

Defender

“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

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“If God Is for Us”

Gary W. Summers

One of the most inspiring passages ever written to Christians is Romans 8:28-39. It affirms that God works all things together for good to those who love Him (8:28), that Jesus is not only our Savior but our brother (8:29), that those who love Him were predestined (as a group), called, justified, and glorified (8:30). Paul asks the question, “If God is for us, who can be against us?” He then lists numerous problems and difficulties that can in no way separate us from the love of Christ (8:35-39). The entire passage is exhilarating and filled with meaningful encouragement.

We want to focus, however, on just one point—**God is for us**. Of course, Christians understand that concept—especially as regards their initial obedience. All of us recognized that love when we obeyed the Gospel. We knew that “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” to die for us (John 3:16). We know that Jesus willingly laid down His life for us (10:17-18) and that He washed us from our sins in His own blood (Rev. 1:5) when we were baptized (Acts 22:16).

Do we lose sight of these facts as

we endeavor to live the Christian life? Do we begin to feel inadequate? Do we begin to think that God disapproves of us? Are we experiencing guilt over falling short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23)? Do we imagine that God looks upon us with disfavor? Are we discouraged? These are times when we need to realize that God is for us. He is not only *for us* in times of persecution; He cares about us in other situations as well.

Suppose that a person is feeling dissatisfied with himself. It might be that he has not been as involved as a Christian should be in the life of the church. Perhaps the demands of work have prohibited him from being the husband and father he ought to be. Opportunities to do good have been passed by; spiritual lethargy has been allowed to dominate. Bad habits have been established, and nothing seems to change.

What is the correct response to these things? Does God hate us now, since we have let Him down? No, but these things should not be ignored. We are always going to be imperfect. What matters most is **how** we deal with those imperfec-

tions. If we deny that we have them, they will never go away, and we will never improve. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Is God surprised that we sometimes feel weak or that we do not do what we know we should do? No. Does He approve? No. He does, however, want us to succeed, and He does not give up on us. He will chastise us (Heb. 12:5-11), but the purpose is to bring about repentance on our part. Even punishment is for our good.

“But how can God love me when I intentionally sinned? I know what he did to Israel, His own people.” Yes, He did give them over to captivity—but not before first chastising them and warning them about their spiritual condition for many years. Consider some individual sins. Did Adam and Eve intentionally sin? Did they not clearly violate a command they were given and which they understood? Yes. Did God annihilate them, give up on them, abandon them to their own devices? No. He did punish them, but they could still be (and probably are) saved.

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Notes From The Editor

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Fulfilled Prophecies

One of the marvelous ways God has given us to know the Bible is inspired by Him is by the prophecies in the Bible that have been fulfilled. God responds to a question which the Israelites might ask: “And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken?” (Deu. 18:21). This certainly was a valid question (even for us today), so God gives the answer: “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” (18:22). If the Bible prophecies an event and then that event does not occur, then Yahweh has not given that prophecy. When we look at the Scriptures, we do find when the Bible prophesies something, then it does come about. With such fulfillment, it gives us confidence the Bible is as it claims, the Word of God and inspired by Him.

There are several aspects in discussing fulfilled prophecies. There are prophecies concerning nations. The Bible gives several prophecies concerning the Jews: their fall (2 Kin. 21:12-15), that the southern

kingdom of Judah would spend seventy years in captivity (Jer. 27:14; 29:9-10) with the first wave of that captivity in 606 BC and the first return in 536 BC, and Cyrus the great would release them (Isa. 44:21-45:4 written about 150 years prior to Cyrus). There is the prophecy of the destruction of Nineveh in Zephaniah and Nahum. Both Isaiah (Isa. 13-14) and Jeremiah (50) prophecy of the destruction of Babylon. Isaiah wrote when Syria was the dominant power in the world but shows that not only would they fall but that the nation who followed them (Babylon) would also fall. Isaiah (23) and Ezekiel (26) prophecy of Tyre being destroyed the first time, then Ezekiel (27) and Zechariah (9) speak of its destruction the second time.

Who could forget the four world empires spoken of by Daniel? First, there was Nebuchadnezzar’s great image in chapter 2, which had a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, and legs of iron and feet part iron and part clay. Then there was Daniel’s dream and vision in chapter 7 of four great beasts coming up from the sea. The first was like a lion and had eagle’s wings, then one like a bear with three ribs in its mouth, after that was one like a leopard with four wings of a fowl on its back, and the last was a beast that was dreadful, terrible and exceedingly strong with iron teeth. These represented four world empires (kingdoms): the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and then the Roman.

Likewise, there are prophecies concerning specific individuals in the Scriptures and all being fulfilled. Abraham is given four great

promises in Genesis 12:2-3, 7. First, there was a promised nation which is Israel, then a great name which was the father of the faithful, that through his seed all nations would be blessed which was fulfilled in Jesus, and then a promised land which was Canaan. There were also four promises made about Ishmael (Gen. 16:10-12): that his seed would multiply, and we know they became the Arabs, he would be a wild man, that he would be against every nation and every man against him, and that he would dwell in the presence of his brethren. There is the promise to King David that after his death, God would set up his seed to build the temple (2 Sam. 7:12-13). While there might be an immediate partial fulfillment in Solomon the ultimate fulfillment of this is found in Christ who built the church (the temple). Over 300 years before King Josiah came on the scene, God calls him by name and tells the work he would do (1 Kin. 13:2), and we observe its fulfillment in 2 Kings 23:15-16.

However, I would like to center our minds on the prophecies regarding the Messiah. It is difficult to say exactly how many Old Testament prophecies Jesus fulfilled. There have been various counts and discussions regarding the number. For example, J. Barton

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

Payne found as many as 574 Old Testament verses that refer to the Messiah. Alfred Edersheim found 456 verses referring to the Messiah and His times. One website gave a list of 356 prophecies fulfilled in Christ. Others have given other numbers and given various lists. Joseph P. Free in his book *Archaeology and Bible History* writes:

Canon Liddon is the authority for the statement that there are three hundred thirty-two distinct prophecies in the Old Testament which have been literally fulfilled in

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Christ (HBCF, 156). Someone with a flair for mathematics has figured out that the mathematical probability of all of these three hundred and thirty-two prophecies being fulfilled in one man is represented by an amazing fraction, the numerator of which would be one and the denominator represented by a figure written with the number eighty-four followed by ninety-seven zeros (HBCF, 157). The chances of all of these prophecies being fulfilled in one man are so overwhelmingly remote that it is strikingly demonstrated that they could in no wise be the shrewd guesses of mere men (284).

Canon Liddon is Henry Parry Liddon the Canon of Saint Pauls of the Church of England who lived from 1829 to 1890. How he came up with the one over eighty-four with ninety-seven zeros following, I do not know. However, it is my opinion that number is much too low. Let us add to this some basic laws of probability. Dr. Emile Borel is one of the world's experts on mathematical probability. He formulated a basic law stating that the occurrence of any event where the chances are beyond one in one followed by fifty zeros is an event which we can state with certainty will never happen, no matter how much time is allotted and no matter how many conceivable opportunities could exist for the event to take place. He gave this in his book *Probabilities and Life* (chapters 1 and 3). The number that Emile Borel stated is much lower than the number Canon Liddon gave. Thus, by Borel's standard, we can state with certainty that no one person could ever fulfill all the Old Testament prophecies regarding the Messiah. Yet, Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled them all. How? By chance it is

impossible, but there is a Supreme Being (Yahweh) who is eternal and saw everything that took place and was able to write about it aforesaid.

Peter Stoner was also a mathematician and decided to do some research as to the fulfillment of some Messianic prophecies. However, he did not try to determine how many prophecies Jesus fulfilled or what the odds were of one person fulfilling all of them (as Liddon did). Stoner took eight prophecies (101-05) and drew some conclusions regarding them. The prophecies were: Jesus being born in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2), a forerunner of Christ (Mal. 3:1), entering Jerusalem as a king riding on a colt (Zec. 9:9), betrayed by a friend that put wounds in his hand (13:6), of those betrayed how many for 30 pieces of silver (11:12), the 30 pieces of silver returned, and a potter's field bought with the money (11:13), when oppressed and afflicted and on trial for his life would not make a defense (Isa. 53:7), and since the time of David, how many have been crucified (Psa. 22:16). Then in his book *Science Speaks*, Stoner writes this:

This is the answer to the question: One man in how many men has fulfilled these eight prophecies? But we are really concerned with the answer to the question: What is the chance that any man might have lived from the day of these prophecies down to the present time and have fulfilled all of the eight prophecies?... we find that the chance of any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled all eight prophecies is 1 in 10 to the 17th power. Let us try to visualize this chance.... Suppose that we take 10 to the 17th power silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all the state

two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all

come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote in their own wisdom (106-07).

There is absolutely no way all this happened by mere chance. God had a plan from before the world began to save sinful mankind through the blood shed by His only begotten Son (who Himself is God). He reveals this

plan to mankind through the Scriptures and gives us confidence in the Scriptures as being inspired by Him by the prophecies He gives and then the fulfillment of them. Since we know the Bible is from God, then we must obey the precepts God has set forth for us therein and we will then receive the blessings provided for us by God.

MH

Continued from Page 1

Has anyone done worse than unleash sin upon the whole world?

David, a man after God's own heart, intentionally sinned with Bathsheba. He knew God and the Law of God ("Thou shalt not commit adultery"). He further knew that it was wrong to murder, yet he made certain that Uriah died. Did God punish him? Yes, and it was so severe that it ought to cause anyone else contemplating the same sin to learn from David's tragedies. However, God did not give up on the king. He sent Nathan to him to rebuke him for his sins. God took this action because of His love for David, who responded by repenting (the only correct reaction to sin).

The good news in these two examples is that God is for us. He wants us to succeed spiritually. He did not "write off" the first couple who sinned, nor the king who betrayed all of the good gifts He had given him. Jesus died for us, and He is unwilling to denounce us also. He is abundant in mercy and willing to forgive when we come to our senses and repent.

Of course, there is a time when God may give up on us—if we take Him for granted or make no effort

to improve. He destroyed the world with a Flood because mankind had degenerated to a point beyond redemption. He allowed His people to be taken captive because they were so steeped in rebellion to Him that nothing would change their minds. An individual, even a Christian, could reach such a state; the Bible speaks of the conscience becoming seared (1 Tim. 4:2). In such an instance, the person has rejected God so continuously that no one can reach him. He has erected steel doors around his heart, so neither the Word of God nor the words of a loving brother can penetrate it any longer.

Thankfully, most of us are not that way. If we are still reading the Bible and attending worship, we have hope. Those temporary rebellions need not keep us away from our God. Peter, for example, did a horrible thing when he denied Christ three times, even to the point of cursing and swearing (Mark 14:71). When the Lord looked at Peter, he realized what he had done; he went out and wept bitterly (Luke 22:61-62). What happened the next time they met? Did Jesus excoriate His disciple? No. The glance had been sufficient to devastate Peter. What words could

anyone have said to him that he had not uttered to himself? God knows how we feel when we fall short.

If we are aware of our sins and are attempting to improve, God is still **for us**. He does not save us and drop us; the concern continues. We frequently may be unaware of the ways He is working providentially on our behalf. Although He does not speak to us personally or strengthen us directly in some sort of Spirit-on-spirit manner (as some erroneously suppose), He will not be satisfied until all of His family arrives safely home. The same apostle who was so weak as to deny Christ three times later wrote about God's determination to help us succeed: "But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*" (1 Pet. 5:10). God takes an active role in our spiritual development.

For that reason, He is called our Heavenly Father. Just as a conscientious parent wants the best for His children, so does He want the best for us. Were all of our children perfect when they were growing up? No. They made mistakes, exercised poor judgment, and occasionally

were defiant and ungrateful, but we did not cease to love them. We exercised patience, just as our Heavenly Father does with us.

Peter writes to his fellow elders in the same epistle: “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers” (5:2). One means which God has of helping us spiritually is through elders, whose difficult work it is to shepherd the flock. Unfortunately, some have thought this is a position of power and authority rather than engaging in the work of bringing members of the church to spiritual maturity. It is the task of elders to make decisions, but the greater responsibility is to “watch out for” the souls of the members “as those who must give account” (Heb. 13:17). Yes, they must guard the flock against wolves and their false doctrines, but protection against danger is only one aspect of their work. They must also provide spiritual nourishment, exercise vigilance in the members’ spiritual growth, and rescue those who go astray.

Jesus is the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:4), and He cares about His flock. It is not His will that any be lost. Our Lord has always shown

anxiousness in that regard. As He prayed to the Father the night of His betrayal, He said of His apostles: “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled” (John 17:12). He was not boasting so much as expressing relief over the completion of a goal. His prayer for the unity of His apostles and all believers follows (17:20-21).

Jesus’ protective concern is seen further in this assurance: “And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand” (10:28). He guards us against Satan, not allowing us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear (1 Cor. 10:13). He provides for our every spiritual need (Psa. 23). Likewise, the Father “is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of” (John 10:29) His hand. Some have erroneously taught that because of God’s efforts we cannot be lost.

There is one condition, however, to make certain that we receive all of this Divine help: “My sheep hear

My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me” (John 10:27). We can choose to give up all that is spiritually precious. Nevertheless, if we remain faithful (although we may be weak and imperfect), and if we are listening to His voice, we will obtain the reward He has planned for us. God does not easily give up on any of His children. We can, however, stray and rebuff His best efforts to bring us back. We must continue in His Word—if we want to remain true disciples (8:31-32).

God was *for us* when He created us. He was *for us* when He gave commandments (Deu. 10:12-13 says they were for Israel’s good). He was *for us* when He allowed His only begotten Son to die on the cross for our sins. He was *for us* when we repented of them. He is *for us* now, greatly desiring our perfection and forgiving us of our transgressions. And He will be *for us* in eternity when He fulfills all of the promises we have not yet received. What greater love has ever been or could ever be shown? God is truly worthy of all praise.

Winter Park, FL

Paul in Ephesus

R. L. Whiteside

Text: Acts 19:8-10; Ephesians 2:4-10; 3:14-19.

“And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples” (Acts 19:1). By questioning these disciples Paul found that they were not disciples of Christ but John’s preaching, though it is not likely

that they had ever seen John. It seems almost certain that these disciples had been baptized unto John’s baptism after it had been superseded by baptism in the name of Christ, for we can hardly think that all the people John baptized had to be baptized again. If so, what purpose did that baptism serve? Paul gave these men the teaching they needed. “And when

they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus” (19:5). Paul must have met up with these disciples immediately after arriving in Ephesus, for it seems that he had not yet gone to the synagogue.

“And he entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading *as to* the things

concerning the kingdom of God” (19:8). *Dialogue* is the anglicized form of the Greek word here translated “reasoning”—Paul dialogued with them. He held conversations with them, or he and they alternated in making speeches. It was what we would now call a discussion or debate. The subject of the discussions was “the things concerning the kingdom of God.” On the kingdom question, Paul and the Jews did not agree. The Jews looked for a world kingdom, a religiopolitical kingdom with the Messiah on the throne in Jerusalem, the Jews the citizens, and all other nations as subjects. That was the notion that was being advocated all over the land. Had Paul agreed with them, there would have been no debate. Certainly, if Paul had preached the sort of a kingdom they expected, they would have accepted his preaching and would not have become “hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude” (19:9). When they became bitter and slanderous in their speaking, “he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus” (19:9). The Gospel stirs men either to obedience or to antagonism. An honest and good heart accepts the Word of God; others harden their hearts against it (Mat. 13:14-15; Luke 8:15). As long as the Jews in the synagogue were content to argue with Paul, he was content to meet with them and argue with them, but when they left off argument because they could not meet his arguments and resorted to speaking evil of the Way, he was through with them. To preach to them anymore was to cast pearls before swine (Mat. 7:6).

It was good for the disciples to be separated from such a rebellious and blasphemous crowd; it also would show the disciples and the people of Ephesus that Judaism and Christianity were two separate systems of religion—that Christianity was not just another sect of the Jews’ religion. It seems that he found congenial surroundings in the school of Tyrannus. If any of the Jews were friendly to his preaching, they could hear him in this school. He continued his teaching in the school for the space of two years “so that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks” (Acts 19:10). What was then called Asia was a strip of country along the western coast of what we now know as Asia Minor. The language does not necessarily mean that Paul in person preached all over that territory; in fact, he could not have done so while reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. Paul had a number of helpers. There were Priscilla and Aquila, Gaius and Aristarchus, Silas and Timothy, and perhaps others. As an apostle of the Lord, Paul was directing the labors of his helpers. We cannot think that these helpers were idle during the two years Paul spent preaching the Gospel in the school of Tyrannus. His helpers could evangelize the territory of Asia during the two years so all Asia would hear the Word of the Lord. To get a full account of Paul’s labors in Ephesus the student must read on through the first verse of chapter 20.

Through His chosen representatives, God set up churches in central places to act as radiating centers, and because these strong churches in central cities would

exercise great influence over the smaller churches in the surrounding territory—be more or less models for such churches—it was more important that these larger churches be well taught and trained; hence, the importance of the letters to the larger churches. Copies of these letters would be distributed to the surrounding churches. There was also an exchange of letters. “And when this epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the epistle from Laodicea” (Col. 4:16).

Mercy is kind or compassionate treatment of the needy, the distressed, and the afflicted. God was rich in mercy to the helpless and condemned sinner. The sinner could not make any plan by which he could remedy his condition. But God was merciful to sinners, and this mercy was prompted by God’s love. “His great love wherewith he loved us” is a superlative expression; his love was superlative, “even when we were dead through our trespasses,” and because of His love and mercy He “made us alive together with Christ” (Eph. 2:4-5). The sinner had done nothing and could do nothing to merit God’s love. Any benefit or blessing bestowed on the sinner was an act of pure favor. “By grace have ye been saved.” Though we were dead through our trespasses, God “made us alive together with Christ, . . . and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places” (2:5-6). These *heavenly places* are in Christ, in His body, the church. The exceeding riches of God’s grace in kindness in saving even some who had a part in the cruci-

fixion of Jesus and others who, like Paul, had persecuted the church, would be made known all down the ages. No such mercy and grace had ever before been made manifest to man. It would give hope to any sinner that he also might share in the blessings of God's grace.

Grace is favor. God's grace, or favor, comes to us in every benefit or blessing extended to us. The life of Christ, His death and resurrection, the church, and the Bible, including His commands, all are by grace. His grace is in the commands He has given us; for in these commands He points out to us the way of life, and that is a favor that cannot be measured. They are God's highway signs which He has put up to guide us along the right way. The one who tries to separate God's grace from His commands has a poor conception of the extent of grace, and evidently considers the commands of no benefit. "By grace have ye been saved through faith" (2:8). Grace is God's part; faith is our part. Grace brings salvation within our reach; faith lays hold on it. But faith only—dead faith—never lays hold on anything. This salvation—this whole plan of salvation—is not of ourselves. We could neither have conceived it nor brought it into being; it is God's gift of grace. No matter how much a sinner does, he cannot merit pardon. Pardon is not based on merit; pardon is always and everywhere a matter of grace. Obedience to the Gospel does not merit salvation and there is nothing in such obedience to give any sinner grounds for glorying, but there is humiliation in that we have to trust another for pardon and submit to His authority to obtain it. In addition to a

man's own salvation, God had another purpose in calling him into His service—namely, that he might do good to others. These good works were prepared beforehand. Before giving this plan of salvation God had in mind the good works He expected His servants to do.

To bow the knee to another, even when the expression is figurative, is to recognize his authority. Paul was not too proud to bow his knee to God. For "every family" the King James Version has "the whole family" and so does Macknight. Paul's petitions begin with verse 16. The prayer is so sublime and so far-reaching in its sweep that one hesitates to make any comments on it. Paul's first petition for them is: "That ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man" (3:16). Every Christian today needs just such strengthening and should pray for it. Our inward man needs to grow in strength. Paul prays for all the things in his prayer, and that God would grant them according to the riches of His glory. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (3:17). We can accept that petition just as it reads, without any speculation as to how it is to be done, and leave the answering of it to God. [Editor's note: the definite article *the* is before faith in 3:17, thus "That Christ may dwell in your hearts through the faith," i.e., through the Word of God.] But there is a certain end to be accomplished in the granting of this petition—"to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong" (3:17). To be "rooted and grounded" is to be firmly established, firmly fixed, in the prin-

ciples of the faith and love for God and man. Strong to apprehend—lay firm hold on with the understanding. Herein has always been a serious defect in God's people. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; *but* Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider" (Isa. 1:3). "Therefore my people are gone into captivity for lack of knowledge" (5:13). Only those who understand the Word can bear much fruit (Mat. 13:23). "The breadth and length and height and depth" (Eph. 3:18). Macknight thinks this refers to the church as a building; Meyer thinks it applies to the love of Christ. But it seems that the terms would more fitly apply to a building than to love. The love of Christ is mentioned in the next verse as an additional matter. How can we know the love of Christ which passeth understanding? We cannot fully know it, but we can know that He loved us enough to die for us—so loved us while we were yet sinners. To this extent, we must know the love of Christ, that we "may be filled unto all the fulness of God" (3:19). And then came what would now be thought of as the benediction: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen" (3:20-21). And that also should be a great inducement to people to pray. Instead of talking about what God can do and cannot do in answer to prayer, meditate on the statement of Paul that God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

Deceased

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Christ Our King

H. Leo Boles

The threefold function of Christ is clearly established in the Bible. He was to be Prophet, Priest, and King. His prophetic function was fulfilled while He was here in the flesh, or before He made His ascension to the Father. His priestly function is now being fulfilled as our High Priest in heaven. Likewise, His regal function is now being exercised while He is seated at the right hand of God. No one should attempt to rob Him of the glory of reigning over His kingdom.

A king is a ruler over a kingdom; his authority is supreme and sovereign. After his resurrection, Jesus declared: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Mat. 28:18). He is also declared by the Holy Spirit to be "head over all things to the church" (Eph. 1:22). His authority is "far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (1:21). He was not a king until the first Pentecost after His resurrection. The premillennial theory teaches that He is not crowned king now, but that He will

be crowned king when He comes the second time. This theory contradicts all the teachings concerning His authority now. This theory robs Him of that regal glory that He now enjoys. No one can accept this theory without doing dishonor to Christ as a king. Christians must honor Him as a king and recognize His authority over His kingdom and His glory that belongs to the King of this kingdom. To deny Christ as King now is to deny that His kingdom has been set up.

His Kingship Prophesied

In the long ago, during the Patriarchal Age, before the tribes of Israel had been developed, it was prophesied by Jacob that "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh come: And unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be" (Gen. 49:10). Hence, the Christ should come through the tribe of Judah. "For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah; as to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests" (Heb. 7:14). God promised David: "When thy days are fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy

seed after thee, that shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom" (2 Sam. 7:12). Again, it was prophesied: "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land" (Jer. 30:9). Furthermore, the prophet said:

For thus saith Jehovah: David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt-offerings, and to burn meal-offerings, and to do sacrifice continually (33:17-18).

The double function of Priest and King was prophesied long before the Christ came.

Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: and he shall grow up out of his place; and he shall build the temple of Jehovah; even he shall build the temple of Jehovah; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both (Zec. 6:12-13).

So, Christ was to be a priest upon His throne. He was not a

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Notes From The Editor

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Gospel

The Gospel is God's power to save, so says the Holy Spirit by the hand of the apostle Paul as he writes to the Romans: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Rom. 1:16). We find the Gospel specifically refers to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Again, the apostle Paul writes:

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

Notice this Gospel is what Paul preached, the Corinthians had received it and stood in it, and it is that Gospel that is going to save them. Then, Paul mentions what the Gospel that will save the Corinthians is: Christ dying for our sins, being buried, and His resurrection from the dead on the third day according to the Old Testament Scriptures. Notice some other

statements Paul had previously made in this letter:

For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.... But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.... And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. (1:17-18, 23-24, 2:1-2).

Paul knew it was the Gospel that was going to save man, which is why he did not speak with "excellency of speech or of wisdom" but preached the power of God to save.

When we consider the Gospel, it consists of facts to be believed (regarding Christ's death, burial, and resurrection) but it also consists of commands to be obeyed. While in Romans 1:16, Paul tells us the Gospel is God's power to save, he will later state:

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness (6:17-18).

Notice that was a doctrine that was *delivered*. In 1 Corinthians 15:3, Paul had *delivered* what he had first received which was the Gospel. In Romans, he tells them they must obey a form of that which was *delivered* or a form of the Gospel. *Form* is from the Greek

word *typos* and means "example, type, pattern." The *form* is the death, burial, and resurrection. We, thus, obey a form of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. The form of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection is found in water baptism as is seen in Romans 6:3-4:

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.

This is that message Paul said he preached and that would save man. It is this same message that Jesus gave His apostles as He sent them out: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16).

We also see in this Gospel and the passages under consideration, that not only does the Gospel consist of facts to be believed, but commands to be obeyed. The commands associated with the facts are that upon one's faith, he must repent (Luke 13:3, 5), confess his faith in Jesus as being the Christ, the son of God (Acts 8:37), and then be baptized in water which is that form of the facts of the Gospel.

Then we also observe there are

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

promises relating to the Gospel. The promises relate to the remission of sins and thus salvation (from past sins). In Mark 16:15-16, upon preaching the Gospel, the one who believes and is baptized will be saved. This salvation is from past sins as we find out when we study the application of what Jesus had instructed His apostles in Acts 2. They preached the Gospel, and when they were asked by the Jews what they had to do, they were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins or their past sins. This action places them into a relationship with the Divine Three (Mat. 28:19-20), thus providing them hope of eternal salvation (Tit. 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:3).

However, it appears many in the churches of Christ no longer believe the Gospel is God's power to

save. They, by their actions, must believe that man must help the Gospel out as it alone is not sufficient to draw people to Christ. Brethren through the years were convinced into thinking the way to draw people and especially young people into the church was to provide entertainment and recreation for them. Thus, congregations began building gymnasiums (although called different names because they did not wish to admit what it actually was and possibly alarm some of the older members) to supposedly get them in the building so they could influence them to be baptized. However, the *social gospel* influenced us in other areas also. We became too sophisticated and worldly for simple Gospel meetings, so we had to start having seminars and such (many

on topics that were and are needed subjects). The problem with this is a turning from God's Word and its drawing power (John 6:44-45) to social ills and problems, and a turning to meet the *felt needs* of people. Nevertheless, the *felt needs* of people are generally not their true needs. The true need of all men everywhere is to hear the saving power of the Gospel of Christ. The reason brethren attempt these other avenues is they have lost trust in God's drawing power and saving power—the Gospel.

Let us get back to preaching and teaching the Gospel. Let us preach it with boldness and plainness. Let us challenge error (wherever it may be found). Let us preach it in our buildings, in our homes, or wherever and whenever we might have the opportunity.

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Continued from Page 1
priest until after He ascended to the Father; He was not upon His throne as king until after He ascended to heaven. Many prophecies, too numerous to mention in this article, could be given showing that all of the prophets foretold that Christ, the Messiah, would become a king.

His Kingship Acknowledged

Not only was it prophesied that Christ should become a king, but it was acknowledged while He was in the flesh that He would become a king. Jesus said:

The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity... Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Mat. 13:41-43).

Again, Jesus said:

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds. Verily I say unto you, There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom (16:27-28).

Jesus declared His kingship at the end of His earthly career. "Now Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest" (27:11). When Pilate asked Jesus:

Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth (John 18:37).

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, "Wise-men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him" (Mat. 2:1-2). When Nathanael was called, he "answered him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel" (John 1:49). Pilate acknowledged Jesus as King when he said: "Will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?" (18:39). Again, His disciples acknowledged Him as king in prospect. "Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force, to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain himself alone" (6:15). When James and John with their mother requested a favor of Jesus, He asked what they requested, and

the mother said: “Command that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy kingdom” (Mat. 20:21). These with other Scriptures show that His disciples expected Him to be a king. His triumphant entry into Jerusalem did honor to Him as a king (21:5; Luke 19:38; John 12:13). Again, the thief on the cross recognized regal authority in Jesus (Luke 23:42). And it was written on the superscription that was placed above the head of Jesus while He was on the cross: “THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS” (Mat. 27:37; Luke 23:37-38; John 19:19-21).

At the Right Hand of God

Christ has been crowned “King of kings, and Lord of lords” (1 Tim. 6:15). He is now seated at the right hand of God. Since he has been crowned as King, His kingdom has been set up. He is now reigning over His kingdom and will continue to reign until the last enemy shall have been conquered.

Then *cometh* the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet (1 Cor. 15:24-25).

Who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by

the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:3).

Again, “When he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God” (10:12). Christians are to run with patience the race that is set before them:

looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (12:2).

