

SEVEN YEARS OF THE GOSPEL GLEANER

Everyone loves a success story, especially when it's one of our own. Just such a story is the Gospel Gleaner, which we publish right here at Heath. The Gleaner developed as a result of the conversations of three gospel preachers in 1984, who were seeking to find a good way of preaching the gospel in a brotherhood paper with proper balance. Once the name Gospel Gleaner, masthead, and format were agreed upon, regular staff writers were recruited and still remain with the paper to this day, seven years later. Those writers were Guy Hester, Dennis Gullledge, Mike Kiser, Ronnie Whittemore, and Bill Dillon. Because of his previous experience with the Bible Light paper, Bill Dillon was selected to be the editor. Later brother Whittemore became co-editor.

In 1985, the Gospel Gleaner's first year began with a circulation of about 2,000. The funding and oversight was taken by the Heath church and her good elders. The first two issues were for the most part paid for through the sale of some office equipment. When brother Dillon was cleaning out some old equipment from his personal belongings, he gave it to brother Whittemore. A few weeks later, during a visit to Lourdes Hospital in Paducah, he noticed that the nurses station used the same type of equipment. At this time the hospital was in the process of expanding a floor or two and had the need for this equipment which was no longer available for purchase commercially. When they were approached, they were extremely pleased with this opportunity and purchased the equipment.

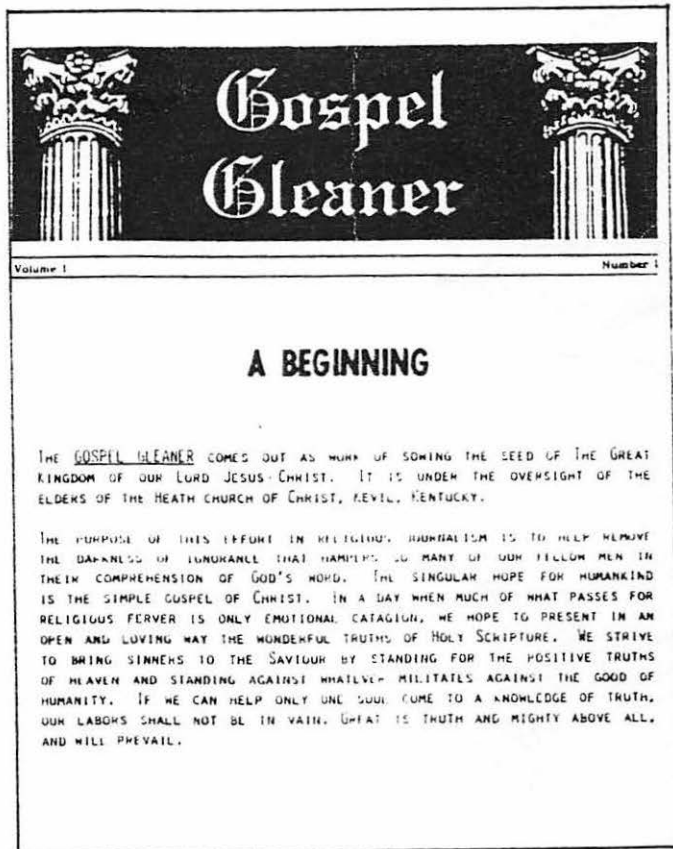


Looking for opportunities rather

than waiting for opportunities may sometimes pay big dividends for the Lord's cause.

From the very start West Kentucky Printing has done an outstanding job with the Gleaner. They have always been helpful and gone the "extra mile" for deadlines that were sometimes almost impossible to meet. The brethren at Heath have always done the addressing, folding, labeling, and mailing, usually after Sunday evening services. Many thanks are owed to those who have volunteered their hours and energies to the preparation of the Gleaner. Thanks also must be given to congregations such as the Arlington Church in McMinnville, TN, and the Garfield Heights Church in Indianapolis, IN, which have given much needed financial support, as well as numerous individuals who have contributed.

And after seven years, what have we accomplished? As of 1992, circulation has doubled and the paper is mailed to nearly 2,500 homes and another 1,500 copies are mailed to churches. Its success is largely due to the great participation and cooperation of the brethren at Heath. Many letters have been received throughout the years in which the paper has been praised for its stand for the truth and balance in proclaiming the gospel of Christ. Requests for deletion from the mailing list can be counted on one hand. The Gospel Gleaner continues to serve the local church at Heath and now LaFayette, GA, well. Our ultimate thanks be to God of heaven from whom all blessings flow. May He receive the glory from our feeble efforts to serve him.





Gospel Gleaner



Volume 7

Number 1

THE CHRISTIAN AND SUFFERING

Dave Smith

The misfortune of some Christians and the lack thereof on some outside the body of Christ have been the bases upon which many alien sinners have relied to justify their unwillingness to obey God. A clearer understanding of God and how suffering occurs should give us a better perception as to how "bad things can happen to God's children while others seem to prosper."

In the first place, mankind all too often tries to reason out what God should do and how He should do it. Yet, we are not infinite beings as He. The way of God is perfect (Psalm 18:30), and our thinking and reasoning are not on the same level as His (Isaiah 55:8-9; Romans 11:33). It is therefore foolish for man to think he can analyze everything to his satisfaction. Sad, but true, some have been so frustrated in their attempts to answer the question of suffering that they have concluded that God is to blame. Such thinking puts the created on a higher plane than the Creator. How preposterous!

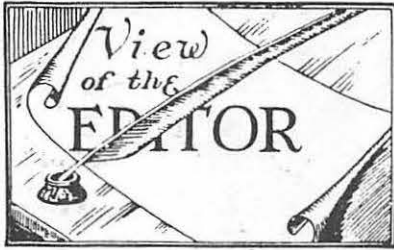
Secondly, there are various reasons why Christians (or anyone) will suffer. It could be due to poor personal choices, either by self or others; it could be due to decisions made by former generations; or it could be due to the laws of nature. This last category presents man his most difficulty. If God is a God of love (and He is), why doesn't He intervene so that His children not

suffer? Changing the laws of nature each time a crisis arises would indeed put things in a state of chaos.

In the third and final place, for those who have questions concerning suffering, the word of God is full of passages and examples indicating that such is part of the Christian way of life--and that it can be and is good for him. The Christian is told he will be despised, hated and subject to all kinds of suffering (Luke 6:22,26; John 15:19; 1 Peter 4:16). The lives of Abel, John the Baptist, Paul and our Savior, Jesus Christ, are but a few examples of those who have suffered unjustly. Rather than being so wrapped up in the "Why" of suffering, we need to realize it is inevitable (at varying degrees for different people) and deal with it in the proper fashion. Notice in Psalm 119 (verses 67 and 71) that affliction brought about greater understanding of and obedience to the word of God. The trials and sufferings which arise are a testing or proving ground for the faith of the children of God (1 Peter 1:7; 4:12).

Though we cannot answer all questions concerning human suffering, especially when the Christian seems to suffer more than the worldly, we are assured that if we withstand whatever the difficulty might be, we shall one day reign with the Lord (2 Timothy 2:12).

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GENTLE PREACHING

Bill Dillon



Bill Dillon

General Stonewall Jackson once wrote a statement of highest praise in regard to preaching. In a letter to his wife in November 1862 he stated, "It is a glorious thing to be a minister of the gospel of the Prince of peace. There is no equal position in this world."

Preachers, indeed, are men concerned with the enormous burden of souls that finds release only by declaring "Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2).

Moreover, preaching the gospel is a two-edged sword. One edge is of boldness and unflinching resolve. Gurnall stated:

A minister without boldness is like a smooth file, a knife without an edge, a sentinel that is afraid to let off his gun. If men will be bold in sin, ministers must be bold to reprove.

Chapin advised:

The minister should preach as if he felt that although the congregation owns the church (building) and has bought the pews, they have not bought him. His soul is worth no more than any other man's, but he cannot be expected to sell it for a salary. The terms are by no means equal. If a member does not like the preaching, he can go elsewhere and get another pew, but the preacher cannot get another soul.

However, the other edge of preaching is of gentleness and genuine

kindness. While propounding the facts of the gospel with all the TNT of the prophets of old, we must not be unmindful to "comfort yourselves together, and edify one another...warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men" (1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14)

In 2 Timothy 2:24, 25, Paul gave his inspired counsel that: "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."

There are times when a Christian's words call for pity as much as reproach.

When Paul wrote, "Let your moderation be known unto all men" (Philippians 4:5); he was instructing that we should be mild in our manners, be fair and act seemly. It is easy to lose sight of equitableness if we are ambitious of ambition and notorious of notoriety!

The preacher's pursuit in life is the beauty of holiness and development of Christian character. Among many

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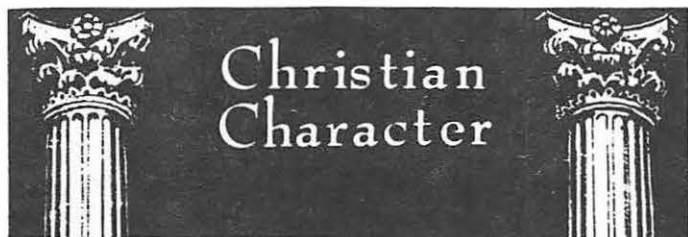
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Christian Character

THE MIRROR OF THE SOUL



Ronnie Whittemore

Man has a great curiosity about his appearance; therefore, he provides for himself all types of mirrors that he might see himself as others see him. Yet, his interest is more than "skin deep," so now he has the x-ray machine. But man's real interest is more than the

appearance of his physical body and the condition of his internal organs. Therefore he needs a means of examining his character and the condition of his soul.

God has provided a mirror for the soul. It is the Bible. Now man can see himself as God sees him. This mirror reflects and reveals a number of vital things from deity to eternity. Without it, man would not know these things. In James 1:21-25, this New Testament writer states, *"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."* Notice the words, "beholding," "beholdeth" and "looketh." The original language suggests that we not cheat ourselves with false reasoning. Instead we should "stoop down" (John 20:25) and get a close look. Consider the types of persons reflected in this mirror and what each one sees in himself as God sees him.

The Unsaved Person

Man does not consist merely of flesh and bones. He was created with a spirit or soul (Genesis 2:7). This soul will be conscious after death (Luke 16:22-23). The unsaved person is described as being without God, Christ and hope. *"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world"* (Ephesians 2:12). Therefore, his end is not promising. Jesus said, *"...Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"* (Matthew 25:41). Sin will eternally separate the unsaved from the presence of God (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10). The unsaved, however, if he is honest will also see that God desires that he obey the gospel and be saved (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9; Hebrews 5:8-9).

The Deceived Person

The apostle Paul warned, *"Let no man deceive himself..."* (1 Corinthians 3:18). He also wrote, *"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived"* (2 Timothy 3:13). The apostle John stated, *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"* (1 John 1:8). The deceived person, upon honest reflection, will find that not all roads lead to heaven. *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"* (Proverbs 14:12). Saul of Tarsus was misguided into believing



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THE MIRROR OF THE SOUL . . .
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that God's way excluded Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 26:9-11), when actually Jesus is *"the way, truth and life"* (John 14:6). The deceived person can also find that the doctrines of men will not avail. *"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). Likewise, the deceived can know that the truth must be followed to be saved. *"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord"* (Acts 22:16).

The Worldly Child of God

When reflecting upon the "word of truth," the worldly children of God can know that they are sowing to the flesh. *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting"* (Galatians 6:7-8). In fact, the worldly minded are choking out the possibility of spiritual growth (Luke 8:14). Those who persist in their materialistic lusts cannot go to heaven (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). John warned, *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"* (1 John 2:15). In the end, the worldly child of God will be the grand loser (2 Peter 2:20-22).

The Faithful Christian

For those saints who are faithful unto the Lord, they understand from their reading the Bible that the Word of God is still their duty and desire. *"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night"* (Psalm 1:1-2). Christians that are faithful to God also know that they must continue steadfast in the faith (Revelation 2:10).

"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9). Finally, God's faithful children also trust in the promise which God has given of a "crown of life" (2 Timothy 4:6-8). *"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them"* (Revelation 14:13).

Reader, while you have read this article, it was easy for you to see what type of person you are. Likewise, it will be easy for you to forget, as the man described in the text (James 2:24), "what manner of man" you are. The Bible is the mirror of the soul. It reveals what there is to know about man's origin, sin, salvation and man's destiny. We can know the truth (John 8:32). When you look at yourself in the mirror and correction is needed, do you ignore it? Would you smash the mirror because it did not flatter you? Of course not. When you read your Bible and recognize that spiritual corrections must be made, will you be a hearer only or a doer?

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Have You
Obeyed the
Gospel?



Faith Fundamentals

BROKEN CISTERNS



Guy F. Hester

"For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13).

A cistern is a large underground tank that is used for storing rainwater. A cistern is a poor source of water supply since it is dependent upon runoff water for its only supply. The water in a cistern is usually contaminated and stagnant, full of bacteria and a source of disease. cisterns are almost nonexistent in this country because of our modern water supply systems. How foolish it would be for someone to trade his modern purified water supply that is piped directly into his house where all that he has to do is turn on the faucet for a cistern, or even worse yet, a broken cistern, that can hold no water! But spiritually speaking, that is exactly what Israel had done and that is what multitudes are doing even today.

Israel at this time was an apostate nation--*"they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters."* They have decided that it is easier to surrender than to stand. They are on the eve of Babylonian captivity because they are looking at the false promises of "broken cisterns." The enemy of the Lord had convinced them that there was more to gain by **giving up** than by **standing up**. That enemy is still on the job!

We want to note some "broken cisterns" of our day that offer that which they cannot deliver.

Salvation By Faith Only

The doctrine of "salvation by faith

only" is a broken cistern offering that which it cannot deliver. Although this is one of the most popular doctrines in the religious world today and one of the most prominent denominations has it stated in their creed book that "the doctrine of salvation by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort" there is nothing further from the teaching of the scriptures. This doctrine eliminates grace (Ephesians 2:8, 9), repentance (Luke 13:3), confession (Romans 10:9, 10), baptism (Mark 16:16), living *"soberly, righteously and godly"* (Titus 2:11, 12) or any other acts of obedience (Hebrews 5:8, 9; James 2:24).

Impossibility of Apostasy

Another broken cistern of today is the idea of "once saved, always saved." Paul said that some of the Galatian Christians had *"fallen from grace"* (Galatians 5:4). He warned the Christians at Corinth, *"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"* (1 Corinthians 10:12). Another scripture says, *"For if we sin wilfully...there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins"* (Hebrews 10:26-29). Peter taught that it would be better not to have known the Lord than after we *"have known the way of righteousness...to turn from the hold commandment"* (2 Peter 2:20-22).

One Church As Good As Another

When people make the statement that "one church is as good as another" or that "one can be saved out of the church as well as in it" surely they have not taken into consideration that Jesus built only one church. (Matthew 16:18), that Christ is the Savior of the church (Ephesians 5:23) and that he gave himself for one church (Ephesians 5:25). When the churches of men (denominations) are considered, perhaps one is as good as another. But not a one of them, or all of the combined is as good as the Lord's church. He purchased it *"with his own blood"* (Acts 20:28). The idea that one church is just as good as another is a "broken cistern!"

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AMERICA'S RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES IN THE 1900'S

Walter Slayden

History records numerous examples of man rejecting the authority of God and trying to improve on his methods. Cain, Balaam and Korah (Jude 11) all denied the authority of God, believing they had the right to circumvent his commands do things their way. God's reaction to their folly (Genesis 4:12; Numbers 31:8; Numbers 16:32) should have convinced man that God is not happy with those who reject what He has to say. Nadab and Abihu thought that "close" was good enough, but found out that God means exactly what He says (Numbers 3:4).

In spite of these records of God wrath, many give little thought to how God has instructed man to worship him. There are even congregations of the Lord's body who place the assembly "body count" above teaching the truth that is needed to set people free (John 8:32). Those among us who need to fill large cathedrals or attract enough dollars to support numerous programs turn (as they have in the past) to the denominations for the marketing concepts. These newest fads for attracting large numbers are copies from man rather than taught by God.

What are the latest methods? What do the experts in "growing" churches tell us that America is looking for in the 90's? A recent magazine article focused on what the "baby boom" generation is looking for in religion as they reach middle age and search for some sort of meaning in their lives. One organization called the Church Growth Movement (CGM) says that what people are looking for is a place where "...individuals can satisfy their need for intimacy yet identify with large successful enterprise."¹ They advocate what is called a "megachurch" with a multiplicity of programs all provided under the same roof.

