the dominant character in the world. How sad that these things are happening. Why can't we respect each other, recognizing that both have their strengths and weaknesses, and both have their different roles and individual needs. Why can't we learn to live together and work together without either one trying to suppress the other and ending pressuring one or the other to assume unnatural roles?

Even in the religious world the role of the woman has

changed considerably in recent years. While some religious groups have long accepted women preachers and used them in numerous other positions that once were reserved for men, other church bodies have more recently opened their organization for women to be appointed as bishops, priests, and to other similar posts. In spite of the many who have objected to this--and even causing division--still those in authority have gone on to appoint female members to these posts.

With these things taking place in the world, what position should the church hold in these matters? Shall we go along with the world and the religious world and allow the ladies to publically preach, lead prayers, direct singing, and wait on the Lord's Table in the presence of mixed audiences? Shall we appoint them to be elders and deacons? In such questions, it is not a matter of what the world is doing, or even what the religious world is doing, but our concern should be that we comply with God's will. If we are unwilling to do that, why bother with religion at all?

We do not have an earthly head in the church to decide such matters. Neither can a preacher or even the elders make a decision for the entire church. Where can we go, then, to know what God's will is on this question? There is just one place: we must go to God's word. Keep

in mind that God has spoken and He has revealed His will to us. He tells us what he wants and what he doesn't want, then it is up to us to either accept His will or reject it. Even God will not force us to accept His will but we must do so if we want to please Him and to be accepted to Him.

Please remember that God made man and woman--male and female--in the beginning. Each is incomplete without the other, and needs the other. Furthermore, God Himself made man head over the woman, and He made the woman to be the helper to man. This does not mean that man is to be a dictator or that he can be mean and cruel to his wife. It does mean, however, that man is the stronger vessel and woman is the weaker vessel, that man is to be the head of the woman and head of the family. The woman is to respect her husband and to recognize him as the head or leader of the family. That was God's plan in the beginning and it has continued to be his plan.

Keep in mind that God has a Son and He saw fit for Him to come into this world by being born of the Virgin Mary. When Christ began to choose a group to carry on His work, He chose 12 men to be apostles. Not one was a woman. Why not? Because God made man and gave him certain duties and responsibilities, and then He made woman and likewise He gave her certain duties

and responsibilities. It has always been God's plan for man to be the head and to give leadership to the family, for the woman to bear the children and to take care of the family and the home. In that position she has great power, as she molds the children and trains them to fill their proper roles to influence the world.

But continuing, it was to the apostles--MEN--that Christ gave the command to take the gospel into all the world. Later when the apostles were selecting a group to assist them in their work, 7 MEN were chosen. As the church grew and it came time for elders and deacons to be appointed to give leadership to the local congregations, according to I Timothy 3 and Titus 1, MEN were the ones to be chosen to fill these offices.

So the question is, "Why were no women appointed to be apostles, preachers, and the elders and deacons of the church under the direction of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Apostles? Were women inferior and less important, or did they not have the ability to do these things? Not so--but we must remember that it was God who so directed all of this and He had good reasons for His rules.

In order to understand God's rules, we must remember that God made woman, just as He made man. But He made them differently, and He designated man as the head

over the woman.

Why did God give man this responsibility? Because, as the Scriptures say in I Timothy 2:13-14, "Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression." These are two reasons given by God for man's authority over woman and his position as head over the family. So man was made responsible for leadership to his wife and children. Between a husband and wife, there may be discussion about different matters, but some one must make the final decision. Unless authority is accepted of the husband there will be problems. It is not a matter of man forcing his way upon the woman or the woman trying to out-do the man, but they must love one another and respect each other and work together. When this is the case, there is no problem at home. But when woman is told that she should compete with her husband for jobs, for pay, for position, for roles in the home, then there will be conflicts. There are no problems when both man and woman submit to God's order of doing things.

Likewise in the church, God has given man the public leadership role. But what about woman's role? She is there to support her husband,

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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The Fig Tree Cursed By Jesus

"Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, 'Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.' And presently the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, 'How soon is the fig tree withered away!' Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith, and no doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed and be cast into the sea; it shall be done.' And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (Matthew 21:18-22)

The cursing of the fig tree, (from Mark's account Mark 11:12-14; 20-24), evidently happened on Monday, and the disciples noted the withered tree on Tuesday morning. This was the week of the crucifixion. Jesus would die on Friday.