So, Christ is now the “only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords” (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14).

Deceased

Jesus: “Begotten” or Merely “Unique”?

Don Tarbet

A controversial matter relating to Christ is whether or not He is the “only begotten” Son of God, or is He the “only Son,” “one of a kind,” or “unique.” It is said that early secular writers introduced only begotten into the passages that refer to Jesus as “the only begotten Son,” and that the original word, *monogenes*, should be rendered “unique.” However, before the introduction of the idea of *monogenese* meaning something else besides “only begotten” (such as “unique”), there were writers who used *monogenes* with reference to Jesus’ birth, calling Him “begotten.” The concept of Jesus’ being “begotten” (with reference to the conception by Mary) is seen in the major translations of Scripture through the years. This article is written in defense of the rendering as seen in the KJV, ASV, NKJV, NASB, etc. Many modern (20th and 21st century) versions leave out only begotten and

render *monogenes* as “son,” “only son,” or “one of a kind,” and claim justification for doing so. I would not attempt to identify their motives, but believe they are in error.

The rest of this article will be an examination of Biblical words relating to this topic, as seen in (1) Promise, (2) Prophecy, and (3) Typology. A combination of thought from these three areas will help us to determine the validity of the proposition set forth in the foregoing paragraph.

Promise

We begin with the promise God made to Satan in Genesis 3:15 when He stated that the *seed* of woman would bruise the head of Satan. Without question, this is the first indication of a coming Savior, who would come from *woman*. Satan used a woman for the downfall of the human race, as he deceived Eve and tempted her to partake of the forbid-

den fruit (Gen. 3:1-6; 1 Tim. 2:14). God was going to redeem man through another woman, whose Offspring would offer salvation to man. Paul stated in Romans 16:20 that God is bruising Satan’s head through the work of Christ and the Gospel. No wonder Paul writes again in Galatians 4:4-5, “But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.” No reference here to the Son’s coming from a man, but from a woman. Everyone born into the world under normal conditions has an earthly father and is *begotten* by a father. Jesus’ earthly beginning would be through a woman—not a man and a woman. The implication from all this is, that there would be something special (or unique) about the coming of the Messiah, and it would not be unique because it was unusual or different, but unique because of the manner of

His conception and birth. His coming to earth would necessitate the involvement of miracles.

Another promise relating to God's Son is given through the prophet Samuel. In relation to God's covenant with David, Samuel recorded Nathan's prophecy to and about David: "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.... I will be his father, and he shall be my son" (2 Sam. 7:12, 14). Of course, Solomon was the next generation son of David, but God surely had more in mind than just Solomon. God is saying that a physical descendant of David, would ultimately sit on David's throne, and He (that Son) would rule from the right hand of God in heaven (which did/could not refer to Solomon). In Paul's great sermon in Antioch of Pisidia, he stated:

And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. Of this man's seed hath God according to *his* promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus (Acts 13:22-23).

Then, in verse 32, he again refers to God's *promise*, and then in verse 33 he quotes from Psalm 2:7, to show that it was Jesus who fulfilled the quoted promise: "Thou art my Son, this day I have begotten thee." **Begotten** in this passage (as in the quotation of Psa. 2:7 in Heb. 1:5 and 5:5) is translated from *gennaō*, one of the two words combined to form *monogenese*, translated in the older versions as "only begotten" in reference to Jesus. That Son has the *key* of David as He reigns over the kingdom

today (Rev. 3:7; 22:16). Again, we have reference to the "Son" and the "Seed." It was Jesus (begotten of God through Mary) Who was to become that Savior. He is unique because of this manner of begotten/birth, but this unique begettal must not be forgotten or minimized by translating it out of the Scripture. Jesus was the remote seed (offspring, lineage) of David, but He was the immediate seed of woman (Mary). She had no earthly husband at that time but conceived of the Holy Spirit for One to be "begotten" (ASV) or "born" (KJV) of her.

It is interesting to note, as we look at the very first New Testament reference to Jesus as the "only begotten" of the Father, that this descriptive phrase with the fact that Jesus was "made flesh and dwelt among us." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). The association and the implication were obvious. When the Word was *made flesh* and *dwelt among us* would be when He became the "only begotten of the Father." The apostles *beheld* Him as "the only begotten of the Father." They saw Him while He was in His fleshly state, wherein He manifested Himself as "the begotten Son." He thus became the Son when He came in the flesh—alluding to His incarnation (begettal and birth).

Prophecy

There are hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament that relate to the coming of the Savior, but the one that is pertinent to our study is that in Isaiah 7:14. Isaiah addressed the "house of David" (7:13), then said, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall

conceive, and bear a son, And shall call his name Immanuel." Any question as to whether or not this prophecy actually refers to Jesus is moot when we look at the inspired declaration of its fulfillment by Matthew. He writes concerning the birth of Jesus Christ and explains that, before Mary and Joseph "came together" (she was still a virgin), she was found with child of the Holy Spirit (Mat. 1:18). Mary had been visited by an angel who made the announcement of a son, who would be called the "Son of the highest," Who would fulfill the promise of one to sit upon David's throne (cf. 2 Sam. 7:12-14). He would be called the "Son of God" (Luke 1:31-35). The Revised Standard Version does not use *virgin* in Isaiah 7:14 but it should be in the text, as Matthew by inspiration quoted Isaiah and used *virgin* in the quotation—signifying that *virgin* is the correct rendering in Isaiah 7:14. Also, Matthew said this Son (Savior, Jesus) would be called "Emmanuel" or "God with us," as Isaiah 7:14 foretold.

The implication of all this is overwhelming. A virgin was to conceive a son of the Holy Spirit, Who would be called the "Son of God." He would have no earthly father, but God would be His Father, because God sent the Spirit to Mary to bring about the conception in this manner. It is certainly proper, therefore, to refer to Jesus as "the only begotten Son of God," as do other passages in the New Testament. In Acts 13:23-27 Paul referred to the fact that the *only begotten* One was raised to become the prophesied king. In Hebrews 1:5, the *begotten* One was above the angels. The Hebrews' writer quoted from Psalm 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14, both about His being *begotten* and becoming God's Son. As the "firstbe-

gotten” He came into the world at which time the “angels of God worshiped Him” (Heb. 1:6; Luke 2:13-14). *Begotten* and *firstbegotten* are thus used interchangeably. He was the *begotten* One when He came into “**the world.**” In Hebrews 1:5-7 we have several steps in the order of events. First, there is the *action*—the begetting. Second, there is the *relationship*—the Father and Son. Third, there is the *time*—when He came into the world. Fourth, there is the *response*—angels rejoicing.

Typology

The Old Testament reveals several types that have their anti-type or fulfillment in Christ. We see this especially in Genesis 22, when God told Abraham to go to the land of Moriah and offer his *only son*, Isaac, as a burnt offering. True, Abraham had another older son, Ishmael, who was born to Hagar, Sarah’s handmaid. Abraham is never said in Scripture to have begotten Ishmael but is said to have begotten Isaac (Mat. 1:2). As a matter of fact, when Ishmael was sent out, he could no longer be considered a son, and was *dead* in a similar fashion as was the prodigal son in Luke 15:24, who was *dead* while away. Further, there was a substitute offering involved instead of Isaac, as Christ is a substitute offering for us (2 Cor. 5:21). Abraham accounted Isaac as having been raised from the dead “in a figure,” as Abraham considered this *seed* to be dead (Heb. 11:19). Jesus being offered up (as the only begotten Son) was typified by Isaac being the “only begotten son” of Abraham. He was the only son, since Ishmael had been “cast out” (Gal. 4:30), and only Isaac’s relationship with Abraham is associated with the “promise” (Heb. 11:17). In these ways, Isaac was indeed Abraham’s

“only begotten” son. He was the only son of Sarah at this point, as the promise to Abraham was to be through Sarah. While Abraham later had other sons, at this time Isaac was the only one under consideration. Some have supposed that the translators saw this typology and therefore used the same language to describe Jesus in John 1 and other passages.

Some argue that *monogese* is a compound word, and since its latter component *genos* is used instead of *gennaos*, that the word takes on a different meaning entirely. However, in the Greek there are five other forms of *gennaos* that essentially mean the same thing. For instance, Thayer lists *genos* as one of them, and says that it means “offspring” (113). Luke quoted Paul’s use of this term in Acts 17:28 in reference to everyone being the “offspring” of God. Thus, Jesus is the “offspring” of God as seen in the word *genos*. He is the *monos* (only) One of God’s offspring that was “begotten” by Him, and the word is inclusive of that fact. All the words relating to *gennaos* have to do with begetting, birth, and so forth. Some seem to forget that forms of words change as they are used in a sentence. For instance, the verb form is not the same as the noun form. In regard to *genos*, it is the noun form of *gennaos* (a verb), so it absolutely must be different. As we have noted previously, God had other sons (e.g., Adam—Luke 3:38), and angels (Job 38:7). He now has spiritual sons who have been begotten by the Gospel (the work of God’s Spirit in the inspired Word), but none were begotten like Jesus—He is the “only begotten Son” of God in the manner described in Matthew 1 and Luke 1.

Regarding the compound word, *monogenes*, we remember that *mono* comes from *monos*, but it does not

change in meaning because it is combined with another word—making a compound word. *Mono* still means the same—*only*. Then just why do some insist that *genos* means anything other than *gennaos*, merely because it has been joined with another word? When one part of the compound word means *only* (and *mono* still means *only*), and the other part (*genos*) means *begotten*, why would the second part of the word change in meaning? If so, why? When one letter (s) is removed from *monos*, it is not questioned, but when one letter (n) is removed from *gennaos*, suddenly it does not mean the same anymore (according to some). Why don’t they make an issue of *mono* as well as *genos*? Could *monos* possibly mean “unequal,” “many,” or “varied”? Surely not! Some do not want the first part of the compound word changed, but the last part. “Both *genos* and *gennaos* derive from *ginomai* and are thus akin in meaning” (Woods, 32). As Solomon wrote, “The legs of the lame are not equal” (Pro. 26:7). At this point it is important to repeat the fact that the real difference in the two words (i.e., *genos* and *gennaos*) is the form—one is a verb and the other is a noun. Some believe Jesus was “begotten eternally” in heaven before the world was. We find no evidence of this in Scripture. Others have asked that if Jesus was the “begotten Son of God” before His physical birth, “Who was His mother?” Then some admit that Jesus was begotten physically but want to use **begotten** in other ways than its literal meaning. It indeed can be used figuratively, but only under the figure of a birth, as it is used that way in regard to our being begotten by the Word in the new birth (John 3:3-5; 1 Cor. 4:15; Jam. 1:18). The meaning of **only begotten Son**

seems perfectly clear and understandable from our good translations. The average reader is not capable of going back into the original language and getting into a debate over such a controversial subject, and it is not necessary to do so. We are not contending that every time we speak of Christ that we have to describe Him as “the only begotten Son,” but we should not deny that He is such or try to twist the meaning of begotten to make it mean something else.

In Summation

There are five summation points that need to be remembered: **First**, we need to remember that when considering literal and figurative terms, the literal must always precede anything figurative relating to it. So, there had to be a literal or physical begettall for us to draw from it in a figurative way. If there had been a begettall “in eternity,” it would have had to have been literal for there to have been figurative begettalls afterward. The literal physical begettall of Jesus was at conception/birth by the Holy Spirit, and the figurative spiritual begettalls take place in the lives of those who are begotten/born anew through the Holy Spirit’s Word (John 3:3-5; 1 Cor. 4:15; Jam. 1:18). If the resurrection, coronation, and ordination of Christ were “spiritual/figurative” begettalls, how do they relate to a physical/literal begettall?

Second, the use of “today” in Psalm 2:7 (which is quoted in reference to Jesus’ resurrection, coronation, and ordination, does not mean that a begettall was taking place on that day or in that moment. The passage is obviously quoted to identify the One being resurrected, crowned, and ordained, as the One named in this prophecy. *Today* does not apply

to the event when other inspired writers quoted it, but to the One who was begotten “when He came into the world.” Every word of this passage does not take on new significance when it is quoted relative to the special event the passage describes.

Third, we should remember that *genos* (the noun) absolutely has to be different in spelling from *gennao* (the verb). Remembering this fact makes all the difference in the world.

Fourth, Jesus coming in “the flesh” (John 1:14) is associated in the immediate context with His being “the only begotten” of God (the first reference in the New Testament to His being the “only begotten Son of God”). Is this merely coincidental, or is it telling us something?

Fifth, obviously, the phrase, **only begotten**, is not used in Scripture to describe Jesus only (i.e., it is applied to Isaac, et al). However, when it is used to describe Jesus, the phrase is invariably qualified by the Father’s singular relationship to Him. Jesus is the “only begotten of the Father,” “the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father,” “his [God’s] only begotten Son,” and “the only begotten Son of God” (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9). This fact should always be remembered when studying this matter.

Conclusion

While Jesus is *unique* because He was “begotten of God” by the Spirit’s causing Mary to conceive, He is not merely unique as some allege. He is unique because He was “begotten of God” in the manner described in Scripture.

Consider the following illustration. Suppose I decided I want to “gold plate” (verb form) a 1957 Chevrolet automobile. It would be the only one of its kind in the world.

So, I announce to the automotive world what I plan to do. I manage to complete the project and I have it documented as the first and only such car in the world. One hundred years later there is still no other car like it. When someone searches the records and learns what they can about it, he decides that since I originally used the words “gold plate,” and obviously the car is “gold-plated” he needs to re-write the certification document. He notes that I originally used the word plate, and that clearly, the car is “plated,” citing the difference in the two terms. True, the terms are different, for one is a verb and the other is a noun, which has an additional letter (d). When consulted about it, the lawyers state that since two words were combined and hyphenated and a letter was added, their meanings change, and the new word simply means “unusual.” From that time on, the automotive world is divided as to whether the car was gold-plated or merely “unusual.” The car is admittedly unusual, but more than that; it is unusual because it is “gold-plated.” The most accurate way to describe it is by saying it is “gold-plated.” Some examine the automobile and say, “That car is gold-plated,” and others say, “No, it is just unusual.” I intended to gold “plate” the car, and the final product was a gold “plated” car—the same word, only in different parts of speech. Why can the world not see that today in reference to *gennao* and *genos*, relative to *monogenes*?

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“You Ask Me How I Know He Lives”

Lee Moses

In a debate with atheist Christopher Hitchens, theist William Lane Craig sought to demonstrate the truth of God’s existence. In his opening speech, he utilized several good arguments, including the cosmological argument, the teleological or “design” argument, the moral argument, and the resurrection of Jesus. Unfortunately, Craig added to these arguments “the immediate experience of God.” He describes this as “the inner voice of God speaking to our own hearts.” Craig acknowledged, “This really isn’t an **argument** for God’s existence; rather, it’s the claim that you can **know** that God exists wholly apart from argument simply by experiencing Him.” Needless to say, Hitchens jumped all over this non-argument.

It is much like the song which some well-meaning but misguided brethren have sung, which repeats the question, “You ask me how I know He [Christ] lives?” To this, the answer is given, “He lives within my heart.” This is a very unsatisfactory answer to the question. Could not someone else answer, “Well, I feel in my heart that He does **not** live.” Does that person

therefore **know** He does not live? Feelings in one’s heart do not impart knowledge; feelings in one’s heart prove nothing. Jacob’s feelings in his heart convinced him that his son Joseph was dead, though he remained alive (Gen. 37:31-35). As Jeremiah said, “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9).

Yet, the truth that Jesus Christ lives is crucial to the truth and efficacy of Christianity. As the apostle Paul affirmed, “And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain.... And if Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins” (1 Cor. 15:14, 17).

Does a Christian have to respond that the way he knows Christ lives is because “He lives within my heart”? Does he have to trust his knowledge of such a crucial truth to a source that is “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked”? Should anyone ask how one knows Christ lives, consider the following.

By the Nature of Deity

Jesus proved His Divine approval and origin by means of the

miracles He performed (John 3:2; 20:30-31; Acts 2:22). Jesus Christ is Himself Deity (John 1:1-3). Although He as man was killed by means of crucifixion, was it possible that Deity could remain in the grave? By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the apostle Peter said, “No”: “Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it” (Acts 2:24).

Peter preached on Solomon’s Porch that the Jews were guilty of killing the “Prince,” or **Author** (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich 138-139), “of life” (Acts 3:15). They had demanded the release of one who **took** life and demanded the execution of the One Who **gave** life. But as He had power to give life at Creation, so had He power to give life at His death:

Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father (John 10:17-18).

The psalmist asked, “What man

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Notes From The Editor

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Morality

Ethics and morality come from either God or naturalism. The idea that naturalism can produce an ethical system to make moral choices is foolish. If naturalism cannot produce ethics and morality, then God must be where it originates. The naturalist, in denying the existence of God, is then advocating that nature and matter give rise to morality. However, ethics and morals cannot come from non-moral facts. Humanity cannot give a satisfactory answer as to oughtness and ethical and moral values.

Most people will admit there are certain acts which are wrong. Brother Thomas B. Warren used this very effectively in his debates when he would ask if the Nazis were guilty of real (objective) moral wrong in torturing and murdering six-million Jews (men, women, and children). If there is no God, then no one can state the Nazis were guilty of objective moral wrong. If they were not guilty of moral wrong, then they did what was morally right in their torture and murder of the Jews. This position is simply untenable to all right-thinking people. Yet, when asked what law the Nazis were guilty of violating, they have no such law, and there is no such law without God. In Warren's debate with Flew, since

Flew rejected God, brother Warren asked him what law the Nazis violated. There is no law of man they violated, thus by man's standard, the Nazis did not do anything wrong in their atrocities. The Nazis were guilty of real moral wrong only if there is a higher law (standard) than man's laws.

Humanism (in the Manifestos they have published) has denied the existence of God, the divinity of Jesus, the inspiration of the Bible, the existence of the soul, and life after death (heaven and hell). Without the existence of God, there is no purpose for mankind. In the second manifesto, they admit the difficulties of having a moral standard when they state, "Nazism has shown the depths of brutality of which humanity is capable. Other totalitarian regimes have suppressed human rights without ending poverty. Science has sometimes brought evil as well as good." Without God, there is no basis to say what Nazism or "other totalitarian regimes" have done in their "depths of brutality" or "suppressed human rights" is wrong. They claim, "Ethics is autonomous and situational needing no theological or ideological sanction." If ethics are autonomous then they cannot be situational and if situational then they cannot be autonomous. *Autonomous* is made up of two words meaning self and law; thus, ethics would be whatever I determine is right or wrong is based upon what I decide and nothing else. I become a law to myself. Situational means that ethics depends on the situation.

If ethics are autonomous, if I should determine that rape, murder, and such things are *right* for me, then it is both ethical/moral

and I am under obligation to do these acts. No one has the right to impose their law upon me nor can I impose my standard upon anyone else. However, most sane thinking individuals realize these acts are immoral; those actions are wrong. If, however, there is no God, then there is no basis upon which to state these acts are wrong.

If ethics are situational, then the argument of the Nazis is correct when they argued the murder of six million Jews was their society made its own laws based upon their needs and desires, thus their *situation* demanded them to murder the Jews (and others) and it would have been morally wrong for them to fail to murder them. Without an objective moral standard (which only comes from God), no one can state what the Nazis did was ethically/morally wrong.

Whether ethics are situational or autonomous, the result is that nothing can be stated to be morally wrong. This would be whether one discusses murder, abortion/infanticide, rape, incest, discrimination whether racial, sexual, or any other type, could be considered morally wrong. Thus, man (naturalism) cannot be the standard of morality. Jeremiah was correct when he wrote, "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: *it is not in man that walketh to direct*

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

his steps” (10:23).

Since man cannot direct His own way, then man needs someone to direct him. Since God created man (Gen. 1-2). As Creator, He knows man even better than man knows himself. The Psalmist states, “O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known *me*” (Psa. 139:1). The Hebrews’ writer puts it well: “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:13). Since God knows man, He knows what is in man’s best interest. Thus, He has the knowledge and right (as Creator) to establish moral standards for man. He has revealed a moral standard for man in the Scriptures, and we are under obligation to obey that standard. God has revealed all things that we need to know, both religiously and morally. Peter

wrote, “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). Paul also shows man has all things he needs when he writes:

All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Among the four things the Scriptures are properly used for is “instruction in righteousness.” *Instruction* is teaching. *Righteousness* is “justice, equitableness, fairness, uprightness” (BDAG) and applies itself to being right with God (obedience to God’s Word) and right living in relation to man (living a moral or ethical life). Thus, God has provided for us through the

Scriptures all things pertaining to life and to teach us in right living. When properly used, the Scriptures will make us not only a “man of God” and perfect (complete, one who is what God wants him to be), but also one who is completely equipped for “all good works” (which includes how we are to live ethical/moral lives).

True ethical and moral behavior can never come from rocks and non-living matter (naturalism and the evolutionary viewpoint). Ethics and morality can only come from the very nature of God Himself. God has revealed such in the Scriptures. As such, all men everywhere and at all times are obligated to live according to that ethical standard and at the end of time when Christ comes again, all men everywhere will be judged by that Word (John 12:48-50; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:16).

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Continued from Page 1
is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?” (Psa. 89:48). No man can deliver his own soul from the grave, but God can, as Deity has life-giving power. Although Jesus’ body was entirely human; yet, He was entirely Divine (John 1:14). Deity is self-existent and eternally existent. Jesus could not have remained in the grave.

Scripture, authored by God (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21), had foretold that Christ would be raised from the dead (Gen. 3:15; Psa. 16:10). God cannot lie (Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18); therefore, Christ had to be raised from the dead. He simply could not remain in the

grave—the nature of God would not allow it.

By the Previous Importance Christ Placed on His Death and Resurrection

Throughout His earthly ministry, Christ manifested His foreknowledge of His impending death and subsequent resurrection. “Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.... But he spake of the temple of his body” (John 2:19, 21). Jesus also stressed that both His death and resurrection were necessary. “And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you,

Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (12:23-24).

That Jesus spoke of the necessity of both His death and resurrection indicates His certainty that both would take place. He was correct in naming the perpetrators of His death and how He would die (Mat. 20:18-19; John 12:32-33). Such specificity of foreknowledge about His death demonstrates His predictions about His resurrection would likewise prove true, and He specifically stated that He would rise the third day (16:21; 17:23; 20:19).

Beyond this, when Christ placed such importance upon His resur-

rection, He also voided any significance that might be attached to His death were He not also to be raised from the dead. He could have equivocated, and merely made Himself a martyr. It might be granted that one might die to make a name for himself. And dying is not that difficult to do. But Christ was willing to stake everyone's belief in Him on His resurrection. Without being resurrected, He would have made Himself a liar. Without being resurrected, He could not be Lord. "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living" (Rom. 14:9).

By the Empty Tomb

Three days following the Lord's death, there was no body to be found (Luke 24:1-3). The only possible explanation for its absence is that Jesus was resurrected from the dead.

Some claim that Jesus never actually died upon the cross, but "swooned." This unconscious man was placed in a tomb, but when He revived, He allegedly rolled away the stone from the tomb door and left. However, the Romans who crucified Him took steps to ensure He was dead (John 19:31-34). Pilate, the Roman procurator of Judea, verified with the commanding centurion that Jesus was dead (Mark 15:44-45). It is laughable to assert that such experienced experts in crucifixion would be unable to discern whether one of their victims was dead. And it is impossible for someone who had just been through the trauma of crucifixion, including having His hands or wrists pierced through with nails, by Himself to roll away a

stone so large that several women could not move it (16:3-4). Neither could any other human being have removed the body from the tomb. Roman soldiers had been placed on guard around the tomb to ensure this did not happen (Mat. 27:62-66). The soldiers agreed to spread the story that Jesus' disciples stole the body while the soldiers slept (28:11-15), but it was a preposterous story. Roman soldiers were some of the hardest men on earth, well-trained and battle-tested—they were not going to fall asleep during their watch. Also, to fail in their duty would have cost them their lives (Acts 12:19). The fact that the Jewish leaders felt compelled to spread such a far-fetched story only demonstrates their incapability to produce a body.

These Jewish leaders were deeply troubled about the rapid spread of the Gospel. When Peter preached his sermon on the day of Pentecost, he appealed to the empty tomb of Jesus (2:29). Had they been able to produce a body, they could have nipped Christianity in the bud. Yet, because there was an empty tomb, Christianity grew exponentially.

By the Testimony of Reliable Witnesses

Just as the testimony of reliable witnesses provides some of the most airtight evidence in court cases, so the testimony of those who witnessed the resurrected Saviour assures us that He lives. They were reliable witnesses whose accounts cannot be denied.

The apostles were men of good character. They were not wealthy or educated, yet they earned favor among the people by means of

their blameless conduct and miracles which they performed (2:47; 4:21, 33). Incidentally, the miracles that they performed were testimonies from **God** that what they said was true (Mark 16:20; Acts 5:32; Heb. 2:3-4). However, consider the apostles' conduct—they taught the necessity of holy living, setting themselves forward for all to see as examples (Phi. 3:17). No one could say a word against their exemplary character and conduct (1 The. 2:1-12). If they had been lying about the resurrection of Jesus Christ the whole time, they would have condemned no one as severely as they condemned themselves. They staked their reputation and the veracity of everything they taught upon the truth of the resurrection. While addressing what the implications would be if there were no resurrection, neither general nor specifically of Jesus Christ, Paul wrote, "Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not" (1 Cor. 15:15).

What did they gain by telling people that Jesus was raised from the dead? They never became wealthy, but they did receive the privilege of being persecuted throughout their lives. All but one of the apostles were killed because of what they taught. What could possibly have motivated Saul of Tarsus to turn from Judaism to Christianity? He profited immensely as a rising leader among the Jews (Gal. 1:14), yet he left it all when he claimed he received a vision from the resurrected Christ (Phi. 3:4-8). Thereafter, he likewise received the apostles' lot of persecution and death. Surely the apos-

bles had better motivation to teach the resurrection of Jesus Christ than this. Might they have been motivated to such a degree because they knew what they taught was **true**? As Peter and John explained, “For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20). One can certainly find people willing to suffer and die for something others have **deceived** them into believing true. However, these men all acted based upon what they had seen and heard themselves. Of course, if what they taught was true, they gained infinitely—they gained eternity in heaven (Jam. 1:12; Rev. 2:10).

Additionally, the testimony came from numerous witnesses. Paul was able to refer to different groups who had seen the resurrected Christ (1 Cor. 15:5-8), and he did not mention them all (Mark 16:9, 12-13; Mat. 28:9-10). Paul mentioned a group of five hundred who had witnessed a resurrection appearance, most of whom were still living at the time he wrote and able to confirm any doubts one might have about the resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:6). The evidence was not only visible to those who had been disciples of Christ prior to his death. Paul said, “I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a cor-

ner” (Acts 26:26). Even those who had not seen the resurrected Christ themselves saw facts and evidence around the situation that could only lead them to one conclusion—Jesus had been raised from the dead. The accusers of Christ could not even produce **two** witnesses whose testimony agreed as to any alleged crime He had committed (Mark 14:55-59). Yet, testimony regarding the resurrection of Christ sprung up from numerous different groups—and their testimony was all in perfect harmony.

The witnesses of the resurrected Christ were also previous skeptics. His disciples did not expect an empty tomb. The only people who correctly understood His predictions of His resurrection were His enemies. When the disciples began hearing reports of others seeing a risen Christ, none except perhaps John (John 20:8) believed until they had seen Jesus with their own eyes (Mark 16:11, 13; Luke 24:23-24). Saul of Tarsus had been an extreme skeptic, and a violent one at that, before his conversion (Acts 26:9-11). Something significant happened to change the minds of these skeptics, and they all claimed that something was seeing the resurrected Christ.

All these factors come together to create a very sound, reliable base of testimony.

Conclusion

Can one know that Jesus Christ lives? Most certainly. And one does not have to rely upon untrustworthy feelings of the heart to know it. When we claim this is how we know Jesus lives, we build upon a flimsy foundation. We act like those who say, “I wouldn’t trade this feeling I have in my heart for a whole stack of Bibles.” Thankfully, one does not have to trust the feelings of his heart, he can trust the **facts** the Bible provides—facts on which true faith is built (Rom. 10:7; Heb. 11:1). Do you ask me how I know Christ lives? I know because the evidence proves it.

Works Cited

Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Chicago, IL: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000. 138-9. *Archehos*, here translated “*Prince*” by the KJV and ASV, is elsewhere rendered “*Author*,” as in Hebrews 12:2: “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* [the] faith...” As *archegos* can mean “one who has a preeminent position,” it can also mean “one who begins or originates.”
Union City, TN

[Editor’s Note: Many have changed the wording of this wonderful song to: “The Bible tells me so.” It would be just as accurate to use *evidence* instead of *Bible*; so, “The evidence tells me so.” Anything along that line instead of a subjective feeling that might be wrong or right.]

