



# Gospel Gleaner

Volume 2

Number 1

## “CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED”

Ferrell Hester

The apostle Paul in writing to the Corinthian brethren said, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellence of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:1-2). Paul makes it perfectly clear that in his preaching he was determined to know nothing other than "Jesus Christ and him crucified." In his preaching, the apostle's main objective was not to discuss current events (things of a political or social nature), nor was it his purpose or desire to make a show of his great learning and ability which he could have done, but Paul is simply saying, **"My Preaching is 'Christ-Centered' and Not Self-Centered."**

The central theme of the gospel is that Christ suffered, bled and died on the cross that we might live. We have hope today because Jesus died for us. We have the right to be members of the church because Jesus died for us and purchased the church with his blood as Paul declared in Acts 20:28. Thus, we have the hope of our sins being remitted and our going to heaven when we die because Jesus died for us.

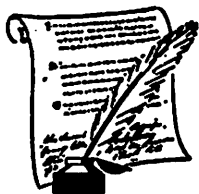
When we consider the cross of our Lord, we should realize the great power of sacrifice. We should understand and appreciate the Lord's willingness to leave heaven, to come

to earth, and to give his life for us. As a consequence, we should understand and appreciate the great power of God's love. No wonder that the beloved John recorded in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Then the apostle Paul in writing to the church at Rome said, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Romans 5:8-9).

Finally, let us consider the drawing power of the cross. Let us try, through an eye of faith, to see our Lord, writhing in agony and pain, as he was suspended upon the cross between heaven and earth, as though he were fit for neither. He was crucified not for any fault of his own nor for any wrong which he had done, or even for his own benefit, but for you and me. No wonder Paul said, "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

Now ask yourself, am I willing to love and obey Christ because he loved me, and has told me to obey him?

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## Editorial...

### THE EVILS OF LIBERALISM

An evil attacks the church of Christ today more harmful than physical persecution. Persecution would cause the streets of our cities to run red with Christians' blood but history tells us the Christians' cause would prosper. Mr. Schaff stated regarding the early Christians, "The blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church." We believe that this is a just affirmation. However, religious liberalism today would slay the cause of Christians by persuading men to compromise heaven's truths and erase the clear line of demarcation between the Lord's church and the denominational world. Persecution comes from our avowed enemies but religious compromise springs from those who profess friendship.

Current trends see men making efforts in an attempt to offer true worship on the chopping block of human creeds. An exaggerated concept of religious courtesy has changed the nature of preaching, in some quarters at least, from proclamation to negotiation. Many seasons ago a diligent seeker of the truth said,

"We know that the war between the Bible and human creeds has commenced, and will never cease until the weaker dies. We are in no doubt as to its issue. All the physical and moral means of the various parties are brought forth into operation to defend their creeds and standards...The heavens are shaking, and everything which cannot stand the shock, must be shaken out. The Bible will stand, and all who stand on it, and are possessed of its divine spirit shall stand firm and undismayed forever."

Faithful men shall allow no place nor give quarter for capitulation or retreat and shall not fear to speak their convictions in the presence of men or devils. If error is silent, nothing is lost. If truth holds her peace, all is lost. Every believer in the gospel knows that to endorse error is treason against God.

Short years ago brother Foy Wallace Jr. stated, "The Lord never meant for men to be interior decorators of His church. He created it just like He wanted it." Some have refused to learn this truth. Men who

are seeking unity on some basis other than the Bible need to consider Paul's thought provoking question to the Corinthians, "Despise ye the church of God?" Let the question be echoed as frequently as is necessary, as long as the general disposition to ignore the Lord's commands prevails.

The present treat to the doctrinal purity of the body of Christ is a venom. We ask all men to carefully consider its harms:

1. It ignores much of the word of God. The lethargy of God's people is scarcely believable. The church of Christ is being lulled to sleep on the lap of a bewitching Delilah and unless she awakens in time, her strength shall surely be shorn. The divine signposts of warning are still there. Deuteronomy 4:2, Proverbs 30:6 and Revelation 22:18,19 caution against men ignoring, and innovating the least word that God has given.

2. It endorses error which can damn the soul to hell. The tendency is to believe everything in general and nothing in particular. The sanctified looseness of liberalism allows it to endorse most everything except the view that says we must preach like Jesus preached, stand for the truth like Paul and speak as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11). As long as it tolerates everything except the truth, religious liberalism remains the most illiberal "-ism" of all time.

3. It causes God to withdraw His favor. Hebrews 10:38 says, "...if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." God is the God of truth. He looks pleasantly upon those whose ways are upright but He keeps no company with error.

4. It provokes God to wrath. Compromising the truth is idolatry and God's wrath has always been manifested against such. Ancient

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# Christian Character



Ronnie Whitemore

## THE EXAMPLE OF EZRA

*"For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments" (Ezra 7:10).*

As the verse above affirms, the life of Ezra, the scribe and priest, serves as a great example for God's children. Ezra lived during the Babylonian captivity which began in 606 B.C. with the first carrying away. In 586 B.C. the temple was burned and destroyed. After seventy years of captivity and by order of Cyrus, king of Persia, about 50,000 Jews returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel as their governor and had the task of rebuilding the temple. Being oppressed by the Samaritans, the Jews ceased their work for sixteen years until the preaching of Zechariah and Haggai convicted the Jews of their obligation to fulfill God's commandment. In 520 B.C. the Jews began to rebuild the temple and they finished their work four years later. A second return to Jerusalem came in 457 B.C. with Ezra and 1754 others joining him in an effort to restore worship and service unto Jehovah. A third return occurred in 444 B.C. when Nehemiah directed the Jews in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. The captivity demonstrated God's wrath and discipline upon his children while the return showed his mercy upon the people.

At the time of Ezra's return, Artaxerxes (Longimanus I) ruled on the throne of the Persian empire and he decreed in a letter to Ezra that the Levites, priests, and people could return with Ezra to Jerusalem to restore worship. As recorded in Ezra 7, the king authorized the return of silver and gold for sacrifices, money from his treasuries for their use, and the establishment of judges and magistrates for law and order. So with the king's decree and the Lord's blessing, the scene was set for Ezra and his companions to return to Jerusalem and restore proper worship.

Yet, before Ezra journeyed to Jerusalem, we learn from our text that he prepared himself for this enormous responsibility.

First, Ezra SET his heart right ("prepared his heart"). The time had come for the nation to serve and worship Jehovah acceptably. But in order for the nation to be righteous, Ezra realized that he must set the proper example. As scribe and priest, Ezra was in a place of leadership; therefore, he set his heart right which is always the first step in serving God correctly.

Second, Ezra SOUGHT the law of the Lord ("to seek the law of the Lord"). One's heart cannot be right until it is filled with the word of the Lord (Psalm 119:11). Ezra could not lead the people unless he knew the will of Jehovah. Ezra did not seek his own way (Jeremiah 10:23), nor the ways of others (Isaiah 55:8-9), but he desired the Lord's way (Jeremiah 6:16).

Third, Ezra SUBMITTED to the law ("and to do it"). Obedience has always been required of man. The Lord promised a blessing unto the obedient in Deuteronomy 11:27. Judah's rebellion and disobedience led them to their captivity in Babylon (Jeremiah 7:23-24). A mere knowledge of the word is not enough to save (James 1:21-22). One must comply with the word (Matthew 7:21). Ezra not only sought the law, but submitted to the law.

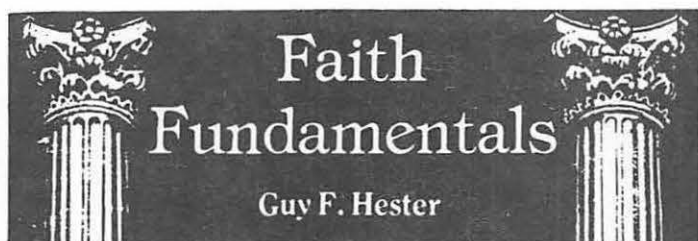
Fourth, Ezra SPREAD the law ("and to teach in Israel the statutes and judgments"). Ezra realized his responsibility to teach God's law to the people. The people had been in captivity for over seventy years. Many of them were born in Babylon; therefore, they had lost sight of worship and service to God. But now, the statutes and judgments must be spread throughout the nation in an effort to restore the people to faithfulness.

But let us pause and consider that these four characteristics from Ezra 7:10 describe the actions of Ezra, not the people. Ezra prepared himself to serve God and the people. He and his companions expected great things once they returned to Jerusalem. While in Babylon, the people longed to leave the strange land and return to their homeland. The Psalmist recorded these sentiments. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof..How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem above my chief joy" (Psalm 137:1-6).

Yet in turning to Ezra 9:3, "And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantel, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished." Why did Ezra now SIT astonished? The people

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### WHERE IS THE PASSAGE?

Those who claim to teach the Bible have an obligation to give a "Thus saith the Lord" for every thing that they teach in religion. The teacher must be able to back up his teaching with the Bible. Peter said, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). He must "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11). Not only is the teacher obligated to back up his teaching with the Bible, but we are obligated to demand that every thing which we hear taught be supported by the scriptures. When we hear that which is contrary to the things that we have believed, we should ask, "where is the passage that teaches it?" If it is taught in the New Testament I will accept it as truth. If it is not taught in the New Testament I will reject it as false.

Where is the passage that teaches that we should have and use human creeds? Almost every denominational church has a creed book written by some man or group of men. But the Bible teaches that the word of God thoroughly furnishes unto all good works (2 Timothy 3:16,17). It further says that God has "given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). It tells us that we will be condemned if we go beyond that which is taught in the word (2 John 9). If a creed book contains more than the Bible it contains too much. If it contains less than the Bible it contains too little. So why not be satisfied with just the Bible?

