



BEACON

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ
4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850.455.7595

Internet Web Page: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>
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BEACON

Vol. XLIX / No. 1

January 6, 2020

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Minister: Michael Hatcher

Deacons: Henry Born, Elward Brantley

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Sunday Worship Services — 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Faithful in All Things

Roelf L. Ruffner

And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses (Deu. 34:9).

Joshua, the son of Nun, was given the task of being the prophet Moses' successor and leading the children of Israel in the conquest of Canaan—the Promised Land. Many centuries before, God had promised His friend Abraham that his descendants would possess this land and its kingdoms (Acts 12:1-3; 15:13-21). God would fulfill His promise through Joshua and the children of Israel.

It is one thing to claim to obey God and it is another to obey God in all things. For example, the Lord gave Joshua a specific command how Israel was to conquer the Canaanite city of Jericho. A procession of

warriors and seven priests with ram's horn trumpets were to accompany the carrying of the Ark of the Covenant, followed by the rest of Israel, encircling the city once a day for six days. On the seventh day they were to march around the city seven times. At the end of the seventh time on the seventh day the priests would blow a long blast on the ram's horns, accompanied by a shout of the people and the walls of Jericho would come down allowing the warriors to attack.

And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long *blast* with the ram's horn, *and* when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him (Jos. 6:5).

Yet, Joshua correctly inferred from God's command that the people could only shout on the seventh day at Joshua's command.

And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall *any* word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout (6:10).

Building Character

Oh, did you know the little thoughts
That flutter through your mind
Are always either good and pure
Or selfish and unkind?

And did you know that what you think
And what you say today
Will make you what you are to be,
Because you grow that way?

Your life is built just like a house:
The things you think and do
Are like the bricks the builders use,
For they are building you.

The bricks that crumble, none would
want
To build into a wall,
Because when the winds began to blow
The house would quickly fall.

And so, to build your character
And build it strong and sure,
Use pleasant words, do kindly deeds
And let your thoughts be pure.

Author Unknown

Yet, God did not specifically command that they remain silent. Joshua wanted to obey God in **all things**. He correctly inferred that God had implied in His command that there was to be no utterance until he gave the order to shout.

The same principle or law of implication applies today in Christianity. If a doctrine is implicitly taught in the Holy Bible it is binding upon men, not because men have inferred it, but because God has implied it. In New Testament worship by the church of Christ "singing" is commanded (Col. 3:16-17; Eph. 5:19). We may correctly infer from these verses that mechanical instruments of music may **not** be used since the only instrument authorized for the worship of God is the human heart or mind.

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord (5:18-19).

God's and Joshua's instructions were followed to the letter in the conquest of Jericho. At Joshua's command the people shouted and the walls of Jericho fell straight forward (Jos. 6:15-21).

What about your worship? If you claim to be a Christian, your worship should be authorized by the Word of God (John 4:24; 12:48; Col. 3:17). It should not be driven by man-made traditions, emotional experience, musical taste, innovation, or even pragmatism. It is to faithfully follow the New Testament. As Jesus said:

This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men (Mat. 15:8-9).

Next time you think that you are worshipping God with melodious melodies (How-ever ancient!), blaring guitars, harps, trumpets, flutes, bagpipes, or organs; stop and ask

yourself, “Am I worshipping God with His authority or my own opinion?” Are you striving to obey God in all things, including worship?

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (7:21).

Columbia, TN

Respect for God’s Name

Did you know that Centuries ago, when ancient copyists of the Scriptures came to God’s name, they would put new pens in their writing instruments, take a bath, and change clothes before they would copy the name. A bit extreme you say? Perhaps! But think for a moment. Which extreme is more dangerous: that of being overly cautious in showing reverence or that of carelessly tossing respect of God to the wind, using His holy name as nothing more than a cheap by-word of vulgar exclamation?

God’s name can be heard more often in one evening of television viewing than during a normal worship service. The problem lies in the manner in which God is mentioned on many television programs. Many of the actors and actresses on television (and movies, as well) use God’s name casually and flippantly as nothing more than a form of exclamation. However, such is not confined to programs with actors and actresses. It can be used by newscasters, sportscasters, and

almost any other kind of program. God deserves better; God expects better. Such disrespect for Deity, some years ago, raised eyebrows; now it appears to be accepted as routine and normal. Could this be indicative of the nation’s continual moral and spiritual decay? As speech follows thought, so behavior follows speech. A lack of respect for God in language leads to a lack of respect for God in life.

The Bible still teaches as it always has: Let all the earth fear the Lord: Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him (Psa. 33:8).

But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned (Mat. 12:36-37).

Let us give God’s name the reverence it deserves.

Author Unknown

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Sick

Remember in your prayers:

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| Marge Williams | Nancy Travis |
| Henry Hignite | Tim Busch |
| Rheba Stancliff | Carla Burleson |
| Bobbie LaBryer | Tina Foshee |
| Cary Parks | Linda Parks |
| Louise Billiot | Doug Myrick |
| Nelda King | |
| Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette
Born's grandson) | |
| John Godwin (Aleacia Godwin's
husband) | |
| Bob Stancliff (Rheba Stancliff's
son) | |
| Beau James Busch (Bill & Pam
Busch's great-grandson) | |
| Billy Tom Muldoon (Pam Busch's
cousin) | |
| Mike Bailey (Nancy Loy's brother) | |
| Elaine DuLaney (Jason DuLaney's
wife) | |
| Halie Cowdell (Bill & Pam Busch's
grand-daughter) | |

Please Remember

January 12

Deacons' meeting will be held
prior to the afternoon service, in
room 1.



YouTube Channel

[https://www.youtube.com/c/
BellviewChurchOfChrist](https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist)



BEACON

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January 13, 2020

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Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Resolutions

Jim Miller

This time of year (as is any time of year) is an appropriate time to make some “resolutions.” I suggest the following for your consideration:

1. I will study my Bible each day. There are in many different ways to increase your knowledge of God’s Word. We may listen closely to the preaching of the Gospel, we may study in one or more Bible classes that are conducted from week to week, we may engage in discussion groups in the homes of various members of the church, or we may engage in a systematic study in the privacy of our homes. All of these programs are beneficial, and one is not designed to replace the others. The Christian who is keenly interested in learning more about the Bible is the one who will avail himself of all of these opportunities. However, too often the daily study of the Bible in the home is “pushed

aside,” and “postponed” because of “lack of time.” Resolve to allot time every day of this year to study in this manner. Be sure your study is systematic! I have heard people boasting of studying daily by allowing the Bible to fall open where it will and then read a chapter. This is not good. It provides no continuity of thought. Choose a book. Read and study a chapter a day. You will be greatly blessed if you do.

2. I will teach others about Christ. If a man is truly converted to Christ, he will feel compelled to tell others the “Wonderful Story of Love.” It is a great blessing to know the truth, but the truth may well condemn those who receive its blessings and refuse to tell others about such. Purpose to tell a minimum number of people about the crucified Son of God during the year 2020.

3. I will attend church services regularly. The local congregation is only as strong and active as people like yourself choose to make it. There is too much absenteeism among the ranks of the Lord's army! Members should feel a strong obligation to attend all of the services and activities of the local congregation. Do your part.

4. I will give as I have been prospered. The church is suffering everywhere because its members are not giving as they should. I know of many localities which need financial support that the Cause of Christ might be planted. I am too pessimistic to believe that

everyone will do their part this year, but I hope that you will. Plan now to give generously that the Gospel might be preached, souls saved, and churches planted in needy areas.

5. I will help those in need. Many of us are blessed with some abundance. We are not rich, but we do not suffer. Nevertheless, many of our brethren are in need. This was true in Jerusalem, soon after the church was established. When those that *had* learned of those that *had not*, they sold their abundance that the needs of those that *had not* could be supplied. Let us purpose to be our brother's keeper. Let us do good unto all men, and especially unto those of the household of faith. We can obey this command as individuals and as congregations.

Of course, "resolutions" are not worth the time it takes to think about them if we do not zealously work to carry them out. Resolve, pray, and work!

Gray, ME

Sermon Outlines

The majority of the lessons presented by Michael Hatcher are also in written outline form (PDF). Which can be accessed on our website at:

<http://www.bellviewcoc.com/sermons.html>

We Are Disciplined Ones

Bill Jackson

We have repeatedly stated that the child of God is a controlled being. He, after all, once lived to his own will and pleasure, fulfilling all the desires of the flesh and mind (Eph. 2:3), but in coming obediently to the Christ he has denied self (Luke 9:23) and willingly subscribed to the Master's will. He has then said that he will live a controlled and regimented life. As a child of God, he is called a *disciple* and thus a "student, learner,

a follower." The word indicates that, as a disciple, there is before him a Master, a Teacher, a Guide, and that is of course, the Christ.

We see, then, in *disciple* the fact that this one is a disciplined one. He has undertaken to follow, to abide by, a Discipline—the Word of God. One of the modern-day creed books is known as the "Discipline" of that denomination. They were correct in thinking that the organization needed some stated form

or rule but were in error in creating a human creed to guide men in religious matters. The point is that we have subscribed to a Discipline, and in living faithful to the Scriptures, we are disciplined ones. We see the term used of some people, without religion even entering into the picture, when they are condemned as being *undisciplined*. We have heard the term used, properly, of unruly children. They are without *discipline*.

We have erred in thinking that the sum of discipline is withdrawal of fellowship. Mention discipline, and that is where the minds of many will go. That withdrawal of fellowship is of course the ultimate in applied discipline, and action that must be taken at times. We are sorry that we see so little of it, and hear so little of it, in our time. But one thing that robs that ultimate action of its proper working is the fact that often there has existed no discipline of any consequence before the action is taken. Such ultimate discipline now applied by people who themselves are undisciplined is a waste of time, and a mockery.

In reality, where the people and congregation are what they should be, there is discipline in effect and ongoing constantly. The design of the Scriptures, with its role to play in providing reproof and correction (2 Tim. 3:16-17) is to discipline us. The work of elders, in admonishing, rebuking, and reproving is the work of discipline. Spiritual ones (Gal. 6:1) who visit those with problems in their application of Christianity are doing a work of discipline. And even the most faithful ones, in diligently studying and applying the

Word of God in their lives, are being *disciplined*.

In our “do it yourself” society, evil philosophies have, through liberalism, entered the church. Against all sense of discipline, we hear men say, “We in Christ do not abide by a set of rules!” However, Paul urged that we all “walk by **the same rule**” (Phi. 3:16). Others of the same liberal bent have said that the grace found in Christ has ruled out law, and that “we are not under law!” Again, Paul said that we “serve the law of God” (Rom. 7:25), and James refers to our being under “the perfect law of liberty” (Jam. 1:25). It is clear that some men have turned to obtain their *discipline* (such as it is) at sectarian theological sources, and they thus show that they are not within the Lord’s blessings in not being “under his discipline.”

We dare not end this without a word on fellowship. A lack of understanding of fellowship, and the meaning of it, the preciousness of it, and the restrictions of it, has worked to render withdrawal of fellowship ineffective in many instances. If fellowship was not valued, then the loss of it renders no hurt to the offender. We need to work on both of these areas, and we need to do it **Now!** We will not be able to do any of it until we are true disciplined ones! That is within the meaning of being a *disciple*. There is a Rule to be followed, and Law we have subscribed to, and a Course laid out by which we are to live. In so doing, we are following a Discipline!

Deceased

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Remember in your prayers:

Marge Williams	Nancy Travis
Henry Hignite	Tim Busch
Rheba Stancliff	Carla Burleson
Bobbie LaBryer	Tina Foshee
Cary Parks	Linda Parks
Louise Billiot	Nelda King
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette Born's grandson)	
John Godwin (Aleacia Godwin's husband)	
Bob Stancliff (Rheba Stancliff's son)	
Halie Cowdell (Bill & Pam Busch's grand-daughter)	

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family of Doug Myrick, who passed away on January 7. Please keep Terri and the rest of the family in your prayers.

Please Remember

January 19

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

January 19

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

January 20

Visitation Get-together at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room



BEACON

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January 20, 2020

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Godly Sorrow Worketh Repentance

Charles Pogue

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: but the sorrow of the world worketh death (2 Cor. 7:9-10).

Repentance is necessary for the individual who comes to Christ in obedience to the Gospel, but its need does not end there. Paul was not addressing repentance on the part of the one coming in initial obedience to the Gospel, but rather was rejoicing over the repentance of the Corinthian brethren. When one goes back and reads Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth, he knows they had a lot of which they needed to repent.

One of the most important things we learn about repentance from the above verses is that sorrow is involved in repentance. However, it is not just any sorrow. One could be sorry that he sinned and when it became public knowledge, he was embarrassed that he got caught, but did nothing about it. One could be sorry that he learned what he was doing was sin, but decided he loved it too much to give it up. One could be sorry that God's Word found him in sin, but he believed he was too overwhelmed by that sin, and not believing he could give it up, he did not even try. One could even be sorrowful like Judas was when he realized he had betrayed innocent blood. His guilt was more than he could bear, so he hung himself. These are some examples of what Paul termed the sorrow of the world. That sorrow does not lead to real and true repentance.

When one is sorrowful with godly sorrow, it works repentance. This person's mind is changed, he is not going to do what he was guilty of anymore, and that leads to him changing his life to be in conformance with that which is right. It is sadly true that sometimes it is easier for the person to repent of his sins when he first obeys the Gospel than it is for the child of God who is caught up in sin to admit it, change his mind, and be filled with the godly sorrow that leads to repentance. For that reason, every child of God today needs to consider what happened in the case of the Corinthians. A concerned brother, in that instance an apostle of Christ, recognized the problems that existed in the lives of the Corinthians, told them about it, encouraged them to repent, and they did. So many times, it is with the initial step in the process that is the problem. Some are too proud to receive it when they are warned about their sin. Sometimes pride gets in the way, and instead of hearing the Scriptural proof that they are in sin, they will respond with, "that's what you think, I don't believe that way." One might say, "you are no apostle, why should I believe you?" In such cases, it

is pride that stands in the way of godly sorrow. Of course, pride will stand in the way of some who need to obey the Gospel, and will keep them from repentance, but that should not be the case with those who are Christians. We have a great advantage today over the brethren in the first century. We have that *perfect* of which Paul was speaking in 1 Corinthians 13. We have the full revelation of God to us, providing everything needed unto life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). We have no excuse not to know the difference between right and wrong. So, when we sin and refuse to repent, the question is, where is the godly sorrow? If it is smothered under a cloak of pride, we need to humble ourselves so God can lift us up (Jam. 4:10; 1 Pet. 5:6). We need to heed the warning that "Pride *goeth* before destruction, And an haughty spirit before a fall" (Pro. 16:18).

If there is some sin in your life for which you need forgiveness, kick the pride out of the way, appreciate one who may have called your attention to it, and have the godly sorrow that leads to repentance. One does not have to repent of that!

Beeville, TX

Man's Duty to "Prove All Things"

B. C. Goodpasture

Men are prone to go to extremes. This has always been true. Paul seems to have been guarding against this tendency when he wrote, "despise not prophesyings; prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 The.

5:20-21). In his day, there were those who claimed to "prophesy" by the Spirit, and did; and there were those who claimed to "prophesy" by the Spirit and did not. The result was that, at least some, "despised" all "prophesy-

ings” by reason of the false claims of the pretenders. Such a wholesale rejection of all “prophesyings” was unreasonable and unsafe. It was wrong. It is not right either to reject the true because some is false, or to accept the false because some is true. Paul indicated the safe course: “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” If there had been no evil mixed with the good, the admonition to “prove all things” and to “hold fast that which is good” would not have been necessary.

What is the meaning of *prove*? In this connection, it cannot mean that the genuineness of “all things” is to be established, for the simple reason that the “all things” to be “proved” are not all genuine. It rather signifies to try, to put to the test. The word is employed elsewhere in the New Testament in this sense (Luke 14:19). It means that we should examine everything we hear before we receive it or reject it, as the case may be. At this point, Adam Clarke said:

Whatever ye hear in these *prophesyings* or preachings, examine by the words of Christ, and by the doctrines which from time to time, we have delivered unto you in our preaching and writings. *Try the spirits*—the different teachers—by the word of God (*Clarke’s Commentary: 1 Corinthians—Philemon*).

In the words of the prophet, “To the law and to the testimony! if they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them” (Isa. 8:20). The conduct of the Bereans was in keeping with the spirit of the

command under consideration, for we read, “Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of the mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). The people of Berea put what they heard to the test, using the Scriptures as their standard of examination. They acted rightly and wisely.

Why will people not do the same today? It is common for the message of a modern preacher to be accepted without thought, testing, or investigation by those who are his friends religiously, and just as common for the same message to be rejected, without consideration, by his prejudiced religious enemies. These two unreasonable extremes are two of the most unmitigated curses of Christendom.

Let it be observed that this passage which **allows the right** also **enjoins the duty** of proving, testing, and investigating what is heard. It does not permit one to be an indifferent and passive listener. This, some seem to prefer. They attend the services, not to be taught, not to bring into use any faculty of discernment or testing, but to be impressed, and that without effort on their part.

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). All professed Christians should endeavor to become “full-grown men, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil” (Heb. 5:14).

Deceased

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Bobbie LaBryer	Tina Foshee
Cary Parks	Linda Parks
Louise Billiot	Nelda King
Carl Ayliffe	
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette Born's grandson)	
John Godwin (Aleacia Godwin's husband)	
Bob Stancliff (Rheba Stancliff's son)	
Halie Cowdell (Bill & Pam Busch's grand-daughter)	

Please Remember

January 29

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00
p.m., in the auditorium.

February 2

Visitation cards for Group 1 will
be handed out by Bill Crowe.

February 9

Deacons' meeting will be held
prior to the afternoon service, in
room 1.

Defender and Beacon

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Is Udenominational Christianity Possible Today?

Dub Mowery

A large percentage of people believe that it is impossible to be in a church that is not a denomination. Some talk of an invisible church and the visible churches. Obviously, they are claiming that the various denominations are the visible churches that are ultimately united in the invisible church. I do not know of any passage of Scripture that even hints of an invisible church. The udenominational church of the first century was very visible. It was so visible that persecution was brought upon it (Acts 8:1-4). To speak of an invisible church is to indicate something intangible. But again, the church of the first century was very tangible.

There are those who refer to the parable of the True Vine in John 15:1-8 as representing the different denominations being in fellowship with Christ. These people teach that the branches represent the different denom-

inations. But examine the passage for yourself to learn what the individual branches represent. Each branch represents an individual disciple who must bear fruit to remain in spiritual union with Jesus Christ.

Many in the denominational world declare, "We are all going to heaven, but taking different roads to get there." Now, think about that for a moment, is that concept taught in the Bible? Matthew 7:13-14 states:

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.

To claim that there is more than one way to heaven is to either suggest that the Bible itself

teaches different ways or that it does not matter whether or not we adhere to what it teaches. Neither of these alternatives can be harmonized with the Scriptures (Mat. 7:21-23; 1 Cor. 1:10; Phi. 3:16; Eph. 4:3-6).

Also, there are those who use the phrase, “other sheep I have, which are not of this fold,” recorded in John 10:16 to uphold religious division. They fail to stress the latter part of that verse, which states, “they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.” All who hear Christ’s voice (the new covenant) shall become one fold, not many folds. When Gentiles (those of other races) obeyed the Gospel of Christ and were added to the spiritual body of Christ (His church), they became one with Jewish Christians (Eph. 2:12-22).

Yes, undenominational Christianity is possible today when obedient believers submit to the one true standard, the Bible rather than the creeds and philosophies of fallible human beings (Phi. 3:16; Mat. 15:8-9; 1 Pet. 4:11).

Deceased

God’s Plan of Salvation

Hear	Romans 10:17
Believe	Mark 16:16
Repent	Luke 13:3, 5
Confess	Romans 10:9-10
Baptism	Acts 2:38
Be Faithful	1 Corinthians 15:58

Why I Did Not Go to Church

- I worked all week, and I took Sunday morning for much-needed rest.
- I sent the children to Sunday school, and that left the house quiet—so conducive to relaxation.
- It took me the greater part of the morning to read the Sunday paper. You see, I like to keep up with the news—including the funnies, the trashy gossip, and the mushy stories.
- There were some things about the premises that needed attention; and as I work all week, I had to take Sunday for keeping up with these duties.
- I was getting short on gas, and I had to save what I had for a little afternoon drive.
- We were to have company for dinner, and, of course, had to prepare for it.
- I attended several meetings during the week, some of them being of a religious character in part, and I guess that was sufficient.
- My favorite television program comes on just at church time, and I did not want to miss it.
- I could watch a better sermon over the television than my own preacher can preach—and, of course, there were no collections.
- I was in the crowds all through the week, so it was a relief to have an hour or two away from the noise and bustle.

- Well, you see, I have my own notion about things, and I do not think the preacher could have told me anything that would change it.
- I have to go to work at a certain hour every day, and it is such a relief to feel that I am free from that compulsion.
- Well, to tell the truth, I just do not care to go; I would rather do something else; I do not want to take on any religious responsibility; I would rather go to a ball game or curl up in a cushioned chair; I do not claim to have very much religion, and, in fact, I have about all I want.

An excuse is a lame attempt to divert attention from the real reason for one's

actions. It is the raising of a false flag. It is an evasion of the truth. No excuse for nonattendance can take the place of actual attendance at the services of the church. An average mind can find an excuse, sometimes plausible, for almost any course of action an indifferent or wicked heart desires to take. The television and the Sunday paper have not rendered obsolete the Pauline injunction:

Not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh (Heb. 10:25).

Author Unknown

Perspective

One day, the father of a very wealthy family took his son on a trip to the country with the express purpose of showing him how poor people live. They spent a couple of days and nights on the farm of what would be considered a very poor family. On their return from their trip, the father asked his son, "How was the trip?" "It was great, Dad." "Did you see how poor people live?" the father asked. "Oh yeah," said the son. "So, tell me, what did you learn from the trip?" asked the father. The son answered: "I saw that we have one dog and they had four. We have a pool that reaches to the middle of our garden and they have a creek that has no end. We have imported lanterns in our garden and they have the stars at night. Our patio reaches to the front yard and they

have the whole horizon. We have a small piece of land to live on and they have fields that go beyond our sight. We have servants who serve us, but they serve others. We buy our food, but they grow theirs. We have walls around our property to protect us, they have friends to protect them." The boy's father was speechless. Then his son added, "Thanks Dad for showing us how poor we are."

Isn't perspective a wonderful thing? Makes you wonder what would happen if we all gave thanks for everything we have, instead of worrying about what we do not have. Appreciate every single thing you have, especially your friends! "Life is too short and friends are too few."

Author Unknown

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Louise Billiot	Nelda King
Carl Ayliffe	
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette Born's grandson)	
Bob Stancliff (Rheba Stancliff's son)	
Halie Cowdell (Bill & Pam Busch's grand-daughter)	

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Aleacia Godwin in the death of her husband, John, on January 21. Please keep Aleacia and her family in your prayers.

Please Remember

January 29

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.

February 2

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

February 9

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.



BEACON

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February 3, 2020

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The Good Fight

Brad Green

Paul charged Timothy to, “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses” (1 Tim. 6:12). To some, the idea of fighting may seem foreign or even contradictory to basic Christian principles like love and peace. However, the Bible teaches that there can be no peace where there is the presence of sin and injustice towards God’s Word. In the life of Paul, we can see an example of fighting “the good fight of the faith.”

First, Paul acknowledged that he was in a spiritual war. Paul states that the Christian is to serve “as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim. 2:3). If there was no war, there would be no need for soldiers. Many individuals fail to enlist in the army of Christ. Others are added to that army through obedience to the Gospel (Acts 2:47) only to tuck their tails and

run at the first sight of conflict. Still others suggest that there is no war, crying, “Peace, peace; when *there is* no peace” (Jer. 8:11). If an individual will not acknowledge that there is a spiritual war being waged, he is doomed to defeat. Only when one recognizes that the Devil and his followers are seeking whom they may devour (1 Pet. 5:8), can one have hope of victory.

Second, Paul was prepared to fight. In preparation, Paul “put on the whole armour of God,” so he could “stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6:11). One should never go into battle unprepared nor unprotected. Paul girded his loins and bound his armor together with the truth (6:14), covered himself and his vital organs with righteousness (6:14; cf. Rev. 19:7-8), prepared his feet to walk in the paths of the Gospel (Eph. 6:15; cf. Psa. 119:105), grounded himself in the

faith to shield off attacks (Eph. 6:16; cf. Col. 1:23), protected his spiritual heart, his mind, wherein dwells the knowledge of and hope of eternal salvation to those who obey (Eph. 6:17; cf. Heb. 5:8-9), the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God (Eph. 6:17) which is

quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12),

I Didn't Have Time

I got up early one morning
I rushed right into the day
I had so much to accomplish
That I didn't have the time to pray.
Problems just tumbled around me
And heavier became each task.
"Why didn't God help me?" I wondered,
He answered, "You didn't ask."
I wanted to see joy and beauty
But the day trailed on gray and bleak,
I wondered why God didn't show me,
He said, "Why didn't you seek?"
I tried to come into God's presence,
I used all my keys in the lock.
God gently and lovingly chided;
"My child, why didn't you knock?"
I woke up early this morning
And paused before starting the day;
I had so much to accomplish,
That I had to take time to pray.

Author Unknown

and remained constant in prayer (Eph. 6:18) that he may not fall to temptation (Mat. 26:41).

Last, Paul chose his battles wisely. Paul never fought "as one that beateth the air" (1 Cor. 9:26). Paul did not waste his energies by swinging his spiritual fists aimlessly in the air. When Paul swung, he always made contact. He fought battles that needed to be fought. He did not shy away from rebuking the apostle Peter to his face and in the presence of others because Peter "was to be blamed" (Gal. 2:11). Paul preached boldly, but he also knew when to walk away. When the Word of God preached by Paul and Barnabas was rejected by the Jews, "they shook off the dust of their feet against them" (Acts 13:51). Jesus proclaimed, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Mat. 7:6). When the doctrine of Christ is "rent asunder," Christians must come to her defense (1 Pet. 3:15). When truth is compromised, the "change agent" must be confronted and silenced (Tit. 1:10-11). When the salvation of the souls of men are at stake, Christians must accept the charge to "seek and save" (Luke 19:10). However, Christians must also acknowledge that the seed, which is the Word of God, does not always fall on good ground (8:11-15) and, sadly, there comes a time when Christians must shake the dust from off their feet.

While some refuse to acknowledge the spiritual battle in which we are engaged, others ignore the battle while it rages all

around them. “Eyes have they, but they see not” (Psa. 115:5). Let us learn how to fight the good fight of the faith using the example of Paul. Acknowledge the spiritual war, be fully armed and prepared to engage the

enemy, and be “wise as serpents, and harmless as doves” (Mat. 10:16), choosing our battles wisely as we are sent to spread the Gospel to the world “as sheep in the midst of wolves.”

Lenoir City, TN

The Bible and the Writings of Joseph Smith

Bobby Duncan

When the Mormons knock on your door, you must, as a Christian, be courteous. However, you should be prepared to show them why you cannot accept as inspired the writings of Joseph Smith, the founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. The Mormons, of course, claim they believe the Bible to be true, but insist that the writings of Joseph Smith are just as much the Word of God as the Bible. If it can be shown that the writings of Joseph Smith plainly contradict the Bible, then the Mormon claim is shown to be a myth. Tape the following contradictions to your refrigerator and have them handy when the Mormons come calling.

What the Bible Says

Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Mat. 2:1). This was according to the prophecy of Micah 5:2.

Melchisedec did not receive the priesthood from his ancestors, nor did he pass it on to his descendants (Heb. 7:1-3).

Jesus was given by the angel at the time he first appeared to Mary to foretell the Lord's birth (Luke 1:31; 2:21).

Jesus had not yet built the church while He was living on earth but promised to build it (Mat. 16:18).

Christian was first given at Antioch around AD 40 (Acts 11:26).

Priests had to be descendants of Aaron (Num. 3:10; 18:1), and even those of doubtful descent were forbidden to serve as priests (Ezra 2:62-63; Neh. 7:64-65). Jesus Himself could not have been a priest if He had been on earth (Heb. 8:4).