A large denominational congregation in the southwest tries to fulfill those

needs. The article says this group: Which claims a membership of 17,000, tries to be all a megachurch can be. It supports 64 softball teams and 48 basketball teams and fields an additional 84 teams in volleyball, soccer and flag football. There are also periodic golf tournaments and a year-round snack bar called Second Helping. The hub of this activity is the church's Family Life Center, which is equipped with six bowling lanes, two basketball courts, an indoor jogging track, racquetball courts, weight and aerobic rooms, and separate areas for crafts and games--plus a music wing for its orchestra and 500 member choir.²

Paul warned in 2 Timothy 3:4 that in the last days men would become "*lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.*" God help us to realize that the gospel is God's power unto salvation (Romans 1:16) and needs no help from us. Let us not search the world over to find proselytes only to make them "*two-fold more the child of hell*" (Matthew 23:15) because we are not teaching them the truth. In spite of what many may think that he needs, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only thing that can save him from eternal damnation.

-Endnotes-

1. Kenneth L. Woodward, "A Time To Seek," Newsweek, December 17, 1990, p. 52.
2. Ibid.

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SERVING CHRIST IN THE GOLDEN YEARS

Bill Brandstatter

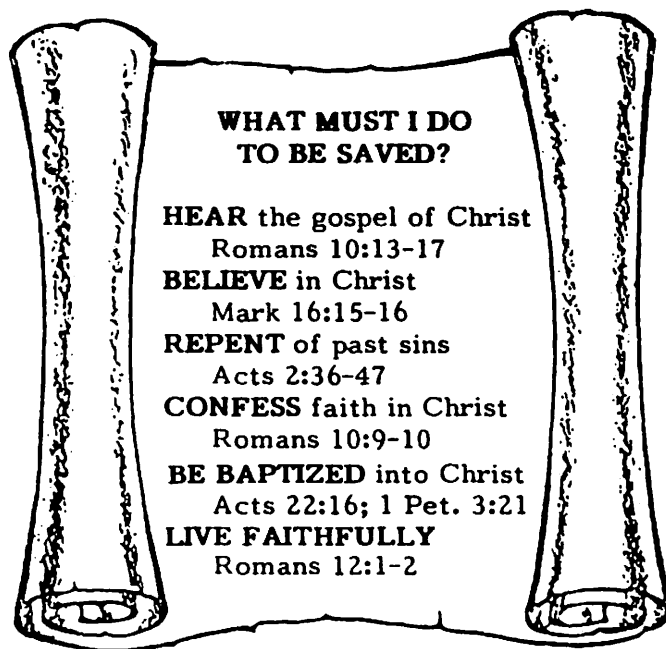
We live in a highly technological society. As a result, more people are living longer than ever before. The ways to prolong life increase almost yearly. The consequences of this are mixed. Some folks resent growing old; others resent old folks. Some societies shun the elderly. Others enable the golden agers to be productive well past "retirement age." Because of the large amount of elderly in the United States, there has been a shift in some areas from youth to the elderly. More nursing homes are going up in some areas than playgrounds. A large elderly population may affect business, politics, and public opinion. In an age that is so youth-centered, we need divine directives to assist in the cultivation of the proper attitudes toward the retirement years.

There is a place in God's kingdom for the aged. The business world may consider a person too old at 65, but not God. He has always used senior citizens to accomplish great works. Moses did his greatest work between 80 and 120. John wrote the book of Revelation when he was near 100. Anna the prophetess was still serving God in the temple at the young age of 84 (Luke 2:36-38). If you are a senior citizen, you are needed in the church today. Every congregation desperately needs the help of golden disciples. A senior citizen often has more time to devote than do the younger folks who must meet certain job and family schedules. The wisdom that younger folks have not yet gained can be found often in the over 60 group. Because of life's experiences, an older Christian is often able to understand the needs of certain people better. The downfall of Rehoboam occurred primarily because he "*forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him*" (1 Kings 12:13). A person who has obeyed the gospel early in life and has remained faithful over the

years has knowledge in the Bible that cannot be replaced. Older women are needed to "*teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed*" (Titus 2:4-5). Older men who meet the qualifications are needed in the position of elders. These men can assist young men in the same fashion as the older women to learn the responsibility of being an adult, and a parent.

There is glory, beauty, and dignity in advanced years. Such qualities in old age do not come by accident. Nor are they the result of it. A graceful old age is the yield of a well-cultivated, properly grown, and nurtured Christian life.

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A MESSAGE FOR LIFE'S TRAVELERS
Matthew 7:13-14

Introduction:



M. W. Kiser

1. Jesus no doubt startled His Jewish listeners when He told them their physical lineage would not take them to heaven!
2. These words are for all of life's travelers.
 - a. Millions now are traveling with no thought of their destination.
 - b. Who would board a bus or plane with such carelessness?
3. Where are you spiritually and where are you going eternally? Do you know?
4. Let us therefore consider our Lord's message.

I. There Are Just Two Gates.

- A. The Lord stated His preference for us. Entering is a matter of choice, not predestination.
- B. Consider these facts about the "strait" (narrow, difficult) gate.
 1. It is hard to enter because of the sacrifice involved (Matthew 5:29-30; 16:24; Acts 24:25; Romans 8:13).
 - a. The baggage of riches will not fit (Matthew 19:16-24).
 - b. The baggage of earthly pleasure will not fit (Hebrews 11:24-26).
 - c. The baggage of self-righteousness will not fit (Matthew 5:20).
 2. We must "strive" (i.e. agonize) to enter (Luke 13:24).
 - a. A continuous struggle.
 - b. See 1 Cor. 9:25; Colossians 4:12; 1 Timothy 6:12.

3. Barriers must be broken; deliberation shown (Matthew 11:12; 23:13).

- C. Consider these facts about the "wide" gate.
 1. It takes no diligent search to find it.
 2. It takes no resolutions to consider it.
 3. It takes no self-denial to desire it.
 4. it takes no truth to enter it!

II. There Are Just Two Ways.

- A. "Way" is a metaphor signifying a course of life.
 1. There is no middle way (Psalm 1:6; Isaiah 35:8-10).
 2. There are not "many ways" in the Bible!
- B. Here are some Bible facts about the narrow way.
 1. Jesus is the only door to that way (John 14:6; 10:9).
 - a. The only access into God's presence (Hebrews 10:19-20).
 - b. "Except" shows how narrow (Matthew 18:3; John 8:24; 3:5).
 - c. Requirements of unity and purity prove it narrow (Galatians 1:8).
 2. How do we get into that way, [Christ]? (Galatians 3:26-27).
 3. How do we continue to walk in this way? (Romans 8:1; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 2:2, 10; 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15).
- C. Consider these facts about the broad way.
 1. It is traveled by the multitude (Noah; Joshua & Caleb; Lot in Sodom).
 2. It is the attitude of the multitude that makes it an easy way to go (Proverbs 14:12; 1 Corinthians 1:23-26; Matthew 15:8, 13).

III. There Are Just Two Destinies.

- A. Even here some people think there is some middle ground. They think in terms of being neither a saint nor a sinner (Matthew 25:31, 46; Luke 16:26).
- B. "Life" is a grand word to describe heaven (Revelation 21, 22).

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GENTLE PREACHING . . .
(Continued from page 2)

other things, this entails that we "*not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think; but be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another*" (Romans 12:3, 10). It means it is better to suffer a false accusation than to assert one; it is better to endure indignity than to inflict it.

Several years ago Mr. Alexander Campbell, perhaps the greatest religious mind of his day wrote against the prevalent atmosphere of animosity;

In this age and country, evil speaking is as fashionable as lasciviousness was at Corinth. Our political papers at this time are rather vehicles of slander, than heralds of intelligence...It prompts us all to draw the veil of forgetfulness over the defects, and to hide the faults we see in our brethren. It constrains the whole who, by a hint, innuendo, or allusion, defames anyone they have confided in, and honored as a Christian brother...And can view in no other light than in that as a thief or a robber, the person who steals away a jot or a tittle of the good character of any one of the sacred fraternity....They have fallen from their first love, and have lost the highest ornament which adorns Christian character. (Christian Baptist; No. 1, Vol. VI, p. 472).

In sum, the thing most needed in the ranks of brethren everywhere (preachers or otherwise) is the spirit of foot washing; but the water must not be boiling hot!

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BROKEN CISTERNS . . .
(Continued from page 5)

Worldly Living

Millions of people, even members of the church, have traded fountains of living waters for the broken cistern of ungodly living. The Bible teaches that we should "*live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*" (Titus 2:11, 12). We must not be in love with the things of the world and if we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us (1 John 2:15-17). We cannot do the works of the flesh and "*inherit the kingdom of God*" (Galatians 5:19-21). Anyone who is a friend of the world is the enemy of God (James 4:4).

Let us not forsake the "fountain of living waters" for the "broken cisterns" that promise but cannot fulfil. Jesus is the living water (John 4:13, 14).

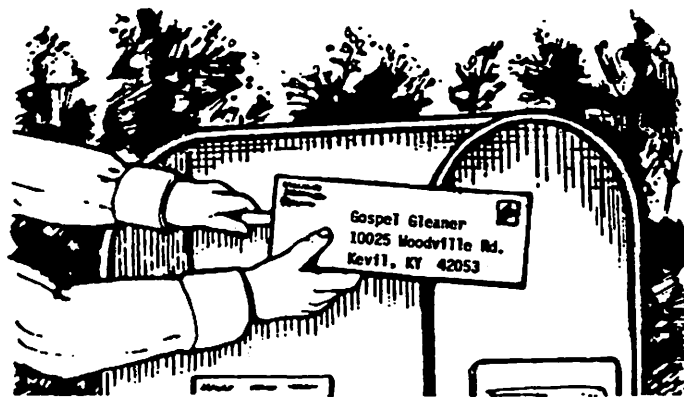
"There's a fountain free, 'tis for you and me, let us haste, oh, haste to its brink."

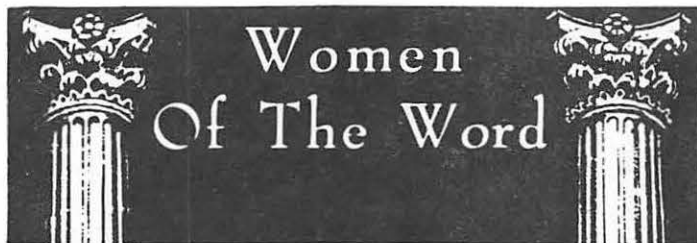
"*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely*" (Revelation 22:17).

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**IF YOU HAVE MOVED
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WOMEN AT THE CROSS AND THE TOMB



Dennis Gullede

In the final hours of Jesus' life on earth, there were those disciples who observed from a distance the events of Calvary. Among that number were many women. *"Any many women were there beholding from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him:*

among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee" (Matthew 27:55-56; Mark 15:40-41; Luke 23:49; John 19:25-27). Women were last at the cross. From the text it is difficult to determine exactly how many women were near the cross of Christ, but the best evidence seems to suggest four, as indicated in John's account. These women were Jesus-mother, the sister of Jesus' mother, Mary Magdalene and Mary the wife of Cleophas.

Thus, we cannot help but be impressed by the words of Chrysostom, who said, "Seest thou women's courage? Seest thou their affliction? Seest thou their noble spirit...even unto death? Let us men imitate the women; let us not forsake Jesus in temptations."

After Jesus' resurrection we find women again on the scene. At the early morning hour on that victorious first day of the week those who went to the tomb of Jesus were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Salome, the mother of John and Joanna, the wife the Chuzas, Herod's steward (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1-4; Luke 24:2-3, 10). Women were not only last at the cross, the were first at the tomb. The ancient scholar Jerome once wrote, "Is it not to women that our Lord appeared after his resurrection? Yes, and the men could then blush for not having sought what women had found."

In this article may we inquire as to whom these women were, what they did that was significant, and why it is that their actions stand out. Great things are to be learned from these women of the Word!

Who Were the Women at the Cross?

There was Salome, the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee. We remember her as a lady of ambition, being desirous of greatness for each of her two sons (Matthew 20:20-21). Yet, she remained one of the most faithful of the Lord's followers.

There was Mary, the mother of Jesus. She was present during the early hours of her son's execution, but was escorted away by John in compliance with Jesus' wishes (John 19:27). It is worthy of note that John says that were *"by the cross"* (John 19:25). Later, however, in the absence of John and Mary, the other women withdrew to a distance where we find them *"looking on afar off"* (Mark 15:40).

There was Mary Magdalene, so named because she came from Magdala in Galilee. She has often been confused with the sinful woman in Luke 7:39, but she is not at all the same person. Mary was afflicted with seven devils which were cast out by Christ (Luke 8:2). She has been unfairly classed as a reformed prostitute. Our country once boasted of its "Magdalene Hospitals," which were homes for the refuge and reformation of prostitutes.

There was Mary the wife of Cleophas. She was the mother of James the less and Joses (Mark 15:40).

What Did They Do That Was Significant?

First, let it be seen that these women were at the cross as witnesses of the event. The Jews, however, considered the testimony of women to be worthless. Josephus said, "But let not the testimony of women be admitted, on account of the levity and boldness of their sex" (Antiquities, iv, viii, 15). The Law of Moses, however, posed no such exclusion on women as witness in courts

(Continued on page 11)

WOMEN AT THE CROSS . . .
(Continued from page 10)

was. They were not there as were others. They were not part of that crowd in their pride, prejudice, envy, hatred and greed. They were there because of loving and devoted hearts. That ought to tell us something.

Second, let it be seen that some of these women were the first to receive the news of the resurrected Christ. The first ones to arrive at the tomb of Jesus were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome (Mark 16:1). They were the first to receive the glad message, "*He is risen*" (Mark 16:6). What brought these ladies out at such an early hour on so melancholy a mission as to visit a grave? Was it not their loyalty and love? there is no indication that they anticipated an empty tomb, notwithstanding the number of times Jesus said he would rise from the dead. They were not led by faith, but by love to the tomb of the dead. These women were more persevering in their devotion than were the other disciples.

Third, let it be seen that these women were the first to proclaim the fact of the resurrected Lord. In her book, "*Women In The Bible*," Mary Evans said, "The women might have been the first to receive the message of the resurrection because they were first at the tomb; they were the first proclaimers of it by the direct command of the angels and of Christ himself" (p. 54).

In the *Millennial Harbinger* (July 1846), Alexander Campbell wrote an insightful piece on the "The Five Marys" of the New Testament. We have studied three of them in this article. Of the five Marys he says, "They loved the Savior, and he loved them, and has given to them eternal fame, not for their fine taste, their highly cultivated imagination, their might genius, or their elegant accomplishments, but for their deeds of unassuming piety, and works of sincere and unaffected love" (p. 398). To this summary of the lives of these godly women of the Word, I would only add that we are not where we ought to be in our appreciation of the value of dedicated women in the Lord's church today. They are the very backbone and heartbeat of the Kingdom of God on earth. Sometimes

we say, "If the church is to survive in the coming years, it will depend on our preachers." As much as we need sound, bold preachers who live, love and proclaim the Word, it will rather be the work of loyal and dedicated Christian women that will carry us through the hard and difficult times. Only eternity will measure the value of these women of the Word.

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A MESSAGE FOR LIFE'S . . .
(Continued from page 8)

1. Heaven is a place that only those who have prepared themselves shall enter into it. (Revelation 22:14-15; Matthew 7:21-23).
2. Is heaven at the end of the road that you are traveling?
- A. "Destruction" is a terrible word used to describe hell (Revelation 21:8).
 1. Hell is the result of rebellion against God (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
 2. Is it hell that is at the end of the road you are traveling?

Conclusion:

1. I have always loved that song: "There is a gate that stands ajar..."
2. Will the road you are on right now take you to heaven?
3. The everlasting kingdom can only be entered through the kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1:13; Acts 2:38, 41, 47).

922 Heritage Drive
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"The wages of sin is death,
no matter how promptly
we pay the pew rent."



Readers' Response

Dear brethren:

Let me highly commend you for running the article by bro. Bill Brandstatter, "Is He the Reason for the Season," and more than that on your front page.

For what it might be worth, I'm sending you a little article I wrote a couple of years ago for our church bulletin. Next season if you don't have anything better, feel free to use it.

May the good Lord bless you in your works of love.

Brother in Christ,
Emitt Gold
Trenton, GA

Dear brethren:

Thank you for sending me the GOSPEL GLEANER. It is certainly a good publication and I appreciate getting it. Please note a corrected address on the label above.

