



THE GOSPEL GLEANNER

Our Attitude In Worship

be his worshipers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth." In the context we learn that Christian worship is not dependent upon a place, such as a city, a mountain, a church building, etc. In times of crisis, churches will often leave their doors open in order that people may come and pray. But, in reality, there is no need to come to a church building to pray; that may be done anywhere. Place does not matter in worship; attitude and obedience to God does.

Reverence for God is not emphasized enough. Some have objected to the song "My God and I" because they have felt that it makes God too familiar. I appreciate the song because it speaks of the fellowship that we may enjoy with God (1 John 1:5-7). Nevertheless, the point is well-taken. Though we do have fellowship with God as we walk in the light, we, at the same time, must not lose the reverence, awe and respect of God's dignity. Psalms 89:6-7: "For who in the skies can be compared unto Jehovah? Who among the sons of the mighty is like unto Jehovah, A God very terrible in the council of the holy ones, And to be feared above all them that are round about him?" Hebrews 12:28-29 adds to the reverence with which we are to esteem

John 4:23-24 has become very familiar to many of us. It's the passage that says, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to

God: "Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: for our God is a consuming fire."

There is a song with the words, "Our God is an awesome God." Such an expression is getting to the center of the correct attitude of the worshiper, so long as it is sung sincerely. Some young people use the word "awesome" to modify almost anything that excites them. "Oh, man! That motorcycle is AWESOME!" Certainly, we would all agree that God and a motorcycle should not be given the same degree of reverence. We shouldn't allow the common use of language to diminish the way we regard the Holy God.

We do not seek to bind any actions on others, but we all need to avoid carelessness in our habits. Is our dress suitable for worship? Do we or the children really need to go to the bathroom and the water fountain all that often? What does habitual tardiness say of our eagerness to worship? Are our thoughts on God and the message of the song or of the prayer or the sermon? Do we reverently memorialize Jesus as we take the Lord's supper? Remember, worship is not accomplished in place or in ritual, but in devotion and obedience.

Deuteronomy 13:4: "Ye shall walk after Jehovah your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him." ■

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Additional Quotes from Clarke

Those who have investigated the issue of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God are familiar

with the remarks from the pen of the noted Methodist commentator, Adam Clarke (1762-1832). Clarke's often cited quotations come from his remarks in the classic "Clarke's Commentary on the Whole Bible." In particular, we refer to Mr. Clarke's observations on 2 Chronicles 29:25 and Amos 6:5. Clarke states that where mechanical instruments of music "prevail most" in worship to God "there is least of the power of Christianity" and that "instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor." He further says, "This is the abuse of music, and here I register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the author of Christianity."

However there are additional remarks made by the scholarly and respected Mr. Clarke in a lesser-known work by his hand. The book we refer to is "Clarke's Theology."

These extended comments were previously published in *The Gospel Gleaner* (Vol. 1, No. 4, Oct.-Dec. 1985). In recent months, we have had inquiries requesting us to make Clarke's additional observations available once again. We are happy to oblige and pray that Clarke's sentiments will continue to influence men everywhere to worship God "in spirit and in truth." (John 4:23,24).

Clarke's additional comments are as follows:

Musical instruments in the house of God are, at least, under the gospel, repugnant to the spirit of Christianity, and tend not a little to corrupt the worship of God. Those who are fond of music in the theatre are fond of it in the house of God, when they go thither; and some, professing Christianity, set up such a spurious worship, in order to draw people to hear the gospel. This is doing evil, that good may come of it; and, by this means, light and trifling people are introduced into the church of Christ; and, when in, are generally very troublesome, hard to be pleased, and difficult to be saved.

Did ever God ordain instruments of music to be used in his worship? Can they be used in Christian assemblies according to the spirit of Christianity? Has Jesus Christ, or his apostles, ever commanded or sanctioned the use of them? Were they ever used anywhere in the apostolic church? Does the use of them at present, in Christian congregations, ever increase the spirit of devotion? Does it ever appear that bands of musicians, either in their collective or individual capacity, are more spiritual, or as spiritual, as the other parts of the church of Christ? Is there more pride, self-will, stubbornness, insubordination, lightness, and frivolity, among such persons, than among the other professors of Christianity found in the same religious society? Is it ever remarked or known that musicians, in the house of God, have ever attained to any depth of piety, or superior soundness of understanding, in the things of God? Is it ever found that those churches and Christian societies which have and use instruments of music in divine worship, are more holy, or as holy, as those societies which do not use them? And is it always found that the ministers who affect and recommend them to be used in the worship of almighty God, are the most spiritual men, and the most spiritual and useful preachers? Can mere sounds, no matter how melodious, where no word or sentiment is or can be uttered, be considered as giving praise to God? Is it possible that pipes or strings of any kind can give God praise? Can God be pleased with sounds which are emitted by no sentient being, and have in themselves no meaning? If these questions cannot be answered in the affirmative, then is not the introduction of such instruments into the worship of God antichristian, calculated to debase and ultimately ruin the spirit and influences of the gospel of Jesus Christ? And should not all who wish well to the spread and establishment of pure and undefiled religion lift up their hand, their influence, and their voice against them? The argument from their use in the Jewish service is futile in the extreme, when applied to Christianity.

In a representative system of religion, such as the Jewish, there must have been much outside work, all emblematical of better things; no proof that such things should be continued under the gospel dispensation, where

outsides have disappeared, shadows flown away, and the substance alone is presented to the hearts of mankind. He must be ill off for proofs in favour of instrumental music in the church of Christ, who has recourse to practices under the Jewish ritual!

Moses had not appointed any musical instruments to be used in the divine worship; there was nothing of the kind under the first tabernacle. The trumpets, or horns, then used, were not for song, nor for praise, but, as we use bells, to give notice to the congregation of what they were called to perform, &c. But David did certainly introduce many instruments of music into God's worship; for which, we have already seen, he was solemnly reprov'd by the Prophet Amos, chap. vi, 1-6. Here, however, the author of this book states he had the commandment of the Prophet Nathan, and Gad, the king's seer; and this is stated to have been the commandment of the Lord by his prophets. But the Syriac and Arabic give this a different turn: "Hezekiah appointed the Levites in the house of the Lord, with instruments of music, and the sound of harps, and with the hymns of David, and the hymns of Gad, the king's prophet; for David sang the praises of the Lord his God, as from the mouth of the prophets." It was by the hand or commandment of the Lord and his prophets, that the Levites should praise the Lord; for so the Hebrew text may be understood; and it was by the order of David that so many instruments of music should be introduced into the divine service. But were it even evident, which it is not, either from this or any other place in the sacred writings, that instruments of music were prescribed by divine authority under the law, could this be adduced with any semblance of reason that they ought to be used in Christian worship? No, the whole spirit, soul, and genius of the Christian religion are against this; and those who know the church of God best, and what constitutes its genuine spiritual state, know that these things have been introduced as a substitute for the life and power of religion, and that where they prevail most there is least of the power of Christianity. Away with such portentous bawbles from the worship of that infinite Spirit who requires his followers to worship him in spirit and in truth! For to no such worship are those instruments friendly.

I have no doubt but the gross perversion of the simplicity of Christian worship, by the introduction of various instruments of music into churches and chapels, if not a species of idolatry, will at least rank with will-worship and superstitious rites and ceremonies. Where the Spirit and unction of God do not prevail in Christian assemblies, priests and people being destitute of both, their place, by general consent, is to be supplied by imposing ceremonies, noise, and show.... The singing, as it is practiced in several places, and the heathenish accompaniments of organs and musical instruments of various sorts, are as contrary to the simplicity of the gospel, and the spirituality of that worship which God requires, as darkness is contrary to light. And if these abuses are not corrected, I believe the time is not far distant when singing will cease to be a part of the divine worship. It is now, in many places, such as cannot be said to be any part of that worship which is in spirit and according to truth. May God mend it!

(CLARKE'S THEOLOGY, PUBLISHED BY LANE & SCOTT, 200 MULBERRY STREET, JOSEPH LONGKING, PRINTER, 1851, NEW YORK, PP. 245-248).

May the God of heaven give us the wisdom to see that the word of man is never the final word on any point of religious controversy. The thoughts of those who are wiser are appreciated but the last word is always God's Word. (Romans 3:4). God's Word is always right (Psalm 19:8a). ■

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To Our Readers

We express continued gratitude to our loyal readership for their patience as we press on to publish *The Gospel Gleaner*. Despite numerous logistical difficulties, our publication gains significantly in the number of readers with each mailout. Please pray for us as we try to accomplish our goal of putting out the best paper possible for the largest readership possible.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We are pleased to note that brother James McGill is joining the writing staff of the *Gospel Gleaner*. Brother McGill's scholarship and stature will be a blessing to all our readership.

Terrorism on the Streets

Question: It seems to me that the expression "freedom of speech" seems to apply to those who preach violence in the name of religion, but doesn't apply to public Bible teaching. Why is this so?

Answer: It certainly is the case for our country and the present times, but it has always been so. The future of every country depends upon the "free course" it gives God's Word (2 Thessalonians 3:1-2). Christians should be praying "that God would open to us a door for the word" (Colossians 4:3). Whom to release on the public streets is an ever-present decision.

"Then he said to them the third time, 'Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go.' But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed. So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will" (Luke 23:22-25 NKJV). With this decision, the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate represented politicians of his, and our, day.

1. He faced a clear, moral decision to make between good and evil.

Jesus Christ was a righteous man as evidenced by:

(a) Pilate's own examination and conclusion—he could "find no fault in Him" (Matthew 27:24; Luke 23:14, 22; John 19:6); (b) his own wife's conscience when she said, "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him" (Matthew 27:19); (c) Jesus' own testimony that the issue was about established "truth," and not whether the charge against Him was simply to be denied (John 18:33-38); (d) the Jew's own admission that Jesus was to be condemned by their law, not Roman law (John 18:28-32; 19:7), though the charge at first was presented to Pilate as "guilty because He was charged," and not "guilty as charged." This made Pilate "more afraid" (John 19:8) because someone was calling Jesus "Christ" (Matthew 27:17).

Barabbas was a convicted "terrorist," and guilty as charged. He was:

(a) "*notorious*," a word meaning "marked in a bad sense" (Matthew 27:16). If there had been a "most wanted list," he would have been on it. He was the "Osama bin Laden" of his day, known to all for his criminal ways.

(b) a leader of "*rebellion*," or insurrection (Mark 15:7; Luke 23:19, 25). Since "an evil man seeks only rebellion" (Proverbs 17:11), he was an evil man. Wisdom taught, "Do not associate with those given to change" (Proverbs 24:21) "He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife" (Proverbs 28:25). "An angry man stirs up strife, and a furious man abounds in transgression" (Proverbs 29:22). Barabbas was evil, proud, angry and given to change, and no particular "cause" was claimed as his "excuse" for his actions. [Hezbollah mutters something about an American-backed Israel invasion, Muslims mumble about Roman Catholic Crusades, and Communists constantly carp about American capitalism, but at their hearts, they are evil, proud, angry, and given to change, like Barabbas] The spirit of Barabbas guides all those today who engage in this practice!

(c) *a murderer* (Mark 15:7). Whether he directly murdered, sent others to murder, or created the violent climate where murder seemed justified, he was directly responsible for the deliberate taking of human lives. Does anyone notice that the leaders of insurrection seldom volunteer for their "suicide" missions? Why was Barabbas still alive, when no telling how many others had died for his "cause" and at their expense? Solomon wrote, "Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes 8:11). Truly, because "death row" has been made into a "protected life" sentence, then who is surprised that the slaughter rate climbs all over the world?

(d) *"a robber"* or plunderer (John 18:40). He stole from his victims showing total disdain, even for the hurting living. Robbers were crucified (Matthew 27:38), so why wasn't Barabbas?

Given the choice, whom would you have chosen to run free on your streets? Jesus Christ had never done anything wrong, and Barabbas had done nothing *but* wrong! The Jews' consciences must have been hurting, because Jesus' teaching and example challenged them to do good, but other Jews were hurting in their homes and lives because Barabbas had no conscience. We have the choice today, of electing only those public officials who will rid societies of those like Barabbas, who make life fearful and unsafe in any place!

2. He abdicated his personal morality for political "peace."

Bar (son) *abbas* (father) could have meant that he was simply called "his father's son." He could have been so rebellious that he mistreated his father and chased away his mother and thus caused shame and brought reproach to his family name (Proverbs 19:26); or a "scoffer" who did not listen to rebuke (Proverbs 13:1); or a "foolish man" who despised his mother (Proverbs 15:20). He clearly was "a foolish son" who was "grief to his father, and bitterness to her who bore him (Proverbs 17:25). No one would have wanted to claim him as his son. In Moses' Law, a stubborn and rebellious son should have been put to death (Deuteronomy 21:18-21)—why had the Jews not already killed Barabbas?