What Joseph Smith Says

Jesus was to be born at Jerusalem (Almah 7:10).

Melchisedec received the priesthood through the lineage of his fathers and passed it on to Abraham (Doctrine and Covenants 84:14).

A woman called the Lord “Jesus” about 90 BC (Almah 19:29).

People were members of the church as early as 73 BC (Almah 46:14).

Christian was already being worn as early as 73 BC (Almah 46:16).

Sons of Lehi, a descendant of Joseph, were consecrated as priests (I Nephi 5:14; 18:7; II Nephi 5:26).

In response to this, the Mormon *elders* may make the allegation that the Bible contradicts itself, but they cannot prove that allegation.

Deceased

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Travis Busch (Bill & Pam Busch's son)	
Shane Norris (Bill & Pam Busch's nephew)	
Tia McLeod (Paul & Phyllis Brantley's daughter)	

Please Remember

February 9

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

February 16

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

February 16

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

February 17

Visitation Get-together at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.



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What Does Peter Mean When He Says We Have Spent Enough Time As Gentiles?

Johnny Oxendine

In 1 Peter 4:3, we read: “For we *have spent* enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries” (NKJV). What are these things Peter speaks of? He enumerates six forms of sensuality, three personal and three social:

1. **Wantonness.** Excesses of all kinds, with possibly an emphasis on sins of uncleanness.
2. **Lusts.** Pointing especially to fleshly lusts, “the inner principles of licentiousness.”
3. **Excess of wine.** Only here in New Testament. The kindred verb occurs in the Septuagint, Deuteronomy 21:20 and Isaiah 46:12. **To teem with abundance;**

hence to **boil over** or **bubble up**, **overflow**. It is the **excessive, insatiate desire for drink**, from which comes the use of the word for the **indulgence** of the desire—**debauch** and **wine-bibblings**. The remaining three are **revellings**, **banquetings**, and **idolatries**.

What are revellings (or revelries)? The Greek word (*komos*) originally signifies merely a **merry-making**; usually associated with a village festival. In the cities such entertainments grew into carouses, in which the party of revellers paraded the streets with torches, singing, dancing, and all kinds of frolics. These revels also entered into pagan religious observances, especially in the worship of Bacchus, Demeter, and the Idaean Zeus in Crete. Socrates, in the introduction

to *The Republic*, pictures himself as having gone down to the Piraeus to see the celebration of the festival of Bendis, the Thracian Artemis (Diana), and as being told by one of his companions that, in the evening, there is to be a torch-race with horses in honor of the goddess. There was to be drinking and dancing in the streets.

The rites grew furious and ecstatic.

Crowds of women, clothed with fawns' skins, and bearing the sanctified thyrsus (a staff wreathed with vine-leaves) flocked to the solitudes of Parnassus, Kithaeron, or Taygetus during the consecrated triennial period, and abandoned themselves to demonstrations of frantic excitement, and dancing and clamorous invocation of the god. They were said to tear animals limb from limb, to devour the raw flesh, and to cut themselves without feeling the wound. The men yielded to a similar impulse by noisy revels in the streets, sounding the cymbals and tambourine, and car-

rying the image of the god in procession (Grote, *History of Greece*).

Christians are to become as foreigners and resident sojourners to their society when the condoned and normalized practices of that society are indulgent and destructive excesses, which are inconsistent with the virtues of new life in Christ. Therefore Peter teaches that Christians are to remain within the social structures of their society (2:11-3:7) yet not participate in institutionalized practices that are recognized as contrary to God's will.

Spicq's Theological Lexicon of the New Testament tells us that *komos* became associated with both music and dance. Adding a transformation toward feasts, accompanied by music and dance, which degenerated, ending up in drunkenness and license. Philo denounces them: "In all your feasts and gatherings, see what exploits there are that stir up admiration and imitation...drunkenness, drunken behavior, parties," **similar to worldly parties today.**

San Mateo, CA

"Come Ye Out from Among Them"

Al Brown

Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath a temple of God

with idols? for we are a temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, And touch no unclean thing; And I will receive you,

And will be to you a Father, And ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1).

This is not a popular passage with some. They do not like to read it or think about what it requires. They know it is part of the will of God, but they pay little or no attention to it. God's people are to be separate—not because

Two Kinds of Christians

There are those who say, "I'm a Christian—**but**": I have to work such long hours I must spend "time off" with the family; I'm just no good at personal work anyhow; I'm paying for a new car or house so just can't give much; I want visitors welcomed, **but** I have so many friends I want to talk to! I would come Sunday night, but—etc.

What a relief to meet the man or woman who says, "I'm a Christian—**therefore**": count me in for all I can do; I'll put the church before my recreation; I'll go out of my way to invite some friends to a worship service; I want the Lord's work to prosper—**therefore** I will take an active interest in Bible Study, meeting strangers, talking and living the Gospel of Christ.

Are you a "**but**" or a "**therefore**"?

Author Unknown

God wants them to be miserable, or because they think they are better than anyone else, or to show favoritism. It is to keep them faithful to God and free from immorality, false doctrine, and perverted worship.

Christians are to be people after God's own heart. They are to be righteous, loving, pure, and holy as God is holy (1 Pet. 1:15-16). God has never allowed His own to indiscriminately mix with the ungodly or even the apostate among their own brethren. Every time the children of God have ignored this principle it has brought them disaster; yet, it seems this is a failing they are determined to periodically repeat.

Some brethren always seem to have trouble seeing the danger of mixing with unbelievers and the unrighteous. They insist on having close associations with the world, the unfaithful and apostate brethren. They reject the admonition: "Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33). They ignore the passage, or refuse to apply it to false doctrine, because they do not wish to believe it, but it still remains true! They insist on being deceived, and in their unbelief, God allows them to be.

So many brethren think they can ignore this and continue their ungodly associations with impunity. Poor souls; they have deceived themselves!

This article appeared in the 1994 Houston College of The Bible Lectureship Book, *The Church Enters The Twenty-first Century* (290-291, 293).

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son) | |
| Travis Busch (Bill & Pam Busch's
son) | |
| Shane Norris (Bill & Pam Busch's
nephew) | |
| Tia McLeod (Paul & Phyllis
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“God Said”

Franklin Camp

The Basis of Acceptable Worship

Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth (John 4:22-24).

Truth is essential for all acceptable worship. “God said” is the basis of the Truth that must direct all acceptable worship (17:17). If one cannot know God without revelation (and he cannot), then it also follows that one cannot worship God acceptably without the Truth that comes by revelation. The Samaritans worshiped God, but it was not acceptable, because it was based on partial revela-

tion. One’s worship must be spiritual, from man’s own spirit, and it must be as the Truth of the Gospel directs. “God said” is the basis of all acceptable worship. Some brethren today need to reconsider this fundamental Truth. This will stop some of the foolish and hurtful things that are taking place in worship today.

The Basis of All Acceptable Religious Experience

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, 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).

Jude speaks of “contending for the faith”—that is, objective faith [i.e., the Gospel], written revelation, upon which one’s faith

must rest. Any “religious experience” not based upon what God has said is false. One’s religious experience must be tested by what “God said,” not by what one thinks God says through a religious experience. Testing what God says by one’s religious experience today is the basis of false religion. Abraham had a religious experience, but it must be based upon what “God said” (Gen. 22:1-13). Salvation is a religious experience, but it must be based upon what “God said.” Worship is a religious experience, but it must be based upon what “God said” (Acts 17). The Athenians were having a religious experience, but it was not acceptable upon God because it was not based upon revelation. One can find people gathered everywhere in worship going through some kind of experience, but this does not mean that that experience is acceptable to God. Every religious experience one has must be in harmony with what the Bible teaches and must rest upon what “God said.”

When one has some kind of experience unknown to the Bible, that experience is false and deceptive and not accepted by God. It is time for men to turn back to the Bible and to find out what it teaches and then act upon it. The action then will be an experience, which harmonizes with what “God said.” This will be acceptable unto God. Nothing else is or can be.

The Basis of Prophecy

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and

the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Pet. 1:19-21).

And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that *is* the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, *but* the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him (Deu. 18:21-22).

Moses declared the failure of the prophecy of false prophets was proof that God had not spoken through them, but this also was proof that what the true prophet spoke was from God. The reason modernists try to re-date all the prophets is that they do not believe in inspiration or revelation in the sense in which the Bible uses these words. This is the reason the modernist attacks the book of Isaiah. The prophetic element in Isaiah is too much for modernism to swallow. Remember that “God said” is the basis of prophecy. If God could announce the promised seed, Christ, in Genesis 3:15, why should one have any problem with His speaking through Isaiah and announcing the virgin birth seven hundred years before it happened? Isaiah 7:14 is what “God said.” Do not try to avoid it, tamper with it, or change it. Just accept it as a prophecy and the fact that all prophecy rests upon what “God said.”

The Basis of Faith

“So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Faith must rest upon testimony—upon what “God said.”

This is the reason Paul declared that what he presented to the Corinthians was the testimony of God (1 Cor. 2:1). He wanted their faith to rest upon the only thing that can establish and sustain faith—that is, what “God said.” This truth needs to be re-emphasized in our day, when there are those who want to tell tales and give experiences and various other things as a substitute for the testimony of God. It is time we get back to the Book, which is the only thing that can produce faith, and the obedience of faith

(Rom. 1:5) is the only thing acceptable unto God.

Also, the strength of one’s faith depends upon the credibility of the testimony. One’s faith can be no stronger than the credibility of the testimony upon which it rests. The spiritual weakness of so many today is due to the fact they have allowed the babblings of men to affect their faith in the credibility of testimony.

It is my conviction that this weakness of faith is one of the main problems we face in this generation. We must re-establish the credibility of the testimony, the Scriptures, what God has said, in order for faith to be strong.

Deceased

Rules for Bible Study

1. Observe who speaks. For instance, Job 2:9.
2. Observe to whom it was given. For instance, Acts 1:7-8 is to the Apostles (1:1).
3. Study the context. For example, Acts 2:44, “and had all things common” does not mean common clothes, common food, etc. While these things are alright, it is not what the passage means.
4. Observe under which dispensation it was given: Patriarchal, Jewish, or Christian.
5. Is language literal or figurative? (John 10:1-2; Luke 3:5).
6. Use good common sense as you would when studying any other book. For example, would it be exercising good common sense to say that “born of water” (John 3:5) has reference to the first birth when Jesus was talking to an old man about how to be born again.
7. Never construe one passage to contradict another. If there is even seemingly a contradiction, know assuredly that the trouble lies with your interpretation and not with the Bible for it does not contradict itself. For instance, Ephesians 2:8-9 does not contradict James 2:24.

Author Unknown

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| Carl Ayliffe | Tina Foshee |
| Cary Parks | Linda Parks |
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The Foundation of Society Is the Home

Paul Vaughn

The foundation for all American society is the home. America needs homes devoted to a higher standard of morality. America needs homes that teach morals and integrity. Yet, there is a cultural shift that is void of morals, integrity, and righteousness. America has become a nation without God.

Perhaps one of the greatest forces behind this cultural shift is the homosexual agenda. Homosexual advocates are executing a well-thought-out plan to change the moral standard that once looked to God and His Word for guidance. Some are working hard to redefine the Biblical terms to open doors of society to their mindset. However, this should not surprise anyone. The apostle Peter warned that some would twist the writings of Paul.

As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are

some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures (2 Pet. 3:16).

Throughout the Scriptures, God has given explicit warnings against changing and twisting His Word.

You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you (Deu. 4:2).

Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar (Pro. 30:6).

And,

For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will

add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book (Rev. 22:18-19).

Yet, even in the face of these warnings, many are still twisting Scriptures to advance homosexual teaching. Some have gone as far as to distort a German translation by Martin Luther claiming, “Men should not lie with young boys, and not men.” Trying to make the argument that the Bible is speaking against “pedophilia,” not homosexuality. However, such interpretation is undiscerning and spiritually detrimental. Those who teach such doctrines twist the Scriptures. The passage in Romans says:

For this reason, God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves

the penalty of their error which was due (Rom. 1:26-27).

The Greek word for “man” in this passage is *arsen* which when translated correctly means male or man (*Strong’s Dictionary*). The false teaching is defeated by honest study.

Simple reasoning from God’s Word will show the false arguments of those trying to advance the homosexual agenda. The Scriptures teach that all sexual relationships outside the boundaries of marriage are sin. “Marriage *is* honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4). Genesis 2:24 teaches that marriage is between a man and a woman.

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed (2:24-25).

Therefore, any sexual activity outside of marriage is sinful. This would include heterosexual and homosexual activity. Marriage ordained by God is one man and one woman!

It is very dangerous to the home and soul to twist the Scriptures to defend that which is sinful to God!

Centerville, TN

Lost

Lloyd E. Ellis

Yes, lost—two golden hours. Day by day I meet with people who say they are members of the church and most of them seem glad that they have had the opportunity of con-

versing with another who is a member of the church. But week by week they have been losing those two hours of which I am speaking. I am not speaking of other hours which

may be lost, but I am thinking of two hours on the Lord's day when the saints assemble, and these are not there. From week to week, month after month, and year after year they fail to meet with the others who meet to partake of the Lord's Supper, study, sing, and endeavor to worship God in an acceptable manner.

It may be that they do not realize their great loss and do not understand the necessity of being present each first day of the week to observe to do what the Lord has commanded. They lose the opportunity of gaining knowledge that is to be gained in these periods spent together. They lose the association of other Christians, and they lose the communion with the Lord, without which there is no life.

The faith of these people grows weak, and they, like others, drift from place to place and from a faith in God to an instability of mind that is very regrettable. Once they learned the truth, but now, under varying influences, they have gradually drifted away from a Christian life. Many of these have moved from former homes to their present locations, and many times it seems that they were faithful attendants in other congregations. If they were, why do they not associate with

Christians where they are now? Why must the minister, or someone else, spend long hours in searching in the highways and byways for them and plead with them to return to a life of Christian practice? It would seem sometimes that they were not taught properly in their former homes, and that they were not at all well-grounded in the faith, for they now appear to be so indifferent toward the work which should interest them more than anything else.

Certain it is that many people are timid about looking for the location of the church when they move to a new home, and it is true also that not as much effort is made to advertise the church as might be, but there are others who do find the place of meeting and immediately make known the fact that they are Christians and desire to do everything possible to help in the cause. Lord, give us more of these. They prove that they are trying to follow the Lord, and by their interest and actions encourage others. They do not lose those two hours at first mentioned and they do not lose other hours which may be used in His service. Let us gather up the golden hours and lose them not.

Deceased

Sermon Outlines

The majority of the lessons presented by Michael Hatcher are also in written outline form (PDF). The PDF files can be accessed on our website at:

<http://www.bellviewcoc.com/sermons-archives.html>

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Rheba Stancliff	Carla Burleson
Carl Ayliffe	Tina Foshee
Cary Parks	Linda Parks

Nelda King

Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette
Born's grandson)

Bob Stancliff (Rheba Stancliff's
son)

Travis Busch (Bill & Pam Busch's
son)

Shane Norris (Bill & Pam Busch's
nephew)

Tia McLeod (Paul & Phyllis
Brantley's daughter)

Please Remember

March 1

Visitation cards for Group 1 will
be handed out by Bill Crowe.

March 8

Deacons' meeting will be held
prior to the afternoon service, in
room 1.

March 15

Visitation cards for Group 2 will
be handed out by Bill Crowe.

March 15

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be
held after the afternoon service,
in room 1.

March 16

Visitation Get-together; at 6:00
p.m., in the zone room.



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March 2, 2020

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On Answering Questions

Lee Moses

A common complaint lodged against Gospel preachers and faithful churches is that they “answer questions nobody is asking, and fail to answer the questions people **are** asking”: “Why is the preacher preaching about baptism when people are wondering where they’re going to get next month’s rent?” “Does the preacher really think he’s going to attract the ‘unchurched’ by preaching about the one church when people are concerned about their friendships?” “What does the preacher think he’s going to accomplish by preaching about ‘true worship’ when people don’t care about any kind of worship?”

It is certainly valid and valuable to consider the questions on people’s minds and answer them from a Biblical standpoint. But this is not to be the thrust of the church’s preaching. Consider three significant facts:

(1) Not all questions are equally important, (2) people do not always know the questions they should be asking, and (3) the Bible provides the questions people should be asking, in addition to the answers to those questions.

On the first Pentecost following the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, none of the throngs of pilgrims present in Jerusalem appeared to be asking for proof that Jesus had been raised from the dead. None were asking what they could do to be forgiven for their part in crucifying Him. However, the inspired apostle Peter went ahead and answered those questions they were not asking. He provided proof that Jesus had been raised from the dead (Acts 2:24-32). It was only after Peter had preached this, and after he had pointed out his hearers’ guilt that they asked the all-important question, “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?” (2:37).

Paul wrote, “For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness” (1 Cor. 1:22-23). The questions the people were asking were: “May we please have a sign?” or, “Could we get some wisdom (based on Greek philosophy) over here?” But Paul answered the question about Christ crucified, and all that it entailed (cf. Acts 8:5, 12). Even though hearers were not asking this question, that is what Paul answered. Even though it was a *stumblingblock* to them, “Christ crucified” remained Paul’s subject matter (1 Cor. 2:2).

In Lystra, the locals were only interested that “Jupiter/J Zeus” and “Mercury/Hermes”

appeared to have fallen into their midst (Acts 14:11-13). However, Paul and Barnabas proclaimed, “We...preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein” (14:15). It had never occurred to them to ask who might be a preferable (or actual) Deity to serve. But Paul and Barnabas answered those questions for them regardless.

It remains the case that most people are not asking the questions they need to be asking. Even if the world remains worldly-minded, the church must continue preaching those heavenly matters of eternal importance.

Union City, TN

What Kind of Works?

Guy N. Woods

For centuries James 2:14-26, has been the occasion of much controversy, and it was this passage which prompted Martin Luther to regard the Epistle of James with considerable contempt and to describe it as “a right strawy one.” Others, who entertain no doubts regarding the inspiration of the book and passage, have nevertheless engaged in much useless and vain speculation thereon in an effort to harmonize an alleged conflict of teaching between James and Paul. There are those who believe that Paul, in Romans 4:1-6, teaches that justification is by faith without works of any kind, and inasmuch as James, in this passage (2:14-26), quite obviously affirms that there is no justification apart

from works, it poses quite a problem for the advocates of the doctrine of salvation by faith only. Moreover, Paul, in Ephesians 2:8-9, wrote: “for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory.”

Yet, James asserted:

Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect (Jam. 2:21-22).

It should be apparent to the most casual reader that Paul and James are discussing two

different kinds or works in these passages. Paul refers to works which are **excluded** from God's plan to save; James discusses works which are **included** in it. Each writer gives the characteristics of the works under consideration. Those **excluded**, discussed by Paul, are works in which one might glory (exult in, boast of); the works included (mentioned by James) are those which perfect faith. Of the first category, works of which a man might boast and in which he might glory, are human, meritorious works, works of human achievement, works the design of which is to earn salvation. Were it possible for man to devise a plan by which he could save himself, he could dispense with grace, accomplish his own deliverance from sin, and glory in God's presence. Such of course,

is utterly impossible. All such works are excluded.

The works **included**, and discussed by James, are the commandments of the Lord, obedience to which is absolutely essential to salvation (1 John 2:4; 2 The. 1:7-9). Humble submission to the will of God as expressed in His commandments, far from involving works of the type excluded, demonstrate complete reliance upon God, and not upon one's self. Only those who seek to exclude all works, even the commandments of the Lord, such as baptism in water for the remission of sins (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38), have any difficulty in harmonizing Paul and James! Paul taught the necessity of obedience to the commands of Christ as plainly, positively, and emphatically as did James (Rom. 6:3-4).

Deceased

Absenteeism

Homer P. Reeves

Unless your absence from divine services is absolutely unavoidable, you stand guilty of sin. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*" (Heb. 10:25).

If one truly loves the Lord, he will not remain at home to entertain visitors when he should be in the assembly of the saints. Fathers will not spend Lord's-day morning for recreational purposes when they under-

stand that they have an appointment with the Holy One; mothers will not be absent from the services to prepare a meal or garnish the house or do any of a dozen things that could as well have been done during the remaining six days of the week.

If one is compelled to travel on the Lord's day, he will see to it that he arrives at the proper time and at the place where the saints assemble for worship. The Lord expects and deserves the best; He will be satisfied with nothing less. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God" (Mat. 6:33).

Deceased

YouTube Channel

[https://www.youtube.com/c/](https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist)

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Shane Norris (Bill & Pam Busch's nephew)	
Tia McLeod (Paul & Phyllis Brantley's daughter)	

Please Remember

March 8

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

March 15

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

March 15

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

March 16

Visitation Get-together; at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.



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Confessing Christ

Charles Pogue

One of the steps in the plan of salvation is confessing one's belief in Christ. Without doubt the most poignant example of that is the Ethiopian nobleman in Acts 8:37. He made the confession, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Paul reminded the church in Rome that man believes with the heart and that confession is made unto salvation (Rom. 10:10). The Lord Himself made it very clear that verbal confession in the presence of other persons is required for salvation.

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

Those who deny that Jesus Christ came in the flesh are deceivers (2 John 7). There are those who believe in Christ, but out of fear, or for seeking the favor of men, will not confess Him. That was true when Jesus lived on the earth. Again, it is John who records that fact.

Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God (John 12:42-43).

In their cases, these chief rulers and Pharisees loved their standing with men more than they wanted the favor of God. There are many today who are the same way. Among those are modern-day United States politicians. Jesus is the only way to the Father

(14:6), but when have we ever heard a person running for public office say something to the effect of, those who are Muslim, Hindu, or whatever, have the freedom in this country to hold to those religions, but if they do, they will be lost eternally? We do not hear it, and we are not going to, not because of the first amendment to the constitution, that is an excuse. We are not going to hear it,

How Important Is Bible School?

As important as giving a child a secure foundation to withstand the storms of life.

As important as equipping a child with a shield of faith that cannot be pierced by atheistic, godless, rebellious, immoral attitudes of the great majority today.

As important as planting in the human mind a trust in things divine that cannot be shaken by man's failures, mistakes, and errors.

As important as showing the greatest love ever bestowed on mankind, Jesus Christ.

As important as a living stone displaying to the world a faith, a hope, and love that defies all arrows of disbelief, mockery, and temptation.

As important as molding a character for tomorrow that will not bend nor yield to things that are wrong regardless of popularity, success, or wealth.

As important as educating, refining, and polishing a human soul for God.

Author Unknown

because these individuals seek the praise of men (i.e. votes) more than they want the favor of God. The same thing is often true with those in business. They are not going to confess that Christ is the only way to the Father, because their business would suffer for it. Would that men were willing to suffer for Christ now, rather than suffer eternally because they will not take a stand for the Lord. Paul wrote to the Philippians that every knee should bow and that every tongue should confess that Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father (Phi. 2:11). Paul then follows those words with these:

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (2:12).

Man should fear and tremble before God the Father and Jesus Christ, not before the electorate or a potential business client. One can either confess Christ now, or he will for sure confess Him in the great Day of Judgment (Rom. 14:11).

We need to be constantly reminded that it is not only with the mouth that we must confess Christ. We must also confess Him with our lives. One can obey the plan of salvation (including being baptized for the remission of his sins) but if he does not live his life in such a way as to confess before men that Jesus is his Lord, those things will do him no good whatsoever. Paul wrote to Titus that to the defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, not even their consciences. He continued, "They profess that they know God; but

in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Tit. 1:16). How sad it will be for those who stand before the Lord in judgment thinking they will be among the saved placed on the right hand of the Lord, only to hear Him say, “depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Mat. 7:23). Who will be among that number? Undoubtedly, by the very words

Jesus uses in this passage, those who confessed Him with their mouths, but they did not confess Him with their lives by obeying the will of the Father. Before one is baptized for the remission of his sins, and subsequently in his life, he must confess with the mouth and by the way he lives that Jesus is the Christ, and the Lord of his life.

Stilwell, OK

Where’s the Respect?

Tim Smith

I cannot remember ever telling my Granddad to shut up. I never told my Grandmother to leave me alone. I never called Granddad by his first name. I never told Grandma that I would get to something when I was good and ready. I never spoke a harsh word to Granddad. I never cursed in the presence of (let alone at) Grandma.

I frequently disobeyed the rules, but never disobeyed them in the presence of my elders. I often was disciplined at school, and just as often disciplined for it at home. Never did my parents/grandparents “take my side” against a teacher and go “throw a fit” at school on my behalf.

I cannot count the number of spankings I received at home, but I remember them well! I always had something to do, it was called *work*. I had *chores*, and I was punished if they were not done. Never did I expect someone else to do them for me. No one financed a lifestyle of ease for me. I have worked at something ever since I can remember, well...I guess that should be since before I can remember.

All of that, and yet, still, I love Granddad (now deceased) and Grandma. I do not resent them. I do not blame them for troubles that have come my way. I still respect them. I intend to continue respecting them as long as I live. That is the way I was “raised.” It was a good way to be reared. I thank them for caring enough to take the time and effort to see to it that I was taught respect. I cannot help but think that we would have far less trouble with the youth of today if they could spend a few weeks with my Granddad and Grandma and their switches.

Deceased

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| Henry Hignite | Tim Busch |
| Rheba Stancliff | Carla Burleson |
| Carl Ayliffe | Tina Foshee |
| Cary Parks | Linda Parks |
| Nelda King | Sheila Myrick |
| Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette
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son) | |
| Travis Busch (Bill & Pam Busch's
son) | |
| Shane Norris (Bill & Pam Busch's
nephew) | |
| Tia McLeod (Paul & Phyllis
Brantley's daughter) | |

Please Remember

March 15

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

March 15

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

March 16

Visitation Get-together; at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.

March 29

Fifth Sunday Dinner; singing and a devotional service at 1:00 pm.



BEACON

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March 16, 2020

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Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Faith Alone Cannot Save

Brad Green

Faith is a necessary and integral element of God's plan to save man. "But without faith *it is impossible to please him* [God]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). However, faith alone has never, nor will ever, save anyone.

Satan believes in God (Gen. 3:4-5; Job 1:7), but no honest individual would believe that faith alone will save Satan. Satan "is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44). The "devils also believe, and tremble" (Jam. 2:19), but no honest individual would claim that demons will be saved by faith alone. Satan and his followers will spend eternity in the eternal fires of Hell (Mat. 25:41), not with the saved believers of God. Faith alone could not save the chief rulers of Jesus' day. "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees

they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42-43). Jesus' disciples were believers, but "many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with Him" (6:66). Faith alone could not save them. A hand-picked and appointed apostle of Jesus Christ is surely considered among those who believe in God. Sadly, however, sometime after Judas' appointment, he fell away. Judas betrayed the Son of God and Jesus considered Judas to be as lost as "a devil" (6:70-71). Judas had faith, but faith alone could not save him.

A true believer is one who will act positively and honestly based upon the truth of God's Word (17:17). A true believer is one who obeys the truth that he has been taught (Rom. 10:17; John 8:31-32). A true believer is one who repents of his past sins (Acts 2:38),

confesses that Jesus is the Christ (Rom. 10:9-10; John 12:42), “and is baptized” (Mark 16:16) to have his sins washed away (Acts 22:16). A true believer is one who lives faithfully, in accordance with God’s Word, until death (1 John 1:6-9; Rev. 2:10). Faith alone cannot save. Faith without repentance cannot save. Faith without confessing Jesus

to be the Son of God cannot save. Faith without baptism cannot save. God states it clearly, “even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.... Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only (Jam. 2:17, 24).

Lenoir City, TN

Religious Snipers

J. A. McNutt

In the recent conflict with Japan in the islands of the Pacific and in the sultry jungles of the tropics, our soldiers were often fired upon by snipers, who concealed themselves in the foliage of trees or hid in the tropical under-growth. These snipers used long range rifles with telescopic sights. Such tactics never won a battle, and the marksmanship was often inaccurate and ineffective, but they aroused the wrath of the opposing army.