The Church in the New Testament

John Allen Hudson

Our Lord was introduced to the public scene by God, the Father, in conjunction with the baptism of John the Baptist. John’s work was one of reform, looking toward the

introduction of Jesus. A man of singular qualities and strong convictions, He was enabled to draw from the crowded cities of Palestine great masses of the people to

His haunts in the valley of the Jordan River. There was fulfilled in Him the statement of Emerson: “If a man write a better book, preach a better sermon, or build a better

mousetrap than his fellow man, though he live in the wilderness, the world will make a beaten path to his door.” The Palestinian world made a path to the door of John, or, rather, to his rude pulpit on the banks of the Jordan. We are told that there went out unto him Jerusalem and all Judea and the regions round about, and were baptized in Jordan, confessing their sins. John laid upon them the demand that they bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. He preached the message that the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

For many long years, the people of Israel had been subject to one nation and then to another. They had not really enjoyed an independent national life since the destruction of their kingdom by Nebuchadnezzar. They were subject to the powers about them that rose and waned. From the Medo-Per-sian domination, they passed beneath the sway of the Seleucid dynasty in Syria and were trampled down by this latter power until the time of the rise of the Roman Empire. They were under this Roman empire when John began to preach. When he proclaimed the kingdom as being at hand, it pleased the fancy of very many in Palestine to believe that he alluded to a revival of the Judaic kingdom as it had been in the days of its glory. It is a plain thought in the New Testament to the careful student that this confusion about the kingdom continued during the public ministry of Christ. The Jews tried to interpret the message of John and of Jesus about the kingdom as alluding to the kingdom of old, the kingdom which their forefathers had known. Jesus preached the kingdom as being at hand, but

He understood it differently. At least once during His ministry, there were those of His own nation who tried to take Him by force and to make Him a king. That was because they were thinking of an earthly kingdom, and they wanted to have relief from the oppressions of foreign rulers and to rid their country of the tramp of the Roman legions. Their sighing for liberty was very great. Jesus had the fullest sympathy, but He had in mind another kind of freedom, as we read in John 6. He also understood the kingdom to be spiritual. He said to them that the kingdom which He preached came not with observation. It did not come with pomp and power or with show and earthly glory. Earthly kingdoms come with observation. Jesus said that His kingdom would not be like that. The reason is that it is built upon the spirits and hearts of men and women. Jesus said: “Behold, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21).

Jesus continued to use *kingdom* with a peculiar connotation, while many of His fellow countrymen, and even His disciples, tried to interpret the idea in the light of their national history and their then state of vassalage to the Roman Empire. Jesus preached that the kingdom was at hand during His personal ministry, the same as had John the Baptist. During the time of His public preaching, Jesus used *church* but twice. I here refer you to the first of these passages:

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say *that thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the

prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock [the rock of the confession of Jesus’ divine Sonship] I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Mat. 16:13-19).

Even in this famous passage, Jesus identified the church with the kingdom which He had been preaching as at hand. He made the church and the kingdom interchangeable, saying that the keys of the kingdom of heaven would apply to the church. Let it also be noted that the central divine truth of the Sonship of Jesus was the bedrock truth of the kingdom’s being established or of the church’s being set up. The name of Peter meant “a stone.” So, Jesus used *petros*, which is masculine. And then, taking off on the meaning of Peter’s name and applying the transferred thought of the great truth which he had confessed of the Sonship of Jesus, he said: “Upon this rock [not upon you] I will build my church.” The word for *rock* in the second instance was *petra*, feminine gender. So, making a play on Peter’s name and transferring the thought of the grand confession throughout, Jesus arrived at the conclusion of building His

church, which would be done, because of His divine Sonship, despite all opposition, even the gates of hell. And there had been much opposition. The Jewish leaders were dead set against Him. They had reported him everything else, being willing to concede that He was a prophet. His divinity they would not allow, but it was nevertheless true, and the mission of Jesus would be fulfilled despite them and in spite of the gates of hell. That mission was to call out of the world the people whom God would save. *Church* means the “called out,” from the verb *kaleo*, which means “to call,” and the prefix *ex*, which means “out of” or “from.” So, Jesus would call out His people, would establish them in spite of all opposition.

Note the language again: “I will build my church.” Now, whose was it to be? Christ’s church, of course. He would do the calling out, and He would do the cleansing by His own precious blood, which would take away the sins of those whom He called by the Gospel. This was no mere sectarian view of the redeemed. He meant the saved of all generations from the time He should begin the calling until the end of the world. In defining the term from which we get the expression “will build,” Dr. Thayer says that it means the building of the church from the foundation to the superstructure, from the first work until the last soul is called and saved by Christ. The church of Christ as He used the term here is big enough and broad enough to save all mankind who will respond to His invitation. There is nothing narrow or mean about it. It is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ and cannot successfully be claimed

by anybody on earth who would sectarianize it and reduce it to any bounds less than to comprehend all the saved. I believe in this church universal, this church of the Lord Jesus Christ, which He purchased with His own blood.

Concerning this institution, Paul said that it is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone and that it is built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2:20-22). It is God’s house; it is God’s building. Again, he said: “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). Again, Paul said to the elders of the church at Ephesus: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).

Since in Scripture the church is the one which Jesus said He would build, it is His in fact; and since it is also called the “church of God” or the “church of the Lord,” only such designations as are given it in Scripture ought to be used. It is, from my point of view, very unfortunate that the Christian world (so-called) should have fallen into any confusion at all about this grand and glorious institution which was established upon the divine Sonship of Jesus and for the salvation of all who would accede to the demands of Jesus by the call of the Gospel. Now, it was not possible for the enemies of Jesus to prevent His building it, and it cer-

tainly is wrong for the would-be friends of Jesus to try to sectarianize it and to confuse the world about it. Let us come all the way back to the Bible and call divine things by divine names and no other. Let us unite upon the grand claims of the Gospel concerning the church universal, and yield obedience only to the great head of the church, Jesus Christ, our Lord. That is the plea which I make. Speaking of the great power which saves us, Paul said:

Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all (Eph. 1:20-23).

So, Jesus is the head of the church. It is His body. He is the Savior of the body, Paul tells us in Ephesians 5.

I am a firm believer that the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest institution in the world. Someone has called it God’s eternal church. There is ground for that belief in this passage: “Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end” (3:21). Kingdoms rise and wane, but the glorious church of God goes on down through the ages. Ideologies flourish, and nations are baptized in blood in support of them, and then they perish, but the glorious church of Christ goes on to heal and to save.

Deceased

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Whose Servant?

Lester Kamp

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? (Rom. 6:16).

The simple truth is that we become servants to whomever we present ourselves in obedience. This is true whether we are servants of sin or servants of righteousness. Remember that being the servant of sin has its consequence—death; being a servant of righteousness, however, brings eternal life. In consideration of these consequences, who would choose to be a servant of sin?

Next, Paul thanks God that these Romans had changed their allegiance and their master. The KJV is not as clear as the ASV in this verse. Paul is certainly not thanking God that the Romans had been sinners, but Paul gives thanks to God for the change these Christians in Rome had made. They were servants of sin, but are now servants of righteousness unto God.

But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching

whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:17-18—ASV).

Note in these verses that the obedience that caused them to become servants of righteousness involved two things. First, it was “from the heart.” True obedience comes from the heart; it is not merely outward compliance to God’s instructions. Obedience that results in a change of spiritual masters is genuine and sincere—from the heart. In the Bible the heart is the part of man that thinks (Mat. 9:4), reasons (Mark 2:8), believes (Rom. 10:10), and understands (Mat. 13:15). Here in Romans 6:17, the heart is what prompts proper obedience.

Second, this obedience is “to that form [pattern] of teaching.” This is a reference to the fact that one’s obedience in baptism (the act of obedience in which one ceases being a servant of sin and becomes a servant of righteousness) follows the pattern of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (6:3-4). This is obedience to the Gospel. Without that obedience, salvation is not possible.

When Jesus comes to judge the world, it will be “In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 The. 1:8). Furthermore, we are told that Jesus is “the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9). If we are going to be saved, we must be obedient to the Gospel.

In Romans 6:18, stress is again given to the fact that Christians are “servants of righteousness.” Christians are no longer under the law of their previous master; Christians have the responsibility of serving only their new master. Dividing one’s service between sin and righteousness is not possible (Mat. 6:24). Once a person has obeyed from his heart the pattern of doctrine and has entered into the service of righteousness unto God, he is to concentrate on serving only God by doing only righteousness.

Paul then gives an illustration of this truth “after the manner of men” (i.e., by using something familiar in everyday life). He uses this illustration because he real-

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Notes From The Editor

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Gideon

When the children of Israel went down into Egypt, they became a great nation. At the appropriate time, God sent Moses to Pharaoh telling him to “Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go” (Exo. 5:1). While Pharaoh initially refused, God changed Pharaoh’s mind by a powerful arm by bringing ten plagues upon the Egyptians. After having to wander in the wilderness for forty years because of their own sin and rebellion against God, that generation who came out of Egypt died off and a new generation crossed the river Jordan and conquered the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua. After Joshua died, “there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel” (Jos. 2:10). As a result, they worshipped and served the idols of other lands. Because of their wickedness, God sent nations to oppress and spoil them. Now that they are greatly distressed God “raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them” (2:16).

The fifth of these judges was Gideon of the tribe of Manasseh, also named Jerubbaal. We find the record of his judgeship in Judges 6-8. As some background to Gideon becoming judge, it had been forty

years (Jud. 5:31) since the defeat of Jabin at the hands of the Israelites under Barak and Deborah’s leadership (Jud. 4-5). While the Israelites had been in bondage multiple times, they never learned their lesson to learn that unfaithfulness to God leads to oppression. Yet, many Christians today fail to learn from history. We should realize the peril of evil and unfaithfulness to God. Without Him, we are weak. We are never so far from evil that we do not have the possibility of apostatizing. The temptation to sin and thus fall away is strong and we must “take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). So, Christians need to continue to grow and keep on striving.

Israel had become prosperous by being faithful to God. As Solomon said, “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Pro. 14:34). While they were faithful, God blessed them. Israel allowed the business of living and making a living to absorb their time and effort. They soon have no time left for God and spiritual matters. Jesus spoke of this taking place in the parable of the sower and the seed that fell among thorns (Mat. 13:22; Luke 8:14). Today we become so busy with the cares of this life, we no longer have time for God. We go here and there for this and that making us run around all day long. We are so busy with this world and the cares of this world, that we have slowly choked God out of our lives. Many times, we do not even have time to come to Bible classes and barely make it to worship.

After a while, we convince ourselves that these material cares of this world are our chief aim in life. Satan slowly deceives us and soon we start defending our need to do worldly things instead of spiritual

things. God had to take away Israel’s privileges to make them realize their strength resided in God and not their prosperity. It is a lesson Christians are to learn and apply. Jesus said, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mat. 6:33). He would add to this, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23). We need to, like Jesus, “who went about doing good” (Acts 10:38), follow His lead.

God had a means by which He brought Israel’s failure home to them. We observe this in every aspect of life. There is the principle: “for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7). If a man neglects his fields, weeds will take over and his crops will be ruined; if he neglects his business, his creditors will take it. For Israel, when they neglected God and began worshipping and serving idols, God brought their failure home by having a nation oppress them. Today, when we think more about material matters and make our decisions in life based on those worldly things, then God has ways to bring the lessons home to us also. We see the rising crime rates (murders, stealing, etc.), the failed marriages raising and those who simply decide to live together without the benefit

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

of marriage, abortion infanticide and euthanasia, vile unnatural affections of homosexuality, moral corruption in government, and on and on the wickedness that vexes the souls of the righteous. Nations and governments cannot long exist when such vileness runs rampant in society.

When Israel is humiliated, they then think about God. "And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD" (Jud. 6:6) It seems that this is often the situation of those who have fallen away or do not have God in their lives. They must be brought low before they will recognize their need for God. When some calamity happens in their life, they then will think about God.

God's first answer was the message of a prophet. Prior to this humiliation, a prophet would have been despised by the Israelites. During their time of prosperity, they felt self-sufficient, they did not believe they needed God or anyone else. Only after being humbled by God sending an oppressing nation are they ready to hear and listen to the prophet. Many preachers have experienced being sent for by one who is in difficulty that before that problem would never have thought of a preacher and had no use for them.

Gideon is then visited by an angel of Yahweh.

And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which *was* in Ophrah, that *pertained* unto Joash the Abi-ezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide *it* from the Midianites. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD *is* with thee, thou mighty man of valour. And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be

with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where *be* all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family *is* poor in Manasseh, and I *am* the least in my father's house. And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me. Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set *it* before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again (Jud. 6:11-18).

Through this visit, Gideon was able to get a vision of God and then to duty. These two always go together. When a man has no proper vision of God there is no sense of responsibility and thus duty. This is what happened with Isaiah. Isaiah saw the Lord and His holiness which led Isaiah to respond, "Here am I; send me" to God's question, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Far too many today have no true vision of Yahweh.

Since the middle of the last century, we changed from a nation that had respect, to a nation that does not respect anything. Children are not taught respect in the home as they are growing up. Parents followed Dr. Benjamin Spock and his liberal, political, childcare and child-rearing books more than they trusted and followed God and His Book. Schools, influenced by John

Dewey (a leftist believer in pragmatism, signer of the original Humanist Manifesto, and one of the most influential people in our educational system) removed God and replaced Deity with evolutionary and humanistic thought. This resulted in more disrespect and ungodliness. If man is simply an evolved animal, then before long he will act like an animal, and they did. This also had its effect in the political realm with dishonesty, crime, and self-serving politicians. It is very difficult to respect many if not most of the Washington elites. We also had the riots (over race, Vietnam, and other causes) leading to more disrespect in the nation. All these and more also resulted in a growing disrespect of all spiritual matters.

The church itself came under attack with the erroneous claim that people wanted the man and not the plan. The leaders of the church constantly came under attack. It was even claimed by some preachers that elders did not have authority in the local congregations. Often it was the elders' authority was only by example. Sadly, many congregations did not help in the matter as they selected men to the eldership who did not qualify; some were selected only because they were good businessmen. Thus, with a generation that already lacked respect for authority of any kind, and with so many elderships having a lack of knowledge of God's Word and the Lord's church, it naturally led to a growing disrespect of all things spiritual including God. Without a clear vision of God and His greatness and holiness, man never saw the duty and responsibility he has to God. We need more today who will be like Gideon and Isaiah of old.

MH

Continued from Page 1
ized their difficulty in understanding. After all, they were in the flesh. The illustration he uses here is about slavery and the recognition of ownership. He wrote:

I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness (Rom. 6:19-20).

If a slave is sold from one master to another, he no longer has any responsibility to serve his old master. His obligation now is to his current owner, not his previous one. Formerly, these Christians were the servants of sin which persistently grew worse and worse (“from iniquity unto iniquity”), but now they are servants of righteousness which leads consistently to holiness (*sanctification*—ASV; i.e., being set apart from sin unto righteous). Paul is saying that since our master has changed we need to act like it. Our lives will reveal whom we recognize as our master.

As long as we served sin, we had no concern or desire to practice righteousness. In that condition, we were still accountable before God, but we, at that time, had no regard for doing what was right before God. When we became servants of righteousness, we should have no longer any concern or desire to practice sin. As servants of sin, we were free with regard to righteousness. As servants of righteousness, we are free concerning sin.

Paul closes this sixth chapter of Romans by urging the Romans to recognize the catastrophe which would result were they not to devote themselves to serving righteousness. Paul wants these brethren to think about the consequences of their behavior. All behavior has results. Paul told the Galatians:

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).

To think that it does not matter what we do is to deceive ourselves. Behavior always has consequences. A life characterized by the works of the flesh (sin) will result in eternal consequences. A life devoted to righteousness in service to God will be eternally rewarded. Think about how we live and what we do! Give this serious thought!

These Romans Christians were now ashamed of the things they formerly practiced. While they were servants of sin, shame was not present. They had formerly enjoyed the temporary pleasures of sin, but now as servants of God, they recognized the shamefulness of their former deeds. A return to their **former** way of life would be assuredly fatal. Sin is deceptive. It promises benefit, life, and happiness, but it surely brings death. Even the pleasures of sin are fleeting. Moses chose to endure the trials of the people of God rather than to “enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (Heb. 11:25-28).

The result of righteous living

is “fruit unto holiness” (*sanctification*—ASV; a distinct, clear severing of our involvement in sin and a distinct and clear setting apart unto doing what is right). The end of this holy living is eternal life. Sin on the other hand has wages. That which is earned by living in sin is death. There are some other results from a life of sin which may occur. There may be mental, emotional, or physical consequences in this life that result from sinful behavior, but there will always be the eternal consequence of death—eternal separation from God and all that is good.

We know the result of a life of sin is death. We also know the result of a life of righteousness is eternal life. How strange it is, knowing these end results, that so many willingly enter into lives of sin but few pursue the way that leads to life everlasting (Mat. 7:13-14)! Why is it that we have to beg and plead with so many men and women today to leave their lives of sin and become obedient to the Gospel of Christ that they might have life?

“The gift of God *is* eternal life through [*in*—ASV] Jesus Christ our Lord.” Gifts are not earned, but something needs to be done by the recipient to enjoy the blessings of the gift. Untying the bow, tearing the wrapping paper, and opening the box certainly are not acts by which one earns whatever is given. Obeying the commands of God in the Gospel of Christ does not earn salvation, but obedience is the only way we can begin to enjoy the spiritual blessings which are in Christ (Eph. 1:3).

Aurora, CO

Adam and Eve: Temptation and Sin

George W. DeHoff

Text: Genesis 3:1-13, 23-24

The exact date of the creation of the cosmos is a profound secret hidden in the depth of the eternal ages and known only to Almighty God. [The dates are generally given between 6-10,000 years—editor.] We know exactly how long the earth existed before Adam and Eve were placed upon it as they were created on the sixth day. We do not know how long this original pair remained in the Garden of Eden; however, we know “all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years” (Gen. 5:5). God spoke the earth into existence, and He created Adam and Eve. Their first home was a beautiful garden—a veritable paradise on earth. It was not good for them to be idle, so God told Adam to dress and care for the garden. This work was not toil, sweat, and blood, however, for they could eat the fruit of the tree of life and have their bodies renewed from day to day. God forbade no good thing, but only commanded that which was good and forbade that which would do evil to Adam and Eve.

Temptation

Into the happy home of Adam and Eve came the tempter. It is thought that he was once an angel himself and had fallen until he became the chief of all fallen or evil spirits. Anyway, Satan came into the garden, taking the form of a serpent—a serpent walking upon legs of some sort. Satan assumed an interest in Eve and asked about the prohibitions placed upon her. He got Eve to *look* upon the forbidden fruit. It is always wrong for

God’s people to look upon that which is evil, and nearly always ends disastrously. He next told Eve it was *good* for food. The next step after looking upon evil is always to be told that it is not so bad; it is really good, and it just depends on the viewpoint, anyway. Eve was next told it would *make her wise*. This was partly true since a man who sticks his hand into the fire will then know more about pain than the man who does not. Naturally, Adam and Eve would know what it was like to feel ashamed, flee from God, lose their home, and finally die. All this knowledge they would not have had, had they not harkened to Satan. It is not true, though, that they became as wise as God. That is a lie Satan told. Satan’s next step was to say: “Ye shall not surely die.” This is the first sermon on the impossibility of apostasy. Satan taught that these children of God could not be hurt, no matter what they did. *Temptation* means to incite to evil, to create a desire for that which is wrong. Satan had skillfully done this.

Sin

Sin is a transgression of law. Sin cannot be inherited, though it seems that a disposition that will lead one to sin can be inherited. Sin cannot be committed by an infant, an idiot, or a person not having sufficient mental capacity to understand right and wrong—to comprehend the law which has been given. Eve transgressed the law which God gave. She ate the fruit which He had forbidden. Some have wondered why God

chose to suspend the destiny of the human race upon so simple a thing as eating or not eating fruit. Naturally, we cannot know the mind of God, save as He has graciously revealed it. The cause, however, of this sin is deeper than eating fruit—it is a condition of the heart. The fruit only gave **occasion** for this condition to manifest itself. God did not suspend the destiny of mankind upon something so profound as to be misunderstood but upon something so simple that no one could misunderstand. When Eve ate, it was, therefore, clearly proved that she chose to pay no attention to God. It could not have been a case of misunderstanding; it was a case of **transgression**. (I presume modern digressives would call this a case of *progression*.) Eve gave the fruit to Adam. He was not deceived, but he ate, anyway (1 Tim. 2:14). He transgressed; he rebelled.

Shame

Sin always brings shame. Sooner or later those who sin are ashamed of themselves. God is ashamed of them. Good people are ashamed of them. If the devil can be ashamed, I suppose he is ashamed of evil people. The final punishment of evil people is called “everlasting shame.”

When Adam and Eve came to themselves and realized that they had sinned, they tried to hide from God. God is found in every place, and though “I take the wings of the morning” (Psa. 139:9) and fly unto the uttermost part of the earth; behold, thou art there. “All things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of

him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:13). Evil people choose darkness for their deeds. There is far more drunkenness, dancing, adultery, and evil of every sort in the darkness. People want their evil deeds to remain in the dark, but with God, there is no darkness (Psa. 139:12).

Excuses

Each person thinks there are some mitigating circumstances whenever he sins. Though he may see the stark reality and terrible evil in the sins of other folks, he generally can at least partly excuse himself. Modern psychologists have attempted to explain all sin on the basis of shifting the responsibility—passing the buck—and claiming that outside circumstances and forces cause one to do evil. They overlook the evil heart, the force within the man. Adam and Eve tried to evade their responsibility. **They** were commanded; **they** understood; **they** transgressed. Adam tried to shift the blame to his wife. Eve tried to place the responsibility upon the serpent. Neither confessed, “I have

sinned”; neither recognized his own responsibility. Sin ought to be acknowledged. Such a confession should be as wide as the knowledge of the sin. There is no good reason why a man should confess his sins to me unless I am in some way concerned. Let him confess his sins to God and to those who have been harmed. Adam and Eve should have confessed their sins to God and begged for mercy. This they did not do.

Punishment

All persons connected with transgression will receive the amount of punishment deserved. The devil in this case took the form of a serpent. The serpent had his legs knocked from under him and had to go on his belly and eat dirt. Enmity was placed between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. Ah, how we like to kill a snake! And apparently, it pleases a snake to get a mouthful of a man’s heel!

On Eve, God laid the burdens of childbearing. “And thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Gen. 3:16). It is

better to recognize responsibility and discharge it than to rebel against it or insist that it does not exist. Adam had to work before he sinned, but now he would have to sweat; thorns and thistles would grow, and his work would be difficult work. The earth was changed from a Garden of Eden into a vale of tears. Upon Adam and Eve and all their posterity came the punishment of physical death. The tree of life no longer yielded its ambrosial fruit to keep their bodies renewed. We can eat no more of its fruit until we stand on the other shore. What we lost in Adam we may gain in Christ.

The awfulness of sin can be seen in the punishment of Adam and Eve, the lives it has ruined, the suffering it brings upon innocent people, and in the price paid for our redemption. It can be seen in any correct picture of eternal torment.

Every Christian should arm himself to fight against temptation and should avoid the appearance of evil.

Deceased

Evolution: A “Tongue-in-Cheek” Look

Tim Smith

Let me see if I have this right—modern scientists say that the Bible is wrong about the origins of the Universe and man? They argue that man could not possibly have been created by a living God, that the earth is not possibly as young as 6,500 years, and that man definitely evolved from lower forms of life into what he is today. They contend that it is ridiculous for us to “have faith

in” a God whom we cannot see, and we should reject the oldest known historical document with it all notions of a Power above. Often, we see ridiculed the Biblical doctrine of creation in publications and on broadcasts originating from *scientific* sources. One of the favorite methods of such ridicule employed by the *scientific community* these days involves selecting someone who is

so totally out in left field within the *creationist* camp that few creationists know of them, let alone agree with them, and then exploiting obviously erroneous points in their answer to the problem of origins. Though there is damage done by “Bible-believing” men who are wrong, such exploitation is, in my opinion, unfair. Still, for all the *offense* of the opponents of the Bible ac-

count of Creation, and all of the attacks on the ignorant among us, what is their story? What are they saying? Let us take a “tongue-in-cheek” look at the doctrine of evolution.

Billions and billions of years ago (just how many we cannot say, and even when we do say we are forever changing our minds), there existed a vast expanse of “nothingness.” The universe did not exist (well, at least not as we have it now). But even though the universe did not exist, and even though it was a vast expanse of nothingness, in this nothingness which did not exist there were some floating particles, microscopic no less, just aimlessly floating around. They must have always been there, for we cannot explain their origin—they certainly were not created by a Creator! They floated around for, well, we do not know how long! Then one day they collided, and upon their chance meeting in the vast expanse of nothingness in which they existed, there was a great explosion. Out of this explosion came the sun, earth, moon, and all the other stars, all the other planets, and even life began by a series of chemical reactions growing out of the “big bang.” It is truly amazing that this explosion occurred in a universe that did not exist and was but a vast expanse of nothingness, but it must have.

The life that came into being as a result of this big bang was formless and microscopic, but that is not a problem, as there were no people around to look at it anyway. It just floated aimlessly about in the ocean (which must have been formed as a result of

the explosion of the *things* floating around in the Universe which did not exist). One day this *life* decided that it was tired of floating around, so it grew fins to propel it. (This is quite an accomplishment, seeing that it had no intelligence! It must have decided that it wanted to think and therefore have grown a brain.) Later, it tired of being propelled without a sense of direction, so it grew a tail. Then it grew curious about the world around it and evolved eyes to see it. Seeing made it want to hear, so it grew ears. It had a strong desire to know more about itself, and when the tides carried it close to shore it used its self-evolved fins and tail to steer it to dry land. Arriving at dry land, it had a desire to go further inland, so it grew feet and legs. Upon journeying a short distance inland, it saw an apple tree. We do not know where the apple tree came from, or how it came to be an apple tree, but there it was! The life wanted to pick an apple, so as it had traded its tail for legs so it traded its fins for arms and hands. It picked an apple, and something told it that the apple would probably taste good, so it evolved a mouth and digestive system and ate the apple. And that is how we came to exist, we just kept changing and changing as the need arose and here we are!

There are some problems with this scenario, and it is subject to change with each new *discovery* that comes along, but in one form or another all scenarios involving evolution essentially fit into the general framework of this illustration. There is no *scientific* answer to the questions concerning the “uncaused first

cause.” Where did the vast expanse of nothingness come from? Where did the particles floating around in the vast expanse of nothingness come from? What caused the big bang? Where did the process begin? Why did it begin? Is it possible that all that is came from nothing and by accident? If there was an intelligent force behind the origin of the universe, what or who was it? Evolution is theory, it has never been verified, it cannot be duplicated, and it is an unproven assertion. [At best it is a poor hypothesis and has never reached the state of being a theory—editor.] If you accept it as fact and if you view *scientific discoveries* in the light of your assumed origins position that evolution is true and the Bible is false, then your conclusions will tend to support evolution. If, however, you view each piece of evidence independent of evolution, and allow it to stand or fall on its own, then the puzzle pieces do not fall into place nearly so neatly. I believe the Bible. I believe that God created the world as Moses in Genesis said. Evolution does not harmonize with this. Therefore, I am not an evolutionist. If *they* can answer the questions about the uncaused first cause sensibly, and when they stop asking me to “accept by blind faith” the existence of particles floating around in a vast expanse of nothingness (by the way, that did not exist) billions of years ago, maybe we can begin to decipher the problem. They have not stopped, and the problem is not likely to be resolved to their satisfaction any time soon.

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For What Have Some Given Up the Lord

Charles Pogue

It is sad when one hears the Gospel of Jesus Christ, believes it, understands its conditions, but refuses to obey it. As grievous as this is, there is one thing even more heartbreaking. What would it be? It would be when someone has obeyed the Gospel, been faithful to it for a certain period of time, but suddenly the Lord loses His importance to them, they put other things ahead of loving and obeying Him, and eventually apostatize completely.

The Bible is filled with warning after warning not to forsake the Lord nor to put anything in this world ahead of Him. A question of why one will leave the Lord is answered by the apostle John in 1 John 2:15: “Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

Both you and I have heard the statement one cannot straddle the fence with God on one side and the world on the other. As Jesus said, one cannot serve both God and mammon (Mat. 6:24). An individual who puts anything ahead of his love for God will almost certainly

find one day God is gone from his life and thoughts completely. For such an individual to turn back to God on their own or with the rebuke and exhortation of another will sometimes never come to be. Two New Testament passages state this as clearly as it can be said.

The first one is 2 Peter 2:20-22.