Jesus, however, was the Son that God was pleased to present to the world. Jesus obeyed His heavenly Father: (a) as a child of 12 (Luke 2:41-49); (b) in baptism at age 30 (Matthew 3:13-17; Luke 3:21-23); (c) throughout His life (John 6:38); (d) in His death (Hebrews 9:11-15; 10:5-10; Acts 2:23-24). God twice directly spoke from Heaven to tell the world, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17; 17:5), and, once for all time, raised Jesus from the dead to declare Him His Son (Acts 13:28-34; Romans 1:4). (e) His miracles convinced even Pharisees (John 3:2; 9:13-16; 20:30-31); (f) He forgave sins as only God should (Mark 2:5-12); and (g) He "taught them as one having authority [over God's law! jtpII], and not as the scribes" (Matthew 7:29). None can disprove this claim. The Jews said Jesus was "the Son of God;" their issue was over whether or not the proof was from Jesus Himself.

Pilate: (a) was convinced of Jesus' innocence (John 19:12); (b) knew the wrong motive of the crowd (Matthew 27:18; Mark 15:10); (c) three times argued Jesus' innocence (Luke 23:4, 14-15, 22); (d) tried to spare his own conscience (Matthew 27:24). But once the compromise with the ungodly was made, there was no turning back! He came out of this with a new "friend" in Herod (Luke 23:12), but as an enemy of God!

3. His compromise left terrorism in the streets.

With Jesus rejected and taken off of the streets, Barabbas would live to kill another day, the Jews would cower in their homes for safety and Pilate would have more riots to police! Every politician who removes Jesus Christ from his/her streets sides with terrorism. Every politician who is a "terror to good works" and not to evil works (Romans 13:3-4) will pay dearly, both in this life and the life to come.

4. Pilate's "conversion" is followed today!

Pilate believed in "water salvation" by declaring his innocence and using only water for his purification. People today follow his example by declaring their salvation before being baptized into Jesus' death, thus making their baptism only a washing with water and not His blood. Scripture, however, shows that in water baptism, a sinner unites with Jesus' death (Romans 6:3-6), hearts are "sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies are washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:22), and one calls "on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Pilate used the so-called "sinner's prayer" (to declare his own innocence) and then applied water to demonstrate his self-declared fact, but did not obey God's command to "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Those who, like Pilate, seek salvation by water without Jesus' blood have made void Bible baptism, and therefore are still in their sins!

Pontius Pilate may face God without Jesus Christ on Judgement Day, but we should not. No country or conscience can survive by taking Jesus away from it. ■

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Was Paul Saved on the Road to Damascus?

Acts 9:1-18 (cf. Acts 22:6-13), it has come to my attention how many are confused upon this matter. Some believe that he was saved on the road while others hold to the fact that he wasn't saved until he had gone into Damascus and met with Ananias. Let us open the scriptures and notice what the text says (I encourage each one to read the text in its entire context).

Paul (at this time his name was still Saul) was traveling to Damascus in order to bound Christians and to bring them to Jerusalem (vs. 2). The distance between these two cities was around 150 miles. As he had come near Damascus, a light shone around him from heaven (vs. 3). Jesus said unto him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (vs. 4) and when Saul replied, "Who are thou, Lord?" Jesus answered saying, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" (vs. 5). Paul then responded to Jesus by asking what it was that he was to do and Jesus told him to "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (vs. 6). We are then told that those that were traveling with him heard no voice nor saw no man (vs. 7). At this point Paul was unable to see, and his friends led him to Damascus where he was without sight and did not eat or drink for three days (vs. 8,9).

Jesus appeared unto Ananias telling him to go to the house of Judas in the street called Straight and ask for Saul, of Tarsus (vs. 10-12). Ananias was hesitant to go, but Jesus proceeded to tell him once again to go and Ananias obeyed (vs. 13-17a). When Ananias found Paul, he told him of how the Lord had sent him. As soon as his sight was restored, he arose and was baptized (vs. 17,18).

Upon first glance, it does not say when Paul was saved. It does not say he was saved on the road, nor does it say he was saved in Damascus. This is why we must search the scriptures and see what else is recorded for us. In the

The question as stated, "Was Paul saved on the road to Damascus?" would be easy for most people to answer if they are familiar with the Bible.

Upon reading and study from

account Paul gave of his conversion in Jerusalem, we are told what Ananias told Paul. He said, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

Can one be saved without having his sins washed away? Of course not, for he is still in a sinful state. He has not yet become a new creature, a Christian (2 Corinthians 5:16, 17). If Paul had been saved, having his sins forgiven and washed away on the road to Damascus, why did Ananias tell him to arise and be baptized in order to wash away his sins? Simply put, because Paul was not saved on the road to Damascus. One is saved only after he has put on Christ through baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:26-28). ■

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Don't Put Them on Your List

Once upon a time there was a woman who had been bitten by a dog. Since she neglected to go to the doctor in time, she was advised by her physician to write her last wishes, because it was very possible that she could die from rabies. She spent so long with pencil and paper that the doctor finally remarked something about how long the will would be. "Well!" she snorted. "I'm writing a list of the people I'm going to bite!"

Sometimes human beings are so eager to take vengeance upon others that we forget the danger we ourselves are in. Often the things we get the most passionate about are things others do to offend us and our feeling that we want to "get them back."

The Bible, of course, tells us that we should leave room for God's vengeance (Romans 12:19). In fact, there is a whole list of things we should keep in mind in dealing with others in this chapter:

Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceable with all men. Dearly

beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:17-21

No matter what our enemy does to us, we are to return only good. In so doing, we overcome evil! ■

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Respect for the Authority of the Bible

Do we have respect for the authority of the Bible? Division, confusion, and strife are manifested when men fail to respect the authority of God's word. Every divisive "issue" to confront religious people throughout the ages can be traced to a lack of respect for the authority of God's word. And just because we may be obeying God on one "issue" does not give us the right to be disobedient on another. God's word must be respected on every point rather than only on the points with which we agree. If we obey God *only* when we agree with Him, we will never truly obey.

A congregation may choose to worship *a cappella* in order to properly obey God's commands for worship in the New Testament. However, this decision to obey God on this one point does not grant them immunity to disobey Him on another point. Being "sound" in the faith requires more obedience than *a cappella* worship. Being a sound congregation requires complete respect for the authority of God's word.

Christ's word is the final say in all matters religious: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son..." (Hebrews 1:1-2).

The word of the Lord will have the final say on the Judgment Day: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my

words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

His word warns us not to go beyond the words that have been revealed: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto

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these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18-19).

Paul wrote to his brethren at Corinth hoping they "might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another" (1 Corinthians 4:6). The Word which is written must be our standard and guide. As children of God and followers of Christ, we must respect the authority of the New Testament by comparing our spiritual lives to the sacred precepts contained therein, rather than comparing ourselves to one another: "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (2 Corinthians 10:12). We may fare very well when we are compared to someone else and still remain eternally lost when we are judged according to our obedience of the doctrine of Christ.

Brethren, let us respect the authority of the Bible by realizing and honoring every word as being from God (Matthew 28:20; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). If we obey on one point, or only on the points with which we might agree, only to willingly disobey on other matters, will we be proving ourselves to have true respect for the authority of the Scriptures? ■

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What is Man Worth?

Recently I read a statement which said that people have no redeeming quality and that man is only worth \$1.49 in mineral content. In this

same statement man was compared to being no better than a dog. This seems to be the compelling attitude among many in our world today. Organizations such as PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) have convinced many that the worth of animals is equal to or greater than the worth of man. This is the attitude that has helped to further causes such as those that advocate abortion and euthanasia. So with this prevailing reasoning among many today, we are compelled to ask, what is the true value of man and can man be redeemed?

MAN'S WORTH IS GREATER THAN THAT OF ANIMALS

We find in Genesis 1:28 where God placed man in the garden of Eden and gave unto him "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." God then showed man's dominion over the animals by bringing each of them to Adam and having him to name each one (Gen. 2:19, 20). We also see where God gave unto Adam the animals to use for his needs, in that when Adam and Eve sinned against God and found themselves to be naked (Gen. 3:7-11), God made for them "coats of skins, and clothed them" (Gen. 3:21).

What is it that makes man's worth greater than that of animals? The answer to this is found in Genesis 1:26, 27: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Man was created in God's image in that God gave him a living soul (Gen. 1:7). This soul gave man the ability to think for and take care of not just himself, but also the things around him. We find that God gave man the charge of caring for the garden in which he lived (Gen. 2:15). He also gave man the responsibility of naming the animals (Gen. 2:19, 20) because man had the ability to think and to reason for himself.

This ability to think and reason for himself also gave man a very grave responsibility in obeying the commands of

God. When God placed man into the garden He told Adam "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat" (Gen. 1:29). God further commanded man concerning what he had been given for food: "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" (Gen. 2:16, 17). When God gave them the command to not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil he also told them that their consequence of eating of it would be death (Gen. 2:17). Man showed his ability to reason and to think for himself in that he ate of that which God had commanded him not to eat (Gen. 1:1-13).

WHAT THEN IS THE TRUE VALUE OF MAN?

Seeing then that man is greater than the animals, we have to ask ourselves what is the true value of man or what is man really worth? If we were to have an object of which we wanted to find the value or worth, we would look to see



We find that God loved man so much that he was willing to pay the price of His own Son in order that man might be redeemed back unto Him (John 3:16).



for how much that object could be bought or redeemed. This would be true in finding the worth or value of man; we would look to see what price would be paid to redeem or purchase him. Now some may mock at this idea and say that man cannot be bought and sold, but when we look at the scriptures, we find that a price has already been paid for man (1 Cor. 6:20, 1 Cor. 7:23).

We find that God loved man so much that he was willing to pay the price of His own Son in order that man might be redeemed back unto Him (John 3:16). Christ was willing to give himself "that he might redeem us from all iniquity" (Titus 2:14). He gave the ultimate price of his blood (1 Peter 1:18, 19) which he shed on that cruel cross of Calvary (John 19:24).

Why was such a high price necessary for man? The Hebrew writer tells us that in order for man to have remission of his sins then it takes the shedding of blood (Heb. 9:22). He also goes on to tell us that the blood of bulls and goats does

not have the power to remove man's sin (Heb. 10:4) and that it is the offering of the body of Christ that gives us salvation (Heb. 10:10; Matt. 26:28). We also find that one is cleansed or washed from his sins by the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5). Saul was told by Ananias to arise and wash away his sins through baptism (Acts 22:16). It is through baptism that we come into contact with the death of Christ (Rom. 6:1-6), that we put on Christ (Gal. 3:27), and that we are added to the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). Luke tells us that when we repent and are baptized for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38) that we are then added to the church by God (Acts 2:47). Paul tells us that the church and the body are the same, that Christ is the head (Col. 1:18, 24), and that he purchased His church with His blood (Acts 20:28).

So what is man worth? He is worth the death of Christ our Savior in order that he might have forgiveness of his sins and that he may be redeemed unto God. ■

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Just Fine

A man was telling his brother about the car he had. The man said, "The engine is messed up, the battery is messed up, the steering wheel is messed up, the seats are messed up, the dashboard is messed up, the headlights are messed up, the transmission is messed up, the tires are messed up, and the windows are cracked. But, other than that, the car is just fine." Think about it—other than the fact that almost everything was messed up, he thought the car was just fine. That is how we look at our lives sometimes. We don't pray as we should, we don't work as we should, we don't support the church as we should, we don't read the Bible as we should, we don't love our spouse as we should, we don't love our children as we should, we don't love God as we should, we don't love our neighbor as we should, or we don't resist the devil as we should. Then we turn around and think everything is just fine. Jesus said in Matthew 23:28, "Even so ye outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." ■

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Do You Possess Good People Skills?

1. Look out for others interests as well as your own: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:4).
2. Treat others better than the way you want to be treated: "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself" (Phil. 2:3). "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another." (Rom. 12:10).
3. Praise has better results than criticism: "There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword; but the tongue of the wise is health" (Prov. 12:18).
4. Look beyond outward appearance: "But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).
5. Don't say everything you think: "A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back" (Prov. 29:11).
6. Be willing to listen and take advice: "Without counsel, plans go awry, but in the multitude of counselors they are established" (Prov. 15:22). "For by wise counsel you will wage your own war, and in a multitude of counselors there is safety" (Prov. 24:6).
7. Be willing to admit when you are in error: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13).
8. Be slow to anger; in doing so you will be able to quiet or calm anger and contentions: "A wrathful man stirreth up strife; but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife" (Prov. 15:18).
9. Be gentle in answering, for it will defuse anger: "A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger" (Prov. 15:1). "A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good it is!" (Prov. 15:23).
10. Listen to all sides before making a judgment: "He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbor cometh and searcheth him" (Prov. 18:17). "The heart of righteous studies how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil" (Prov. 15:28). ■

~Unknown

God's Covenant With Man

A covenant is an agreement or contract. The following verses define by actual example the meaning of the term covenant. Genesis 21:27, "And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant." Genesis 21:32, "Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines." 1 Samuel 18:3, "Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul." 1 Samuel 23:18, "And they two made a covenant before the Lord: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house." 1 Kings 20:34, "And Benhadad said unto him, The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then said Ahab, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away."