The soldiers who were fired upon by snipers resorted to various plans to cause the hidden gunmen to reveal themselves and expose their hiding places. Once such a blunder had been made and the keen eye of some watchful soldier had detected the spot, the sniping business was likely to have a sudden end.

Old Testament Snipers

There are some interesting comparisons which we can make in the religious field. Open your Bibles at Nehemiah 4 and consider the scriptural account of the opposition encountered by Nehemiah when he began to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. His ene-

mies did not come out into the open to fight his rebuilding program, but first of all, they tried to cause trouble by falsely accusing Nehemiah and the Jews of rebelling against the king (Neh. 3:31). Then Nehemiah and his followers were compelled to overcome the mockery of Sanballat (4:1), the ridicule of Tobiah (4:3), the threat of a combined attack from all their enemies (4:8), and then an investigation to negotiate a compromise which would have stopped all the work that they were doing (6:1-2). Never did Nehemiah’s enemies face him openly. All of their work was undercover as they sought to fire their volleys of falsehood, mockery, ridicule, threats, and compromise at Nehemiah and his followers.

The secret of Nehemiah’s triumph over these deceitful snipers is found in the simple declaration, “Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them” (4:9).

Modern Religious Snipers

There are certain preachers who are bold exponents of their particular brand of teach-

ing behind their pulpits, or over the radio, or in other places where an answer is impossible. However, they cannot be persuaded to come out and defend their unscriptural assertions. They resort to sly insinuations and misstatements of the issues which they propose to discuss, and then hide behind the immunity furnished by their own pulpits or behind the code of ethics used by the radio stations which will not permit a man's being called by name when his falsehoods are being exposed. They hide themselves in the foliage of error and do a little religious sniping from the jungles of ignorance and prejudice, but refuse to be drawn into the open field of honorable discussion. They are unwilling to have their logic (?) tested by men, being content to argue with women and children, and to conduct a whispering campaign of opposition to the truth.

It is safer always for such preachers to cry, "baptismal regeneration," "water salvation," or "salvation by works of human merit" than to act like honorable men and face the real issue. They choose rather to parrot their slogans—slogans which no one accepts or ever did believe.

The Contrasts

Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Men say, "He that believeth and is not baptized shall be saved," or "he that believeth is saved, and can be baptized if he wants to be."

Peter said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Men say,

Sermon Outlines

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"Repent and be baptized because your sins have already been forgiven."

Peter said, "Baptism doth also now save us" (1 Pet. 3:21). Men say, "Baptism does not save anybody, is not necessary, is wholly non-essential."

These contrasts might be continued indefinitely, as, for example, in the matter of the name, of the action of baptism, of the organization of the church, etc., etc.; but these examples suffice to show the kind of opposition and competition the truth must encounter.

The real issue in this matter is not difficult to see. The religious snipers have simply been trying to do their undercover work under the protection afforded them by their pulpits and radios. But we tell them all that any time they want to change their sniping tactics and their talking under the immunity of their pulpits, we promise them a fair and honorable discussion of the questions at issue. We shall deal at *close quarters* with these false teachings, for the truth has nothing to fear and nothing to lose by any fair and open discussion of disputed questions.

Deceased

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March 29

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BEACON

Vol. XLIX / No. 12

March 23, 2020

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Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

“No! Not in the Bible”

Roelf L. Ruffner

Within the Church of England (CofE) there has been a long civil war over the ordination of women to the priesthood. But January 26, 2015, this 500-year-old denomination reached a milestone. They ordained the first female bishop in their history in historic Yorkminster Cathedral in Canterbury, England. “Archbishop of York John Sentamu, laid hands on the Rev. Libby Lane Monday (Jan. 26), making her the eighth bishop of Stockport and the first woman bishop in the Church of England” (Grundy).

Over 1,000 well-wishers were in attendance. There was a choir singing, organs blaring, and several bishops were there in their resplendent robes and paraphernalia. The CofE was putting on one of its “high church” shows. But, as the Archbishop asked the audience if they agreed to her election as bishop, one lone voice of a renegade Angli-

can priest, Paul Williamson, strongly exclaimed, “No! Not in the Bible.” The Archbishop quickly read a statement claiming that Queen Elizabeth II, the supreme governor of the CofE, had commanded this ordination. (Actually the action had been approved earlier by a vote of the CofE’s General Synod or church council.) There was no further opposition. Then the other church officials present all symbolically placed their hands on the woman’s head (Grundy; “Libby Lane”).

Now this denomination proceeds down the same heretical path of its sister church, the Episcopal Church USA, who ordained their first female bishop in 1989. The presiding bishop of their convention is Katharine Jefferts Schori. They now have over 100 female priests. They also ordain homosexuals to be priests and bishops.

The Holy Bible mentions no female priests in service to Jehovah in the Old or New Testaments. (All Christians are spiritual priests to God—1 Pet. 2:9.) There are no females in leadership roles at all in the New Testament. No female elders (bishops) are even intimated in its pages. In fact one of the qualifications for an elder is, “must be...the husband of one wife” (1 Tim. 3:2). The apostle Paul and the Holy Spirit were even more explicit when they wrote:

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence (2:11-12).

This prohibition is obvious and authoritative to those whose ears are open to the Bible (Mat. 13:15).

However, for many in the denominational world and increasingly in the Lord’s church the siren’s song of “gender equality” is strong. The present generation of young and not so young people have grown up which “knew not Josph” (Exo. 1:8) i.e., the Bible, and could care less. Society has proclaimed that “gender equality” should apply to all aspects of life, even religion. Some in the brotherhood are pining away for women preachers, elders, and deacons. Recently, the Fourth Avenue Church of Christ in Franklin, Tennessee, hired a female preaching intern. Some brethren were surprised at this but they should not be. The movement to violate the Scriptures and have women in positions of authority in the church will soon become a tidal wave as a new generation takes charge

in many congregations. Speaking of ancient Israel, after the death of Joshua the Holy Spirit wrote:

And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel (Jud. 2:10).

Someone should have risen up in the assembly of the Fourth Avenue church and said, “No! Not in the Bible,” but apparently no one did. No one was struck down by lightning. The woman preacher’s tongue did not dry up in her mouth. This does not mean that God was pleased. His Word indicates

How Christ Is Seen

Not only in the words you say,
Nor in the deeds expressed,
But in the most unconscious way,
Is Christ by you confessed.

Not in the beatific smile,
Or holy light upon your brow—
Ah, no, I felt his presence while
Your laugh rang out just now.
For me ’twas not the truth you taught
To you so clear, to me so dim;
But when you came to me, you brought
A deeper sense of him.

And from your eyes he beckons me,
And from your heart his love is shed,
Until I lose sight of you
And see the Christ instead.

Author Unknown

He was not pleased at all, just delaying His wrath until the Day of Wrath or Judgment and giving them time to repent. Let us never mistake God's longsuffering nature or patience for His approval of unscriptural conduct.

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9).

Works Cited

- Grundy, Trevor. "First female bishop ordained in Church of England amid ongoing controversies." *Regional News Service*. www.regionalnews.com. 26 Jan. 2015. 14 Mar. 2020. <<http://www.religionnews.com/2015/01/26/first-female-bishop-ordained-church-england-amid-ongoing-controversies>>.
- "Libby Lane." Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia. 14 Mar. 2020. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libby_Lane>.

Columbia, TN

Seven Good Reasons Why You Should Attend Bible Study Every Sunday

If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained" (1 Tim. 4:6).

1. The Bible Study is the church laboring to teach the Word of God to all ages. Will you help in this worthy work?
2. About 80% of those who are converted have been enrolled in Bible Classes. That means that many of those who are baptized learned a great deal from Bible Study in classes. Will you be a soul winner?
3. Those who become members of the church after having been taught in Bible Classes have a good foundation upon which to build. That means it will be easier for them to develop into strong faithful Christians. Will you contribute to the faithfulness of the church?
4. The Bible Study provides the best taught material for the well-trained church for tomorrow. Will you assist in making the church of tomorrow what it should be?
5. The Bible Study training offers the very best insurance against juvenile crime which is cursing our land. Will you help safeguard the welfare of the nation?
6. Those who willfully neglect to train themselves are not only refusing that which Christ offers but are sending their own soul and perhaps those of their children to eternal condemnation. Will you help prevent such a fearful calamity?
7. Bible Study helps develop one's own personal consecration to the Lord and enables him to live closer to God. Will you not help bring yourself and others closer to Him?

Author Unknown

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Ignorance Is Easier to Deal with Than, “I Don’t Want To”

Charles Pogue

When the young man came to Jesus and asked what he needed to do to inherit eternal life, Jesus told him to keep the commands of the law. He replied he had kept those from his youth. The young man then showed his ignorance when he asked, “what lack I yet.” So long as it was just ignorance the Savior had to deal with, the question was easy to answer, and He did. “go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me” (Mat. 19:21). At that point, it was no longer ignorance that Jesus was dealing with, but rather, “I don’t want to,” and the young man went away sorrowfully. Ignorance is a lot easier to deal with than, “I don’t want to.”

Sometimes you come across an individual who is eager to learn the Gospel, and

when you teach them, because their soul is the most important thing to them, they will gladly accept the truth and obey it. Sometimes, though, you teach an individual who says he wants to learn, but when you come to that part of the Gospel message that does not sit well with him, he will say, “I don’t want to,” and no amount of pleading will convince him otherwise. There may be something in his life, like there was in the life of the rich man who came to Jesus, that means more to him than his soul does. If he does not want to give that up, whatever it is, all we can say in your attempts to convince him otherwise is, good luck!

It is easier to deal with ignorance than it is, “I don’t want to.” “I don’t want to,” can show up at just about any point in one’s life. It can

show up even after one has obeyed the Gospel. In the process of growth on the sincere milk of the Word (1 Pet. 2:2), he comes face to face with something he does not want to change, and just like that young man in Matthew 19, he will go away sorrowfully.

“I don’t want to,” makes it difficult on at least three people. It makes it hard on the person who does not want to, for unless he changes his mind, he will be lost. It makes it hard on the person attempting to teach him, because they will sorrow for the person’s soul. It also makes it hard on the Lord Himself, for one day He will tell that person, “You had your chance, you turned it down, now go away into everlasting punishment.”

A question arises, that is not an easy one to deal with. Jesus told the disciples when He sent them on the limited commission, “And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them” (Luke 9:5). When you run up against the, “I don’t want to,” attitude, when do you know you have reached the point of shaking the dust from your feet? If it is someone near

and dear to you it makes it even more difficult. There is not a single answer for that question, but we must admit that sometimes that situation will arise. Maybe the person will make it very clear by saying, “go away, I don’t want to hear it.” Maybe we just have to pick up on some clue. We do not always know until the moment comes.

So how does one deal emotionally with the “I don’t want to,” attitude? All we know to say is, if we do what the Lord commands by teaching someone the Gospel, or trying to convince one who has already obeyed it, to let go of some sin when they have that “I don’t want to,” attitude, we have done what we could. As result, we have protected the eternal welfare of our own souls. How God will do it, who knows, but when we reach heaven, if anyone, including a good friend or loved one, would not receive some part of the truth, just like He will do with physical pain, God will also do away with the mental anguish from this life. So, let us do what we can, and if that “I don’t want to,” attitude arises, God will take care of the rest.

Beeville, TX

Scriptural Conversion

J. W. McGarvey

Whatever is common to all cases is necessary to Scriptural conversion, but whatever we find in one case which certainly did not occur in all others, is a peculiarity of the individual cases in which it occurs. The points in which all the recorded cases agree are points in which all subsequent conver-

sions must agree with them. The points in which they differ are points in which subsequent conversions may differ from them. To determine that certain features are not essential, it is only necessary to find cases in which they do not occur. To determine that any one is essential, we must find it in all cases, or

find it prescribed in some general law expressly designed to govern all cases.

While the three cases already before us are fresh in memory, and before points of difference become multiplied by additional cases so as to confuse the understanding, we propose to institute a comparison between them, in the light of the general rule just prescribed. Leaving out of view the difference in character, occupation, and social position, of the eunuch, Saul, and Cornelius, which show only that the Gospel is adapted to all men without regard to previous character or

position, we will only notice those differences which might form the ground of erroneous conclusions. **First**, then, in the cases of the eunuch and Cornelius, there was the visible appearance of an angel, and many converts of modern times have related, as part of their experience in conversion, similar apparitions. But there certainly was not in Saul's conversion the appearance of an angel; therefore, such an appearance is not necessary to conversion. **Second**, the Lord Himself appeared to Saul and conversed with him, but He certainly did not to either the eunuch or Cornelius. It is not necessary, then, to see the Lord. **Third**, Saul mourned and prayed for three days after he believed and before he was immersed, but Cornelius and the eunuch did not; therefore, protracted sorrow and prayer are not necessary to conversion. **Fourth**, Cornelius was immersed in the Spirit, but Saul and the eunuch were not; therefore, immersion in the Spirit is not essential, but a circumstance arising from the peculiarity of a single case.

The points in which these cases agree are chiefly these: they all heard the Gospel preached, with miraculous evidence to sustain it; they all believed what they heard; they all were commanded to be immersed; they all were immersed; after their immersion they were all happy. If, then, we do not hereafter encounter recorded cases from which some of these items are certainly absent, we must conclude that at least all of these are necessary to Scriptural conversion.

What Is Conscience?

Robertson L. Whiteside

Too often we are confused as to what conscience is. It is often represented as the moral judgment. That cannot be; for when Saul's judgment was entirely wrong, he had a good conscience. Besides, one person can exercise his moral judgment on the actions of another person, but his conscience is not in the least degree involved—unless he feels that in some way, he is responsible for what the other does. It gives you pain if you do what your moral judgment pronounces wrong, and it gives you a feeling of pleasure when you do what your moral judgment tells you is right. Your judgment may be wrong, for it is based on information, but conscience is not wrong.

Deceased

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Please Remember

April 5

Visitation cards for Group 1 will
be handed out by Bill Crowe.

April 12

Deacons' meeting will be held
prior to the afternoon service, in
room 1.

April 19

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be
held after the afternoon service,
in room 1.



BEACON

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June 8, 2020

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“I Withstood Him to the Face, Because He Was to Be Blamed”—The Right Way

Johnny Oxendine

This event as described in Galatians 2 is one more classic example for us to follow and learn from. Paul tells us how he took Titus with him to Jerusalem and paid absolutely no attention to “false brethren.” He continues to explain that though others had accorded some status and merit to these men, he did not.

And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who

seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me (Gal. 2:4-6).

The apostle also says that they did not compromise their principles in the presence of these people “for an hour.” That is a refreshing example for us to recognize the possibilities—many, if not most, brethren today are unwilling to stand for truth the way Paul did here. Brethren bring in false teachers/teaching and no one says a word. How else to explain the *suck up* behavior that you can read about on the web and in bulletins across the country? Rather than defending the Gospel, we have become like the children of Israel entering into Canaan. God told them to destroy their (and His) enemies, but they decided to befriend the nations—to accommodate

them and compromise their own principles. Their thoughts are like Saul's (I did obey the Lord!). Can we tell the difference between obedience and defiance?

Galatians gets much better. Paul does what he does here for the right reason. He opposes something for a reason even if it demands a backhanded criticism of his friend Barnabas.

But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation (2:11-13).

Now one question that apparently ought to be asked is why no one other than Paul had the nerve to do this. Oh, there were likely some brethren there who would have opposed something—maybe a few things, but they were not going to cross *Pope* Peter. Of course he was not a

pope, but the brethren were treating him like one as they watched him act that way and did/said nothing about it. His influence was obvious as others acted just as he did, and Paul called him on it:

I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? (2:14).

Do not dare question anyone today who has a reputation! Is that not where we went wrong with Bert Thompson? Even after his sin became (guardedly) known there were those who did not want anyone to mention it (but still wanted brethren to send Apologetics Press money). Many of those brethren are against anyone who is not in their (accepting) camp, yet will not answer any questions or defend the positions of those they fellowship and support.

Paul did the right thing. He stood for what was right despite the fact that a popular apostle was the recipient of the rebuke. Would that more brethren had the guts to stand up for truth.

San Mateo, CA

Our Distinctive Plea

F. G. Allen

Unless we have a distinctive plea we have no right to exist. The day we become like the denominations around us, that day ends our right to exist as a distinct religious people. If we have a distinctive plea, in that consists our strength. I believe that our dis-

tinctive principles are made less prominent in our pulpit now than formerly. I do not mean that our preachers should be always on what is called “first principles.” Very far from it. But I do mean that all our members should be deeply indoctrinated in the things

that distinguish us from other religious peoples. The people should understand **why** they occupy the position they do. The better this is understood the more it will be appreciated, and the firmer and more consistent will be the Christian life. When people are led to believe that sectarianism is about as good as New Testament Christianity their influence for the cause we plead is positively hurtful. Whenever we begin to curry favor with the sects and fawn upon them for recognition, we are certain to say but little about a plea that lays the axe at the root of

the whole denominational tree. Whenever we begin to curry favor with the world, we are certain to fall in with the world's notions, and adjust ourselves to the world's ways. Hence much of that in which churches now indulge in the way of worldly amusements, carnal methods of raising money, the spirit of mere entertainment in the worship, etc., is due to the fact that they copy the sects rather than the New Testament churches, and they are filled with the spirit of the world instead of the spirit of Christ.

Deceased

You Be the Judge

This

“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” (2 Cor. 11:25—Paul).

“And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” (Acts 7:59).

“be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

“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).

“though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor. 8:9—Paul).

or

This

“Maybe I had better not go to church today. Looks like it might rain.”

“I don't believe I will go to church this morning. I have a little headache.”

“I've been to services once this week. I don't think it is necessary to go tonight.”

“I guess I'll have to start going to church sometime. A person really should, I suppose.”

“I get so tired. Every time I turn around somebody is saying we ought to give, give, give.”

Author Unknown

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Nelda King	Sheila Myrick
Dot Dodd	

Cary Parks (Select Specialty
Hospital)

Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette
Born's grandson)

David Norris (Bill & Pam Busch's
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BillyTom Muldoon (Pam Busch's
cousin)

Melissa Godwin (Aleacia Godwin's
daughter-in-law)

Fran Viviano (Cathy Beck's friend)

Jason Veters (Cathy Beck's friend)

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June 14

Deacons' meeting will be held
prior to the afternoon service, in
room 1.

June 21

Visitation cards for Group 2 will
be handed out by Bill Crowe.

June 21

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be
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BEACON

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The Word as a Lamp and Light

Bill Jackson

“Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, And a light unto my path” (Psa. 119:105). Thus stated David; among the many verses in Psalms giving some function of the Word of God. It is important to notice that he had just mentioned that the precepts of God provide understanding. If one asks, “Understanding what?” the answer comes in the same verse: Understanding the right way, in contrast with the false way, and stating the desirability of the right way, and the condemnation of the false way. Thus, verse 104 ends: “Therefore I hate every false way.”

Verse 105 simply pictures the man of God in his righteous walk, or his daily living for the Lord. His feet will walk in one path or the other; that is, in righteousness or in evil. Insuring that direction will be in the paths of good is the thought behind the words *lamp* and *light*. All certainly know that whether in

physical terms or in spiritual, one proceeding without light certainly will slip, stumble, slide, and fall. That which is so very treacherous in darkness loses much of that foreboding when light shines upon the way. The Word of God serves that purpose, and one thus has guidance from God. Indeed, the “scripture *is*...thoroughly furnish unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). How comforting that has been, and is!

The fear is very much present that we are fast losing that point of comfort all across the brotherhood. Too many of our people have gone the denominational route that pays lip service to the Bible as the Word of God, but they back off from intimate contact with it. Too many of our people wish allegiance to the Bible presented in theory, but they disdain all teaching efforts wherein the Bible is applied in life. We now have a corps

of Christians who proclaim themselves our “scholars,” and they now meet in council to re-think and re-study the church, the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). It has

Set Free

H. L. Gradowith (Tim Smith)

Oft along the way we're troubled
By the foe of ev'ry man,
Oft it seems his strength's redoubled
Endless fury's in his hand...
When we think we've reached our rope's
end,
That no longer can we last;
We look up and find a True Friend
And unto Him we hold fast.
He can help because He's been there,
What we now face He did, too;
We can trust our burdens He'll share
With us 'til our journeys through!
Over death He gained the Vict'ry,
And He offers us the same;
Tho in life the worst we oft see
All our troubles He shall tame!
Now He's promised us a Life Crown
And a Home forevermore,
All temptation He will put down
And lead us to Heavens' Shore!
And we know that there He'll meet us!
Happy we'll forever be!
There with open arms He'll greet us
From the sting of death set free!

Deceased

already been demonstrated that these *scholars* are thinking in terms of what the modern age wants to hear rather than merely to note and extol the timeless and unchanging truths in the Bible. From all of this has come, in short order, the declared need for a “New Hermeneutic,” and, any who have bothered to follow all that is said can easily see that the point is “you have your interpretation, and I have mine, and we each can hold our own views and still be in union and fellowship.” It is the same sectarian view I heard from my youth, when denominational people dismissed all plain Bible declarations with, “That’s your interpretation. I have a different one, and we’re all entitled to our own. But, let’s be brethren!”

That view, already catching on among the brethren, would then, in effect, cast Psalm 119:105 to the ground. That view says, “The lamp and the light have gone out, for the help David spoke of receiving is no longer a sure and certain thing.” Ultimately, when the idea of “your interpretation, my interpretation” is accepted, not a single thing in the Bible then can be looked upon as sure, fixed, and certain! Everything said in praise of the Word of God—and so much of it said by David in the Psalms—would then be in doubt. Every mark of the New Testament church would be erased, and if not erased completely, a noting of a particular mark in the New Testament would be said to be “something needed at that time, in that culture, but not now.” Every step in the plan of salvation would lose its individual significance, and all would fall back on the error

of “faith alone,” and “be baptized if you want to, but it’s not necessary.” Untold horrors would await us, as all the while more and more of the Bible would be dismissed as “having served some useful purpose for that time, but history has changed, and men have changed, and we no longer need it.”

We do not believe the lamp and the light have been extinguished, and to the extent that men turn from that light and plunge into darkness, they are taking flight from God! But, they cannot escape. The Scripture cannot be broken (John 10:35), the Word of the Lord endureth forever (1 Pet. 1:25), the Word shall not pass away (Mat. 24:35), and the Word will be present as the basis of judgment on that great day (John 12:48). How impor-

tant and how valuable these truths have been down through the years, and how important and how valuable they are this very day to those who belong to God! Yes, with David let us state it, “O how love I thy law!” (Psa. 119:97).

God’s truths remain unaffected by time, by history, by custom, by culture—by anything of man! The night cannot be so dark, the way cannot be so dangerous, the enemies cannot be so numerous, this planet cannot be so old, and the times cannot become so sophisticated that the lamp of the Word cannot guide the godly! That we steadfastly believe, and we intend to keep on believing it! You plan to do the same!

Deceased

Baptism into Christ

“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” (Gal. 3:26-27). Most people today are willing to be baptized into any kind of denomination just as long as they are not being baptized into Christ. However, there is just one Baptism. That is, one baptism acceptable to Jesus our Savior. You can be baptized into all the denominations on earth and never be baptized into Christ. It was because of erroneous baptism that Paul baptized 12 men as recorded in Acts 19. When one believes the Gospel, repents of his sins, confesses his faith in Christ, then baptism in water puts this believing penitent into Christ.

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).

Examine your baptism, whether or not you were baptized to be put into Christ, or if you instead confessed you were already in Christ (saved—8:1) and were just baptized into a denomination. If you find yourself in the same condition as the men in Acts 19, then hasten to comply with God’s will (10:34).

Author Unknown

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Rheba Stancliff	Carla Burleson
Carl Ayliffe	Tina Foshee
Bill Busch	Linda Parks
Nelda King	Sheila Myrick
Cary Parks (Sacred Heart Hospital)	
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette Born's grandson)	
David Norris (Bill & Pam Busch's brother-in-law)	
BillyTom Muldoon (Pam Busch's cousin)	
Melissa Godwin (Aleacia Godwin's daughter-in-law)	
Fran Viviano (Cathy Beck's friend)	
Jason Veters (Cathy Beck's friend)	

Please Remember

June 7

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

June 14

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

June 21

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

June 21

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.



BEACON

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“I Withstood Him to the Face, Because He Was to Be Blamed”—The Right Way

Johnny Oxendine

This event as described in Galatians 2 is one more classic example for us to follow and learn from. Paul tells us how he took Titus with him to Jerusalem and paid absolutely no attention to “false brethren.” He continues to explain that though others had accorded some status and merit to these men, he did not.

And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who

seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me (Gal. 2:4-6).

The apostle also says that they did not compromise their principles in the presence of these people “for an hour.” That is a refreshing example for us to recognize the possibilities—many, if not most, brethren today are unwilling to stand for truth the way Paul did here. Brethren bring in false teachers/teaching and no one says a word. How else to explain the *suck up* behavior that you can read about on the web and in bulletins across the country? Rather than defending the Gospel, we have become like the children of Israel entering into Canaan. God told them to destroy their (and His) enemies, but they decided to befriend the nations—to accommodate

them and compromise their own principles. Their thoughts are like Saul's (I did obey the Lord!). Can we tell the difference between obedience and defiance?

Galatians gets much better. Paul does what he does here for the right reason. He opposes something for a reason even if it demands a backhanded criticism of his friend Barnabas.

But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation (2:11-13).

Now one question that apparently ought to be asked is why no one other than Paul had the nerve to do this. Oh, there were likely some brethren there who would have opposed something—maybe a few things, but they were not going to cross *Pope* Peter. Of course he was not a

pope, but the brethren were treating him like one as they watched him act that way and did/said nothing about it. His influence was obvious as others acted just as he did, and Paul called him on it:

I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? (2:14).

Do not dare question anyone today who has a reputation! Is that not where we went wrong with Bert Thompson? Even after his sin became (guardedly) known there were those who did not want anyone to mention it (but still wanted brethren to send Apologetics Press money). Many of those brethren are against anyone who is not in their (accepting) camp, yet will not answer any questions or defend the positions of those they fellowship and support.

Paul did the right thing. He stood for what was right despite the fact that a popular apostle was the recipient of the rebuke. Would that more brethren had the guts to stand up for truth.

San Mateo, CA

Our Distinctive Plea

F. G. Allen

Unless we have a distinctive plea we have no right to exist. The day we become like the denominations around us, that day ends our right to exist as a distinct religious people. If we have a distinctive plea, in that consists our strength. I believe that our dis-

tinctive principles are made less prominent in our pulpit now than formerly. I do not mean that our preachers should be always on what is called “first principles.” Very far from it. But I do mean that all our members should be deeply indoctrinated in the things

that distinguish us from other religious peoples. The people should understand **why** they occupy the position they do. The better this is understood the more it will be appreciated, and the firmer and more consistent will be the Christian life. When people are led to believe that sectarianism is about as good as New Testament Christianity their influence for the cause we plead is positively hurtful. Whenever we begin to curry favor with the sects and fawn upon them for recognition, we are certain to say but little about a plea that lays the axe at the root of

the whole denominational tree. Whenever we begin to curry favor with the world, we are certain to fall in with the world's notions, and adjust ourselves to the world's ways. Hence much of that in which churches now indulge in the way of worldly amusements, carnal methods of raising money, the spirit of mere entertainment in the worship, etc., is due to the fact that they copy the sects rather than the New Testament churches, and they are filled with the spirit of the world instead of the spirit of Christ.

Deceased

You Be the Judge

This

“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” (2 Cor. 11:25—Paul).

“And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” (Acts 7:59).

“be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

“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).

“though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor. 8:9—Paul).

or

This

“Maybe I had better not go to church today. Looks like it might rain.”

“I don't believe I will go to church this morning. I have a little headache.”

“I've been to services once this week. I don't think it is necessary to go tonight.”

“I guess I'll have to start going to church sometime. A person really should, I suppose.”

“I get so tired. Every time I turn around somebody is saying we ought to give, give, give.”