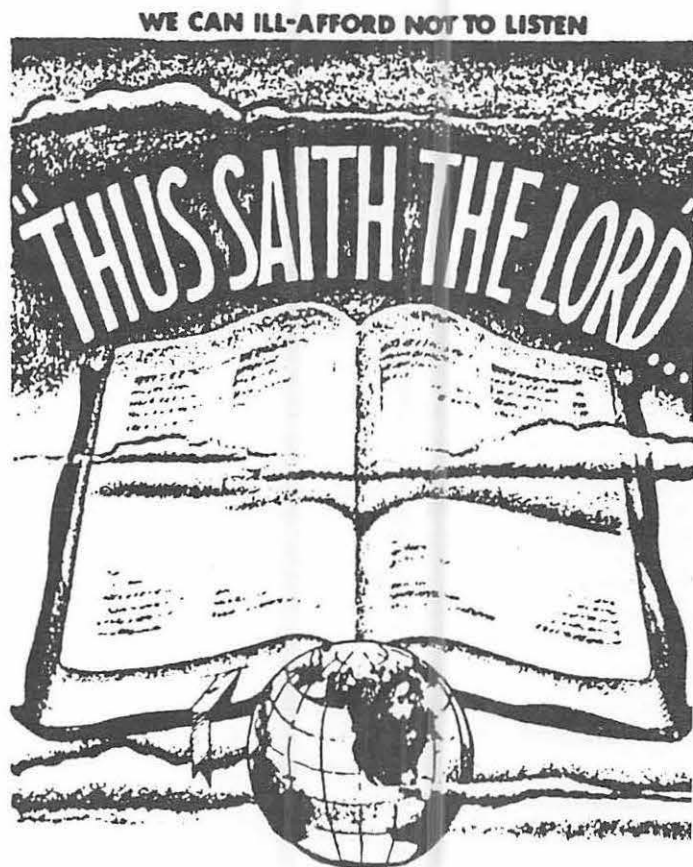
Where is the passage that teaches that we can follow men in religion? The Bible does not teach that our authority comes from the Pope, pastor or any other man. The Bible condemns human doctrines (1 Corinthians 1:10; Matthew 15:9; Galatians 1:6-9). It also teaches that we are not to seek to please men (Galatians 1:10). In Matthew 28:18, Christ claims **all authority**. Paul said in Colossians 1:18 that Christ has the **preeminence in all things**. What authority does that give the "Pope", "Pastor" or "Presiding elder"?

Where is the passage that teaches that one name is as good as another in religion? The Bible teaches that salvation is only in the name of Christ (Acts 4:12). The name Christian is a "worthy name" (James 2:7). The only way that we can glorify God is through the name Christian (1 Peter 4:16). So why risk your soul by wearing some other name instead of or in addition to the God-given name, Christian.

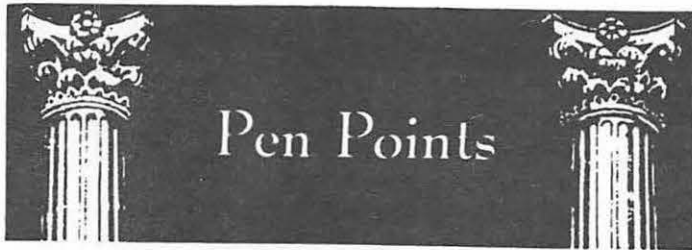
Where is the passage that teaches that the kingdom of God is future? The Bible says that the obedient are already citizens of the kingdom (Colossians 1:13). The apostle John was in the kingdom in his lifetime on earth (Revelation 1:9). Instead of Christ establishing his kingdom at his return, he will then cease to reign and turn the kingdom back to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-26).

Where is the passage that teaches that one can be saved as well out of the church as in it? The Bible teaches that the saved are added to the church (Acts 2:47). It further teaches that Christ is the Savior of the church (Ephesians 5:23). In view of this, how could anyone say that one can be saved without being a member of the church?

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## "BY WHAT AUTHORITY DOEST THOU THESE THINGS?"

Ben F. Vick, Jr.

When Jesus had cleansed the temple of its thieves and had healed the blind and the lame which came to him, the chief priests and elders came to him as he was teaching and asked, "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority" (Matthew 21:23)? Jesus answered their question with a question by asking, "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men" (Matthew 21:25)? Though the question asked by the enemies of the Lord was not from pure motives, it is still a good question for all today.

The question of authority is fundamental in religion. "Authority" means "the power or a right to command, act, enforce obedience, or make final decisions; jurisdiction." In all realms of life (including religion) there must be authority or utter chaos will be the results. All that is taught or practiced in religion must be authorized.

The question which Jesus put to his inquirers places the source of authority in one of only two areas. Either John's baptism was "from heaven," i.e., authorized by God, or "of men," i.e., a commandment from men. All teaching and practice in religion falls into the category of either being authorized by God or commanded by men.

If the right to command certain teaching and practices be from heaven, i.e., from God, then all are duty bound to obey or suffer the consequences. Jesus said, "All power (authority, ASV) is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach 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 alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:18-20). Christ is "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9). "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates of the city" (Revelation 22:14).

If the source of authority for what one teaches or practices is of men, then it is not only useless, but is a rejection of God's commands. Jesus said, "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:7). Those who cling to the traditions of men lay aside the commandment of God (Mark 7:8). Again, the Lord said, "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:9). Those who cling to that which is authorized by men and not God make the word of God of none effect (Mark 7:13).

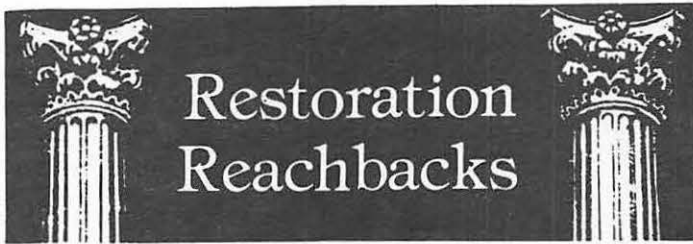
Paul exhorted the brethren at Colosse, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." (Colossians 3:17). "In the name of the Lord Jesus" means by the authority of the Lord Jesus. If a policeman comes to my door and says, "Open up in the name of the law," he means to open up by the authority of the law invested in him as a policeman. This command by Paul is going unheeded in too many places in the religious world and in the Lord's church today.

Of our religious friends we ask, "By what authority doest thou these things?" Where in the Bible is authority for the name by which you are called? Where does the Bible authorize the "baptizing" of infants? Where does the New Testament authorize sprinkling or pouring instead of immersion in water? By what authority does one partake of the "Lord's supper" monthly, quarterly, or annually? Is raising of church funds by rummage sales, pie sales, the selling of strawberries authorized from heaven, or of men?

By what authority is the Lord's church called the church of Christ (Matthew 16:18; Romans 16:16)? By what authority is baptism to the penitent believer for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38)? By what right or command are men to be immersed in water (Romans 6:3-4)? The practice of partaking of the Lord's supper upon the first day of the week, is it from heaven? or of men (Luke 22:19; Acts 20:7)? Where is Bible authority for raising church funds only by volunteer offerings of its members (1 Corinthians 16:1-2)?

Another practice in the Lord's church needs to be put to this same test. Where is Bible authority for the church's building a playground in order that the members' children might have a place to play after services? Recently, a congregation which I know announced the above project as part of their plans in the

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## STAYING IN LINE WITH THE TRUTH

W. M. Davis

Man's first and noblest impulse is to accept the truth. The majority of men want to be right, if it doesn't cost too much. Some people are in error with honest convictions, but many are in error because it is easier and cheaper than to stay with the truth. The truth of God pierces men to their hearts and that hurts. A motley crowd was thus affected on the day of Pentecost, and they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They were men of obdurate minds, too, but the truth that Peter preached pricked them in their hearts. They were brought to a complete standstill so far as argument was concerned. They either had to go against what they knew was the truth or make a change. They made a wise decision and accepted the truth.

The test of a man is not in his following the truth when it does not hurt him, but in staying with it when it does hurt him—when it destroys his pleasure, causes him to part with his money or upsets his long cherished notions.

John says, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth" (3 John 4.). It is not joy, but sorrow, to a preacher to learn that half of his converts backslide and become unfaithful. A man shows his love for the truth when it causes him to cut off his right hand or pluck out his right eye.

Paul said to Timothy, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them: and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:14, 15). Timothy's mother and grandmother had taught him the truth, and Paul admonishes him to stay with it. Some young people now think it is a sign of independence and advancement to throw away their mother's faith. They think they should discard it just because it is their mother's, and because

they embraced it when they were unlearned and immature. It is not easy to stay with the truth when one's associates are making fun of what they call his foggy notions.

## Strong Men

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7). Heaven's faith does not make cowards. While it is designed to make men tremble at their own ways, at the same time its purpose is to give strength and make men courageous. There is a class of intellectuals who look upon faith as a sign of weakness. And they fail to see any power in love.

People usually think of courage as a matter of temperament. But is it not the purpose of the gospel to mend human temperaments? It restrains vices and stimulates virtues. It transforms defects into excellencies, and it never causes excellencies to go to seed and become defects. The gospel is the best tested recipe for human defects. It makes crooked things straight.

The gospel gives men courage in the face of trials and great dangers. Paul was the most courageous man aboard the sinking ship on the voyage to Rome. The captain of the ship and centurion were pushed into the background by the presence of Paul. He told the passengers not to fear, that, while the ship would be lost, all the people would be saved alive. And it turned out the way Paul said it would. It was his faith in God that gave him courage.

No, faith is not a sign of weakness; it is a condition of strength. Instead of fostering fear, the truth gives men power and love and a sound mind. The truth stiffens men into fearlessness. The man full of truth is not a reed shaken by the wind. He is a pillar of strength amid all dangers.

But a man is a fool to tell himself not to be afraid, when he is on the wrong road. The gospel makes strong and courageous men; it is sin that makes men cowards. Men have nothing to fear when they do the will of God, but they have much to fear when they disobey Him. If a man has all other available strength, except the strength of the Lord, he is a weak man. Paul says, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Corinthians 16:13). It takes a great deal of strength to always act like a man instead of a child. It also takes a great deal of strength to stand, when there is an easy place to sit

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*The Evils of Liberalism. . .*  
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Israel escaped the darkness of Egyptian slavery but soon thereafter deified the leeks, garlic and onions of the old slave land. Modern Israel (the church of Christ) has escaped the pollutions of sectarianism but, alas, the cravings of popular applause, and the spirit of pseudo-unity allure the Korahs and Sanballats to plead their case for benevolence toward error. Instead of loving men, the love the doctrines of men.