For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

The other passage is Hebrews 6:4-6.

For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance;

seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame.

The Old Testament prophet Ezekiel describes the fate of such individuals in Ezekiel 18:24.

But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, *and* doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked *man* doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

It is difficult to understand why anyone would choose to know and do the truth and then turn away from it. Paul wrote this very thing to the Galatians. “But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?” (Gal. 4:9). It makes no sense.

The Hebrews’ writer stated the absolute commitment one must have to not turn back to the weak and beggarly elements. “Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not

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Notes From The Editor

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Gideon

In our previous editorial, we considered Gideon (also named Jerubbaal) and his judgeship recorded in Judges 6-8. Israel had become unfaithful to Yahweh resulting in His bringing an oppressing nation over them—the Midianites. Israel soon cries unto God who sends them a prophet (6:8). Gideon is then visited by an angel of Yahweh by which he was able to get a vision of God. Only with a proper vision of God does man derive the proper sense of responsibility to Him.

The first act Gideon does it to tear down his father's altar to Baal. "And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it" (6:25). Before one can build up, there must first be a tearing down or destroying the evil that is present. In Jeremiah's commission, God told him, "See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant" (Jer. 1:10). The first four items deal with tearing down the evil that is present before he can do the last two: build

and plant. When Paul told his son in the faith, Timothy, to "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season," he added that in the preaching the Word there would be the need to "reprove, rebuke, exhort" (2 Tim. 4:2). Timothy had to tear down the altars of sin and wickedness before he could exhort.

There is, however, a place for both negative and positive. Gideon could not simply tear down the altar to Baal and put nothing in its place. So, after Gideon tears down the altar, he then builds an altar to God and offers worship to Him. "And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down" (Jud. 6:26). Some might have tried to tear down the altar of Baal and put nothing in its place. However, this simply would not work as it leaves one aimless and desolate. Others would try and leave the altar to Baal there and build an altar to God by the side of it. No doubt we all know of those who have obeyed the Gospel but then continued to live like the world. They have not learned what John taught, "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15). They have never really set their affections on things above (Col. 3:2). Neither of these alternatives is acceptable and neither will be successful. Gideon had to tear down the altar to Baal and build an altar to God.

Gideon had to first recover Israel's lost ideals and restore their distinctiveness. Without these

principles, Israel had no hope as a nation and as God's people. Gideon's father (Joash) also helped in this restoration as he challenged the men of the city who desired to put Gideon to death for tearing down the altar to Baal by saying, "Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst *it is yet* morning: if he *be* a god, let him plead for himself, because *one* hath cast down his altar" (Jud. 6:31). Baal was not god and could do nothing; Yahweh is God. Baal should have been able to take care of one who defiled (tore down) his altar and should not have to depend on you. Yahweh would be able to protect His altar as we see with Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10). Israel as a nation was Yahweh's people, not Baal's.

God showed Gideon that He would save Israel through him by the dew and the fleece. Gideon has an army of 32,000 soldiers. With these 32,000 Gideon is going to war against the Midianite army of 135,000 (a 4.2 to 1 ratio). One would think this was already a big advantage to the Midianites. Human wisdom would say the more people a nation has in its army, the greater the chance for victory. Man thinks there is power in numbers. In most cases, when one removes God from the picture,

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

man's thinking would generally be correct. However, lest Israel thinks this, God says to Gideon, "The people that *are* with thee *are* too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me" (Jud. 7:2). Israel had to realize they could not save themselves. God did not want them to be filled with pride (Pro. 16:18) and instead, trust in God and His deliverance. The Lord's church needs to realize the battle is God's and the honor for the victory over sin and Satan is to be His and not ours. However, too many times we forget this basic principle and rely on our wisdom and strength instead of God's. Likewise, we claim honor for ourselves instead of giving glory and honor to God. When we erroneously think we must rely on our wisdom and strength, it will sometimes cause us to fail to enter battles that need to be fought. We always need to remember the wonderful promises of God.

Since there were too many for God to give the Midianites into their hands, Gideon, as instructed by God, says to his army, "Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead" (Jud. 7:3). We are informed there were 22,000 who were "fearful and afraid" who left before the battle. We quickly learn the battle against sin, evil, and wickedness is no place for the faint-hearted. Paul uses four military terms of admonitions to the Corinthians when he wrote, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13). He would tell his

son in the faith, Timothy, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7) and then a few verses later state, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2:1). God knew the battle is not for the faint-hearted even as it is not today.

Having reduced the number to now 10,000 (a 13.5 to 1 ratio), God still says, "The people *are* yet *too* many" (Jud. 7:4). So, God had a

"The angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour... And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee" (Jud. 6:12, 16).

test to see which ones had the proper spirit, the water test. The human body needs water but how they drank would show a great deal about them. Notice what the record states:

And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people *are* yet *too* many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, *that* of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. And the number of them that lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the

three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the *other* people go every man unto his place (7:4-7).

The 300 men knew what their mission was, and they get a drink and are quickly on their way. They also drink in such a way they can also keep their eyes watching. The 9,700 men drink in a way they cannot see what is going on and are in a position they cannot move quickly as they are bending down into the water. Many commonplace things in our lives test our quality even as these 10,000 men's quality was tested. We, as they, are led to the stream to drink to show what we are and whether we are in

earnest about divine matters. It tests us (as God tested Abraham, Gen. 22:1) as to our dedication to God and the church; whether we "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" and have set our affections on things above and not on things on the earth (Col. 3:1-2). Where do we spend our time? Are we concerned and take part in all the activities of the local congregation? Do we make sure we attend all the services of the church (Bible study, worship, meetings, lectureships, etc.)? Do we teach the Gospel to others and oppose error and sin? Do we pile up engagement after engagement until we spend all our time at the stream and never get to the battle? Israel had 9,700 tagging along in the army without a real sense of duty as soldiers. What are we? Are we taggers along or are we soldiers?

MH

Continued from Page 1

of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul” (Heb. 10:38-39).

What is there in this world so alluring to some they cease to put God and spiritual and eternal things first in their lives, trading those for that which is temporal in nature? While the following five are by no means an exhaustive list, they are common things people decide they would rather have and lose their souls over than continue in the grace of God and have eternal life. The first four are not things that are wrong in and of themselves, but the fifth one is and is often the cause for one of the other four to take over one’s life.

The first thing is **pleasure**. There are clean and appropriate pastimes. There are fun things that the Christian may enjoy. However, Jesus said in His explanation of the parable of the sower, or hearts, concerning the thorny heart, “And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection” (Luke 8:14). Speaking from personal observation, one thing which happens to the person who spends too much time with and loves pleasure too much is he soon comes to the point when wholesomeness nor the lack thereof means anything to him. Consequently, evil pleasure lures the person away from any concern at all for God and holy living. This is not the only way pleasure can separate one’s mind from God, but it is one that is often the blame.

The second thing which can cause one to leave God out of his life is **ambition**. If one chooses any

respectable occupation, he will naturally seek to excel in it. There is nothing wrong with that kind of ambition. However, loving one’s work too much can cause him or her to place too much importance on it. I know one person who puts so much attachment and time into their work, they will not even take a few minutes a day to read a chapter out of their Bible. Why? Because what they do professionally has become such an obsession God and love for spiritual things are disappearing at a rapid rate.

Another cause for ambition crowding God out of one’s life is seeking the praise of men. This is exactly what happened among the chief rulers of Jesus’ day. John wrote in his Gospel account: “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). Wanting such praise often results in compromising either holiness or responsibilities to God. Either way, while ambition is not bad in itself if one is not careful too much can lead to one casting God aside.

A third thing, it has ties to the previous one, is **money**. Ecclesiastes 5:10 states, “He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: *this is* also vanity.” The more one has because he wants more of it, he will desire to have. When Paul wrote to Timothy reminding him the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim. 6:10), he referred to some unnamed persons who coveted money and one of the two conse-

quences was they erred from the faith. Money is a necessary thing for one to have, but the love of it is a necessary thing one must not have!

A fourth thing that can cause one to abandon God is **family**. We all know Jesus made a statement that many people today need to take to heart. “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Mat. 10:37). People have been known to skip worship because family dropped by on Sunday morning. Some have been known by me to attend family gatherings where there is alcohol consumed including by relatives who are apostate members of the church. Some such gatherings take place over the weekend, again causing worship of God to be neglected. Do you know anyone with relatives who abandoned the Lord, and because of their devotion to those family members, they too abandoned God? I do.

There is a fifth reason a person may cast aside their love for God, and, as we said, this one is wrong in and of itself. It is **neglect**. We have seen how neglect is associated with the things we have already discussed and is part of the reason the other issues led to total apostasy. Neglecting worship, neglecting Bible study, and neglecting one’s responsibility to labor in the kingdom is wrong, and where it leads is eternally fatal. Neglect may be an occasional thing to begin with, but it becomes more and more frequent with some until God is excluded from life completely. Let us not neglect our love and duty to our Lord.

What all of the aforementioned

matters involve is one loving this life more than the next one. John wrote, “He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal” (John 12:25). This same apostle wrote and expanded on this same subject in 1 John 2:15-17. He warns, do not love the world. All that is in this world is the lust of

the flesh, of the eye, and the vain-glory of life. All of these things will pass away.

Dear friends, eternity is a mind-boggling thing to us; we cannot grasp it completely because everything we know in this life of a material nature has a beginning and an ending. Isn't that the crux of the warning John gave? Of course, it is,

because if one loves and keeps the Father's Will eternal life with joy and no sorrow or pain will be his. If one leaves the Father he will be cast into the eternal fire where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. In the fire, the worm does not die, and the fire is never quenched (Mark 9:43-48).

Deceased

Church Entertainment

H. M. Phillips

While this may not be a real Bible subject, there are plenty of churches that claim to be following the Bible but are engaging in these entertainments by the church. It is indeed shocking to see some who once stood so firm against these affairs are now taking part in them—even announcing on the bulletin board the church ball games of the old men playing the young men or playing against some denomination. They think the young people are a problem, and so try to entertain them to hold them in line. Yet, the church entertainments are too tame to hold them, and if they get wild enough to compete with the things of the world, then they cease to be acting as church members should.

Young Need Entertainment

This, I am sure, is true, but it is the duty of the church to stick to spiritual affairs and not to entertain. Where in the New Testament is it taught that the church should sponsor or furnish the entertainment? What church in the New Testament is mentioned as having entertainment programs for the young or the old, with plenty of eats, drinks, and games? Corinth

made a feast of church affairs and was condemned severely (1 Cor. 11). How would it look in the New Testament to say that Paul led the old men against Timothy and the young men in the church at Ephesus; or for Paul to advise Timothy and Titus to get up a contest of softball games or foot races between congregations? Titus was to set in order the things wanting, but there is no mention of entertainment games for the young and old as part of that which was needed. The church is the pillar and support of the truth, not entertainment.

Money Out of the Treasury

Big things are planned for the church entertainment by way of “hot dogs,” soda, and buns, costing enough to hold a mission meeting almost, and this is paid out of the treasury—money which was contributed to spreading the Gospel instead of mustard on buns and “hot dogs.” No wonder Paul spoke of some “whose god is their belly”! Where in the New Testament is it taught by direct statement, example, or implication that it is the responsibility of the church to provide entertainment for the people?

Did the Lord forget that there would be young people and old people in the church, and also forget to reveal a plan for their entertainment, and so let some denominational set give the program and then the church follow it? Where did this thing come from anyway? From the Spirit's teaching or the worldly-minded ones? The denominations tried that to hold the people, and since they had not the truth, they needed something. Is it that we are to leave the truth to hold the people and appeal to man's entertaining ways? Stop and look into the Word of God and listen to what it says and obey it.

Home and Individuals

If entertainment belongs anywhere, and it does, it is in the home with individuals, and not as a church program. All such, then, should be governed by whether it is right within itself, what effect it has on the one engaging therein, as well as the influence on others, and the surroundings where it was done. The church is a spiritual body of the highest type, and we should not lower it to the carnal, worldly affairs. Young and old may well come together in affairs that

elevate the mind and build the body, but such entertainment should not be tacked on the church. If we would settle down and quit going wild about the young people and keep them in the home more, they would learn to appreciate what the church is and respect it and the Word of God. It is high time that some cry out against this fast-growing fad of the church being the entertainer. Even some places advocate an extra preacher to coach the young in their worldly activities. The digression came because of such an idea, and we will follow unless we call a halt.

A Fine Rule to Follow

Now the pioneers had a slogan that we all agree is fine. That is to “speak where the Bible speaks and to be silent where it is silent.” If we did this, we would not be talking about the entertainment for the church, or as part of the church

program. Often churches plan classes, saying: “We will get them to come for our entertainment, and then we will teach them the truth.” So said the digressives about their societies and music. But they will have entertainment, so why not the church provide it? No church can keep up entertainment very long before the world, in general, says it is a worldly affair, and it loses its influence for spiritual matters. Better know how to behave in the church of God and leave these things borrowed from the denominations alone. This is done by reading the Word of God and not by calling a convention of churches for a feast or frolic. If it takes such to hold, when that is stopped, then they stop. They are not held by the Lord or His Word. Keep the church and the world separate.

What Is the Difference?

Often, we hear it said: “Show us where we are doing anything the

Bible does not teach, and we will quit it”; or, “Tell us what the Bible teaches that we are not doing, and we will do it.” Well, here we have it in plain terms not to be a friend of the world (Jam. 4:4). Jesus said His kingdom was not of the world (John 18:36). We are to come out and be separate and apart (2 Cor. 6:17). When we have that which is not taught, can we claim to be guided by a “thus saith the Lord”? Ball games, ball teams of the church, and such like were not heard of till a few years ago. Were the people in the past lacking in the whole truth and now we are getting it? They did not have such. When members have more of the spirit of the Lord and less of the world, they will not need entertainment to keep them coming and gathering with the church. When some late-edition preachers learn to stick with the Bible, it will be better.

Deceased

Does the Church of Christ Need to be Restored

Ron Cosby

“Does the church of Christ need to be restored?” Not according to at least two groups. One group tells us that the church was never lost; another tells us that there is nothing to restore. Respectfully, we disagree, and here is why:

Mixing Biblical metaphors causes some to deny the need for restoration. “After all,” they tell us, “the church is the people. You cannot restore the people.” With this group, we need only to remind them that God’s spiritual sphere is not only referred to as the church, but the same body is alluded to, among other figures,

as the kingdom. Having viewed the church from the aspect of a kingdom, this group will be better able to see the potential of restoration.

The apostles pled for restoration of the old kingdom, “When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). We can all agree that they knew of the principle of restoring kingdoms. Thus, when one views the church as the kingdom, the rationale for the plea to return to that which once existed in pristine form is evident.

Another principle that shows that the church or kingdom **can** be restored is found in 2 Kings 23. God’s system of religion deteriorated under the rule of evil kings and lying diviners. After being enlightened by that which was written, godly princes, prophets, and people returned to the Lord by keeping “the passover unto the LORD your God, as *it is* written in the book of this covenant” (23:21). Lest someone missed it. They kept the Passover “as *it is* written”; indeed, “as *it is* written in the book of the covenant.” What these passages tell is that a system of religion (the church, or

the kingdom) **can** be restored. Obviously, the Lord was pleased with their return to His way of righteousness.

What we need now is to understand whether or not the church **needs** to be restored. It depends on the time frame. Has the church of Christ (the kingdom) ever needed restoring? Yes. Wayne Jackson is exactly right when he says, "Every Biblical passage that warns of a 'falling away' from the faith...contains the implied need for a restoration" (*Spiritual Sword*, Vol. 23, No. 1). Both Acts 1:6 and 2 Kings 23 verify brother Jackson's basic declaration.

After the apostles established the church on firm footing, false teachers led many astray, even as Paul had forewarned (Acts 20; 1 Tim. 4; 2 Tim. 4; 2 The. 2). History shows that the profane so corrupted the church that pure Christianity could rarely be detected, possibly existing only in remote and isolated spots. Thus, having gone astray, the kingdom **needed** to be brought back to its original condition.

Changing the time frame to today, we ask, "Does the church need to be restored today?" Herein we answer, "No." However, if providence allows another falling away, God's system of righteousness will need to be brought back into its primitive state.

Admittedly, what we have said up to this time does not fully address the second group's opposition to restoration. Remember they deny that there is anything to restore. Listen to one of their proponents. He says, "The church which the Lord built is a univer-

sal, unstructured entity which defies limiting patterns." The writer is saying that no pattern exists. Dear reader, if there is no "limiting pattern," there can be no falling away.

Did the church in the first century have an original condition, that is, a specific pattern that they followed and kept? Indeed, it did. The apostles established the church all over the land, with every congregation following the same set of rules. Paul as much as said this very thing to the Corinthians: "Timotheus,...shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church" (1 Cor. 4:17). Accompanying this teaching was the warning to remain faithful to what they had been taught: "learn not to go beyond the things which are written" (4:6—ASV). Now, read what Paul said to Timothy. "Hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Tim. 1:13) and, "the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2:2).

Every church was taught the same thing. Paul did not teach one set of doctrines to the Corinthians and then another set to other churches. An equally firm warning was given to the Galatians. They were not to receive anything other than that which was preached to them or/and received by them (Gal. 1:8)—no new teaching!

Therefore, the penitent believer in Corinth did what the penitent believer in Galatia did to become a Christian. He/she was born again (John 3:3-5). Brethren may have dressed a little differ-

ently, talked a little differently, and met at a different time to publicly praise God, but they worshiped on the same day and in the same way (Acts 20:7; John 4:24; Acts 2:42; Heb. 2:12; 1 Cor. 11-16). Furthermore, whether in Corinth or Ephesus, God's people lived according to the standard laid down in the first century (Tit. 2:11-12; Rom. 12:1-2). Clones one of another? No, not at all. Followers of the law of Christ (Gal. 6)!

Out of the four meanings, *The American Heritage Electronic Dictionary* supplies for *restore*, to "bring back to an original condition" fits exactly what we have been discussing. Builders restore deteriorated houses. Members of antique car clubs take great pride in "fixing up" junkers that have been neglected. The closer they can equip them with the original equipment the more delighted the restorer. Two ingredients are present in any restoration. First, the "original condition" must have existed; second, this primitive state must be sought and attained. So, it is with the kingdom. Certain, specific requirements which have been set forth in the pages of the New Testament must be fulfilled before we can have the original.

When we compare what is being taught and practiced to these specific requirements, we will be able to determine whether we have restored, reformed, or built anew. Reforming falls short. Building a new blueprint is forbidden. On the other hand, insisting on the original condition is not only safe but follows Scriptural mandates.

Jay, OK

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Following a Multitude to Do Evil

Guy N. Woods

“Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil” was a divine edict of the law of Moses (Exo. 23:2). It was designed by Jehovah to guard the Hebrews from the corrupting influences of an evil environment and to protect him from the inevitable consequences of mob psychology.

Man is, by nature, a **social** being. He is gregarious, tending to flock or gather together with others of his kind. Thus, early in the history of mankind great cities had sprung up, rivaling in size and wickedness the great cities of the world today. This tendency of man to desire the companionship and association of others of his kind has many excellences. It enables man to enjoy the accrued advantages of the many, and to have legally and properly the fruits of the labors of others as well as those of his own. But this characteristic may be perverted from its intended end. Man may, and most often does, imbibe the evil characteristics of those about him as readily, and even more so, than the good ones.

All history, as well as our own hearts, teaches an impressive lesson that **custom, fashion, and example**

wield a more powerful influence on most people than reason. Today, the realm of pure reason is rarely occupied; logical processes leave most people unmoved; whereas common customs and practices of the day influence in a most irresistible fashion. This explains why many, in the face of the most logical opposition, unhesitatingly indulge in things that are wrong.

The world is said to lie in wickedness (1 John 5:19), and its vices are so common that they lose for many their sinful appearance.

Vice is a monster of such frightful mien

That to be hated needs but to be seen;

Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,

We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

It is for this reason that worldly practices, frowned on by all only a comparatively few years ago, are now, in many circles, accepted without hesitation. It is not that the passing years have seen a change occur in the moral nature of such things; the change has been in the people and not in the acts they now tolerate or embrace. This is to disobey the divine injunction of the

apostle to the Gentiles, who said: “And be not conformed to this world” (Rom. 12:2). “Do not fashion yourselves according to the age”—i.e., do not let prevailing customs of the age determine for you your conduct. This is the sole standard to which many in the church today adhere. Some years ago, Ira Douthitt and N. B. Hardeman toured the Holy Land, visiting enroute many European cities. In their lectures on their return, they told of the amazement they felt in seeing women smoking cigarettes on the streets of Paris, France! The world, however, no longer looks askance upon such habits, and great masses of people feel no other restraint.

As a matter of fact, popular indulgence in vice tends not only to destroy all the restraints of modesty and shame, but it actually employs them in leading others to participate therein. Many timid souls are prompted to do that which is in violation of their concepts of right and wrong for fear of being considered old-fashioned, outmoded, out of step, and behind the times. Sophistication is a lure that dangles but a short time before the eyes of

Continued on Page 4



Notes From The Editor

Michael
Hatcher

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Gideon's Army

When Gideon started with an army of 32,000 soldiers, God said that was too many for Him to deliver the Midianites into their hands. Thus, those who were faint-hearted were told to go home, which caused 22,000 to leave the battle. That left 10,000 men to face an army of 135,000 Midianites. However, God said there are still too many for Him to give the Midianites into their hand. So, God gave them a water test of which only 300 passed the test, so 9,700 men were sent home. Let us consider some things about these 300 men.

These men were selected men. These 300 men were selected out of the original 32,000. Christians are selected (chosen) to salvation. Paul writes, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph. 1:4). Like these 300 who had to *pass the test* before being selected, Christians must *pass the test* of obedience (Heb. 5:8-9) to God in being baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3-4, 17-18) upon one's faith, repentance, and confession of his faith. Thus, "in Christ" we are chosen. The choosing is not on an individual basis (per Calvinism), but a location (*in Christ*), and all who get into that location are chosen by God.

The 300 men had faith in the cause they were fighting for. They had such faith they were willing to stake their lives on it. From a human standpoint, the odds of winning a battle against the Midianites was slim to none (it was a 450 to 1 ratio of Midianites to Israelites). Yet, these 300 men would be willing to go into battle against the 135,000 men because they believed the cause they were fighting for was worth it. These men had such faith they were willing to die to free themselves of the tyranny of the Midianites. Christianity is worth staking out lives on. If one's religion is not worth dying for (staking our lives on it), then it is not worth anything. Paul was told by the Spirit that "bonds and afflictions" waited for him in every city. His response was, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:23-24). Do we consider our life more important or more valuable than doing God's Will? Those who overcome by the blood of the Lamb and God's Word do so because "they loved not their lives unto the death" (Rev. 12:11). Are we overcomers? Are we willing and ready to fight as if our lives depended on it (as the 300 soldiers were)? Our spiritual lives do depend on it.

These 300 soldiers made the fullest use of what they had and left the results up to God. Gideon provided each man with a trumpet, an empty pitcher, and lamps within the pitchers. Each man used what had been given him and allowed God to do His work. God brought a great victory for Israel that day. Think of

what the church could accomplish today if each Christian would do his part and leave the results up to God. Paul and Apollos were this way. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. 3:6). We have far too many who are more concerned with who gets the credit than we do of those who simply want to do the work of the Lord.

Then every man stood in his place. "And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled" (Jud. 7:21). There were no idle men in Gideon's army; no soldiers on the sidelines cheering on the others. Each man was there engaging in the battle and doing his part. Each man acted as if the entire outcome of the battle depended solely upon him and what he did. I am not sure if we can imagine the good that could be done if every Christian (soldier) stood in his place doing his work. It has long been said that 90% of the work is done by 10% of the members (whether or not that is the actual figures, it accurately represents the reality of the situation). What could be done in congregations across America and the world if we could engage the other 90% of brethren. What if there were not *nominal* Christians, but that each one realized the priesthood of all believers (1 Pet. 2:5,9) and faithfully performed the duties of a priest of

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

God?

Additionally, these soldiers acted in unity. Every soldier was at his place and every man had a pitcher with a light in it and a trumpet. At the signal, every man blew his trumpet and broke the pitcher to let the light shine.

And he divided the three hundred men *into* three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers. And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be *that*, as I do, so shall ye do. When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that *are* with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, *The sword* of the LORD, and of Gideon. So Gideon, and the hundred men that *were* with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that *were* in their hands. And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow *withal*: and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled. And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Bethshittah in Zererath, *and* to the border of Abelmeholah, unto Tabbath.

This unity of action brought about a great victory for Gideon and his army. Just suppose when Gideon gave the signal, only one man jumped up and blew his trumpet and broke his pitcher but no one else did at that time. After a little

while, another jumped up and would do it, then later another. This would continue till all of them single-handedly had accomplished the task. There certainly would not have been a victory for Israel that day. Or what if one jumped up, blew his trumpet, and broke his pitcher then others started complaining that he blew his trumpet too loud or that he broke his pitcher in the wrong way or he did not jump up the right way or the right time? Again, there would be no victory for Israel. For Israel's victory, they had to be working together, working in unity.

The church is to work together, to act in unity one with another and with God. What we so often see is division instead of unity. Certainly, we cannot have unity with those who are out of fellowship with God. However, it seems so many today nit-pic so much they cannot have unity with anyone. Paul recognized this problem when he wrote, "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Gal. 5:15). Today, so many are biting and devouring one another so much that we are being consumed by each other. Denominations and liberals simply sit back laughing at us as we consume each other. We need to learn to work together in unity. Let us be like Paul and Apollos: "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. 3:6). Instead of biting and devouring, let us learn to work together for the good of the church. Do not allow just one person to blow his trumpet, break his pitcher, let his light shine, make his cry ("The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon") till he becomes discouraged. Let us make sure we are supportive of the work of the Lord in which brethren are engaged.

Just suppose it was time for the battle and half of Gideon's army could not be found. Gideon must then go out and attempt to round up the other half of his army. Obviously, there would have been no victory for Israel under such circumstances. Yet, how many times is this the case in the New Testament church? Even in our responsibility to gather together in one place to worship God, so many of our own members absent themselves from that gathering. Then when we have a second gathering, so many refuse to return to worship God. When we meet for a mid-week Bible study, many more do not attend. Then, so much time is having to be spent in an attempt to round up those who are supposed to be soldiers of the cross. However, so many of those who are supposed to be soldiers of the cross have capitulated to the enemy that it is difficult to tell the difference.

The Midianites were wrong. As a result of their being wrong, they were weak even though they gave the appearance of being strong. They had a great army numerically; however, Gideon with his army of 300 men and having God on their side, put to flight the *great* Midianite army. Wrong even though it might appear to be strong actually never is strong but weak. Evil might win a temporary victory, but it will be short-lived. God and right will always be victorious. When we are on God's side, we will also be victorious. We have the wonderful opportunity to live the victorious lifestyle if we just will. "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

MH

Continued from Page 1

many before it is grasped with fatal results. Evidence of this is to be seen in the revised view that many now subscribe to regarding smoking, drinking, immorality, divorce, immodesty in clothes, etc. The slogan, “Everybody’s doing it,” has lulled countless thousands into a false security from which they will never awake and has caused them to live a manner of life that otherwise they never would.

It is because of these indisputable facts that the sacred writers so often warn of worldly participation. See, for example, 1 Corinthians 15:33, Ephesians 5:11, 2 Corinthians 6:17, 7:1, 1 John 2:15, and James 4:4. We are positively forbidden to love the world, to have any fellowship with it whatsoever, to withdraw ourselves from it at once and forever, and to reprove it—i.e., lay bare its deceptions and expose its specious allurements. Only thus can one ul-

timately overcome it.

1. It is dangerous to follow the multitude because the majority is nearly always wrong. It was so in the days when righteous Noah labored faithfully in building the ark, when Elijah sought to stem the tide to Baal, when Christ was rejected by his contemporaries, and when Paul fought almost alone in his battle for a pure Christianity. It has ever been thus. Those who fight for a pure faith and faultless practice often do so against their own brethren, who would deliberately compromise with the world and betray the cause of the Lord into the hands of his enemies.

2. The multitude frequently succumbs to the influence of prejudice, passion, and mob psychology. The shouting throngs who welcomed our Lord to Jerusalem on the occasion of His triumphant entry changed in four days to a seething, menacing mob that demanded His blood and milled and

surged at His feet in cold fury while He died. Shrewd political leaders, aware of this tendency on the part of the masses, frequently use it to their own perverted ends.

3. The Lord has always sought to protect His people from the influence of the world. Abraham was called out as the father of a special people to preserve the bloodline from heathen admixture that Christ might be born into the world. Nehemiah refused to suspend the work of the Lord to engage in useless controversy with Sanballat and Tobiah. Jesus warned of the corruption of His contemporaries, and Paul taught complete separation from the world as the only means by which to escape its corrupting influences.