Author Unknown

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Carl Ayliffe	Tina Foshee
Bill Busch	Linda Parks
Nelda King	Sheila Myrick
Dot Dodd	

Cary Parks (Select Specialty
Hospital)

Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette
Born's grandson)

David Norris (Bill & Pam Busch's
brother-in-law)

BillyTom Muldoon (Pam Busch's
cousin)

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Fran Viviano (Cathy Beck's friend)

Jason Veters (Cathy Beck's friend)

Please Remember

June 14

Deacons' meeting will be held
prior to the afternoon service, in
room 1.

June 21

Visitation cards for Group 2 will
be handed out by Bill Crowe.

June 21

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held after the afternoon service,
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June 15, 2020

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The Christian's Influence

Brad Green

An individual's influence is witnessed every day and is therefore very important for discussion. Some influence people or events with their wealth, prestige, or political prowess. Christian's are to influence by means of the Word of God and their actions. The way we live influences those around us. An individual who professes to be a Christian but practices the same lifestyle as those in the world is a hypocrite. One who professes to be a Christian but does not attend Bible Classes, Worship Services, and other Scriptural opportunities for spiritual growth tells others, by their actions, that those assemblies are not important. A person who gets up and leaves in the middle of a sermon or lecture, without good reason, tells those around him, by his actions, that the information being presented is not crucial and therefore unneeded.

As recorded in Matthew, Jesus metaphorically portrays the proper example and influence that His followers should show forth.

“Ye Are the Salt of the Earth” (Mat. 5:13)

Salt enhances the flavor of certain foods. In some cases, the salt is the only quality which makes a particular food palatable. Salt is also used as a preservative, which is of great import to the context of Jesus' statement. Those in Jesus' day did not have freezers or refrigerators to keep food fresh for lengthy periods of time. Salt was therefore a key ingredient to preserving food and sustaining life. In like manner, Christian's can, by their example and influence, make life a little more palatable in the midst of an ungodly world. The Christian's influence can also preserve the earth from total moral corruption and chaos. Remember also, it is the faithful

Anvil Sparks

Robertson L. Whiteside

If the entire church would work as hard for the Lord as a fraction will work to carry its point, nothing could stop its progress.

Some “additions to the church” are not “conversions to the Lord.”

If Absalom were living today, he would be in great demand, for he was the best mixer in the kingdom.

A good mixer sometimes mixes up a terrible mess.

The elders should not lord it over the church; neither should the church lord it over the elders. I have seen it practiced both ways.

A church is losing its grip on the Gospel when it puts more stress on “a good mixer” than it does on a good preacher. Beware of the serpent—he was a good mixer.

Flattery is an intoxicant and is prohibited in God’s Word. The Flatterer is therefore a bootlegger, peddling for his own gain.

Narrow-minded? Well, a person’s mind should be narrow enough to shut out everything but the truth, and broad enough to accept all truth.

Some preachers act and talk as if the devil had sent them out as a burlesque on preaching.

Deceased

Christian’s prayer that God hears. Without such influence, the world would be a very miserable place indeed.

“Ye Are the Light of the World” (Mat. 5:14)

The Word of God “is a lamp unto my feet, And a **light** unto my path” (Psa. 119:105). Christians are, therefore, the light to the world because we spread that light by teaching the Word to others and by living our lives in accordance with God’s Laws. There are many examples and influences shared throughout the world on a daily basis, but there is only one influence that can lead them to salvation. Salvation can only be found in the Gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17) and the world must be led to that light by the good example and teaching of faithful Christians.

“The Kingdom of Heaven
Is Like unto Leaven” (Mat. 13:33)

Though the kingdom of Christ, the church of Christ, had not yet been established at the time this parable was spoken (see Acts 2:38, 47; Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:9), it is that one body (Eph. 4:4) that can be likened unto leaven today. This parable is therefore prophetic of the influence that Christians, members of the church of Christ, have on their surroundings. “Leaven is used metaphorically in the Bible of an influence that can permeate whatever it touches” (*Nelson’s Bible Dictionary*). Many believe that the only way their influence can be effective is to be loud and overt. In addition, others believe that as long as they are quiet and hidden, their influence is not observed at all. This parable teaches that the attitude and example, in word and practice (cf. Col. 3:17), can

be of great influence though it be silent and seemingly undetected until the point it brings forth a certain result. No one can see leaven in bread; it is only after the bread rises (the result) that the proof can be evinced that leaven was present. Paul stated, “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase” (1 Cor. 3:6). The influence of Paul and Apollos could only be seen after an individual obeyed the Gospel, but the influence of those men was present long before the resulting action of obedience. Paul also

stated, “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Gal. 5:9). Just as a little bad influence can cause a great deal of damage (1 Cor. 5:1-7), a little good influence can lead many to glorify God in Heaven (Mat. 5:16).

Our example, whether good or bad, is seen daily. Let us live our lives in accordance with God’s Word so we can glorify Him and influence others to do the same.

(Original idea for this article came from Frank L. Cox, Deceased)

Lenoir City, TN

Living Rightly

Tim M. Smith

We know that “of that day and hour” we are ignorant—and so forever shall remain right up until “that day and hour.” We are given no signs concerning its arrival, no warnings, no pre-indicators—nothing. He will come “as a thief in the night.” That being true, could it be that many, out of sheer exhaustion from fighting against the error of the prevaricating prognosticators, have grown careless in their watching? The fact that we have no signs or indications whatsoever in no wise means that He will not come today!

We do not know when He will come, but we do know that He is coming. It may be today. It could be tomorrow. It could be next week. It could be twenty thousand years in the future. We do not know. Our part is to live rightly. So living, it will not matter when He comes.

Equally important with the date of His return, and equally unknown to us, is the date of our death. We do not know when our natural life will end. It could be today, tomorrow, or next week. It most certainly will not wait twenty thousand years! Still, we do not know when it will be. Now, if people ignorant of their own approaching death will not live rightly, is it any surprise that something that may yet linger twenty thousand years distant has failed to move them?

In the final analysis, it does not matter when He comes or when we die if we are living rightly. To be prepared for the one is to be prepared for the other. To live rightly is to die rightly, and that is to be with Him in Heaven forever. Are you living rightly? May God bless us all as we study and obey His Word.

Deceased

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- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
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| Henry Hignite | Tim Busch |
| Rheba Stancliff | Carla Burleson |
| Carl Ayliffe | Tina Foshee |
| Aleacia Godwin | Linda Parks |
| Nelda King | Sheila Myrick |
- Dot Dodd
Bill Busch (surgery on June 22)
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette
Born's grandson)
David Norris (Bill & Pam Busch's
brother-in-law)
BillyTom Muldoon (Pam Busch's
cousin)
Melissa Godwin (Aleacia Godwin's
daughter-in-law)
Fran Viviano (Cathy Beck's friend)
Jason Veters (Cathy Beck's friend)

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Linda Parks in the death of her husband Cary, who passed away on June 11, 2020. Please keep Linda and her family in your prayers.

Please Remember

June 21

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

June 21

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.



BEACON

Vol. XLIX / No. 17

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The Arrogancy of Man-Made Religion

Roelf L. Ruffner

Surely for your lifeblood I will demand *a reckoning*; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man. "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man" (Gen. 9:5-6).

This command was given to the patriarch Noah as he and his family offered sacrifices of thanksgiving to God after surviving the Great Flood. Since that time, God-fearing governments have recognized the need for the death penalty or capital punishment, especially for the crime of murder. However, in recent years humanists and religious liberals have sought to ban capital punishment. Meanwhile, expensive and time consuming legal barriers have been erected which make

the carrying out of executions difficult in the United States.

Add to this mix is the *pontifex maximus* of the Roman Catholic Church—Pope Francis. Since World War II the Roman Church has looked negatively upon capital punishment. Ironically, Vatican City, the "papal kingdom" within the nation of Italy, carried out executions until the early 19th Century. Now, Francis wants to make opposition to the death penalty part of the official doctrine of the Roman Church on par with its opposition to abortion. In a recent speech he said that capital punishment is "contrary to the Gospel, because it entails the willful suppression of a human life that never ceases to be sacred in the eyes of its Creator." He goes on to claim that this opposition is part of the "pro-life" (anti-abortion) position of the Roman Church.

What *gospel* is he referring to? Nowhere in the New Testament is capital punishment condemned. Granted the governmental authorities in New Testament times abused this power in the execution of John the Baptist, Jesus the Christ, Stephen, and the apostle James. Yet, nowhere in the Gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John or even the epistles of Paul, James, Peter, Jude, and John do we find a condemnation of the death penalty.

Notice the words of the apostle Paul and the Holy Spirit regarding governments and capital punishment:

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority

except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.... For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to *execute* wrath on him who practices evil (Rom 13:1, 4).

The phrase *bear the sword* refers to the use of the sword as an instrument of punishment, usually by beheading.

Later, when righteous Paul was to be judged by the Roman Governor Festus regarding the Jewish officials' false charges against him, he proclaimed by inspiration:

For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar (Acts 25:11; cf. Luke 12:11-12).

Now would have been the perfect time for the inspired apostle to inform the Roman governor (and us) that the death penalty is immoral. But he did not, because it is not.

It is the height of arrogance for "Christ's representative on earth" (so-called!) to equate the killing of the innocent (abortion) with the legal execution of the guilty. This is one more proof that the Roman Catholic Church has long ago rejected the Scriptures (*sola scriptura*) for the doctrines of men.

For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the

What Happens When I Read My Bible?

The Word works effectually in me
(1 The. 2:13).

The Word teaches, reproves, corrects
me (2 Tim. 3:16).

The Word cleanses me (Eph. 5:26).

The Word strengthens me (1 John 2:14;
Acts 20:32).

The Word gives me faith (Rom. 10:17).

The Word gives me joy (Jer. 15:16).

The Word gives me heavenly life (John
6:63).

Author Unknown

Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book (Rev. 22:18-29).

Work Cited

Lamb, Christopher. "Pope Lays Down Challenge to US Catholics on the Death Penalty." *Religion News Service*. 1 Mar. 2018. <<http://religionnews.com/2017/10/13/pope-lays-down-challenge-to-us-catholics-on-the-death-penalty>>.

Columbia, TN

Sermon Outlines

by Michael Hatcher

<http://www.bellviewcoc.com/sermons.html>

YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Respect for Parents

The Bible teaches children to respect their parents,

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth (Eph. 6:1-3).

Throughout the Bible God has taught children to be obedient to parents. Parents, in turn, are taught to train their children in the ways of righteousness. Here are some verses which show how important it is for children to be taught to do right.

Cursed be he that confirmeth not the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen (Deu. 27:26).

A wise son maketh a glad father; But a foolish man despiseth his mother (Pro. 15:20).

One sign of the *last days* is "disobedience to parents" as Paul writes: "For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful,

haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy" (2 Tim. 3:2).

Usually parents are at fault as well as children when there is disobedience. Sometime children show lack of respect for parents because parents live ungodly lives before them. Children soon come to know the real facts about their fathers and mothers. Again, parents who live good moral lives fail to take the time to train their children. They expect them to grow up knowing what to do. But, the Bible says that children must be taught. "Train up a child in the way he should go, And even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Pro. 22:6). May we urge all parents to give special attention to setting the right example before their children and taking the time to train them to do God's Will. Begin early to read the Bible in a period of family devotions. Bring your children with you to Bible study on Sunday mornings and to worship.

Author Unknown

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Bill Busch	Tina Foshee
Aleacia Godwin	Linda Parks
Nelda King	Sheila Myrick
Dot Dodd	
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette Born's grandson)	
David Norris (Bill & Pam Busch's brother-in-law)	
BillyTom Muldoon (Pam Busch's cousin)	
Melissa Godwin (Aleacia Godwin's daughter-in-law)	

Please Remember

July 5

Visitation cards for Group 1 will
be handed out by Bill Crowe.

July 12

Deacons' meeting will be held
prior to the afternoon service, in
room 1.

July 19

Visitation cards for Group 2 will
be handed out by Bill Crowe.

July 19

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be
held after the afternoon service,
in room 1.



BEACON

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June 29, 2020

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“Why Should a Man Tell the Elders About His Private Affairs?”

G. C. Brewer

This sentence is taken from a letter which was published on this page some weeks back [*Gospel Advocate*, January 2, 1936]. The letter, our readers will perhaps recall, was criticizing the budget system and especially the pledge cards. The brother thinks that the elders have no right to know what the members whom they oversee do in the matter of giving. In this, he expresses a view that seems to be held by many brethren, and for that reason we give it special attention.

God requires that every Christian give as he is prospered—that he does this upon each first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2). Why should the elders not see that the members obey this command as well as any other divine injunction? Why is giving any more a “private affair” than partaking of the Lord’s

Supper? Or why is the sin of failing to give any more to be overlooked than the sin of drunkenness, or gambling, or fornication? Paul puts covetousness in the list with these sins and says that if any man that is called a brother is guilty of these, or anyone of them, we should not even eat with him (5:11).

It is common these days for church members to consider it none of the elders’ business what they do about anything, but such church members do err, not knowing the Scriptures. This idea prevails among the younger people in reference to worldliness, but they are more reasonable than the older people on the giving proposition. The matter of giving is a very delicate subject with many of the older brethren, including some so-called *elders*. They have very tender sensibility

ities on that point, and the amount they give is a most sacred secret with them. Their failure to give as they should is (they think) a “solitary sin.” But they are all wrong—wrong in every respect.

The following responsibilities that fall upon the elders should be remembered:

1. The church is a “charge allotted” to them (1 Pet. 5:3).
2. They are to “tend” the flock (5:2).
3. They must feed the church (Acts 20:28).
4. They exercise the oversight (1 Pet. 5:2; Acts 20:28).

5. They watch in behalf of the souls of the members and will have to give an account for every one of them (Heb. 13:17).
6. They must see that no member renders evil for evil toward anyone (1 The. 5:14).
7. They are God’s stewards (Tit. 1:7). A *steward* is one who takes care of that which belongs to another—especially money—and “it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2).

Deceased

A True Story

A Gospel preacher tells the following story.

“Bob and Sally are members of the church of Christ. They attend services where I preach. However, about two or three years ago they began to slack off on attending services regularly. Their neglect increased as time went on. Not attending worship really did not bother them, and still seemed to be very happy with each other. Last New Year’s Eve they were invited by friends to attend a small party in which a few drinks were served. This seemed harmless enough to them and they accepted the invitation. After all, it was just a social event. Additionally, it might even help them get the wanted positions and promotions in their work.”

For lack of space we cannot print the whole story, but Bob and Sally accepted

other invitations, such as to the “Junction,” a place to drink and dance. They began sharing partners...in March, Sally asked Bob for a divorce...She later decided she did not want the divorce, but Bob was so hurt that a reconciliation looked hopeless. “Sally came to my office to discuss the matter. Plans for the divorce were then to be finalized in May. **Sally said, through tear-stained eyes, as she prepared to leave my office, ‘Always before I could see nothing wrong with dancing, but now it is very evident to me.’**”

Note: Only the names have been changed to protect the innocent. Mother, father, open your blind eyes to the evils of dancing and drinking, before it is too late for your children.

Author Unknown

Watch Your Words

It becomes frightening when one stops to consider the power of words. Solomon said, “Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue” (Pro. 18:21). Words are the most powerful weapons and the most effective tools in the world. Jesus warned, “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Mat. 12:37).

Words can wreck homes, destroy lives, ruin businesses, and leave congregations torn apart. Words can bring joy and smiles, or words can bring heartaches and tears. With this realization, it is no surprise that the Psalmist said, “Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; Keep the door of my lips” (Psa. 141:3).

The following story illustrates perfectly the destruction that may follow careless talk. Three young men who were raised on the prairies of West Texas decided to travel farther west. Arriving in Utah, after crossing the Colorado Rockies, they decided to climb to the summit of a saw-toothed mountain on a certain range. Slowly and painfully they climbed—and without mishap.

Near the summit they saw a large and round stone, weighing not less than two tons. It was perched near the edge of a steep precipice. By using pry poles, they easily dislodged it and watched it as it rolled. Slowly at first, and then it gathered momentum; a few moments later it was plunging faster and faster, snapping tall pines as if they were just toothpicks, crushing everything in its path until finally it was lost from view.

The next day in their descent, they traveled the canyon route and saw the stone and the trail of ruin it had left behind. The destruction testified of its awesome power—they were now frightened! What if there had been men in the canyon yesterday? What if someone should loose such a stone above them? The thought terrified. They looked at smashed and shattered trees that had stood as stately patriarchs with outstretched branches. They had foolishly destroyed them, and without thinking. Though they had been able to start the stone, once started, the power to stop it or to prevent its damage was beyond them.

The first effects of ill-chosen words will scarcely be noticed, but as the days go by the trail of destruction becomes greater and greater. James said, “let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (Jam. 1:19).

Cranfield Kleiser taught the lesson beautifully in these words entitled, “Watch Your Words.”

A careless word my kindle strife;
A cruel word may wreck a life.
A bitter word may hate instill
A brutal word may smite and kill.
A gracious word may smooth the
way;
A joyous word may light the day.
A timely word may lessen stress
A loving word may heal and bless.

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Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette Born's grandson)	
David Norris (Bill & Pam Busch's brother-in-law)	
BillyTom Muldoon (Pam Busch's cousin)	

Please Remember

July 5

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

July 12

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

July 19

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

July 19

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

July 29

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.



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What Is the “Stance” of the Congregation?

Bill Jackson

That is a good question, and one especially appropriate in our day. It has been shown, time and time again, that a person baptized can grow and develop into a knowledgeable, working, and faithful child of God due, to a great extent, to the congregation wherein he has his membership. The opposite has been shown also. In fact, it is seen in the movement that some members must make, through job transfer, etc. Leave one sound and faithful congregation, and then place membership with and serve with a congregation known for “what it will tolerate,” and that child of God will change also. The individual will accept and blend in with the congregation. It depends on the congregation’s *stance*.

Be sure, a congregation will have a name, a reputation, based on its work and its *stance*. Rome was known for having a faith spoken

of throughout the world (Rom. 1:8). Thessalonica was known for its sounding out the word into far distant areas (1 The. 1:8). The churches of Macedonia were known for their liberal giving (2 Cor. 8:1-5). Sardis, once having a good name, and with some of that still lingering in the minds of men, nevertheless was told by the Lord that, “thou are dead” (Rev. 3:1). We recall hearing of one person saying, “This congregation is known for its love and that congregation is known for its doctrine!” That, brethren, is tragedy? Love and doctrine are combined within the system of the Lord. Jesus combined them in His statement in John 14:15.

What, by the way, wherever this is received, is the *stance* of the congregation where you are? Is the doctrine of God sounded forth powerfully and plainly, and without modification, addition, subtraction

or dilution? Is the congregation a “disciplinary” one, in that sin is rebuked, and the wayward and disobedient are seen to with dispatch? Are the Bible classes known for their emphasis on the Word of God, or are the classes given to playtime and waste-time? Have the elders led the congregation in taking a stand against worldliness, sectarianism, and every other form of error that will weaken and finally kill the church? Is the emphasis of the congregation’s work that of preaching and teaching, rather than entertainment and social work? Are those in the congregation content to abide in God’s will, rather than always having a desire for something new and appealing that they can borrow from sectarianism? Are those who stand up to preach and teach grounded in

the faith, with no disposition to traipse off into liberalism, anti-ism, Crossroadism, or any other “ism”?

Oh yes, a congregation has a *stance*—a name—a reputation. Preachers can help it be known for what it is, good or bad; elders can do the same; so can Bible class teachers; so can the members. What is entered into the eternal record books, under our names, will be those things we did/failed to do while members of the congregations where we lived. We will partake of, support, condone, and further whatever *stance* the congregation has taken. Now, the question again: How is it where you are? Are you ready to face God concerning it?

Deceased

Restoration

Ken Chumbley

Computers are wonderful things. They can do so much. Not only can you use all the programs that enable you to produce many things, even this bulletin, but thanks to the Internet one can be in touch with the world—even seeing people half way across the world through Skype. Also, the latest Internet browsers enable one to restore a previous session, with all of its tabbed pages, with just one click of the mouse. However, when things go wrong, as has happened to me this week, you have problems. My laptop computer will not download attachments—one browser says the file is not there, another that it has a virus and will not download. I

know neither is true for the same attachments will download quite safely on my desktop computer proving both that the file is there, and it does not have a virus. I am told there is a virus when trying to download a legitimate file from the Internet (like Adobe Reader, which Internet users will know about).

In trying to eliminate such problems there are tools that can be used including system restore, which takes the computer back in time to an earlier date taking out what may be problem files downloaded after that date and gets rid of other *trash* in the process. This can only go so far. Sometimes it reaches

a point where the only answer is a full restore that takes the computer back to how it was when it was first set up after it was purchased, this removes everything that you have added to the computer since—except, fortunately, your data (I am hopeful my problem will be resolved before this time as it is a long process to reinstall all added programs).

Such reminds me of Christianity. One can use “System Restore” that takes one back in time to a certain date to restore things to the way they were at a certain point as had happened during the Reformation period that removed some of the accumulated *garbage* that had gathered over the years through Catholicism. However, as with system restore, Reformation does not go back far enough. What is needed is a full restoration that takes one back to the beginning, to the establishment of the church, thereby removing all of the layers of human doctrine that have been added to have the pristine church just as our Lord designed it. The concept of restoration is well-known. When one takes an automobile, like an E-type Jaguar (built in my home town, Coventry), and restores it, he makes it like it was the day it first rolled off of the assembly line.

The church of our Lord can be restored to its pristine glory only when the “doctrines and commandments of men” which makes worship “vain” (Mat. 15:9) are removed. If the church is to be the church that our Lord promised to build (16:18) and He promised only to build one, the one He purchased with His blood (Acts 20:28), then it must teach and preach only that which has been autho-

rized by Christ in His Word for He is the One who has all authority (Mat. 28:18).

As the Lord’s people, let us preach and teach only that which is authorized by Christ Himself that those who are obedient to the Gospel of Christ will be added to the church that He purchased with His blood (Acts 2:47).

Deceased

The Problem of Applause in Worship

Applause in worship, simply put, is misguided praise. Applause praises the individual/s, while “Amen” (1 Cor. 14:16) praises the truth. **Amen** affirms truth or what is being done as according to the truth. So consequently, *amen* is directed at the **what** and **how**, while applause is aimed at the **who**. This is why applause should not be allowed in worship. It is our duty to obey (preaching, singing, baptisms, etc.) and no one deserves any applause (praise) for it (Luke 17:10). Furthermore, no one is worthy of praise in worship but God! “The Father seeketh such to worship him,” not to “receive honour of one another” (John 4:24; 5:44). Be joyful, and **Amen** truth being obeyed!

Author Unknown

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Bill Busch	Tina Foshee
Aleacia Godwin	Linda Parks
Nelda King	Sheila Myrick
Paulette Born	Dot Dodd
Pam Busch	
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette Born's grandson)	
David Norris (Bill & Pam Busch's brother-in-law)	
Billy Tom Muldoon (Pam Busch's cousin)	
Randall Johnson (Joyce Johnson's husband)	

Please Remember

July 12

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

July 19

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

July 19

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July 29

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.



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Hearken Ye Parents of Young Children

Charles Pogue

When you have raised your children, and you are now knocking on the door of old age, or like I have, already placed one foot through that door, you cannot but help observe how well or poorly you did at raising your offspring. Sometimes, as adults they do things that force you to ask, did I not bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord as I should have (Eph. 6:4), or did I train them properly, but as adults, they, of their own choosing, are on the road of departing from that training?

If you are a parent with young children let me please encourage you to never depart from the ways of the Lord, even for a short season. If you do, you will lose valuable time in teaching your children correctly, and that may at least be a factor in the future when they begin to do things that with grief, you

as an aging parent witness and say, “Where did that come from?”

You may believe you did all that you could to raise those children correctly, but when as adults they commence doing things that expose a beginning of their embracing the things liberals in the church have done for years, there will be second thoughts. If upon further observation you realize you have failed to some extent, there will be a heavy burden of guilt that will weigh upon your mind every day.

How sad it is when you believe that child you love so much could be counted among those who are sound in the faith, but then all of a sudden you see them engaging in, even promoting, the innovations of man that the faithful have been warning against for decades.

Perhaps you journey back in your mind and come away with the belief that you imparted to the child all they needed to know to always be counted among those who contend for the faith and combat against changes to the Lord's blood bought body. However, upon closer look you realize there is one thing you neglected to do. You failed to warn them to be careful of the company they keep. "Beware," you never told them, "do not be persuaded by modern-day methods which originate in the mind of man and lead to alienate one from the grace of God."

Sadly, when it is too late, you have to admit to them, I did not arm you sufficiently with the knowledge of how to recognize the fox in the hen house and now you are not only not guarding the brood, you are abandoning the brood and joining the skulk. Be certain of this: At that point when you attempt to make the child see the corrections they need to make, there will be via the avenue of the highway of excuses an attempt

to justify the unjustifiable. Your instruction that is too late will fall upon deaf ears.

That becomes even more difficult if you look back on your own life and realize that there were some companions you had who were only just commencing on the road to apostasy, and you never realized it until it was too late. You look back on that first thing that individual or group did that causes you to wish you had never had been involved with them at all, and now that child of yours is following their lead, doing that very same thing. That too, is a heavy burden to bear.

There are occasions, and they are not rare, when one is brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord by his or her parents, and then begin the gallop away from the faith on their own. That is bad enough, but when that child ventures away, because you know you failed at some point, that is even worse.

Hearken ye parents of young children, do all that you can, and when they are grown pray that you did all that you could to get them started and to stay on the right path.

Beeville, TX

Jeremiah's Prophecy Concerning Coniah (No. 1)

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting

upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah (Jer. 22:28-30).

That is the prophecy of Jeremiah concerning the man called *Coniah* an abbreviation of "Jeconiah," his real name.

Coniah and His Seed

Jeremiah, the prophet, said no man of his seed should prosper sitting on David's

throne and ruling any more in Judah. What does that have to do with the question of Christ sitting on David's throne? Just this—Jesus Christ was of the fleshly seed of Coniah. When the Lord said, "Write ye this man childless," it does not mean that Coniah was congenitally childless—the names of his sons are given in the Old Testament record, as well as the New Testament genealogies. Coniah had sons; he was not childless physically; but the Lord said, "Write ye this man childless." That meant that he should not have a successor on David's throne; that Coniah would be the last man to occupy the fleshly throne of David. Zedekiah, son of Coniah, who was appointed to the throne by Nebuchadnezzar, was a vassal of the king of Babylon. Young Zedekiah was the prince and representative of Nebuchadnezzar but did not succeed to the throne of David. With Coniah, David's earthly throne became extinct blotted out forever.

Coniah and the Throne

There are several passages that will identify Coniah. First is Jeremiah 24:1:

The LORD shewed me, and, behold, two baskets of figs *were* set before the temple of the LORD, after that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with the carpenters

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Sermon Outlines

Numerous lessons presented by Michael Hatcher are also in written outline form (PDF).

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and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon.

Here we see that Jeconiah (Coniah) was the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah. Next is 1 Chronicles 3:16: "And the sons of Jehoiakim: Jeconiah his son, Zedekiah his son." Now we know who Coniah was, and that he was not congenitally childless. But he was childless with respect to the throne.

No man of his seed should rule any more on David's throne in Judah; in him the earthly throne of David ceased; there was no seed after him on David's throne. Zedekiah, though a son of Jeconiah, became the prince of Nebuchadnezzar, with no right to the throne, and it was overturned. For the proof of this read with me Ezekiel 21:25-27:

And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity *shall have* an end, Thus saith the LORD God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this *shall not be* the same: exalt *him that is* low, and abase *him that is* high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no *more*, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it *him*.

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Nelda King	Sheila Myrick
Paulette Born	Dot Dodd
Pam Busch	Heather Stark
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette Born's grandson)	
David Norris (Bill & Pam Busch's brother-in-law)	
BillyTom Muldoon (Pam Busch's cousin)	
Randall Johnson (Joyce Johnson's husband)	
Betty Podgurski (Bill & Peggy Crowe's daughter)	

Please Remember

July 19

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

July 19

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

July 29

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Jeremiah's Prophecy Concerning Coniah (No. 2)

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

Coniah and Christ

Ezekiel was in Babylon with exiles. He knew that the throne of David was no more and that Zedekiah, as a prince of Nebuchadnezzar, had no right to it. God said, "Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this *shall not be the same*" (Eze. 21:26).