5. It stunts the growth of the church. I have heard two sermons on the subject of "church growth" in the past few years that I shall never forget. In the first not a scripture was quoted or referred to; and the other made no mention of defending the truth although much was heard of "love" and "friendship". Jesus said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14); and James 4:4 reminds us, "that the friendship of the world is enmity with God, whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is th enemy of God." Who wonders why the church is failing to grow, if its pulpits divorce themselves from a "thus saith the Lord"? We must feed on sound doctrine (I Peter 2:2; 2 Timothy 4:1-3).

6. It creates unfaithfulness. Many will allow those who believe and practice "hell-originated" and "hell-bound" heresies to pursue those beliefs without challenge or question. This is contrary to James 5:19,20.

It is easier to develop the "let it be" habit and watch souls sink down to eternal ruin than to be so "unkind" as to correct the error in the spirit of Him who said, "Love one another." The apathy some display toward the salvation of souls seeped in falsehood leaves a shame too great to be measured.

A grand opportunity faces all Christians today. The opportunity is ours to exhibit a caliber of courage seldom seen in the world. Let us have a courage so brave it will not lie nor slight the truth. The greatest hero is the man of religious convictions who goes on his way fearlessly speaking and unflinchingly maintaining that God's word is powerful, precious and prevailing. Truly, God's Word has the force necessary to shake insidious liberalism right back down to the abyss from whence it came. The spirit of liberalism is the spirit of death. God save the church.

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*The Example of Ezra. . .*  
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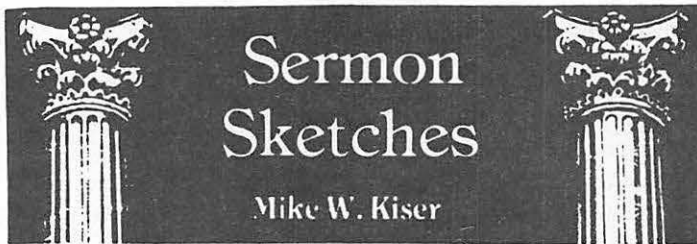
were still in sin (9:1-2)! Despite Ezra's preparation and the attitude of the people while in Babylon, the nation continued to disobey God! Ezra sat astonished, ashamed and disappointed because of the sinful condition of God's people.

Dear reader, perhaps the elders, the preacher, and the Bible teachers at the place where you work and worship have set their hearts right, sought the law of the Lord, submitted to the law and spread the statutes only to sit astonished because some people remain in sin. No doubt some people are guilty of forsaking the assembly (Hebrews 10:25), of failing to put the church first (Matthew 6:33) or failing to do good (Galatians 6:10; James 4:17). Others have failed as husbands, wives, parents, or children (Ephesians 5:22-25; 6:1-4; Proverbs 22:6). Some people are guilty of conforming to the world (Romans 12:1-2). Perhaps many brethren have the same attitude of Judah. When troubles and trials were upon them, they called upon the God of the valleys. But when the hardships were over, they failed to call upon the God of the hills.

Dear friend, use the example of Ezra as an admonition to live faithfully unto death. In Ezra 10:12, the people repented and cried with a loud voice, "As thou hast said, so must we do." The prophet Micah recorded, "...O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" (Micha 6:8)?







## THE MIDNIGHT CONVERSION

Acts 16:25-34

### Introduction

1. It is always wonderful to hear of someones conversion to Christ. Imagine last night at midnight coming back to this place to assist someone who had gone to bed, not knowing who Jesus is, then aroused out of sleep only to be taught the gospel and to obey it.
2. Why do I refer you back to this example of conversion?
  - a. Only God's word can supply instruction. This is no time for personal testimony. John 17:20,21; 20:30,31
  - b. The message preached by the apostles was inspired and to endure for ever. 2 Timothy 3:16,17. There is no mistake in their instructions.
  - c. The gospel of Christ is the only saving message. Romans 1:16; Galatians 1:8
  - d. I know what this man heard and did was right. There will be no mistake in following this example for preachers or listeners.
3. There are four things we want to study:

### I. The Man's Religious Background.

- A. He lived among people who were more interested in making a living than seeing someone freed from the bondage of sin. Acts 16:16-19, John 8:34
- B. These people had strong ties to their present and past religious beliefs and disliked a message that was different. Acts 16:20,21
- C. The jailor himself had little concern for religious matters.
  1. His prison was dark, hot, and musty.
  2. Prisoners were in stocks. They were neither sitting or standing, but kept in a painful position.
  3. Even two were of a different attitude.

### II. The Man's Question.

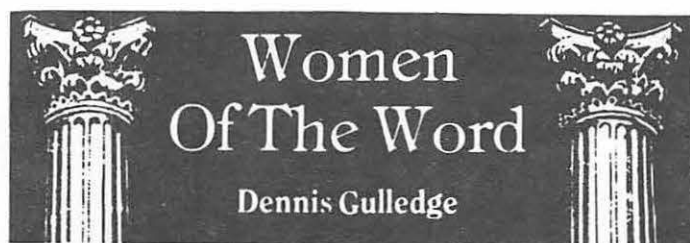
- A. The occasion for the question.

1. That night he had a clear conscience, unaware of his true spiritual condition. Evidenced by his sleep.
  2. The earthquake aroused him to danger.
  3. It was the character of his prisoners which caused him alarm.
- B. An analysis of the question.
    1. "What must"-a strong word; not can or may.
    2. "I"-personal, irregardless of others.
    3. "Do"-action required. Hebrews 5:8,9
    4. "To be saved". Not physically, for in no danger.
  - C. Implications of that question.
    1. It strikes at "universalism". The jailor knew there was a vast difference between being saved or lost. Matthew 7:13,14; 12:30; 25:33,46
    2. It strikes at "calvinism". Although he recognized he was lost, he believed he could be saved. 2 Peter 3:9; Matthew 11:28-30
    3. It strikes at "indifference". He was interested and ready to act as commanded.

### III. The Apostolic Answer.

- A. Jesus Christ is the Cause of Salvation. Acts 4:12
- B. This does not teach, as some suppose, "faith only".
  1. Illustrate: Father tells son, "you must trust me." or the doctor tells the patient, "you must trust me." We are looking for a message of instruction.
  2. An uninformed unbeliever cannot "believe" by just being told to "believe". Romans 10:14-17; Mark 16:15,16
  3. That is the reason for the next statement.
- C. What is the "word of the Lord" on Salvation?
  1. Luke 13:3; John 3:3-5; Matthew 18:4; 7:21-23.
  2. Prophecy about the "word of the Lord." Isaiah 2:2-4
  3. Fulfillment- Luke 24:46,47 (facts, commands, promises.)
  4. Denominationalism uses Acts 16:30,31 out of it's context and when their intepretation is placed in the context it makes the whole story absurd.

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## REMEMBERING MIRIAM

Of women in the Old Testament, who are endeared to us, Miriam must rank among the favorites of many. God, in the long ago, chose her as one to be remembered when he instructed Israel to, "Remember what the Lord thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt" (Deuteronomy 24:9). For 3500 years those who would be dedicated servants of God have striven to do just that. There must be something about Miriam that would warrant our remembering her, and that something to which God refers is her sin and punishment. As we examine this intriguing woman of the Word let us reflect upon what we do remember of her, and then, draw those necessary lessons from what we must remember of her.

### Her Family We Remember

Miriam had two brothers, Aaron and Moses. Their father was Amram, son of Kohath, the son of Levi (Exodus 6:16, 18). Jochebed, their mother, was also of Levi's family (Numbers 26:59). Moses was born to this couple when Rameses II was the king in Egypt. He forced the Hebrews into bitter toil and gross public injustice. He also issued the heartless mandate calling for the death of all Hebrew male children at birth (Exodus 1:15-22). It was under these circumstances that Moses was born and safely hidden from the cruel Egyptians (Exodus 2:1-3).

Our first glimpse of Miriam in Holy Writ comes when she is perhaps on the brink of her teenage years. She demonstrated early in her life the qualities of a capable leader. First, she was dependable. Her mother left her in charge of baby Moses, as in desperation she placed him in a small ark, made of papyrus, and secreted it in the river Nile. Second, she was quick to think and discern the proper course of action when the Egyptian princess discovered the child among the bullrushes, thus enabling Moses to be reared by his own mother and taught of the one true God (Exodus 2:7-8).

### Her Great Leadership We Remember

A number of years pass before we hear of Miriam again, and then we find her mentioned as a laborer with Moses and Aaron, in bringing Israel out of bondage (Micah 6:4). As Lottie Beth Hobbs has well noted, "She lived during one of the major transition periods of history, and her work was to assist in the organization and building of the infant nation of Israel."<sup>1</sup>

Miriam has the distinction of being the first prophetess mentioned in the Bible (Exodus 15:20). Her being a prophetess gave her, no doubt, a position of influence among the Hebrews not enjoyed by any other woman. It is likely that she was inspired of God to instruct the Hebrew women (Numbers 12:2). In commenting upon the character of Miriam, Roy H. Lanier, Sr., said, "Miriam was a woman of unusual ability, and no doubt rendered a great service among the women of Israel as teacher and counselor."<sup>2</sup>

Also, when Israel was delivered from bondage, it was Miriam who led the women in singing the chorus of the great song of deliverance (Exodus 15:21). Miriam was a capable woman, and women of the Word have a place in God's work.

### Her Sin and Punishment Must Be Remembered

How eminently correct was C. R. Nichol, when he wrote, "Jehovah never shields those who do wrong. In detailing the history of the heroes and heroines of the Bible, their faults are not overlooked."<sup>3</sup> Thus, we read in Numbers 12:1-2, "And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken also by us? And the Lord heard it."

First, we observe that Miriam spake against Moses because of his Ethiopian wife. This personal attack upon her younger brother does not appear to be the genuine reason for her uprising. In doing this Miriam was no different than many people today, because quite often in justifying conduct, one does not give the real reason for his actions. For example, when one has quit attending the services of the Lord's church excuses are often heard such as, "The members there aren't friendly," or, "So-and-so hurt my feelings." If the real reason were known it would

*(Continued on page 11)*

future. Their good support in the mission field does not offset this unauthorized project. (James 2:10.) The playground for the children and the instrument in worship stand or fall together. If the church can build a playground, it can also, by the same "reasoning," justify the instrument. It is my prayer that the leaders of the above-mentioned congregation and any others practicing the same will abandon such a course before it is too late.