Sincerely,
David H. Dyer
Louisville, KY

Dear editors:

I saw a publication of the GOSPEL GLEANER in my doctor's office. He is Dr. Thomas Hayes in Ft. Oglethorpe, GA. I know he is a Christian man and an excellent surgeon.

Please send me Vol. 6, No.3 GLEANER and put us on your regular mailing list. Thank you so much.

Also thank you for the news of ministers of the church. We hear Bill Dillon from LaFayette, Georgia and he is a good speaker and we know his works in this area.

In Christ,
John & Shirley Stephens
Rossville, GA

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Gospel Gleaner

Volume 7

Number 2

WHY GOD WANTS GOSPEL PREACHERS

John T. Polk, II

"The preaching", according to one New Testament Greek word, means "the message promulgated by public criers or heralds." God uses men to add their personality and power to the Bible Message. It is in a sermon that, spiritually, *"the Blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them"* (Matthew 11:5).

God has chosen *"the foolishness of preaching"* to *"save them that believe"* (1 Corinthians 1:21), and therefore to all men who faithfully do this are God-chosen to the task. Paul knew: God established *"according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ"* (Romans 16:25); that his preaching depended not upon *"enticing words of man's wisdom"* (1 Corinthians 2:4); that God *"manifested his word through preaching"* (Titus 1:3). When men turned against Paul, he knew *"the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known"* (2 Timothy 4:16-17). Preachers must first know the Word because error makes our preaching vain, and your faith vain (1 Corinthians 15:14). Jonah's message had to be preached for men to repent (Matthew 12:41; Luke 11:32) and so it is today.

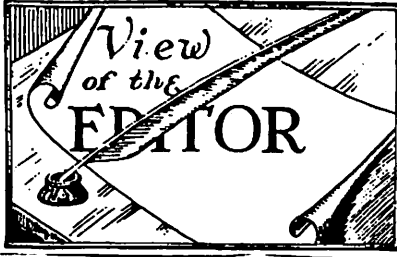
Some have recognized the true calling of a preacher. "It is not the business of the preacher to fill the house. It is his business to fill the pulpit." (Vance Havner) "My grand point in preaching is to break the hard heart and to heal the broken one."

(John Newton) "A strong and faithful pulpit is no mean safeguard of a nation's life." (John Hall)

Ways to Hinder the Work and Kill the Zeal of a Preacher: 1. Stay away from church, especially when only a handful will be there, and especially on Sunday evenings. 2. Stay away from midweek service because it isn't Sunday. 3. Hurry out of worship without speaking any word of encouragement to him. 4. Don't tell him when you get sick, then criticize him for not coming to see you. 5. Never invite him and his family into your home, but criticize him when he doesn't come into your house regularly. 6. Contribute as little as you can, then gripe about the contribution being so low, as if he were to blame. 7. Never make him feel accepted. Always keep up with your favorite preacher who has moved away and vocally quote him and ask for opinions about local matters. 8. Never give him anything special. 9. Never ask him how he or his family is feeling, even when there is sickness and/or death in his or his wife's family. 10. Never volunteer your services in any way.

The ungodly feel they can abuse the gospel preacher any way they wish, but Jesus said, *"He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me"* (Matthew 10:40). Your attitude toward the messenger of God is your attitude toward the God of the Message.

#1 Christian Lane
Decherd, TN 37324



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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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IS THE CHURCH OF THE LORD A DENOMINATION?

Bill Dillon

Many years ago W. F. Gray gave the following tribute to the truth:

"I am the truth. I move in a straight line. I make no concessions. The ignorant do not know me. The intolerant disown me. I am everybody's good friend and brother. To those who try to bend me, I am as hard as tempered steel. To those who, with a pure heart, seek me, I am as gentle as a mother's caress. Only once have I been perfectly embodied in a life—just once also in a book, to know me is to enjoy the highest freedom. To reject me is to invite the most tragic doom."

Many religious voices beckon today but only one is worth hearing. In religion, we plead that all might not be satisfied with what others say but insist on exploring the recesses of God's Word and follow where it leads. A Christian will do no more; only fools shall do less!

What Is A Denomination?

To denominate means "to give a name in order to show a difference." In religion the difference is in creeds that men have devised. The very word "denominate" carries the idea of division; which spirit is opposite to the spirit of the one who prayed in John 17:11, that His followers might "be one." A prominent characteristic of the early church was "*they were of one heart and of one soul*" (Acts 4:32).

In 1 Corinthians 1:10-17, the indomitable apostle nipped religious denominationalism "in the bud." By these same words today all men stand warned of the evil of religious fragmentation.

Denominational names serve the purpose of pointing out distinctions. Almost every denomination is named for, at least, 1 of 3 things: 1. some form of government (Episcopal, Presbyterian, etc.), 2. some doctrine (Baptist, Adventist, Pentecostal, etc.), or 3. some man (Luther, Wesley, etc.).

It is characteristic of denominationalists to elevate a certain or particular doctrine or name to the virtual exclusion of many other essentials. Denominationalism cannot be right because it lacks an

(Continued on page 11)

Faith Fundamentals

LET'S GO TO BAT



Guy F. Hester active benevolence program, etc., are virtually non-existent because we defeat ourselves before we even begin by saying it can't be done. Individual Christians as well as congregations should have the attitude expressed by Paul: *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"* (Philippians 4:13).

Nothing worthwhile can be accomplished without effort. Anything that Christ has commanded us to do can be done. He does not ask the impossible. But there is one thing for sure, we can never win the game until we have gone to bat.

One of my favorite poems is **THE OPTIMIST** by Richard M. "Pek" Gunn:

I passed a sand lot yesterday,
Some kids were playing ball,
I strolled along the third base line
Within the fielders call.

"Say, what's the score?" I asked the chap,
He yelled to beat the stuffin'
"There's no one out, the bases full,
And they're forty-two to nuthin'!"

"You're gettin' beat, aren't you my lad?"
And then in no time flat,
He answered, "No sir, not as yet,
Our side ain't been to bat!"

Let's Go To Bat And Build Up Our Attendance. No church has ever grown without

attendance. The Hebrew writer admonished: *"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised; And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching"* (Hebrews 10:23-25). How do we interpret this passage? Do we make excuses for not being faithful in our attendance? How about Sunday night and Wednesday night? Do we regard these services as unimportant? Did not Jesus say, *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"* (Matthew 18:20)? Do you not like to be in the presence of Jesus? Do you not enjoy singing, praying, studying the Bible and fellowship with other Christians? What better thing could one be engaged in than when the church assembles?

Would the same excuse that keeps you away from church keep you off the job or from participating in recreational activities? Let's go to bat and build up our attendance not only by being present at every service ourselves, but by inviting and encouraging others to attend. We should set a goal for ourselves that every day we will invite someone to attend services with us. How many people do we "rub shoulders with" every day that are lost? The song says, "You met me day by day and knew I was astray, yet never mentioned Him to me."

Are we truly concerned about the souls of our friends and loved ones? Isn't the gospel God's power to save? Paul said, *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"* (Romans 1:16). Is there anyone that we do not believe that the gospel will help?

We need to have at least as much concern for those who have sick souls as we do those who have sick bodies. We would not think of just doing nothing and letting a loved one who is physically sick die without putting forth any effort to help him or showing concern for him. Yet, too often, we let those who are spiritually sick die and go to hell with seemingly little or no concern on our part. Someone says, "But I try, I invite and encourage others and yet, as often as I try, I fail." Friends,

(Continued on page 4)

LET'S GO TO BAT . . .

(Continued from page 3)

God does not reward us for success, but for effort. But there is one thing for sure, there can be no success without effort. Noah was a "preacher of righteousness" for 120 years and saved only eight souls, his own family. Let's go to bat and build our attendance.

Let Go To Bat In The Work Of Benevolence.

The inspired James wrote, *"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world"* (James 1:27). Then Paul said, *"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith"* (Galatians 6:10). Are we fulfilling the commands to provide the material needs of others? Do we sit back and let the Rotary, Lions, etc. do the work that God has enjoined upon Christians? Are we hiding behind a curtain of excuses and doing nothing?

How many members of the church live in our communities who are negligent and out of duty? Have we ministered to their spiritual needs? In this same chapter, Paul said, *"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted"* (Galatians 6:1). Let's go to bat and help the less fortunate and "Bring the wandering ones to Jesus."

Let's Go To Bat In The Mission Program Of The Church. Jesus said, *"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"* (Mark 16:15, 16). Ask yourself these questions. Do I participate gladly or grudgingly in the mission program of the church? Am I helping to preach the gospel in the mission field by material support? Do I pray daily for the mission work that the congregation is engaged in and for those who labor in difficult places? Are my prayers empty or meaningful?

Let's Go To Bat And Increase Our Contribution. Paul instructed Christians: *"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as the Lord hath prospered him: (1 Corinthians 16:1, 2).* On April 15th every year we are taxed by the government "as we are prospered." Now we can all understand this. Why

then, should it mean anything different with reference to our giving to the Lord. When you prepare your tax return look at all your state and federal taxes that you pay. Do you give at least that much or more to the Lord?

Let's Go To Bat And Increase Our Personal Knowledge Of God's Word. Is my knowledge of the Scriptures increasing with the passing of time? Peter said, *"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby"* (1 Peter 2:1, 2). Then again, *"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"* (2 Peter 3:18). The only way that we can accomplish this is to study God's word. Thus Paul said, *"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"* (2 Timothy 2:15). Let's go to bat and hide God's word in our hearts that we sin not against Him (Psalm 119:11).

In these and other things, we may be behind "forty-two to nuthin'", both as individuals and as a church. But now it is time for "our side to go to bat!" Not only can we "catch up" but we can "win!" *"If God be for us, who can be against us?"* (Romans 8:31).

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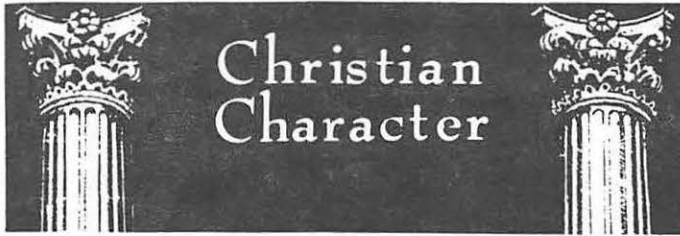
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QUALIFICATIONS FOR SOUL WINNERS



Someone has wisely said, "We have been saved, to save others." The apostle Paul wrote, *"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also"* (2 Timothy 2:2). *"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee"* (1 Timothy 4:16). These statements are not intended just for preachers, nor for the young preacher Timothy only, but they are also intended for all Christians for all time. Solomon wrote, *"...he that winneth souls is wise"* (Proverbs 11:30).

Many Christians are hesitant about teaching the gospel to others. Understandably, they are concerned about saying the right things. There is a degree of wisdom that must be used when teaching others if we want to be effective. Jesus said, *"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves"* (Matthew 10:16). Likewise, teachers bear a great responsibility in teaching others. James wrote, *"My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation"* (James 3:1). However, it is not understandable why brethren lack the desire to teach the gospel to the lost. The only hope for the sinner is the gospel. *"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost"* (2 Cor. 4:3). What are some qualifications of a soul winner? If we learn what is expected of us, then perhaps, we will be more willing to teach the gospel to the lost and dying.

BE A GENUINE CHRISTIAN

How can Christians teach others about the

advantage of becoming a Christian and living the Christian life, if he does not appreciate being a Christian? Genuine Christians are those who: (1) love God, the Savior, and the Bible (1 John 5:3); (2) love the truth and hate sin (Psalm 119:11; 119:128); (3) live the Christian life because they know that it is the best life (Romans 12:1-2; Philippians 1:21). Real Christians possess a love for the spiritual and heavenly. Their affections are centered in heaven, not on earth (Col. 3:1-2).

HAVE A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF SPIRITUAL THINGS

It is absolutely essential that soul winners have a good understanding of spiritual things. Christians must have: (1) a deep appreciation for the sacrifice, suffering and death of Jesus upon the cross (Hebrews 2:9); (2) a good comprehension of the power of the gospel (John 1:12; Romans 1:16 - 17); (3) an abiding faith in the promises and providence of God (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18; 13:5-6); (4) confidence in God's manner and way of salvation (1 Corinthians 1:18-23). Men may invent their own "ways" of salvation, but true salvation rests with God and His divine plan.

HAVE COMPASSION FOR THE LOST

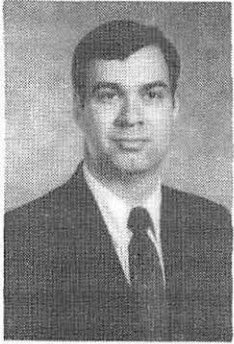
Men and women who do not possess a complete compassion for the lost will do very little to teach them the truth. They may go through the motions (give their money, talk about the condition of the lost, acknowledge the necessity of their hearing the gospel), but will they actually do the teaching? If Christians have a deep passion for the lost, then they will: (1) study the Bible for the right knowledge in teaching the lost (Hebrews 5:12-14); (2) pray for wisdom that the right things may be said (James 1:5); (3) and teach others that they may gain more experience, wisdom and prudence to *"speak the truth in love"* (Ephesians 4:15).

Although there are many other qualifications for soul winners (courage, humility, zeal, etc., these should get us started. Let us purpose to teach the gospel to the lost!

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THE BIBLE IS THE STANDARD

Gilbert Gough

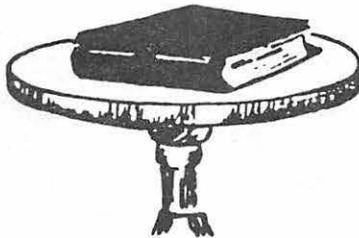


A standard is something set up and established by an authority as a criterion, test or reference. In matters that concern the soul, a standard is the source of right (true) answers to questions which concern the salvation of the soul.

It is obvious to all that standards are necessary in ordinary activities of life. There are standards to follow in playing a football, basketball or baseball game. There are standards to follow in mailing letters and packages through the Post Office. There are standards for paying taxes on properties, autos and incomes. In fact, without these standards, chaos would prevail and confusion would be the order of the day.

The Bible is God's standard for men. But, when it comes to abiding by God's standard, people will reject it. Why? Because people either do not realize the Bible is God's standard for Christian living and worship, or they know it and do no care!

When people reject the Bible standard-either knowingly or ignorantly-they will establish themselves as the authority and develop their own standard. They establish for themselves a false standard. There are many feeble appeals to humanly originated standards.



SOME USE FEELINGS AS A STANDARD

Feelings are fickle and fleeting. One moment a person may feel secure in his emotional high, but then depression sets in. Now, security is gone. He has trusted in himself-in his feelings. Solomon said, "*There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof is death*" (Proverbs 16:24). Jeremiah concurred with Solomon by saying, "*O Lord, I know that the way of man is not*

in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). Man's feelings are not the standard, for they cannot save.

SOME USE CONSCIENCE AS A STANDARD

One should never violate his conscience (Romans 14:23). But, what if the conscience does no think there is anything wrong with committing adultery? Would that make adultery right? Of course not! The conscience does not tell man what truth is. Truth must be learned from the Bible. Jesus said, "*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth*" (John 17:17). Truth is external to the conscience, and truth must be learned. Therefore, the conscience must be taught what is right, good and acceptable to God. Even though the apostle Paul lived in "*in all good conscience*," he was still the "*chief of sinners*" (1 Timothy 1:15; Acts 23:1).

SOME USE HUMAN CREEDS AS A STANDARD

But, human creeds are just that-*human*! They are not divine. Proverbs 16:25 and Jeremiah 10:23 apply again. "*It is not within man that walketh to direct his steps.*" If the creed says more or less than the Bible, then it violates Revelation 22:18-19. If the creed says the same as the Bible, then it is not necessary. Human creeds are not acceptable and ought to be rejected.

CHRISTIANS USE THE BIBLE AS THE STANDARD

Why? Because it is the all-sufficient standard (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It teaches us how to go to heaven. It explains how to be pleasing to God in Christian living and worship. It warns of false teaching and evil doers which would eternally jeopardize souls. God's standard must not be overlooked, shunned or neglected.

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LOVE IN ACTION

Larry Montgomery

Jesus has made it plain in the Word that there is more than one way to "say"--"I love you." He stated, "If you love me, keep my commandments" (Jn. 14:15). Surely, in this he was realizing that many might say, "I love you" and yet, fail to obey him, thus demonstrating in reality "I do not love you." The best way to say "I love you" to Jesus is to obey his teaching.