Ordinarily we think of a covenant being an agreement or contract between two people with a mutual agreement with reference to a proposal, plan, intention or offer, as in the passages just noted. However, God's covenant with man is based entirely upon the terms or conditions which He has set forth.

God made a covenant with Adam and Eve, promising divine favor in return for obedience (Genesis 2:15-17). God made a covenant with Noah that he would survive the great flood (Genesis 6:18) and that the world would never again be destroyed by water (Genesis 9:12-16).

There were other divine covenants, i.e. Abraham (Genesis 13:17, 17:2,4,7,11,13,14; 2 Kings 13:23; Acts 7:8; Romans 4:13,17); the Israelites (Exodus 31:16); the Levites (Malachi 2:4,8); with Phinehas (Numbers 25:11-13); and David (2 Samuel 7:15,16; 2 Chronicles 21:7; Psalm 89:20-28,34). Of course now, He has made a New Covenant of a more spiritual nature designed for all peoples and nations (Jeremiah 31:31-44, Hebrews 8:8-11; Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 10:44-47).

ADAM AND EVE

Notice the covenant God made with Adam and Eve,

promising divine favor in return for obedience (Genesis 2:15-17). First, God told Adam what to do: *dress and keep the garden*. Second, He told him what he must not do: *eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. Third, God told him what the result would be if he disobeyed: *in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*.

COVENANT OF UNION

Man and God, husband and wife, united according to God's plan. This covenant of union which God made with Adam remains binding today and shall remain as long as the world stands

(Genesis 1:24-28). First, let us notice that God made man in His own image. That is, God gave man an eternal spirit and a soul that will never die. Man was like



Today we are hearing a lot about so-called "same-sex marriage." Even the animals live on a higher plane!



God also in the fact that he was created pure and upright. Man was also like God in that he was given the ability reason and understand. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 1:18). None of the other created beings were given this ability. One of the great tragedies of society today is that many people are conducting their lives on the low level or plane of an animal.

In fact, there are some who have reduced themselves to an even lower level than that of an animal. The Genesis account declares: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Today we are hearing a lot about, so-called, "same-sex marriage." Even the animals live on a higher plane! When God told Noah to gather the animals for the ark, He said, "Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the *male* and his *female*: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the *male* and his *female*." (Genesis 7:2) (emphasis, gfh.). It has remained that way in the animal kingdom, but not so with some people. It matters not if every court in the land passes a law to legalize such arrangements, it will never be marriage in the sight of Almighty God. Paul wrote to the Romans, "For this cause

God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet" (Romans 1:26-27). "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind" (1 Corinthians 6:9). "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination" (Leviticus 18:22). Such was an abomination in God's sight then; it still is, and will be at the judgment.

COVENANT OF DOMINION

God told Adam to "replenish the earth, and subdue it." *Subdue* means to tame, conquer, or control. Adam was to have control over the earth. His dominion over the earth meant that he had a responsibility to care for that under his control. He was also given dominion over the animal life which God had created. "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Everything God had made was under the dominion of Adam, even the tree in the midst of the garden. He had the power to obey God and refuse to eat of it or he could partake of the fruit and die; the choice was his.

Today, there is nothing under heaven higher than man! Man, under God, still has the responsibility to care for himself and all that God has placed under his control. God calls this "stewardship" (Luke 16:1-4). Under Christ, man's highest responsibility is to himself. Paul said, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is *temperate* (emphasis, gfh.) in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have

preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). Solomon expressed it this way in Ecclesiastes 12:13, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

God's covenant with man is that he, man, has dominion over the gospel message to teach it to the whole world (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). Paul declared the necessity of preaching the gospel (Romans 10:13-17; 2 Corinthians 4:7).

God has given man dominion over his family. God said of Abraham, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Genesis 18:19). God requires no less today (Ephesians 5:23-33; 6:1-4).

The one thing that would solve more of the problems of society than anything else is for men to fulfill their duty of dominion as husbands and fathers as ordained by God. Far too many have relinquished their dominion to a life of sin. Paul wrote, "For sin shall not have dominion over you" (Romans 6:14).

COVENANT OF SUBJECTION

God's covenant with man is a covenant of subjection. "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11:3). Notice the order of subjection: **God....Christ....Man....Woman**. This is God's order and absolutely no one has the right to change it. "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing" (Ephesians 5:24).

"The church is subject unto Christ." The church is not at liberty to choose what, how, and when to worship. "Christ is the head of the church" (Ephesians 5:23); "the church is subject unto Christ" (Ephesians 5:24); and therefore must get her directions or authorization from Him.

This is a very important subject because it seems that

many members of the church today have lost sight of the fact that only worship authorized by the Holy Scriptures and offered in the exact way that the Scriptures authorize is acceptable to God.

Christians must be in subjection to the authority of the holy scriptures when it comes to the worship we offer to God. Never in any dispensation has God ever required man to worship without giving him complete instructions, specific, explicit and definite, relative to how He wants to be worshipped. It has never been left up to man as to how he wants to worship. As we look upon the religious world today, one might come to the conclusion that it really makes no difference how we worship. It seems that some of our own brethren have come to that exact conclusion.

I believe we would do well to look at the Old Testament example of Cain and Abel and the manner in which these two brothers offered their worship to God. We read in Genesis 4:3-5, "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect." Evidently Cain reasoned that it made no difference what was offered as a sacrifice just so something was offered. By just a little bit of deductive reasoning we can learn that God had commanded a certain kind of offering. We are told in Hebrews 11:4, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." Then we read in Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Abel heard God; Cain refused to be subject to the God's authority. God was pleased with Abel's offering, but was not pleased with the offering of Cain and He refused to accept it. Neither will He accept any unauthorized worship today.

We have now come to the crux of the whole matter of Christian worship. We have a guide book, and that book is the New Testament. In the New Testament, Christ has designated the worship in which members of His church are to participate. If we are to worship God acceptably today we

must adhere strictly, without any change, subtraction, addition or substitution to Christ's instructions, which are plainly designated in this book.

I believe that a negative approach, showing why many members of the church are not worshiping God acceptably, will help us to understand how we must worship in order to please Him.

Too many members are trying to get by on the very minimum. Their attitude is "how much *must* I do?" instead of "how much *can* I do?" (How many services *must* I attend? How much do I *have* to give?) Even when we have done all that we can, we are still "unprofitable servants" (Luke 17:10).

Still others worship unacceptably because their worship is not according to truth. They worship outside the truth. Jesus told the woman at the well: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Jesus said, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:8-9).

CHURCH MUSIC

Christ has designated that Christians are to sing as worship to God. (1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Romans 15:9). This is what the early church did, and, for us to be in subjection as to our worship, we must do the same. The New Testament does not teach Christians to play on a mechanical instrument of music in worship. There is not one syllable of authority for the use of mechanical music in Christian worship in the New Testament. The use of it is an addition of man; it is a part of the doctrines and commandments of men. Therefore, the lack of authority demands that we not use it, and that we oppose its use, among others.

In summary, I believe that God's Covenant with man is a covenant of Union, Dominion, and Subjection. ■

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A New Book

A new blockbuster sermon book is now available, written by Guy F. Hester of Lynn, AL. Brother Hester is a veteran of the pulpit

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Thoughts on Personal Holiness

In a word we must labor for holiness of character...You must have holiness; and, dear bretheren, if you should fail in mental qualifications (as I hope you will not), and if you should

have a slender measure of the oratorical faculty (as I trust you will not), yet, depend upon it, a holy life is, in itself, a wonderful power, and will make up for many deficiencies; it is, in fact, the best sermon the best man can deliver.

—Charles H. Spurgeon
Lectures to My Students

I have one passion: it is He, He alone.

—Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf

God is not impressed with how much I know (intellectually) of His Word; He wants to know how much like Christ I am becoming.

—Howard and William Hendricks
As Iron Sharpens Iron

Unless we know God deeply, we cannot love Him deeply.

—R.C. Sproul
The Soul's Quest for God

The congregation is the pastor's place for developing vocational holiness. It goes without saying that it is the place of ministry... but it is also the place in which we develop virtue, learn to love, advance in hope—become what we preach. At the same time we proclaim a holy gospel, we develop a holy life. We dare not separate what we do from who we are.

—Eugene H. Peterson
Under the Unpredictable Plant

Prayer is surrender—surrender to the will of God and cooperation with that will. If I throw out a boathook from the boat and catch hold of the shore and pull, do I pull the shore to me, or do I pull myself to the shore? Prayer is not pulling God to my will, but aligning of my will to the will of God.

—E. Stanley Jones
A Song of Ascents

Prayer ought to be frequent and fervent.

—Martin Luther

Is Thy Heart Right with God?

Is their heart right with God? This is a question that needs to be deeply considered not only by those who are outside of the

body of Christ, but by those of us who are part of the body as well. We live in a time when the truth and power of God's word is taken all too lightly by many of us. Many have distorted God's word concerning the true meaning of our hearts and our lives as Christians. Some have said, "All you have to do is believe." Others that, "church discipline is unloving." Statements such as these have only led many into apostasy.

Let us see then what the Lord has to say concerning our hearts and His word:

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

This passage alone shows the awesome power that God's word has upon the hearts of men. We need not any other, yet there are many (Matthew 10:34-37; Jeremiah 23:29; 1 Corinthians 14:24-25; 1 Peter 1:23). His word, and the power which it possesses, has different effects on the hearts of different people. Those Jews on the day of Pentecost who heard Peter and the apostles preach Jesus Christ were "pricked in their hearts" (Acts 2:37). This caused them to ask, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Yet, the Sanhedrin responded differently to the preaching of Stephen:

When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth...And they cast him out of the city, and stoned him... Acts 7:54, 58

We today need the same conviction to stand for the truth, regardless of the outcome. As we go about fulfilling our duties as Christians, we need to keep these things in our minds. We should remind those around us that we speak the truth in love for their souls and it should not make us their enemies (Ephesians 4:15; Galatians 4:16), but should

cause them to look inwardly. Likewise we should continue to make sure that our hearts are in harmony with God and His will, for He is the one that will judge us and He will do so by His will (Romans 2:16).

We see then that New Testament Christianity is of the heart. It must be in accordance and in harmony with His word. So again the question at hand must be asked, is thy heart right with God? ■

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The Church

What is your first thought when you hear the word *church*? What is your definition of *church*? What role should the church play in the history of man? What does God intend the church to be? Just what is the church, anyway? Plainly and simply—the Lord's church is the Lord's people. *Ekklesia* is the Greek word meaning "the called out", "the assembly"—when attached to the church of God—"that which belongs to the Lord."

Alexander MacLaren observed, "The church is an anvil which has worn out many hammers." From the pen of Henry Ward Beecher comes the thought, "The church is not a gallery for the exhibition of eminent Christians, but a school for the education of imperfect ones." Really, the church is not a hotel for saints, but rather a hospital for sinners. "The Church with not great anguish on its heart has no great music on its lips"—Karl Barth. Jesus taught that His disciples are to be, "the salt of the earth"—"the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14-16). Paul writes that the church is to be a "shining light in the world" (Philippians 2:15). Maybe E.C. McKenzie summed it up properly, "The world at its worst needs the church at its best." You see, the church offers you something you simply cannot get elsewhere.

Someone observed, "All churches grow old, but some never grow up." A church that is not reaching out to the lost and needy is passing out. The church is a workshop, not a dormitory. But many times, when all is said and done, more

is said than done. The church desperately needs workers, not a wrecking crew.

The business of the church is to get rid of evil, not supervise it. However, if you and I were perfect, we could not belong. We are all sinners in need of the grace of God. As a place of worship, the church should be of such character that it will be easy for men to find God and difficult for them to forget Him.

A sign in front of a Chicago church building said, "The competition is terrible, but we are still open for business." And that's the way it is! The church, pray for her, support her, and help to build her up. ■

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Who Has the Right to Change the Message?

The Christian faith has its basis in the revealed will of God. The scriptures inspired of God are not to be altered. The inspired scriptures are complete furnishing all that man needs to be complete (2 Timothy 3:16-17). "All that pertains to life and godliness" has been given in the scriptures (2 Peter 1:3). The scriptures bring to the heart of man the will of God, in order to bring man into a right relationship with God (Romans 1:16-17).