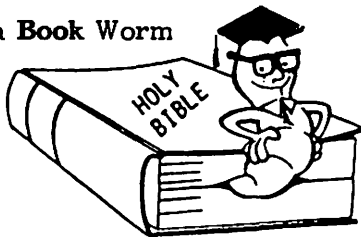
Some churches (like Madison church of Christ in Tennessee) have built (or are building) "Family Life Centers" (euphemism for gymnasiums) for their members and friends. The denominations have had gyms for years. Where is command, apostolic example, or necessary inference for such? Evidently many have no interest in Bible authority in matters spiritual.

If one counters by saying, "Well, this teaching or practice is in the realm of expediency," this, too, is fallacious reasoning. Friends, every expedient must first be lawful. Paul wrote, "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." (1 Corinthians 6:12.) Paul, in this context, was dealing with the eating of meats. He was not saying that everything is lawful, but that all that is lawful is not necessarily expedient. Thus, we gather from this statement that expediencies must fall under the realm of things lawful. Let such practices as mentioned above first be proved lawful, then expedient. To attempt to prove a thing is expedient before showing it is lawful is to get the cart before the horse. Where is the command, apostolic example, or necessary inference from the New Testament which authorizes what is done?

If our teaching or practice be of men, let us give it up; but if it be of God, let us hold to it while teaching others.

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Be a Book Worm



down. The devil offers every man a chair who is tired of standing up for the truth. It requires a strength that is greater than our own, to be guided by reason instead of passion. Some men brag about living by nature, which means that they live by the worst half of themselves.

Firm Foundation  
August 24, 1943

### TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

Not seeking to please men but to please God, we herein present the steps required by God to become a Christian:

1. You must first hear His Word and believe it:  
Heb. 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
2. You must repent of your sins:  
Luke 13:3 "I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
3. You must confess the name of Jesus Christ before men.  
Rom. 10:9 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."
4. You must be buried with Christ by baptism:  
Acts 2:38 "... Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. . ."
5. These steps add you to the church of, body of Christ:  
Acts 2:41, 47 "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. . . And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
6. Having been added to the body of Christ or church, God then expects you to worship and work in a congregation of faithful Christians. By doing this God will accept your life and you will have the hope of eternal life.



#### IV. The Man's Response.

- A. He evidenced his belief in repentance. "washed their stripes." Acts 17:30,31; Acts 2:38;
- B. He evidenced belief in his baptism.
  - 1. The subjects correspond with the "word of the Lord." Mark 16:16; Acts 16:34
  - 2. The manner corresponds with the "word of the Lord." Colossians 2:12: "brought them out;. . .took them". Acts 16:13
  - 3. The purpose corresponds with the "word of the Lord." Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38
- C. He evidenced his belief by the urgency with which he acted. "The same hour of the night."
  - 1. No question or quibble on his part.
  - 2. Midnight baptism-why so urgent?

#### Conclusion

- 1. When was this man called a "believer?" When he: put them in prison? went to bed? woke up? before he heard? while he heard? or after he obeyed the message? Acts 16:33,34.
- 2. What must I do to be lost? Nothing!
- 3. What is faith, but obedience to the commands of Christ.
- 4. If you knew you would be in hell within a week, what would you do? Proverbs 27:1

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#### Remembering Miriam (Continued from page 7)

sound something like this: "I've gone back into the ways of the world" or "I've lost my love for the Lord, and spiritual things no longer interest me."

Second, we observe that Miriam's real complaint was against the preeminence of Moses. Her sin was that of jealousy and envy. Those who excell will always be the target of the envious (Ecclesiastes 4:4). As serious a matter this is we have somehow demoted jealousy and envy into the realm of "small sins" in

our own thinking (Cf., James 3:16). Again, her sin was that of rebelling against God's delegated authority. To disregard such authority is simply to disregard God (1 Samuel 8:7). Miriam is a case of a woman refusing to be in subjection to divine authority. God's delegated authority must be recognized in all areas of life, be they spiritual (1 Timothy 2:11-12), civil (Romans 13:1), or, domestic (Ephesians 5:24). Further, her sin was that of trying to elevate herself by pulling someone else down. The words of Isaac Errett seem most appropriate here, when he advises, "Be content with the sphere in which God has placed you, and be anxious only to do your whole duty there. If there is anything higher that God has in store for you, it will be made apparent in due time."<sup>4</sup> Indeed, as Jesus said, "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14:11).

The gravity of Miriam's sin is seen in the manner in which God punished her. God instructed Aaron and Miriam that they did not stand in the same relation to him as did Moses. To them, and all other prophets, he would reveal his will in visions and dreams, but to Moses he would "speak mouth to mouth...and not in dark speeches." As punishment for leading in the insubordination Miriam was stricken with leprosy (Numbers 12:10), and was later healed after seven days separation from outside the camp (Vss. 13,15).

Nearly 40 years separate these events and the time of Miriam's death (Numbers 20:1). Although the Biblical record is silent of her activities during this time, it is likely that she learned her lesson and continued as a great influence among women. The great lesson for us in this is that of God's willingness to heal his erring children (Jeremiah 3:22; 2 Peter 3:9).

#### -End Notes-

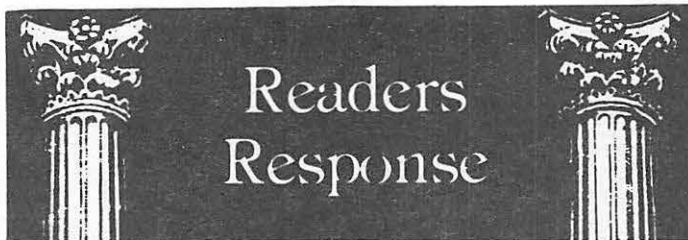
<sup>1</sup>Lottie Beth Hobbs, Daughters Of Eve. (Fort Worth: Harvest Publications, 1963), p. 54.

<sup>2</sup>Roy H. Lanier, Sr., ed., "Miriam, The Sister Of Moses," Lesson IV-July 27, 1947, Teacher's Annual Lesson Commentary On Bible School Lessons, 1947. (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1946), p. 215.

<sup>3</sup>C. R. Nichol, God's Woman. (Clifton, Texas: Nichol Publishing Company, 1938), p. 21.

<sup>4</sup>Isaac Errett, Evenings With The Bible: Old Testament Studies, Vol. 1. (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1884), p. 170.

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# Readers Response

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# Gospel Gleaner



Volume 2

Number 2

## *When One Looks Backward*

Howell Bigham

Time and time again, the Bible warns those who have obeyed the truth against returning to the old world of sin. Christ, in Luke 9:62 said, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." The child of God must not look backward and desire to enter that country of iniquity that he has left. The apostle of love writing in 1 John 2:15 instructs that we must not love the world and its desires. John writing said, "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." When one obeys the gospel, God's power unto salvation (Romans 1:16), he has promised to forsake the world and to cleave unto Christ (Romans 6:16-18). He must realize that Satan has painted the world in glittering colors and that it is not gold!

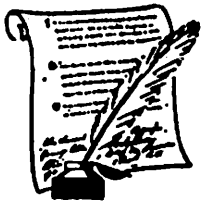
Many in the Lord's body either have not read or are willingly glancing over Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians 10:12 to take heed unto our souls. The faithful apostle wrote, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Those who are not taking heed to their souls' salvation are playing with their souls and are longing to return to the land of filth. They have found the world more alluring and service to Christ unrewarding. Unlike Moses, they have put their trust in the pleasure of sin when they should be suffering with the people of God (Hebrews 11:25). Friends, traitors to God and Christ must come to themselves and realize the unfit condition of their souls.

May we not follow the example of those in the Word who looked back--who were unfit for the kingdom! As one studies the Bible, he will see the principle of looking backward to the world of sin in that of Lot's wife (Genesis 19:26). Rather than trusting in the command of God to flee sin, she instead desired to glance backward to the land of sinful Sodom and Gomorrah. Because of her disobedience and lack of respect for God's word, Jehovah turned her into a pillar of salt.

In the New Testament there were those who also glanced backward to the filth of the world and thus were unfit for God's kingdom. Paul, speaking of two unworthy servants named Hymenaeus and Alexander, said, "Holding faith, and a good conscience, which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck; of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme" (1 Timothy 1:19-20). Those who are unfaithful in the body of Christ, who refuse to repent and walk the straight and narrow (Matthew 7:13-14) are to be marked and delivered unto Satan (Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:5)! They have gone astray from the fold of safety and have joined the ranks of wolves. Peter describes the unfit condition of the Christian who has departed from God's kingdom to rejoin the world of sin as being far worse than before his obedience to the Word (2 Peter 2:20-22).

*(Continued on page 4)*





## Editorial...

### PREACHING OR WIND-JAMMING?

In the Bible, the wind is symbolical of all that is vain or worthless (Isaiah 26:18; 41:29). Today much of what passes for gospel preaching is nothing less than "wind-jamming." Preaching that speaks comfortably to souls engaged in doctrinal error, and shelters sinners under the umbrella of opinion and pronounces sweetness and light to unbelief and heresy is itself a deception. The tolerance of so-called "liberalism" can be best described as one of the worst forms of tyranny ever known to man.

#### Ancient Israel and Their Prophets

Ancient Israel had, for the most part, an unchanged heart toward the prophets God sent unto them (2 Chronicles 36:14-16). The false prophets and lying spirits seemed to have had the welcome mat always out for them (1 Kings 22:22,23; Ezekiel 13:2, 3, 17). On the other hand, faithful messengers were esteemed as contemptible (Jeremiah 20:1, 2; 26:8, 9). Through the corridors of time you can almost hear the evil doers and pompous princes of Israel say, "Save your breath; you'll not change me." Never did a prophet escape persecution (Acts 7:52). Although, God always intended preaching, yet he gave no guarantees that his preachers would be accepted. Consequently, with increased faithfulness, there was increased adversity. With great courage and fearless faith, the old prophets spoke out against the evils of their day. With vigor of mind, they preached for souls not smiles, not regarding the mocks and chills of men (Ezekiel 33:30-33).

#### Modern Preaching A Contrast

Much modern preaching is not worth the breath it takes to speak it. Many pupits have not yet learned that in trying to speak to be all things to all men, with matters of eternal truth hanging in the balance, one winds up being nothing to anybody.