The apostle John extended this principle to humankind in general when he wrote, "My little children, Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 Jn. 3:18). The fact is--true love demonstrates itself in action. There are many ways to tell others you love them; let's examine this idea.

First, in the relationship of marriage it is very important for the husband and wife to each know that the other loves him/her. Not for a moment would I minimize the importance of saying "I love you" sincerely and often to one's mate in marriage. However, actions which demonstrate and support the reality of spoken love is often a major deficiency in a marriage. Thus, husbands and wives need to give attention to loving in word and deed.

Husbands are charged, "Love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it;" (Eph. 5:25). Husbands, do you tell them so? Do you show them? Accepting your responsibility as head and provider, a gift of flowers, dinner out, help around the house, an evening away from the children, a listening ear in moments of trial, a box of candy, appreciation for the many things done for you and the family, and support in their interests--all are **"great ways to say you love them."**

Wives in turn, do you express your love toward your husbands? In words? In actions? Submission to his headship (ordained by God, Eph. 5:23), encouragement in times of trial, his favorite dinner, breakfast in bed, expressions of appreciation for his love and devotion, and support in areas of his interests--are all **"great ways to say you love them."**

Second, as we consider the home there is also the children-parent relationship. What about it, parents? Do you love your children? "Sure," you say. Be certain to tell them and show them! Not just with food, shelter, clothing, education and

every new toy to hit the market--your children need your time and energy spent playing with them, working with them, and just being with them. Most importantly, show your children love by discipline and training in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4)...**"Great ways to say you love them."**

Also, children need to understand and practice this principle. Paul stated, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother..." (Eph. 6:1-2). Children need to "tell their parents that they love them by such things as: cleaning their rooms, doing their homework, giving them an evening out, making them a "thank you" card, giving them a hug and an "I love you!" each day, and by doing all they are asked to do without murmuring or complaining. These are all **"great ways to say you love them."**

Finally, the principle needs to be applied within the church as well. John wrote, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because

GREAT WAYS TO SAY,
You Love Them

we love the brethren, he that loveth not his brother abideth in death" (1

Jn. 3:14). Within the church I believe there is often a lack of both verbal expression and active demonstration of our love for one another. Do you love your brethren? Tell them so. And, remember that there are many **"great ways to say you love them."** Help them in times of distress (sickness, death, disaster, and persecution). Rejoice with them in happiness (marriage, success, birth, etc.). Invite them to occasions for fellowship (parties, dinner, celebrations, entertainment, etc.). And, of course, work with them peacefully, shoulder to shoulder, in the kingdom of the Lord.

As the saying goes, "Actions speak louder than words." In all of these relationships, as well as others not discussed, it is very important for us to say and do those things which demonstrate our love for God and our fellowman. Remember, "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).

Vienna, IL 62995



THE ANCHOR OF THE SOUL

Hebrews 6:18-20

Introduction:

1. This section of the Hebrew epistle began at 5:11 and pertains to the thought of our need for spiritual perfection.



M. W. Kiser

- a. Spiritual immaturity is undesirable and perfection is attainable.
- b. We are to beware of the danger of apostasy and to rest upon the immutability of God's promises.
- c. Maybe the writer was thinking too about Psalms 43:5.

2. From this text let us consider the following three things about our hope:

I. The Concern Of This Hope ("Of The Soul").

- A. Hope is always desire with expectation...of something good!
 1. The object is always really or imaginarily good.
 2. The object is always future (Romans 8:24).
 3. The object is always attainable.
- B. Our hope is not that we are Christians. (A married man knows that he is married. We are married to Christ, so we ought to know! Romans 7:4)
- C. Our hope therefore pertains to future spiritual blessings (1 John 2:25; Mark 10:30).
 1. That we will one day be raised from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:17-19; Mark 10:30).
 2. That we will one day see Jesus in person (1 John 3:1-3).

3. That we will one day escape all grief (Revelation 21:1, 3-4; 22:5).
4. That we will one day enjoy eternity (Philippians 3:20; 1 Peter 1:3-4).

II. The Characteristic of This Hope ("Anchor").

- A. An anchor is essential to secure a vessel in times of storm.
 1. We are "saved" by hope. (As we are by other things: Romans 8:24).
 2. It keeps us from casting off our confidence and becoming shipwrecked (1 Timothy 1:19, 20).
 3. What a wonderful thing confidence is (Job 19:25; 2 Timothy 1:12).
- B. An anchor is only of service when connected to a good cable. (Faith)
 1. Look at the Hebrew writer's definition of faith (Hebrews 11:1).
 2. A good anchor on a weak cable may not hold in a storm!
- C. An anchor must be used before it is of any service. (We are told to hope unto the end: Hebrews 3:6; 1 Peter 1:13).
- D. An anchor must be cast on good ground. In our case our hope:
 1. Rests on the "oath" and "promises" of God. (Text)
 2. And, the finished work of Christ (1 Timothy 1:1; Colossians 1:27).

III. The Certainty of This Hope ("Both Sure and Steadfast").

- A. Not everyone has this hope. "Which hope WE have..."
 1. The hypocrite certainly does not have it (Job 27:8).
 2. The worker of iniquity does not have it (Matthew 7:21).
 3. The disobedient does not have it (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

(Continued on page 9)

THE ANCHOR OF THE SOUL . . .

(Continued from page 8)

- B. The heir is the one who possesses it (Romans 8:16-20).
- C.
 - 1. The Christians' hope cannot fail...unless:
 - 2. Divine veracity fails (1 John 2:25; James 1:17; Hebrews 6:18).
 - 3. Christ's precious blood loses its saving power (Hebrews 6:18).
 - 4. The Father's covenant with the Son should become null and void (Isaiah 53:10; see Hebrews 1:1-13).

for the entrance into the home of the soul.

- a. Faith (Hebrews 11:6; Mark 16:16).
 - b. Repentance (Luke 13:3; Acts 27:30, 31).
 - c. Confession (Matthew 10:32, 33; Romans 10:9, 10).
 - d. Baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).
 - e. Continued grow in graces (2 Peter 1:5-11).
 - f. Faithfulness unto the end (Revelation 1:10).
- 2. Let the Christian hold on to his hope and rejoice in it.
 - 3. Let the hopeless come to our Saviour who can dispel darkness from the mind and banish sorrow and despair from the heart.

Conclusion:

- 1. The Word of God sets forth the conditions

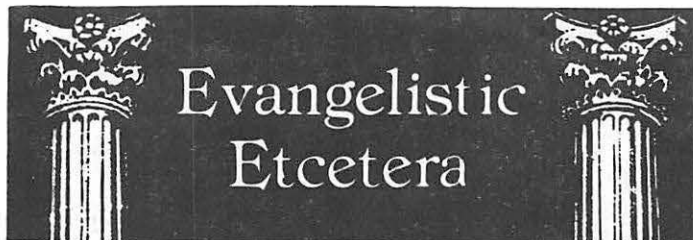
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The "Power" of the Word

- 1. *Revealing Power* (Romans 1:16-18). In no other book can we find God, the beginning, God's eternal purpose, race history complete, the Christ, the Holy Spirit, the scheme of redemption, how to become and live a Christian, and that which is to be.
- 2. *Convincing Power* (Examples: Peter's sermon, Acts 2; Philip's teaching, Acts 8; Apollos, Acts 18:28). The purpose of the Gospels (John 20:30-31). Unprejudiced reading will convince and convict anyone.
- 3. *Saving Power* (James 1:21; 1 Corinthians 1:21). The word saves by informing, leading and encouraging. Knowledge, faith and obedience bring salvation; the word produces these in order.
- 4. *Searching Power* (Hebrews 4:12-13; 1 Corinthians 2:10). Read the Bible; it will find you out. Meditate on it; it will prove your weakness. Study it; it will meet your need. It convicts of sin.
- 5. *Growing Power* (Acts 19:20). In clearness, influence and productiveness.

Like a seed, it springs to new life; a life, it may abide in the hearts of millions with no less force. The more you pass it on the more you will have left.

- 6. *Transforming Power* (Romans 12:2-4). Behold Peter, a coward made into one who was later willingly crucified. Observe Paul, an oppressor of the church changed to a martyr for it. Everyone who obeys it is made "a new creature."
- 7. *Comforting Power* (John 14:1-6; 6:19-21). In this life it give hope, peace and genuine happiness; in death it removes the sting; in sacrifice it fills the void.
- 8. *Living Power*. Despite all efforts to remove it, its influence and presence increase day by day. Last data shows that there are more than a billion copies in the world (there are only two billion people).
- 9. *Its Judging Power* (John 12:48). It is our test now, and must be the means of judgment at the last day. It speaks as one with authority. It does not err in presentation or sentence.



SOWING THE SEED

Mark Nichols Posey

John Chapman was born in Massachusetts in 1774. The pioneers loved him and rightfully so. For forty years he gathered apple seeds from cider mills in Pennsylvania and planted them all over Ohio, Illinois and Indiana. He gave deerskin bags of seeds to families moving westward. He set up nurseries in various places and went from one to the other tending them.

Pioneer children in the middle west had apples to eat because of John's labors. Adults and children loved him and always welcomed his visits. Indians, who were often hostile to other white men, were very protective of John because they thought his mind was different from other white men. The settlers along the way fed him, gave him shelter and told him many stories about his good deeds.

Here was a man with only one mission—to carry the apple seeds of the East to the newly cleared West, so the pioneers might have the juicy fruit to eat. He lived to see thousands of acres of orchards that came from the seeds and plants in his nursery. John died at Fort Wayne, Indiana in 1845. We know John Chapman as Johnny Appleseed.

We need more men and women like Johnny Appleseed today. Men and women that want to sow the seed to the world. Not apple seeds, but the seed of the Word of God. Jesus says in Luke 8:11 that the seed is the Word of God. Are you sowing that seed?

Jesus commands, not asks, begs, nor pleads, but commands in Matthew 28:19-20 to sow the seed to the entire world. *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."*

The message is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His death, burial and resurrection as we see in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. I do not know of anything

other than the gospel of Jesus Christ that can convert the soul of man. Note what James says, *"receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your soul"* (James 1:21). Paul tells us that the scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation (2 Timothy 3:15). The message of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). With no message, there is no power.

The method is simply to "Go and preach or teach and baptize." We can go by plane, car, bus, foot or some other convenient method. The command is to go, not how to go. Such is the same with the tools we use. Some may choose to use filmstrips, VHS video series, correspondence courses, home Bible studies, preaching or some other effective method. There are so many good tools available to use in sowing the seed. But a tool is only as good as the craftsman. When we mold and shape a life with the gospel of Jesus Christ, that method is the best method of all.

GO YE

MEANS

GO ME

The motivation seems to be the biggest problem. Most have no problem with the message. The method is just a matter of choice. But the motivation is the drawing line between going and staying. Getting Christians to

take the Gospel in hand, heart and mind to a lost and dying world is growing harder each day.

If a person is not self-motivated what can be done? I believe in the power of example. If someone is a lazy soul winner, give them a motivating example to follow. Jesus left humanity an example to follow. Christians follow that good example to the best of their ability. Probably the best way to motivate an individual to evangelize is to show them an evangelistic spirit in yourself. The desire to save souls is better caught than taught. The message and method are useless without motivation.

Are you a Johnny Appleseed for Christ? If not, start sowing the seed today. Jesus said, *"behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest"* (John 4:34). You will be rewarded for your labors.

P. O. Box 376
Arab, AL 35016

IS THE CHURCH OF THE LORD . . .

(Continued from page 2)

emphasis on the whole truth. The New Testament church consists of have the whole of God's Word—nothing less, more or else!

Someone has defined a religious denomination as "a party or religious people who are in agreement, or who have a platform, standard and creed book or manual of discipline by which they are governed in religious activities of worship, terms of membership, and who have a name to distinguish them from other denominations."

While not meaning to sound harsh, (but not wanting to be misunderstood, either) I assert in the strongest manner that the church of Christ is not a denomination!

The Name

It is not denominational from the stand point of the name. We wear no name we claim as our own. Individual members wear the name Christian with no qualifiers (Acts 11:2; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16). In Revelation 2:13 the church at Pergamos was commended because it "*holdest fast my name.*" How many religious organizations today could merit the same compliment? The signs on their buildings give them away!

The Creed

The church of the Lord is not denominational from the viewpoint of creed, discipline of manual. Does the church of Christ have a book in addition to the Bible which gives it distinguishing characteristics? Absolutely not! God's people stand on inspired ground (2 Timothy 3:16-17). We need go no further.

The Worship

From the stand point of worship, the New Testament church practices that for which a "thus saith the Lord" can be given. Denominationalism has corrupted the simplicity of true worship with nothing higher for authority than tradition and majority rule.

Because the worship of the New Testament church consists strictly of what is authorized in the New Testament, it is not denominational in worship.

The Terms of Admittance

When the day arrived that the church should come into existence, the terms of entrance were stated with unmistakable clarity (Acts 2:36-38). The 3,000 who obeyed the gospel on the splendid occasion were added by the Lord (Acts 2:47). This is not the way modern denominationalism does things. Furthermore, not 1 of the 3,000 became members of a denomination. There were no denominations in Acts 2, neither should there be any today.

The Way

Reader, there is only one safe guide. Let us follow the New Testament and be one as God meant for us to be.

P. O. Box 506
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WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

HEAR the gospel of Christ

Romans 10:13-17

BELIEVE in Christ

Mark 16:15-16

REPENT of past sins

Acts 2:36-47

CONFESS faith in Christ

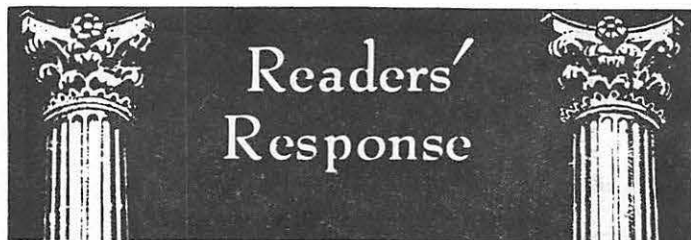
Romans 10:9-10

BE BAPTIZED into Christ

Acts 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21

LIVE FAITHFULLY

Romans 12:1-2



Readers' Response

Brethren:

I am requesting the GOSPEL GLEANER be mailed to me. A brother in Christ recommended the GLEANER to me and I find it sound reading. I look forward to receiving the GLEANER and reading more. Please send mailings to the address below. Thank you very much.

*In Him,
Henry Oliver
Lake Charles, LA*

Dear brethren:

Greetings and thanks to you all in Christ Jesus. I must say thanks so very much. I really appreciate the Bible you sent me and the words you fine brethren have written there in it.

It was with great joy that I received the Bible and am trying to make the full use of it.

You might wonder where and how did I get your address. Well, as I was reading the GOSPEL GLEANER, I saw you all's name as those who oversee this work, so I decided to write thanking you all.

Keep doing the good work of the Lord as He blesses you all with health. May I say, you all are doing a good job. I would really appreciate, out of your busy schedule, you drop me a line. Thanks.

*Your brother,
Richard LeBlanc
Montserrat*

Dear brethren:

A friend of mine, Bobby Gore of Livingston, TN, gave me a issue of GOSPEL GLEANER. it was such a good issue and much needed in the brotherhood at a time when the Lord's church has so many obstacles to overcome. Thanks so much.

*In Christ,
Carl S. Sims
Sparta, TN*

Dear Sirs:

Would like very much to subscribe to the GOSPEL GLEANER.

*Thank you,
Sidney Maxell
Corvan, TN*

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Gospel Gleaner

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Number 3

BACK TO THE BASICS

Robert C. Oliver

There used to be a commercial on television for some kind of soap product which promoted the idea, "Let's get back to the basics." It is high time that the church get back to the basics. If one were to go from congregation to congregation of the Lord's church, he would not get far at all before he began to see some departures from the practice, terminology and organization of the early church.

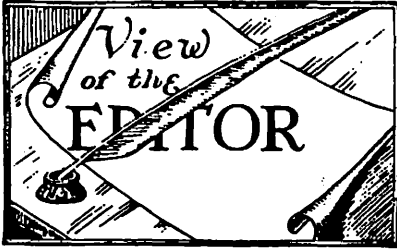
Once known and often cited passages such as Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 4:4; Ephesians 5:23, Romans 12:4 as well as many others teach that there is only one church and that it is separate and distinct from the rest of the world and its religious organizations. When we dig deep into the very core of the word of God, we still come up empty in any attempt to locate a single "denomination." We fail miserably to find an "instrumental congregation" of the Lord's church. Furthermore, after a diligent search one does not find a single congregation of the "Christian church." Yet, just listen within the brotherhood and you will hear of "Christians in every denomination", "brethren" from the instrumental congregations and "brethren" in the Christian church. Let us get back to the basics.