It should never be forgotten that the broad way is the **way of the world!** Those who go in thereat do so to their own destruction.

Deceased

Who Are We?

Gary W. Summers

As most congregations know, the Olan Mills folks are happy to do a church’s pictorial directory. Usually, they carry a few samples of their work with them when they try to interest a group in allowing them to do their next one for them. Recently, the directory of a “church of Christ” was used as one of those samples. We will omit the location where this church meets, but it is in Texas.

Particularly striking is the “Who Are We?” page. Although the brief description begins well, it soon wanders off into the land of “Say, what?” The first three paragraphs

are designed to make the visitor feel comfortable and welcome. Love and the “family” aspect of the church are emphasized; especially laudable are the no-nonsense claims: “We believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God” and “We believe the Bible is the written word of God.” These doctrines are not only clearly taught in the Scriptures, but they are central and crucial to Christianity.

One’s admiration for the boldness of this church’s willingness to declare the key tenets of Truth diminishes suddenly, however, with the next paragraph:

We believe that men and women are justified by faith in Jesus Christ and that justification is by faith alone. We believe that baptism is a validation of one’s faith and commitment to him. Baptisms here are performed by immersion in which the one is buried in the likeness of the death of Jesus and raised in the likeness of his resurrection. We observe the Lord’s Supper each Sunday as a token of the fellowship which exists. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are the only ordinances we keep...

“Justification by faith” is a biblical doctrine (Rom. 3:24-26), but what Scripture says, “faith alone”? For generations those calling them-

selves members of the churches of Christ have rightly bound themselves to no man or human tradition, but rather to what the Scriptures teach. “Faith alone” signifies a radical departure from the noble motives and intent that brethren have always possessed, which is as old as the Bereans, who “searched the Scriptures daily” to see whether the things Paul taught were so.

The phrase, *faith alone*, does not appear anywhere in the New Testament or the entire Bible. This is the doctrine of John Calvin—not those who follow the Word of God. One wonders if this “church of Christ” also believes in “hereditary total depravity” and “once saved, always saved.” One also wonders what their explanation is for Peter failing to impart the “faith alone” doctrine on the day of Pentecost. Why did he not tell the multitude they could be justified by faith alone? Why was Saul told to arise and be baptized to wash away his sins? Why did not Ananias say to him, “Saul, I can see that you believe; your faith has saved you”?

None of these things were spoken in the Bible because they do not reflect God’s plan of salvation. That plan includes repentance and baptism for the remission of sins in addition to faith. How times have changed! Members of the church in times past may not have been very sophisticated in the ways of the world or very advanced in theology, but at least they knew what it takes to become a child of God. How sad that some are now teaching Baptist doctrine, which thing we once debated!

Our Lord is further insulted (to deny Jesus’ doctrine is to insult Jesus personally) by the horrible distortion that “baptism is a validation

of one’s faith and commitment to him.” Did not the Lord say, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mark 16:16)? What Bible verse calls baptism a *validation*? It sounds as though whoever wrote this tripe plagiarized some Baptist Manual. Peter did not say, “Repent and validate yourselves.” The eunuch did not ask, “What doth hinder me from validating myself?” It is not recorded that Paul and Silas took the jailer and his family the same hour of the night and validated them.

Apparently, this “church of Christ” has lost sight of the fact that the inspired apostle expressed a purpose for baptism—**for the remission of sins**. How can someone stray so far from the Book that they fail to realize that baptism is “the working of God” (Col. 2:12), in which the blood of Christ washes away our sins (Rev. 1:5)? Again, Peter said, “Baptism doth also now save us” (KJV), not “Baptism doth also now validate us.” Parking tickets are validated; the sins a person has committed are washed away in baptism.

It is wonderful that this *church* still recognizes that baptism is a burial in water, but if it is only a validation, they might as well sprinkle people—as do the denominations they are trying so diligently to ape. We bury people who desire to die to sin. They are buried as the Lord was buried. They arise a new creation—new because those who were buried have had their sins washed away. They arise washed, sanctified, and justified (somehow validated was omitted in Holy Writ). Even though this group is following the form provided by Scriptures, a good question to ask would be, “Do you **fellowship**

those who were sprinkled rather than immersed?”

Do the Scriptures present the Lord’s Supper as a mere “visible token” of the fellowship we have with the Lord? Although the bread represents the broken body of the Savior and the fruit of the vine His blood, they are not just symbols. Viewing them in such a fashion invites a ritualistic observance. First Corinthians 11:22-29 teaches that partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine carries with it substantive meaning. Their purpose is to focus our minds on the sacrifice Jesus made for our sins. This sober reminder emphasizes our sinfulness, our continual need of forgiveness, and the love of God and of Christ to enable us to have fellowship with them. This weekly observance also serves as a declaration that He is coming again to receive His own (11:26). Thinking of the Lord’s Supper as “a visible token” is hardly conducive to partaking of it in a worthy manner, nor does it hint at self-examination (11:28). A failure to discern the Lord’s body brings judgment upon the thoughtless participant (11:29). How dare anyone be so glib as to downgrade this honoring of the Lord’s death to a mere reminder of “the fellowship which exists”!

Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are referred to as ordinances, which in most religious usage refers to a sacred rite or ceremonial act. Apparently, the author of this statement also wants to please the Roman Catholic Church. In the New Testament, there are no rites or ceremonies. There were some under the Law of Moses, as when priests were ordained, but we are now under the purest kind of religion—one in which all facets are

carried out in spirit and in truth. Worship and service must be from the heart. Jesus did not die so people could offer up stale, formal, heartless worship to the living God. We do not have a daily routine of service that becomes just that—routine. Christians must be thoughtful. Self-examination of our thoughts and motives is expected (2 Cor. 13:5). We are not taught to take our salvation for granted (1 Cor. 9:24-27). We continually “prove all things” (1 The. 5:21).

In case some of the implications of the preceding paragraph were lost, this next one should clarify it.

We are firmly resolved to resist every sectarian tendency and to be God’s people only. We make no claim to be the only people of God and we celebrate our ties with all others who reverence Christ as Lord. Our only enemy is Satan. We do not wrestle against “flesh and blood.” It is our intention to regard every child of God on earth as our brother and sister, to treat them as such, and to receive them just as God receives us....

While it is laudable to “resist every sectarian tendency,” it is **not** advisable to give up Truth in a vain effort to achieve it. Failure to contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered (Jude 3) is just as sectarian as trying to bind one’s unsubstantiated opinions on others. The author of this statement (and a few elderships in various parts of the country) need to start taking massive doses of Citri-spinal-cal so they can develop some backbone. Apparently, some think there is some virtue to be found in making wishy-washy, Max Lucado-like statements, which have all the fortitude and stamina of soggy bread.

The statement that we are “God’s people only” and “not the only

people of God” undoubtedly sounds noble to those who make it, but a little reflection upon the idea reveals that it is essentially unintelligible. Do we teach people the truth regarding salvation, acceptable worship, and Christian doctrine? There are three possible answers to this question.

First is the answer, “Yes, we do teach what the Scriptures teach with respect to these all-important matters.” If, when we say, as Peter did, that souls seeking salvation should repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins, we are speaking the truth, then those who preach a different message (“faith alone”) are in error and stand accursed for teaching another gospel (Gal. 1:6-9). Those who listen to them remain lost.

Second, if we answer, “No, what we teach people about salvation is not true,” then we ought to repent immediately for teaching error. What could be worse than intentionally lying to people about the most valuable commodity of all—their souls (which Jesus said were worth more than the whole world). If we know that we are worshipping God falsely and teach others to offer up worship as vain as ours, we shall surely be punished most severely throughout all eternity.

The third possible answer is to say that we are unsure if we are teaching the Truth. Then we ought to quit immediately pretending that we have something to offer people. The inspired apostle wrote: “If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11). If we do not **know** that we are teaching the Word of God, then we ought to resign as teachers or preachers (Jam. 4:1) and turn this sacred privilege over to someone

who **does** know the Truth and is willing to communicate it to others.

The very idea that we are so inept at understanding the Scriptures that we cannot be sure if we are saved or lost is ludicrous. It presumes that God sent Jesus to die on the cross for the sins of mankind but lacked the communication skills necessary to tell man the proper way to respond to His grace to be saved. If words mean anything, then we can know the Truth (John 8:31-32). This mealy-mouthed approach to the Word of God may win the praises of men for being non-judgmental, but such is the only reward it shall obtain. Our Lord spoke the Truth to people whether they approved or disapproved, and His true disciples follow in His footsteps.

Jesus did not pontificate: “I regard every child of God on earth as my brother and sister.” Instead, He said, “whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother” (Mat. 12:50). It is not a matter of what a person **says** or **claims**, it is a matter of what a person **does**! The Jews in John 8:41 claimed God as their Father. Jesus emphatically denied it and insisted, “You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do” (John 8:44). Jesus did not wallow in a sort of sloppy, sentimental, pseudo-love that accepts all people as Christians regardless of their hearts. Our Savior had standards. Genuine disciples of Christ cannot today accept as brethren those who have never obeyed the Gospel; to do so would be a denial and a repudiation of Jesus and His teachings.

No one can rightly be called a Christian who does not first believe

in God and the Lord Jesus Christ. But faith is only the beginning of the process of salvation. No one is a Christian who has not repented of his sins (Luke 13:3). No one can rightly be called a Christian who has not been baptized for the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38). These are God's terms of salvation.

The same apostle who wrote that "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood" also said to mark "flesh and blood" false teachers (Rom. 16:17-18). He also listed some of their names (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17). Our war is against Satan, who inspires error and snares men in false doctrine. We do not have anything personally against such men, but they must be opposed because they are fighting

against God, subverting whole households, and causing people to be lost. Paul wrote that their "mouths must be stopped" (Tit. 1:11).

Yet, some insist that the devil's emissaries should not be opposed; apparently, they think they are acting out of a higher motivation, which they mistake for love. Love does not allow the devil and his false doctrines to go unopposed. For that reason, we are to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). Love does not allow people to believe a lie and to walk in darkness. Love is not so fearful of challenging people and making an enemy (Gal. 4:16) that it refuses to affirm that the way of error leads to

damnation.

How can brethren depart so far from the Word of God that they end up thinking this way? They cannot study the Bible diligently and arrive at such positions expressed in this "Who Are We?" directory rationale. The only way a congregation could possibly arrive at such a position is either through massive ignorance or a willful rejection of what the Scriptures teach in a vain (and cowardly) effort to "get along" with others. How sad that those who were once the Lord's people have neglected their great salvation and been reduced to such a low estate in adopting what may accurately be called "the devil's peace."

Winter Park, FL

Abortion "Overturned?"

Michael Hatcher

I am writing this shortly after the landmark ruling by the Supreme Court overturning the horrendous decision by the 1973 Warren E. Burger court when seven (out of nine) men wrote a new law claiming abortion was in the United States Constitution. The Roe v Wade decision was directly contradictory to the Constitution. The Preamble to the Declaration of Independence states:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Unalienable Rights are rights a person possesses that come from God and cannot be taken away or nullified. These are rights beyond the control of any government.

They intended for the government to protect those rights.

Life begins at conception! This is true whether discussing it from a scientific standpoint or a Biblical standpoint. As such, the Declaration of Independence recognizes the baby's right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and that right cannot be taken away or nullified. Thus, this reversal of the tragic decision in 1973 has ended up murdering 60 to 70 million precious, innocent souls.

This ruling by the Supreme Court does not outlaw abortion. It simply removes the federal protection of abortion by the government. It also returns power to each state regarding abortion. Thus, when the Supreme Court ruling was announced, within hours several

states were banning or severely limiting abortion. This is good, and prayerfully more states will follow suit. However, other states are promising to provide abortions during the entire pregnancy (including partial-birth abortion). Many companies are promising to pay all expenses to cover someone going to a state that provides abortions so the mother can murder her unborn baby. Thus, the challenge of abortion has not ended with this ruling but has simply entered another phase. We must remain watchful and vigilant to the evils that remain and do everything within our power to put a stop (nation-wide and worldwide) to this great evil. Our Lord still hates "hands that shed innocent blood" (Pro. 6:16-19).

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Lizzie Borden: Commonly Held Errors

Gary W. Summers

*Lizzie Borden took an axe
And gave her mother forty
whacks.*

*Then she saw what she had done,
she gave her father forty-one.*

For decades, even small children have been familiar with this verse—and probably repeated it. The only problem is that none of the things mentioned in the poem may be true. First, Lizzie’s step-mother was killed, not her mother. Her mother had died when Lizzie was just two years of age. Second, she was struck 18 times, not 40. Third, the murder weapon was a hatchet, not an axe. Fourth, Lizzie’s father was struck ten times, not 41. Fifth, and most importantly, Lizzie was probably not the murderer. She was acquitted by an all-male jury after only two hours of deliberation—due to an utter lack of evidence against her.

How has she come down through history as being guilty of the crime, as depicted in three movies? This will come as a surprise. A newspaper reporter decided she was guilty; he published a book to that effect, which was popular for thirty years. He suppressed facts and information,

however. Many people in Fall River, Massachusetts, believed Lizzie was guilty and shunned her despite the favorable verdict.

Our source material (based on facts) comes from a book titled *Forty Whacks*, written by David Kent, who devoted himself to studying the case and published his findings in 1992 on the 100th anniversary of the crime. (He also died that same year.) The author did not specifically accuse anyone else of the crime, but he did make an interesting comment about Andrew Borden’s first wife’s brother, who just happened to be a guest when the murders occurred. No, he was not at the house at the time of the murders; he had an alibi for just about every second, however.

Lizzie’s sister, Emma, was away on a visit, or she might have been present that morning. Mrs. Borden told someone she was going out that morning but never left the house. Her husband had been out early but returned after a few errands and was resting on the couch. The only other persons on the property were Lizzie and a maid, Bridget Sullivan, whose room was on the third floor of the

house. Mrs. Borden had charged the maid to wash the windows—even though it was the hottest day of the year. Something she had eaten the night before had not set well, so she went to lie down in her room for a few minutes. Lizzie was out back in the barn. When she came back into the house and saw her father’s condition, she immediately cried out, “Murder.” Mrs. Borden was the first one killed, and Lizzie’s father became the second victim about half an hour later. That such a crime could occur in broad daylight (between about 10:00 and 11:30) in a busy section of town was thought to be incredible.

One can only imagine three possible explanations. Someone living at the residence did the murders. Only two were present: Lizzie Borden and the maid Bridget Sullivan. Someone was hired to do the murders and was provided all the household information. That someone would be sure to have an alibi. An unnamed stranger from off the street took his chances that he would be able to slip in, commit the murders, and escape unnoticed. This last one is doubtful. The sec-

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Notes From The Editor

Michael
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Silence

A few decades ago, I was speaking with a faithful brother in Christ who made a statement regarding the law or principle of silence. At the time I did not understand what he was saying to me but knowing this brother I could not imagine him giving up the principle. This principle or law is, to a certain extent, what differentiates the Lord's church from most, if not all, denominations. At the time, we did not go into a discussion of it. However, having come to a better understanding of the subject, I would tend to agree with him that the way many brethren understand the law of silence is erroneous. Let us consider this law and what it is and is not.

What we commonly hear (and what I have taught in the past) is that when God specifies something, it excludes everything else. This argument is normally used when discussing the use of mechanical instruments of music. Then we will use a few examples to emphasize our point. One of the first, and we believe most effective, examples is Noah and the ark in Genesis 6. God plans to destroy the world, but Noah finds "grace in the eyes of the LORD" (6:8). Thus, God informs Noah to build an ark for the saving of himself and his family

(eight souls). God gave Noah instructions as to how to build this ark and begins by commanding him to "Make thee an ark of gopher wood" (6:14). Then we would emphasize that God commanded him to use gopher wood and since God specified that type of wood, everything else is excluded and, in particular, every other type of wood is excluded. We might emphasize that if Noah had used oak, pine, or some other type of wood, the ark would have sunk, and those eight souls would have perished along with the world of that day.

We then come to the subject of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God today and we apply this seemingly good illustration. We correctly point out God said to sing. We generally appeal to Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16.

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord... Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

We might add that in the New Testament God always says to sing and He specifies singing. Singing is specific and does not include mechanical instruments. Since God specified singing, it excludes any mechanical instruments.

Let me be clear, the use of mechanical instruments of music in the *singing* of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs is **sinful**. So, the problem is not the sinfulness of instrumental music, it is the argument that becomes the problem.

Allow me to give a personal experience. While in high school, I

had a teacher who was a member of the Baptist Denomination. He and I often went back and forth in our discussion regarding the subject of faith only (which he argued for) and baptism and its necessity for salvation (which of course was what I argued for). Obviously, if I had known then what I know now, I would have argued in a far different way. Many of these discussions were done during the class session and where everyone in the class could hear. I am thankful some of the rulings and anti-religious attitudes that exist now did not exist then (in all probability he would have been fired and I would have been suspended, at best). One argument he consistently used was John 3:16: "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." Often after quoting this verse, he would add something like, "Doesn't that complete the picture?"

However, think how it could have gone if he had known this *principle* that so many brethren believe and teach. He could have asked, "Do you believe and teach that when God specifies one thing, it eliminates everything else? Do you not teach that it is sinful to use instruments of music because God specified singing, so instruments

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

are excluded?” If my answer (which at that time and for many more years) would have been “yes,” then he could have used that argument with John 3:16. He could have said, “God specified belief or faith in John 3:16 to be saved. Thus, according to what you have said, that excludes baptism to be saved.”

Now, to be consistent, I must deny the essentiality of baptism to be saved or deny the *silence principle* I had just agreed with. Now, obviously, the Scriptures teach the essentiality of baptism for salvation (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; etc.) so it would be sinful to deny it. Since baptism is essential to be saved, then it must be the *silence principle* as has been believed and taught must not be correct.

The Bible does teach a *law of silence* to be sure, just not as has been presented, taught, and believed by so many. God authorizes by what He says (through direct statements, examples, and implications). If God does not authorize an action, then that action is sinful because He has not authorized it. It would only have the authority of man and not God, thus the action is excluded. It is excluded because God is silent on that action. Consider the examples previously discussed. God authorized Noah to build an ark. He gave authorization

for Noah to use gopher wood. Does God’s direct statement to use gopher wood exclude another type of wood? No! However, God never authorized any other type of wood, thus all other types of wood are excluded because they are not authorized: not because gopher wood excludes them.

When discussing the sin of instrumental music with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, they are simply not authorized in New Testament worship. God authorized singing as is evidenced by the passages previously provided. Instrumental music is not singing (they are different types of music even as gopher wood is a different type of wood than oak or pine). God did **not** authorize instrumental music in New Testament worship. Because God did not authorize instrumental music, instrumental music is excluded. They are not excluded because God said to sing; they are excluded because God did not authorize them. What if God had authorized instrumental music in worship to Him today in some other passage (He did not but just a what-if)? According to the when God specifies one thing everything else is excluded view, God could not authorize instrumental music in another passage.

This is the situation one would

have with John 3:16 and it specifies belief (faith) for eternal life. Certainly, one must have faith to please God and to be saved (Heb. 11:6; Mark 16:16). However, faith being specified does not exclude anything else. It simply authorizes that action. Nevertheless, when we study other passages, we learn other items that must be done to be saved. We learn God commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30) because it is necessary, so we do not perish (Luke 13:3, 5), and is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). From other passages, we learn we must confess our faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (Mat. 16:16; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10). Likewise, we learn baptism is a necessary part of that salvation process (Mark 16:16; Act 2:38; 22:16; etc.). While these things are not stated in John 3:16, belief there does not exclude them; it only authorizes belief.

Is there a law of silence? Absolutely yes! That law of silence is not that when God specifies one thing, it excludes everything else. The law of silence is simply that if God does not authorize an action, then that action is excluded. Let us always argue for that which God authorizes and against what God does not authorize. Let us use the law of silence but use it properly.

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and one could have happened, but no evidence of it exists. That leaves Lizzie and Bridgette.

This case is one of the most famous unsolved murders. News commentator Paul Harvey had two “Rest of the Stories” involving this event. One of them focused on

Miss Sullivan, who was sometimes called *Maggie*. According to the research of a famous criminologist, his judgment was that the murderer was the Irish maid, whose room was directly above Mrs. Borden’s. We do not know if his opinion is correct, but it does fit the facts. However, neither Bridget nor

Lizzie ever implicated each other as the perpetrator of the crimes. Bridget moved to Montana and remained there until her death; she never discussed the case again.

The other “Rest of the Story” dealt with Lizzie’s life after the trial. She and her sister Emma lived together for a few years before Emma

moved out. Lizzie used the money she inherited mainly for the well-being of others. She helped fund the Fall River Animal Rescue League, founded by a friend, Helen Leighton. Although most Fall River citizens considered her guilty, she had a dozen or so friends. She also provided college scholarships for youths. Helen Leighton said of Lizzie:

Many, many individuals were aided by Miss Borden. She delighted to help people and gave most generously of her means. She helped several young people to obtain a college education. Fond of good reading herself, she saw to it that many persons who enjoyed good books but could not afford to buy them were well supplied with reading matter. Very few people knew the extent of her charities (Beck 209).

Did she commit the murders? Perhaps we will all find out on the Day of Judgment. She might have—even though no blood spatter appeared on her clothes or hair. Although her stepmother did not show much warmth toward anyone, her father adored Lizzie; she also seems to have genuinely loved him. It is hard to imagine that she could have brought herself to have killed him. Stranger things, however, have happened.

“A false witness will not go unpunished, And *he who speaks lies will not perish*” (Pro. 19:9). Those who lie in court will be held accountable. So will those who besmirch (without proof) the name of the dead.

More Widely Accepted Errors

President Ronald Reagan is famous for a quote concerning his liberal friends, but it applies (maybe even more so) to society in general as it pertains to the Scrip-

tures. So, here is our paraphrase: “The problem with our denominational friends is not that they are not ignorant of the Bible. It’s just that they know so much that isn’t so.”

Like what? Most are convinced that the Lord’s Supper consists of bread and wine (alcoholic). Yet, in the New Testament, the Greek word for wine is not used in any passage referring to the Lord’s Supper. The Bible refers to it as “the cup” or “the fruit of the vine.” Besides Matthew, Mark, and Luke, where Jesus originated the observance, Paul likewise uses the same descriptions in 1 Corinthians 10:16-21 and 11:23-29. Nevertheless, most still incorrectly call it “the wine,” as though this expression actually came from the New Testament, but it did not.

The “Pastoral” Epistles and “The Pastor”

This is the common designation of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. Why? Timothy and Titus were not pastors. Instead, they were to appoint elders, pastors, or bishops, all of which designated the same group of men. For that reason, Paul provides the qualifications of these leaders. But Timothy and Titus were not themselves pastors. Therefore, no logical rationale exists for calling them *the pastoral epistles*.

Furthermore, one would think that the New Testament was shot through with such designations as Pastor Paul, Pastor Timothy, Pastor Titus, et al. Generally, it is assumed that every preacher is a pastor even though this phraseology does not occur even one time in the New Testament. This is just one of the things that people know that just is

not so. Do people not wonder why that terminology is not found in the New Testament, or are they just not reading their Bibles?

Equally erroneous is the use of *Reverend*. This also comes from the common practice of the day, not from anything one might have read in the books of the New Testament. *Reverend* does not occur there, period. It appears once in the Old Testament (Psa. 111:9) and is applied to God, not man. Jesus makes it a point to teach that men are not to be exalted (Mat. 23:8-10). Yet, it is not unusual for preachers to be called “Reverend”—even though they have never used the *title* nor encouraged others to venerate them in that way.

Christmas and Easter

Another assumption is that all Christians celebrate Christmas and Easter—even though these arose from the traditions of men and are not found in the Bible. One would think that December 25th was taught in the Sermon on the Mount and that Jesus commanded people to celebrate His birth.

His birth was unique. No one else has ever been born of a virgin! (One wonders if those who do have “Christmas” programs actually believe that Jesus was born of a virgin, which was prophesied in Isaiah 7:14.) Many *ministers* do not. However, God did not command the day of His birth as a day to celebrate. He had no problem communicating when the Day of Atonement would be (Lev. 16); neither was there any ambiguity in observing the Passover or the other feasts. God has excellent communication skills. But the New Testament never authorizes us to remember the day of Jesus’ birth, significant

though it was. In fact, we are not told what day of the year it was when He was born.

Likewise, people bandy about such terms as Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday, just like they were in the Bible. None of them is (although the King James Version erroneously put Easter in Acts 12:4 even though they knew it was the word for Passover). Once again, people are more familiar with the traditions of men than they are with what is actually in the Bible. The Lizzie Borden poem has been repeated so often that people now accept it as truth despite the lack of evidence. The same thing is true of these various Christian practices.

Singing

Another assumption is, "If you are a Christian, you must like

Christian music." Few have noticed that, although instruments of music were used even commanded in the Old Testament (2 Chr. 29:25), it is totally absent in the New. Everyone who reads the New Testament should notice that instruments are never used in singing hymns. If Jesus never used them, the apostles never used them, and the churches never used them, then by what authority do Christians use them today? They have no authorization! Christians sing (see Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16-17).

The Rapture

This is another word that does not appear in the New Testament. The Bible describes Jesus' return, but it is not to set up a kingdom. He already rules over His kingdom (Dan. 7:13-14. Acts 2:29-35). Jesus only comes to the earth; Christians

rise up to meet Him in the air (1 The. 4:13-17). He is coming for judgment (2 The. 1:7-9). When He does so, the earth shall be burned up (2 Pet. 3:10-13). The books advocating premillennialism oppose the teaching of the Scriptures. Most people, however, assume Christians believe that fiction.

"Faith Only"

Most think that Christians believe in "faith only" for salvation—even though the Bible teaches the exact opposite (Jam. 2:24). Necessary for salvation are repentance and baptism, as taught on Pentecost (Acts 2:38) and repeated throughout the Book of Acts. Why do people not teach and believe what the Scriptures teach? Could it be that they prefer slogans often repeated instead of the truth?

Winter Haven, FL

What Must I Do to be Saved?

G. M. Prosser

This is a question that is in the hearts of many honest souls, but they have been so confused by the doctrines of men and heard so many different answers that they do not know which one is right. There are some two hundred and fifty different ways taught in the religious world today; so it is not a strange thing to see people so baffled that they do not know where to turn religiously.

I would like to point to you an infallible proof. May I say first, do not take any man's word for your guide, only those things that you can read from the pages of Holy Writ. If I can give you the words of the Master and His inspired apostles on this question, then it is not what I think about the subject. So, the only way

we can find the answer is to go to the Word of God and find out what was told to the people that asked this question about nineteen hundred years ago.

We find that the first time man, under the New Covenant, asked what to do to be saved was on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ when Peter and the rest of the apostles had preached the Gospel to them and pointed out how they by wicked hands had crucified the Lord of glory (Acts 2:23, 36).

When they believed what Peter had said concerning the Christ, they cried out and said, "Men and brethren, what must we do?" (Acts 2:37). Then in the next verse, Peter tells them what they are to do. He

did not tell them to believe and give him their hand and they would be saved. No, Peter was directed by the Holy Spirit, and he was not like a great many preachers today. He was not prejudiced against the truth with some biased ideas of his own. He was willing to speak as the Spirit directed him. So, by that Divine guidance, Peter said, "Repent." That was the next step for them to take since they had already believed that the One they had put to death was the Christ. They must obey His divine commands, which consisted of faith, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins. So, when they asked what to do, Peter told them to "Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for

the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

Some will say that the word, *for* in Acts 2:38 does not mean *for* but means “because of.” No doubt the God of heaven looked down the stream of time and saw men that would try to change the meaning of words in His plan of salvation; so, He recorded more than one conversion. May we call your attention to others that were told how to get rid of their sins, and without the use of the little word *for*.

Paul, or Saul of Tarsus, was a very religious man in the Jewish faith, so much that he made havoc of the church of Christ. When he was on his way to Damascus to bind Christians and bring them to Jerusalem and put them in jail, the Lord appeared unto him and asked Saul why he was persecuting Him. Saul, or Paul, had never believed in Christ until this happened, but when the great light shone round, about him and the Lord asked him this question, it was then he realized the great mistake he was making and wanted to know what to do to get rid of the awful sin he had committed in persecuting the church of our Lord. Then we hear the Lord tell Paul to go into the city and it will be told him what he must do (Acts 9:6). The Lord went to the preacher, who was Ananias, and told him about Saul. Ananias went to the place where Saul was staying and there found him praying. The preacher did not say, “Now Saul, you just pray on and you will ‘come through’ after a while.” No, he knew that there was something that Saul must do. So, he told him the next step to take to become a child of God. Saul had already believed in Christ three days before Ananias came to him, and we

know he had repented, for he changed his purpose. He had come to Damascus to persecute the church, but now he was praying, which showed his penitent mind. So, the next thing for him to do was to get rid of his sins, and the preacher just told him that which he lacked. That was to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16).