#### A Balance Needed

We should not be altogether woe and calamity preachers but our words should include the whole spectrum of love as well as the whole counsel of God (1 Corinthians 13; Acts 20:27). We should not preach with bile but benevolence toward those who have lost their way.

We should not preach as those eager to have the grim visage of controversy upon us, but in brotherly affection seek to correct the erring, being more desirous to convince than confute. Let us not preach as men possessing hearts of dirt but having feet of clay, much mindful of our own smallness compared to God's greatness.

#### The World's Need

The world stands in need of the strong hope that true gospel preaching can bring. Thoughtless men in every age have clamored for the soft stepping peddlers of permissiveness and the supply has always met the demand. If the world is to be saved, however, men must preach truth and all the truth, claiming nothing unjust and yielding to nothing unjust. The will being of our planet is bound up to the gospel of Christ. The world needs "Christ and him crucified," but it has a Christianity that is frightfully low grade.

#### The Church's Challenge

The deep waters of religious error run ever so deeply in the lives of men. The crowning transgression of old Israel was their desire for the prophets of the wind and the delusion they brought. People's mind were vacant to the rebukes and reproofs they needed to hear. Today men are caught between the Master and the multitude desiring to hear a perfumed gospel that leaves sinners going to hell smelling good. There is no power like the power of the gospel. Albert Barnes said, "There is no combination of wicked men, and no form of depravity that can stand before the faithful, zealous, pure preaching of the gospel." The aim of preaching is to separate men from sin. Let men so preach, therefore, that the wicked will either become Christians or spend the rest of their lives in the fear of hell. This the great challenge before the church of Christ.

*Bill Dillon, editor*

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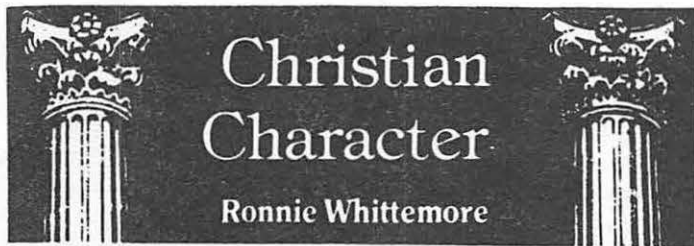
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## SPIRITUAL STARVATION

On past occasions, the Lord's people, out of their genuine concern for mankind, have given liberally of their means, time, and talents to aid the starving in distant lands. Such obedience to the commandment of God is commendable (Galatians 6:10) and "unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Ephesians 3:21). Though we rejoice in the opportunities taken, we grieve in the responsibilities neglected. It has been this writer's observation in his short years of life that God's people are starving to death! Not from a lack of physical food, but from a lack of spiritual food and the death which many have and will suffer is eternal alienation from the Lord (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Therefore, the problem is indeed a serious one which demands attention and action.

### What Are the Causes?

If this subject were an economic issue, the answer may be found in the law of supply and demand. If a group of people were starving physically, then perhaps because of famine, disease, or government intervention, their food supply was diminished or even cut off. But for God's part as Supplier, such is not the case for the **spiritually** starving. The Bible is a never-ending source of spiritual food. Jesus said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). The weeping prophet, Jeremiah, stated, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts" (Jeremiah 15:16). How assuring it is to read from the inspired pen of the apostle Peter, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3) and from the potent pen of the apostle Paul, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in

righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Thus, God provides man with everlasting bread and water (John 6:35).

However, the plan of God includes the use of His servants in supplying man with the wonderful words of life. The apostles preached to the Jews on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. Stephen disputed with the "stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears" in Acts 6 and 7. Philip preached "the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ" to the Samaritans (Acts 8:12). Later, he preached Jesus to the eunuch (Acts 8:35). Peter said to Cornelius that Jesus "commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead" (Acts 10:42). Later Paul, Barnabas, Silas, John Mark, Timothy, Titus, Luke and hosts of others preached Christ "to every creature which is under heaven" (Colossians 1:23). Gospel preachers have the obligation to proclaim the gospel of Christ and no other gospel (Galatians 1:6-9).

Yet spiritual starvation occurs when a preacher gives in to the whims of the day. Pulpits across this land are filled with men who look upon preaching as a mere "business appointment" and not the means by which souls are saved. They lack conviction and detest boldness. They love popularity, so they "tickle the ears" of their listeners. They speak so positive that who would complain? These men fill their sermons with secular words and avoid the scriptures. Book, chapter and verse preaching is not their style; it is too harsh, too complicated, and too controversial. It is evident that these preachers are "ashamed of the gospel of Christ" because they will not preach it.

But a poor supply of preaching is not the only cause for spiritual starvation. A poor demand by God's people leads to their eternal destruction (Hosea 4:6). Jesus said, "For where your treasure is there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21). For centuries, people have been trading their spiritual riches and treasures for physical riches and pleasures. "And what more shall I say? for the time would fail me to tell of" Achan, Judas, and Demas. A vast number of people no longer request, "Is there any word from the Lord?" The fancy of the day is preaching that makes one "feel good." The cry is heard, "Preach only positive things!" Exposing error and sin is harsh, cruel, mean and unloving. "Am



## GHANA: THAT ALL MIGHT HEAR

Bill Dillon

The greatest accomplishment in the world is to see a sinner saved by grace, being delivered from darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1:13). The west African nation of Ghana is a land where Zion's light brightly shines with thousands seeking after the truth. Consequently, tremendous visible results have been accomplished in recent years as brethren have spent sleepless nights, shed barrels of tears, and invested anxious hours toward the one noble purpose of the salvation of souls.

A recent thrust into Ghana was made by brethren from Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi and Georgia, to conduct a preacher training seminar and assist local brethren in personal work, street preaching, visiting schools and supplying needed evangelistic materials. Brethren Bill Mead, M. W. Kiser, Curtis Hickey, Allen Carmichael, John Polk, John Stacy and Bill Dillon engaged in this effort during the month of February.

### Much Preaching and Teaching Accomplished

A preacher training seminar was conducted in the capital city of Accra at Achimota School with approximately sixty participants. Many of the men traveled several miles to attend. It is impossible to estimate the amount of good accomplished by such efforts. Classes were taught on a wide range of subjects such as, "Survey of New Testament Churches," "Ecclesiastes," "Church Leadership," "Minor Prophets," "Sermon Outlining," "Debating," etc. The classes started each morning at 8:00 and extended into the late evening hours.

Visiting public schools to preach the gospel is always thrilling. As a result of street preaching and house to house visiting, some sixteen conversions resulted and over 150 individuals signed up for Bible Correspondence Courses. Gospel meetings were conducted at Suhum, Nsawam, Tema, Jauben, and other churches were visited and exhorted on the Lord's Days.

## A Great Opportunity

The innocence and genuineness of the people in Ghana cannot but make a lasting impression on the minds of visitors. Throughout Ghana thousands are unhappy with traditional and spiritualist beliefs, and the staleness of denominationalism is seen everywhere. There is no doubt that Ghana remains one of the greatest opportunities available today for evangelism. The cry of the saved has been heard from Ghana but the cry of the lost is also heard. May God bless all proper means to teach lost souls the eternal truths of God's Book.

The Great Commission stands next to every Christian's heart and upon our shoulders hangs the heavy responsibility of going and teaching in all parts of the earth.

### Pressing Needs

There is a powerful thirst for gospel literature to be sent to Ghana. Anyone interested in helping to send KJV Bibles, John Hurt correspondence courses, sermon outline books for native preachers, and other such materials can contact Ted Wheeler, P. O. Box 1015, Tema, Ghana, West Africa. Brother Wheeler is doing an effective job as resident missionary in Tema and is deserving of faithful brethren's support.

Time was never more opportune than now. The means are available. The conditions are favorable. Millions are dying. Victor Hugo said, "Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come." It is also true that nothing is more pathetic than an idea acted upon too late! Brethren, while the door is open, please help a land with such a strong desire for truth.

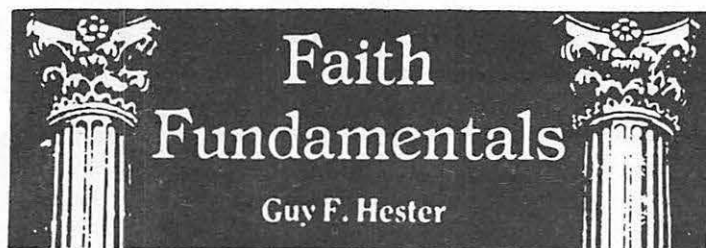
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### When One Looks Backward... (Continued from page 1)

Friend, may we never leave the place of refuge that we have in service to God (Psalm 57:1). May those who have put their hands to the plough of Christianity, never look backward to the world, but continue to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:14), that they may be fit for service in the kingdom of glory.

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## SOME OUTSTANDING CHARACTERISTICS OF A LOST MAN

In Acts chapter ten we have the record of the conversion of Cornelius and his household. As we read this account and the events leading up to his conversion, we note that Cornelius was an outstanding man prior to his becoming a Christian. He was a military commander, "a centurion of the band called the Italian band" (Acts 10:1). It is rare indeed to find one of such importance interested in spiritual things. Yet the records shows in verse two that he was "a devout man." He was devoted to God and things of a spiritual nature although he was not yet a Christian. How we need more people today who are devoted to God. So many of our time are devoted to worldliness (1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4).

Cornelius "feared God with all his house" (Acts 10:2). Not only was he concerned about himself but his family as well. He was the head of his household and recognized his responsibility to lead them in the paths of righteousness. The husband is to be the head of the wife (Ephesians 5:22-24). He is to have his children in subjection to him (Ephesians 6:1-4). We do not have enough fathers who bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

He was benevolent. He "gave much alms to the people" (Acts 10:2). He was not stingy or covetous but gave "much alms." God demands liberal and cheerful givers (1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5).

Cornelius was a man of prayer. He "prayed to God always" (Acts 10:2). He understood that prayer is man's only means of talking to God. A great deal is being said about prayer in school, but I am much more concerned about prayer in homes than I am prayer in school. If we had more praying fathers, we would have more pious children. We are told to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). However, God will not hear a sinner's prayer who regards iniquity in his heart and turns away his ear from hearing the law (John 9:31; Psalm 66:18; Proverbs 28:9).