What was wrong with this fig tree that drew the curse of Jesus? The Davis Dictionary of the Bible (Royal Publishers, Inc. P.O. Box 47, Nashville, TN, 37202, 1973 edition, pg. 243) says, "The young fruit, or rather blossom, appears in the spring before the leaves open, on branches of the last year's growth. If green fruit is not on the tree when the leaves have opened, no figs will be borne. The fig, the *Ficus carica* of cultivation, is a tree 20 to 30 feet high. The leaves, which come forth late in spring and are shed at the approach of winter, are often 8 or 10 inches across. They are heart shaped with three or

four lobes."

When Jesus saw the leaves, he naturally assumed that fruit would be present on the tree. It should have been, but wasn't. The tree gave the appearance of bearing fruit, but in truth did not.

What is the meaning of this? Why would Jesus bother to curse a tree? Was he simply outraged at this non-human, non-thinking object which disappointed him, or was this another of his deep and meaningful object lessons aimed at teaching an important lesson? The immediate teaching given by Jesus was simple: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

This statement is puzzling. At face value Jesus seems to offer the disciples a miraculous blank check. So long as they had faith and didn't doubt, all their whims and desires --even to moving a mountain into the sea-- would be accomplished. Yet the disciples seem to have understood that Jesus was laying down a broad, general rule that is clearly limited by God's law. We never see them attempting miracles without godly purpose, or miracles to flex their supernatural muscle. This is important to see because some teachers want to apply this passage today. They claim this passage as proof that they can perform miracles, and that when their attempt miracles don't work it is because of someone's doubting or lack of faith.

Remember a good practice in studying the scriptures is to let the plainer passages guide you in understanding the more difficult ones. The following scriptures have a clear bearing on how the

early disciple's prayers, were limited, and how our prayers are limited:

1. **When we pray, we should not expect to receive that which is unlawful for us to desire.** James 4:2-3 says, "Ye lust, and have not; ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."

2. **When we pray, we should not expect to receive that which is contrary to the will of God.** Remember that Christ prayed in Luke 22:42, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done." I John 5:14, 15 says, "And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desire of him. If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it."

3. **When we pray, we should not expect to receive that which is harmful to our Christian growth.** Paul wrote in I Corinthians 12:7-9, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, 'My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest

upon me."

4. **When we pray today, we should not expect to receive a supernatural occurrence,** for miracles as were performed in the New Testament times, have ceased. (I Corinthians. 13:8-11)

This brings us to a bit of speculation. Was there also a symbolic meaning to what Jesus did? Are there lessons which we can legitimately pull from this amazing event? Probably so. By having leaves, the tree beckoned to the wayfarers to come and be refreshed by it's sweet fruit. But it was a lie. There was no fruit. Those leaves were nothing but showy pretension. The picture seems to resemble the Jewish leaders who outwardly appeared to be so pious and good with their enlarged garment borders and broad phylacteries (Matthew. 23:5). In reality they wouldn't stop to help a man who had been robbed and left for dead (Luke 10: 30-37). In reality they had shut up the kingdom of heaven against men by their traditions and teachings (Matthew 23:13). They

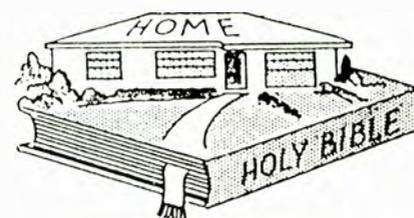
twisted and perverted God's truth to the way they preferred (Matthew 23:15-39). Jesus said of them, "ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity (Matthew 23:28).

Are our acts of benevolence little more than leaves, or is there really fruit here? Are our acts of worship on the Lord's day or at other times just pretty leaves, or is there fruit here? Are our kind words to others really filled with the fruit of Christian sincerity, or nothing more than pretentious leaves? Sometimes self-examination is very helpful. If our righteousness doesn't exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, we won't inherit the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:20).

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Galatians 5:22-23)."

Jesus said, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them (Matthew 7:20)."

Glenn Colley



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Woman's Role In The Church

(Continued From Page 1)

to work with other women, to teach women, to teach children, to do personal work, and to do the many other things she can do as a woman.

But you can watch it in the religious world. When God's order is rejected and the woman gets involved in a public way by doing those things reserved in scripture for man, then eventually woman will completely take over. That is because man retreats from the position God has given him, and thus God's order is reversed to both man and woman's hurt.

The question is, why are

people never satisfied? They always want to do the other person's work, but not their own! They feel that unless they are allowed to switch roles, they are being deprived, and that something is wrong. Look at young women today who are wanting to do all kind of professional jobs that are normally done by men, to challenge all male institutions for entrance, to take on professional sports that have always been male dominated in the past, and so on. Actually, if man would do his work and woman would do her work, both would have

more than enough responsibilities. Those who respect God and His wisdom will accept that. Those who do not will end up opposing God.