When we consider the subject of "worship", let us get back to the basics. In every age God has desired that His creation, man, worship Him. But God did not leave it up to man to devise the manner in which He was to be worshipped. He has instead provided man with the desired manner of worship (John 4:24). Look around you within the

brotherhood and what do you see? It is not unheard of to find a congregation wearing the name "church of Christ", but worshipping God in song AND in instrument. Get back to the basics! Don't look now (actually you need very much to look), but here comes "vocal instrumental music." Even in the mission fields of America such as the East coast of the Carolinas, we have some who would like to entertain us by bringing a group who, although using no mechanical instruments, make the sounds of the mechanical instruments. Brethren, where have we looked for the authority for such? It is apparent that we have not looked in the Bible. Go back to the basics. When one stops requiring Bible authority for the manner in which he worships God, he can then justify most anything that his little heart desires. He can even come up with a reasonably rational excuse for taking a large number of the audience (the children) along with several of the adult Christians (teachers) out of the worship assembly and allow them to have an assembly of their own somewhere else. Someone please give me book, chapter and verse for that. Why don't we all just get back to the basics and follow God's word for our worship?

Brethren, take a leisurely stroll through the pages of the New Testament noticing the beautiful bride of Christ, the church. Notice the autonomous aspect of each congregation with each congregation

(Continued on page 5)



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REDEMPTION: GOD'S OFFER AND MAN'S ACCEPTANCE

Bill Dillon

No word is more precious to the Christian than *redemption*. It means "to buy back." The child of God has been purchased at great cost. The burden of the gospel message to all men is "*be ye reconciled to God.*" (2 Corinthians 5:19, 20.)

Redemption Was Foretold

Isaiah 53 has been called "the greatest single Messianic prophecy in all of the Old Testament."

Franz Delitzsch stated, "It looks as if it has been Bill Dillon written beneath the cross upon Golgotha." Alexander Whyte wrote, "All the other Old Testament scriptures are written with pen and ink, but these things read as if they were written with the very blood of Christ himself, with the sin-atoning blood of the Lamb of God, slain for Old Testament believers and New, before the foundation of the world."

Isaiah's forceful and clear prophecy said: "*He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*" (Isaiah 53:3-5.)

Redemption Is Needed

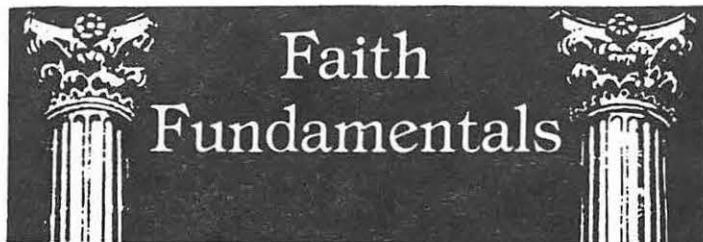
Man needs many things to sustain physical life; air to breath, food to eat and shelter for his head. For spiritual life, no need is greater for any man, than the desire to have his soul redeemed.

The Bible has some blunt statements to make in regard to man and his sins. Romans 3:23 says, "*For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*" 1 Kings 8:46 says, "*For there is no man that sinneth not.*" In Ephesians 2:12, Paul painted a verbal picture of the unredeemed's lot with dark colors when he wrote, "*That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.*"

Yet, the Word of God pays man the compliment of announcing that in God's sight he is worth redeeming. In Isaiah 43:7, the Lord proclaims, "*I have created him for my glory, I have formed him: yea, I have made him.*" Man, the unworthy, can become man the redeemed!

Redemption Is Provided

Salvation is made possible by the death of Christ. Paul said, "*But*"
(Continued on page 11)



THE WORK OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH



Guy F. Hester

There is no way that we could overestimate the value of woman power in the church. In most congregations, the female members outnumber the male members two to one, in some the ratio is even greater.

Because of the influence of the Women's

Liberation Movement, ERA, NOW, etc. there has been a noticeable change in the thinking of women in general. This makes it necessary that we teach clearly and unmistakably just what the Bible has to say about the woman's role in the church. After all, the Bible is our only and final authority in the matter. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

In our study, we want to notice first what women may not do and then conclude by showing what a woman may do, and **MUST** do, in order to please God.

These things that we shall talk about in no way devaluates the woman nor lessens her importance in the work of the church.

WHAT WOMEN CANNOT DO

(1) *Women Cannot Be Preachers.* In our text, Paul said, "*But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence*" (1 Timothy 2:12). Paul goes on to give the reason: "*For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression*" (1 Timothy 2:13, 14). Through his subtlety, the devil was able to deceive Eve. "*And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave*

also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (Genesis 3:6). There is no indication that Adam was deceived, he was persuaded by a woman! The wife may be the weaker vessel, and is, according to Peter in 1 Peter 3:7; but the woman has a persuasive power that many men will not resist.

A woman may have the quality of voice and diction to speak as eloquently as any man. She may know as much about the Bible and what it teaches as the best read man in the congregation. She may excel in the fields of literature, science and art. But the Bible, our only authority in religion, says, "*Suffer not a woman to teach, nor usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence*" (1 Timothy 2:12). This will not allow women to be preachers and Bible teachers in the assembly of the church. I am very aware of the fact that many of the denominations are now ordaining women preachers but the Lord's church must stay with the Scriptures.

(2) *A Woman Cannot Lead A Public Prayer.*

This would clearly violate the command that the woman is not "*to usurp authority over the man, but be in silence.*" In the opening verse of our text, Paul said, "*I will therefore that MEN pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting*" (1 Timothy 2:8). While some may argue that the term "men" in this passage is in the generic, meaning mankind, it would still violate the command that she is to "*be in silence.*" Let us also look at 1 Corinthians 14:34, "*Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.*" A woman could not **LEAD** a public prayer and remain silent at the same time. Women, and all Christians, are to pray publicly. They are to listen as a man prays loudly enough to be heard, clearly enough to be understood, and simply enough to be followed and pray silently with him, making his prayer their own.

(3) *A Woman Cannot Serve As An Elder In The Church.* Paul said, "*If a MAN desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE*" (1 Timothy 3:1, 2). It is the MAN who should "*desire the office of a bishop.*" Only a MAN can be "*the HUSBAND of one WIFE.*" Thus the Scriptures would forbid a woman serving as an elder.

(4) *A Woman Cannot Serve As A Deacon In*

(Continued on page 4)

THE WORK OF WOMEN . . .

(Continued from page 3)

The Church. Just as with elders, so must *"the deacons be the HUSBANDS of one WIFE"* (1 Timothy 3:12). Since a woman cannot be *"the husband of one wife"* a woman cannot be a deacon.

(5) A Woman Cannot "Usurp Authority Over The Man." Thus she is forbidden to direct the song service, serve at the Lord's Table, or be "over the man" in any way in the assembly in the church.

It is not possible for a woman to qualify as a preacher (1 Timothy 2:11, 12), as an elder (1 Timothy 3:1-6), as a deacon (1 Timothy 3:12), which creates a strong presumption that it was not God's intention that women should be involved in the oversight of the church, nor actively engage in its public ministrations; there is no hint of such activity by women in the records of the early church; and those instances involving the public always specifically indicate that men, not women, participated (1 Timothy 2:8; Acts 20:7-12).

What Kind Of Work Women May Do

Is there anything that a woman can do in the work of the church? As we study the Scriptures and observe the work which the church does, we can easily see the greatness and the importance of the work of the women in the church.

(1) Women May Teach Women. In fact, Paul said of the aged women: *"That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed"* (Titus 2:4, 5). This may be done in ladies' Bible classes or it may be done privately.

(2) Women May Teach Children. When a woman teaches a children's Bible class, she is not teaching over a man nor is she usurping authority over the man. Women are much better suited in so many ways to teach young children and those who prepare themselves to do so are rendering an invaluable service to the work of the church.

(3) Women In The Church Can Be Like Dorcas. *"Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works deeds which she did"* (Acts 9:36). One of the great services which the church renders is through the

women, who without being asked, are always doing good deeds for others. I often hear it said of certain women in the church, "When I was sick, she was the first one there." Or, "When there is a death she is always there with food." These women do not have to be on a committee or given an assignment. They just do it.

(4) Women Can Be Personal Workers Like Priscilla. She along with her husband Aquilla, expounded unto Apollos *"the way of God more perfectly"* (Acts 18:26). A woman, in private, can teach anyone, even a man, what to do to be saved, how to be more faithful, etc. Many men are Christians today because some godly woman, maybe his mother or his wife, taught him the truth.

By their examples and good conduct, they can be instrumental in leading others to Christ. She may even win her own husband this way. Peter said, *"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they may also without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear"* (1 Peter 3:1, 2). Some of the greatest soul winners in the church are women.

(5) Women May Be Servants Of The Church Like Phebe. Paul said of her, *"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea"* (Romans 16:1). Many women are special servants of the church in that they serve on food committees, telephone committees, special visitation, sending flowers, etc. Those ladies who obligate themselves to teach Bible classes or pick up someone who needs transportation to church or to the doctor, etc. are special servants of the church. They can be depended upon!

Route 1, Box 501A
Fulton, MS 38843

HEATH CHURCH OF CHRIST SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

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

BACK TO THE BASICS . . .

(Continued from front page)

having its own elders (plural) and deacons and evangelist (Philippians 1:1). You see it in the pages of the New Testament just like God has directed that it be. Just as God gave the instructions for the building of the ark and the building of the tabernacle, He likewise gave instructions for the organization of the church. Where in God's word do you find authority for the "metropolitan church" idea? Where do the scriptures teach that one large congregation has any control over a number of smaller outlying congregations? If you have not looked, I can save you some time. It's not in God's word. That is just not part of the basics. How about the "house church" concept? It's not in God's word. No! Or, how about evangelistic authority? Nope, it's not found there either. These, as well as other changes in the organization of the church, are man-made changes without Divine authority or approval. Let us get back to the basics concerning the organization of the church.

Back in the days of Nehemiah, we learn where a number of Jews had married women of Ashdod and the result was among other things the inability of their children to speak the Jewish language. They instead spoke the language of Ashdod (Nehemiah 13:23, 24). Look around you brethren. It seems that many among us are speaking the language of Ashdod. No longer do I hear of the evangelist at a certain church. I now hear of their campus minister, their community minister, their music minister, their tract minister, their pulpit minister and a plenty of other ministers as well. This sounds a lot like something from the denominational world. Brethren, let us get back to the basics. When the faithful mailman delivers the daily batch of correspondence from churches around the brotherhood it is time once more to read of the "seminar" being held by the church at one location. Or maybe you would like to attend one of the many "retreats" being offered. You could attend "the singles retreat", "the youth retreat", "the young married couples retreat", or maybe "the spiritual retreat." All you need to do before attending one of these seminars or retreats is to send in your registration form along with the "registration fee." To those brethren who have come out of denominationalism I ask; Doesn't this sound familiar? Brethren, let us get back to the basics.

Last but not least, you would think that

those among us who have gone the liberal route could at least keep their pens and their desires away from the portion of God's Divine Word which deals with the plan of salvation. But, not so! This area of God's word has been tampered with and perverted as well. Those whose vision is so keen that they can see Christians in every denomination are in effect changing God's plan for salvation. Since God has not authorized a single denomination, He has not authorized even one of their plans for salvation. Brethren, look for and find for me the passages of scripture that authorize the modern "discipling movement" and "lordship baptism." They are not there. They are just not found in the basics. They are therefore, unauthorized. They are therefore, wrong! If I were to listen to some of these teachings, I would find that I had made a mistake when I left the denominational world and turned to the one true church. Brethren, we need to get back to the basics.

Brethren, it is high time we got back to the basics of Christianity. The old plea to "speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent" needs to be a new plea again. Let's go back to "calling Bible things by Bible names." Let's go back to "doing Bible things in Bible ways." Let's get back to the basics.

*P. O. Box 193
Clinton, NC 28328*

PLAN OF SALVATION

HEAR the gospel of Christ

Romans 10:13-17

BELIEVE in Christ

Mark 16:15-16

REPENT of past sins

Acts 2:36-47

CONFESS faith in Christ

Romans 10:9-10

BE BAPTIZED into Christ

Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21

LIVE FAITHFULLY

Romans 12:1-2

OLD-TIME TENT REVIVAL

Ronnie Whittemore



Ronnie Whittemore Hester was selected as speaker and he did an outstanding job in proclaiming the "Old Jerusalem Gospel." Using sheet charts for most of his lessons and a surrounding cornfield as a backdrop, brother Hester presented the simple truth of God from Sunday evening, July 21 through Friday evening, July 28. By the time that the tent came down late Friday night, four souls were baptized into Christ and one family placed membership. Within the next couple of months, another precious soul was baptized and another couple confessed wrong and placed membership with the Heath church. This summer has thus far been very fruitful and productive for the church. But how was all of this accomplished?

THE GOSPEL MEETING

While some brethren are turning to various secular activities in an effort to draw people to their church buildings, the Heath church under the oversight of her faithful elders continues to acknowledge the real drawing power of God. Jesus said, *"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me"* (John 12:32). Paul wrote that God's power is in the gospel of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:16). For many reasons, it was decided that the environment for this meeting would be different. (1) A tent meeting would provide a somewhat "neutral" site for visitors who felt uncomfortable entering the church building. (2) A tent meeting would require more involvement from the church members. (3) A tent meeting would be a novelty for most people in the area since tent meetings are more or less a thing of the past. Yet, despite the difference in atmosphere, the same

truth was preached at this meeting as all other meetings in the past--THE GOSPEL.

THE CAMPAIGN

About six weeks prior to this tent meeting the Heath church engaged in weekly campaign efforts on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Members participated in these endeavors by canvassing, babysitting (so others could canvass), preparing meals and driving cars for canvassers. The goal of knocking on 4,000 doors was met a week early. Advertising was in full swing and interest peaked as the tent meeting drew near.



Brother Hester (take our word for it) Preaching A Sheet Chart

OTHER PREPARATIONS

The brethren at Heath did a remarkable job in planning and preparing for this evangelistic effort. The elders, deacons and preacher met regularly for several months. Plans were made and carried out by the faithful brethren of church. Even some of the children were involved in dusting off chairs each night and passing out songbooks and special hand-held fans. Volunteers were numerous for erecting and taking down the tent. The field was mowed for the tent site, a twelve-foot banner was placed in the field which advertised the meeting. Security was provided by the brethren including some of the teen-age boys. Signs, utility

(Continued on page 7)

OLD-TIME TENT REVIVAL . . .

(Continued from page 6)

pole, fans, tract rack displays, lights, public address system, water coolers and even a string line for the bed sheet charts were part of the essentials to this tent meeting. (See the samples on page 11).

THE SUCCESS

Before the first sermon was preached and the first person obeyed the gospel, the meeting was a success. The church at Heath had engaged in blanketing their community with the gospel of Christ through an eight-page publication. The brethren had been involved in the Lord's work in such a way that personal growth occurred with each participant. The church has benefitted greatly from the combined and cooperative efforts of her members. *"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen"* (Ephesians 3:21).



Brother Steve Miller Directing the Song Service

"ONE NATION UNDER GOD"

This summer's national campaign called "One Nation Under God" by the Sycamore church in Cookeville, Tennessee reminded the brotherhood of Jesus' commandment to "teach" and "preach" the gospel, especially in the local communities. Churches that spend their time and money in recreation and entertainment have lost sight of the true mission and work of the church. Churches that are content in "keeping house" and lack the zeal and will to teach neighbors, friends and enemies of God's truth are guilty of hiding the gospel from the lost (2 Corinthians 4:3). Even churches that only support missionaries and their labors on foreign soil need reminding that America is also a country in dire need of the gospel (Luke 5:32).

Churches that were not involved in the "One Nation Under God" campaign had the right to

decline according to the autonomous design of the church. It would be a mistake for force such a program upon other churches. Each local congregation has the right to choose its own programs and methods of evangelism. But every church is obligated to preach the gospel (2 Timothy 2:2). If a local church did not choose to participate in this national campaign, that is fine. But God requires that each church still must preach the gospel! This writer, personally, is grateful for the vision and plans of the Sycamore church who gave churches the excuse to do what they should be doing anyway.