The scriptures direct us to handle "aright the word of truth." They warn against "going beyond what is written", against "going beyond the doctrine of Christ", against "adding to or taking away from" the word. God directs "preach the word," "hold fast to the sound doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:2), and warns against receiving "another gospel" (Galatians 1:6-9).

We must do more than pay lip-service to the fact that Christianity rests upon the inspired word of God! No part of Christianity rests upon the doctrines of men! Only one

message calls men to life in Christ! Only one provides the terms of salvation! It is the gospel of Christ! Salvation is to be found only in Christ (Acts 4:12; Hebrews 5:8-9). It cannot be found in the doctrines of men. The worship and work of God's people, as well as the moral and spiritual tenets they are to live by are contained in the gospel of Christ. The Christian life can be produced and maintained only in the acceptance of the will of God set forth in the gospel of Christ. The doctrines of men do not, and cannot, bring a soul into a right relationship with God (Matthew 15:8-9; Mark 7:7-9; 2 John 9-11; Galatians 1:6-9; Romans 6:16-18, 12:1-2). An amended gospel or a partial gospel is not the gospel of Christ! The doctrines of men are not the counsel of God!

False teachers do not hesitate to pervert God's revealed will. They have no qualms about setting it aside or going beyond it. They falsely claim to be interested in the future of the church, especially the youth, and that they want to see the church grow. They conduct themselves as being above the word of God, and are willing to set it aside. False teachers have ever championed new terminology, new freedoms, new and different doctrines, and broader fellowship. They have ever called men away from the truth of God.

When anyone advances "the plan of salvation of your choice," "the worship of your choice," and "the church of your choice," they are speaking falsehood. "The savior of your choice" and "the godhead of your choice" is not truth! The enthroning of personal choice has ever led people away from God. "Personal choice" exalts self and diminishes God. It exalts the profane, not the holy. Greater personal choice has ever been the desire of man. It has ever led to the rejection of the authority of God, and disloyalty to God.

Truth demands loyalty! Loyalty to God is not negotiable. To set aside or reject the will of God is to be disloyal to God. Day in and day out, nothing is more important than loyalty to God! We are called of God to be loyal to Him and to His will for us. ■

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The Portrait of the New Man:

Colossians 3:12-17

Introduction:

1. Christ is "all, and in all". "He is my everything, he is my all."
2. With the putting off of the "old man", there must logically come about some changes.

3. The whole field of Christian morality is not covered, but that which concerns our social duties which result from our union with the body of Christ. The world had never seen a picture of man like Paul paints.
4. The portrait of the new man presents to us three considerations:

I. The Condition of the New Man. (vs. 11-14)

- A. In Christ. (Galatians 3:26, 27; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15)
 1. He is our "mentor". (Phillipians 2:5)
 2. Our focus is upon Him.
- B. Elect of God. (1 Peter 2:9)
 1. Christians are now the true children of Abraham. (Galatians 3:29)
 2. Election is not an argument for partiality. (Acts 10:34, 35)
- C. Holy.
 1. We are sanctified, set apart for God. (Colossians 1:2)
 2. The church is "the called out". (Colossians 1:13)
- D. Beloved.
 1. God has fixed His love on us. (Romans 8:38, 39)
 2. The church is "special" because of God's feeling for it.
- E. Forgiven. (vs. 13)
 1. This declares the deity of Christ "Christ forgave you."
 2. The great gospel blessing. (Hebrews 8:12)

II. The Clothing of the New Man. ("put on" vs. 10, 12, 14)

- A. Mercy—a heart of compassion, pity.
 1. The ancients considered the "bowels" to be the seat of our emotions (liver, kidneys, lungs, intestines, etc.).
 2. There is deep feeling of concern over the needs of others.
- B. Kindness—good will toward others.
 1. There is a sweetness of disposition in dealing with others.
 2. This does away with suspicion of others. (Ephesians 4:32)
- C. Humbleness—the estimate of yourself.
 1. All must plead for mercy because they are sinful!
 2. Therefore opposed to haughtiness. (Proverbs 16:18)
- D. Meekness.
 1. Courtesy, power under control; gentle but firm.
 2. Opposed to rudeness and harshness.
 3. Moses and Jesus, both examples. (Matthew 11:28-30)
- E. Longsuffering.
 1. A reaction toward treatment. Temper under control.
 2. Opposed to malice, resentment, and revenge.
- F. Forbearance.
 1. Tolerance to hold yourself back. Self-restraint.
 2. What of murderers who plead "temporary insanity?"
- G. Forgiveness.
 1. "Quarrel", i.e. complaint, real or imaginary.
 2. We often plead we don't have to until the person "repents" when there has never been an actual "offense" or sin committed by the other person! We complain because "chips" get knocked off our shoulders!
 3. The reason and extent expected of us: "as". (Matthew 6:12, 14, 15)

H. Charity.

1. "Bond"—girdle. That garment that held everything else in place. Liken it to our overcoat!
2. The prevailing principle of discipleship. (John 13:35, 1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

III. The Control of the New Man.

A. The Ruling Peace of Christ.

1. Christ indeed has brought us peace. (John 14:26; Isaiah 9:6; Ephesians 2:17; Romans 5:1; Ephesians 4:3)
2. God is too good to be unkind, and too wise to be mistaken.
3. On all questions this gives the deciding vote. "Umpire."

B. The Indwelling Word of Christ.

1. This is no doubt a reference to the gospel. (Romans 1:16)
2. To "dwell" is to be at home. Occupies our mind and will.
3. Not human traditions nor the doctrines and commandments of men. (Colossians 2:20-22; Mark 7:7-9)
4. Issues forth in praise that teaches and admonishes our brethren. We are worshiping a body. (vs. 16; Ephesians 5:19)

C. The Hallowed Name of Christ.

1. His name stands for identification. (Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16)
2. His name stands for authority. (Acts 2:38; 4:12; Phillipians 2:9, 10)
3. His name calls for thanksgiving. (vs. 15, 17)

Conclusion:

1. Our outward conduct becomes the proof of the inward transformation.
2. How could we tell ourselves? (Matthew 7:20; James 2:18) ■

M. W. Kiser

104 Calhoun St., Sylacauga, AL 35150

Putting Away Lying...

Ephesians 4:25

...Is synonymous with putting off the "old self"

(Ephesians 4:22). This is so essential because the old self is corrupted by deceitful

lusts. Lying does damage to the conscience and the soul. It is interesting to note that this spoiling, or ruining, of one's spiritual self is, at least sometimes, driven by lusts and ungodly desires. Is this suggesting that one lies to cover up other acts of iniquity? That is a behavior characteristic of a godless person. The only way to put away the practice of lying is to break free from the service of sin (Romans 6:17-18).

...Is the precursor to speaking truth (Ephesians 4:25).

Until a lie is no longer a verbal option in our dealings with our "neighbor", we will be stuck in that old way which ultimately leads to corruption¹. By eliminating this sin of the tongue (and heart), we allow ourselves to engage in completely honest discourse about whatever discussion is under consideration. This has a powerfully positive impact on every relationship a Christian bears, in the home, the church, the workplace, and the community. Honesty is great for the reputation of a Christian, and it makes one the most effective servant of Christ.

...Is motivated by an appreciation of unity (Ephesians 4:25). *Why* put away lying? "We are members one of another." Our actions affect others. Our lies betray, anger, hurt, and alienate their victims. In whatever context the lie occurs, it is a wholly selfish and self-serving act. Such egocentricity tears at and destroys unity, making such difficult. Lying is a stone wall separating hearts and lives. Sobering indeed is the charge of Jesus against liars, that any such "are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44). Liars are allied with Satan!

Are you being honest with your spouse? Your family? Your government? Your friends? Your brethren? Your God? The hopeful message of Ephesians 4 is that the old self can be put away and the new self can be put on. In view of eternity, put away lying! ■

Neal Pollard

¹A study of the word translated "corruption" (*phthora*) leaves one with the undeniable impression that Bible writers are speaking in terms of one being eternally lost. It means to be ruined, to perish, and decay.

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Someone gave me a *Gospel Gleaner* to read, and I really did enjoy it, so I want you to start sending a copy to me regularly. Enclosed is a small donation.

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Chris Steele
New Port Richey, FL

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our readers are given permission to reprint any article in *The Gospel Gleaner* if it will help the sure increase of God's Kingdom

Article Was a Help

"I would like to thank you for producing *The Gospel Gleaner*. Recently, I had been struggling with depression. A good friend gave me her copy of the paper. It was my first time reading the publication. An article in "Interesting Inquiries" really hit home for me. I know the passage in Luke 12:28-31 well, but because of wrong thinking, I had allowed myself to take ownership of things which I have no control over. That short article brought a lot of things back into focus for me. Thank you so much. If possible, I would like to be added to your mailing list."

Tom Howell
Birmingham, AL

Catholic Debate

How can I obtain copies of the "Debate With Catholics" involving John T. Polk, II and Robert Sungenis?

EDITOR'S NOTE: The "Polk-Sungenis Debate on the Sole Authority in Religion" can be purchased from The Gospel

Advocate (800-251-8446) or www.gospeladvocate.com. Also Freed-Hardeman University 731-989-6751 or www.fhu.edu/recording.

This debate is one of the better religious discussions in brotherhood history. Every concerned brother or sister should obtain a copy.



THE GOSPEL GLEANER

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The Gospel Gleaner is a quarterly publication of the Hickory Ridge Church of Christ in Hickory Ridge, Arkansas. It is also supported financially by interested sister churches and individuals and is mailed free of charge to its subscribers. *The Gospel Gleaner* is dedicated to restoring New Testament Christianity. We welcome your comments and questions regarding any article found herein.

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Bible Quiz

1. Whose hands were covered with hair?
2. Who was the wisest man in the Old Testament, yet his wisdom did not teach him self-control?
3. Who is the first female singer in the Bible?
4. What prophet's word caused the Syrian soldiers to be struck blind?
5. How many times does Eve's name appear in the New Testament?

1. Esau (Genesis 27:23); 2. Solomon; 3. Miriam (Exodus 15:21); 4. Elisha's (2 Kings 6:18-23); 5. Twice (2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:13)

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Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 AM
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 AM
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00 AM

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THE GOSPEL GLEANNER

Where Has the Time Gone?

by Brent Smith 1714 South College, Trenton, TN 38382

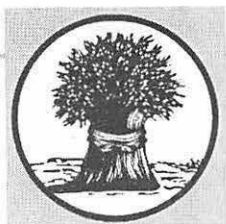
It will have been 365 days, 8760 hours, 525,600 minutes and 31,536,000 seconds when the year of 2007 comes to an end. Are you happy with the way you have spent the time this year? Is God? Yes, we needed the time to rest and relax and recreate, but did we do too much of that? Maybe we did not rest enough. Or perhaps we were busy but too busy to do the things that were really important. Was God the recipient of the first-fruits of our time?

The apostle Paul encouraged, "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:15-17). There is a foolish way and a wise way to spend our time. The wise way is to conscientiously consider and use each of the nearly nine thousand hours of the year. The days themselves are evil in the sense that they are destroyed so soon; they come and go, never to return. Wisdom is knowing the Will of God and doing His will through the day.

Did you spend your days doing the Will of God?

Paul touched on the same thought in his letter to Colossae and was more specific about the use of time, "Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one" (Colossians 4:5-6). When considering the fleeting time, Paul spoke of the urgency of influencing lost souls for Christ. How many this year did you influence for Jesus' sake? Does your answer reflect time well spent or time ill spent? Does your answer indicate "understanding" or "lack of wisdom?"

Whatever our answer, we can always do better tomorrow. But even tomorrow is not promised and perhaps that is part of the problem. The moment is now. What am I doing right now? When I start thinking about "now," then I will be able to reflect on yesterday in a better way. ■



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Bible Reading

Have you read any good books lately? Have you read the Good Book lately? A popular health slogan says, "You are what you eat." It is true, of course; it's true physically and mentally. A man can't just expect to grow in knowledge without feeding his mind anymore than he can expect to grow physically without feeding his body. Unfortunately, there's an ample supply of "junk-food literature" available in our world. Junk-reading leads to junk-thinking; and junk-thinking leads to junk-living.

The book I have in mind right now, though, is far from junk; it's a treasure book. It's been recognized for years as the surpassing book of all time. If people would take the time to learn more of the Bible, they would love it more and, without doubt, it would have a tremendous effect on their lives for the better. Those who have acquainted themselves with it have happily discovered that it is a storehouse of riches, excelling in wisdom and imparting strength. Psalm 119:50 declares, "This is my comfort in my affliction, For your word has given me life."