Paul spoke on the subject of women having a leadership role in mixed assemblies of the church. He said that women are to remain silent, in the sense that they are not to usurp authority over the men (I Corinthians 14:34, I Timothy 2:11-12). Sometimes when these verses are noted, there are those who speak of Paul as being "down on women" or they say he was a "woman hater." Those who make

such negative statements have evidently forgotten the fact that Paul was directed by the Holy Spirit when he wrote the scriptures. No, Paul was not a woman hater. He was simply saying what God's word had said all along, and he was teaching what the Holy Spirit instructed him to say: that God made man the head of the woman, and this truth is to be reflected in the home as well as in the church. If we are wise we will leave matters as God left them.

In conclusion, we of the Lord's church must abide by God's teaching on this subject, as well as on all

other matters. Regardless of what the secular world says, or what the religious world does, we must go on as was ordained from the beginning. That does not put us behind, but ahead. We would do well to remember the words of Isaiah, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9).

J.C. Choate

Public Prayer

On previous occasions I have mentioned that I believed prayer was a subject we were under-instructed in. I would further venture to say that "public" is perhaps the weakest link in our instruction on and of this great subject. Just possibly, we have considered the matter of prayer solely personal and private, to the extent that we wouldn't dare suggest to another that their prayers were not meeting New Testament criteria; and in failing to do just that, as J.W. McGarvey once said they, "reach no higher than the ceiling." [Chapel Talks, p.39]

It would be my judgment that the man who doesn't recognize the difference in private and public prayer is making a genuine mistake. Isn't it the case that when one presumes to lead the congregation in prayer but is actually verbalizing a private prayer, he is missing the whole point of "public" prayer? Praying publicly in an assembly of Christians

involves verbalizing sentiments that not only glorify God, but that also express the thanksgiving, petitions, and supplications of those praying with you; to the end they may be able to say "Amen".

The Scripture we appeal to in defense of this prayer directive is I Corinthians 14:15-16 which says:

"What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?"

I understand perfectly well that the text here offered is laced with the supernatural [spiritual gifts were being manifested in that assembly - in connection with prayer, singing, and teaching] but surely the principle of verses 15 and 16 is abiding. Let me

explain, if those praying with you cannot "understand" the prayer you offer publicly for a variety of reasons, say because you are expressing strictly individual desires, then how in the world can they unite with you in that prayer? I say they cannot. Surely, we all want our "public" prayers to be understandable and edifying to the entire assembly.

One suggestion I would make, which is by no means original to me, is that men who expect to be called on to lead the church in prayer spend some time in deliberation of those prayers. I am well aware that at all times we have no advance notice of our praying publicly, in that case I offer you this:

"One is often called on to lead in prayers very unexpectedly. You have no time to reflect what you should pray for before beginning. On such occasions you have this relief: You know that there are certain spiritual wants and

aspirations that are common to all worshippers, and if you present any of these you will not have gone amiss in respect to the present audience." [McGarvey, Chapel Talks, p. 46]

I don't know to what extent the matter I have

discussed is a problem in the church of Christ, but surely it is deserving of our further consideration.

Mel Futrell
Daphne, AL

Most Of A Minute

Not Mine To Begin With

Living the way we should, and understanding the real truth about life requires a knowledge of God. Proverbs 1:7 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."

Senator Bob McQuin tells the story of going to McDonalds with his little boy. After getting the food and sitting down, the senator reached for one of his son's fries. The little boy said, "No daddy. Those are my fries."

Bob thought a minute and then took out a piece of paper and wrote four observations. First, his son didn't know that if he wanted to, he could take all his fries. Second, if he wanted to, he could smother his son in french fries. Third, he didn't need his son's fries, he could get his own. And finally, what hurt him the most is that his son wasn't willing to share that which he had given him.

You know, as we look at our heavenly Father's blessings we observe that He could remove all of our blessings. Second, He could cover up in blessings. Third, He doesn't actually need what we have to offer. And finally, what hurts Him most is when we refuse to give to Him what He has given to us.

Psalms 103:13 says, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him."

Glenn Colley

“Be Sure Your Sins Will Find You Out”

Sin is the transgression of God's law (I John 3:4; Romans 4:15). In all ages - the Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian - sin has been punished in keeping with the will of God. There is no escaping sin - it will find you out in time, in conscience or in eternity.