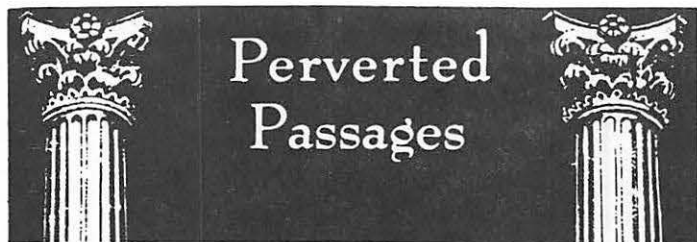
"ONE COMMUNITY UNDER GOD"

Somewhere along the line, it seemed appropriate that the local program of the Heath church in its area should be called: "One Community Under God." Besides the national paper being mailed to our area, we sent our

own publication throughout the community, canvassed the area, preached the gospel and continue to follow up all contacts through Bible Correspondence courses and personal visits.

The spiritual activities of this summer were rewarding to every member. Though the brethren were physically tired at times due to the enormous work involved, they were spiritually refreshed by receiving a hint of labors that must have been involved in the first century when persecution scattered the disciples and they *"went every where preaching the word"* (Acts 8:4). It is the desire and prayer of this writer that churches of Christ realize the enormous responsibility to teach the gospel to the world. Is it not time that erring brethren and churches repent of their false doctrines and innovations and return to the Truth of God wherein lies the only basis for unity, harmony and heaven.

10015 Woodville Road
Kevil, KY 42053



HANDLING ARIGHT THE WORD OF TRUTH



Dennis Gullede

In 2 Timothy 2:15, Paul said *"Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth"* (ASV). The footnote in the ASV says, "Holding a straight course in the word of truth." Therefore, where the KJV

says, *"rightly dividing the word of truth"* the sense is that of making a straight path with the gospel. Marvin R. Vincent was correct, when he said, "The thought is that the minister of the gospel is to present the truth rightly, not abridging it, not handling it as a charlatan...not making it a matter of wordy strife (vs. 15), but treating it honestly and fully, in a straightforward manner."

It is possible to know what the Bible says, but have its meaning so jumbled as to misrepresent its plain teaching. The need for a right division implies the possibility of a wrong division. A case in point is a brochure which I received recently, that says, "GOD'S JUDGMENT IS NEAR. IN OCTOBER OF 1992, JESUS WILL COME AGAIN." The pamphlet was distributed by Mission For The Coming Days. It is filled with Scripture, but espousing a multitude of false and ridiculous notions relative to the second appearing of Christ and the end of time. As amazing as it is that there are those who pervert the Scriptures so, it is even more amazing that there are many who will believe it when it is all said and done.

As A. T. Robertson said, "Certainly plenty of exegesis is crooked enough (crazy-quilt patterns) to call for careful cutting to set it straight." Any serious Bible student should be satisfied to teach the truth of God accurately and in a straightforward manner. Upon what basis shall we

proceed with that as our goal? The following suggestions should be in order:

APPRECIATE THE BOOK WITH WHICH YOU ARE DEALING

Remember what the Bible is. It is God's completed and inspired revelation of his will to men (1 Corinthians 13:10; James 1:21). One should tremble in fear at the very thought of adding to, taking away, or in any way altering God's word (Revelation 22:18-19). Remember what the Bible contains. It contains (is) perfection, and is not to be supplanted nor supplemented. The New Testament, for example, contains history, personal letters, biographies, moral instructions and religious teaching. It is God's will for man this side of the cross of Jesus Christ. It is the product of apostles, prophets and other writers who were inspired of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). Remember what the Bible does. It directs our paths before God (Psalm 119:105). It is able to save our souls (James 1:21).

DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE COVENANTS

Basically, there are two: the first covenant and the second (Hebrews 8:7), or, the first testament and the second (Hebrews 10:9). In times past, God made different covenants with individuals and nations, and one cannot know his responsibility before God without knowing to which covenant system he is amenable. The promises came through Abraham (Galatians 3:16), the Law came through Moses (Galatians 3:19), and the gospel came through Christ (Galatians 3:26-27). We are now under the law of Christ.

DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE PERMANENT AND THE TEMPORARY

Some things were intended to be age lasting, such as, grace, faith and obedience. God has dealt with man in accord with these three principles since time began. Some things, however, were intended to be temporary, and they passed away when their purpose was fulfilled. Miracles, for

(Continued on page 9)

example, have fulfilled their purpose and are no more part of the church (1 Corinthians 13:8-10).

This is what Pentecostalism fails to see. The Law of Moses was temporary. It was designed to tutor the Jews and bring them up to Christ (Galatians 3:24-25), and

with that task fulfilled it was taken away (Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14). This is what the denominational world fails to see.

DISTINGUISH BETWEEN CUSTOM AND PRINCIPLE

The customs of man change, but the principles of God do not. It is a serious mistake to confuse the two. For example, we read where Jesus washed the disciples' feet in John 13:4-15. It was obviously intended as an object lesson on humility. However, some have erroneously tried to make it a binding "church ordinance." Another case in point is the wearing of a veil by women of Paul's day (1 Corinthians 11:2-15). There are levels of subordination (vss. 3-5), and the woman's veil was a symbol of her subjection to man. Paul did not originate the custom, neither did he bind it as a time enduring principle, but he rightly gave sanction to it for his time. The principle of headship, as taught by Paul continues, but the woman today without a veil is not thought to be insubordinate, nor is she.

Another case in point here is the matter of the role of women in the Lord's church. The liberals among us, who are pushing for a "new hermeneutic," are saying that the reason the Bible places limitations upon women is due to the "culture" in which it was written. They say that Jesus was "counter-cultural," regarding women, and that Paul was "traditional," and "to the extent that we let Paul.....take our eyes off Jesus, we fail to see the whole picture" (Robert Randolph, F-HU Forum, 1990). They would have us believe that Paul bowed to a traditional culture which would not allow women to do the things Christian women had been given the right to do. These guys have no understanding whatsoever of the difference between culture and principle, the inspiration and authority of the Bible, nor the meaning of the word "teach" in 1 Timothy 2:12. When we confuse culture and principle, we mishandle the Scriptures.

DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE CIRCUMSTANTIAL AND SPIRITUAL

This was illustrated to me a few years ago when a dear lady, a friend of mine, told me of her trip to the lands of the Bible, and of the fact that she was baptized in the river Jordan. This lady had been baptized for the remission of her sins years earlier, but she felt that her immersion in Jordan was special because of Christ's immersion there. As far as water goes, there is nothing special about Jordan. Naaman said, *"Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?"* (2 Kings 5:12). Jesus' baptism there was a matter of circumstance because he lived in that locality. It matters not whether a person is immersed in Jordan or in an Arkansas creek, as long as it is done for the right purpose (Acts 2:38).

Some argue that the form of baptism is a matter of opinion, whether it be immersion, sprinkling or pouring. They overlook the plain statements of baptism as a burial (immersion), and the spiritual significance of baptism as conveying the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12).

Still others make a test of fellowship over the number of cups used in observing the Lord's Supper. They insist it must be one cup as indicated in the Bible (Mark 14:23). They overlook the fact that the "cup" refers to the contents as well as the drinking vessel. In Matthew 26:27 Jesus gave the disciples the "cup" and told them, *"Drink ye all of it."* By their own logic, each of the disciples drank a cup; contents and all. Brethren, one of our most essential tasks is to handle God's word aright. Confusion is the result of much mishandling!



10822 Mabelvale West Road
Mabelvale, AR 72103



IMITATORS OF GOD

Ephesians 5:1

INTRODUCTION:



M. W. Kiser

1. The word, "follower," literally means: "imitator."
 - a. We are all imitators by nature.
 - b. Tennyson said, "I am a part of all that I have met."
2. God made us to seek after Him.
 - a. Before sin came into the world, we were like Him in character.
 - b. The coming of sin changed our surroundings and our ways.
3. Christ came to lead men back to God.
 - a. He will purify those that obey Him and bestow upon them a new nature (2 Peter 1:4).
 - b. In His own life, He showed us what God is like (John 19:9).
4. One cannot be a follower of Christ without becoming an imitator of God.

I. WE ARE TO BE IMITATORS OF GOD IN *LOVE*.

- A. Love is the very essence of God's moral nature (1 John 4:7-8, 16).
- B. God demonstrated His love in the gift of Jesus (John 3:16; Romans 5:8).
 1. Sacrifice is the measure of love (Genesis 22:12).
 2. Therefore, Jesus becomes the measure of God's love for mankind.
 3. That love enables us to be called "the children of God" (1 John 3:1).
- C. How can we imitate the love of God?
 1. In our obedience (1 John 5:3).
 2. In giving ourselves to the great task

of trying to save the world.

3. In showing genuine love for all of His children (John 13:34-35).

II. WE ARE TO BE IMITATORS OF GOD IN *MERCY*.

- A. Our God is a God of mercy (2 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 2:4; Psalms 103:8).
- B. This mercy has been shown to us in the forgiveness of our sins.
 1. Our sins deserved to be punished (Romans 6:23).
 2. God wants us to be saved (2 Peter 3:9; Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 55:7).
 3. Every saved person extols the mercy of God (Titus 3:5).
- C. How are we to imitate this mercy?
 1. In forgiving those who wrong us (Matthew 5:48).
 2. The very context of our text is about forgiveness (Ephesians 4:32).
 3. Only the forgiving can expect forgiveness (James 2:13; Matthew 6:5).

III. WE ARE TO BE IMITATORS OF GOD IN *HOLINESS*.

- A. God is an holy God (Isaiah 6:3; 1 Peter 1:15-16; Revelation 4:8).
- B. What does it mean to speak of the holiness of the Almighty?
 1. He cannot be tempted with evil (James 1:13).
 2. He cannot even look upon sin (Habakkuk 1:13; Genesis 6:5-6).
 3. Furthermore, our sins separate us from Him (Isaiah 59:1-2).
- C. How can we imitate this holiness?
 1. We must train our minds to think the right thoughts (Philippians 4:8).
 2. We must learn to abstain from every form of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:21).
 3. We must follow the sinless example of Christ (1 Peter 2:21-22).

IV. WE ARE TO BE IMITATORS OF GOD IN *FAITHFULNESS*.

- A. God is trustworthy, One to be relied upon (1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 John 1:9).
- B. We know that God is faithful because:

(Continued on page 11)

IMITATORS OF GOD . . .

(Continued from page 10)

1. He has never failed man at any time (2 Peter 3:9).
2. He has never mocked us with false promises.
3. His Word is faithful (1 Timothy 1:15; Psalm 119:89; Revelation 21:5).

C. How can we imitate this faithfulness?

1. By keeping every promise and pledge we have made to Him (Ecclesiastes 5:4).
2. By performing every duty and obligation bound upon us.
3. By observing every principle of holiness in our lives.

CONCLUSION:

1. When one becomes a Christian, he pledges his life to God.
2. In every phase, one should be an imitators of God.
3. After all, Jesus left us an example (Hebrews 5:8-9; Matthew 3:15).

922 Heritage Drive
Sylacauga, AL 35150

REDEMPTION . . .

(Continued from page 2)

God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8.) The word "commendeth" means to argue or to prove something. The meaning of Romans 5:1-11 is that the death of Christ on the cross proves God's love for us.

The benefit of Christ's death is appropriated by faith. In Romans 6:3-4 Paul wrote, *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."*

Man's response to heaven's offer of salvation is obedience to God's Word. When man responds he becomes a new man in Christ. The life is transformed from sin to serving God.

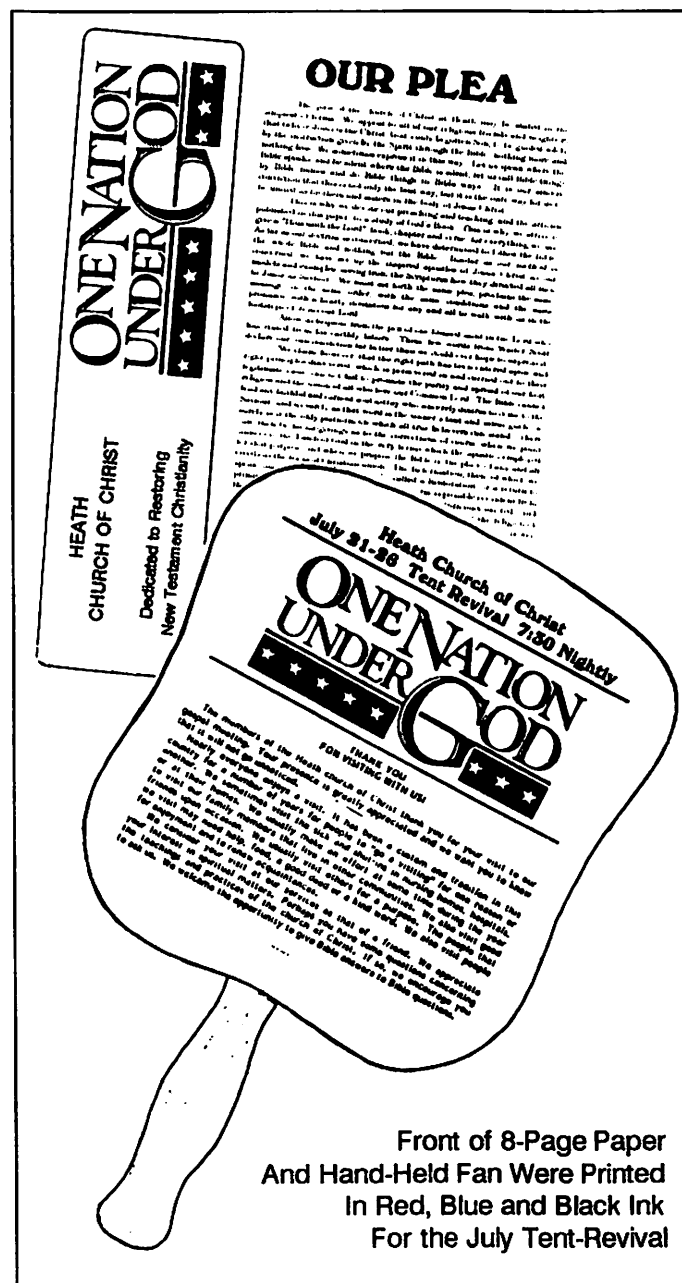
The world frequently reminds us in books,

magazines and speeches that new men are needed for a new age. Yet, the only kind of new men worth talking about are those who have been made new by the blood of Jesus Christ.

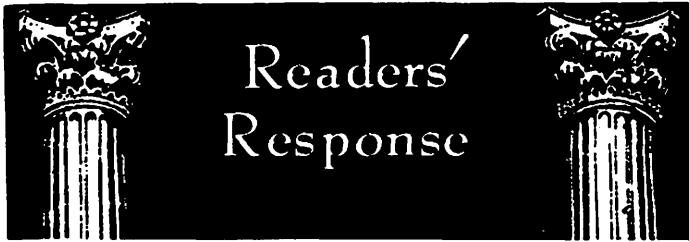
Redemption is God's offer and obedience is man's acceptance. Will you accept God's offer of salvation?

"Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts..." (Hebrews 3:15.)

P. O. Box 506
LaFayette, GA 30728



Front of 8-Page Paper
And Hand-Held Fan Were Printed
In Red, Blue and Black Ink
For the July Tent-Revival



Readers' Response

To whom it may concern:

I have come into possession of the GOSPEL GLEANER--Volume 2, Number 3. I have read every article in it several times and enjoyed it.

I would like to be put on your mailing list to receive it. I am on a fixed income and never have much money, but I will send you some to help with publication next month.

Thanks in advance.

*A sister in Christ,
Pauline Thomas
Franklin, KY*

Dear brethren:

I am a 1989 graduate of Memphis School of Preaching and have recently graduated Faulkner University with a degree in Biblical Studies. I have just begun my first full-time work as a gospel preacher and I am trying to receive a number of brotherhood publications. I would be interested in receiving your publication. Would you please put me on the mailing list of GOSPEL GLEANER.

Thank you for your time.

*In His Service,
John West
Belmont, MS*

Dear brethren:

We have moved from Madisonville, KY to Nesbit, MS. We enjoy the GOSPEL GLEANER so very much and would like to continue receiving it. You are doing a good work. Thank you so very much.

*In Christ,
O'Neal Bray
Nesbit, MS*

Dear brethren:

Please put the following on your mailing list. Thank you for your help in preaching the gospel, defending the faith and helping Christians to remain sound in the faith.

*Faithfully yours,
Lawrence Williamson
Moss, TN*

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Garfield Heights church of Christ Indianapolis, IN	145.00
Atlas E. Bridges Manilla, AR	25.00
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Gospel Gleaner

Volume 7

Number 4

TOTALLY AWESOME!