Down through the years the greatest of thinkers, speakers and writers have utilized and adapted the stories, terms and phrases of the Bible to their own works. The names of Shakespeare, Milton, Bunyan, Melville, Wordsworth, and a host of others fall into this category. This is not to say that the lives of these writers conformed to the teachings of the Bible; but it is to say that their lasting works (as the world's great masterpieces of literature) were saturated in Bible terminology, images and thoughts.

Abraham Lincoln is a good example of one who let the Bible influence his speech-making. Most have heard of the Gettysburg Address. His words and phrases are recognized to have a definite Bible flavor to them. Mr. Lincoln is also attributed as saying, "I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible. Take all this book upon reason that you can, and the balance upon faith, and you will live and die a better man." Of course, in years gone by, such remarks were addressed to a nation of people whose religious devotion was deeper than the current age.

Another example worthy of notice is Daniel Webster, who adorned his speeches with Bible allusions and quotations. Webster said of Alexander Hamilton, "He smote the rock of natural resources, and abundant streams of revenue burst forth; he touched the dead corpse of public credit and it sprang upon its feet." Webster said this in reference to Hamilton's providing funds for the U.S. treasury while it was still in its infancy. Webster's words helped Hamilton become a noted historical figure, but also revealed Webster's own knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. More than one famous figure from the past has demonstrated the rich storehouse of thought found in the Bible.



by Bill Dillon

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How many children through the years received their early impressions for good from Bible lessons and stories that dealt with the noble themes of courage, truthfulness, honesty and many other wonderful virtues? Paul reminded Timothy "that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15).

The book of Ruth is among the most charming love stories of all time; the book of Esther will always remind us of how important a woman was in saving God's people in the days of ancient Persia; Joseph's story, as related in Genesis, tells how a young man can go far in life even though several bad breaks befell him in his youth; David's encounter with the giant of Gath has instilled bravery into many young persons who were up against some modern day Goliath; the story of Job has likewise encouraged numbers of souls in trying times of extreme distress and trouble. How many more lessons can you think of? Do your children know of these ageless truths?

The Bible is the book for all seasons. It is not a man-made book; it is the book that has made men! It is the Good Book. Read it! "To read it is to know it; to know it is to love it; to love it, is to live it." Isaiah 34:16 says, "seek ye out of the book of the Lord and read." May we all be better acquainted with The Good Book. ■

Begged, Borrowed and Begotten

I go out to preach with two propositions in mind. First, every person ought to give his life to Christ. Second, whether or not anyone else gives Him his life, I will give Him mine.

—Jonathan Edwards

I am confident that the Almighty has His plans, and will work them out; and, whether we see it or not, they will be the best for us.

—Abraham Lincoln

If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent an educator.

If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent an engineer.

If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent an economist.

But since our greatest need was forgiveness, God sent us a Savior.

These days there's no arrest for the wicked.

The Greek text in 2 Corinthians 9:7 reads... "a cheerful giver loves God!"

Sin is Christicide.

—C.K. Spurgeon

The idea that Absalom, King David's long-haired handsome son, got his hair caught in the branches of an oak came from Flavius Josephus not from the Bible. The Bible says his head was caught. See 2 Samuel 18:9.

There is no greater darkness than ignorance of God.

—John Calvin

None are to be more pitied than slaves to error.

Atheism



by John T. Polk, II
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Question: How should a Christian witness to an atheist?

Answer: We should not. If by "witnessing" you mean give your own personal testimony of what you did to become a Christian, it would be meaningless to an atheist, and even to all people!

We must share Paul's understanding that "we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:5), the reason being that "not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends" (2 Corinthians 10:18). It is only by obeying the Holy Spirit-inspired word that one becomes a child of God (Romans 6:1-7; 8:12-17). A "witness" is someone who personally has seen an event or been miraculously given its facts (such as past prophets had), but no one living today has seen Jesus Christ's life and death in the flesh, or His resurrection, nor have they been given inspired knowledge of the Gospel apart from the written Word of God (1 Corinthians 14:37; Galatians 1:6-9). Peter preached the miracles in Jesus' life and could claim:

...we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and dead. To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.

Acts 10:39-43

Only by preaching and teaching what is written in the Bible can anyone be converted to its faith.

The Bible Is a "Christian Evidence" Textbook!

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Faith is based upon "evidence" and is a solid conviction of "things not seen." Since "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17), then the best "evidence" for faith is "the word of God!" The Bible makes statements that point to external data, and thus becomes a "Christian evidence" textbook. For example:

1. *Every effect must have an adequate cause.* "For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God" (Hebrews 3:4); "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1); "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible" (Hebrews 11:3). All scientific evidence proves that matter is not eternal and must have had a beginning.
2. *There is magnificent design and order to life.* Jesus pointed to the inherent order in agriculture when He said:

For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.

Mark 4:28-29

Such order is impossible without the imposition of law from a Higher Power. Speaking of the intricacies of human development and birth, David said:

You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. My frame

was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.

Psalm 139:13-16

The millions of details involved in each human's normal birth are mind-boggling, and faith-building, indeed. The birth of one human demands an imposing attention to details virtually impossible without God, the Maker.

3. *Life cannot/has not/will not come from non-living matter.*

It is the "God, who made the world and everything in it...[Who] gives to all life, breath, and all things" (Acts 17:24-25). There is no construction of material substance that has been brought to life without adding the living components to the experiment. Science shows life had to be added to the material earth from an outside source.

It is only prejudiced ignorance that would attack Christian faith without dealing with what the Bible, itself, says!

Atheism Equals Ignorance

Speaking of "prejudiced ignorance," one readily thinks of an "atheist," a word meaning, "without faith in deity," hence a person who is without faith in God. No one can be an atheist without denying all the evidence for God's existence and the scientific conclusion that it is fact. In other words, atheists are known for what they confess they do not or cannot know. "Ignorance" is defined as "the absence of knowledge." It is practically impossible, then, for any atheist to ridicule a believer's "faith" because a Bible-believer has evidence for that faith, but an atheist has reduced his or her intelligence to denial. The evidence for God is so abundant that an atheist can believe there is no God only by closing his/her mind to the factual evidence that would prove otherwise! Atheists have a big void throughout their core intellect, and are as Gentiles,

...in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart...

Ephesians 4:17-18

Atheists Are Not Consistently Moral

Those who do "not like to retain God in *their* knowledge" are also known for their lack of redeeming qualities. They are "disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful" and "deserving of death" (Romans 1:28-32). The "death" here is spiritual, not physical, because "God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting." It describes their spiritual separation from Him. The "un-" in the original text is an "a-" in front of a word, thus negating the term used, just like "a-theist." Listing sins of those who love themselves rather than God, Paul included "disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving" (2 Timothy 3:2-5). Atheists are known for what they lack because they have a big void throughout their moral core.

Christopher Hitchens Is *Not* Great

Christopher Hitchens, an atheist writer of some note, is listed in Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia on the Internet, as "known for his iconoclasm, anti-clericalism, atheism, antitheism, anti-fascism and anti-monarchism"—all negative attitudes! His objective case and kickative mood is manifestly "anti-." A petulant child must learn to accept authority imposed by someone greater than the child, but it's sad to see "adults" fighting against all authority but their own! It is, therefore, surprising to note that Hitchens gained his American citizenship on his 58th birthday (April 13, 2007), obviously not "for God and country," but only "for country." His British anti-religious upbringing wasn't distinctive over there, and he must have realized only in a "religious" country could his negativism make a splash and cash!

His new book titled, *God Isn't Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*, supposedly attacks the concept of religion altogether. It is interesting that he wants to ridicule every religion's "god," but singles out "God" for his title. He wrote:

There still remain four irreducible objections to religious faith: [1]that it wholly misrepresents the origins of man and the cosmos, [2]that because of this original error it manages to combine the maximum of servility with the maximum of solipsism, [3]that it is both the result and the cause of dangerous sexual

repression, and [4]that it is ultimately grounded on wish-thinking.

ibid, p. 4, numbers added, jtp11

[1] He further says, "...religion should simply add an apology for foisting man-made parchments and folk myths upon the unsuspecting..." (*ibid*, p. 205). He thus "waves his hand at" (ignores) the physical evidence for the creation and the flood in Noah's day (Genesis 1-3; 6-9), exactly what Peter said "scoffers" would do (2 Peter 3:1-9). The "origins of man and the cosmos" in the Bible is the only account that is scientific and factual! What has Hitchens to offer better than the Bible?

[2] It is precisely because of the Creation and Flood accounts, that the worth of humans may be ascertained. God breathed into man "a living soul" (Genesis 2:7) and after the Flood, murder is forbidden because God made man "in His own image" (Genesis 1:26-27; 9:6). Humans are not animals and should "have dominion" over the rest of the creation. No "solipsism" here; it must exist in atheist Hitchens' solipsistic mind! What reason can atheists give for the dignity of humans?

[3] Sex is repressed only to those who refuse God's plan for sexual happiness. Sexual intimacy is kept pure by: one man's and one woman's devotion to each other for life (Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:1-4); condemning sexual abuses before and during marriage (Hebrews 13:4; Matthew 19:9); and children being taught this purity (Ephesians 6:1-4). People who try multiple marriages often abandon God or blame His marriage pattern as unworkable rather than accept their own personal failure to work God's way thoroughly. Many seem to muddle through life without God's guidance, and when finally they find God, they think He failed to find them first and hold Him accountable for their sins! Do atheists respect marriage as constituted by God?

[4] Rather than accepting the factual evidence for one God, one wife, one religion, one worship, and one Lord, Hitchens is the "wish-thinker" who fantasizes it to be otherwise. Jesus warned against following "many" into common destruction (Matthew 7:13-14), and Peter warned against those who "promise them liberty, [while] they themselves are slaves of corruption" (2 Peter 2:19).

Hitchens wishes there was no God, no Creation, no end of

the world, no Judgment, no sins, no need for salvation, no Jesus Christ, no heaven and no hell; but these cannot be "wished" away! What have atheists "wished" in their place?

Take Off Those "Godless-colored" Glasses!

This writer has never personally known, or known of, an atheist whose criticism of God didn't center outside the Bible and almost entirely dwelt upon the paganism, ritualism, weaknesses, sins, hypocrisies and, yes, idolatry, of the false practitioners of God's Way. Scripture itself acknowledges these, from the Garden of Eden in Genesis all the way through to the churches of Asia in the Book of Revelation. Jesus Christ also condemned the Pharisees, hypocrites, and sinners (Matthew 23; 6; 15) who either ignore or abandon God's principles. How narrow-minded must one be to take some Scriptures as true accounts of the failures of faith and not consider other Scriptures as true accounts of the faithful? The religions that are based upon perverted Bible teachings, or teachings from outside of the Bible altogether, mean nothing as arguments against what the Bible actually teaches. Hitchens begins every argument from his knowledge of worldly corruption and then he brings in an often misrepresented Scripture to be interpreted! He may have memorized some Scriptures as a child, but has never learned to rightly divide the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15)!

Who Is "Greater?"

What makes the God of the Bible "great" is not the people who practice in His Name, but the great things He has done to distinguish His Name! Since "our great God and Savior [is] Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13), is Hitchens claiming that Jesus Christ is NOT "great?" Jesus' wisdom made Him "greater than Solomon," and His resurrection from the dead made Him "greater than Jonah" (Matthew 12:39-42). Hitchens is not as wise as Solomon, nor has he been delivered from "the belly of the great fish," so if Jesus is "not great," then Hitchens is not as great as those of whom Jesus is "greater!"

We can only pray that the eyes of Hitchens, and those like him, will be opened before it's too late. ■

(Free quantities of this article are available in tract form. Contact the author.)

Leadership: Christ-Like Leaders

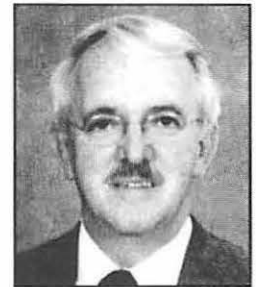
How many people do you know who are Christ-like? How many of these are leaders in the church? Are you Christ-like? If this were a matter of little import, such questions could be readily dismissed, however, in a discussion of leadership from a Christian perspective, such questions may be the most significant to be considered. Who is Christ-like?

Any discussion of leadership in the church demands a thorough-going examination of the life of Christ. Our Lord epitomized the concept of spiritual leadership in His own example and in His teaching. He stated the nature of leadership in the following statement: "The Son of man did not come to be served but to serve;... I am among you as one who serves" (Mark 10:45; Luke 22:27). His method of leadership was in unselfish service. He chose to lead by humbly serving. He willingly served with love and dignity, with compassion and care.