I want you to note that Ananias did not use *for* as did Peter on the day of Pentecost. Instead, he used the words, “Wash away.” I wonder if someone will say that “wash away” does not mean “wash away” since they say that *for* does not mean *for* in Acts 2:38.

But another says, “I want to be saved like the Philippian jailor. He was told to just believe.” No, he was not told to *just believe* or to *believe only*. It is true that he was told to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31). If you or any other person under heaven is ever saved, you will have to believe on the Lord, 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). So that was the first thing that the jailor must do, but Paul did not stop there, as so many *faith only* preachers do. He did what any honest preacher would do today. Acts 16:32 tells us that they spake unto him the Word of the Lord and to all that were in his house. Verse 33: “And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his straightway.” Therefore, we find the inspired man of God always began where the person needed to be taught and told him what he lacked being a child of God.

Let us hear the Christ Himself when He gave the great commission

to His apostles, according to Mark 16:15-16 when He said, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that **believeth** and is **baptized** shall be saved.”

May God help us to tell people all that He wants them to do to become Christians. Then to observe all things whatsoever the Lord has commanded.

It takes more than faith, repentance, and baptism to carry us through the pearly gates. We must hold to that faith in Christ, the seven Christian graces. First, to our faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, to temperance patience, to patience godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love (2 Pet. 1:5-7). Now Peter says if we lack these things, we are blind and cannot see afar off and have forgotten that we were purged from our old sins.

It is the will of the Lord that we meet upon the Lord’s Day and worship Him as He has commanded in His Word. We find that He has told us what to do when we come together on the Lord’s Day, in that we may worship Him in spirit and truth. We are to sing, pray, teach or preach, take the Lord’s supper, and give of our means. These are the items of worship that we find recorded in the New Testament, and it is in this Book that Christ said for us to observe all things whatsoever He had commanded us. Not Moses, not David, not one of the Old Testament prophets, but the things that He had commanded in the New Testament.

So may we, by the guidance of God’s Word, do these things and be sure that in the sweet by and by we will be saved eternally in heaven.

Deceased

Seeing as God Sees

Marvin Weir

It is an age-old problem that becomes a stumbling block to so many people. A person observes those who appear to be healthy and successful as they live in willful sin in rebellion against God. He also observes the struggles and apparent lack of success of those striving to live righteous lives. The false conclusion is quickly drawn that the “end really does justify the means” and that God is failing to bless the righteous.

The Bible warns against making rash, quick judgments without all the facts (Mat. 7:1) and based only on outward appearances. A classic example is God choosing a king for Israel from among Jesse’s sons and Samuel thinking that surely Eliab will be the one who is chosen (1 Sam. 16:6).

But Jehovah said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have rejected him: for *Jehovah seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart (16:7).

Making judgments based upon outward appearances caused the Psalmist to say, “But as for me, my feet were almost gone; My steps had well nigh slipped” (Psa. 73:2). One must fight the temptation to be envious of the arrogant upon seeing the “prosperity of the wicked” (73:3). Let us learn from the 73rd Psalm that our faith and trust is to be rooted and grounded in Jehovah and not in the glamour and glitter of this present world.

The Problem to Overcome

1. “The prosperity of the wicked” (73:3)—their boastfulness that was apparently justified by their

security and success.

2. The wicked had “no pangs in their death” (73:4)—that is, they died easy without fear or pain with no apparent mental or physical struggles.

3. The wicked were not “in trouble” and “plagued like other men” (73:5)—in normal life poverty and disease affect the poor while the wealthy appear to be living in luxury.

4. They are characterized by “pride” and “violence” (73:6).

5. They possess more than a heart could wish for (73:7).

6. They scoff and set their mouths against the heavens (73:8).

7. They are willfully ignorant of God and blasphemous and haughty in attitude (73:11).

The Psalmist then notes the wicked being at ease and increasing in riches and exclaims, “Surely in vain have I cleansed my heart, And washed my hands in innocency; For all the day long have I been plagued, And chastened every morning” (73:13-14). People today wrestle with the same thoughts. Does it matter what a man does? Will righteousness be victorious over unrighteousness? Does it pay great dividends to be wicked and God-defiant?

The Solution to the Problem

The realization that the wicked do indeed prosper and enjoy this life is often quite painful to the one striving to live a righteous life. But when one considers and accepts God’s eternal truths, earthly things are then seen in their true perspective. Temporal prosperity takes on an entirely new character when seen in the light of eternity.

1. The Psalmist saw that the feet

of the wicked were set “in slippery places” and that they were cast “down to destruction” (73:18).

2. A day is coming when the wicked will become “a desolation in a moment” and they will be “utterly consumed with terrors” (73:19).

3. In the Day of Judgment when all accounts are made right, God will despise the image of the wicked (73:20).

Understanding and accepting God’s revelation (the Scriptures) disposes quickly one’s envy of the wicked. Who in his proper mind would covet the position of one who is rich and famous in this world but wretched and lost throughout eternity? Physical prosperity will never be able to overcome spiritual bankruptcy!

The Destiny of the Righteous

1. He has fellowship with Jehovah God (73:23).

2. He is guided by Divine counsel (Word of God) that will lead to eternal glory (73:24).

3. He realizes that nothing upon earth can compare with God and His eternal blessings (73:25).

4. He knows that the flesh and heart will fail, but that God is his source of strength and refuge (73:26).

5. He understands it is always good for man to draw near to God, and he places his complete trust in God (73:28).

Let us realize that God’s thoughts are not our thoughts and neither are His ways our ways (Isa. 55:8-9). May we see as God sees and cherish the blessings that come from God more than the prosperity that comes through the world!

Paris, TX

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The Christian-Atheist

Daniel H. Coe, Sr.

An atheist does not believe in the existence of God. One would think that of all people a Christian would surely not be an atheist. However, there are countless Christian-atheists in the Lord's church. Indeed, the term Christian-atheist is an oxymoron of the n^{th} -degree. What is an oxymoron? It is the conjoining together terms that are direct opposites. Such as jumbo shrimp, a little lot of land, or a little big man. Just what then is a Christian-atheist?

Christian-atheism comes in seemingly countless forms. The number of Christian-atheists in the Lord's church is unknown. Some Christian-atheists are openly such, while others are Christian-atheists in secret. Still, others are Christian-atheists and do not even realize it. Regardless, there is not one Christian-atheist who would admit to such. On the contrary, they would deny being atheistic at all. So just what is a Christian-atheist? A Christian-atheist does not believe there is a God who requires certain things or has commanded numerous things, or even promises some things.

The Christian-atheist does not

believe in a God who means what He says (Eze. 5:13). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to be obedient in all things (John 15:14).

The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian keep all His commandments (John 14:15). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to love Him with all their heart soul and mind (Mat. 22:27). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian refrain his tongue from evil (1 Pet. 3:10). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to walk in the light of the Lord (1 John 1:7). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to love his neighbor as himself (Mark 12:31). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to listen to every word of Christ (Mat. 17:5). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to do good unto all men (Gal.

6:10). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to contend for the faith (Jude 3).

The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to attend every assembly of the saints (Heb. 10:25). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to sing songs of praise and admonish the brethren (Eph. 5:19). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to pray without ceasing (1 The. 5:17). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to give as they are prospered (1 Cor. 16:2). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to partake of the Lord's supper properly discerning the Lord's body (1 Cor. 11:29). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to pay attention when His Word is being proclaimed (Rom. 10:17).

The Christian-atheist does not

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Faith Only

Most of *Christendom* believes in the false doctrine of salvation by faith only. This false doctrine originates from another false doctrine regarding the nature of man. From early times men have taught that the nature of man is sinful. Calvin systematized Augustine's views into what has been taught with the acrostic: TULIP. The "T" stands for Total Hereditary Depravity. This false view of man leads to all the other points of Calvinism, so if you disprove the first point, the rest fall with it.

While this article is not intended to refute total hereditary depravity, it is the basis of the faith only doctrine. Total depravity teaches that man, because of his depraved condition, cannot do anything that pleases God. How is man to be saved then? God must send the Spirit into man's heart to convict him of his sin, to convert him, and then will preserve him to the end. In connection with this, God thus gives to man faith. There is almost always a misuse of Paul's statement, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). They falsely claim, "the gift of God" refers back to "faith," thus faith is given by God—a gift of God. However, "the gift of God" cannot grammatically refer to "faith," it refers in-

stead to the salvation that comes by grace through faith (I believe the textual evidence shows it is grace through **the** faith or God's Word). Thus, when God gives us faith, they claim we are then saved at that point. Of course numerous verses are mentioned showing the necessity of faith—all of which we firmly believe. They will normally bring up passages such as John 3:16, Acts 10:43; 16:30-31, and Ephesians 2:8-9.

One passage, however, that advocates of faith only have difficulty with is James 2:14-26. This caused so much difficulty for Martin Luther that he famously called James, "an epistle of straw" and wondered if whether it belonged in the Scriptures or not. One of the many obvious problems is that the phrase "faith only" is found one time in all the Scriptures and it is stated: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (2:24). They teach we are saved (justified) by faith only and James, by inspiration of God, says we are **not** justified by faith only. There is no way to harmonize the two statements: either we are or we are not. Either those who teach faith only justification are right, or James is right. It is no wonder that Luther did not like the book as it did not harmonize with his doctrine.

However, another problem exists when we read this portion of James. James writes, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble" before pointing out "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (2:19-20). Instead of *devils* a better translation would be *demons*. Demons believe is what God by the hand of James

states. If the doctrine of faith only salvation is true, then the demons will be saved because according to God, they believe. Yet who, in their right mind, would claim the demons will be saved? Yet, this is the conclusion which **must** follow if salvation by faith only is true.

There is ample evidence of James' statement. Let us notice a few of these:

And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? (Mat. 8:28-29).

But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not (Mark 5:6-7).

And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not (Luke 8:27-28).

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

All three of these passages refer to the same incident. In each one the demons (devils—KJV) not only know who Jesus is, they confess Him as the Son of God. In Peter's confession of Jesus as being the Christ, he stated Jesus was "the Son of the living God" (Mat. 16:16). Also, when the Ethiopian was asked by Philip if he believed, he responded, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). The demons believed and confessed Jesus as the Son of God.

If the contention that faith is all that is necessary to be saved, then how can anyone deny the demons' salvation? But this, of course, they cannot accept so they attempt to make a difference between the demons' *belief* and belief that saves.

Yet, they cannot maintain a harmony with their faith only doctrine and demonstrate any difference between saving faith (as they call it) and the demons' faith. They end up giving up their faith only doctrine to deny demons' salvation. However, what they need to do is to give up their false doctrine of salvation by faith only.

While faith (belief) is essential to salvation (Heb. 11:6 along with the previously mentioned passages), nowhere is it taught we are saved by faith only (alone). Thus, James' statements in James 2:14-26 stating we are justified by works. These works James speaks of are works that God has ordained or authorized. We would be correct in saying they are the obedience

which we render unto God, and which saves us (Rom. 6:17-18; Heb. 5:8-9). That obedience/works begins with faith (John 6:28-29)), but also includes repentance (Luke 13:3, 5; 24:46-47; Acts 17:30), confession of our faith (Mat. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:9-10), and being baptized in water for the remission of our sins or salvation (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:20-21). We are then to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3-4) yielding our lives to God. The one who continues to the end will receive the reward of eternal life with God (Mat. 10:22; 1 Cor. 15:58). It is certain: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (Jam. 2:24).

MH

Continued from Page 1

believe in a God who requires the Christian to dress modestly (1 Tim. 2:9). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to study His Word daily (Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 2:15). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to have their speech endowed with grace (Col. 4:6). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to be a proper example (Mat. 5:16; 1 Tim. 4:12). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to follow the example of Christ (John 13:15). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to not be conformed to this world (Rom. 12:2).

The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to be affectionate toward one another (Rom. 12:10). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to not put stumblingblocks in his brother's way (Rom. 14:13). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to take up their cross daily and follow His Son (Luke 9:23). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to live by faith (Gal. 3:12). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to speak soundly in doctrine (Tit. 2:11). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to speak Gods oracles

(1 Pet. 4:11). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to be framed together with other Christians (Eph. 2:21). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to continue in brotherly love (Heb. 13:1). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to love the Lord more than family (Mat. 10:34-37). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to confess Him before men (Mat. 10:32-33). Oh, the Christian-atheist, he is a miserable fellow is he not?

The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to preach the Word before all men (2 Tim. 4:2). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to be expedient (1 Cor. 6:12).

The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to walk in truth (1 John 2:4). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to follow after charity (1 Cor. 14:1). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to study the Old Testament (Rom. 15:4). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to set their affections on things above (Col. 3:2). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to continue in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to follow that which is good (3 John 11). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to resist the Devil (Jam. 4:7). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to deny ungodliness and worldly lust (Tit. 2:12). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to walk worthy of God (1 The. 2:12). The Christian-

atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to shun vain babblings (2 Tim. 2:16). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to gain knowledge (Rom. 11:25). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to be steadfast (1 Cor. 15:58). The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to lay aside all malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies, and all evil speakings (1 Pet. 2:1).

The Christian-atheist does not believe in a God who requires the Christian to do anything the Lord has mandated. The Christian-atheist wants a Burger King religion—they want to have it their way. The Christian-atheist wants to do things his way on his terms and dictate to God what He should and should not do. They want to live life on their terms and demand God save them. The Christian-atheist has no hope of a home in heaven. The Christian-atheist has removed God the Father from His rightful place and has put himself in His place.

Now, the Christian-atheist has a choice to make; He must decide which god he wants to serve, the god of self, or the God of heaven. “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). The Christian-atheist is not a Christian at all, he is an atheist! How can one expect to live like an atheist and die like a Christian? The Lord will not say to a Christian-atheist, “Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Mat. 25:23). The Lord will not say such because the Christian-atheist is faithful in nothing, he is an atheist! “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Psa. 14:1). How many other things does the Christian-atheist not believe? We can only speculate, but the number is seemingly endless. Now: Are you a Christian or are you an atheist? You cannot be both!

Hillsdale MI 49242

Apostasy

J. Noel Merideth

There are more than 2500 warnings against apostasy in the Bible. Let us note some examples.

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall (1 Cor. 10:12).

Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God (Heb. 3:12).

Paul himself wrote:

I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I my-

self should be rejected (1 Cor. 9:27).

These passages indicate the clear possibility of a child of God falling from grace and coming short of the glory of God. Such warnings would be without meaning if it were impossible for a child of God to so sin as to be finally lost. These passages, therefore, teach that it is possible to fall away and be lost and so warn against doing such.

God's promises are conditional in their nature:

And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind; for Jehovah searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever (1 Chr. 28:9).

When the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth therein; in his iniquity that he hath

done shall he die (Eze. 18:26).

We will now look at some arguments that prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that a child of God can fall away, can go into apostasy, and can so sin as to be lost eternally in hell.

(1) Luke 8:13: "And those on the rock are they who, when they have heard, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." Here are believers that in time of temptation **fall away**.

(2) Psalm 106:12, 24: "Then believed they his words; they sang his praise.... Yea, they despised the pleasant land, They believed not his word." Here in Israel's history the people at first believed and followed God, later they fell into unbelief and were not allowed to enter into the rest (Heb. 3:1-19; 1 Cor. 10:1-13; Heb. 4:1-11).

(3) James 5:19-20: "My brethren, if any **among you** err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he who **converteth a sinner from the error of his way** shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins"

(4) 2 Peter 2:20-22: "For if, **after they have escaped the defilements of the world** through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, **they are again entangled therein and overcome**, the last state is become worse with them than the first. For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them. It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing

in the mire."

(5) 1 Timothy 1:19-20: "holding faith and a good conscience; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith: of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander."

(6) 1 Corinthians 8:11-12: "For through thy knowledge he that is weak **perisheth, the brother for whose sake Christ died**. And thus, sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ."

(7) Hebrews 10:38-39: "But my **righteous** one shall live by faith: And **if he shrink back**, my soul hath no pleasure in him. But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul."

(8) Galatians 5:4: "Ye are **severed from Christ**, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are **fallen away from grace**."

(9) Philippians 4:3: "Yea, I beseech thee also, true yokefellow, help these women, for they labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow-workers, **whose names are in the book of life**." Exodus 32:33: "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." Revelation 20:15: "And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire."

(10) John 17:3: "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." Jeremiah 2:32: "Can a virgin forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number."

(11) John 15:5-6: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that

abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit:... If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

(12) 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Acts 8:22: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee." These statements teach what the erring child of God must do when he sins so that he may be forgiven and restored to the Lord. The law of pardon for the erring child of God would not be given if it was not needed.

Peter writes that Christians need to add to their faith: virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. He says, "if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble" (2 Pet. 1:5-10).

Deceased

Editor's Note: In 2 Peter 1:5-10 where we must add the Christian graces to our lives as Christians, there is a conditional statement with the word *if*. The Christian will never fall if he adds these characteristics. However, what if he fails to add them? Then he will not have the promise, "ye shall never stumble (ASV), "ye shall never fall" (KJV). If a Christian fails to add these Christian graces to his life, then he will stumble or fall. Let us ever be vigilant to add these characteristics to our lives so we will never stumble or fall and "an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (1:11).

Hirelings, Hucksters, and Snake Oil Salesmen

Jerry C. Brewer

Spiritual con artists, like those described by our title, are at work in our town and across the world every week. Making their hearers feel “**really** good,” they regale their deluded victims with psychological theories, perverted Bible texts, promises of heaven for nothing, and then laugh all the way to the bank.

Chances are good that you have been victimized by one of them. He is your *Pastor* or *Preacher*. As such, he is a member of one of the largest groups of legal hucksters in the world—the hireling denominational clergy—and Satan’s most valuable ally in sending the gullible to hell.

These spiritual snake oil salesmen can practice their trade unhindered because their victims support and enable them to preach their damnable doctrines in luxurious opulence. While they give lip service to your eternal salvation, their real agenda is to pick your pockets for their 30 pieces of weekly silver. Here is how the New Testament describes them:

Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. These are spots in your feasts of charity when they feast with *you*, feeding themselves without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.... and their mouth speaketh great swelling

words, having *men’s* persons in admiration because of advantage (Jude 11-13, 16).

Without any spiritual substance, and following in the steps of Judas, these leeches in the denominational industry willingly sell the Son of God to the highest bidder. They dare **not** preach the Truth lest the money is dried up from victims who love their smooth words. They are spiritual copperheads who strike with deadly doctrines, then slither off seeking their next victim.

Pretending to preach Christ who said, “The Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head” (Mat. 8:19-20), these whitewashed phonies live in splendor. With their IRAs, pension plans, stock investments, fat salaries, and paid medical and life insurance, they dare not preach Bible Truth about your soul’s salvation. That Truth requires faith (Heb. 11:6), repentance (Luke 13:3; 17:30-31), confession of faith in Christ as the Son of God with the mouth and in life (Mat. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:10), and baptism in water into Christ for the remission of your sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). But you will not hear that message from the covetous pulpiti-teers in our city and across the world.

Instead, most of them preach Universalism. This is the doctrine that hell is non-existent, there will be no punishment for the wicked, everyone will be saved at last, and you have absolutely nothing to do to gain heaven. That single doctrine will probably send more people to hell than any other that has been concocted since Satan lied to

Eve about the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:4). Why do they do this? To paraphrase a political line in recent years, “It’s the money, stupid!”

Pursuing the lifestyle of the Religious Rich, some *pastors* even work on a commission basis, receiving a large percentage of the weekly collection, so their greed absolutely forbids them to tell you the Truth. They are religious liars who have changed the Truth of God into a lie at your soul’s expense. Their god is their belly, and their damnation is sure. That is how Peter describes them:

And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not (2 Pet. 2:2-3).

They dare not tell their victims the Truth about righteous living. People just do not like to hear God’s Truth about things like that. Just listen to the verbal sewage spewing from the mouths of those with whom you work or attend school. Though you cannot tell by the way they live, they are generally religious folks who will tell you that they have been “born again.” Instead, they have been fed a steady diet of egalitarian grace by their money-grubbing pastors who say, “God doesn’t demand you to change the way you live. His grace covers it all. Eat, drink, gamble, carry on as you always have.” That is the same line the Cerentian Gnostics spouted at Ephesus in the first century—“Profess to be a

Christian but live like the devil.”

No, my friends, God **does not** accept you, “Just as you are.” He demands a change in the way you live. That is what *converted* means in Matthew 18:3 where Jesus said, “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

God will not accept homosexuality, drunkenness, adultery, lying, or theft. He demands that you give up those things, take up your cross and follow Christ if you want eternal salvation. He demands that you and I live, “soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world” (Tit. 2:11-12).

Christ’s religion is one of sacrifice—quite a novel concept in these days of, “Don’t worry, be happy” and “Do your own thing.” But, of course, you need not expect that fat pulpiter standing before you to mention anything like sacrifice on anyone’s part—especially his own. He is more interested in your bank

account than he is your soul, and he certainly does not want to upset you.

The apostle Paul suffered unspeakable privation and physical punishment for daring to preach the Truth (2 Cor. 11:23-30). What would happen if the so-called preachers in our town actually dared to speak the Truth like Paul? They would be tarred and feathered by hedonistic parishioners who love having their cake and eating it too. They do not want to be told that the Lord gave only **one** Scriptural reason for divorce (Mat. 5:32; 19:9). They do not want to be told that dancing is lasciviousness, that shacking up without marriage is sin, that drunkenness will send them to hell, that filthy language is a mark of the devil’s child, or that they must actually **obey the Gospel** to go to heaven (Gal. 5:19-21; 2 The. 1:6-9).

Jesus said, “Ye shall know them by their fruits” (Mat. 7:16), and it is

obvious that the hired hands of denominations are wolves in sheep’s clothing who not only fleece their flocks each week but spiritually devour souls as Satan’s ministers, masquerading as angels of light (2 Cor. 11:14-15).

It should come as no surprise if the welcome mat at hell’s door is made from the hides of denominational preachers.

Elk City, OK

Editor’s Note: It is sad but true that many so-called preachers in the Churches of Christ are no better than these religious hucksters from the denominational world. These congregations have long ago left the moorings of God’s Word and are nothing but denominations with a sign on their building that says Church of Christ and claiming to be one but are no longer. They are apostates from the truth. Their elders have turned things over to those who will lead the congregation into the halls of hell fire.

What is Really Important in Life?

Author Unknown

Not where you were born:

Winston Churchill was born in the ladies’ cloakroom in the castle of Blenheim. His mother was attending a social function there when she gave premature birth to her son.

Not your education:

Did you know that nine of our presidents did not attend college? (They are Truman, Cleveland, Andrew Jackson, Lincoln, Filmore, Taylor, Van Buren, Jackson, and Washington).

Not size:

President William Howard Taft weighed 350 pounds. President John

Adams was only five feet six inches tall.

Not your looks:

Did you know, for example, that President U. S. Grant’s wife was “cross-eyed?” She wanted to have it corrected with an operation, but he said he “liked her that way.”

What really counts? If you want to enjoy life, then check:

Your Attitude:

“The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?” (Pro. 18:14). Your spirit or attitude can bless you or break you.

Use of your time:

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:15-16).

Your belief:

“Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecc. 12:13). Jesus said, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mat. 6:33).

Center in on the things that really count. If these are right, then you can overcome any other obstacles that may be in your way.

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“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

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Recommended Reading: *The Thing That Hath Been (Vol. 2)* Gary W. Summers

The title of this book comes from Ecclesiastes 1:9:

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.

Certainly, there is nothing new under the sun when it comes to errors being promoted in the camp of the faithful. This book's subtitle is: "The Cycle of Apostasy." What happened during the era of the judges also happens in the Lord's church—just not as frequently. But there are many similarities occurring today compared to what happened 200 to 250 years ago.

The two issues headlining division back then were missionary societies and the introduction of mechanical instruments of music. Today, those have returned and brought many other innovations with them. The same ineffective and weak arguments are being used today as then—and with many of the same results: The voices of those holding closely to the Scriptures are being ignored. Pleas for Biblical soundness not only go unheeded; they are often treated with

contempt.

This book is, perhaps, the most valuable, "right on the money" analysis and warning to churches since Ira Rice's *Ax on the Root* series, published in 1966, 1967, and 1970. This book was published in 2020, and its second edition is now available. The best news is that it is free (although this reviewer thinks sending \$5.00 would be a nice gesture). Jerry Brewer is the author, 308 South Oklahoma Avenue, Elk City, OK 73644.

"An Emerging Denomination"

This first chapter seeks to define what is meant in the book by the phrase *mainline churches of Christ*. Of course, some congregations still believe and hold fast to the Word, but many of the rest find themselves in a state of flux and maybe are not too sure where they are. Some of these remain where they used to be, but some are a long way down the road to being a denomination—the very thing churches of Christ have historically sought diligently to avoid becoming.

Brother Brewer provides eight characteristics of mainstream

churches (1). The one that really struck a chord with this reviewer (and probably most of those who read this publication) was the second one: "Churches who may not preach error, but willingly fellowship churches and preachers who do (1 John 1:6-7; 2 John 9-11)." This has become an insoluble mystery to many of us over the past two decades—especially since many of those in this category once stood where we do and used the same Scriptures as authority for their stance! However, now we find a spirit of compromise among those who once stood firm (they know who they are). The church has been and is being weakened.

"When the Floodgate Was Opened"

Many occasions for opening the floodgates to apostasy could be cited (and are throughout the book), but what causes the problem is one's view of authority. Does silence authorize or prohibit Christians from engaging in various activities? The rationale for the first choice is provided by W. K. Pendle-

Continued on Page 4



Notes From The Editor

Michael
Hatcher

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Entertainment Evangelism?

After publishing the article by brother H. M. Phillips in the May 2022 issue of *Defender*, a brother from Alabama wrote objecting to the conclusions brother Phillips makes in his article. In this letter, he attempts to defend using entertainment and baseball teams, basketball teams, building gymnasiums, and such as a means for evangelism. I did notice in his entire letter, not one passage of Scripture was mentioned, although he did give lip service to “the mission of the church is missions!”

The first defense of using *entertainment* and *recreation* as evangelism was to attack those who do not with the insinuation that if you do not, then you are not really involved in missions. Naturally, no one comes out and actually states such, but it is the implication in the questions asked. Such as: “How are you conducting your mission? Is it only for people who you enter your fraternity building and are taught the gospel then?” So, unless you are providing recreation, entertainment, sports, gymnasiums, “blow-up jumping equipment, games, and refreshments,” then you are not really involved in missions. I wonder where all these things are found within the Scriptures. Maybe this

brother’s Bible is different than mine (it might be with all the proliferation of *versions* on the market today with many of them being nothing more than the false doctrines of man under the guise of a Bible).

What this brother has done is to take a pragmatic view of missions; whatever works is what should be done. However, when one takes the whatever works approach, then why not (as one denominational group did) bring in strippers for their *worship* one Sunday? They could probably get the group “Strippers for Christ” (an actual group and there is also a “Strip Church” who will help you start this ministry in your town) to come strip for them. No doubt it would get a lot of lust-filled men (and possibly women) to come and then they could teach them the Gospel. However, some might object that stripping would be sinful. That is all right though because this might be the only way you could get some to attend, and once they are there you can teach them the error of their way and save them. Once you take a pragmatic approach (as this brother has), there is no stopping point. It simply is a matter of degree from the entertainment, recreation, etc., to the strippers.

I believe Paul gives us great insight into activities such as this. Paul has received the Macedonian call (Acts 16:9-10) which results in his travel to Philippi. There is then the conversion of Lydia (16:13-15). A young woman possessed with a Python spirit followed them crying out “These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation” (16:17). Paul then cast out that

spirit causing her masters great consternation and they brought Paul and Silas to the rulers of the city who had them beaten with rods and then cast them into the innermost prison. The jailor was then converted to Christ and afterward, Paul and Silas were released. They then passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia and came to Thessalonica. After *reasoning* (a word meaning “to engage in speech interchange, converse, discuss, argue” BDAG) in the synagogue for three sabbath days resulting in some believing and “of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few” (17:4), persecution arose against them. The persecution was so great the brethren sent them away by night to Berea. If Paul and Silas had known what this brother and others who hold the same view know, Paul and Silas would have started a baseball or basketball team and asked those in the synagogue to join their team or pulled up some blow-up equipment for party and games. They would have really been involved in mission work then, but Paul, Silas, and Timothy did not recognize these valuable tools to do mission work.