Another outstanding characteristic of this man was that he was interested in the spiritual welfare of others. He "called together his kinsmen and near friends" (Acts 10:24). How we need to show more interest in others in spiritual matters, especially relatives and friends.

When he learned that he was not right religiously, he acted immediately to learn the truth. He said to Peter, "Immediately therefore I sent for thee" (Acts 10:33). When we learn that we are in error religiously we need to act **now** to make the necessary corrections in our lives. "Behold now...is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

No one could question the fact that Cornelius was a good man (Acts 10:1-2), but he was not saved by his goodness. He was not saved by prayer although his prayers came "up for a memorial before God" (Acts 10:4). He was not saved by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This was to convince Peter and his Jewish brethren that the gospel and salvation are for the Gentile as well as the Jew (Acts 10:44-48). He, and those of his household were saved when they obeyed the command to "be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48).

Those who are unsaved today can be saved just like Cornelius and his household were saved. Upon hearing "all things that are commanded thee of God" (Acts 10:33), believe and "be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48).

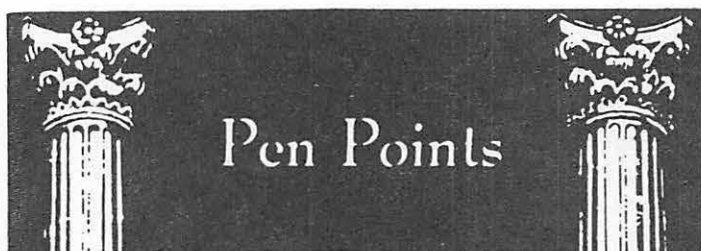
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## CONFUSION BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND COLLEGE

Ronnie Whittemore

With the onslaught of Satan's schemes and devices on every hand, it is quite evident that these are **not** cautious times. Many brethren have been deceived into participating and encouraging methods and procedures which do not meet the approval of God. Jesus said that authority is either from heaven or from men (Matthew 21:23-27).

If one cause could be listed for the error and confusion which exist in the church of the Lord today, it is the lack of respect for the authority of God. This disrespect results in false doctrines, religious divisions, and a loss of the distinctiveness of the church of Christ. Regardless of what man thinks, feels, or believes, "the word of the Lord is right" (Psalm 33:4). Therefore, "whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17).

With these points established, the purpose of this article is to untangle the web of confusion which exists between the church and the college.

### The Church, A Divine Institution

The church is a divine institution which was purchased by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). The church wears the name of Christ, practices the teachings of Christ, and is organized according to the divine pattern (Romans 16:16; Ephesians 5:23-27; Philippians 1:1).

### The Home, A Divine Institution

The home is also a divine institution and was established in the garden of Eden (Genesis 2:18-24). Within the framework of the home, God authorized that there is to be one man and one woman. From that marriage union, children are produced and their rearing and training are the responsibilities of the parents (Ephesians 6:1-4).

The college is an adjunct of the home, **not** the church. The church does not have the obligation to provide a secular education

for the young or old. The college serves as a means by which **parents**, if they choose, can obtain further training for their children. Colleges which maintain a good Christian environment and boards of directors whose desires are to do things God's way are to be commended. Such institutions and their leaderships are tremendous assets to the home.

### The Missionary Society, An Human Institution

Several decades ago, another institution was established. Unlike the home and church, the missionary society is **not** authorized by God. Innovated by man's wisdom, the missionary society serves as an adjunct of the church. These associations seek to do the work which God assigned to the church. These organizations rob the church of her glory (Ephesians 3:21).

### Apples and Oranges

To compare the work of the college to the work of the missionary society is like comparing apples to oranges since the college is an adjunct of the home and the society is an (unauthorized) adjunct of the church. Yet, in attitudes, there are some similarities between these two institutions. And these attitudes are leading causes in the confusion between the church and the college.

### Fears and Arguments

One of the early fears of the missionary society was that the society would become a substitute of the church. The same fear has been recognized and realized regarding the colleges. Again, the college is not a work of the church, nor is it the church. Jesus died for his church (Matthew 16:18). Jesus did not die for Freed-Hardeman College, David Lipscomb College, Harding University, or any other college. Yet, evidence suggests that many people have substituted the "college" for the church. They **contribute** more money to a college, than the church. They **devote** more time to the activities of a college than the work of the church. They **defend** a college when they will **not defend** the church! So for many people, the college has priority over the church. Yet, Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness..." (Matthew 6:33).

The second fear of the missionary society was that the society would dictate to the congregations. Remember, the college and the church are not the same! It is not right

(Continued on page 11)

# Restoration Reachbacks

## THE CHURCH THAT PAUL PERSECUTED

E. L. Flannery

Perhaps no Christian ever met with as much persecution as did Paul. And yet, it is difficult to find anyone who persecuted the Christians more than he, before he obeyed the gospel. It is stated that Saul (later he was named Paul) made "havoc" of the church. He was vicious! He was "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts 9:1). In his prejudice Saul was as a madman. He later of himself said, "...many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priest; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft...and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities" (Acts 26:10, 11).

### What Church Did Paul Persecute?

Paul did not persecute the Catholic Church, for it did not come into existence until a few centuries after Paul was dead. It developed by a gradual apostasy from the Truth, even as Paul stated (1 Timothy 4:1-3). (See also 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12). Paul did not persecute any Protestant Church for they all originated 1500 years after Paul lived. Paul persecuted the church of Christ (Philippians 3:6,7). Paul recognized that all true churches (congregations) were churches of Christ (Romans 16:16). Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). Paul persecuted the church that wore the name of Christ; whose members were Christians only (Acts 26:9-11; 11:26). Paul persecuted the church whose members had been baptized "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38; Acts 8). Paul persecuted the church that assembled to eat the Lord's Supper every Lord's day (Acts 20:7; 2:42; 8:3; 1 Corinthians 11; 16:1,2). Paul persecuted the church that believed there was but one way to heaven, even as Jesus taught (Acts 22:4, 5; 24:14; John 10:1, 9).

### Some Like Saul Today!

The church is being persecuted today by some who, like Saul, verily think they are

doing God a service in so doing. Those who simply take the Bible and follow it are called "Campbellites" in an effort to destroy their plea for undenominational Christianity. (There is no other kind of Christinity! E. L. F.) If one accepts the Bible teaching that baptism is "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38); that the Lord's Supper is to be eaten on the Lord's day (Acts 20:7); that we can be simply Christians (Acts 11:26) some are set to make "havoc."

**THE MESSENGER**  
August 24, 1952

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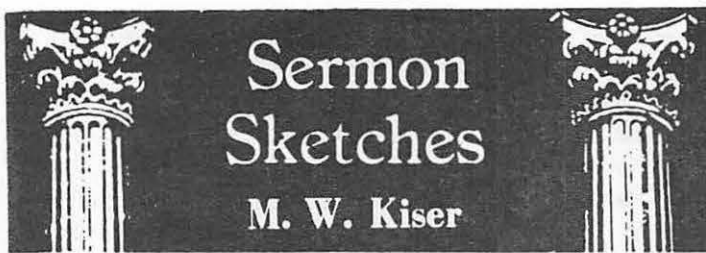
#### GOD'S PART

1. The great love of God for man. (John 3:16)
2. He gave Christ as the Savior. (Luke 19:10)
3. Sent the Holy Spirit as a guide. (John 16:13)
4. Gave the Gospel as "the power" unto salvation. (Romans 1:16)
5. Provided atonement by the blood of Christ. (Romans 5:9; Colossians 1:14)

#### MAN'S PART

1. Hear the Gospel. (Romans 10:17; John 8:32)
2. Believe the Gospel. (Hebrews 11:6; John 20:31)
3. Repent of past sins. (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30)
4. Confess faith in Christ. (Romans 10:10; Matthew 10:32)
5. Be Baptized. (Galatians 3:27; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38)
6. Be faithful unto death. (Revelations 2:10)





## THE MISUNDERSTOOD CHURCH

Acts 28:22

### INTRODUCTION

1. Misunderstanding causes war. Since the days of the Greeks there has been one war for every two years. Even some of these carnal conflicts have been religious wars. Verbal wars continue in religious circles because of misunderstanding of each other or a misunderstanding of the word of God.
2. Since the days of Jesus and His apostles there have been misunderstandings about His kingdom.
  - a. The Jews misunderstood the nature of it. John 18:36.
  - b. The apostles also thought it to be material or earthly. Acts 1:6.
  - c. Early Christians were accused of teaching unlawful customs. Acts 16:21.
  - d. They were also accused of worshipping contrary to the law. Acts 18:13.
  - e. They were accused of heresy. Acts 24:14.
  - f. And of turning the world upside down. Acts 17:6.
  - g. In our text, they were called a "sect."
3. What are some present "misunderstandings" about the church?

### I. "You Do Not Believe The Old Testament."

- A. We believe the Old Testament is inspired scripture. II Timothy 3:16,17; II Peter 1:21.
- B. We also believe the Bible must be handled correctly. II Timothy 2:15.
- C. We believe that now we are to listen to Jesus. John 1:17; Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 1:1,2.
  1. Christ took the old law away and gave us a better covenant. Colossians 2:14; Matthew 5:17; Hebrews 8:6; 10:9. To "fulfill" means to bring to completion; like keeping an appointment. When a man makes two wills, the last supersedes the first.
  2. What purpose does the Old Testament serve? Like a family album, the story

of the good and the bad; illustrating God's faithfulness to stand behind His threats and promises. Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 2:1,2.

3. Some say, "Well, we take it all." The tabernacle and the church? The blood of animals and of Christ?

### II. "You Are A Denomination Started By Alexander Campbell."

- A. Who was Alexander Campbell?
  1. A great religious reformer that worked to restore New Testament Christianity in the 1800's.
  2. Prophecy foretold a falling away. II Thessalonians 2:12; I Timothy 4:1-3; II Timothy 4:2,3; Acts 20:28-32.
  3. It would be right to go back. Jude 3; II John 9; Revelation 22:18,19.
  4. The restoration of a thing is not the beginning of that thing. (An antique for illustration.)
  5. When I sow Kentucky blue grass, that does not make it Kiser grass. (see: Luke 8:11; I Peter 4:11.) If Campbell preached the gospel and people obeyed it, that did not make them Campbellites.
  6. What about succession? You don't need succession when you have the seed. (Take corn or wheat for example.)
- B. Of what denomination were the Apostles members?
  1. None! Because there were none!
  2. Why? Because Jesus did not want any! Matthew 16:18; John 17:20,21; I Corinthians 1:10-12.
  3. The denominational concept (the church is smaller than the church universal yet larger than the church local) is foreign to the scriptures. Ephesians 1:22,23; 4:4.
  4. If you, I, Campbell, or anyone else obeyed the same gospel the Apostles preached, we would all be members of the same church.
  5. A Baptist lady said to me, "If we all understood the scriptures in their true sense we would all be members of the same church."
- C. We preach Christ... Not Campbell!
  1. As Saviour. Matthew 1:21; Acts 4:12.
  2. As Redeemer. Ephesians 1:7.
  3. As coming King. John 14:1-3.
  4. As Judge of mankind. Acts 17:30,31.