The earthly throne of David should be no more "until he come whose right it is" (21:27). Jesus Christ, the One to come, alone had the right to David's throne, and that only in the antitypical sense; not the earthly but the spiritual throne of David—for no man of Coniah's seed could "prosper, sitting and ruling on David's throne any more than in Judah." By these two charts I will show that Jesus was of the fleshly seed of Coniah and cannot occupy the throne of David on earth.

Jeremiah said no man of Coniah's seed should sit on David's throne and rule any more in Judah.

Coniah and Christ No. 1

Jer. 22:30 — Mat. 1:12

King James

1. Jeconiah begat Sabthiel
2. Salathiel begat Zorobabel

Revised Version

1. Jeconiah begat Shealtiel
2. Shealtiel begat Zerubabel

The Seed of David thru Coniah

The texts of King James and American Standard versions are arranged here in parallel columns to show you that Jesus is of the seed of Coniah. Comparing first the genealogies as given in Matthew, "Salathiel," in the text of the Authorized Version, is called "Shealthiel" in the text of the Revised Version. "Salathiel" was the father of Zorobabel,

but “Shealthiel” as the father of Zerrubabel (the same man—just different spellings of the names in the two texts)—thus proving that Salathiel and Shealtiel are names of the same person. So the genealogy of Matthew brings the lineage of Christ from Coniah, through Shealtiel, or Salathiel, depending on which version is used. The two versions are arranged here side by side because some have claimed that Salathiel was not Shealtiel, and not of Coniah. But the effort fails. Salathiel and Shealtiel were either the same man or else they were brothers, for Jeconiah (Coniah) was the father of both, as shown. Furthermore, they both had the same son, Zorobabel—unless Zerubbabel and Zorobabel were two persons, in which case they were first cousins, for their fathers then would be brothers. So, either way, the fact remains that Jesus was of the fleshly seed of Coniah. And no man of his seed could “prosper sitting on David’s throne ruling any more in Judah.”

The second chart, from Luke’s genealogy, is connected with the lineage of Jesus through Coniah in the Old Testament genealogy of 1 Chronicles 3:16.

Coniah and Christ No. 2

Luke 3:27 — 1 Chr. 3:16

King James

1. Zorobabel—Son of Salathiel
2. Salathiel—Son of Neri
3. Jeconiah—Assir—Salathiel—his-son

Revised Version

1. Zerubbabel—Son of Shealtiel
2. Shealtiel—Son of Neri
3. Jeconiah—captive—Shealtiel—his-son

No-Man-of- His Seed-or-David’s Earthly Throne

The purpose of the two genealogies, Matthew and Luke, is to establish both the fleshly and legal connection of Jesus Christ—one through Mary, the other through Joseph—thus proving His legal and regal right as an heir to the throne of David. In Luke’s genealogy it is seen again that “Salathiel” and “Shealtiel” were the same—having the same father and grandfather, or father-in-law, if traced through that connection, as was sometimes the case. No matter what the case, I have established the fact that Salathiel and Shealtiel were the sons of Coniah (Jeconiah) and that the genealogy of both Matthew and Luke brings Christ in the world through the fleshly lineage of Coniah.

Now since Christ is the seed of Coniah, and no man of his seed can sit on David’s throne and rule any more in Judah, it follows that Jesus Christ cannot occupy the throne of David on earth. But the prophets said that Jesus Christ the son of David, should occupy David’s throne. Since it cannot be done on the earth, it follows that Jesus Christ would occupy David’s throne not on earth, but in heaven. And that is exactly what Peter affirms in Acts 2:30.

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Sermon Outlines

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Permissive Parents

Children can influence their parents just as parents can influence their children. The following story about an imaginary couple may have been duplicated in the lives of many of our readers.

George and Mary was a wonderful couple as they began their life together. Throughout their youth they had received strong teaching concerning worldliness, and their conduct showed the effects of that teaching. They had been taught faithfulness in attendance, and they never missed a service for “anything.” In character and conviction...they were blameless.

However, this young couple failed to instill into the hearts of their children these same convictions. Consequently, as the children reached their teens, they began to put pressure on their parents to let them do what all the other young people were doing. Gradually the will of the parents was broken down, and they began to permit their children to do things they never dreamed their children would do.

Rationalization came easy for George and Mary. “After all, the Bible is not specific in these matters,” they thought. “The Bible says ‘modest apparel,’ but it doesn’t define modesty.” “And they’re only planning to go to the dance; they aren’t planning to dance.” “We can’t say ‘no’ to everything,” they said. When Junior began to show unusual athletic ability, the question of attending services became a problem. At first they took Junior out of games and brought him to mid-week services, but then the team began to depend

more and more on him. The play-offs came, and the team’s only hope in the play-offs was for Junior to play. George and Mary gave in. And once more they had given in; they had no more argument for the future. Junior never missed another game to “go to church.”

George and Mary often found themselves on the defensive in Bible classes. They began to argue for their children’s behavior. And, the more accustomed they became to their children’s actions, the more innocent their actions seemed to be. Eventually, their own conduct became affected. They reached the point where they thought nothing of missing on Friday night during a meeting to see Junior play ball. Mary even adopted some of the daughter’s dress habits, although remaining sufficiently *discreet* to stay in good graces of the brethren. Yes, Mary and George are still in good standing in the church, and their change has been so gradual that many fail to realize that they are not the strong Christians they formerly were. What happened to George and Mary? Instead of bringing their children “up” in the nurture and admonition of the “Lord,” their children brought them “down” in the nurture and admonition of the “devil.”

Our children may go wrong, but they must not do wrong with our permission. We do not seek anger, but repentance. Parents, would your names fit in the place of “George” and “Mary” in the above story?

Author Unknown

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Please Remember

July 29

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00
p.m., in the auditorium.

August 2

Visitation cards for Group 1 will
be handed out by Bill Crowe.

August 9

Deacons' meeting will be held
prior to the afternoon service, in
room 1.

August 16

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His Eyes Met Mine

Robert R. Stephenson

In John 13 we learn:

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded (13:1-5).

The following verse tells us that He came to Peter, but Peter would ask the Lord, "Lord, are You washing my feet?" to which Jesus

answers "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this" (13:7). In verse 8, Peter boldly proclaims to the Lord, "You shall never wash my feet!" In that same verse, our Lord responds by saying:

"If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." Peter's analytical mind causes him to reply, "Lord, not my feet only, but also *my hands and my head!*" (13:9).

Jesus would tell him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash *his* feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you" (13:10). Verse 11 tells us that the phrase, "but not all of you" is a reference to Jesus knowing that one of them (Judas) would betray Him. He would announce this to all of the disciples which caused each one of them to ask, "Lord, is it I?" (Mat. 26:22). When Judas brazenly asked the question to Jesus "Rabbi, is it I?" he knew that he was betraying the Lord that

night. Our Lord's simple response to His betrayer was, "You have said it" (26:25).

Christ told His disciples that upon His arrest that they would all scatter like sheep, but once He rose from the grave He would go before them to Galilee (Mark 14:27-28). Peter would respond to the Lord that "Even if all are made to stumble, yet I *will not be*" (14:29). Our Lord would inform him that that very night, "before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." Peter would vehemently deny that that would happen by announcing, "If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" (14:30-31). This same declaration was echoed by each one of the disciples. Of course, Peter would deny Christ just as he was told (14:66-72).

Now, allow us to notice verse 72. The recorded statement is so heart-wrenching. It is there we find that when the:

second time *the* rooster crow...Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times."

And when he thought about it, he wept.

Luke adds some additional information about that occasion by telling us, "while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter" (Luke 22:60-61).

Can you imagine the piercing eyes of our Lord looking at Peter? Looking at him with hurt and disappointment for his actions! Can you even begin to imagine how Peter felt at that very moment? Mark tells that when Peter "thought about it, he wept" (Mark 14:72), but Luke adds that Peter "wept bitterly" (Luke 22:62). In my mind, I see Peter,

upon remembering what Jesus told him that he would do that night, became so distraught that he wept so bitterly. Then at the moment of our Lord's death, imagine the agony and the tears Peter must have shown. In those hours following the death of Christ until His resurrection, Peter must have shed many tears, recalling not only the suffering and death of Jesus, but His eyes piercing Peter's soul. Can you imagine the renewed pain of that moment every time he heard the rooster crow?

Now think of the events on the first day of the week following Christ's death. Mary Magdalene went to the tomb of Jesus very early that day and found the stone had been taken away from the tomb. She ran to Peter and John, telling them that the body of the Lord had been taken out of the tomb and she did not know where the Lord had been placed. This prompted Peter and John to run to the tomb, finding it empty. I imagine the heartache that Peter and John must have felt. They would leave and go to their own homes John 20:10 tells, but Mary stays, weeping outside the tomb. The Scriptures tell us that two angels would inform her that the Lord had risen and turning she saw Jesus. He would instruct her to

not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, "I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God" (John 20:17).

That evening, Jesus would appear to His disciples. It would be that moment that the eyes of Jesus and the eyes of Peter would meet again.

Dear friend, every sin we commit, Jesus is staring right at us. Every sin we commit He is staring right into our eyes with that same hurt and disappointment that He stared into Peter's eyes. Yet, every time we make repentance and seek God's forgiveness, His stare turns into joy and approval.

There is coming a day when our eyes will meet, and that moment will be the Judgment Day. On that day that moment will be one of immense joy, just as Peter must have felt

in seeing Jesus following His resurrection! Or it will be the moment of great fear. Which will it be?

Trenton, TX

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The Shame of It

He that answereth a matter before he heareth *it*, *It is* folly and shame unto him (Pro. 18:13).

Often, we are called upon to commit ourselves upon a matter before we hear what that matter is. "I'll tell you something, if you will not tell it," one hears so often. It is folly and shame to so commit oneself. It was such a rash decision that brought grief to a victorious warrior in Old Testament days. So elated over victory, he said that he would offer as sacrifice "whatsoever cometh forth" (Jud. 11:31) from his house upon his return. But it was his daughter that came our first! This man was much grieved because of his *folly*, but we can imagine that he was more cautious in making vows thereafter.

We describe a matter like this described by Solomon as prejudice judging without properly considering facts. Many a person closed his heart to the truth because he makes up his mind before hearing the truth. "He answereth a matter before he heareth

it." How many times have we heard men say, "I would not change (my religious state) if I knew I was wrong."? This one has answered before he hears, and thus he engulfs himself in "folly and shame." No one can do justice to his soul by making his decisions without hearing first. Let every heart be open to the truth at all times, and let every heart be ready to hear the whole truth.

When Peter reached the house of Cornelius, having been sent to him to tell him "words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:14), Cornelius said, "we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God" (10:33). This man did not make up his mind as to what he would do before hearing, but he desired to hear first, and was resolved to do whatsoever he heard commanded of God. Thus, being commanded to be baptized, he did as commanded. Have you, friend?

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August 2

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August 9

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August 16

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Is the New Birth Enshrouded in Mystery?

W. C. Hall

Many sermons have been preached on the subject of the new birth. I grew up under sectarian influences and was led to believe the process of the new birth was a mystery so hidden from the ordinary mind that it could not be comprehended. I heard sermons which were mysterious to me then, for they were cobwebbed with untruth, fanaticism, and ignorance of the Word of truth.

The Religious Expression Is a Figure

The Lord teaches by comparison. That accounts for so many parables, similes, and metaphors in the Scriptures. Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again. Nicodemus had some curious ideas relative to it, and Jesus had to divest his mind of all those misconceptions and pour into him the real truth. He did it by using the figure of natural birth to illustrate a spiritual one. When one is born, he simply changes places

of living. Before birth, a child lives in his mother's womb; afterward, in the world. That is the reason it is called a birth, for he has changed conditions of existence. Any growing plant may be said to be born again if it changes places and conditions of living. A butter bean has its little embryo, which is tucked away in a stalk neatly folded and lying in wait till the conditions make it grow. If one plants the seed, in a little while, there will come out two leaves, indicating that the plant is living. But it is existing under different circumstances and in a different place—it has been born again.

There Must Be a Starting Point

Paul reveals to us just what and how that beginning point is attained: "For though ye have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet *have ye* not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I begat you **through the gospel**" (1 Cor. 4:15). A

beginning begins all-natural births. Yet there must be time enough and growth sufficient to bring about the birth. So, with the spiritual. When Paul said he begat them through the Gospel, he is saying that he started them in their religious career by first telling them of the Gospel.

They heard it and thought of their condition, realized that they were lost, and hence first received the little part of the Gospel truth, which is called the beginning. Those Corinthians had many teachers after becoming Christians, but he told them they had only one father. So, it is now; the man who teaches a person to think about the Gospel and believes begets that one. That is further emphasized in Paul's statement quoted above. "For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful **child in the Lord**" (4:17). He is called his child because he begat him. Peter further corroborates this idea when he taught: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth...having **been begotten again**, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the **word of God**, which liveth and abideth" (1 Pet. 1:22-23). This shows conclusively that the preaching of the Word of the Lord is the beginning point, the begetting of all spiritual children.

The Changing Places of Living

The begetting alone will not do, for there has been no change in places of living. The process must be continued; growth must be had. This growth is further induced by the Word of the Lord. Peter teaches: "Long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that

ye may grow thereby unto salvation" (2:2). Further, learning causes spiritual growth until one learns enough to be obedient to the Gospel. He learns that the Lord requires him to repent, to confess His name before men, to be buried by baptism into death, which he gladly does. This process takes him out of the kingdom of the devil and places him into the body of Christ. Here, he is living a different life, a new environment hence has been born, again. He has changed his place of living, and that is the reason the name *birth* is given to the process.

This idea is further strengthened by Paul's announcement: "Who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love; in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins" (Col. 1:13-14). Here is represented a change, called a *translation*, from sin to righteousness. Hence, a life with a changed environment.

The Bible expression, therefore, "be born again," simply is a figurative way of stating the simple fact that one becomes a Christian by obeying the simple commandments. It has no mystery connected with it, except in the vagaries of some imaginative mind who wants to mystify the truth. Let us, therefore,

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understand it and teach it as it is—a simple process, taught, and easily learned from the study of the Word of God and will be productive of salvation to the one who accepts the truth relative thereto.

Deceased



Our Critical Judgments

Homer P. Reeves

Our lives and positions are purified and made invulnerable by the refining fires of criticism. Even harsh and unfavorable judgments often prove to be of great value to the honest heart. It is to be remembered that a kite rises not with, but against, the wind.

However, in offering criticism we should see to it that something constructive is offered. It is the aim of Christians to do good to all men, and this applies in a special way to the household of faith. When disposed to be critical, we should have something to offer in lieu of prevailing circumstances and arrangements. If we have nothing better to offer, our critical opinions should be made very sparingly.

Using hurtful words and making defamatory remarks is foreign to the brotherhood of Christ. A Christian will not engage in such evil practices. We may profit by Pliny's statement: "Criticism comes easier than craftsmanship."

Our judgments should be expressed in view of the obvious fact that others possess judgments too, and the chances are pretty great that these opinions may be salutary and of greater validity than our own.

Criticism should be directed to those who are being criticized. It is wicked and cowardly to "hide in a dark place" and vent our private critical judgments to others who revel in common gossip and thrive on casting aspersions and slanderous accusations.

It should be the intention of every faithful Gospel preacher and faithful officers of the church to keep open the channels of communication with every member. Every member should feel free at all times to discuss any matter of mutual interest. Since we are concerned about mutual edification and advancement of the church and glory for God, we will be extremely careful never to criticize in such a way and in any place, which will create injury to the cause which we love. Remember that the seeds of discord and alienation are sown in the thoughtless expression of some calumnious remark.

The critic should be honest and sincere in his judgments. He should be considerate and tolerant in arriving at opinions. His opinions should be studied opinions. He should be courageous and kind in expressing his criticism.

Deceased

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August 9

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room 1.

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A Congregation Worthy of Commendation

Brad Green

The apostle Paul bestows a wonderful commendation upon the church which met in Thessalonica (1 The. 1:1-5). Every congregation of the Lord's church should seek such Divine approval. For this reason, it is important and necessary that we imitate the characteristics of the Thessalonian congregation which God condones and commends.

First, the church at Thessalonica followed God and not men. The inspired Paul records that the congregation "received the word" (1:6) and grounded their "work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1:3). The church at Thessalonica did not seek the endorsement of their community. These Christians were meeting amidst a wicked people who were described as not *noble* (Acts 17:11) and who caused the church much *affliction* (1 The. 1:6). To find the approval of men, the Thes-

salonian brethren would have had to reject the Word of God and compromise their work, faith, and labor to resemble that of the men around them. The congregation at Thessalonica was commended by God because they "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42) and obeyed "God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

Second, the church at Thessalonica "sounded out the word of the Lord" (1 The. 1:8). These brethren were not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ (cf. Rom. 1:16). Like the prophet Jeremiah, each Christian should be able to proclaim that the Word of God is "in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, And I could not" (Jer. 20:9—NKJV). Instead of seeking the approval of men, the church must teach and encourage men to seek the approval of God.

Third, the Thessalonian congregation eagerly awaited the return of the Lord (1 The. 1:10). The inspired Paul writes:

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 Tim. 4:7-8).

We must all live our lives in such a manner as to be able to say that we are ready for Jesus to return. We can only “love His appearing” if we have been obedient to His Word, which

will serve as our judge (John 12:48). If we live faithful to God’s Will every day, we can be “looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God” (2 Pet. 3:12).

As a congregation of the church for which Christ died, we should earnestly strive for the approval and commendation of God. To help us in this endeavor, God has given us inspired examples to follow. “To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen” (Jude 25).

Lenoir City, TN

Do We Really Care for or Love the Lost?

Often times we sing the song, “Does Jesus Care.” This is a very comforting song and is often sung at funerals. There is a joy that fills the heart, especially when we sing the chorus, “O yes, He cares, I know He cares, His heart is touched with my grief; when the days are weary, The long night dreary, I know my Saviour cares.” How do we know He cares? Well, the Bible tells us He does and how much. Jesus cares for you and me so much until He was willing to die for us that we might live. He has proven His love for us. Jesus left all the beauties and glories of heaven and came to this sin-cursed earth to pay the ransom price for the sins of man (Phi. 2:5-8). In Luke 19:10 we read, “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

How much do we really care for the lost? How much do we love them? John said, “My little children, let us not love in word, neither

in tongue; but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18).

1. How much do you love your own soul? Do you talk righteously but do not act so? Do you really want to go to heaven? Do you quickly find an excuse for not serving the Lord or do you faithfully serve Him? Do you attend all the services of the church possible and work for the cause of Christ? If not, why not? If your soul is saved, it will be because you love God, His Son, the church, the Bible, and your soul more than anyone or anything in this life. Jesus said:

If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.... So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:26, 33).

I know some do not love their own soul for they will not attend worship or serve the

Lord. Some of you have been pleaded with time and time again but continue to give some silly excuse for not faithfully serving God.

2. Do you love the souls of your children and grandchildren? You do not unless you are a faithful, dedicated example of Christianity. Oh, you say, I provide for them well. I give them a good house, car, boat, etc. I cook, iron, etc. for them. Yes, but that was not the question. The question was, “Do you love the souls of your children and grandchildren?” Parents have an obligation to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and yet, many seem to think they are doing someone a favor when they bring their children to Bible classes and worship service once in a while.

Parents, how can you look your children in the face and say, “I love you,” and then not be faithful in services and not work for the saving of lost souls.

“Even if happiness forgets you a little bit, never completely forget about it” (J. Prévert). We are often called upon to bear crosses far greater than we planned and we often find ourselves in adverse circumstances. It is just part of life. What to do about it? Sulk and pout? Why? In Jesus there is joy—find Him and you find joy...despite the circumstances. You are bigger than what is happening to you! God bless.

Tim Smith

3. How much do you love the soul of your husband or wife? Do you set the best example for him or her? Does your mate know that God comes first even before him or her? Do you act un-Christian? Do you curse, swear, get mad, fuss, drink, etc.? Do you ever invite Christian friends into your home that your mate may get to know them and to appreciate them? It seems that some couldn't care less if their mate is lost. How much do you care?

4. How much do you love the lost in the community? Do you say, “Yes, I want them to be saved and go to heaven,” but never do anything toward their salvation? Do you believe the world is saying of the church today, “Those people really care about lost souls?”

5. How much do you love your unfaithful brethren? Paul said, “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Gal. 6:1). How many of the unfaithful have you contacted lately concerning their soul? Have you even considered their unfaithfulness? James said, “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (Jam. 5:19-20).

Remember, we are to love “in deed and in truth.” Brethren, how much do we really love the lost?

Author Unknown

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| Bill Busch | Tina Foshee |
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| Roberta Harrell (Nancy Travis'
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Sermon Outlines

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August 17, 2020

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4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Internet Website: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

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Bishops: Paul Brantley, Michael Hatcher
Bill Busch

Minister: Michael Hatcher

Deacons: Henry Born, Elward Brantley

Sunday Bible Classes for all ages — 9:00 a.m.

Sunday Worship Services — 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

A Leader Who Is Always There

Roelf L. Ruffner

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) or the Mormons lost its leader in January 2018, President Thomas S. Monson, to old age being 90 years old. He was considered by them the “prophet-seer-revelator” like their first president, Joseph Smith, Jr. Monson’s successor is the 93-year-old “Apostle” Russell M. Nelson. The theological cult of Mormonism with 16 million spiritually enslaved members is also a business empire which has vast real estate holdings and businesses, all tax free. It seeks to control its members with false doctrine and the heretical promise of godhood after death.

The leader of the church of Christ since its establishment in Jerusalem in AD 30 is also its founder, Jesus Christ. “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18).

He never grows old and has an “endless life” (Heb. 7:18). This means he will not age physically or mentally as all people do as they grow older. In my life I have watched quite a few Mormon Presidents grow more and more feeble. Their last few years are often spent being led about on the podium of the bi-annual General Conference in Salt Lake City by an aide. After he utters a few barely audible melodious words he is led back to a recliner on the podium as the Mormon Tabernacle Choir beautifully belts out “Come, Come Ye Saints.”

Notice how this picture contrasts with the last word picture we have of the King of Kings Jesus Christ:

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden gir-

dle. His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength (Rev. 1:13-16).

The contrast between the two could not be starker. One is omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient but the other is not. One is an object of man-made tradition induced reverence, while the other's very presence demands worship. The apostle John said in the presence of his Risen Lord, "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead" (1:17).

Dear reader, the LDS President, the Pope, and their ilk are a gigantic farce put out by

Satan and his devices. We must not be "ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor. 2:11). Being Biblically aware we must not bow before religiosity or piety masquerading as Christ's representative on earth while masking false doctrine drug up from the pit of Hell. Rather New Testament Christians must shed light on all and turn men away from these religious relics and show them the light of Jesus Christ found in the Word of God. When John tried to worship an angel the following happened: "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10). We should heed this command.

Columbia, TN

God's Ways Versus Our Ways

Luther W. Martin

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 (Isa. 55:8-9).

This above-written statement from the prophet Isaiah gives expression to God's attitude toward our petty schemes and ideas which we quite frequently use in our Christian worship.

From merely the human viewpoint, there are many things that we might incorporate

into our church services which would render the service much more enjoyable and pleasant during the brief time we assemble to worship (?) God.

One of the first ideas usually presented when attempting to make the worship service more enjoyable from the human viewpoint is the suggestion that the sermon might be shortened. In answer to this idea I would ask that you remember the sermon of the apostle Paul when he continued his speech until midnight (Acts 20). Next, I would have you remember that no one ever suggested

that a double-feature movie be reduced in length. Likewise, the same type of individual will be more than willing to sit up half the night in a card game. Yet, when going from the things of the world to the teachings of the Bible, the cry is: "Shorten the sermon!"

Another of our ideas that has become so very popular is the way or ways we have invented to finance the work of the church. Paul gave these instructions: "Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (1 Cor. 16:2). Here we have stated the way of God concerning the financing of the work of the church. Then you and I come along and decide that we should take up money whenever we have the opportunity. We may even follow our own ideas so far that we have quilt raffles, bake sales, pie suppers, etc., to raise money. Of course, these ideas are fine for the use of clubs, fraternities, and lodges, but when dealing with the bride of Christ, the church, the body of Christ, we should never go out after our ideas.

In Acts 20:7, we find the information that upon the first day of the week the disciples met together to break bread. Now, there is a first day in every week, so for this reason we should observe the Lord's Supper each week upon the first day. Further, the Lord's Supper is observed in remembrance of Him. In remembering Christ, we might keep in mind that He arose upon the first day of the week; we also remember that it was upon the first day of the week, Pentecost, that the apostles received the Holy

Spirit in a baptismal measure. Furthermore, the first Gospel sermon was preached upon the first day of the week and the church was established upon the first day of the week. Now, the Gospel contains the story of the death and resurrection of Christ, and the church is the body of Christ. In other words, these many occurrences concerning the life of Christ will be brought to our mind when we observe devoutly the communion service. Even so we have followed our ideas to the extent that many denominations observe communion quarterly, semiannually, or annually.

Again, many of us have departed from God and His commands by deciding to please our itching ears, not only with false teachers, but by instituting and including a musical instrument in the worship service. Yes, instruments were used to praise God under the law of Moses, but we are no longer under that law (Col. 2:14). We might reply: "Well, if they were acceptable in the sight of God then, why is it not acceptable to God now? The New Testament instructs us to "sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs"; but nowhere does it authorize us to use the instrument. We can also reply that God does not say not to use it, but in the same breath the same could be stated concerning the communion elements. God did not say not to use corn bread and buttermilk for the Lord's Supper, but He did state what to use. God has stated that we are to sing, and for this reason why should we question His commands?

Deceased

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Bill Busch	Tina Foshee
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Nelda King	Dot Dodd
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David Norris (Bill & Pam Busch's brother-in-law)	
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An Encouraging Word from a Departed Soldier of the Cross

G. K. Wallace

When I was a young preacher, brethren were saying, “What will happen to the church when brother A and B are gone?” Today some are saying that “in a few years we will have no one to fight our battles as the giants in the land will all be dead.” Let us hope and pray that there are, and I believe there will be many young men who will rise and lead the way. However, these young men must realize that the way is not easy—it has never been. The road down which they travel is not a controlled-access highway. There will be many stop signs on the road and detours offered. Young men must stay on the Lord’s highway and be willing to suffer persecution. The right way is a *strait*—difficult way (Mat. 7:14). The fight will be hard but so will be the helper of His true soldiers...

To encourage young men, may we offer these suggestions:

Do not be intimidated by so-called scholarship. The so-called scholars of today want to make you feel handicapped. Their worldly wisdom, they think, gives them an advantage over you. In your fight for the right, you will be called “moss backs,” “water ducks,” “narrow-minded bigots,” “traditionalists,” “uneducated fools,” and many other things to make you feel inferior. What has the “so-called scholarship” brought us? Just count the young men who have been lost to the cause of Christ because they have been led away from the simple Gospel of Christ.

Do not be intimidated by the cry of legalism. If one goes to the Bible for proof of doctrine, he is called a *legalist*. Yet, all

denominations [and even change agent liberals in the church] go to the Bible for some points of doctrine. If one goes to the Bible for **one point** of doctrine, he is as much a legalist as a man who accepts every point of law. Do not be afraid to take all the Bible regardless of what men say.

Do not be intimidated by the call to the “plains of Ono.” Do not surrender by compromise. In the work of Nehemiah, we observe that he did not start **to build a new wall**, but to **restore** an old wall (Neh. 1:2-3). When it was apparent that he would succeed, his enemies desired to compromise (6:1-4). There was a call to Nehemiah to come to the plain of “Ono” for a unity meeting. Today, our enemies [both within and without] view the plea for restoration as a success, so they ask us to come to “Ono” for “unity meetings.” We should be too busy to go to the conference. We are interested in unity, but we cannot sacrifice Truth for consolidation by mutual concession and compromise. *Unity*

in diversity is not the unity for which Jesus prayed.