John T. Polk, II

Awe is "dread or terror" leading to veneration. Parents used to using "awe-struck" or "awe-inspiring" now have children who say "totally awesome" when referring to people, places, or things worthy of note. This term is overworked by referring to cares, clothes, companions, or careers. Surely no one should be completely worthy of awe but God. He alone is "totally awesome."

God's children are still commanded to "fear thy God" (Leviticus 19:14; 1 Peter 2:17), and the list of those who did include Joseph (Genesis 42:18), Job (1:1), and Cornelius (Acts 10:1). Those that fear God may have prolonged days and those who don't won't (Ecclesiastes 8:12-13). Since our hearts should stand in awe of God's Word (Psalm 119:161), it is of little surprise to note the gospel is preached to those who fear God (Acts 13:16) for they will keep His commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13; Philippians 2:12). Those who fear God serve the Lord (Psalm 2:11), live orderly lives (1 Peter 2:18; Ephesians 6:5), manifest chaste conversation (1 Peter 3:2), save others (Jude 23), and cleanse themselves in the sight of God (2 Corinthians 7:1; Acts 2:38). Only the wicked have "no fear of God before their eyes" (Psalm 36:1; Romans 3:8).

It is for these considerations that we read of man's varied responses when dealing with the presence of God. In posture or attitude:

(1) Adam & Eve hid from the presence of God because of their sin (Genesis 3:6-8). They had

abdicated their God-given duties and had become *USELESS*.

(2) Moses, before the burning bush, removed his shoes and was *SIGHTLESS* (Exodus 3:2-6).

(3) Moses confronted Pharaoh with miraculous works to convince him to let God's people go (Exodus 5:1), but Pharaoh's response was, "Who is the Lord...? I know not the Lord" (Exodus 5:2). He was *HEARTLESS*.

(4) God asked Job questions demanding answers beyond man's capabilities and, rather than reply with ignorant answers, Job said he would cover his mouth and remain *SPEECHLESS* (Job 40:1-5).

(5) Isaiah realized how holy God is and how sinful man is and was *DEFENSELESS* (Isa. 6:1-5).

(6) In the midst of his drinking feast, Belshazzar the king called for the gold and silver vessels of the temple of God to be used (Daniel 5:1-4) which his father, Nebuchadnezzar had taken. The handwriting on the wall unnerved him (Daniel 5:5-6), and he was *POWERLESS*.

(7) Jesus' Apostles saw him still the storm and the sea (Mark 4:35-40) and they marvelled at what manner of man this was (Mark 4:41; Luke 8:25) and they became momentarily *THOUGHTLESS*. *HOPELESS* will describe on the Day of Judgment all who reject Jesus (Matthew 7:21-23; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8). Friend, what will be your position? ☐

#1 Christian Lane; Decherd, TN 37324



Volume 7 Number 4
October - December, 1991

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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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THE CHRISTIAN'S STRUGGLES

Bill Dillon

Many Christians would agree with the pained Patriarch Job when he commented, "*Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.*" (Job 14:1). Pain impoverishes. Pain isolates. Pain restrains. It's devastation is deep. The only thing good about it are the gifts God sends along with it.

J. W. McGarvey, among the best and ripest of Bible scholars, had the correct outlook when he wrote, "...a struggle develops character; it strengthens a man's purpose; it makes him throw himself more and more on the good providence of God." J. K. Gressett would have added, "God prepares great men for great tasks by great trials." Those entangled in the meshes of suffering stand out easily: Their understanding is deeper; their sympathies are wider; their patience is longer all because they have felt the sting of sorrow and realize how sharp are the thorns on the pathway of pain allowed by an omniscient God.

While the world may picture suffering Christians as those denied by their own God; and though it is the Christian's lot to suffer (2 Timothy 3:12), yet, beyond the smallness and insignificance of this world is a universe of treasure that God has prepared for his soldiers who have fought with fortitude and won the highest victory--faithfulness unto death (Romans 8:18). With our petty personal worlds falling apart, how few times has it been realized that God's grace is the glue for every catastrophe (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Strange as it sounds: pain makes us think; pain ultimately engenders strength and courage; and pain can make us contented and grateful for things being as well with us as they are (Philippians 4:11-13).

Each of us confronts trials and sorrows; for some the magnitude of the problem may be overwhelming, but others will find the strength within to endure and prevail. The secret is having Christ within (Colossians 1:27; 3:4, 10, 16).

Life is made up of summits and sewers; high points and heartaches; glitters and gutters; man seems at times to be born for "*trouble as the sparks fly upward*" (Job 5:7). When troubles mount and pain increases, no child of God is alone (Hebrews 13:5, 6). The undeniable truth is God cares (1 Peter 5:7). The Psalmist wrote, "*Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall not suffer the righteous to be moved*" (Psalm 55:22).

When struggles increase; pain oppresses; and the heart works overtime in sorrow, remember these verses: Matthew 10:22; Numbers 6:24-28; Deuteronomy 33:27; Joshua 1:8; Nehemiah 8:10; Psalm 31:24; 62:8; 71:5; 84:5, 11, 12; 86:7; 124:8; Proverbs 24:10, 16.

In the hour of sorrow God has given light for tomorrow.



P. O. Box 506
LaFayette, GA 30728

Christian Character

THE FIRM GRASP OF SIN



The Bible defines sin as the transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4). God's law can be transgressed by words, thoughts and deeds. Sin is also defined as the neglect of one's responsibilities or opportunities. *"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin"* (James 4:17).

Many people do not take sin seriously. They attempt to justify sin in many ways. Some rationalize that "everyone else is doing it" or they want to "go along with the crowd." Others fabricate doctrines to believe and practice which the Bible does not teach. Some reason, "Well, we are saved by the grace of God; therefore, God will be merciful." In Romans 6:1-2, *"Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"* Others believe that God's children cannot fall from grace, but the Bible warns, *"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"* (1 Corinthians 10:12). In Galatians 5:4, the apostle Paul plainly stated that some had fallen from grace.

The Bible describes the severe consequences of sin. In Romans 6:23, *"the wages of sin is death."* Death is the final consequence of sin, but it is not the only consequence.

Sin Spots

In the sight of God, one who is living in sin is spotted and unclean. In James 1:27, *"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."* There were many members of the Lord's church in Sardis who had defiled their garments (Revelation 3:4). In Luke 15, Jesus taught a

parable about a son who journeyed to a far country and wasted his inheritance in riotous living. After a famine came to this foreign country and the son ended up in a pen with the swine, he *"came to himself"* and penitently returned to his father's house. An important point in this parable is the illustration of the filth of sin. The apostle Peter used a similar illustration in describing the uncleanness of sin (2 Peter 2:20-22).

Sin Scars

In Galatians 6:7-8, *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."* Many years ago, before the discovery and development of a vaccine, smallpox was deadly. When smallpox did not kill its victim, it often left scars upon the body. In like manner, sin also leaves scars. The apostle Peter was scarred by his denial of Christ as recorded in Matthew 26. And though Peter was later forgiven, his memory of that dreadful event lingered in his mind and surely every time that Peter heard a cock crow, he was sorely reminded of his deed. In the book of Acts, there is a man named Saul of Tarsus who persecuted the church of Christ. He also repented and was forgiven upon his obedience to the gospel (Acts 22:16), but he always remembered his sin. In 1 Timothy 1:15, Paul described himself as the "chief of sinners." In the Old Testament, King David confessed, *"My sin is ever before me"* (Psalm 51:3).

Friend, beware of the scars of sin. Every day on news reports or in newspaper articles, we read of murder, theft, robbery, broken homes, drunkenness and lying. And each sin leaves a scar. Some scars are visible: The deaths of innocent people due to the sins of drunk drivers, kidnapping and child abuse because of parental discord and desertion, police records and ruined reputations because someone thought that he could steal and get away with it. Some scars are invisible to the observant eyes of others, but they still exist in the form of emotional distress, lack of self-esteem, loneliness and even hatred which some possess due to the neglect of guardians and parents. But there will come a day in which all must stand before God's throne of justice (2 Corinthians 5:10-11).

(Continued on page 4)

THE FIRM GRASP . . .

(Continued from page 3)

And in the final analysis: *"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."*

Sin Enslaves

But sin does not end with a spotted soul and a scarred life. Satan desires to enslave man to sin. In Romans 6:16, *"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; Whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"* Jesus clearly said, *"Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin"* (John 8:34). Of course Jesus is not speaking of one who sins in a moment of weakness or passion, but he described those who persist in sin. The drunkard is a slave to alcohol. The gambler is a slave to his ill-gotten gains whether it be track betting, lotteries, raffle tickets or poker. The drug addict is a slave to his narcotics. Some are slaves to tobacco. Others serve the god of adultery and fornication. Yet, perhaps many of our readers are shackled to the sins of materialism and greed (Luke 12:15; 1 Timothy 6:10). Others are chained to the sins of deception, denominationalism and prejudice.

One of Satan's greatest lies is that a person can partially serve God and still receive the heavenly reward (Matthew 6:24). Friend, every man is a slave. He either serves the God of heaven faithfully or he serves Satan and sin. John warned. *"Little children, keep yourselves from idols"* (1 John 5:21). Reader, beware lest you become a slave to sin!

Sin Separates

During the days of Isaiah the prophet, the Israelites called upon Jehovah God in prayer, but they received no answer. They thought that God had lost his ability to answer—that his arm was too short to save and that his ear was too heavy to hear. But the prophet declared, *"Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear"* (Isaiah 59:2). Sin separates man from God. Christ pronounced eternal punishment, destruction and separation for the wicked (Matthew 25:46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Though all have sinned (Romans 3:23) and consequently face separation from God, mankind

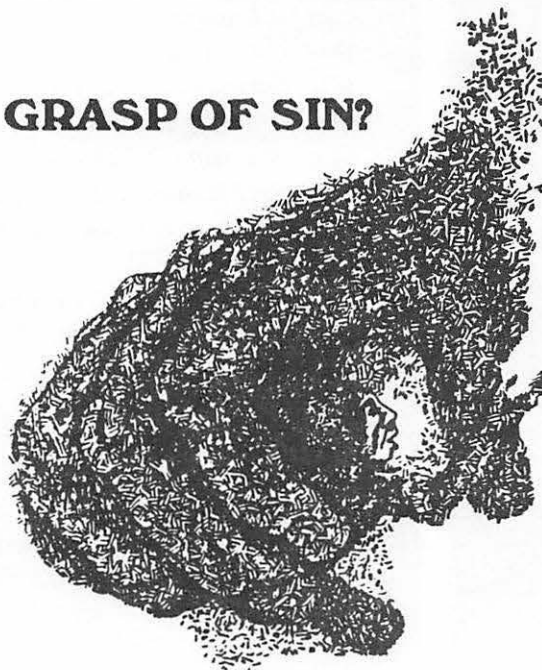
can be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ by the word of God (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

Dear reader, are you in the firm grasp of sin? Is your soul spotted and scarred by sin? Are you enslaved to wickedness? If you died today, would you be eternally separated from God? Why not obey the gospel this hour! ☐

10015 Woodville Road
Kevil, KY 42053

ARE YOU IN THE FIRM

GRASP OF SIN?



PLAN OF SALVATION

HEAR the gospel of Christ

Romans 10:13-17

BELIEVE in Christ

Mark 16:15-16

REPENT of past sins

Acts 2:36-47

CONFESS faith in Christ

Romans 10:9-10

BE BAPTIZED into Christ

Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21

LIVE FAITHFULLY

Romans 12:1-2

DEDICATED DENIAL

Walter Slayden

A truly faithful follower of the Lord practices conspicuous denial of self and unwavering dedication to the cause. Christianity leaves no room for prolonged goodbyes to the old life or extensive orientation to the new. Jesus said you're either for me or against me-you serve me or you back up the devil (Luke 16:13). He challenges us in Luke 9:23, 62: *"And he said to them all, if any man will come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." "And Jesus said unto them, no man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."* Five moves for the Master are found in these two passages: self denial; daily cross bearing; following the leader; putting your hands to the task; and refusal to look back.

Self-Denial

The life of John the Immerser was an inspired picture of self-denial. He lived a simple life free from the burdens of materialism (Mark 1:6). John was not driven by desires for the accolades or the accessories of this life. Unlike most people in the church today he was singular and dedicated in purpose. Godly tunnel vision drove him to preach the preparation of the way of the Lord (Luke 3:4).

This Elijah of the New Testament was gracious in his acceptance of his place in relation to his Master. Speaking of Christ, John said, *"There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose"* (Mark 1:7). Perhaps the ultimate statement of John's self-denial is, *"He must increase, but I must decrease"* (John 3:30).

Daily Cross Bearing

Christianity demands daily cross bearing. Carrying one's cross does not translate into dragging two pieces of wood through the streets in spite of what some do today. Instead, we are called to courageously take the lighted path as it winds through a world of darkness and sin. Paul probably understood daily cross-bearing better than any man before or since. His cross was loaded with

labor, strife, imprisonment, a shipwreck, robbers, hunger, thirst and the daily care of all the congregations that he helped establish (2 Corinthians 11:23-28). In spite of those burdens, that cross was to him a labor of love. For the privilege of carrying it he was willing to look upon his worldly pedigree as mere rubbish (Philippians 3:4-8). Paul was confident that daily cross-bearing would net him a crown of righteousness in the world to come (2 Timothy 1:12; 4:8).

Following the Leader

Those who take up the cross must be willing to follow the Master. No more can they march to society's cadence concerning those things which affect the eternal destiny. Following the preacher is not enough. The traditions of mom and dad, sister and brother may have to be abandoned (Matthew 10:34-37).

Peter knew who he was to march behind. He said, *"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps; Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth"* (1 Peter 2:21-22). Paul urged us to line up, single-file, behind him as he followed Christ. It is not enough to take up the cross and follow. We must make sure we are following the one who has all power in heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18).

Putting Your Hands To the Task

Those who seek to please God as Christians must put their hand to the plow. Christianity is not a life for the lazy. We must imitate our Lord who said, *"I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work"* (John 9:4). The adage that said, "Make hay, while the sun shines" is a good motto for saints. It is necessary for us to grab every opportunity to serve God and use it with all of our might. Not only do we need to put our hand to the plow, but we should employ our arms, our legs, our back and especially our heart to break ground for

(Continued on page 8)

RELIGIOUS TITLES ARE NOT FOR YOU!

Eddie Helms

In Matthew, chapter 6 and 23, one sees the Lord's estimation of the religion of many of the Jews. Theirs was a religion of show, of pride and of class distinctions. Jesus clearly denounced this type of religion in these passages. These teachers and rulers of the Jews loved to make distinctions between them selves and others by an excessive display of dress (Matthew 23:5). They made efforts to show themselves special and distinguished in the places they sat (Matthew 23:6). They also make distinctions by using religious titles and degrees (Matthew 23:7-10). Jesus denounced these religious titles of distinction and the motivation behind them! Jesus said, religious titles are not for you! *"...Be ye not called Rabbi: for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father on the earth: for one is your Father, even he who is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, even the Christ"* (Matthew 23:8-10).

If Jesus were to come to earth today, what would he say to the religious world as far as this context is concerned? He would still say, religious titles are not for you!

He would say this to the ones today who seek, assume or accept the religious title of "Reverend." Many denounce the religious title of reverend on the basis of Psalm 111:9, *"...Holy and reverend is his name."* Actually, both Hebrew words are used to describe attributes that God's people should possess. (Compare the words "holy" and "reverend" found in Psalm 111:9 with the word "fear" in Leviticus 19:3 and the word "holy" in Leviticus 11:44). Therefore, it is the passage in Matthew that should be used to show the prohibition of the use of the religious title of reverend.

He would say this to the masses of people in denominationalism and Catholicism who use religious titles of distinction. The distinction between the so-called "clergy" and "laity" is a man-made distinction and, hence, is not from God! One would therefore recognize that the religious titles of Pope, Father, Right Reverend, Mother Superior and other such titles of distinction are contrary to the will of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Perhaps there are those even in the Lord's church today who would hear the words of Jesus directed to them...religious titles are not for you! God's children are brethren, joint heirs of the spiritual blessings in Christ (Matthew 23:8; Romans 8:17; Galatians 3:26-28). There are differing functions within the body of Christ and differing roles to perform. For example, a woman cannot function as an elder or a teacher in a mixed assembly (1 Timothy 2:8-15). But, there must be no hierarchy, no clergy or laity distinctions! The term "brother" suggest the equality of the relationship Christians have with one another. But even this term can be used contrary to the command of Matthew 23. When one introduces the preacher as "Brother Jones," is not the term brother being used in the same sense as the term reverend? One may use the term "father" to describe his biological relationship to someone and he may use the term "doctor" to describe the degree in the medical field one has achieved (Matthew 19:5; Ephesians 6:2). But, when the term "father" is used as a religious title or the religious title of doctor is used as an appendage to one's name, each is contrary to the Lord's words of Matthew 23!