Self-less service is Christ-like leadership. He willingly served those in need; helping, healing, guiding, and teaching. All marvel that He humbly served His own disciples, even washing their feet. He willingly gave His life in order to secure salvation for mankind. To study His life is to be impressed with the fact of His service, and to realize that the only example He left for His followers is one of simple and willing service. Jesus insisted both by example and in His teaching that greatness is not found in power or position, but in service (Matthew 20:20-28). Christ-like leadership is grounded in Christian love which manifests itself in Christian service. If leadership is not Christ-like in service, it cannot rightfully be called Christian!

To study the life of Christ is to be impressed with the fact that the will of the Father was of supreme importance to Him. He lived to do the will of the Father. He faithfully taught and exalted the final authority of the Father's will (Matthew 7:21). He exalted the truth of God and insisted it to be the only basis of hope for mankind. He spoke and taught authoritatively—averring that what He taught was the will of the Father (John 8:12-19). He knew that the truth of God was to be perpetuated, and to that end He taught and trained His disciples. He committed the message of salvation to His disciples, and trusted them to proclaim and teach it faithfully (Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-48). Christian leadership is Christ-like only as it holds fast to the truth of God and faithfully proclaims it. The truth of God qualifies Christian leaders.

Jesus called His followers to obedience. He Himself was obedient (John 10:16ff; Hebrews 5:8-9). He consistently taught the necessity of obedience (Luke 6:46; Matthew 7:21-27). He insisted that it was only as they obeyed His word that they could abide in Him (John 15:1-8). Christian leaders do not originate doctrine, they hold fast to the teachings of Jesus. Christian leaders are themselves Christ-like as they are obedient to the will of God.



by Ron Bryant
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Jesus' service to mankind was not only exemplary, compassionate, and centered in the will of the Father; His service was also redemptive. That which Jesus taught was not simply counsel for daily conduct, it was to the end of delivering eternal souls from sin. His word, His truth, has the power to make men free from sin (John 8:31-32; Romans 1:16-17). Those that embraced His word and followed His example not only came to possess eternal life, they were also transformed—changed into His likeness. Jesus did not drive them to conform, nor did He endeavor to control their actions. He taught them; He lived simply and consistently before them, and He loved them so fully that they chose to be with Him, and desired to be like Him. Redemption is obtained in vital-life-union with Jesus Christ; it is never conferred as a mere legal technicality. All that Jesus did was to draw men to redemption. He made it possible for them to see the Father (John 14:6ff), and to know deliverance from sin (cf. John 17:3). Christ-like leaders are ruled by a love for the Redeemer and for the redemption He alone provides. They live under the sway of the motive of helping others come to the redemption that is in Christ. It is only as leaders are redemptive in their role and ministry that they are Christ-like.

It is apparent, even on the surface, that Christian leaders must be Christ-like. In fact, Christ-likeness is the common denominator for the people of God. If they are not Christ-like they fail to qualify as Christians. If leaders are Christ-like, they serve as did He. Like Christ, they also love and hold fast to the will of the Father. Like Christ, they are obedient to the Father. Like Christ, they love the souls of men, and they love God's plan and purpose of redemption. They delight in bringing souls to the Savior. Their deepest desire is to be Christ-like. They long to "grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18). ■

Mrs. Potiphar



by Max R. Miller

(1925–2001)

VIA SPIRIT OF TRUTH

(5-1978)

King Solomon was well acquainted with women, having had some seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. Many other women were also in his acquaintance, from such royalty as Sheba to prostitutes that came before him for judgment. He knew the good of woman and came to know of the influence that evil women could also have. "His wives turned away his heart" from God. The aged and life-scarred Solomon advised young men to be careful of the cunning and deceitful ways of the immoral woman. He struck many proverbs which identified the ways of the wanton wenches and warned of their dangers.

There was a particular woman in far off Egypt who could have been a case type of the kind of woman Solomon defines so clearly. From reading about this devilish woman (Genesis 39), we may observe several things.

The young man Joseph, pure and undefiled, served in the house of Potiphar, a high ranking officer of Pharaoh. Joseph was young, intelligent, and handsome. Potiphar's wife "cast her eyes upon Joseph and said, 'Lie with me'." Joseph demonstrated character molded by God. He was loyal to Potiphar and all that was entrusted to him. All in the house had been committed to Joseph except Mrs. Potiphar. Joseph could not have her simply because "thou art his wife." He also was loyal to God and broaches the question to Mrs. Potiphar, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Joseph demonstrates purity of life, power over temptation of the flesh, personal loyalty to his master and faithfulness to his God.

Mrs. Potiphar "spake to Joseph day by day... to lie with her, or to be with her," but Joseph resisted her advances and womanly charm. With heated passion she clutched to him and begs, pleads, demands, commands—"Lie with me." Joseph rejected her offers of sin. With rejection Mrs.

Potiphar turns from the honey-mouthed seducer of warmth and charm to the cold, bitter and destructive demon of sin. Her lustful selfishness had no concern for her husband; her charms flaunted, she seeks vengeance on Joseph.

"Heaven has no rage like love turned to hatred, nor hell a fury like a woman scorned."

Mrs. Potiphar was a clever liar. Joseph, in fleeing from her clutches, had been stripped of his coat; the garment was now in the hands of a destructive woman. The coat now becomes "evidence" of Joseph's unholy and lustful advances toward her. To make her lie more believable, she accused Mr. Potiphar of the unwise act of bringing "in a Hebrew unto us to mock us"—that is, to defile the pure relationship that existed between husband and wife. Lying, she said, "he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice," but alas, there was none to hear her. She had only the evidence of Joseph's coat as proof, and such was sufficient.

Mrs. Potiphar had winning ways with her husband. She, to him, related her tale of evil accusations against a good man. In so doing he was led to kindle his wrath against Joseph, his loyal and faithful servant. He had him cast into prison.

Mrs. Potiphar was a devious and successful liar. She had apparently convinced the household that Joseph was a rapist. She convinced the man that knew her best that Joseph was a rapist. She had no conscience to condemn her ungodly acts. She allowed faithful Joseph, an innocent man, to be confined in prison for deeds not done.

"For the lips of a strange woman drop as a honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil; But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell." (Proverbs 5:3-5). ■

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Preaching Jesus

by Timothy Wilkes, II

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We have recorded for us the account of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch in the latter part of Acts 8. Following the command of the Holy Spirit, Philip ran to join himself to the chariot which carried the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:29,30). Philip heard the man reading from the Scriptures and asked if he understood what he was reading. The man did not understand; he needed a teacher. Notice the end of verse 31: "And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him." This man recognized that he needed a teacher, and he recognized that Philip was one who was willing and able to teach. The fact that the eunuch "desired Philip" to teach him is commendable because it shows his desire to know and understand the will of God and to submit himself to it.

The passage that was being read by the eunuch is one of the most moving passages in the whole Bible, Isaiah 53. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth" (Isaiah 53:7). The eunuch was not afraid to ask questions about what he had read. He wanted to know about whom the Scriptures were speaking. Acts 8:35 makes it very clear that the text in Isaiah was a prophecy about Jesus, for, in answering the eunuch's question, Philip "began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus" (verse 35).

We must stop and take note of what the text says that Philip preached: he "preached unto him Jesus." We, too, have

the responsibility to preach Jesus to the world, however, there are different ideas of what it means to preach Jesus. Many believe that preaching Jesus means that we give testimonials about how Jesus has affected our personal lives and all of the wonderful things He has done for us. I am certainly not one who would deny that followers of Christ are blessed tremendously, however, is that what it means to preach Jesus? What exactly did Philip preach when he preached Jesus? Because the Bible does not record all of what was taught, we cannot know all of what Philip preached. However, there are some things we can know, none of which would include giving personal testimonies.

1. First, we can be sure that Philip taught about how the prophets spoke of the coming Messiah, for Philip began at that very prophecy written by the prophet Isaiah.
2. We can be sure that Philip taught about the tremendous sacrifice that Christ made in willingly suffering and laying down His life for the sins of many, for that is the significance of the prophecy in Isaiah 53 (especially verses 5 and 6).
3. We can be certain that in preaching Jesus, Philip taught the eunuch what

he needed to do to take advantage of the sacrifice that Jesus made. This is where many people fail in understanding what it means to preach Jesus. You may be familiar with such phrases as, "Don't preach the plan, just preach the man." What fails to be understood is that "preaching the plan" and "preaching the man" (Jesus) are inseparable.

Part of preaching Jesus is preaching man's responsibility to take action in obedience to Jesus and to the Lord's plan of salvation.

This is clearly what Philip taught the eunuch, because in the very next verse (36), the eunuch is seeking to take action in obedi-

ent submission to the Lord. He said, "See here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" After the man heard Christ preached, he did not have the attitude, or belief, that Christ had done it all; that there was nothing for him to do. Rather it was just the opposite; after Christ was preached, the eunuch knew that there was something he needed to do. If he had faith, would repent of his sins, and would confess his belief (verse 37), he needed to put on Christ in baptism. All of this is included in preaching Jesus. Let us understand what it really means to preach Jesus. ■

You may be familiar with such phrases as, "Don't preach the plan, just preach the man." What fails to be understood is that "preaching the plan" and "preaching the man" (Jesus) are inseparable.

Commitment



by John R. Gross, Jr.
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Adultery is a problem in our society, no matter how you look at it. Any marriage has problems, even the best. Our society is a pleasure-seeking one that demands instant gratification. I admit, I don't look the same as I did thirty-four years ago. My hair is a little grayer and there is more of me to love. Over time (unknown to any of us), problems are standing in line waiting their turn to see how we are going to respond to the pressures that are imposed on us. If it is not financial, it is our job. If it is not something breaking down at the house, it is the car. In addition to all, that there is the reality of raising a family. That little bundle of joy that we could never turn loose of grows over night into a teenager—that in itself brings “interesting” times. If any marriage is going to last and stand the test of time, it needs commitment.

Marriage needs commitment to the Lord.

When God created a man and a woman He established the home. The Lord knew what He was doing (Genesis 2:18-25). We need to be committed to God's way with the intention of doing His will the way He wants it done.

Marriage needs commitment to each other.

God knew what He was doing when He made a man and a woman. Yes, a husband does not think the same as his wife and a wife does not think the same as her husband. Men call it a “plate” and women call it “china.” Life is dull and boring when everyone thinks and does the same thing. However, a husband and wife have to be on the same page! They have to come to an agreement when it comes to finances, houses, cars and children. None of us has all the answers. When a husband and wife face life together, the trials and tribulations of life are not as difficult (Ecclesiastes 4:9-11; 9:9-10).

Marriage needs commitment to the community.

It not only takes money to raise a family; it

takes time. It takes a mother and a father to teach a child. Parents have to teach their children manners, respect and authority. Without that teaching, children become a burden on society: If they don't learn it at home, they learn it from a judge.

Marriage needs commitment to children.

It takes two people to make a child and it takes two people to raise a child. Your children did not ask to be born. No one is going to love them as much as you do. Children need the love and protection of a marriage.

Commitment is a big word that is easier said than done. It takes two people to make a marriage. It takes only one to make a problem. Leaving a marriage and trying to establish another only compounds problems. No human being is perfect. If your spouse is climbing the wall, what makes you think you are not going to do the same to someone else? God knew what He was doing—trust Him. ■

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Serious About Those Vows?

Here are ways to AVOID sexual temptations:

- **DO keep visual reminders of your marriage contract.** Always wear your wedding ring when in public. Keep pictures of your spouse in your wallet, in your workspace, etc. When you placed that ring on your mate's finger, you promised your heart, affections, loyalty, and faithfulness until death!
- **DON'T be overconfident (1 Corinthians 10:12).** Recognize your weak points. One is vulnerable after a major letdown or major success. Those who are depressed or having marital problems can easily fall into illicit relationships.
- **DO avoid flirty people.** If a flirtatious woman or man is in the break room—go elsewhere! A wise person avoids evil (Proverbs 22:3).

The Older People

by Levi Sides

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There is much said about the young people these days, and many programs planned around and for them; workshops, camps, social events, etc. In fact, hardly a service goes by that there is not some special attention called to the fact that "the young people are doing this or that." And this is good!

It dawned on me that there is perhaps a segment of church membership that is being overlooked—the "older" people. Actually, our senior citizens constitute a greater percentage of our population now than ever before.

Growing old is God's plan and is a natural process which should not be feared. To fear old age is like being afraid to look at the view after one has trudged carefully up the rugged mountainside.

Age has been compared to the top of the mountain while youth is the valley and adulthood is the mountain side. The view from the top is always better and more revealing. To want to remain young would be like limiting our view to only what can be seen in the valley around us.

Many have seen the accomplishments of those who had lived the majority of their lifetime.

Tennyson at 80 wrote "Crossing the Bar."