What is the bases for the conclusion we have reached? The Scripture saith, “For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

Sin had its origin in the Garden of Eden as far as man is concerned. Here Genesis chapter three should be read.

Satan appears to be the chief of the fallen angels. We read, “And the angels, that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6, ASV). In II Peter 2:4, a parallel verse, again we read, “For if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment (ASV.) Another passage is I John 3:8 which reads, “He that doeth sin is of the devil; the devil sinneth

from the beginning. To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (ASV).

Most scholars think the expression “Not a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil,” has reference to Satan's pride (I Timothy 3:6). Jesus declared that the majority of Jews of His day were sinners: “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it (John 8:44, ASV).

God's remedy for sin can be found in Romans 5:12-21. The remedy for sin is Jesus Christ and the gospel of Christ. It's forgiveness of sin extends to every creature in all the world (Matthew 26:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). But this does not mean that all, saint and sinner, shall be saved.

God loves the sinner, but God is a just God which means that sin demands punishment. As proof we offer for our reader's consideration Romans 11:22; “Behold then the goodness and severity of

God; toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, God's goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off” (ASV). Hence, the popular doctrine of “once in grace always in grace” is shown to be false. Did not Jesus say, “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit” (John 15:2, ASV).

Another passage reads, “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open into their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil” (I Peter 3:12). We must remember that one's heart can be hardened Matthew 13:13, his conscience seared I Timothy 4:2, and after a time it can become impossible to renew one unto repentance Hebrews 6:4-6.

What are some examples of sin to which we refer? Read the following two verses: “For ye know, that no whoremonger, no unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of

disobedience” (Ephesians 5:5-6).

The scriptures teach that the wicked are punished in this world as well as in the world to come. Did not God punish Sodom and Gomorrah and those who lived before the flood? Did not God send his wrath upon the wicked cities at Nineveh, Babylon, Israel and Judah, Jerusalem and Rome?

Our nation is rapidly traveling toward destruction, if it can not change its course. Murder and violence seems to rule the day. Morally, spiritually, and politically we are not setting a very good example. Atheism and ungodliness weakens our nation day by day. Evolution and humanism are responsible for moral decay. Our boys and girls are taught that one cannot know the truth. As a result we have those who practice hedonism - the doctrine that pleasure or happiness is the sole or chief good in life. “If it feels good do it,” we are told. As a result we have those who boast of being “single parents.” Once such was a shame. Our nation is wash with drugs, alcohol. Many of our cities are war-zones. One teacher recently told me that he never goes to school without his pistol. To

thousands the marriage contract means nothing. Thousands of young people do not know who their real parents are.

What lessons does God have for the nations? “The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God” (Psalm 9:17). Remember nations are but men who must account to God for their deeds.

“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Proverbs 14:34). Righteousness is often used to denote holiness, justice, and faithfulness. Where are these qualities where abortion is concerned?

Again, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance. The Lord looketh from Heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men” (Psalm 33:12-13).

The nations should understand that God knows the evil counsels of evil men. All things are open and naked before His eyes (Hebrews 4:12-13). We sincerely urge our readers to believe and obey the truth of God today.

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Distinctive Preaching is Balanced Preaching

Some grab a cute cliché and pronounce it “wonderful.” We are too often suckers for a snappy saying. The need for “balance” in our preaching is an ongoing buzzword.

If one means by such that the preaching should change tone from day to day to keep up with the “felt needs” audience, this is incorrect. Have you ever

read in succession the sermons of Peter in Acts 2 and Acts 3? While you are reading, you might want to read the sermons of Stephen in Acts 7, of Phillip in Acts 8, and of Paul in Acts 13 and 17.

These sermons were virtually identical in content. They were doctrinal. Even the first sermon of Peter on

Pentecost violated the advice of the church changers of our day who advise against doctrinal sermons on morning. The first thing Peter said in this first recorded gospel sermon violated the rule of “positivism.” Peter said those in the multitude who accused the Apostles of drunkenness were wrong.

Balanced, doctrinal

preaching in our day will contrast the gospel of Christ with the creeds of men. Both positive and negative preaching is needed. The church of Christ must be contrasted with denominationalism. Extremes, both within and without the body must be rebuked. Holiness of life and respect for the law of God regarding marriage,

divorce, and every other aspect of our lives must be addressed. Yes, doctrinal preaching is balanced preaching. Those who can preach on both sides of the aisle, to suit the feelings of the audience are compromisers of truth. This is the worst kind of unbalanced preaching.

Paul Kidwell, Sr.