Let us all be in agreement with the Lord's words! Let us prove all things and hold fast to that which is good (1 Thessalonians 5:21)! Religious titles are not for me! ☐

4218 McKee Road
Charlotte, NC 28270

HEATH CHURCH OF CHRIST SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

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

WHY IS FORNICATION THE EXCEPTION?

Kerry Duke

God's regulations on divorce and remarriage are specific. Fornication is the sole reason for divorce and remarriage, and remarriages following divorces for other reasons are adulterous (Matthew 5:32; 19:9). The phrase "except it be for fornication" has inclusive and exclusive force. It includes as authorized remarriages those which occur following a divorce for fornication; it excludes remarriage following a divorce for other reasons. Fornication is the one cause in this dispensation for scriptural divorce and remarriage. It is distinct from all other reasons for divorce so that God allows the dissolution of a marriage which He initially sanctified. In the sight of men, drunkenness, violence, desertion and unhappiness may seem to be sufficient grounds for divorce and remarriage, but in the eyes of God only the sin of fornication is an acceptable ground. This sin is so contrary and disruptive to the marriage relationship that God permits the innocent party to divorce the mate guilty of fornication and marry another. What is it about this sin that separates it from all other reasons for divorce? Why is fornication the single scriptural reason for divorce and remarriage?

Fornication Violates the Covenant of Marriage

Fornication is a violation of the one-flesh covenant of marriage. In marriage the two are joined together by God and become one flesh (Matthew 19:5-6). Marriage is a relationship which is confined to this life (Matthew 22:30), involving the desires of the physical body and the resultant sexual union. It is a covenant (Malachi 2:14) in which the two promise to keep themselves to each other. The adulterous woman forsakes "*the covenant of her God*" (Proverbs 2:17). Fornication contradicts the sexual aspect of the marriage covenant. It strikes at this fundamental part of marriage in a way that other marital difficulties do not.

Fornication Destroys the Uniqueness of Marriage

Fornication also destroys the uniqueness of the sexual relationship in marriage. A husband and wife share many experiences and feelings with each other which they also share with others. They work, talk and laugh with others as well as with each other. But the sexual union and the intimacies connected with it are shared only by the husband and wife. This area of marriage is the private possession of the two. It is the one thing they share in common with no one else. The sexual relationship in marriage provides a special bond, and it is interesting that the Bible uses the word "know" to refer to this union (Genesis 4:1; Matthew 1:25). The husband and wife in the sexual union know each other in a unique way. When the sexual union occurs outside the marriage, the uniqueness of the relationship is destroyed.

Fornication Undermines the Trust of Marriage

Since the sexual aspect of the marriage covenant is both binding and unique, it is apparent that fornication undermines the trust that is so important in the relationship. Trust is vital in securing peace in the marriage. The sin of fornication causes this trust to be replaced by suspicion, fear and insecurity which may eat at the bond which once held the two together until nothing is left. One earns the trust of another by his life and character, and the married fornicator shows himself to be untrustworthy by his deeds. The adulterer usually lies to his mate to cover his sin. But he soon finds that he must tell other lies to cover the previous ones. It is not the physical act of fornication by itself that is so destructive to the marriage, but the dishonesty and disloyalty from which it proceeds. The adulterer destroys in a few moments the trust which took years to build.

(Continued on page 8)

WHY IS FORNICATION . . .

(Continued from page 7)

The offended mate will, in time, recover from the hurt caused by this sin, but trust in the guilty party may never be restored. As a result, God does not require the innocent party to continue to live with such a mate.

Fornication Removes Respect From the Marriage

Fornication also removes respect from the marriage. The Scriptures enjoin mutual respect in marriage (1 Peter 3:1-7; Ephesians 5:22-33), and lasting intimacy must be built upon respect. Even worldly men do not respect a woman who is "easy." Respect is a fundamental aspect of marriage in that it sets the stage for how the couple perceive and treat each other. The fornicator loses respect in the eyes of men: his honor will be given to others (Proverbs 5:10). He loses respect from God (Hebrews 13:4). In fact, he shows that he has no respect for himself. But in particular, he loses respect from the mate he has offended and finds disgust in its place.

Fornication Defeats the Divine Purpose of Marriage

Fornication is particularly vile in that it defeats a divine purpose of marriage. Paul wrote, *"...It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband"* (1 Corinthians 7:1-2). The American Standard Version in verse two has because of fornications. Marriage is the relationship in which physical desires can be expressed and fulfilled (1 Corinthians 7:3-5). A scriptural marriage is the only divinely authorized situation in which sexual union may occur. God permits one to have a mate in order to prevent fornication, but the married fornicator despises this plan by committing the very sin which the institution of marriage is designed to restrain. He rejects the purity of marriage and shows himself to be unworthy of the privilege of this divine institution.

God's attitude toward sexual immorality is indicated in several ways in Scripture. Unfaithful Israel is often portrayed as an adulterous woman (Hosea 1; Ezekiel 16). Adultery, under the law of

Moses, was punishable by death (Leviticus 20:10). Under the gospel of Christ, the married fornicator forfeits his right to a mate, and lifetime of celibacy may (depending on the decision of the innocent party) be the penalty with which he has to live if he desires to please God. Since the severity of the penalty shows the heinousness of the sin, the displeasure of God toward the sin of fornication is evident. Fornication affects the marriage relationship in a way that no other violation of the marital covenant does. It so completely contradicts the very nature of marriage that God allows divorce and remarriage for this reason. In a soap-opera society where adultery is glamorized, Bible teaching on this subject should be the incentive to esteem the institution of marriage with the dignity and honor it deserves. □ 501 Emberton
Tompkinsville, KY 42167

DEDICATED DENIAL . . .

(Continued from page 5)

the harvest of souls. Our lives must be given to the Son to use in the business of His father (Luke 2:49).

Refusal to Look Back

Finally, those who put their hands to the plow must never look back (Luke 9:62). The dead must be left to bury the dead (Matthew 8:22). If houses, families or land stand between us and the Lord they must be left behind and forgotten. When we turn our face to the light we can never again gaze back with longing toward the darkness.

Lot's wife allowed her true self to be made manifest when she gave one last look to the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah. God meant what He said when He told her to get out of that wicked city and never look back. He desires that you and I make a similar break with our old, sinful selves. A plow pulled backwards is worthless at accomplishing the work it is designed for. Equally as ineffective is the Christian who is always dwelling on and longing for his old lifestyle.

May we live our lives so that any backward look brings only the assurance that we have fought the good fight and will receive the crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:7-8). □

749 Toni Drive
Hurst, TX 76054

Faith Fundamentals

EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN



Slowly and gingerly the blind man walked down the street tapping and feeling carefully with his white and red cane until he located the curb on the busy street corner where he stopped and waited until he was aware that someone else was also at the same corner. Carefully he touched the arm of the person

who stood by him and asked, "Would you mind if I accompany you across the intersection?" "Why no," replied a woman's voice, "I'd be delighted." He then took her arm and with traffic roaring through the busy intersection, they stepped from the curb and walked briskly to the other side. As the blind man was about to thank her, the lady said to him, "Sir you cannot imagine how I, being blind, appreciate your kindness and consideration in helping me across this busy street corner."

These two people very sincerely had faith in each other, but they did not have sufficient evidence for that faith. If either of them had known that the other was blind, neither of them would have relied upon the other to get them across the street. Many people have the same problem religiously. They sincerely place their trust and confidence in a system of religion which they believe with all their hearts will get them to heaven not knowing that they are following blind leaders. Jesus said, *"Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch"* (Matthew 15:13-14). While it is true that *"we walk by faith and not by sight"* (2 Corinthians 5:7), there must be sufficient evidence for the faith that saves. Notice how saving faith is defined by the Hebrew writer, *"Now faith is the*

substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). The word of God is the only source of saving faith. *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Romans 10:17). There is all the evidence in the world that the Bible is true, that it is, as it claims to be, the word of God. The Bible has withstood the test of time and never has its enemies been able to destroy its credibility or prove one syllable to be untrue. The Scriptures are the inspired word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The Bible declares the existence of God and that He is the Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1). We can have undaunted faith in this because of the abundance of evidence. *"Every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God"* (Hebrews 3:4). *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork"* (Psalm 19:1). All about us is the evidence of the Almighty and the creation, but there is no evidence anywhere for the false claims of evolution. Although we cannot "see" God, our faith in Him is not "blind faith" because of the indisputable evidence. The very same thing is true of the Son of God (John 1:1-5; 5:32-37; 20:30-31).

Since the Bible is true, based upon solid evidence, we can have faith in whatever it teaches. We can have faith in the virgin birth of Christ (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-23). We can have faith in His death, burial and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-8). We can have faith in the fact that Christ has but one church (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47; Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 1:18). We can have faith in the power of the Gospel to save all who believe and obey (Romans 1:16; Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 5:8-9). We can have faith in the fact that God will accept only worship that is sincerely offered and authorized by the New Testament (John 3:23-24; Colossians 3:17). We can have faith that singing without the use of mechanical instruments of music is acceptable to God (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). We can have faith in the observance of the Lord's Supper as a regular part of the worship every first day of the week (Acts 20:7). We can have faith that those who remain faithful will receive *"a crown of life"* (Revelation 2:10), when Jesus comes.

Many are placing their faith in religious organizations that teach and practice that which is contrary to these things; but to do so is to follow blind leaders which will ultimately fall into a ditch (hell). □

Route 1, Box 501A
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"BAPTISM DOESN'T DO ANY GOOD"

Allen Webster

You've heard it. And discussed it. And argued about it--until you ran out of words and patience. But, you know, they may be on to something. Baptism does not do any good--in some cases.

For centuries, unbelievers and denomination-
alists have argued against the necessity and efficacy of baptism. Many see it as an useless ritual or a superstitious relic from a dark past. Others divorce it from any saving power.

On the other hand, some see baptism as a "cure all." To them, baptism is a magic action through which one passes which immunizes him against any danger of future spiritual disease. The truth lies somewhere in between. **BAPTISM DOES NOT DO ANY GOOD IF...**

(1) It is not preceded by correct understanding. *"And many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized"* (Acts 18:8b). Scriptural baptism requires that one hears and understands that Jesus, the Son of God, died for all (John 3:16; 8:24) and that all sinners must obey Him in order to be saved (Hebrews 5:8, 9). It is possible to be immersed without understanding the reasons for it. For instance, many babies are "baptized," but do not have a correct understanding, so their "baptism" does no good.

(2) It is not preceded by proper faith. *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"* (Mark 16:16). One must believe that Jesus is Divine before his baptism is scriptural. Further, one must believe that he is lost without baptism for it to be scriptural (cf. 1 Peter 3:21). If a person does not believe he needs to be baptized and will be lost if he is not baptized, then his faith in God's plan is lacking. In the Bible, only sinners are told to be baptized (Acts 2:26-38; 22:16), and one who is baptized just to please parents, spouses, in-laws or friends has not been scripturally baptized.

(3) It is not preceded by true repentance. *"Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost"* (Acts 2:38). A person who is unwilling to change his lifestyle (repent) might as well not be baptized, because it would not do him any good. If one does not intend to quit drinking, cursing, smoking, committing

adultery and lying, why be baptized? It just makes a mockery of a sacred practice.

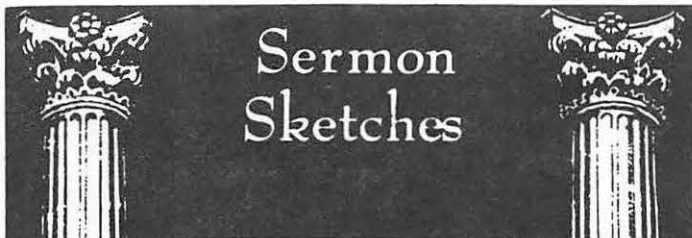
(4) It is not preceded by a biblical confession. *"And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, 'If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God'"* (Acts 8:36-37). Most religious people in our world do not make this confession at their baptism. Many say something like, "I believe that God for Christ's sake has forgiven my sins." Where is this found in the Bible? It is not! God said that He forgive sins at baptism (Acts 22:16), not before. If one does not make a scriptural confession prior to baptism, he has not been scripturally baptized.

(5) It is not an immersion. *"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death..."* (Romans 6:4). Many advocate that one can be baptized by sprinkling, pouring OR immersion. The Bible does not give such options, but calls baptism a "burial" (Colossians 2:12) and shows that it requires going down into the water (Acts 8:38). The word baptism literally means, "to dip, plunge or submerge." If one was not immersed, then his "baptism" did not do any good.

(6) It is not followed by faithful Christian living. *"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers"* (Acts 2:41-42). Occasionally, a person is baptized and never darkens the building's door again. Some come for a time but then fall away. Others may continue to attend services, but their lives mirror the world instead of the image of Christ (cf. Romans 12:1-2). In each of these cases, baptism did not really do any good because ultimately (without repentance) they will be lost.

There is a record of some who were baptized incorrectly in God's book (Acts 19:1-6). They were told to be baptized again--correctly. Why not do so if you need to? Eternity awaits your decision. Baptism will do you good! ☐

Route 1, Box 38
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THE RIGHT TO BE WRONG

John 8:31-36

Introduction:



1. The Reader's Digest (May, 1986) gave as a "Quotable Quote" the following: "The greatest right in the world is the right to be wrong." This is a time when various groups are interested in "rights."
2. Religiously, does a person have the right to his own belief?

- a. If the Bible teaches it, then everyone should.
- b. The only right answer to a religious question is a Bible answer.
3. The Bible allows for freedom of religion, but it calls for us to be right religiously!
 - a. What is "legal" is not always "scriptural."
 - b. John 8:29; 2 Corinthians 10:18.
4. Here are three arguments against the idea that man religiously has the right to be wrong.

I. Examples from the Bible (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11).

- A. Cain did not have a right to his own belief (Genesis 4:3-5; Hebrews 11:4; Romans 10:17).
- B. Naaman did not have a right to his own belief (2 Kings 15:10-14).
- C. Paul did not have a right to his own belief (Acts 23:1; 26:9-10).
- D. The twelve at Ephesus did not have a right to their own belief (Acts 19:5-6; Matthew 28:18-20).
- E. The Galatians did not have a right to their own belief (Galatians 1:6-10; 1 John 4:1; 2 John 9).

II. The Nature of Truth (Ephesians 4:11; Jude 3).

- A. Only truth can save (John 8:32; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-13; 1 Peter 2:22).
- B. Only truth should be preached (Galatians 1:8; 2 Timothy 1:13; Titus 2:1).
- C. Only the truth will judge us (Revelation 20:12; Romans 2:2; John 12:48)

III. The Character of God (Acts 10:34-35; Hebrews 13:8).

- A. All are to obey the same gospel.
 1. All are to hear it (Mark 16:15).
 2. All are to believe it (1 Cor. 15:1-4).
 3. All are to obey it (Hebrews 5:8-9; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30-31; Galatians 3:26-27).
- B. All are added to the same church (Acts 2:47).
 1. I have no choice if Jesus takes care of the matter (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4).
 2. We all have the same name to wear (Isaiah 62:2; Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16).
 3. Hear Jesus on "churches" (Matthew 16:18; 15:7-9, 14).
- C. All are expected to live by the same rule.
 1. To worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24; Acts 2:42; 2 Corinthians 5:7).
 2. To be different from the world (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Peter 2:9, 11).
 3. To serve according to our ability (1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Matthew 25:14-30).

Conclusion:

1. If thinking something is right makes it right, there would be nothing false in the world!
2. God in His Word sees the case as follow:
 - a. Broad and narrow ways (Matthew 7:13-14).
 - b. Foolish and wise builders (Matthew 7:24-27).
 - c. Life or death (Romans 6:16-18).
 - d. Satan or Christ (Colossians 1:13)
 - e. Good or evil (Hebrews 5:14).
3. It makes a difference to God (Matthew 25:31-33; 13:47-50; 7:21-23). ☐

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Sylacauga, AL 35150



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I am sending a small donation.

*Thanks,
Mrs. Thomas Bates
Old Hickory, TN*

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*In the Master's service,
David A. Rogers
Burnet, TX*

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*Thank you,
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