(Continued on page 9)

### III. "You Do Not Believe In Music."

- A. To answer this point there are a few rules to keep in mind.
  - 1. We are under the authority of Christ. Colossians 3:16.
  - 2. Christ sent the Holy Spirit to the Apostles to guide them into all truth. John 16:7-13.
  - 3. We are to continue in their teaching. Acts 2:42; Philippians 4:9; II Timothy 2:2; Revelation 22:18,19.
- B. We do too believe in music!
  - 1. It is a matter of which kind - vocal or instrumental.
  - 2. Which is authorized by the New Testament? Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16.
- C. The popular objections to our position are not acceptable for what proves too much proves nothing.
  - 1. "It is a God given talent."
  - 2. "David had them in the Old Testament."
  - 3. "The Bible does not say, 'Don't do it.'"

### IV. "You Believe In Water Salvation."

- A. We believe that Jesus is our saviour and that His blood cleanses us from all sin.
  - 1. This is a stated Bible fact. Acts 4:12; Matthew 26:28; I John 1:7; Revelation 1:5.
  - 2. We locate His blood in His body. I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:7; Acts 20:28.
  - 3. Christ shed His blood in His death upon the cross. John 19:34; Romans 5:6-10.
  - 4. He saves conditionally (or there would be universal salvation.) Hebrews 5:8,9; I John 2:1.
  - 5. We come to His death where the blood is found in baptism. Romans 6:1-6, 16-18.
- B. Where did God place baptism in relation to salvation in passages that speak of both. Mark 1:4; 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; I Peter 3:21.
- C. The efficacy is not in the water, but in obedient faith.
  - 1. The case of Naaman. II Kings 5.
  - 2. The case of the blind man. John 9.
  - 3. So with the believer. Colossians 2:12.

### CONCLUSION

- 1. I am not concerned so much with "who" is right as I am with "what" is right. We don't believe we are morally better than everybody else; or possess more sincerity. But it takes more than morality and sincerity to be saved.
- 2. It makes a difference what we believe if we are concerned about: forgiveness- Hebrews 10:4; freedom- John 8:32; purification- I Peter 1:22; condemnation- II Thessalonians 2:11,12; heaven- John 8:24. Truth is narrow and popular opinion or human judgement cannot alter it.
- 3. I know of no truth you must give up to be a member of the church of Christ.

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### *Spiritual Starvation. . .* (Continued from page 3)

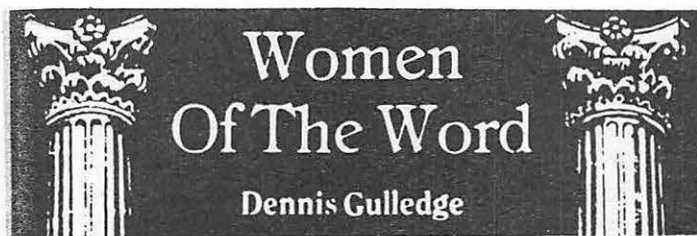
I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth" (Galatians 4:16)? Such attitudes and neglect will result in "weeping and gnashing of teeth."

#### What Is the Cure?

A return to the "old paths" (Jeremiah 6:16) will save the lost. Several decades ago, people were appealing to the scriptures as their guide. Hundreds, even thousands, left their denominational beliefs and practices and obeyed the gospel of Christ. Debates were common as men and women studied God's word and recognized that truth must be followed. What a thrill it must have been for gospel preachers to see the multitudes of honest people turn from their wicked ways unto the living God. How encouraging it must have been for these preachers to hear the pages of Bibles rustle as their hearers "searched the scriptures...whether those things were so (Acts 17:11).

The cure is simple. Let us study our Bibles daily. Let us demand gospel preaching and Bible authority. Let us demand preachers to proclaim truth or else leave the pulpit. Let us stand four-square upon the word of God. May we be Christians who want to hear **BIBLE!**

Route 4, Box 134-AA  
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## THE SISTERS OF BETHANY

Two of the best known names among women of the Word are Martha and Mary, two sisters who resided in Bethany. They are remembered for the fact that they were friends of the Lord until the very end of His earthly pilgrimage. They were not "fair weather" friends, nor were they "lip service" friends, but comrades of the most genuine stock. They were willing to pay whatever price was necessary to being true friends of the Lord (John 15:14-15).

It is also known that they loved Jesus and were dearly loved of Him (John 11:5). Martha and Mary were capable of a deeper understanding, greater sympathy and more whole-hearted allegiance than the average disciple. The sentiment of Alexander Campbell, in addressing the five Marys mentioned in the New Testament, would apply to both subjects of this article. He wrote, "They loved the Saviour, and he loved them, and has given to them eternal fame, not for their fine taste, their highly cultivated imagination, their mighty genius, or their elegant accomplishments, but for their deeds of unassuming piety, and works of sincere and unaffected love."<sup>1</sup>

This family in Bethany had a place in the Lord's heart and life which was shared by few others. The New Testament records three instances in which Jesus spent time with Mary, Martha and Lazarus. First, at a family meal (Luke 10:38-42); second, at a funeral (John 11:1-46); and third, at a supper (John 12:1-9). Our study will focus upon the first of these three occasions.

### Jesus Welcomed in Martha's Home (Luke 10:38)

Jesus came to "a certain village." John reveals that this village was Bethany, located about two miles from Jerusalem (John 11:1, 18). Jesus was certainly no stranger to this little town. Eleven New Testament references connect the name of the Saviour with Bethany (Matthew 21:17; 26:6; Mark 11:1, 11, 12; 14:3; Luke 19:29; 24:50; John 11:1, 18; 12:1).

Martha graciously received Him into her house. Jesus never enters a home where He is unwelcome, and where His presence

would be an intrusion. Is your home a Christian home where the presence of Christ is felt by family and guests alike? Robert R. Taylor, Jr., has properly observed that, "Christ separate and apart from the home means a Godless and Christless home. Where the Godhead does not reign in the home, Satan will be on that home's throne."<sup>2</sup>

### Martha's Complaint Against Mary (Luke 10:39-40)

We find in these two sisters a portrayal of familiar types of character and temper. Some have pictured Martha as representing a worldly class of women, and Mary as being symbolic of those women who are more keenly attune to heavenly concerns. The former assessment is hardly fair to Martha. Both of these women loved Jesus, but they had different ways of showing that love. As J. W. McGarvey commented, "Martha honored Jesus as Guest, but Mary honored him as Teacher."<sup>3</sup> If Martha appears bustling and busy, it is only the sign of her devotion.

Mary "sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word" (Vs. 39). She made use of the opportunity that was her's to imbibe heaven's truth from the lips of God's Son. As Roy H. Lanier, Sr., suggested, "Mary was of the studious, contemplative type."<sup>4</sup> Indeed she was (Cf., John 12:1-3). May her tribe increase in the world.

"Martha was cumbered about with much serving" (Vs. 40). That is, she was overly occupied with the household business of the moment. The word "cumbered" in this passage means literally, "to draw from around."<sup>5</sup> That is to say she was distracted (See, marginal reference, ASV). Martha's attention had been drawn away from what the Lord could do for her. She was totally absorbed in what she could do for Him.

### Caution and Commendation (Luke 10:41-42)

The finger of caution is pointed at Martha (Vs. 41). Her mistake was not in serving, but, in being overly burdened in "much serving," or, giving too much attention to physical concerns of the moment. This is a fine portrayal of many members of the church of Christ today. They are "anxious and troubled about many things," and that which is so demanding of our time and energies is no more important than that which distracted Martha from something more important. Brethren often become so wrapped up in the cares of business, entertaining visitors, housekeeping, etc., that their attention is turned away from that which is most needful. Too many of

(Continued on page 11).



*The Sisters of Bethany...*  
(Continued from page 10)

us have no time to be faithfully regular in our attendance at the worship hour, Bible classes, visitation, or, any other aspect of the Lord's work simply because we are "anxious and troubled about many things."

Jesus cautions against the temptations incident to the activities of Martha, and that is that the concerns of this life, though lawful and proper that they be attended to, can be dangerous if we are distracted by them. It is very possible for us to be so dedicated in supplying the physical needs (and many times the "wants") of our families that we leave those most vital concerns of the soul wholly unattended. We can give an unbalanced degree of attention to domestic, or extracurricular activities, in which we as families may engage, and neglect that essential element of spiritual nourishment, and lose our own souls as well as those of our children (Matthew 4:4).

The finger of commendation is pointed at Mary (Vs. 42). In her timeless example we see the wisdom of putting first things first in the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:19-21, 33). Her's was the better way of honoring Christ--by receiving His Word into her heart (Psalm 119:11). Her's was a permanent privilege--one never to be taken away.

How many brethren are there who are the very image of Martha? They are overcome and distracted by many things, even in the name of serving Christ. Let us be more like Mary and sit at the feet of Jesus at our every opportunity.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Five Marys: Remarks," Millennial Harbinger 3, (July, 1846):400.

<sup>2</sup>Robert R. Taylor, Jr., Christ in the Home (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), Introduction.

<sup>3</sup>J. W. McGarvey and Philip Y. Pendleton, The Fourfold Gospel (Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Foundation, n.d.), p. 478.

<sup>4</sup>Roy H. Lanier, Sr., ed., "Mary and Martha, Friends of Jesus," Lesson X--September 14, 1947, Teacher's Annual Lesson Commentary on Bible School Lessons, 1947. (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1946), p. 259.

<sup>5</sup>Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973), p. 357.