When Paul writes back to this new congregation after he arrives at Corinth. Paul recounts this history by writing:

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain: But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention. For our exhortation *was* not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts (1 The. 2:1-4).

Several things stick out that deal specifically with the pragmatic view of using recreation and entertainment for mission work. At Philippi, Paul suffered and was shamefully treated. Entertainment and recreation are the opposite of what Paul was doing in his mission and ministry. What Paul did at Thessalonica was to be bold in preaching the Gospel. He would put it this way in writing to the Corinthians: “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21). These entertainment and recreation ministers (what most “youth ministers” are) would have to say that it pleased God by recreation and entertainment to save them that believe. Then Paul added, “But we preach Christ crucified... Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (1:23, 24). For what these brethren practice, it should read that entertainment and recreation are the power and wisdom of God. Paul would say, “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (2:2), but these brethren would need to say they determined to know sports and recreation.

However, getting back to what Paul stated to the Thessalonians, it is of particular interest when he states in verse 3 that their (Paul, Silas, and Timothy) exhortation did not include three things: deceit, uncleanness, or guile. Uncleanness might not be indicative of these brethren as it would to many. Uncleanness would include any type of moral impurity including things such as greed, ambition, vanity, pride, honor, or popularity. These brethren certainly want to be popular and eschew such things as the suffering and shameful treatment Paul received at Philippi. The more recreation and entertainment they can provide, the more popular they will be. However, the word implies more sexual impurity as Paganism was often associated with such. We would not accuse our sports and recreation brethren of doing such for sexual impurity.

Deceit was mentioned first by Paul and *guile* was mentioned last. Both words find an application to this subject. *Deceit* is a term BDAG uses for the Greek word and Thayer uses not only deceit but also fraud and “a deceiving spirit, a teacher who seeks to seduce, deception, fraud.” Using sports (ball teams), entertainment, and recreation and then slipping the *gospel* into it is deceptive. The purpose of the entertainment is totally different than the teaching of the Gospel. Paul did not try to deceive them into obeying the Gospel by providing fun and frivolity, he simply preached the Gospel to them.

Guile has reference to trickery, craft, and subtlety. While uncleanness would have reference to improper purpose or motive, guile would refer to improper means. Paul would not stoop to improper

means to gain converts. He would never have stooped to using entertainment and recreation to attempt to *convert* people to Christ. If he had, he would never have been able to truthfully write what he did in 1 Thessalonians 2:3-4. What they end up doing is to *convert* people to those forms of entertainment and recreation and not to Christ.

This also brings us to the idea presented by Christ. When the Jews were murmuring at Him because of His teaching that He is the bread of life which came from heaven, He states:

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me (John 6:44-45).

The only way to come to Christ is by the Father drawing a person to Him. The denominational world has long emphasized verse 44 while ignoring verse 45 so they could teach that the Father draws us by sending the Spirit into our hearts to convict, convert, and sanctify man. This doctrine is Calvinistic in nature and is false doctrine. It ignores the manner or means by which the Father draws us. The Father draws us by the means of teaching. This teaching is the Gospel of Christ for it is God’s power to save. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). It is that Word that is implanted into the hearts of man to save the soul. “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of

naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (Jam. 1:21). This is why Jesus gave the apostles and us the Great Commission to “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). The Father draws us to Christ, but it is to be done by teaching or preaching the Gospel which is able to save the soul.

The games (ball teams), recreation, and entertainment brethren have lost sight of the drawing power and have ended up rejecting what God says is the drawing power. Their position is that we need something to draw people in so we can teach them. It becomes obvious that the Gospel alone is not sufficient to draw people; instead, we need fun and games. It is a denial of God’s plan (the drawing

power is the Gospel) and relying on man’s plan (fun and games).

While fun and games are proper for the home, they are not the work of the church, and they are not designed to do mission work. Mission work is the preaching of the Gospel to draw people to Christ. Fun and games reject the way of God for the ways of man.

MH

Continued from Page 1
ton (20). At a meeting in Lawton, Oklahoma on Nov. 17, 2003, Lynn McMillion, President and CEO of *The Christian Chronicle*, was asked three times: “Is the silence of the Scriptures permissive or prohibitive?” Most of us know what he believes, but he refused to answer. The reasons why are analyzed (21-22).

Chapters 3 and 4

These describe some of the current apostasy that is occurring. Some of these parallel previous conditions. Brother Brewer quotes quite often from the volumes Earl West wrote—*The Search for the Ancient Order*. A frequent technique was simply to introduce something without making a fuss over it. When someone opposed it, they were credited with being unloving and divisive. Isaac Errett was one of these. He set forth ten articles concerning what the church teaches and practices (41-46). Even though many of the points were Biblical, they had the appearance of a creed, and most brethren rejected them as such.

Pentecostalism

Anyone who does not think we are faced with the specter of Pente-

costalism in the church has not been paying attention. For years, many Pentecostal groups believed that people were baptized in the Holy Spirit in modern times (usually evidenced by “speaking in tongues”). In the 1960s and 1970s, many in the church began to teach the concept as well. Pat Boone led the charge with such beliefs, but others followed soon.

[Reviewer’s note: Your congenial reviewer ran into this situation in the very first congregation with which he worked. Two song leaders and their families (all of them hard workers) had involved themselves in this error. After several months of praying and studying, the congregation had no choice but to withdraw fellowship from them. They had many good qualities but adhering to the truth was not one of them. He also recorded Pat Boone at the Civic Center in Pittsburgh in 1973. Some brethren tried to speak with him but were denied access.]

John Wesley first began to teach in the United States “a direct influence of the Holy Spirit on man’s spirit” (53). Mac Deaver began to run with this position in the 1990s, but he is not alone. Sunset School

of Preaching and several *Christian* universities also have instructors teaching the same thing (60-66).

Chapter six considers what the Scriptures mean by being “spirit-filled”; a number of preachers and churches are to the point of saying that the Spirit enables Christians to do various things separate and apart from the Word. This is an error that has already infiltrated many congregations.

Christian Universities

Chapters 8 and 9 deal with the current status of *Christian* universities. Many of us have known for decades that a university, a college, a high school, middle school, elementary school, kindergarten, or preschool is not the work of the church. By what authority would the church teach mathematics, history, science, or English? The work of the church is to educate everyone concerning the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In 1947, David Lipscomb wrote in the school’s lectureship book: The Christian college is intended to help mothers and fathers bring up their children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (89). Many brethren used to understand that the school was an adjunct of the home—not the church.

For that reason, schools ought not to be supported by churches—but by individuals. In fact, Ohio Valley College once had, as part of its charter or by-laws, that they could not receive checks from churches. Any they received from churches had to, of necessity, be returned. They were serious about this decision because the very next item stated that the previous provision could never be changed. Most Christian universities today are happy to take money from churches—or the government—or corporations. Anyone who knows the story of “Play On, Miss Bertha” will find an accounting of it on pages 100-101.

More on universities is examined in the next section—with a particular focus on “the pornography in the art department” at Freed-Hardeman University, which remains supported by the Henderson Church of Christ and the Bible faculty at the university not to mention the institution’s president, David Shannon. One can only imagine the degree of jaw-dropping amazement and awe that would be expressed by N. B. Hardeman and other former godly men about something so obviously wrong.

How the information came to light is retold with information provided by Kerry Sword (the congregation which this reviewer works with and is one of the overseers of supported brother Sword in Kiev, Ukraine for 25 years). Two articles written on the morality aspect of their actions, by this reviewer, are also included. The presentation is rather lengthy (104-40), but it is well worth reading. Brother Sword is accurate in his descriptions; nevertheless, he has been much maligned in the area.

Schools of Preaching

These too are not as trustworthy as they were in years past. One of the schools examined is Sunset, which has had problems for years regarding Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage. Many congregations have also reported problems with graduates teaching error on the Holy Spirit. Brewer points out that former Sunset instructor, Richard Rogers (whose class on Old Testament History and Geography course was inspirational when this writer listened to the tapes years ago) endorsed Terry Rush’s heretical book, *The Holy Spirit Makes No Earthly Sense* (150). The reader will be surprised by the teaching that has found its way in what were once conservative schools.

The Social Gospel

The author not only defines what the social gospel is (183-89); he shows from various church bulletins that the emphasis in main-line churches seems to be going that way. Also included is a study of the word, *ministry*, as used in the Scriptures (199-200). Chapter 12 takes a look at various “societies among the churches of Christ,” including the Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort (CCDRE) (206-10). What do Christians actually know about this organization? Chances are the material presented here will come as a surprise to most brethren. Some comparisons are made to previous institutions of one century ago.

Fellowship

Now all of these departures are disturbing, but the most insidious problem is discussed in chapters 13-14. Why is it the worst problem we face? The reason is that we know liberals like Max Lucado,

Rubel Shelly, and Rick “Abihu” Atchley are going to come along. We know we will face a few men who are not so flagrant, but who are leaning the same direction. But what we have not seen in such abundance in previous years are the number of preachers and brethren who will fellowship false teachers.

In the last twenty years, those who would have never been fellowshiped previously are now endorsed either implicitly or explicitly. Why doesn’t it make sense to people to correct someone when he has taught error? Why would a preacher appear on a program with a person who has been associated with liberalism for 35 years? Why would someone speak on the same program as another person who has written a book denying the doctrine of hell? Who could have imagined that anyone would do such a thing? Yet it is being done. If the most conservative among us fellowship men who are known for their errors, what does that mean for the future of the church? Isn’t he who justifies the wicked an abomination to God (Pro. 17:15)? No one ought to say to the wicked, “You are righteous” (Pro. 24:24-26).

Brewer also includes important chapters on brotherhood periodicals, newsletters, and youth ministries. He has collected a tremendous amount of information, which brethren need to read, and it would not be surprising to learn that a Volume 3 might be forthcoming (although this material is very thorough). Some will not agree with every point made, but if it causes them to evaluate their practices, it will be worth it.

Winter Park, FL

Reasons To Rejoice

Lee Moses

In many books of the Bible, certain words stand out and convey themes of a particular book. In the inspired epistle Paul wrote to the Philippians, these words are *joy* and *rejoice*. Paul used these two words sixteen times, as well as a use of *gladness*. It did not bother Paul in the least that the Holy Spirit had inspired him to be repetitive in this respect: “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed *is* not grievous, but for you *it is* safe” (Phi. 3:1). Paul was glad to be able to write a message of rejoicing. Throughout this epistle are various “Reasons to Rejoice.”

The Want of the Lord

God desires rejoicing. Indeed, the imperative “rejoice in the Lord” (3:1) is a Divine imperative. Jesus sought the joy of His apostles: “And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they [the apostles] might have my joy fulfilled in themselves” (John 17:13). Jesus prayed for the joy of His apostles, and spoke for the joy of His apostles (15:11). Those things which Jesus said are revealed to us, that our joy might be full as well (1 John 1:4).

Some have the idea that God wants everybody to be miserable. Generally, those who believe this do not want anybody telling them that there are some things they must do and some things they cannot do. However, God wants to rejoice, and He wants mankind to rejoice (Isa. 65:18-19). God not only desires that we rejoice but also took steps to see that we would have cause for rejoicing.

The first time *rejoice* is used in the

New Testament is at the birth of Christ: “When they [the wise men] saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy” (Mat. 2:10). The word for *rejoice* also means “be full of joy” (Mounce 478). Thus, it might be said that the wise men were “full of joy with exceeding great joy” and that they were to see the Christ child.

There was certainly good reason for them to rejoice. His names would signify that He would be “God with us” and the One Who would “save his people from their sins” (1:21, 23). The wise men from the east had more reason to rejoice than they may have known, as this salvation was not limited to physical Israel, but would be extended to everyone of every nation who “feareth him [God], and worketh righteousness” (Acts 10:34-35). God had a design for the reconciliation of man to Himself (Eph. 1:9-10).

God provides for mankind a joy incomparable to any other known by man. As Jesus said, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly” (John 10:10). This by no means guarantees Christians the best outward circumstances (compare with 2 Tim. 3:12). However, God provides joy in the face of the worst outward circumstances:

Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you (Mat. 5:11-12).

Brother Dub McClish explains, “To ‘rejoice in the Lord’ does not mean that we are to paste a fake smile on our faces and walk around like

zombies. However, we should likewise guard against being perpetual ‘sourpusses’ and turning into cynics” (122). God provides internal joy, but that joy is not internal alone. “Joy is not just inward. It has a cause and finds expression” (*Chairoo*). God provides a reason to rejoice in that He desires that we do rejoice.

The Workers for the Lord

It is truly a joy having faithful brethren. Paul prayed often about the beloved brethren at Philippi: “Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now” (Phi. 1:4-5; compare with 4:10, 17). The Philippians likewise anticipated a joyful reunion with Paul (1:25-26), and with the faithful messenger Epaphroditus (2:28-29).

Paul’s greatest joy was seeing his spiritual brethren succeed. He looked forward to the Philippians’ successes, and to seeing the fruits of their successes at the glorious Last Day (2:2, 16-18; 4:1; compare with 1 The. 2:19-20). Unfortunately, there were some brethren for whom Paul could not rejoice: “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ” (Phi. 3:18). Paul had “great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart” because of “my kinsmen according to the flesh” (Rom. 9:2-3). He was referring to Israelites, who had “not attained to the law of righteousness” (9:4, 31). Fleshly Israel’s failure to follow Christ broke Paul’s heart, as did the failures of those who had once followed Christ. Nonetheless, we can rejoice in every success of our

brethren in Christ—as we hear of foreign evangelists carrying the Gospel to new lands, as we learn of churches standing firm for the Truth in the face of adversity, or as we see young babes in Christ maturing in the faith to become productive workers for the Lord.

The Word of the Lord

Paul exclaimed, “Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice” (Phi. 1:18). He could not rejoice over the motivations some held in preaching Christ (1:16); nonetheless, he rejoiced greatly when the truth of Christ’s Gospel was preached. He knew very well the blessings available to those who heard.

You see, the Word of the Lord had been a great blessing to him, as it is to any who receives it. Jeremiah said, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts” (Jer. 15:16). The psalmist wrote of the blessed man, “But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night” (Psa. 1:2). It is cause for rejoicing whenever Christ is preached; whether we hear Him preached, or hear of His being preached (Acts 8:5, 8, 35, 39; 11:18).

That We Are in the Lord

Paul repeats two final times the imperative to *rejoice*. He writes, “Rejoice in the Lord alway: *and* again I say, Rejoice” (Phi. 4:4; compare with 2:18; 3:1). He speaks of a rejoicing that does not end. This continual rejoicing is “**in the Lord**”—it is possible only for those who have been baptized into Christ and remained faithful in the Lord. One cannot have true joy if he does not have Christ. There

is no other religion that offers the hope and joy Christianity affords (3:2-3).

The Christian knows how to maintain joy in Christ. Warren Wiersbe notes three attributes found in the verses immediately following Philippians 4:4 that enable one to maintain this joy in the Lord:

(1) **Right praying.** “Be careful [anxious—ASV] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (4:6). The Christian is to be anxious for nothing, yet he is to pray about everything. And right praying requires adoration, supplication, and thanksgiving. As Wiersbe points out from this epistle, one needs the single mind of Philippians 1 to give adoration, the submissive mind of Philippians 2 to come with supplication, and the spiritual mind of Philippians 3 to give God thanks. If these are being practiced, one will have the secure mind of Philippians 4.

(2) **Right thinking.** Paul exhorts, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things” (4:8). What we think upon controls our attitude, and in turn controls our life. As Solomon wrote, “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life” (Pro. 4:23).

(3) **Right living.** Paul goes on to say, “Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you” (Phi. 4:9). There is indeed a right and a wrong way to live. While the wrong

way might grant license for self-indulgence without regard for consequence, eventually consequence catches up with wrong living.

The Christian can rejoice that he is in the Lord because he is able to look beyond things temporal (2 Cor. 4:18-5:1). The heathen has all of his joy placed in this world. However, when things of this world depart from him, in what can he rejoice? Paul wrote this epistle of joy while he was **in prison**, yet he could be thankful even for his imprisonment (Phi. 1:12-14; 4:11). Even in death, one who is “in the Lord” is blessed (Rev. 14:13).

Conclusion

As Christians, we should rejoice in the joy we have. This may sound redundant, but we should rejoice that we have true joy, unlike any other known to man. There are good reasons for Christians to rejoice: Rejoicing is the want of the Lord, we are blessed with the faithful workers for the Lord, we are blessed with the Word of the Lord, and we are in the Lord. However, if one is not in Christ or has left Christ, there is no cause for rejoicing. Notwithstanding, even heaven can be provided a reason to rejoice: “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke 15:10).

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The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus

F. B. Srygley

The first introduction we have of Paul—or Saul of Tarsus—in the New Testament is found in the latter part of Acts 7 in these words: “and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul.” This statement was given in the account of the death of the first Christian martyr. Stephen was killed for contending for the Truth with religious men who opposed the Truth. It was a religious discussion that brought about his death, and no inspired man condemned Stephen for discussing these questions with those who opposed the Truth. Many otherwise good people today condemn religious discussions.

Of himself, Saul, who afterward was called Paul, said, “I am verily a man *which am* a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day” (22:3). Zeal is a good thing when properly directed, but zeal in error is, on the contrary, dangerous. It carries one further into wrong and makes his influence more dangerous. One

should do what he thinks is right, but his **thinking** it is right does not necessarily **make** it right. Paul said, “I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth” (26:9). What Paul **thought** about it did not change the truth of the question.

Again, Paul said to the council, “I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (23:1). Some people now contend that conscience is a correct guide, but this cannot be true. If it had been, Paul would have needed no conversion, since he had a good conscience while persecuting Christians. If Paul lived in all good conscience toward God and was still the chief of sinners, certainly conscience is not a correct guide. A good conscience is not a guide but **needs** a guide. A good conscience is a conscience that performs its function, and its function is to approve the judgment. However, the judgment may be wrong. Therefore, it also needs a guide. God’s Word is the guide for man in all things pertaining to life and godliness.

Soon after the death of Stephen,

Paul went to the high priest and obtained letters of authority to carry his persecution against Christians into other cities. With a company of soldiers, he started to the ancient city of Damascus to arrest Christian men and women to bring them to Jerusalem to be punished. On his way to Damascus, and as he drew near to the city, “suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest” (9:3-5). Paul could have truthfully said, “Why charge me with persecuting **you**? I never saw you before in my life.” But Paul must have understood that the relation of Christ and His followers was so close that to persecute Christians was to persecute their Lord.

The next question Paul asked was, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (9:6). Christ did not tell him what to do but told him where he would find a man who would tell him what he must do. In former days, when men *got religion*,

Continued on Page 4



Notes From The Editor

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True Grace

In Peter's first epistle, he extends to the strangers scattered, grace and peace.

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied (1 Pet. 1:1-2).

Then as he ends his first epistle, he states, "By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand" (5:12). By using *true grace*, Peter automatically recognizes there must also be a **false** grace.

No doubt there are many expressions of false grace. Several years back, many of our brethren were touting a doctrine they called an "umbrella of grace." This doctrine was/is nothing more than the Calvinist doctrine of "once saved always saved" warmed over. It might be best illustrated by an example I used: if a Christian was committing adultery with another woman and her husband walked in on them and being outraged, he shot and killed them, would that Christian be saved? The person then told me that the Christian

would be saved because he was a Christian and God's grace would cover him. Thus, there was no difference between this supposed "umbrella of grace" and "once saved always saved."

Then others have no concept but will claim that they never knew grace until they started listening to So-and-So (insert false teacher here). It seems what they mean by it is that unless the preacher or teacher is mentioning the word *grace* every few minutes, then you supposedly do not believe and teach grace. No, doubt there are many other expressions of false grace, but what about true grace?

Before considering what Peter has to say regarding it, notice what Paul states:

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (Tit. 3:11-13).

Paul writes that God's grace teaches us. That grace teaches us three things: (1) to deny certain things, (2) to live in a certain way, and (3) to look. The first of these is that God's grace teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. *Ungodliness* comes from a word meaning "want of reverence towards God, impiety, ungodliness" (Thayer). BDAG adds that it "is understood vertically as a lack of reverence for deity and hallowed institutions as displayed in sacrilegious words and deeds." God's grace teaches us not to speak or act in such a way that would show a lack of reverence for God.

It also teaches us to deny

worldly lusts. *Worldly* has reference to the world system that is under Satan's control and is thus without God. It is a worldwide empire ruled by Satan (2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:1-4). *Lusts* means "desire." John describes these worldly lusts in this way:

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever (1 John 2:15-17).

Those desires that are separate from God and are under that empire ruled by Satan must be denied within our lives.

Paul turns to the positive and says we are to live in a certain way: (1) soberly, (2) righteously, and (3) godly. The idea presented by *soberly* has a variety of meanings. Thayer defines it as "with sound mind, soberly, temperately, discreetly." BDAG states, "pertaining to being prudent, soberly, moderately, showing self-control." This is the person who can think rationally or sensibly and because of that thinking, they can then demonstrate it in controlling themselves. In this context, it does not mean being free from alcohol, in

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

other contexts it does (1 The. 5:6-7).

Righteously denotes that which is just, proper, or upright. It often has reference to our relations with other people. These relations are going to be judged by the standard of God's Word (the Gospel reveals God's righteousness—Rom. 1:16). One of those great standards is what man has termed the golden rule: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Mat. 7:12). It is summed up beautifully by our Lord when He says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (22:39). Then, Paul adds a third wonderful principle of being *godly*. This word is defined by Thayer as "piously, godly" and BADG adds, "in our literature of one's relation to God, in a godly manner." Then they ask this brilliant question from Zenophone: "Can there be any better or more reverent way to honor the gods than by doing what they command?" This describes one who is living based upon a proper relationship with God and living as He requires. It is the opposite of one who is living ungodly.

The third great principle is that we are to look for our blessed hope which will be culminated when our God and Savior appears. When Christ comes the Christian who is living faithfully by denying ungodliness and worldly lust; living soberly, righteously, and godly will be given an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom or into that heavenly home for which he has longed (2 Pet. 1:11). These are great principles so when we discuss and preach on these subjects (denying, living, looking), then we are discussing and preaching on

God's saving grace (whether *grace* is specifically mentioned or not).

Let us now turn our attention to what Peter describes as the true grace of God (1 Pet. 5:12). Since Peter states he has written "exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand," it would be necessary to go back and see what he has written. As one goes back to the beginning of the book, he finds that Peter is writing to the elect desiring grace and peace be multiplied to them. (A wonderful study is found here regarding election by God, but there is no space to discuss it at this time.) Peter then goes into that living hope the Christian has (that which Paul says we are looking for). It is made possible by God's abundant mercy by our being born again (that new birth process of John 3:3, 5) based upon the resurrection of Christ. He describes that heavenly hope as being incorruptible, undefiled, and one that does not fade away. It is a salvation that results in trials, proving our faith, and a salvation that the prophets and the angels sought to investigate. This type of salvation, all based upon the blood of Christ and His resurrection from the grave, is generally the grace that is thought of when *grace* is mentioned. However, it does not stop here.

Peter begins teaching about holiness. This grace for which we hope brings about self-control in the life of the obedient child of God. Because God judges without respect of persons and according to our work, we are to live our lives in fear (respect and reverence for God). We realize the precious cost of our redemption to God—the blood of Christ. That purification comes by our obedience to God's

Word by being born again (1:3) by that Word. This obedience in becoming a child of God leads us to love one another. Thus, when we preach on and discuss our obedience to God in the salvation of our souls (upon hearing, believe, repent, confess, and be baptized), we are preaching and teaching God's true grace.

Peter also shows that Christians are to renounce certain things in their lives (malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies, evil speakings) as they grow through the Word of God. They are to abstain from fleshly lusts. This rejection of this way of life is what Paul called *denying* (Tit. 2:12). This leads to a beautiful description of Christians as the chosen people of God, set into that spiritual house (the church) built by Christ. The church and the Christian's responsibilities in the church and the world is simply another aspect of God's true grace.

Peter lets us know we are to respect our government which includes submitting to them or obeying the laws of the land (unless a law violates what God has mandated; Acts 5:29). He also teaches us to honor or value all men (see also Jam. 3:9). He also returns to the subject of suffering (an oft-repeated theme in 1 Pet.) to which we are called having Christ as our perfect example. All these matters are aspects of God's true grace.

Peter broaches the subject of the home and how the wife is to submit to her own husband and to present herself with a meek and quiet spirit. When preachers and teachers preach about modest clothing and the roles within the home, he is preaching about God's true grace. Within the home, the husband is to treat the wife with

the respect and honor she is due.

He teaches us about our relations with all by being compassionate, loving others, showing pity, and being courteous to them. We are not to retaliate when someone does us wrong. We are to speak properly, do good, and seek peace living in such a way so when those who are evil speak against us, they will be ashamed. However, we are to always be ready to defend the Truth of God's Word and the hope we have of eternal life.

The Christian is no longer walking like the world and the world thinks it strange, so they persecute the Christian. We are to live soberly (what Paul said in Tit.

2:12), prayerfully, lovingly, and using our abilities for God's glory. All these matters are a part of God's true grace.

The organization of the church is also a part of God's true grace as Peter discusses elder—member relations and the responsibilities of those men who serve as elders/pastors/bishops. While those elders have a role of oversight and in feeding the flock, all Christians must demonstrate a humble attitude of submission. Even while being humble, we must still live as a soldier recognizing and fighting against our enemy, the devil.

All these subjects (and more) are the true grace of God. The lib-

erals' mindset will ultimately reject these subjects as part of God's true grace and tries to limit it to only the sending of God's Son to die for the sins of the world. Certainly, this is the greatest demonstration of God's grace, it does an injustice to God to limit it in such a way. It also is an abuse of the grace of God to speak of it as an umbrella of grace whereby sin is overlooked and ignored. Saying the word, *grace*, multiple times does not aid in understanding the true grace of God. Instead, teaching the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27) will develop an understanding of God's true grace, whether the word is stated or not.

MH

Continued from Page 1

men claimed the greatest evidence of pardon was seeing a light in a dark place. Though he had seen a light, Paul was told to arise and go into the city, and he would be told what he must do.

Why did He not tell Paul that he was saved, and this was proof of it? Neither Jesus nor His apostles ever taught anyone that seeing a light was necessary to anyone's salvation. Jesus did not appear to Paul to save him, or to "speak peace to his soul." Why, then, did He appear to him? Jesus answered that question Himself in these words: "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee" (26:16). He, therefore, appeared to Paul not to save him, but to make him an apostle.

Though Paul had seen a light and Jesus had talked with him, still

he was told to arise and go into the city and there it would be told him what he must do. At the time, Paul was blind, and they had to lead him by the hand. If anyone should be excused for **not** obeying the Lord, it appears that Paul would have been that man, but he was led into the city. He stopped in a house in the city, where Ananias, by the direction of the Lord, found him. Ananias was told that Paul was praying. Paul had seen the Lord, and was praying, and yet there was something that he **must** do.

What did Ananias tell him to do? He did not tell him to pray on—that God would save him in answer to his prayer—but instead, Ananias said, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (22:16). "But," one says, "He that calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Sure, but Ananias said he had to be baptized, which is "call-

ing on the name of the Lord." Not he that saith, "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).

Notice, the Lord told Paul that Ananias would tell him what he **must** do, and yet he only told him to be baptized. If one **must** do that, I would hate to tell him that he need not do it. Ananias said, "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins."

A man asked a preacher one time in what sense baptism washes away sins. The preacher replied, "In a Bible sense." Is that the sense in which you want your sins washed away? "Oh, but that is figurative! God does not literally wash away sins." No, perhaps not. He literally pardons sins, but one must be baptized to have that literally done. We are taught that our sins are washed away in the blood of Christ, but blood will not literally

wash away anything. Blood stains, rather than washes, but still sins are washed away in the blood of Christ. Baptism is placed between the sinner and the blood of Christ.

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). Can one be saved without doing both of these things? Why did not Ananias tell Paul that he must believe in Christ? Because he **already** believed—and had been a believer for three days and nights! He believed the Lord when He spoke to him. Why did he not tell Paul that he must repent? Because he had already repented, and Ananias knew it. So, there was but one thing for him to do, and he **must** do what he was told to do. In such a case, I

would hate to say that a believer need not do what the Lord said he must do.

Some have contended that Saul was baptized in the house where he was when Ananias came to him, and, therefore, he could not have been immersed. But that statement is not in the record. The record does not say where he was baptized. He was told to arise and be baptized. If he were sprinkled for baptism, he could have been sprinkled without arising. It would have been easier to sprinkle him sitting or kneeling than standing up. On the other hand, if he were **baptized**, he would have been compelled to arise. Paul, himself, tells **how** he was baptized: “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. 6:4). How were you baptized, Paul? We are **buried** with Him by baptism; and as Christ was raised up from the dead, we also should walk in newness of life. Baptism, then, is a burial and a resurrection.