Do not be intimidated by those who mock at the “pattern of sound words” (2 Tim. 2:13). We are duty-bound to hold to the Gospel both in words and in fact. Truth must be exalted above policy and duty above inclination. The preaching of the Gospel has been entrusted to uninspired men. *Direct revelation or divine illumination* is not how God leads man today. The task of preaching the Gospel is not committed (especially to cultured and eloquent men) to faithful men (2:2). Much of our trouble is caused by a departure from sound words. When the Word of God is filtered through human intellect, no matter how scholarly, the result is systematic theology.

Let us not be dismayed; preach the Word in season and out of season (4:1-6). Let us fight the good fight—the good fight of faith.

Deceased

Baptism

James A. Harding

The deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage is a striking illustration of our deliverance from sin. I believe there is not a more perfect type found in the Old Testament. Notice the parallelisms:

1. They were in bondage in Egypt; we are in bondage in sin.
2. God sent Moses, their brother, to save them; now He has sent Christ, our brother, to save us.
3. Moses did mighty works before all the people; Christ did mighty works before the people that they might believe.
4. The people followed Moses through three day’s journey (from Rameses to Succoth, from Succoth to Etham, and from Etham to Pihahiroth) before coming to the Red Sea, where their baptism occurred; so we follow Christ through the three steps of faith, re-

pentance, and confession to the waters of baptism.

5. They, following their leader Moses, went down under the cloud into the sea and were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and the sea; so, we, following our leader Christ, go down into the water of baptism and are baptized into Christ.
6. They came up out of the sea, leaving their enemies (Pharaoh and his hosts) overwhelmed in the depths of the sea—freed from them; so, we come up out of the water of baptism, leaving our enemies (our sins) behind us, being freed from them. We are made free from sin when we “have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine,” which had delivered us.
7. Then Moses and the Israelites sang their song of deliverance; so we, after baptism, go on our way rejoicing. (See the case of the eunuch, Acts 8:39; of the jailer, Acts 16:33; of Paul, Acts 9:18).
8. In the wilderness, they ate of the manna and drank of the smitten rock;

as we in the Church eat and drink of the body and blood of Christ.

9. Those of the Israelites who were faithful to the end finally passed over Jordan into Canaan—the promised land; those of us who hold out faithful to the end will pass over the Jordan of death into the celestial Canaan—the paradise of God.
10. As they had that strange pillar (of cloud by day and fire by night) to guide them from the very moment that they started; so, we have the Bible to guide us even unto the river of death.

What could be more understandable or more beautiful! Read Exodus 14 and 1 Corinthians 10:1-5 for a full account of the matter. You see, although the Israelites had learned to despise their enemies, had accepted Moses as the leader sent from God to deliver them, and had followed him through three encampments, their enemies were not completely blotted out until the Israelites’ baptism and so it is of our sins.

*Deceased
Moody-Harding Debate*

The Christian’s Body

- It is bought (1 Cor. 7:23; 6:20).
- It is purchased with a great price (1 Pet. 1:18-19).
- It is not your own (1 Cor. 6:19).
- It is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19).
- It is to glorify God (1 Cor. 6:20).
- It is for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body (1 Cor. 6:13).
- It is to magnify Christ (Phi. 1:20).
- It is to manifest the life of Christ (2 Cor. 4:10).
- It is to be controlled (1 Cor. 9:27).
- It is to be dissolved in death (2 Cor. 5:1; Gen. 3:19).
- It is to be changed when Christ comes (1 Cor. 15:52-52).

Author Unknown

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| BillyTom Muldoon (Pam Busch's
cousin) | |
| Randall Johnson (Joyce Johnson's
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| Carolyn Fry (Bill & Peggy Crowe's
neighbor) | |
| Lauren Kreuz (Nancy Travis' niece) | |
| Robertta Harrell (Nancy Travis'
niece) | |
| Murdell Barker (Nancy Loy's
cousin) | |

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“He’s in a Better Place (?)”...Maybe Not!

Johnny Oxendine

The words above are often said to one in grief as a way of providing comfort, or at least comforting thoughts. We want to imagine that the loved one is not in any more pain. We want to think that the physical problems he might have been dealing with are no longer a worry. We want to think that the soul is at peace. We want to think the best—that the departed loved one is “in a better place.” Might it be that everything has, in reality suddenly gotten worse?

The Scriptures certainly give us examples of some for whom that could be truthfully said. The account of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19) illustrates so many great lessons, but for us at this moment, we can see how everyone would think that the rich man had gone to an even better place than that which he had experienced on

earth. Read this passage from Luke 16:22-31:

The rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence. 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.

Clearly, the rich man did not expect to find himself in this situation, but it was one of his own doing. He could have been obedient to God! It was a choice that he made not to do so, and his eternity was sealed. Lazarus was obedient, and he went to "a better place."

Back to the original thoughts from the title, many people do somehow seem to understand that there is a better place, but they simply do not try to get there.

San Mateo, CA

The Purpose of Preaching

Jesus has given the command to go and preach the Gospel. Mark 16:15-16 states:

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

When Jesus used *preach* in this passage, he used a word that conveys a unique concept. Preaching is a proclamation of a message. It is a declaring of one's position. Therefore, it is a very common form of presentation that is heard day after day by someone somewhere peddling their positions, whereas genuine Bible preaching is a very unique thing. Nothing can take the place of real Bible preaching, nor can its power really be measured.

Bible Preaching Refutes False Ideas

Over and over again Christ and the apostles challenged the false positions of their day through preaching. Jesus refuted the false teachings of the Jewish teachers of His day.

Notice His rebuke of them in the Sermon on the Mount (Mat. 5-7). His denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23 is but one example of many incidents of the Lord's hatred for false doctrine. Though He had supreme love and compassion for the sinner, He hated every false way, for He knew that such would cause souls to be lost. Peter, in his sermon on Pentecost (Acts 2) as well as Paul's sermon on Mars Hill (Acts 17), are two illustrations of how Christ and the apostles used the medium of preaching to expose error. We must do the same.

Bible Preaching Explains the Scriptures

Bible preaching comes from the Bible. It is a presentation and an explanation of the greatest book in the world, the Bible. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, filled his sermon with quotations from the Old Testament. But, notice that it was not just a Bible quoting session; rather he went on to explain the Scriptures which he used. There was no

doubt in the minds of his hearers as to how these Scriptures should be applied (2:16, 25). Gospel preaching must be Bible based and centered (2:17-21), but it must also let the people know what the Scripture means and how it applies today. A person can read the Bible at home for himself. He can memorize every verse in the Bible, but if he misses the Bible's proper explanation and application, then he has gained nothing toward growing in faith (2 Pet. 3:18). Bible preaching is based on God's Word and is a correct explanation and application of that Word.

Bible Preaching Convicts Men of Sin

In Acts 2, Peter let his audience know they were sinners (2:36). There was no misunderstanding him about the matter. He exhorted

them to do something about their spiritual condition (2:40). Peter stirred their consciences (2:37). Paul's sermon to Felix caused Felix to tremble (24:25). Bible preaching is to convict men of their sins and exhort them to turn to the living God.

We need a revival today of the preaching that we hear. We need a return to first century preaching—the kind of preaching that is filled with the Bible—preaching that causes the hearer to realize his condition and urges him to do something about it. Then we will see, as the Word of God instructs, that it is indeed “quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword” (Heb. 4:12).

Author Unknown

A Portrait of Soul Winners

Their ears are open to the cries for help from a lost and dying world.

Their eyes are ever searching for a receptive heart, in which to plant the Word of God.

Their lips are always ready and willing to proclaim the glory of God.

Their hands are always turning the pages of God's Holy Word, seeking His will for them.

Their feet are on the move to carry out the words of Christ to preach the Gospel to every creature.

Their hearts are beating and breaking with the urgency to reach the lost before it is too late.

Their heads are bowed in a prayer to the Father in heaven, to give them wisdom to carry out the mission.

Their faces glow with the hope that is in them.

Their lives are like the light of a city set upon a hill that cannot be hid.

They are the light of the world.

In Christ they live, and move, and have their being.

Author Unknown

Make plans now to
attend the
Gospel meeting
with
Paul Vaughn
Oct 4 – 8

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Randall Johnson (Joyce Johnson's husband)	
Carolyn Fry (Bill & Peggy Crowe's neighbor)	
Lauren Kreuz (Nancy Travis' niece)	
Roberta Harrell (Nancy Travis' niece)	

Restored

Randall Johnson was restored to Christ on August 30. Please keep Randall in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Nancy Loy in the death of her 101-year-old cousin, Murdell Barker, on August 26. Please keep Nancy and her family in your prayers.



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Extinction of Religion

Paul Vaughn

There are sounds of heathenism roaming throughout the land. Generally, people are accepting the humanist approach to life, which disavows the existence of God. This philosophy supports abortion, euthanasia, suicide, situation ethics, and numerous other doctrines that degrade humanity to the level of an animal. In a recent Fox News report, the mass media giant reported that religion is becoming extinct in parts of the world with the possibility of religion becoming extinct in America.

Religion is a subject that conveys different ideas. It is defined as

Belief in and reverence for God or some supernatural power that is recognized as the creator and ruler of the universe; an organized system of doctrine with an approved pattern of behavior and a proper

form of worship (*Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*).

Religion can be laden with error or it can be built on truth. The only way to have truth is to follow the pattern that is set forth in Holy Writ, the Bible. The report from Fox News documents the shift in society from being God believers to humanists' beliefs that has been rolling over the land for the past fifty years. In the report they said, "In 2008 those claiming no religion rose to 15 percent nationwide, with a maximum in Vermont at 34 percent" ("Study").

Will religion become extinct in America? The answer to that question is beyond the ability of this writer to answer. The answer belongs to God; He is in charge of the world. Our society has become very immoral and has been turning from God at an epidemic rate. Yet, there is hope. God is in control and

He will always have His faithful followers. It is the responsibility of each of us to be faithful to Him in all things. It is written, "Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful" (Heb. 10:23). A better question to ask is, "Will religion become extinct in my heart?" This is something I have control over. The best way to answer it is to quote Scriptures. "And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will

serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Jos. 24:15).

Work Cited

"Study Finds Religion May Be Heading for Extinction in Parts of World." *Fox News*. Aug. 14, 2020. <<https://www.foxnews.com/study-finds-religion-may-be-heading-for-extinction-in-parts-of-world>>.

Hopkinsville, KY

Think on These Things

Roy L. Smith

There is always one danger involved in preaching against sin: someone is almost certain to think the preacher is getting personal.

So many people find it difficult to believe that you are opposed to a wrong if you do not endorse their particular method of remedying that wrong.

The tree that stands alone usually develops symmetrically, but it is not always true of men.

No pillow was ever soft enough to ease a guilty conscience.

Too many people are sensitive about the wrong things.

Deceased

Sowing and Reaping

The Bible teaches that a person's behavior carries consequences. The Bible also teaches that a person can deceive himself into thinking that he will not reap what he sows. God's Word says:

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting (Gal. 6:7-8).

In light of the Scripture above, you are only fooling yourself if:

- You think you can neglect your soul's salvation upon earth and not be held accountable for it in eternity (John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10; Heb. 2:1-3; 5:9).
- You think you can spend most, if not all, of your time with wicked people and not become like them (1 Cor. 15:33).
- You think you can be a "part-time," "some-time," "name-on-the-roll-only," "holiday-

Gospel Meeting

with

Paul Vaughn

October 4–8, 2020

Sunday: 9:00 A.M., 10:00 A.M., & 1:00 P.M.

Monday – Thursday Evenings: 7:00 P.M.

Sunday Bible Class — Dangers Facing the Church

Sunday Morning Worship — The Critical Spirit

Sunday Afternoon Worship — Humanism

Monday Evening — Humanism and the Death of Truth

Tuesday Evening — Humanism and the Death of Outrage

Wednesday Evening — Humanism and the Death of the Family

Thursday Evening — Humanism and the Death of the United States of America

- only” Christian and be pleasing to God (Mat. 6:33; Luke 9:23; Rev. 3:14-16).
- You think you can spend your young-adult life pursuing the pleasures of the world and then easily persuade your unbelieving spouse or future-spouse to become a Christian (1 Pet. 3:1-4; 1 John 2:15-17).
 - You think you can marry a child of the devil and expect to have no trouble with your “father-in-law” (John 8:44).
 - You think you can raise your children to question or defy all authority and expect them to be good citizens, let alone Christians (Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:20-21).
 - You think you can teach one way and live another and expect those listening to you to follow the former and not the latter (Mat. 5:13, 16; 6:24; 12:30).
 - You think you can fall from grace, live, and die in that condition, and still be saved (Gal. 6:1; 2 Pet. 2:20-22; Jam. 5:19-20).
 - You think just doing “good deeds” and spending money for “good causes” will get you into Heaven (Mat. 7:21-27).
 - You think you can run with the sinners during the week and worship acceptably with the saints on Sunday (1 Pet. 3:10-12; 1 John 1:7; 4:24).
 - You think you can go to Heaven or Hell and not “take someone with you” (Mat. 12:30; 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; John 1:35-42).
- Remember we will reap what we sow!**
Author Unknown

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| Henry Hignite | Tim Busch |
| Rheba Stancliff | Carla Burleson |
| Bill Busch | Tina Foshee |
| Aleacia Godwin | Linda Parks |
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| David Norris (Bill & Pam Busch's
brother-in-law) | |
| BillyTom Muldoon (Pam Busch's
cousin) | |
| Lauren Kreuz (Nancy Travis' niece) | |

Please Remember

September 13

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

September 20

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

September 20

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September 30

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.



YouTube Channel

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BEACON

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September 14, 2020

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Spiritual War Is Raging

Paul Vaughn

There is a war going on today. It is not a physical war but a spiritual war between good and evil, righteousness and unrighteousness. This war began in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve rejected God to follow the lies of Satan. This war will go on until the end of time. Paul charged Christians to prepare for this war by putting on the armor of God. It is written:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to

withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand (Eph. 6:10-13).

Christianity is attacked by atheists who claim that teaching the Word of God is doing harm to children—calling it child abuse. Humanist are working overtime to remove God from every facet of society. In public school systems it is illegal to teach or even discuss that God created the world as it is recorded in Genesis 1. There are legions seeking to destroy the Bible as God's inspired Word. Sadly, this list is only touches the "hem of the garment." Add to this list that most of the "religious world" is seeking a comfortable, politically correct, non-confrontational, washed out religion. Many Christians are suffering from intense storms of apathy. It is past time to "put on the whole armor of God."

All it takes for evil to win in this war is for Christians to do nothing. Just sit back and watch Satan and his servants march on to destroy the souls of mankind. Serving the Lord requires that every Christian soldier fight the fight of faith. Peter said:

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear (1 Pet. 3:15).

Let us all be ready to answer with a “thus saith the Lord.”

Hopkinsville, KY

Sermon Outlines

<http://www.bellviewcoc.com/sermons.html>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

To receive the Defender and Beacon via e-mail please send your e-mail address to:
bellviewcoc@gmail.com

The Busy Christian

One day while a *good* brother was plowing in his field, a neighbor came over to talk to him about some insect trouble. The brother was anxious to get his plowing done but took a little time to visit.

After a while the neighbor said, “I hear you folks are having a good interest at church.”

“Fair,” the brother replied.

“You say that your church is the only one mentioned in the Bible,” asked the neighbor.

“Yes sir, it is,” proudly replied the brother.

“You must be happy to belong to such an important church,” suggested his neighbor.

“Well, I am,” was the brother’s reply.

“Sometime I would like to go with you and learn more about that church,” said the neighbor.

“Fine,” said the brother, “I’ll be glad to take you anytime.”

“Isn’t tonight meeting night for you folks?”

“Yes, it is,” the brother hesitated, “but I can’t go; just got too much work to do.”

“Well, I reckon your church isn’t any more important than any other. We don’t think you have to belong to or go to church to be saved. And if your work is more important than that of your church, I reckon your church isn’t very important either.”

As the neighbor walked away, the brother started his tractor, jerked it into gear, and muttered something about “narrow-minded people.” No, he was not at the service that night, nor has he been able to bring his neighbor with him since. Nor does his neighbor seem interested in talking religion with him anymore.

Author Unknown

Gospel Meeting

with

Paul Vaughn

October 4 – 8, 2020

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Monday – Thursday Evenings: 7:00 P.M.

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Please Remember

September 20

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

September 20

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September 30

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.

October 4 - 8

Gospel Meeting with Paul Vaughn.

October 4

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BEACON

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Is Worship God-centered or Man-centered?

Dub Mowery

Our Lord Jesus Christ emphasized that “God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship *him* must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). Also, when the devil attempted to entice Jesus to fall down and worship him, the Son of God responded by saying, “Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Mat. 4 10) These two passages should suffice in Scripturally clarifying that our God is the object and center of worship. However, more and more churches and individuals are placing emphasis upon worship services being man-centered rather than upon God. They are more interested in what pleases them than in determining from the inspired Word of God how He wants to be worshipped. In this age of modern conveniences, people are inclined to seek what has been coined as *creature comforts*. Many

have become self-centered: instead of being thoughtful and considerate of others, and especially of our Heavenly Father. They want the worship service to be modified in order that it will conform to that which pleases them.

The tempo of much of the music heard today in the religious realm is more conducive to an old fashion barn dance than reverence toward God. Not only is that true within the denominational world, but sadly this is also true among many congregations of the church. In attempting to appeal to the whims of a permissive society, several congregations of the church select songs that will incite hand-clapping, bodily gyrations, foot patting, lifting up hands and moving them back and forth, etc. The apostle Paul stressed, “Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40). There is certainly nothing

decent and orderly in such shenanigans. Often, instead of singing in such services, there is humming, whistling, repetitive sounds with their voices, and even mimic with their voice mechanical instruments of music. It seems that some brethren have lost all propriety of conduct in blindly following the latest trends of society at large. The New Testament specifically instructs us to sing by speaking. Ephesians 5:19 (this excludes humming, whistling, repetitive sounds with the voice, and imitating mechanical instruments

of music). We are also to teach and admonish “one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16). A person cannot do that by exercising the innovations already mentioned.

Brethren need to get back to pleasing the Lord in their worship rather than their sensual desires. Again, if we are to please the Heavenly Father, then we “must worship *him* in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

Deceased

Dealing with Anxiety

Paul Vaughn

The strain of living in the twenty-first century can bring discouragement and anguish to the soul of everyone. No one is exempt from the pain of living. It is as if the world is caught up in an explosive and destructive confusion. How do we handle the strains of living in the postmodern age of unbelief and humanism?

The only safe course to overcome the stress of society is looking to Jesus. He can help us live in a world of confusion. He is the solace that will help everyone overcome the storms of life. Jesus said, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me” (John 14:1). Listening to the teaching of Jesus with the intent of following those Words of life can and will encourage us during the storms of life.

The Words of Jesus teach us not to worry. Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what

you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? (Mat. 6:25-27).

It is incredibly comforting to know that God is always there looking over His children. The confusion of society leads to anxiety and distress, but trusting in God leads to peace and happiness. Jesus teaches all how to have this peace and happiness. It is written, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (6:33). The key to success is putting God first in our life, and then we can remove the anguish and pain we face daily.

Hopkinsville, KY

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with

Paul Vaughn

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| Rheba Stancliff | Carla Burleson |
| Bill Busch | Tina Foshee |
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| Heather Stark | |
| David Norris (Bill & Pam Busch's
brother-in-law) | |
| BillyTom Muldoon (Pam Busch's
cousin) | |
| Lauren Kreuz (Nancy Travis' niece) | |

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Bobbie LaBryer in the death of her brother, Johnny Ray Fleming, on September 12. Please keep Bobbie and her family in your prayers.

Please Remember

September 30

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.

October 4 - 8

Gospel Meeting with Paul Vaughn.

October 4

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October 11

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Christian Priorities

Paul Vaughn

Our priorities speak volumes about what is important in our lives. In discussing the essential and not essential things in life, it is essential to realize that everyone has priorities.

One of the major priorities covenanted by many people is material possessions. There is a constant race for money, and they cannot get enough of it. Sadly, people are greedier for money than they love God. Paul said:

For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of evil*, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows (1 Tim. 6:10).

An example of one who had great wealth and turned his back on God was the “Rich Young Ruler” (Mat. 19:16-26). He had his trust in possessions and not God. He was not

willing to sacrifice his wealth for God. Therefore, he turned his back on the Lord.

There are many other things that people put before the Lord; they are more personal than possessions. It could be a job. Everyone needs a job to support their family; if we do not support our family, it is a sin (1 Tim. 5:8). Yet, many times our occupation will take first place in our lives. Sadly, more people are working on getting on top of their profession and will not exert any effort to get to Heaven. Sometimes our family ties conflict with our responsibility to God. It is written:

He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me (Mat. 10:37-38).

Nothing should come between us and God, not even our family. This does not mean we should not love our family, but those who love God with all their heart will love their family even more.

Let us all take inventory of our lives and priorities. If the Lord is not our priority, we should take quick action to change our pri-

ority. Jesus said, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (6:33). Establishing spiritual priorities in our life is the most important thing we can do for ourselves and our families.

Hopkinsville, KY

No Religious Freedom

Bob Wear

Much has been spoken and written concerning religious freedom. I am happy that we who are citizens of these United States of America are granted and guaranteed the right to worship God as we please, and that many of the other nations have the same right. All governments should guarantee religious freedom to their people.

We are free to worship God as we please, and yet we are not free to do so. You and I are given religious freedom by our government, but God does not give us religious freedom. He does not permit us to worship Him as we please. He demands that we worship as He directs. According to the revelation of God, there is no religious freedom.

The teaching that we are free to worship God as we please and to join the church of our choice is quite contrary to the truth of God.

We cannot worship God acceptably unless we worship as He commands. Christ said, “But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men” (Mat. 15:9). He said on another occasion, “God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship

him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

We are not free to join the church of our choice. In the first place, the Lord has but one church. He said: “I will build my church” (Mat. 16:18). He said *church*, singular; not *churches*, plural. Christ is the head of the church, which is His body (Eph. 1:22-23). There is but one body (1 Cor. 12:20). The church is the body; therefore, there is but one church. It is impossible to have a choice when there is but one.

We must also remember that becoming a member of the church is not accomplished by joining, but we are added when we become a Christian by obeying the Gospel. God adds us to the church (Acts. 2:47).

As members of the church, we are not free to live as we please. We must live as God directs. We must be servants of God, completely submissive to His will.

After all, being a servant of the Most High God brings us the greatest freedom—freedom from the bondage of sin.

Deceased

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with

Paul Vaughn

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Lauren Kreuz (Nancy Travis' niece)	
Tia McLeod (Paul & Phyllis Brantley's daughter)	
Brenda Loy (Nancy Loy's sister-in- law)	

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Vaughn.

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The Word Is *Integrity*

Paul Vaughn

One of the characteristics missing from the heart of men today is **integrity**. There is always a need for men and women who are honest, upright in conduct, and sincere in their actions. Too often, the norm is deceit, pretense, or hypocrisy. The paramount tragedy is this characteristic is absent from the hearts of many Christians. Yet, faithful followers of Christ must be people of integrity! It is not a recommendation or suggestion; it is a requirement!

Integrity of Jesus

All one has to do is examine the life and teaching of Jesus, and you will see a man of integrity. The life of Jesus has been one of endless research. It is a study that brings great delight and is extremely important to those who desire to emulate the Master. His words are like jewels, precious, and valuable to the soul of man. His life was filled with sound

moral principles, uprightness, honesty, and sincerity. Jesus is the example for us to follow. “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (1 Pet. 2:21).

The integrity of Jesus is eminent in His teaching. The “Sermon on the Mount” is a panorama of proper conduct and honesty. If Christians follow the principles in this great sermon, they will be people of integrity. Jesus said, “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Mat. 7:12). Everyone demands honesty from the people around them. Honesty begins at home. If we desire honesty from the people around us, we must be honest with our dealings with them. People of integrity teach and practice the “Golden Rule.”

People of integrity are folks who keep their word. Jesus said, “But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil” (5:37). In the Psalms, David teaches about the importance of keeping your word. It is written that those who will dwell with God keep their word. “*He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not*” (Psa. 15:4). When you give your word, you keep it, even if it costs you to your hurt.

Integrity Towards God

In the teaching in the “Sermon on the Mount,” one is taught that Christians must be people of integrity in their actions and thoughts toward God. Christians cannot be honest and not wholeheartedly serve God.

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon (Mat. 6:24).

This very thing will rob Christians of the happiness and peace in the Christian life. They are not happy, nor do they have peace for their souls, because they have not been honest in their service toward God. Trying to enjoy the passing pleasures of this world and at the same time seeking to enjoy the peace that is found only in a faithful Christian life will make one miserable, depressed, discontented, hapless, and hopeless. They are not faithful in attendance at worship. They are not faithful in giving to the Lord. They are not faithful in their service. They want to go to Heaven, but at the same time, they want to play with the devil. Thus, Christians trying to ride the fence are some

of the most unhappy people in the world, all because of their lack of integrity.

Integrity with God demands honesty with His Word. Paul set his heart never to handle the Word of God deceitfully.

But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God (2 Cor. 4:2).

Paul was a man of integrity, acting without pretense, deceit, or hypocrisy. The church needs elders, preachers, and teachers who are honest with the Scriptures, leaders with integrity.

Integrity Towards Man

Integrity necessitates love for all men. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you (Mat. 5:43-44).

Love will keep the tongue from slanderous words. Love will keep our actions and thoughts upright and sincere.

Integrity towards man demands that the Great Commission be carried out to the fullest. “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). All men are lost in sin who have not obeyed the plan of salvation. Christians are not honest in their lives, sincere in their action if they do not love their neighbor enough to try to teach them about

Jesus and the need for faithful obedience. It is a matter of integrity!

Conclusion

We live in a pernicious time where men are trying to define down honesty and integrity. Goodness is not a virtue in many hearts today. The words that Isaiah spoke are pertinent to all who are trying to change that which is good to that which is evil.

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 (Isa. 5:20).

The word is integrity! Something that all Christians should hold dearly.

Hopkinsville, KY

Gospel Meeting
Lessons on the Internet
[http://www.bellviewcoc.com/
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Just for Today

Just for Today I will try to live through this day only and not tackle my whole life problem at once. I can do something for twelve hours that would appall me if I felt that I had to keep it up for a lifetime.

Just for Today I will be happy. This assumes to be true what Abraham Lincoln said, that “most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be.”

Just for Today I will adjust myself to what is, and not try to adjust everything to my own desires. I will take my *luck* as it comes and fit myself to it.

Just for Today I will try to strengthen my mind. I will study. I will learn something useful. I will not be a mental loafer. I will read something that requires effort, thought, and concentration.

Just for Today I will exercise my soul in three ways: I will do somebody a good turn and not get found out; if anybody knows of it, it will not count.

Just for Today I will do at least two things I do not want to do—just for exercise. I will

not show anyone that my feelings are hurt; they may be hurt, but today I will not show it.

Just for Today I will be agreeable. I will look as well as I can, dress becomingly, talk low, act courteously, criticize not one bit, not find fault with anything, and not try to improve or regulate anybody except myself.

Just for Today I will have a program. I may not follow it exactly, but I will have it. I will save myself from two pests: hurry and indecision.

Just for Today I will have a quiet half-hour all by myself and relax. During this half-hour, sometime, I will try to get a perspective of my life.

Just for Today I will be unafraid. Especially I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful, and to believe that as I give to the world, so the world will give to me.

Today is all I have, all I need, and all I can handle.

Author Unknown

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- | | |
|---|----------------|
| Marge Williams | Nancy Travis |
| Henry Hignite | Tim Busch |
| Rheba Stancliff | Carla Burleson |
| Bill Busch | Tina Foshee |
| Aleacia Godwin | Linda Parks |
| Nelda King | Dot Dodd |
| Heather Stark | |
| David Norris (Bill & Pam Busch's
brother-in-law) | |
| BillyTom Muldoon (Pam Busch's
cousin) | |
| Lauren Kreuz (Nancy Travis' niece) | |
| Tia McLeod (Paul & Phyllis
Brantley's daughter) | |
| Brenda Loy (Nancy Loy's sister-in-
law) | |
| Betty Podgursky (Bill & Peggy
Crowe's daughter) | |
| Anita Ware (Terri Myrick's mother) | |

Please Remember

October 11

Deacons' meeting will be held
prior to the afternoon service, in
room 1.