Cato learned Greek at 80. At 60, Chaucer

wrote "The Canterbury Tales." Noah Webster at 70 wrote his monumental dictionary. Observe some examples of "older people" who are still "living" and

who are making noble contributions to His church and to society.

God can use the elderly. Our faith is strengthened when we study the lives of God's "older people" like Moses, Joshua, Abraham, and Paul. God can use you too!

Age generally does not bring about a change of character. It only solidifies and magnifies those qualities that have been a part of his life for years.

God's "older people" are asked to instruct (Titus 2:1-5), to counsel (1 Kings 12; Job 12:12), to set the good example (Titus 2:1-8), and to build for the future (Matthew 25:34-46).

The value of an older person's experience and influence is seen especially as he helps to temper the foolish ambitions of younger people. The younger person is to respect (Ephesians 6:2,3), to support (1 Timothy 5:4-16), and to consider the "older people."

Too often "older people" get to feeling like they have outgrown their usefulness and are nothing but a burden to their loved ones. Whether or not an older person is a burden depends a lot on his own outlook on life and his attitude. Age generally does not bring about a change of character. It only solidifies and magnifies those qualities that have been a part of his life for years.

Don't lose the spirit of adventure and the desire to learn and grow. Keep a good sense of humor and you will make your loved ones and friends rejoice that God has spared you all these years so that they too can be blessed with your life and influence. ■

- **DON'T send mixed messages.** Avoid prolonged stares, lingering touches, or joking that may be construed as flirting.
- **DO be on guard when out of your normal routine (1 Peter 5:8).** Business trips, vacations, new jobs, new membership at gyms, sports teams, etc. When away overnight, call home and talk to your spouse and children. Block out the TV sex channels—or leave it off altogether.
- **DON'T let friendships cross the line.** Never do anything when your mate is absent that you would not do in his/her presence. If things are heading towards adultery, it is important to put emotional and physical distance between you and this person—right now! Avoid them!
- **DO be aware of the power that immodest dress has on you.** Don't pick up the magazine; don't click the web link; sit with your back toward indecently dressed women in a restaurant or office. Don't wear a garment that sends a message you don't want received.
- **DON'T let a person of the opposite sex confide in you about marriage problems.**
- **DO take drastic action if a line has been crossed.** Quit a hobby, change jobs, break a friendship, change congregations, move to a new city (completely avoid seeing this person)!
- **Celebrate your 25th and 50th anniversaries,** you'll be glad you kept your vows.

VIA BANNER OF TRUTH (1-9-2005)

Hard Preaching



by Guy F. Hester

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Recently someone told me that I am a *hard preacher*. This could be either good or bad, depending on what is meant by *hard preaching*. In context to the conversation, I took it as a compliment to my firm stance for my convictions.

Many people deplore hard preaching that may prick their consciences, but rather cry, "Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us *smooth things*, prophecy deceits" (Isaiah 30:10). They demand smooth things that will lull them into a spiritual sleep. They want easy listening sermons that will tickle their ears just as predicted by the apostle Paul: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

Sometimes someone will say to me, "You sure stepped on my toes in your sermon." My friend, if I step on your toes, I missed, because I was aiming at your heart.

In John chapter six, after hearing a sermon from Jesus in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum concerning His being the bread which came down from heaven and that those who would eat of His flesh and drink His blood would live forever, "Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" (John 6:60). Yes, Jesus, the master preacher, was a hard preacher! Why should I consider it anything less than a compliment if I am accused of being a hard preacher, regardless of the intent of the one making the remark, because that puts me in very good company.

PETER WAS A HARD PREACHER

When the first gospel sermon was preached in the New Testament on the day of Pentecost, Peter was talking to a group of Jews who had been guilty

of crucifying the Son of God. He said, "Ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23). Peter could have preached any number of sermons to that audience and never have mentioned their sins. He could have preached the truth for a long time, he might have even held a gospel meeting in their midst and never mentioned the fact they had been guilty of crucifying the Son of God. But he didn't do that. In the very first sermon, he said, "Ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." That sermon might have been good preached **to** someone who was not guilty **about** those who were, but that is not the place the apostle preached it. He preached it to those who were guilty and left no doubt as to what he was saying. He said, "Ye have taken." They knew that he was preaching the truth and they knew that they were guilty. That sermon brought conviction to their hearts and converted them to the truth. Today the church is the body of Christ (Colossians 1:18). People today can crucify the Son of God afresh (Hebrews 6:6), and when we begin to crucify the spiritual body, that's worse than crucifying the fleshly body of Christ. And when we find those who are guilty in our audience and tell them that they are crucifying the spiritual body of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is hard preaching, but it needs to be preached just as firmly as the apostles did on the day of Pentecost.

PAUL WAS A HARD PREACHER

Paul went to a place where the cultured and educated people of the world had come together. In the city of Athens at Mars Hill, there was a group of philosophers and men who had nothing to do except tell and hear some new thing. They were the educators of the day. They were the ones who prided themselves on their wisdom and their philosophy. When Paul began to preach to them, he mentioned the fact that they were idolaters. He said, "For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE

UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you" (Acts 17:23). Now Paul did not say that to a group of ignorant people, nor did he say it to people who were untaught concerning the affairs of this world. He said it to people who were educated and enlightened according to the customs of the day, telling them that they were ignorant of God. He said, "Him declare I unto you." Today we must preach hard to those who do not know God and those who do not know how to worship God according to His will. It takes hard preaching to reach those who are conceited and vain in their wills.

Paul was a hard preacher in preaching to his own brethren. Peter had been acting a hypocrite with others. He had been teaching one thing in one place and practicing something else in another. Now Peter was a brother in Christ. Not only that, but he was a gospel preacher. Furthermore, he was an inspired preacher, and yet he was to be blamed. "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" (Galatians 2:11-14). So you see that Paul, when he found his brethren in error, corrected them—**withstood them to the face!** That was hard preaching! It takes hard preaching today to reprove and correct brethren who are in error. The instructions for doing this are found in our preaching manual: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:1-2). Also, "Them that sin [elders, gfh] rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality" (1 Timothy 5:20-21). Hard preaching? Yes,

indeed! These instructions scare the gospel preacher almost to death! However, it is his unpleasant duty to teach brethren who are in sin, withstand them to the face, before others, if need be. If we are preaching to an audience where hypocrites are to be found, we shouldn't try to cover-up their hypocrisy and make their sin look respectful. We need to preach and teach against the sins of which they are guilty.

JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS A HARD PREACHER

The scripture reference is Matthew chapter fourteen. John had been imprisoned, and while he was in prison he had the opportunity to talk to Herod. Herod was living with his brother's wife. Now John could have preached much truth and never mentioned the sin of adultery. But when he looked at Herod and saw the sin of which he was guilty, he said, "It is not lawful for thee to have her" (Matthew 14:4). In other words, he pointed out the specific sin that Herod was guilty of and said that it was not lawful for him to live like he was. He could have preached a sermon on baptism, or a sermon on love, or a sermon on any number of good things, and maybe would not have bothered Herod very much. But he preached on **adultery!** He told him he was living in sin. That one sermon finally cost John his head, but nevertheless, he preached the truth to those who needed to hear it. That was indeed hard preaching! Today, gospel preachers must do some hard preaching to those who are living in adultery. We should not skip over it and say maybe it will be all right (as many preachers are doing). We need to cry the same thing that John did long ago. We need to say, "It is not lawful for thee to have her" (Matthew 14:4; 5:32; 19:3-9).

Regardless of the consequences, we need to preach the truth today to those who need to hear it. To those who are guilty of some sin, that sin needs to be pointed out and specifically condemned when there is need. We need to say, as did John to those who are living in adultery, "It is not lawful for thee to have her." That is hard preaching, but it may save a soul from being lost in hell.

When my preaching seems hard, it is not just because I want to be a hard preacher, but because I love you. Some of my brethren wish that I didn't love them so much. My friend, I love you too much to see you lose your soul if there is anything that I can say to prevent it. If you are lost, I want to make hell so real to you that you can almost feel the heat and smell the sulfur. ■

God's Ways vs. Man's Ways



by James R. McGill
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For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 55:8,9

Naaman the leper is an example of man's thinking in conflict with God's way. When Naaman arrived at the house of the prophet Elisha in Israel, hoping to be cleansed of his disease, the prophet just sent a messenger out to tell Naaman, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times..." (2 Kings 5:10).

Naaman "was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought..." (2 Kings 5:11). He had expected something entirely different. But his servants asked him, "If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it?" (2 Kings 5:13). Only then did Naaman come to his senses and obey the simple instructions of God's prophet.

These are some other examples of how man's thinking differs from God's:

- Man often emphasizes **birthdays**. Yet neither the month nor day, nor even the year of Jesus' birth is mentioned anywhere in the Bible.
- The **place** of Jesus' birth was not where man would have chosen. It was not Rome, the world capital; or Athens, the center of learning; or even Jerusalem, but little Bethlehem: "Bethlehem... little among the thousands of Judah" (Micah 5:2).
- Furthermore, man would probably have had Jesus enter the world as a full-grown man, not as a newborn baby.

Not Politically Correct

Jesus' selection of His apostles was not based on what man considers most important in building a successful organization, such as political power, educational status, social standing, financial wealth, or important positions of religious leadership. Furthermore, Jesus' choices were not according to modern ideas of "political correctness."

There was no ethnic or gender balance. There was no "diversity." They were all Galileans (Acts 2:7).

Consider, too, God's choice of preachers, in sending Moses to Pharaoh, and Jonah to Nineveh. Man would not likely have selected preachers who were so reluctant to go.

The Plan of Salvation

God entrusted the preaching of the gospel to the apostles, and then to all Christians. As Paul said, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Corinthians 4:7). Man might have thought it better for God to speak to each person directly, perhaps through some kind of a direct operation of the Holy Spirit who would go to each individual to tell him or her what to do to be saved.

Man would also have tried to present the gospel plan of salvation to make it appeal either to worldly lusts, lavish bright displays, and pomp and ceremony, as the heathen religions did, or to worldly wisdom and human reasoning. God did not do this. (1 Corinthians 1:23).

When God sent His only begotten Son into the world to die for sinful man, He did for us what was wholly contrary to man's nature to do. As Paul told the Romans: "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:7,8).

The Scriptures

If man had written the Bible, he would have de-emphasized or even omitted his own favorite sins. He would have lowered the lofty standard of the Scriptures. But the Holy Spirit wrote the Bible. He did not downplay anybody's favorite sins. If man had written about David or Abraham, or other men and women in the Bible, he probably would have slanted the biographies according to his personal feelings, but God told it exactly as it really

was—bad and good—with no partiality!

When the mob challenged Jesus to “come down from the cross” (Matthew 27:40-42), man would have had Jesus accept that challenge in a dramatic demonstration of His miraculous power.

The infidel Robert Ingersoll used to dare God, in front of large audiences, to strike him dead in sixty seconds—if He really existed. Then Ingersoll would take out his pocket watch and count off the seconds. If man had been in God’s position of power, he would likely have stricken Ingersoll dead the very first time he issued that challenge. Yet God did not lower himself to intervene that way.

A human military adviser would have told Gideon that, in order to win, he needed an army much larger than the three hundred men God instructed him to lead (Judges 7). Yet, through God’s power, Gideon won.

The Widow’s Mites

Jesus said of the poor widow who gave two mites—all her living—that “this poor widow hath cast in more than they all...” (Mark 12:42; Luke 21:2). Man would have considered two mites the smallest of all the gifts and might even have advised her to keep her two mites, since she was herself so poor and needy.

Of Jesus it was said, “The common people heard him gladly” (Mark 12:37). But man would have said that the only way to promote and advance a movement is to meet

the “right” people, the “important” people.

The Cross of Christ

The cross itself was considered an emblem of shame—reserved for those who were not even Roman citizens. Yet it came to be glorious, so that Paul could say, “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ...” (Galatians 6:14).

Jesus said, “But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant” (Matthew 23:11). Peter’s original negative attitude toward this way of thinking represented typical human reasoning.

To carry out something as big as the command to “Go... teach all nations” (Matthew 28:19), man’s mistaken thinking would be: “This job will require a very large organization, an impressive headquarters, a central clearing house, an elaborate chain of command, pooling of resources, and big finances—in other words, an organization like a Missionary Society.”

God looks at people as they truly are, but man often draws his conclusions from superficial outward impressions: “...for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

Probably every Christian can think of other examples in which typical human reasoning clashes with God’s perfect way. ■

What Is Faith?

What is *faith*? Some say faith is trusting God to do everything for you. Some say faith is believing that you can change the world. The Bible says, “Now Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). Faith is an essential ingredient in the plan of salvation. But the faith that saves is the faith that obeys (John 8:24; Romans 6:3,4).