What, then, did Paul do to be saved or converted to Christ? He believed in Christ, repented of his sins, and was baptized. And he arose to walk in newness of life. The new walk, the new life, began at his baptism.

Deceased

David Anointed King

R. L. Whiteside

Text: 1 Samuel 16:1-5, 11-18

Samuel was greatly disappointed in Saul and mourned for his downfall, but that was useless for he could do nothing about it. Jehovah had rejected him, and that was final. And yet, many times we mourn when our mourning cannot remedy anything. We cannot keep from it. Samuel had had great hopes for Saul, now these hopes were blasted. “Fill thy horn with oil, and go: I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite; for I have provided me a king among his sons” (1 Sam. 16:1). Jesse was the grandson of Boaz and Ruth, the Moabitess (Ruth 4:18-22). Bethlehem is one of the very old towns of Palestine. It was in existence when Jacob returned to Palestine after he fled to Paddan-aram from the wrath of his brother (Gen. 35:9). It was at first called Ephrath, and so,

Jesse is called “that Ephrathite of Beth-lehem-judah” (1 Sam. 17:12). After the children of Israel conquered the land, the town was usually referred to as Bethlehem. There has never been any dispute as to the site of Bethlehem; it appears to have had a continuous existence from the time of its founding down to the present time. In this connection, the student should find the book of Ruth as fascinating as any piece of literature he ever read. In Bethlehem, David was born. Here also Jesus was born. Bethlehem, therefore, has a fame that will never perish, even though it continues to be only a village.

Samuel knew what a tyrant Saul had come to be. Saul, like any tyrant, was for a man so long as he could use him, but he would kill any man who might seem to be against him. The horn of oil and

the statement of verse 1 could mean only one thing—namely, that Samuel was to anoint a son of Jesse as king. Samuel knew the possible outcome of such an act. “If Saul hear it, he will kill me.” The spirit of tyranny is always the same—no different than from what it is now. Yes, Saul would have killed the venerable and honorable Samuel, the man whom the whole nation revered, to keep him from doing anything that would imperil the perpetuation of his kingdom in his family. But Samuel must not let it be known openly that he was going to Bethlehem to anoint a king, but rather to offer sacrifices to Jehovah. Jehovah was in control of all the proceedings; he would show Samuel what to do. “I will show thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee” (16:3).

Samuel promptly obeyed Jehovah and went to Bethlehem. His coming had not been announced to Bethlehem. Just why the elders feared, we are not told, but it seems that they were very much disturbed, for they met him trembling. There must have been something wrong in their management of affairs in their city and knowing Samuel had long been both judge and prophet, they must have feared that he did not come with peaceful intent. So, they said: "Comest thou peaceably?" (16:4). Samuel did not tell them the real purpose of his coming. To let them know the real purpose of his coming would do them no good and might work harm. The whole town would not keep a secret; in some way, word would reach Saul, if the people of Bethlehem knew the real mission of Samuel. The fact that Samuel was doing exactly what Jehovah had commanded him to do would not have weight with Saul; he was too far gone in rebellion to care anything about any move Jehovah inaugurated. He would regard Samuel as in rebellion against him even if Jehovah was directing the movements of Samuel. This Samuel well knew; so, he kept his mission veiled under the claim that he had come to offer a sacrifice. He invited the elders to sanctify themselves and to go with him to the sacrifice. "And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice" (16:5). Jesse and his sons, of course, knew nothing of what the purpose of Samuel's mission was, but Samuel may have informed Jesse before the anointing occurred. At least, things seemed to work out in such a way as to indicate that Jesse knew Samuel's real purpose.

The lesson is not complete without verses 6-10: "And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely Jehovah's anointed is before him" (16:6). It is not likely that Samuel spoke this out loud, but only to himself. To him, Eliab looked the part of a king. He was forming an opinion based on appearances. We gather from Samuel's opinion that Eliab was a fine-looking specimen of manhood. "But Jehovah said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have rejected him: for *Jehovah seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart" (16:7). Only Jehovah knows the hearts of all men (1 Kin. 8:39; 1 Chr. 28:9). The heart determines the man. It is not enough to have good thoughts and good intentions; a man must be sufficiently steadfast of heart to stay with what he knows to be right. Eliab was not the kind of man Jehovah wanted. Seven sons of Jesse passed by, and Jehovah rejected all seven.

"And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children?" (1 Sam. 16:11). Apparently, Samuel was puzzled. Jehovah had rejected all the sons that Jesse had presented, and there was not another in sight. Yet, Jehovah had said: "I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite; for I have provided me a king among his sons" (16:1). He could not doubt Jehovah, and so he must have thought that Jesse was holding out one or more of his sons. Hence, his inquiry: "Are here all thy children?" Oh, yes, "There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he is keeping the sheep" (16:11). If Samuel had informed Jesse as to

the reason for this gathering, as he most likely had done, Jesse had not thought it possible that David, a mere lad, would be Jehovah's choice. However, Jehovah does not see things as man sees. "And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he come hither" (16:11). The feast would have to wait until this youngest son was brought. The son whom Jesse thought to be of the least importance turned out to be the most important. "And he sent, and brought him in." Of course, David had no idea what was to be done. "Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon" (16:12). For "beautiful countenance" the marginal reading has: "Heb. fair of eyes." The Jewish translation has: "Now he was ruddy, having withal handsome eyes, and being of a goodly appearance." David was no weakling, but a fine specimen of manhood. Notice what David later said to King Saul: "Thy servant was keeping his father's sheep; and when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him" (17:34-35). As soon as David was brought before Samuel, Jehovah said to him: "Arise, anoint him; for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren" (16:12-13). It does not seem that his brethren knew why this anointing was done; for when later Jesse sent David to carry food to his brethren who were in Saul's army, and David asked questions about Goliath's challenge:

Eliab his eldest brother heard when

he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why art thou come down? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thy heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle (17:28).

When David was anointed, the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him. This evidently endowed him with greater physical power and wisdom. So, as soon as the ceremonies were all over Samuel returned to his home in Ramah.

Saul had brought trouble on himself. How much he had worried over the fact that both Samuel and Jehovah had rejected him, we have no means of knowing. It does seem that he would have felt the loss keenly. But it seems that verses 14-18 come in out of their chronological order, for things are said of David in verse 18 that it does not seem could have been said of him until later.

Then answered one of the young

men, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Beth-lehemite, that is skilful in playing, and a mighty man of valor, and a man of war, and prudent in speech, and a comely person; and Jehovah is with him (16:18).

And then notice this:

And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell. And the king said, Inquire thou whose son the stripling is (17:55-56).

These things—1 Samuel 16:14-23—may have been recorded out of their chronological order because it was a suitable time to give a contrast between the behavior of David and that of Saul. Saul started with great promise; how different now! Rejected by Jehovah and forsaken by Samuel, he could see no bright future. He had the declaration of Jehovah that the kingdom would pass from his house to another. We cannot imagine the depressing effects of all these things

upon a high-spirited man like Saul. It must have had a great effect on Saul's mental balance. Evil does not always mean wickedness. Sickness, whether physical or mental, is an evil as is also any calamity. This evil spirit from Jehovah troubled Saul. It does not necessarily mean that it made him any more sinful. His mental condition was an evil. It was a condition that music apparently relieved; it soothed and calmed him. No, it did not drive the devil out of him; it did not make him any better servant of Jehovah; it did not in any way improve his character. When Saul's servants suggested music as a remedy for his troubles, he said to them: "Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me" (16:17). It resulted in David's being brought before Saul, and for a time Saul loved David greatly. Later, Saul became David's most bitter and determined enemy. The story of Saul, David, and Jonathan is a most interesting bit of history.

Deceased

No Excuse Sunday

Anonymous

To make it possible for everyone to attend worship next Sunday, we are going to have a special "No Excuse Sunday." Cots will be placed in the foyer for those who say "Sunday is my only day to sleep in." We will have steel helmets for those who say "The roof would cave in if I ever came to church." Blankets will be furnished for those who think the building is too cold, and fans for those who say it is too hot. We will have hearing aids for those who say "The preacher speaks too softly" and cotton for those who say he

preaches too loudly. Score cards will be available for those who wish to list the hypocrites present. Some relatives will be in attendance for those who like to go visiting on Sundays. There will be TV dinners for those who cannot attend worship and cook dinner also. One section will be devoted to trees and grass for those who like to see God in nature. Finally, the auditorium will be decorated with both Christmas poinsettias and Easter lilies for those who have never seen the building without them.

[Editor's Note: Obviously this was written *tongue-in-cheek*, but the principle is certainly applicable. The truth is that even if it was possible to have a "no excuse Sunday," people still would not come. The real problem is a heart problem and they do not attend because they do not love God. If they loved "the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Mat. 22:37), then attending every service of the Lord's church would not be a problem. They would always be there without excuse.]

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God Is: Three Arguments

W. B. West, Jr.

The Ontological Argument

Ontology is derived from two Greek words, *ontos* and *logos*, which mean “the reason or ground of being.” Stated briefly, God exists because we think He does. This is the argument from thought to being. Human thought is always a signpost pointing to something beyond itself; deny this something and all human thought is denied. The very idea of God is possible to us only because God is behind it and by God. Anselm, the father of the ontological argument, meant “that than which nothing greater can be conceived.” Anselm argued that the fool who denies the existence of God thereby proves only that he is a fool, for he shows that he has the idea of God in his understanding even though he does not go on to understand that such a being exists.

Descartes added to the conception of Anselm by saying that the idea of God, that is, of a perfect being, could not originate in the human mind since it is finite and imperfect. Consequently, it must be referred to a perfect cause or God; therefore, God exists.

The contingency of all finite things, since the reason for their being does not lie within them-

selves, requires the assumption of a being whose ground of existence is in himself alone: self-existence is a necessary element of perfection, and therefore of God. Another way to express it is that the idea of God includes necessary existence; therefore, God necessarily exists.

What is the value of the ontological argument for the existence of God? It was severely criticized in Anselm’s day and by Kant, who accepted it as regulative thinking but not constitutive of knowledge.

It is true that it has the weakness of saying that every thought of the mind must have an objective reality, but in all fairness to its most ardent supporters, it must be said that they “do not contend that every subjective conception must have an objective reality, but only that certain ones must have,” such as are conceived by the mind as demanding necessarily a corresponding objective reality, because the idea of God in the mind is an idea of Him as necessarily existent; consequently, the mind must believe in Him as actually existent.

Somehow the ontological argument—always being shown out the front door in a polite manner—

enters quietly again at the back door. It seems to be here to stay, a valuable argument for the existence of God.

The Cosmological Argument

Cosmological is from two Greek words, *kosmos* and *logos*, the former meaning “world” and the latter “a reason for.” In its usual acceptance, the cosmological argument deals with the principle of **causality** as applied to the relation of God to the world. It is claimed that God is the cause, and the world is the effect.

A more exact statement would be that everything that has begun is a result of a cause sufficient to produce it. In this form, the argument might be called the *aitiological*—the Greek word, *aitia*, meaning “cause”—but for the purpose of generally accepted understanding, we shall use *cosmological*.

The most common response of the man on the street to the challenge to prove that there is a God is the sweeping gesture of the hand, and a rhetorical question: “Who, then, made all this?” Every honestly thinking person knows that every effect has a cause and every

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Respect For God's Word

As we open God's Word, we are immediately introduced to the historical account of creation (Gen. 1-2). The crowning part of the creation was making man in God's own image and placing man in the Garden of Eden. We also notice God "commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (2:16-17). Yet, as we turn to Genesis 3, we find Eve doing what God said not to do, eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God had warned them what would happen if they ate of that tree, but they did anyway. Were they under the impression that God would do nothing about it? However, God would do what He said He would do: "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The translation "surely die" is literally "certainly die you shall die." They died that day because they were separated from God which is spiritual death, and they shall die regarding physical death because they no longer had access to the tree of life (3:22-24). God wanted man to respect His

Word and when man failed to do so man suffered the consequences.

In Genesis 4, Cain and Abel offered sacrifices to God. Abel brought an acceptable sacrifice to God while Cain did not. "Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell" (4:5). Cain then murdered his brother Abel. As a consequence, God said, "And now *art* thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth" (4:11-12). It was such a great punishment, "Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear... it shall come to pass, *that* every one that findeth me shall slay me" (4:13, 14). If Cain had done well, he would be accepted, but instead, he sinned (4:7) and suffered the consequences.

When "GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually" (6:5), God determined to "destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth" (6:7). Because of man's wickedness and evil, God destroyed the world with a global flood. God expects His Word to be respected and when man fails to do so, he suffers the consequences.

Skipping through the Bible, we come to Leviticus and the duties of the priest and specifically the Levitical priesthood. We then find two sons of Aaron (Nadab and Abihu), thus priests with the obligation of offering sacrifices. As they did so, they took their censer and put fire in the censer as they were commanded to do by God. However,

God expects His Word to be respected. God said they were to get the fire from a specific place, "he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD" (Lev. 16:12). On this occasion, God said Nadab and Abihu "offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not" (10:1). They did not respect God's Word to obtain the fire from the proper location making it a *strange* fire. Because of Nadab and Abihu's lack of respect (obedience) for God's Word, "there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD" (10:2). They suffered the consequences of their actions.

Consequences for one's actions because they did not respect God's Word are seen in the ruling class also. King Saul was told by God, "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (1 Sam. 15:3). Saul went to Amalek and won a great victory. However, the Record states, "But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly" (15:9). God told

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

Samuel: "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments" (15:11). Samuel went to meet Saul as he was returning from the victory. Samuel brought home to Saul his disobedience by asking, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" (15:14). Saul tried to pass the blame to the people, but that did not work. Samuel then informs Saul:

Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king (15:22-23).

Saul failed to obey God's Word, so God rejected him from being king. He suffered the consequences of failing to respect God's Word.

During the last days of Eli, Israel was at war with the Philistines and thought bringing the Ark of the Covenants to the battlefield would assure their victory. Instead, the Ark was taken by the Philistines who initially put it in with their idol Dagon at Ashdod (1 Sam. 4-5). Dagon fell on its face and finally, the idol broke before the Ark. God also smote the Philistines with emerods (tumors), so they send the Ark to Gath. The men of Gath also had an outbreak of emerods, so they tried to send the Ark to Ekron. The men of Ekron were in great fear and also had an outbreak of emerods. The Philistines decide to return the Ark to the Israelites putting it on a cart pulled by cows.

The Ark resides at Bethshemesh till David becomes king and decides to transfer the Ark to Jerusalem. They build a new cart and place the Ark on the cart. As Uzzah and Ahio drive the cart, the Scriptures state, "And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it" (2 Sam. 6:6). Next, we find the surprising statement, "And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God" (6:7). David was upset with God and called this "a breach upon Uzzah" (6:8). There can be no doubt that Uzzah took hold of the Ark to steady it and possibly keep it from falling; thus, doing so in all good sincerity of heart. David remained upset or displeased with God (6:8) till he learned "None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever" (1 Chr. 15:2). David found out that only Levites (Deu. 10:8) from the family of the Kohath (Num. 3:30-31) were to carry the Ark and all were forbidden to touch the Ark (Num. 4:15). It was to be carried by staves placed in the rings on the Ark (Exo. 25:14-15). Thus, when Uzzah in all good sincerity of heart and service, touched the Ark, he died because he did not respect God's Word in the matter. David correctly concluded, "the LORD our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order" (1 Chr. 15:13). Uzzah and David learned the hard way that God demands what He has said be respected.

Paul teaches us we are to learn

from the examples given to us in the Old Testament (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11). In many examples throughout the Old Testament, we learn about the goodness of God, and we also need to learn about God's severity. "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Rom. 11:22).

The Hebrews writer states:

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will? (2:1-4).

The "word spoken by angels" is that which would be found in the Old Testament. God made sure that when someone sinned (Adam and Eve, Cain, people of Noah's day, Nadab and Abihu, King Saul, Uzzah, et. al.), they received the consequences of their sinful actions. "Every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward." The Word spoken by our Lord is a far greater word than that spoken by angels. If we neglect what He says regarding our great salvation, there will be no escape.

Later the writer discusses the same concept:

He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (10:25-29).

Under the Law of Moses, those individuals who sinned (Nadab and Abihu, King Saul, Uzzah, et. al.) died without mercy. Those under the Law of Christ will receive a greater punishment than death without mercy. The writer reminds us that vengeance belongs to God and He will punish, thus it is a fearful thing to fall into His Hands.

As the Hebrews' writer is discussing the contrast between the Law of Moses and the Israelites coming to it compared to our coming to the church. He gives this great warning:

See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on

earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire (12:25-29).

We are to make sure we do not refuse the One who speaks from heaven—the Christ. Those who refused the one who spoke on earth (Moses and his Law), those who refuse or reject Jesus and His Words (as revealed in the pages of the New Testament) will not escape judgment. He then reminds us that God is a consuming fire indicating the type of judgment those who do not respect God's Word will suffer.

Paul reveals that Christ "shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with ever-

lasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 The. 1:7-9). Those today who do not respect the Gospel (the Word of God), will be punished. That punishment is God's vengeance (for the affliction they have caused the righteous) which includes flaming fire and everlasting destruction.

God has given us a way to escape that vengeance. We must respect His Word, and obey the Gospel (continue to obey it, not simply initial obedience). God's Word teaches us what we must do to be saved from our sins initially (upon hearing, believing, repenting of our sins, confessing our faith in Jesus as God's Son, and being baptized in water for the remission of sins). We then have to obligation as Christians to live according to the Gospel. As Paul describes it "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Tit. 2:12). It would be adding the Christian graces to our lives (2 Pet. 1:5-7) along with the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-24). Let us make sure we respect God's Word and respect **all** of it and not just some of it.

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Continued from Page 1

cause an effect. The world and all that is within it is here. What or who caused it?

A beautiful and ordered world is seen everywhere. On a clear night in Texas when the sky is a blaze of brilliant diamonds against a deep blue curtain, with one star differing from another star in glory, presenting a ceiling of unsurpassing

beauty, we overwhelmingly exclaim with David, "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Psa. 19:1).

The gorgeous beauties of the sunrise are the glory of God's trailing robes, and the rainbow is the scarf which He throws about His shoulders. The sun, the moon, and the stars send forth their light to guide by day and by night. When we see these manifestations of a Di-

vine Cause, we say with the Hebrew poet, "When I consider the heavens, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him?" (8:4).

During the French Revolution, a revolutionist said to a peasant, "I will have your steeples pulled down that you may no longer have any

object by which you may be reminded of your superstitions.” But the peasant replied, “But you cannot help leaving us the stars.”

A man who never enters a church building went with a preacher one night to a planetarium. When he saw the unfolding and the great drama of the sky, he said to the preacher, who was sitting by his side, “There is no room for chance in what we are seeing tonight, is there?” It is no marvel that, speaking of the heavens, Pascal once said, “The eternal silence of these infinite spaces terrifies me.”

One can go from an observation of the heavens to the beauties and wonders of the world of nature and as obviously and convincingly see a Divine Cause. One makes a visit to the Himalayas of that intriguing land of India, to the towering Alps of picturesque Switzerland, to the vast rooms and corridors of Carlsbad Caverns with their fascinating formations, or to the grandeurs of Grand Canyon, and unreservedly says with the Psalmist, “The firmament showeth his handiwork” (19:1).

It is said that an atheist living in New York went to Los Angeles by the way of the Grand Canyon. Leaving Grand Canyon, he said, “No longer do I disbelieve. I now believe in God.”

“God is and God created” is the only answer when we look at the cosmos or the world about us. Truly did Moses write, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1), and “By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by God so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear” (Heb. 11:3).

The Teleological Argument

Teleological has its parentage in the Greek language, being derived from *telos* which is defined as “end or purpose” and *logos* as “the reason for.” The teleological argument is closely related to the cosmological—the original meaning of the noun *kosmos* being “order.” The verb is *kosmeo* and means “to arrange,” and it is akin to the Sanskrit root, and *ornare* meaning “adorned or ornamented.” A *kosmos* cannot be conceived without a *telos*. The world and all that is in it must be for some end or purpose.

Evidences of a purposeful universe are so numerous and clear in all the realms of nature and life that space will permit the naming and discussion of only a small number. Let us mention the order and purpose of the heavenly bodies. The mathematical astronomers say that the more carefully they investigate the movements of the heavenly bodies, the more certainly do they know that they show order and obey law.

Sir James Jeans, the great physicist, said, “The universe begins to look more like a great thought than a great machine.” Centuries before modern science, Socrates expatiated on the orderly movements of the heavenly bodies, on the blessed gift of sunlight, and on the silence of the nocturnal hours designed as if to invite repose. Concerning the reason for all this, Samuel Rogers said, “The very law which moulds a tear/And bids it trickle from its source/That law preserves the earth a sphere/And guides the planets in their course.”

As revealed in the first chapter of Genesis, all creation shows marks of design—light and darkness, day and night, the collecting

of the waters and dry land, seed time and harvest, the sun, moon, and stars, the animal kingdom, and man. Everything in the universe is adapted to a purpose. Let us think of the realm of the living, where design, end in view, aim to be had, order, method, and system are clearly evident.

It is singularly characteristic of some animals that they are adapted for life on dry land, others for life in the air, still others for salt water, brackish water, and fresh water. Some fish never leave the unlighted abysses of the ocean, others leap into the sunlight foam of tropical seas. A common animal like the mole is adapted to the ground beneath the surface of the earth, where it lives much of its life. Its barrel-like body, its pointed snout, its shovel-like hands, its athletic breast muscles, its well protected eyes, and its rapid digestion attest to the adaptation of the mole to life under the ground.

The chicken is well adapted for its purpose in the universe. More than 2,000 years ago Plato studied the development of the chick within the egg, and his observations are good for today. A story is told of the visitor to London, who could not be persuaded to leave the shop window in Regent Street where chick incubators were for sale, with the young chicks often scrambling out of the eggshells. He said to his companions: “That’s a thing to have seen. After that there ain’t no use telling me that there is no God.”

I wish there were space to tell of all the wonderful revelations of the telescope and the microscope, to say nothing of the most obvious observations of the eye, all of which would testify to their teleol-

ogy. It is difficult not to use Paley's illustration of the watch, which is as good now as ever, to prove that there must be a Designer for every design, but space forbids. In the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians Paul says that members of the body have different functions. This will be the final illustration of the teleological argument for the existence of God, using the human eye as an example of the marvelous adjustment of means to ends.

There are many marvelous things that could be said about the eye, but only a few will be mentioned. The eye is adapted to perceive objects at different distances, varying from inches to miles. In telescopes this would be accomplished either by putting in another lens, or by some focusing arrangement. We do not know exactly how the eye can see objects at different distances, but we know that it can and does do it with amazing correctness. A landscape of a number of miles is brought within the space of half an inch in diameter. At least the larger ones of the multitudes of objects it contains are all preserved, and can each be distinguished in its shape, color, size, and position. And what is even more amazing is

that the same eye that can do this can read a book at a distance of a few inches!

Again, the eye can see objects in different directions, for it is constructed to turn right or left, up or down, without moving the head. To keep it moist and clean, both of which are essential to its utility, a special fluid is supplied constantly, the superfluous moisture passing through a hole in the bone to the nose, where it is evaporated.

This valuable instrument is in duplicate, the two eyes being so arranged that while each one can see separately if the other should get injured, they can usually see together with perfect harmony. Our admiration for the eye is further increased when we know that it was formed before birth. It has been called a prospective organ being of no use at the time that it was made. This shows design more plainly than anything else. In view of all this and much more that could be said, the eye is an optical instrument of ingenuity. The conclusion is that it must have been made by someone and that someone must have known and designed its use.

Whence all the order and intelli-

gent purpose in the universe which we have been discussing? Surely no reader will agree with the atheist who says:

The world rolls round forever
like a mill;
It grinds out death and life
and good and ill;
It has no purpose, heart,
mind, or will.

We would not say that intelligent order in the universe is here by chance. The best thinkers of the ages have ascribed out teleological world to Supreme Intelligence, to a loving Planner and Designer. The Greek philosopher ascribed the movement and order of the world by analogy to *nous* or "mind". Socrates not only developed the proof for the purpose of the world but gave it a definite theistic reference. Despite Charles Darwin's pseudo-science, the best scientists of the ages have seen God behind our world. The Bible produced by the Holy Spirit, through the greatest minds of the ages, abundantly testifies that all creation has purpose and that behind this creation and purpose is the Great Creator and Designer of the universe, who is none other than God.

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Misidentification on Someone Else's Part Does Not Create a Dilemma on Yours and Mine

Charles Pogue

There was once an old farmer whose eyes had grown dim with age. It so happened, this old man loved black-eyed peas, but hated turnips. As with many black-land-rocky-field-farmers, wealth, and usually the ability to just break even, had mostly alluded him. A

couple of years before the old man died, he scrounged through a bureau draw and found one last package of seeds. He picked it up, and through dim squinted eyes read, "Turnips." Although he hated turnips, hunger and the prospect of a hard winter prompted him to

plant the seeds in his garden. After the passing of time, he ventured to the field, and much to his surprise, there were three long rows of plants loaded down with black-eyed peas! His misidentification of the seed package had no bearing at all on what the seeds were or what they

ultimately produced.

There is a group of men who would pass themselves off as church historians who would have us believe that the restoration preachers had virtually no desire to, nor knowledge that they were, restoring the New Testament order of things, and the church that Jesus died to purchase with His own blood (Acts 20:28). What was really in the minds of Campbell and Stone, these men say, was the goal of ushering in a millennial rule of God upon the earth. Restoring the ancient order of things, they would have us believe, was not the end, but rather just the means to an end. The men who push this idea have as their goal to convince members of the church of Christ that the churches of Christ are just the product of the 19th century restoration movement and are not congregations of the New Testament church at all, but nothing more than a sect of denomination-alism, who through the struggle of 150 plus years has finally and totally achieved for itself independent denominational status. In the interlude of silent inactivity that must take place in the minds of these men, they expect a round of cheers and whistles from a million plus people who have long been deluded about who and what they are.

This writer has a message for this group of self-declared intellectuals whose ability to interpret history far exceeds the rest of us. Even if Campbell, Stone, and a host of other 19th century preachers, in the pursuit of an erroneous idea about end of time things, failed to realize that they were planting the seed of the kingdom into the soil of receptive hearts, it has not a dimes worth of bearing on the ability or inability of any person today to recognize that

the preaching of the Gospel, like the planting of black-eyed peas yields peas, produces the church of Christ which Jesus purchased at the cross. Just because some man or group of men did not realize that the kingdom represented in king Nebuchadnezzar's dream was the same church Jesus built, does not change the truth that that is exactly what it was! Misidentification of something on someone else's part does not create a dilemma on yours and mine. We are members of the New Testament church, not some denomination resulting from a 150 year old movement.

What the enemies of Christ, affirmed and otherwise, fail to understand is that it is absolutely essential to you and me that the New Testament church exists in the world today. While there are others that may be as important, here are three reasons that is true.

Jesus built only one church

The church is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23). There is only one body or church (Eph. 4:4). Since that is true, if the church is a denomination among denominations, then it has nothing at all to do with the church Jesus built, the next point shows why that is vital.

The church is the saved

The church was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, and God added to the church daily, those who were being saved (Acts 2:47). Christ is the savior of the body, Ephesians 5:23. The Lord has not promised to save anyone or anything else. If the church of the New Testament does not exist today, then there are no people alive today who are saved.

The church is God's family

The house or family of God is the church (1 Tim. 3:15). This house or family is a spiritual family, and according to Peter is the people of God (1 Pet. 2:1-9). If the church of the New Testament does not exist in the world today, then no one is of the family of God, nor does God have any family members upon the earth today.

We are very appreciative of the work of the Restoration preachers. It is perfectly clear that whether they came to a sufficient knowledge and obedience to the truth to have their sins washed away, and whether they remained or did not remain faithful all the days of their life to the Word of God, has zero bearing on whether a person today obeys the Gospel and remains faithful to it. It makes no difference whether restoring the church of the New Testament was an end or a means to an end to Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone. By obeying the Gospel of Jesus Christ, a person has his sins washed away and is added to the number of the saved. If he remains faithful to Christ all the days of his life, he will be welcomed into the eternal abode of the soul. It makes no difference what a man or a group of men in the past thought, what is important is what the Bible says. Shame on those who would rewrite history and misinterpret facts in a heretical attempt to prove that the beautiful bride of Christ is just a denomination among denominations! Such people have a great need to study the New Testament and recognize the identifying marks that reveal the church of Christ, and make sure they are faithful members of it rather than self-declared analysts purporting to know other men's minds.

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