October 18

Visitation cards for Group 2 will
be handed out by Bill Crowe.

October 18

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be
held after the afternoon service,
in room 1.



BEACON

Vol. XLIX / No. 33

October 12, 2020

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Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Blessed Be the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Brad Green

We have much for which to be thankful. God is most deserving of our praise and adoration. “The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock; And let the God of my salvation be exalted” (Psa. 18:46).

The apostle Peter records three wonderful blessings that God bestows.

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you (1 Pet. 1:3-4).

First, we read of God’s abundant and overflowing mercy. The mercy of God is never ending and is like a freely flowing fountain that can be tasted by all who will obey God’s

commands. Jesus Christ “is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins* of the whole world” (1 John 2:2). Second, because of God’s mercy, He has given man a plan by which we can have hope. Many today place their hope in things of this world. Paul writes, “Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using” (Col. 2:21-22). The hope we should seek is a “lively hope.” That hope is eternal life (1 Pet. 1:4). If we seek a lively hope, we must have a faith that is not dead. “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.... Ye see then how that by works [**of obedience**] a man is justified, and not by faith only” (Jam. 2:17, 24). Third, we read that the hope of an incorruptible inheritance is only made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

That sacrifice exhibits the greatest love that man has ever known.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved (John 3:16-17).

Jesus states, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (15:13). The love of Christ is further exemplified in the fact that He died not just for the faithful, but also for those who were in sin.

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God

commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:6-8).

The mercy, hope, and love of God are indeed blessings worthy of our thanksgiving and praise. We can show forth our honor to God by simply obeying His Word. Jesus says, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14). God's love, in sending His Son and making a path to reconciliation through Jesus' blood, has made mercy and hope possible for all. However, only those who will humbly submit to God's will, and by faith (Heb. 11:6), repent (Luke 13:3), confess (Acts 8:37), be baptized (2:38), and live faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10), shall enjoy these grand blessings in Heaven.

Lenoir City, TN

Giving Up

Tim Smith

The surest way to fail is to give up. Just quit. Stop. Cease and desist. That removes all danger—danger of succeeding, anyway. Many people quit every day. They just give up. They decide that things are too tough, that times are too hard, that it is not worth the effort. Why? What is it that makes so many give up on the right way of living and turn to an inferior life?

What if Moses had quit? Would we be studying the Law of Moses today? And what about Daniel? If he had taken the pragmatic course and prayed to the king as well as Jehovah, would his story be inspiring our young people in Bible class today? What if Ruth had

gone her own way? What if Noah would have found so great a task unworthy of the effort? What if Joshua had turned back at Jordan? What if Solomon, in a moment of remorse for his wickedness, had abdicated? What if Jesus would have been thwarted by the Sadducees and Pharisees? What if Peter would have quit over the guilt of denying His Lord?

Those men and women had it bad, but they did not quit. I look to them for inspiration often. Given all the facts, quitting looks good sometimes. Discouragement sets in and takes root and hope seems slim and help is hard to come by and many times I have almost thrown up my hands and walked

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away. Then I think of those who went before and wonder how many of them stood where I stand and decided not to quit. I think sometimes of those who did quit—but, of course, we know nothing of most quitters, for they leave no noteworthy mark behind them.

When you are standing on the brink of defeat know this: the world appreciates one who loses with class much more than one who tucks tail and runs from the confronta-

tion. I am familiar with the old axiom, “Discretion is the better part of valor,” but I also know that he that is faithful unto the end shall receive the crown (cf. Rev. 2:10). Which will it be for you? Will you quit or will you finish? May God Bless You as You Study and Obey His Word.

Deceased

God’s Plan of Salvation

Hear	Romans 10:17
Believe	Mark 16:16
Repent.....	Luke 13:3, 5
Confess.....	Romans 10:9-10
Baptism	Acts 2:38
Be Faithful.....	1 Corinthians 15:58

The Church of Christ

Origin	Builder ~ Jesus Christ *** Mat. 16:18 Place ~ Jerusalem *** Isa. 2:2-3; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 1:8; 2:5,14 Time ~ c. AD 33 *** Dan. 2:44-45; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 24:49
Faith	Creed ~ Jesus is the Christ *** Mat. 3:17; 16:16; 17:5 Belief ~ the Son of God *** John 3:16; 4:26; 8:24; 10:36; 20:30-31 Discipline ~ the New Testament *** 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21
Doctrine	Hear ~ Mat. 13:9; 17:5; Acts 15:7; 18:8; Rom. 10:13-17 Believe ~ John 8:24; 20:30-31; 2 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 11:6 Repent ~ Luke 13:3,5; 24:46-47; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Pet. 3:9 Confess ~ Mat. 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Tim. 6:12-13 Baptism ~ Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 8:38-39; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4
Practice	Worship ~ 5 items *** Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 14:15; 16:1-2; Col. 3:16 Name ~ His church *** Mat. 16:18; Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:20,27 His followers *** Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16

“the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved”
Acts 2:47

Author Unknown

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Anita Ware (Terri Myrick's mother)	
Paulette Owens (Sheila Myrick's relative)	

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family of Henry Hignite, who passed away on October 5. Henry was baptized into Christ in March 2014, at the age of 78. He had been contacted during a door-knocking campaign and afterwards started attending services. Please keep Henry's family in your prayers.

Please Remember

October 18

Visitation cards for Group 2 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

October 18

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Refutation of the False Doctrine of the “Sinner’s Prayer”

Guy N. Woods

According to the Baptist view, the order of, and conditions essential to, salvation are: (1) repentance; (2) faith. Repentance is a change of mind, produced by sorrow for sin, and leading to a reformation of life. Essentially, repentance is simply a *change of mind* (for so the word *metanoia*, translated “repentance,” signifies), sorrow for sin merely being a condition precedent to it, and reformation of life, the result thereof. What produces a change of mind (i.e., attitude of heart) in the sinner? In a word, all the factors involved in the scheme of redemption. The sinner, through contemplation of his lost condition, is led from feelings of gratitude for the provisions made for him to decide to turn from rebellion against God to humble and complete obedience to him. From what source

does he derive information touching his lost condition, and where does he learn of the provisions thus made in his behalf? From the Scriptures, of course. What prompts him to act upon the impressions obtained in this manner? **His confidence in the reliability of the facts and principles presented!** But is not this confidence he now enjoys in the sacred writings nothing more nor less than faith? It is indeed, and without it there can be no repentance. Furthermore, it is the acceptance of the facts presented that leads him **to desire to repent!** Faith, then, **must** precede repentance. Faith enables the sinner to repent—in fact, prompts the desire. **Without faith the sinner cannot repent; without faith he would not if he could.** As irresistible and conclusive as these facts are, they are,

nevertheless, in hopeless conflict with Baptist doctrine. Why? The basic assumption of their doctrine is **the dogma of salvation by faith only**. They insist that the sinner is saved at the very instant of belief, before and without additional acts of obedience. With such a position it becomes clear that they cannot place repentance **after** faith in their scheme; to do so they would have the sinner “saved” before and without repentance! Thus **to get repentance in their “plan of salvation” at all, they must place it before faith!** Such an arrangement is illogical, unscriptural, and psychologically impossible. It is, however, but the inevitable consequence of their false theory regarding the plan of salvation. An absurdity growing out of their basic error in this matter, it is the fruit of an effort to be consistent in error while clinging tenaciously to a false premise—viz, that salvation is conditioned upon faith only in the Scriptures.

They face a similar difficulty in their position regarding an alien sinner’s prayer. While

it is a tenet of their doctrine that God will hear and answer the prayer of an alien sinner, their position thereon makes such psychologically impossible. In their view, faith and salvation are concurrent—i.e., the moment the sinner believes, he ceases to be an alien—is saved. Manifestly, then, he cannot pray as an alien **after faith**, for he is, according to their conception, no longer an alien. If, therefore, he prays as an alien sinner, it must be before he believes. It is, however, psychologically impossible to pray without faith; moreover, such is displeasing to God (Heb. 11:6). Thus, since an alien cannot pray before he believes, and since Baptist doctrine has it that he is no longer an alien after believing, their doctrine makes it logically and psychologically impossible for an alien sinner to pray **any time! Yet it is of the very essence of their doctrine that an alien sinner must pray in order to receive salvation.**

Questions and Answers Open Forum 249-250

Deceased

Being Subject to the Higher Powers

Ken Chumbley

In Romans 13, the apostle Paul tells the Christians at Rome and, indeed, all Christians that they are to “be subject unto the higher powers” (13:1). This means Christians are to be obedient to the civil government under which they live.

In verse 5 of the same chapter, the Apostle gives two different motives as to why Christians are to be subject to those higher powers.

The first motive is one that includes the aspect of fear of punishment. The Christian is to be obedient “for wrath.” That is, for fear of the wrath of the government being brought to bear against the lawbreaker. The fear of punishment is indeed a strong motive for not violating the law. However, when the possibility of punishment is light, or the punishment that is meted out is inadequate for

the crime, then this motive of fearing the wrath of the authorities is lessened. Today, sadly, we find that this is often the case. Those who commit crime, even serious crime, get off with a light sentence—if, indeed, any real punishment is meted out at all. As a result, there is a lack of respect for authority in many of our communities—whether it be children in school, or among adults. When there is a lack of adequate punishment for wrongdoing, there is a corresponding increase in the crime that is committed. When little or no discipline is imposed in our schools, children have no respect for those in authority.

A second motive that Paul offers for our being in subjection is “for conscience sake” (13:5). This means that the conscience of the child of God is trained in accordance with the will of God, and that teaches him that he is to be obedient to the laws of the land. Sometimes that may mean complying with laws that we do not like. However, unless they violate the will of God (Acts 5:29), we are to obey all laws. If, however, we do not like a particular law, we have the privilege of working within the framework of the law to get that law changed. Congressmen and Senators can be contacted, as well as local government officials. Indeed, oftentimes in the local context one may appear at the meeting of the ruling body—whether it be the city or

county government, or the school board. However, in the first century, Christians who lived under the rule of the Roman Emperor did not have the freedom that we enjoy today in being able to get laws changed through democratic means—but they were still called upon to obey the laws of the land. As Christians, we need to set the right example before our children, and also before our friends and neighbors.

This dual motive also would direct the Christian to pay taxes and customs duties which are enacted by the various branches of government in order that it may carry out its God-given functions, for indeed, “the powers that be are ordained of God” (Rom. 13:1). We may not like paying taxes or customs duties, but they are necessary for the functioning of our communities. If taxes are too high or are being used for things that we do not believe they should be used for—then again, we can work within the framework of the law to seek to bring about a reduction in taxes, or the passing of legislation that would prohibit the use of the funding of certain activities with the use of tax dollars.

Let us then always “be subject unto the higher powers” as we are taught.

Deceased

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Sermon Outlines

The majority of the lessons presented by Michael Hatcher are also in written outline form (PDF). The PDF files can be accessed on our website at:

[http://www.bellviewcoc.com/
sermons-archives.html](http://www.bellviewcoc.com/sermons-archives.html)

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Paulette Owens (Sheila Myrick's relative)	

Please Remember

November 1

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.

November 8

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

Beacon

The October 19, 2020, issue of *Beacon* will not be printed. The office has been closed due to COVID. The *Beacon* will resume publication with this issue.



BEACON

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November 2, 2020

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The Command to Read and Study the Bible

Charles Pogue

God has given His laws to Man. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to chosen men, those laws have been written down for us all. God gave Moses His commands on two tables of stone. They were written by the finger of God (Exo. 31:18). God commanded all the words of His law to be read, including by the human king when the children of Israel reached the land of Canaan and demanded one (Deu. 17:18-19). Over and over God commanded His law to be read. For instance, we read in Deuteronomy 31:11: “when all Israel is come to appear before Jehovah thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing.”

In Jesus’ dealings with the Jews, six times it is recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke of Him posing the question, “Have ye not read?” (Mat. 12:3, 5; 19:4; 22:31; Mark 12:10,

26; Luke 6:3). From the time Moses received the law until the hundreds of years later when Christ walked on the earth, God’s command to read the law was still in force. In Acts 8 when Philip joined the Ethiopian in his chariot, the man was reading from Isaiah 53. Acts 18:28 informs us that Paul convinced the Jews from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. Jesus died on the cross removing the old law, yet reading the Old Testament is still of value to us today (Rom. 15:4).

The apostles and others were chosen by God and inspired by the Holy Spirit to write the New Testament Scriptures. They wrote for the purpose of which Paul informed the Ephesians:

For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus in behalf of you Gentiles,—if so be that ye have heard of the dispensation of that grace of God which was

given me to you-ward; how that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ; which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; *to wit*, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel (Eph. 3:1-6).

We have the New Testament, the will of Jesus Christ, and are commanded to study (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 2:2) that we might grow thereby. Paul's prayer for the Colossians, among other things, was that they would increase in the knowledge of God. Paul closed the letter to the Colossians with the instructions that when the epistle was read, it be passed on to the Laodiceans to read and the Colossians read the letter from Laodicea. God gave instructions to those who lived under the old law to read it, and He gives

instructions to us who live under the law of Christ to read and study it.

It is very difficult to understand why members of the body of Christ fail to read and study their New Testaments. We ought to be studying both Old and New Testaments, but countless numbers bother with neither. Many fine sermons have been delivered wherein we were encouraged to read our Bibles daily. Some shouted an "amen" while the covers of their Bibles remained coated with dust. Not only are they depriving themselves of the knowledge they need to live lives faithful to Jesus Christ, they are ignoring the command God has always had for His people—read my Law!

Beeville, TX

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A New Weapon of War

G. K. Wallace

The sword of the Spirit has been exchanged for the spirit of the sword—a new weapon indeed. Paul said, "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). The sword given by the Spirit to be wielded as an offensive weapon is the Word of God. This sword is not the spirit of the Word, but the Word which is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16). This Word

of God is "shaper than any twoedged sword" (Heb. 4:12).

There is a vast difference between using the sword of the Spirit and the spirit of the sword. We should take the Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit, and fight with the spirit of Christ. The new modernist tells us we cannot depend upon the literal Word of God but must always be governed

by the spirit of the Word. They have thrown the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit, away as useless and have issued various and sundry “spirits of the sword” in the form of their own opinions. These so-called scholars, who tell us we ought to go by the spirit of the Word and not the letter of the law, find themselves in brawls and are constantly embittered against each other. Their success seems to be only in defeating one another. In one point, however, they all agree and that is their fight against any and all who believe in being governed by what God has said.

This effort to get people to leave the Word of God and what it says for the so-called spirit of the Word is not broadmindedness, but narrowness. Very few, including the philosophers, can unite on this basis. Paul says we walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:17). A religion of faith is based upon the Word of God. “Faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). We are plainly instructed to walk by the Word of God and not by the so-called spirit of the Word of God. The so-called spirit of the Word, upon which the modernists ask us to unite, is purely an intellectual thing—an inference. It requires men to be well-trained in logic and philosophy to state what they are saying. It then requires just as much logic and philosophy to understand what they have said.

This so-called spirit of the Word or the spirit of the sword is not only narrow, it is too weak. The cords of opinions so freely tied together by the modern philosopher cannot bind men’s hearts in Christian love. The only

real basis of unity is the facts of the Gospel as revealed in the Gospel (2 John 9). Nearly all preachers, priests, and rabbis acknowledge the same Gospel facts. Every notable fact in the Bible is so plain and evident from the record that no one accepting the record can mistake the fact. The record of God, however, is set aside for what they call the spirit of the Word. The spirit of the Word, according to them, is actually the spirit of the interpreter.

We must remember that learning how to become a Christian and how to live a Christian life is not a difficult task. Jesus said, “Go...preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:15-16). The apostles went out across the nations of their time preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ to men and women who were unschooled and unlearned, and the masses were able to understand the Gospel and become Christians. Jesus did not say preach the Gospel only to university presidents and college graduates. Many of the heathen could neither read or write, but they could understand what to do to be saved. The apostolic preachers were not so much interested in what the world calls the spirit of the sword as they were in wielding the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. The Word of God was preached with power and conviction to the great body of people of their day as contrasted with the elite (Mat. 28:19-20). The Word of God does not need explaining nearly so much as it needs proclaiming.

Deceased

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Paulette Owens (Sheila Myrick's relative)	
Matthew Dawson (Linda Park's nephew)	

Please Remember

November 15

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November 15

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Defender and Beacon

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Can Sinners Pray?

Batsell Baxter

The “mourners’ bench” has caused a great deal of confusion in religious circles. People who are not children of God have been admonished to get down at the bench and pray for pardon. Preachers have told them that if they would pray long enough God would save them from their sins; also, that after they are saved from their sins, as Christians they can pick out the church they want to belong to and be baptized or sprinkled into it.

A Pernicious Doctrine

This is a very dangerous doctrine. For one reason, it holds out a false hope—a hope that calm people who are not easily excited realize can never be attained. Thus, some people have gone through life hoping for a good inside feeling as evidence that their sins were pardoned. They realize that such a feeling

has never come to them. So, they feel that God does not want them.

Hinders Obedience

The person who believes that he can pray his way into the kingdom of God is naturally not inclined to obey commands to be saved from his past sins. He is taught that salvation is by prayer and grace and not by obedience. This false teaching keeps him from obeying the commands of the Lord. He believes he can be saved without it.

Belittles Obedience

Belief in the “mourners’ bench” as a way of pardon causes an alien sinner to reject baptism. The sinners at Pentecost were told to be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). The penitent Saul of Tarsus at Damascus was told: “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (22:16). The man who believes he

can pray his way into the kingdom of God does not understand this command. He thinks baptism is a nonessential. The idea of praying one's way into the kingdom of the Lord contradicts the plain statement of the Lord. Jesus said: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Mat. 7:21).

Obedience Essential

Jesus said:

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it (7:24-27).

Jesus meant what He said, and all the preachers in the world cannot change it. Saul of Tarsus, Lydia, and Cornelius were all outside the kingdom of God. In each case

God's preacher found them praying. He did not say: "Pray on." He told them to be baptized.

Turning from His Law

Anybody, saint or sinner, who turns away from God's law and refuses to obey it puts himself in a dangerous position. Even the child of God cannot have his prayer heard if he sets himself against the law of God. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, Even his prayer *shall* be abomination" (Pro. 28:9). It is a dangerous thing to preach something to people that causes them to turn away from hearing the commands of God. This general principle has been true under every dispensation of God's dealing with man.

A Prayerful Spirit

The alien sinner—the man who has never become a child of God—cannot pray his way into the kingdom. He cannot substitute prayer for obedience, but as he obeys the Lord, he can do so in a prayerful spirit every step of the way. However, the very moment that he stops and refuses to obey a command of the Lord he is turning away his ear from hearing the law. Christians need an admonition here. We are God's children. With us prayer opens the door to God's throne of mercy, and Jesus intercedes for us (Heb. 4:15-16); but by the stubbornness of our hearts in refusing to obey some command of the Lord we can close that door until we get rid of our stubbornness and obey the command. Let us as Christians be careful that our prayer is not an abomination to God.

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What the World Needs Now... Is More Weeping Prophets!

Andrew Connally

Jeremiah has long been recognized as the “weeping prophet” because of his lamentations for Israel and Judah. Jesus wept over Jerusalem and no doubt countless other prophets of old and preachers of today have cried over the sins of the city. But as these great men of God wept, they also *cried* out concerning the sins they beheld! Notice, “have spoken unto you, rising up early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened (Jer. 25:3). And again:

And Jehovah hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, (but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear), saying, Return ye now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that Jehovah hath given unto you and to your fathers, from of old and even for evermore; and go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with the work of your hands; and I will do you no hurt. Yet ye have not hearkened unto me (25:4-7).

Jeremiah had become so discouraged with the wickedness of his brethren and their refusal to hear. He thought that he would

shut up the Word of the Lord and speak or make mention of His name, but it burned like a fire, and he grew weary with his silence (20:9). He had to speak!

The shepherds of Jeremiah’s day were responsible for scattering the sheep by refusing to visit them and God promised vengeance on such elders (23:1-3). Elders today can be busy as a proverbial “cranberry merchant” and never do the work of elders—visit, counsel, guide, and succor the sheep. They, too, shall pay a terrible price for their negligence.

God pronounced a curse on all those who are negligent and who keep their sword back from blood in the service of the great king (4:8-10). Oh, that such words would jar us out of our complacency, compromise, and conformity, and make us weep for the slain of our people!

Yes, what the world needs now is more weeping prophets dedicated to restoring the Will of God in our lives and spreading the kingdom of God on this earth. Men and women who wield the Sword of the Spirit to separate us from idols. The idols of materialism, sensualism, negativism, liberalism, and procrastination. These are damning multitudes in the valley of decision and causing great men of God to weep for they see the patterns of history being repeated. Let us arise and weep, but let us cry too!

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Who is the “Man of God”?

R. L. Whiteside

A prepositional phrase attached to a noun greatly limits the application of the nouns; and sometimes such an expression, by usage, is restricted to a more limited meaning than the phrase itself would seem to indicate. Such is true of the phrase, *man of God*.

We are likely to assume that any man who served God would have been called *man of God*, but not so. This term appears twice in the New Testament, both times in Paul's letters to Timothy—1 Timothy 6:11 and 2 Timothy 3:17. The term occurs not less than seventy-five times in the Old Testament, and always refers to a prophet or a public teacher of God's law. It was never applied to a man just because he was a servant of God.

This fact gives us additional light on what is said in 2 Timothy 3:16-17:

Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.

The Primitive Baptists, thinking that *man of God* meant any regenerated or saved man used to make an argument on these verses. If you quoted the passage to one, he would reply, “Of course the Scriptures thoroughly furnish the man of God unto every good work, but do not furnish the unregenerated man anything—he is not a man of God, and cannot even understand the Scriptures.” If you still think *man of God* refers to any Christian, how would you answer him? But they were mistaken in their use of the phrase. A man of God was a prophet, a teacher of God's Word—a man to direct people aright.

Teaching

Is a preacher thoroughly equipped for the work he should do? What is his work? If he is really engaged in the work of the Lord, he seeks to convert sinners and to edify saints. For that work the scriptures furnish him with everything he needs. To become Christians, people must be taught. The Scriptures are profitable for teaching—in teaching sinners, the preacher needs nothing else. In teaching sinners the preacher should have a definite purpose, and should therefore teach the sinner the things he needs to know. He needs to be made to realize that he is a sinner and needs salvation. It is the business of the man of God to do that essential thing. But what shall he use to accomplish that work? The Scriptures are profitable for teaching.

Reproof

The Scriptures are profitable for reproof. The Greeks had two words for reproof, but there was difference between them. One simply meant to reprove or rebuke with no implications as to results. The other meant to so reprove a person as to make him realize his guilt—that is the word here. Hence, the Scriptures are profitable for conviction. They so teach a sinner as to bring him to a knowledge of his sinfulness.

Jesus said of the Holy Spirit: “And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin” (John 16:8-11). In this Scripture we have in the Greek the verb form of the word which in 2 Timothy 3:16 is translated *reproof*. Hence, the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures (the Word of the Holy Spirit) convict sinners. That does not mean there are

two methods of conviction. There is one method; the Scriptures are the words of the Holy Spirit—these words convict sinners.

Correction

But to convict a man he is a lost sinner, and offer him no way of escape, only adds to his misery. The Scriptures, the written words of the Holy Spirit, do not therefore stop with conviction. They are profitable for correction.

Correction in contrast to *conversion* is specific; *conversion* means simply a change from one thing to another, whether for the better or for the worse. But to correct a person is to get him out of the wrong way into the right way. A person may be converted from one wrong doctrine or way to another wrong doctrine or way, but that is not correction. To correct him is to set him right—to put him in the right way. David expresses the same idea in other words, “The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul” (Psa. 19:7).

Instruction in Righteousness

To restore anything is to get it back to where it belongs—back to its proper place. But to correct man, or, what is the same, to restore him to his right place, and then leave him without any further guidance, is of no benefit. For it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps.

The person therefore who has been corrected and restored to the right way needs to know how to live right. The Scriptures fill that need—they are profitable for instruction in righteousness. “Thy word is a lamp

unto my feet, And a light unto my path” (119:105).

So the Scriptures thoroughly furnish the preacher teacher with everything he needs in teaching people, convicting them of sin, correcting them, and instructing them in the right way. Thus equipped, he is complete, furnished completely unto every good work. If a preacher seeks to inject some of his own wisdom and inventions into his work, he is

lacking in faith. The Bible is complete; any addition to that which is complete makes it incomplete, no longer exactly fitted to do the thing it was designed to do. Man may know many things, but he will never know as much as God knows. He should not seek to deify himself by following his own ways.

Deceased

Why Am I Not a Christian?

1. Is it because I am afraid of ridicule? “For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed” (Luke 9:26).
2. Is it because of the inconsistencies of professing Christians? “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12).
3. Am I unwilling to give up all for Christ? “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36).
4. Am I afraid I shall not be accepted? “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37).
5. Is it for fear I am too great a sinner? “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).
6. Is it for fear I shall not be able to hold out? “He which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phi. 1:6; see also 1 Cor. 10:13).
7. Am I thinking that I will just do as well as I can and that God ought to be satis-

fied with that? “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all” (Jam. 2:10).

8. Is it because I am postponing the matter without any definite reason? “Boast not thyself of to morrow; For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Pro. 27:1).

Author Unknown

Young People We Like

Young people of backbone.
Young people who are unselfish.
Young people who are teachable.
Young people who can say “no.”
Young people who are not fidgety.
Young people who do not know it all.
Young people who are utterly frank.
Young people who delight to “lift up.”
Young people who live in the sunshine.
Young people who are never behind time.
Young people whose religious zeal grows.

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The Church at Work

Bob Wear

We read much concerning the church and its mission in the world. The church is the institution in which we glorify God, and there is no other institution in the world in which people can glorify God. The institution that Christ built, the institution of which He is the head, the institution we know as the church of Christ is the one and only spiritual body on earth. Read with me Ephesians 3:21: “Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.” The church of the Lord is the institution in which we must glorify God.

The responsibility resting upon the church is great indeed. The advancement of the cause of Christ depends entirely upon the Lord’s church, and we, individual Christians, are the church. Our responsibility is brought very near when we read Matthew 5:13:

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

This language was spoken specifically to the disciples there with Jesus, but we learn from this lesson the relationship that we as Christians bear to the world of lost and dying men and women. People in the world who are without Christ are dependent upon us for the story of Christ. We must carry the Gospel story to those who are living out of Christ. The work of foreign missionaries is necessary, and I bow in humble respect to those who are willing to deny themselves the comforts of the homeland to go and carry the story of Christ to other nations. There is, however, missionary work to be done in our own country, even in our own community.

I know of many communities where the Gospel story is not known, and many of these communities are within a few miles of large congregations, but the churches, many of them, seem to be in a self-satisfied state of doing nothing much. They have magnificent meetinghouses, some of which have been built at the expense of neglecting to preach

the Gospel. When we have to neglect to have the Gospel preached to build a meetinghouse of magnificent proportions, we are not doing as the Lord would have us do. The congregations in rural communities have a hard time. They very seldom have any leadership, or capable teachers. They are not able to pay a preacher, and if the larger congregations do not help them, they are truly in a sad condition. I cannot understand how large congregations with capable men can calmly stand by and, by their actions, say to their weaker sister congregations: "Swim or drown."

Let us awake and be about the Lord's work. Some of us might very well be in the class spoken of by Amos: "Woe to them *that are* at ease in Zion" (Amos 6:1). There is an old song we sing: "Shall I be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease, while others fought to win the prize and sailed through bloody seas?" We have much work to do, and we must ever be up and doing. What has the Gospel of Christ done for you? What blessings have you received? Does it mean anything to you that Christ died for you? We must tell the good news and let us remember that the harvest is truly great and the laborers few. Let those of us who are members of the larger congregations see to it that we sow the seed in the territory surrounding us, and by all means help our weak sister congregations. These small rural churches welcome assistance, and it seems to add new life to them. In the name of our God and Father let us "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with

17 Secrets to Success

1. Keep your temper to yourself.
2. Give your enthusiasm to everybody.
3. Be yourself, forget yourself, and become genuinely interested in the other guy.
4. Be fair, honest, friendly—you will be admired and liked.
5. Make other people feel important.
6. Count your assets and stamp out self-pity.
7. Meet the other person at his/her own level.
8. Put your smile power to work.
9. Keep moving.
10. Keep trying.
11. Give the gift of heart.
12. Get off to a good start in anything you do.
13. Forgive yourself if you fail.
14. Be lavish with kindness.
15. Overwhelm people with your charm, not your power.
16. Keep your promises.
17. Be an optimist.