Think about the house you live in or the car you drive. What substance is it made of? Is it a strong substance or a weak substance? If it is weak then you are not safe. Now think about your faith—is it strong or weak? It is important for

you to know that you can control how strong or how weak your faith is. How can you strengthen your faith? The Bible says, “So then Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). You strengthen your faith by learning about God’s word. When Jesus was tempted by the devil in the wilderness he simply said, over and over, “It is written... It is written... It is written...” Matthew 4:1-10. Jesus knew the scriptures, and this protected him from the Devil. Remember Psalm 119:1, “Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the Law of the Lord.”

Abundant faith builds the abundant life (John 10:10). ■

by Mark Dillon

332 Stephanie Drive, Gassville, AR 72635

Christ, All in All Colossians 3:11



by M. W. Kiser
104 Calhoun St.
Sylacauga, AL 35150

Introduction:

1. In this chapter the Apostle is contending for holiness. The dead man with his grave clothes have been laid aside. We are new people with new garments to wear. Our manner of life becomes a distinguishing characteristic.
2. Albert Barnes makes this thoughtful comment on this text: "The great thing that constitutes the uniqueness of the church, is that Christ is its Savior and that all are His friends and followers. Its members lay aside all other distinctions, and are known only as His friends. They are not known as Jews and Gentiles; as of this nation or that; as slaves or freemen, but they are known as Christians, distinguished from all the rest of mankind as the united friends of the Redeemer."
3. This is a truth that Paul constantly emphasized. (Galatians 3:26-29)
4. In what way is Christ all in all?

I. Christ Is All in All in Creation and Providence.

- A. He made all things "for Him" (Hebrews 1:2; John 1:3; Colossians 1:15; Revelation 4:11)
- B. He upholds all things. (Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3)
- C. If it were not for Him, things would not be; nor would they be able to continue as they are.

II. Christ Is All in All in The Message of The Bible.

- A. His glory guilds the sacred page from Genesis to Revelation.
- B. All things converge on Him. All typology and prophecy. (Luke 24:44, 45; Acts 8:34, 35)

- C. The New Testament is the history of His life, mission, work and kingdom.

III. Christ Is All in All in The Great Plan of Salvation.

- A. It was His wisdom that planned it out.
- B. It was His power that executed the plan.
- C. It was His love that made possible the sacrifice.

IV. Christ Is All in All in The Ordinances of The Gospel.

- A. In the matter of preaching.
(I Corinthians 1:23)
- B. In water baptism.
 1. He commanded it. (Matthew 28:18, 19)
 2. He gave it significance. (Mark 16:16)
- C. In the Lord's Supper.
 1. He instituted it. (I Corinthians 11:23)
 2. The elements used are symbolical of Him. (I Corinthians 11:24-25)
 3. The duration of its observance is with Him in mind. (I Corinthians 11:26)

V. Christ Is All in All in Our Blessings and Privileges.

- A. Justification. (Romans 5:1)
- B. Adoption. (John 1:12)
- C. Sanctification. (I John. 1:7)
- D. Peace. (Romans 5:1)
- E. Protection. (Hebrews 12:1, 2)

VI. Christ Is All in All in All Christian Graces.

- A. In faith. (Acts 16:30, 31)
- B. In hope. (Colossians 1:27; I Peter 1:3)
- C. In love. (I John 4:19; I Corinthians 16:22)

Who Can Evangelize?

VII. Christ Is All in All in Our Expectations.

- A. That the saints will have a happy death.
 - 1. He has taken the sting out of death.
(I Corinthians 15:55)
 - 2. He has taken away the fear.
(Hebrews 2:15)
- B. That the saint will have a glorious resurrection.
 - 1. It will take place at His return.
(I Thessalonians 4:15, 16)
 - 2. It will be in likeness to Him.
(Philemon 3:20, 21)
- C. That we will have a blessed entrance into Heaven.
 - 1. He will judge and welcome us in.
(Matthew 25:31-34)
 - 2. He will lead us through the gates.
(John 14:1-3)

Conclusion:

- 1. We have seen everything that is holy and heavenly, pure and abiding, and saving is of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2. I know that Christ is not "all" to all men. To many in this world Christ is nothing. To some, he is something, but not much. To others, he is much, but not sufficient they think for their awful case.
- 3. Truly, for the Christian Christ is all and in all. "All in All."
- 4. My brothers and sisters in Christ, let us live for Him; talk about Him; glorify Him in all we say and do; trust always in Him; and prepare to meet Him and live with Him one day.
- 5. "Christ is my everything, He is my all." What about you? He bids you come to Him even now.
(Matthew 11:28-30) ■

Jesus knew the growth of His church was dependent upon every member of His body being mobilized to teach, preach, and reach the lost. As far as is known, not a single priest or Levite was among the originally selected apostles. Jesus used ordinary disciples as couriers of the message of saving grace.

One of the most astonishing statements uttered by the Lord was, "the labourers are few" (Matthew 9:37). The priests in Jerusalem were so numerous they took turns performing temple ceremonies, yet Jesus said, "...the labourers are so few." The entire tribe of Levi was dedicated to religious services, yet Jesus said, "...the labourers are few."

If ever the world is going to be won to Christ, it will be done by the devout disciples in the pews. Much of the church today has become too "professional." We have promoted the "let-the-preacher-do-it-all" syndrome to the point of discouraging ordinary Christians from using their diverse talents to the glory of God.

The attitude of every Christian must be, "my business is winning souls and I work at my job to pay expenses." Satan's subtle strategy has always been to convince common believers that mission work is so complicated and winning souls so complex that only university trained experts (preachers) could do it. Are wars so complex that only generals can fight?

May God give us grace to see the fields are still white unto harvest and labourers are indeed few. Let us pray that every Christian be involved in "the Kingdom's sure increase" both on foreign mission fields as well as evangelistic efforts at home so that "the earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14).

Every Christian, every day, evangelizing in every way is the spirit we are to have if the gospel is to be shared with the lost world. ■



by Bill Dillon

bdillon@crosscountybanh.com

Reader for Many Years

I've just finished my latest *Gospel Gleaner*. It always feels good when I read it. Thank God I'm in the Lord's family. This is a very uplifting copy. I pass it on to a lady in the nursing home. She waits for the next copy. Thank God for people like you. Take care and hang in there. In Christian love,

Betty Johnson
Lauderdale, MS

I have been a reader of *The Gospel Gleaner* for many years. When I lived in Illinois, our congregation received bundles (Marion, IL). I remember very clearly seeing our preacher's name and picture in the publication when he had an article published (Gerald Cowan). Unfortunately, I only have a few copies of the publication since moving. Is it possible to get back issues? Someone from Hickory Ridge (secretary perhaps?) mailed me the latest two issues at my request this past week. Thank you for your time and effort!

Bradley Cobb

We enjoy receiving *The Gospel Gleaner*. Keep up the good work. It is a good publication. God speed in all of your work. 3rd John 2.

M.D. Kirkpatrick

We enjoy *The Gospel Gleaner* so much; look forward to getting it. I read it from cover to cover. Thank you. In Christian Love,

Thelma Minach
Deming, NM

I am a reader of *The Gospel Gleaner*. I enjoy the magazine so much. Please send copies of the magazine to... I've enclosed a small donation to help with the magazine.

Ila Masters
Joppa, AL

Gratified Readers

I love receiving *The Gospel Gleaner*. Hope this little bit will help. In Christian Love,

Geralene Bearden
Jonesboro, AR

I am sending a small amount to help on the postage and mailing of the paper. Use this in whatever you see fit.

Nannie Philpot
Wartrace, TN

Efforts Appreciated

We appreciate your efforts. Thanks for sending *The Gospel Gleaner* to us.

Henry Terrill, MSLS, Professor
Serials, Govt. Docs, and Special Collections
Librarian, Brackett Library, Harding University
Searcy, AR

Commendations

I am writing to inform you of a change in my address. I also want to thank you for your stand for the truth. May God bless the work you do through the *Gospel Gleaner*. I am sending money to help with the cost of mailing.

Lyndell Henson
Red Boiling Spring, TN

Article Appreciated

Dear Guy F. Hester:

I wanted to drop you a note thanking you for your article ("God's Covenant with Man") in the last publication of *The Gospel Gleaner* (Volume 22, Number 1, January-March, 2007). It gave me more ammunition to fight the false doctrine that some believe, and teach, in the churches of Christ, and that being, that all are in the new covenant and under/bound by all of it's laws... I have sent a copy of this letter to Bill Dillon to his email address so he may know how good your article was in defense of the truth.

Rea Buttermore
Youngstown, Ohio

Faithful Reader Passes

Houston Stiles, a faithful gospel preacher, has passed away. He enjoyed reading *The Gospel Gleaner* and appreciated its soundness and strong stand for the truth. Thank you so much for sending it to him for many years.

Mrs. Houston Stiles
McMinnville, TN

Campus Ministry Helped by *The Gospel Gleaner*

My name is Scott Elliott and I am the campus minister in Wilburton, OK. We try to make sound publications available to the students. Please add us to your mailing list. Thanks,

Scott Elliott
Church of Christ Student Center
Wilburton, OK

New Readers

A fellow Christian sent us a copy of *The Gospel Gleaner* and we have read it through. It is very powerful and we would love to get it on a regular basis. We are very small in number and this would be a great help to our congregation. We are the Fairview Church of Christ, Fairview, NC. We will be sending you a small contribution to help with the expenses of mailings and so forth. Thank you so much.

Herston Owenby

I would like to have *The Gospel Gleaner* sent to my home. I am a member of Linville Forest Church of Christ.

*Carolyn L. Cox
Winston-Salem, NC*

If it is not any trouble, I would like to subscribe to *The Gospel Gleaner*. My address is... Thank you very much! God Bless,

Shane Carter

I saw one of your *Gospel Gleaners* this past week and enjoyed it very much. Would you please add my name to your mailing list?

*John & Betty Taylor
Pall Mall, TN*

I am the church secretary at Highland Park Church of Christ in Muscle Shoals, AL. I would love to receive your publication.

*Rhonda Cole
Sheffield, AL*

I was given a copy of *The Gospel Gleaner* dated July-December 2005. I found it to be very informative with a lot of good reading material. If it is still being published, would you please put us on your mailing list? We hope it is still in circulation because it seems to be a sound and firm-in-the-faith publication. Thank you,

*Jimmy & Viola Copeland
Flat Rock, AL*

I received a copy of *The Gospel Gleaner* and I especially liked the shorter articles mixed in with the longer ones, and there were a variety of other inserts that made it interesting.

Henderson, TN

Please put me on your mailing list. Thank you,

*Veronia Merriweather
Fairview, TN*

New Names

Would you please send *The Gospel Gleaner* to Mrs. Tommy Key, Jr., McRae, AR. Here is a contribution of \$20.00. Thank you,

*J.W. Robbins
Reeds Spring, MO*

Contributions Received During the Last Quarter

Geralene Bearden	
Jonesboro, AR	\$50.00
Antioch Church of Christ	
Blue Springs, MS	\$100.00
Elizabeth Church of Christ	
Elizabeth, AR	\$150.00
Bradford Church of Christ	
Bradford, TN	\$450.00
Cotter Church of Christ	
Cotter, AR	\$300.00
Church of Christ	
Sylacauga, AL	\$3,600.00
Daniel Page	
Wynne, AR	\$5.00
Carolyn L. Cox	
Winston Salem, NC	\$80.00
Betty Johnson	
Lauderdale, MS	\$10.00
Ila M. Masters	
Joppa, AL	\$20.00
Harold Stover	
Union City, TN	\$25.00
Church of Christ	
Tiptonville, TN	\$25.00
Lyndall Henson	
Red Boiling Springs, TN	\$20.00
James/Linda Robbins	
Reeds Spring, MO	\$20.00
Ronald/Susan Bryant	
Metropolis, IL	\$100.00
Carroll Bennett	
Camden, AR	\$30.00
Thelma Minach	
Deming, NM	\$10.00
Nannie M. Philpot	
Wartrace, TN	\$5.00

TOTAL \$5,000

Bible Quiz

1. Is the phrase "cleanliness is next to godliness" in the Bible?
2. Who was "without blemish" in the Old Testament?
3. What Bible character was the father of 88 children?
4. Who had 12 fingers and 12 toes in the Old Testament?

1. No, John Wesley said it; 2. Absalom (2 Samuel 14:25); 3. Rehoboam—he had 28 sons and 60 daughters (2 Chronicles 11:21); 4. A giant at Gath (2 Samuel 21:20-22)

Sylacauga Church of Christ
200 South Broadway • P.O. Box 126 • Sylacauga, AL 35150

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday Morning Bible Class	9:45 AM
Sunday Morning Worship	10:45 AM
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 AM
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00 AM

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