Author Unknown

patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith.” Let us keep in mind that the promise of eternal life is to those who endure to the end. The power of the church is not in splendid buildings or great assemblies, or temporal fame and power, it is in the character and lives of its members. Do we love the Lord?

Let us be about His work. Consider prayerfully the thought of the following:

And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it (Mat. 10:38-39).

Deceased

Singing for the Baptizing

George W. DeHoff

A baptismal service is a beautiful service. It is a picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It is a burial of the old man of sin and a resurrection of the new and living man to walk in Christ. Seeing a baptismal service is worth as much as hearing a sermon. For that reason many congregations take thought that their children be seated where they may see the baptizing.

Baptizings are also made more impressive by the singing of fine Gospel songs, such as: “O Happy Day,” “Buried with Christ,” “Take My Life and Let It Be,” and similar songs. But how many times have all Gospel preachers come into the water with a candidate only to have the leader suddenly stop in the

middle of a verse and attempt by a wave of the hand to stop the congregation while various ones stopped and left a few stragglers to catch on belatedly! Such a leader should sing to the end of the stanza. It will not injure the preacher and the sinner to stand in the water a few seconds longer. What kind of impression is left on the visitor who witnesses such a performance? Are we singing just to fill up time, or do we really intend to add to the service, teach, and admonish? Why have a baptizing amid the giggles of those who are amused by the sudden stop in the singing? (And who can blame the children and the uninformed for giggling and laughing and the informed for being deeply pained by the ignorance of those responsible for such conduct?) Yes, brethren, either sing to the end of the stanza or never start it in the first place. It is sometimes in order to stop just before singing a chorus when a trained leader knows how to stop his audience, but it is never in order to break off in the middle of a sentence.

Deceased

Sermon Outlines

The majority of the lessons presented by Michael Hatcher are also in written outline form (PDF). The files can be accessed on our website at:

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Two Brethren Who Took the Risk to Defend the Gospel: Our Challenge!

Johnny Oxendine

We know that Peter and John, two ambassadors of Jesus Christ, were arrested and put on trial before the Jewish court known as the Sanhedrin. Though they were questioned by the priests, the captain of the temple, and Annas the High Priest, the Bible records that these men were amazed

when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13).

Shortly afterward Peter and John were released by their captors, but they were threatened not to speak any more about Jesus Christ. The apostles immediately went back to their preaching and were arrested again and put in prison, where an angel of God

released them and said, “Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life” (5:20).

Early the next morning Peter and John were again found preaching and were again arrested and brought before the Jewish court. The High Priest reminded them that they had been strictly commanded not to teach or preach the words of Jesus anymore. Peter simply said, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (5:29).

Peter was respectful and courteous, but his convictions could not be silenced by the threat of violence. The Jewish council wanted to kill Peter and John, but on the advice of a Pharisee named Gamaliel the apostles were beaten and released. “So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that

they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name” (5:41).

In the process of time many of the first century Christians were put to death by the Roman government—Nero dipped Christians in oil and set them afire in his garden as torches at night. These early Christian were not told to participate in protest marches against the government, nor set up picket lines in front of government office buildings. They were to humbly and meekly go about their task—but they were never to give in to violence, nor were they willing to sacrifice their convictions in the process.

Today, it is almost unimaginable to live with the risk that was absorbed by the apostles and early Christians. In the world today we are seeing more and more brethren content to *put their time in* with an appearance on Sunday mornings. Fewer still will commit to teaching Bible classes and the thought of anyone but the preacher teaching someone

at their home is preposterous—yet, we all want to be with Peter and John.

In the United States we have seen the tide of liberal thought creep into what had been sound conservative congregations. Its appearance is not in the form of hair-raising doctrine of the Jeff Walling variety, but rather of the tolerance for false teaching and false doctrine that comes through the Tahoe Family Encampment, Jonathan Jones II, Phil Sanders, and Dave Miller. It has been reported that the church in the Philippines is rapidly falling under the influence of the liberal brethren from the United States. Many more of them now are implementing instrumental music into worship, and others are being inundated with the doctrine of Holy Spirit baptism by the likes of Mac Deaver and his cronies. If men do not stand for the truth worldwide it will be felt for many generations. Obey God rather than men!

San Mateo, CA

We Have to Teach Repentance When We Preach the Gospel

We have continued to stress the importance of repentance. We really cannot preach the Gospel without it. Repentance was part of the fundamental message which after the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus was to be sounded out to Jews and Gentiles in every nation.

And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of

Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, 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 24:44-47).

The apostle Paul, while standing on Mars Hill and preaching to the Athenians, said:

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will

When I Read the Bible Through

Amos R. Wells

I suppose I knew my Bible,
Reading piecemeal, hit or miss,
Now a bit of John or Matthew,
Now a snatch of Genesis,
Certain chapters of Isaiah,
Certain Psalms (the twenty-third),
Twelfth of Romans, first of Proverbs—
Yes, I thought I knew the Word!
But I found that thorough reading
Was a different thing to do,
And the way was unfamiliar
When I read the Bible through.
You who like to play at Bible,
Dip and dabble, here and there,
Just before you kneel, a weary,
And yawn through a hurried prayer,
You who treat the crown of writings
As you treat no other book—
Just a paragraph disjointed,
Just a crude, impatient look—
Try a worthier procedure,
Try a broad and steady view;
You will kneel in very rapture
When you read the Bible through.

Deceased

judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead (Acts 17:30-31).

The apostle Peter, writing in 2 Peter 3:9, said:

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

What is repentance, and why is it so important? Repentance is a turning. In relation to one's spiritual condition, it is turning from sin and the pursuit of sin and turning to God and the pursuit of righteousness. It is the change of mind that causes one to forsake living in and for sin and to desire to live for God and in accordance with His will.

Repentance is brought about through the hearing of the Gospel (Luke 24:44-47). When people hear the Gospel and truly believe its message, repentance, a change of life, takes place. The Word causes one to come face to face with his true identity. Hearing the Gospel brings about repentance because when the Word is received into a good and honest heart, it produces godly sorrow which leads to repentance (2 Cor. 7:10). Godly sorrow makes one become repulsed at sin. It makes him desire to become a servant of righteousness (Rom. 6:17-18). Jesus said that unless we repent, we will likewise perish (Luke 13:5)!

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God's Way Works; Man's Does Not

Brad Green

Naaman was a captain in the Syrian army, “a great man with his master, and honourable,...he was also a mighty man in valour, **but he was a leper**” (2 Kin. 5:1). Leprosy is a slowly progressing, incurable and highly infectious skin disease. It would begin as a rash or other topical skin disorder but would continue to destroy the skin and also result in loss of bone mass and deformities. Israelites who contracted the disease were cast out of the camp, quarantined, and considered unclean (Lev. 13:44-46). For a mighty man of valor, such as Naaman, leprosy was indeed a devastating and life-changing development.

The only way to depose the leprosy was by means of a miracle. After hearing of Naaman's plight, Elisha calls for Naaman to come to him that Naaman “shall know that there is a prophet in Israel” (2 Kin. 5:8). Naaman

was commanded to “go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean” (5:10). God's way was simple and complete. Naaman's leprosy would be totally healed and his skin returned to health by simply obeying the word of God. Instead, Naaman “turned and went away in a rage” (5:12). Naaman was expecting something more from the prophet of God—some grandiose show or performance, or at the least, the option to wash in a much cleaner or nicer body of water than the Jordan River. Naaman's way was to reject the Word of God and walk away. Naaman's way led him to remain a leper, unclean, and sure to be overtaken and killed by his disease. Fortunately for Naaman, one of his servants talked some sense into him and convinced Naaman to dip “himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man

of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean” (5:14).

Many today are waiting for some grand sign or vision to come to them to prove they are saved. They are spiritual lepers, plagued by sin, who have rejected the Word of God to follow the ways of some denomination. Sadly, many sincere individuals still wait, remaining in sin and doomed to spiritual death (Rom. 6:23), instead of obeying the simple plan provided by God in His Word—Hear (Rom. 10:17), Believe (Heb. 11:6), Repent (Acts 2:38), Confess (Rom. 10:9-10),

and be baptized to have past sins washed away (Acts 22:16). Be cleansed of your spiritual leprosy today. Just as Naaman was cleansed from his leprosy by obeying God’s Word and dipping beneath the waters of the Jordan River, you too can be cleansed from sin by obeying God’s Word and being dipped into the watery grave of baptism. As Naaman arose from that water pure and clean, you too can arise from baptism “a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). God’s way works.

Lenoir City, TN

How Do You View the Bible?

Truly there is no book like the inspired Word of God! Its contents have been microscopically attacked as no other book. Many have thought they could rid the world of this Sacred volume by literally burning it, others have belittled and ridiculed the book Divine in an effort to destroy its life changing message, yet it has endured! Jesus said of God’s Word: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away” (Mat. 24:35). Peter too emphasized the indestructibility of God’s Word.

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by

the gospel is preached unto you (1 Pet. 1:23-25).

The Bible is the vehicle, the only vehicle, God uses to convict and convert lost souls (Mark 16:15-6; Acts 2; Rom. 10:9-17), and it furnishes spiritual food for the Christian’s growth (1 Pet. 2:2). Therefore, when one refuses to study the Bible or when one rejects any or all of the inspired Word of God, they are cutting themselves off from God’s only source of communication to man! There are many differences between the Lord’s church (the church of Christ) and the denominational world. However, the one area around which everything revolves is our attitude towards the Word of God! Faithful brethren have always viewed the Bible in the following light:

The inspired Word of God “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* pro-

fitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Containing everything man needs for salvation:

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue (2 Pet. 1:3).

Authoritative:

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him (Col. 3:17).

The final revelation to man:

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, 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).

It will judge us at the last day:

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).

How one views the Bible determines how he lives! If one does not believe the above five points, they will live a totally different life than one who does. Observe carefully, when any or all of the five supporting pillars previously mentioned are removed, liberalism will quickly invade the church! The diligent student will observe that many will declare they believe the Bible is inspired, supplies man’s every need, but do not accept it

as authoritative. It is extremely important to remember when one rejects any part of God’s Word they are rejecting God (12:48)! One, therefore, either accepts all of God’s Word or none of it!

Remember, the possibility of apostasy is always one generation away! A question of paramount importance is now before us: “Will this generation be responsible for leading the Lord’s church into the wilderness of sin? The answer, in great measure; depends on how they view the Bible!

Author Unknown

Turn to God

Charles Pogue

We’re sure no one is perfect we know it
both you and I

We’re allured by Satan’s wiles that liar
he is so sly

There is one thing we must do to stay
on the narrow road

Making sure our hearts are right takes
away much of the load

We must turn to God in prayer ask
Him for the strength we need

He supplies a two-edged sword to de-
stroy the devil’s seed

So when temptation lures you depend
on yourself you’ll fall

But if to God you will turn; sin you
won’t answer its call

Beeville, TX

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December 13

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December 20

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Jesus Knows All about Our Troubles

Tim Smith

We sing these words with joy and thanksgiving in our hearts, knowing that the Lord is in sympathy with us in our darkest hours. When we have lost loved ones, He is there; when we have illness, He is there; when we are lonely, He is there; whenever we need Him, He is there. To the faithful child of God, this fact brings untold hours of comfort and consolation.

However, just as Jesus knows all about our troubles, and just as He understands our limits, He also knows that we can overcome our troubles and temptations and serve Him with all our heart. He has assured us that God will not allow us to be tempted above that we are able to bear, but will with every temptation make a way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13). He has given us commandments that we are able to keep, and they are not grievous (1 John 5:3). Sometimes we allow the trivial

matters of life to keep us from serving Him with our all. Jesus knows this, and He is not pleased.

Jesus “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). He experienced all of life’s tribulations, and yet never allowed them to keep Him from serving God. He never allowed the death of a loved one deter Him from His duties. In John 11, we see that His dear friend, Lazarus, died. Verse 35 tells us that this experience moved Jesus to tears, and yet still He did not turn from God. He was repeatedly in danger for His life, and He finally lost His physical life on the Cruel Cross of Calvary, but this did not stop Him. I am sure that He was subject to the same headaches, body-aches, and illness and troubles as all men, yet never did these things turn Him aside. He was a man,

flesh and blood, and He suffered pain just like the next fellow, but He refused to quit.

I suppose that He could have become offended by the deeds of the scribes and Pharisees and *quit* like many of today, but He did not. He realized that He had a work to do and He went about to do it. He was the kind of man who refused to allow the devil to have his way with Him. Unlike many today, He realized that He had a work to do and did it! He took on Him the form of a man, a servant, suffered the ridicule of this world, took the worst this world had to offer, and refused steadfastly to give the battle up. He bled and died on the cross, going even unto death for the work's sake.

I wonder what He must think when He, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who willingly took on Him the form of a servant—what does He think when He looks down upon us and sees us living in fine houses (He had no place to lay His head), owning big cars (He had to walk wherever He went), enjoying absolutely no physical persecution for His cause nor His name (He lived in con-

stant peril), and neglecting to do His Will. How does He feel about us in such luxury and yet in such apathy? He was from the “old days,” when people who loved God demonstrated it by the lives they lived. He really believes in being faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10). He believes in seeking the kingdom first (Mat. 6:33). He believes in attending faithfully the services of the church (Heb. 10:25). He believes in adding the Christian graces (2 Pet. 1:5ff). He knows and understands when our heads really hurts, and He knows when it does not. He knows which things would keep us from services but not work. Yes, He knows all about our troubles, and He is not impressed. We have not suffered as He did on the cross; we have had no crown of thorns, no whip, no nails in our hands and our feet. Have we turned away from Him? Have we let Him down? Remember His sad words on the cross, “Why hast thou forsaken me?” This was His prayer to the Father, but we would do well to see if it applies to us.

Deceased

Go Out and Do Like He Done!

A newspaper columnist once reported that one of the finest business letters he ever saw came from an illiterate salesman.

Dear Boss: I seen this outfit which ain't never bought a dime's worth of nothing from us and I sole them a couple of hundret thousand dollars worth of goods. I am now going to Chwgo.

Two days later a second letter arrived in the home office.

Dear Boss: I came here and I sole them half a milyon.

Both letters were posted on the bulletin board with a note by the president of the company:

Dear Employees: We been spendin too much time here trying to spel instead of trying to sel. Let's watch those sails. I want everybody should read these letters from Gooch who is on the rode doing a grate job

for us, and we suggest you should go and do like he done.

Dear Brethren: Us members uv the church should lern a lessun from this two. Sometimes we git so concerned abowt doin things just exactly rite way that we end up doin nuthin at all. Of course we musn't do things on the wrong way—but the biggest mistake is too be so concerned about proper procedur that we end up doin nothing in any

way. The people who make mistakes is the ones who also make everything else to.

Those who offend a few people who wear there feelings on there sleeves is also the ones who win souls. Lets do the best we can tieching on sole winning, les work hrder. Lets do it in luv, but lets do something. We will nevr stump our toe if we're standing still. There a hole ot to be dun, lets do it. We need more people to "go out and do like he done."

Author Unknown

How Much Owest Thou unto the Lord? (Luke 16:5)

Frank L. Cox

1. "Tenth of all," said Abraham (Gen. 14:20).
2. "I will give a tenth," vowed Jacob (28:20-22).
3. "Our gold, silver, and jewelry," said the children of Israel when they were about to build (Exo. 35).
4. "A tenth or more," said the devout Jew under an inferior covenant (Lev. 27:30-33).
5. "According to ability," says the Old and New Testament (Deu. 16:17; 1 Cor. 16:1-2).
6. "We do not owe Him anything," said the apostate Jews. So, they robbed Him—robbed Him by withholding their gifts (Mal. 3:8-9).
7. "A tenth of all," said the heathen to his false god.
8. "All that I have," said the poor widow (Mark 12).
9. "Your body and all that pertains to it,"
10. said the inspired apostle (Rom. 12:1).
10. "Beyond our power, or ability," said the Christians in Macedonia (2 Cor. 8:9).
11. "One tenth of my income," says the Roman Catholic, the Mormon, the Seventh Day Adventist, and others.
12. What is your answer?
"As much as I spend for pleasure," says one. He places the god of pleasure on equality with the only true and living God.
"What I do not need," says one. He does not have the spirit of God, the great example.
"Whatever I find in my pocket when the plate is passed," says one who ignores the divine law of purpose (2 Cor. 9:7).
"What I have, that I cheerfully give," says the true Christian (Acts 3).

The Lord loves a cheerful giver. Upon him showers of blessings descend. Jesus, our great example, gave His life!

Deceased

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Excuse my Language (Oh Wait, You Already Did)

Lee Moses

I have recently seen a couple of articles that I find rather disturbing. One is an AFP release titled, “Swearing at Work Boosts Team Spirit, Morale,” and the other is an article from *Babytalk* magazine called “Why Moms Lie.”

According to the first article:

Regular swearing at work can help boost team spirit among staff, allowing them to express better their feelings as well as develop social relationships.

While this statement may be true, it does not reveal all the facts. Other questions one might ask include: (1) Does regular swearing/cursing at work **always** help boost team spirit among staff? (2) Are there times when swearing/cursing at work seriously **damages** team spirit among staff? (3) Is

there a sensible way to permit only the swearing/cursing at work that will boost team spirit while wholly eliminating the swearing/cursing that will damage team spirit among staff? While I have not conducted a survey on the matter, I believe the answers to these questions are obvious. Yes, those who feel at home in a barroom will be made to feel right at home at work when the barroom atmosphere is replicated at work. But cursing will hurt the morale of those uncomfortable in such an atmosphere, and it will even hurt those who claim not to be bothered by such language. The Holy Spirit admonishes us never to speak in any foul manner: “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” (Eph. 4:29). There is speech which serves the purpose of edifying, or building up, hearers; and which serves the purpose of ministering grace, or doing something favorable, for hearers. However, corrupt communication does not build up hearers; it tears them down. It does not do anything favorable for hearers; it oftentimes causes them to become like those they are around.

The second article addresses the lies that new mothers commonly tell. These might be lies told to strangers, such as saying, “he sleeps great!” when asked whether he is sleeping through the night. This is apparently acceptable, “Because you may never see them again.... Most of the fibs we tell strangers are harmless.” Mothers may also lie to friends, but it is reassuring to learn, “Lying does bring some social rewards,” says Robert Feldman, Ph.D., a professor of psychology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. “If you [dishonestly, LM] compliment a friend, she’s likely to reciprocate. Everybody ends up feeling better.” Additionally:

Using your child as an excuse with friends—to get out of social functions and to get off the phone—is a time-honored tradition among new moms. So, don’t feel bad: Your friends with kids are using the same lines on you!

The article goes on to justify lying to parents, husbands, and doctors. But regardless of how pretty one wants to paint lying, it is deception, it is misleading, and it hurts others: “A lying tongue hateth *those that are* afflicted by it; And a flattering mouth worketh ruin” (Pro. 26:28).

Even if it could be demonstrated that there are instances in which foul language or lying might serve a good purpose, such will never please God. God, who gave us the organs of speech, desires that only blessing proceed out of our mouths—not cursing (Jam. 3:10). Lying is one of seven things the Lord **hates** (Pro. 6:16-19). Solomon admonishes, “Lying lips *are* abomination to the Lord: But they that deal truly are his delight” (12:22). There is no excuse for foul language or for lying.

Union City, TN

Should Alien Sinners Pray for God to Save Them?

C. D. Plum

The answer to the subject of this lesson is: No; emphatically, no! Who are these alien sinners that should not pray for God to save them? These sinners have never been God’s children. They have never been members of Christ’s church. These sinners, being without Christ, are alienated and

need to be reconciled to God (Eph.2:12; Col. 1:21). And prayer will not accomplish this for them.

Mourners’ Bench Is Passing

The mourners’ bench, where alien sinners are supposed to pray through to forgiveness among the denominations is now

no longer so popular even among them. The mourners' bench way for salvation never did have any sanction from the Word of God. Alien sinners on the day of Pentecost, when they asked, "What shall we do?" were not asked to get down to a bench to pray. These sinners were not even told to pray anywhere, in any position. Rather, these believing sinners were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:37-38). They immediately did what they were told to do (2:41-42).

No Command from God

Nowhere in all the Word of God did He command an alien sinner to pray to be saved. There is no example in all the Word of God where God saved an alien because he prayed. John records this: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth" (John 9:31). In view of this, the one who prays must have previously been obedient to God's will, if the prayer is to profit him anything. Therefore, alien sinners who have never thus been obedient are out so far as prayer is concerned as a help to them.

One Who Prayed

Saul of Tarsus prayed before he obeyed, but his prayer did not save him (Acts 9:11). The Lord did not tell him to pray. In fact, no one told him to pray. However, God's preacher, Ananias, virtually told him to quit praying. He found him praying, and this is what Ananias said to this alien sinner: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling

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on the name of the Lord" (22:16). Saul did this immediately (9:18). When Saul thus obeyed, this new birth made him a child of God. As a child of God, being no longer an alien sinner, he could, should, and did pray much.

Alien Sinners Could Not Begin Prayer Correctly

If the alien sinner would say, "Dear Father in heaven," to begin his prayer, or some such similar beginning, he would be mistaken. Spiritually speaking, God is not the alien sinner's Father, because the alien sinner has not yet been born a child of God. Satan is the alien sinner's father. Jesus refers to people being the children of Satan, Satan being their father (John 8:44). So alien sinners need to obey, then they will be in a position to pray (Mat. 7:21-23; Heb. 5:9).

Dear friends, think on these things and obey the Lord correctly.

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Carla Burluson

Brenda Loy (Nancy Loy's sister-in-law)

Mary Aninois (Nancy Travis' friend)

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January 3

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“Speak Unto Us Smooth Things”

J. Noel Meredith

“Which say to the seers, See not; And to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, Speak unto us smooth things, Prophecy deceits” (Isa. 30:10—KJV). The people of whom Isaiah wrote did not want the prophets to prophesy the Truth, they wanted them to speak “smooth things.” Rebellious people demand an easy religion. It is not the Truth they want; it is assurance that all will be well. These are the people who can grow eloquent about the joy of their life style and indignant over the Gospel of sin and judgment. In the days of the prophets some men wanted to hear only pleasant things. They applauded those who said what the people wanted to hear and stoned the prophets of plain truth. Jeremiah wrote, “The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so” (Jer. 5:31). Paul wrote to Timothy:

For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

The New Testament plainly teaches we all need to strictly follow sound doctrine and walk in the straitened way (Mat. 7:13-14).

(1) The New Testament teaches that God’s Word is Truth (John 17:17).

(2) That knowing and obeying the Truth will make one free from sin (John 8:32; Mat. 7:21-27).

(3) But believing and obeying a lie will result in damnation (2 The. 2:10-12).

(4) Men must be very careful that they do not add to, take from, substitute, change or modify in any way, the Word of God (Deu. 4:2; Pro. 30:5-6; Rev. 22:18-19).

(5) To do what is not authorized by the Word of God or go beyond the doctrine of Christ is sin (2 John 9-11).

(6) Men may depart from the Truth and may pervert the Gospel (1 Tim. 4:1; Gal. 1:6-9).

(7) And so the children of God are to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints (Jude 3).

(8) The thing that is to be preached is the Word of God (2 Tim. 4:1-5).

(9) Just as Jesus severely rebuked error during His earthly ministry He expects us to do the same today (Mat. 23:1-36; 1 Tim. 5:20).

(10) Men are called upon to decide whom they will serve—Christ or the devil (Jos. 24:15; Deu. 11:26-28; 30:19; Mat. 6:24; 7:13-14).

A caustic, carping, critic recently said, “The stifling orthodoxy of many churches of Christ is keeping many persons from being a part of Christ’s church.” It is the old statement that the church is too narrow. We have all heard it in one form or another dozens of times. But what about this alleged “stifling orthodoxy?” *Stifling* is to smother, prevent from breathing, suffocate, repress. *Orthodoxy* is conforming to the usual beliefs or established doctrines; conforming to the Christian faith. Since when is Christianity stifled by insisting that people conform exactly to the Christian faith? Paul required that we are “not to go beyond the things which are written” (1 Cor. 4:6). Peter wrote, “if any man speaketh, *speaking* as it were oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11).

Men leading the current ecumenical efforts cry for unity in diversity. They say doctrine divides so do away with it. They want to blur the lines of distinction. They have abandoned the premise that unity can be based upon obedience to God’s revealed Word. They denounce those who are engaged in denouncing error. And they apparently never notice how inconsistent they are when they denounce denouncers. They say that all brethren are “brethren in error” and

Don'ts for His Own

Don't visit the church. Worship.

Don't hurry away. Speak and be spoken to.

Don't dodge the preacher. Show yourself friendly.

Don't dodge the collection plate. Contribute what you are able.

Don't stop in the end of the pew. Move over.

Don't stare blankly while others sing, read, and pray. Join in.

Don't wait for an introduction. Introduce yourself.

Don't criticize. Remember to think of your own frailties.

Don't monopolize your hymnbook. Be neighborly.

Don't stay away from church because of company. Bring them with you.

Don't stay away from the church because the church is not perfect. How lonesome you would be in a perfect church!

Author Unknown

ridicule the idea of drawing lines of fellowship on doctrinal matters. Listeners who want to live as they please and believe what they fancy have itching ears for this kind of speaking. They want to be soothed instead of being saved. But even leaders of the alleged unity movement have some few doctrinal points they say must be accepted. There are points that are an irreducible minimum. But to be consistent, if we accept part of the commands of Christ, we should accept them all! We should not require only a few of the points of the doctrine of Christ; logically we should stand for all of them. John writes that

if anyone does not abide in the teaching or doctrine of Christ we should not fellowship that person (2 John 9-11).

Paul fought for the Truth, and we should do likewise. Near the end of his life he looked back and wrote, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7). We should want preachers to preach the Word of God in power and love, without fear or favor. Jesus said, "Take heed therefore **how** ye hear" (Luke 8:18). And, "Take heed **what** ye hear" (Mark 4:24).

Deceased

The Tower of Babel

Bascum M. Litton

The people of the earth immediately following the flood were of one language and one speech (Gen. 11:1). They began building a great tower. Its top was to "reach unto heaven." Its purpose was that the people might not be scattered upon the face of the earth. God had commanded Noah and his sons to be "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (9:1). A land can be more quickly settled if its people are scattered evenly and not crowded together in the large cities. The early church grew when the disciples were driven from Jerusalem and scattered. In this case the will of man ran counter to God's, and He confounded their speech so they could not continue their work and were separated and scattered upon the earth.

Satan also uses this method to retard the growth of the church. The Word of God is truth (John 17:17), truth does not contradict itself, and if we know the truth and speak the truth, we "all speak the same thing" (1 Cor. 1:10). Quarrels and grievances between brethren are often caused by misunderstandings. When Satan can cause us to fail in understanding one another and to begin to fight among ourselves, he has succeeded in stopping all of the work that we are able to do to build up the cause of Christ.

Gideon, by the power of God and three hundred men, once caused a great army to destroy itself by confusion. Confusion can destroy us. Unreasoning anger, prejudice, and distrust are the means by which Satan confounds our speech.

Deceased

BEACON

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Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill Busch

Nancy Travis

Tim Busch

Carla Burleson

Sympathy

We extend our deepest sympathy to the family of Marge Williams, who passed away on December 19. Please keep her family in your prayers.

Sympathy

We extend our deepest sympathy to the family of Ronald Howell, who passed away on December 19. Please keep his family in your prayers.

Please Remember

December 30

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.

January 3

Visitation cards for Group 1 will be handed out by Bill Crowe.



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