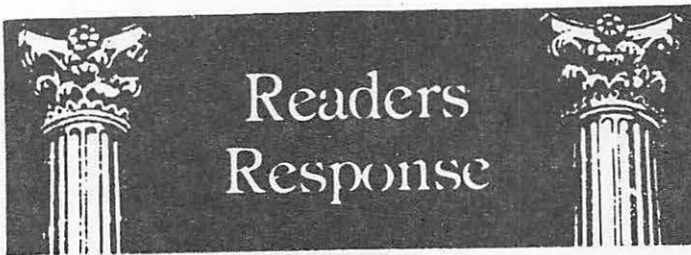
*Confusion Between...*  
(Continued from page 6)

to allow the wishes and desires of a college to "run" the church. God has designated this responsibility to the eldership of the local congregation (Hebrew 13:17). Decisions are made by elderships (each congregation being autonomous), and not by a president or board of trustees. Yet, too often, college officials dictate policies, and pressure churches to "hire" certain men of their choosing as local preachers. The Bible serves as our guide in all things (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

#### A Final Cause for Confusion

Upon occasion, various groups who support a college conduct activities such as bake sales, fashion shows, etc. to raise funds for that college. There is nothing wrong with concerned individuals participating in these efforts. However, a danger does exist when church buildings and their facilities are used. One should recognize that a building is a building. Yet wisdom should be exercised in such matters. Our friends and neighbors may not see the distinction between the church and school. By their observation of these activities taking place in the church building and their seeing a sign placed in the yard stating, "sponsored by the ladies of such and such church of Christ," they may form the opinion that the school activity is a work of the church. Therefore, the world views these money making tactics as raising money for and by the church. Certainly, one can recognize the danger of confusing the school and the church by these activities.

In 2 Samuel 6, David borrowed another method from the Philistines in transporting the ark of the covenant. He used a cart and oxen which the Lord had **not** authorized. When the oxen stumbled and the ark of God shook, Uzzah "put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it." God smote Uzzah for his disobedience in touching the sacred thing. The Biblical record states that "David was displeased" (2 Samuel 6:8). In the following verse, David asked, "How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?" He asked the right question at the wrong time. He should have inquired for God's instructions before he introduced his own. Of course, David already knew the method sanctioned by God. Friends, the lesson is clear and concise. Before we, as God's children act, we too should request instruction from the Lord. The answers are in his word. The Bible says, "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22). From whence do you receive your authority? From heaven or men?



# Readers Response

The people at White Oak enjoy the **GOSPEL GLEANER**. It is a very good paper.

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Lafayette, TN

Would you please put me on your mailing list to receive the **GOSPEL GLEANER**. I worship with the Williams Chapel church of Christ.

Thank you,  
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In Christian love,  
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Yours in Christ,  
Barbara Hamm  
Columbus, OH

Dear Editors:

I know you are very busy so I will try to be brief. I am currently serving as preacher for the Franklin church of Christ in Franklin, Louisiana. I would very much appreciate being added to the **GOSPEL GLEANER** mailing list. Thank you so much for your time and may God continue to bless you in your stand for the truth.

Your brother in Christ,  
Terry Phillips  
Franklin, LA

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Arlington church of Christ (McMinnville, TN)	\$ 75.00
Olmer Williams (Indianapolis, IN)	5.00
Charles & Vinola Sewell (Lafayette, TN)	25.00
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# Gospel Gleaner

Volume 2

Number 3

## ANOTHER "NEW" GOSPEL

M. W. Kiser

The pure gospel of Jesus Christ once again is under attack by those who think they have discovered a better way. This attack is of no surprise to us because from the very beginning the gospel has been the object of many human perversions (see: Galatians 1:6-10).

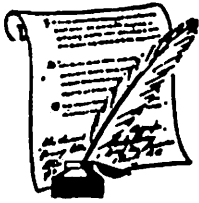
This new gospel might well be called "the gospel of self-esteem." One of the most outstanding preachers of this message is none other than the "crystal-cathedral" builder, Robert Schuller. Read what Schuller says about the death of Christ in his book Living Positively One Day At A Time: "Jesus knew his worth, his success fed his self-esteem...He suffered the cross to sanctify his self-esteem. And he bore the cross to sanctify your self-esteem. And the cross will sanctify the ego trip" (page 201). What a difference between what Schuller says and the apostle Paul said in Philippians 2:3-8! Schuller has followers everywhere, even in the Lord's church. His message is as much secular as it is religious, for that reason he and his preachers can go to soap conventions, church groups, and yes, even to known cultic gatherings and find open arms and large crowds to hear him preach the "gospel of self-esteem."

It is a very true statement that "God didn't make junk." But, neither does Volkswagen! Why are junk yards full of what used to be fourwheeled "bugs"? and why will hell be full of the creation of God? Souls, like automobiles, can become junk through the abuse, neglect, and indifference of their possessors. Sad that some souls are headed for hell and every step of the way they are thinking that they are in "first class" condition (see: Matthew 7:21-23). Junk is junk!

The "gospel of self-esteem" is filled with self-deception. Many have seared their consciences and instead of making needed changes in their lives have instead learned to "visualize" themselves as okay. When a man thinks himself to be something (saved, saint, righteous, heaven-bound) when he is nothing (lost, sinner, wicked, hell-bound) he certainly deceives himself!

Rebirth is needed (John 3:3-5). Any attempt to alter reality, whether it be about ourselves or others, is wrong. Feeling good about self should never be equated with godliness. Faith in ourselves will not save. The "gospel of self-esteem" is nothing but more bait in the social gospel trap.





## Editorial...

### **PADUCAH PREACHER'S EFFORTS IN RESTRUCTURING THE CHURCH (Part One)**

The Bible is filled with warnings about changing or restructuring the magnificent plans of Jehovah God. Man deceives himself when he believes that his thoughts and feelings supercede the way of God (Isaiah 55:8-9). When one changes (adds to, subtracts from, or substitutes for) God's plan, it is no longer God's, but man's (Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:12). As a result, the changed plan loses its saving power. For example:

(1) The subtle serpent added the word, "not" to God's statement in the garden. Consequently, Eve heard, believed and obeyed a lie rather than the truth (Genesis 3:4).

(2) Nadab and Abihu went beyond the word of the Lord and offered strange (unauthorized) fire. They developed a way of their own and reaped their just rewards (Leviticus 10:1-2).

(3) Naaman wanted to dip in the rivers of Damascus or do some great thing to cleanse his leprosy, but God's way was simple and true according to the prophet's words, "Go wash in Jordan seven times and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean" (2 Kings 5:10).

(4) Korah and the other rebels of his day wanted other leaders besides Moses and Aaron whom God had chosen. The earth was their grave (Numbers 16:31-32).

(5) God issued the order that no man was to touch the ark of the covenant. Uzzah did and Uzzah died (2 Samuel 6:6-7).

With multitudes of recorded examples for our learning and admonition (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11), men **still** are attempting to restructure the plans of God and specifically in regards to his church. Whether it be the Pentecostal movement, the Premillennial movement, the Crossroads philosophy, the ecumenical movement, "unity in diversity" or the "social gospel concept," many "angels of light" are seeking to change the ordinances of the Almighty. These individuals have lost respect for the authority of God and seek

after their own wisdom. But, "hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world" (1 Corinthians 1:20)?

On April 6 of this year, brother David Clayton, preacher at the Broadway church of Christ in Paducah, Kentucky, demonstrated his intentions of changing the gospel and the Lord's church by preaching a sermon filled with erroneous doctrines and ridicules. Since the church at Broadway is in our immediate area, it is the desire of this writer as preacher along with the church at Heath and her elders to put forth every effort to stop the mouths of those "who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not" (Titus 1:11).

Since brother Clayton expressed concern at being misunderstood by making the statement, "I hope this is on tape so we can go back to this later," the following remarks concentrate upon a few of the false and misleading statements in his sermon.

***It should be noted by our readers that the following excerpts in the three numbered paragraphs following their respective headings are from a transcript of brother Clayton's sermon.***

#### **The Versions**

(1) "You know, we spend so many times worrying about different translations of the Bible. I hear people making issues about what translation they use and they talk about the Authorized Version or they talk about the American Version or the NIV or all of these different versions. I am going to give you my opinion about those. I don't care what you use. It doesn't bother me one bit, what

*(Continued on next page)*

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- translation you use. I have seen many Christians make issues about those things. It's almost like all right, we have to use this one because it uses thou, thee and thine and it seems to be more reverent and more holy than this other Bible. Well, what are we doing? We are worshipping the Bible."

The Bible teaches that men are to respect and reverence the God of heaven (Hebrews 12:28-29). The solemn style of speech is a great advantage and blessing in the English language in which man can address God in a way that he addresses no one else. But the issue or danger of the modern versions of the Bible is not the discarding of the solemn style of speech. Brother Clayton isolates this one objection while ignoring stronger protests. The modern versions of the Bible are dangerous because of their unfaithfulness to the text. God has always condemned tampering with his word (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:6; Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19). The *New International Version* reads in the preface, that the translators "have striven for more than a word-for-word translation." Anything beyond a word-for-word translation enters the realm of a commentary. For this reason, many denominational doctrines have been planted within the text and footnotes of the modern versions. Since brother Clayton, evidently, opposes any drawing of lines in regards to the versions ("I don't care what you use"), perhaps he endorses the *Cottonpatch Version*, the *New World Translation* (version of Jehovah's Witnesses) or the *Reader's Digest Version*? If he draws the line on one of these, then he is guilty of that which he condemns.

### The Power of God

(2) "If I were to ask most of you this morning what does the Holy Spirit do in your life? First of all, you would probably feel uncomfortable and squirm and secondly, you probably couldn't give me a very clear answer. And, then we wonder why our children will not know about the power of God later on. I believe with all my heart that many people have gone to the far extreme in their beliefs about the Holy Spirit. I really do. But, brethren, as much as they have gone to the other extreme, we are over here. We are close to blaspheming. I will be honest with you. We are close to a denial of the Holy Spirit. We talk about the trinity, God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit. We talk about it, but we don't do anything about it. I don't hear people talking about the Holy Spirit and I would suggest to you that somewhere

in the middle, we are going to have to meet. I think that the church's view on the power of God is wrong. We have made the Holy Spirit nothing more than the word of God and that's all it is to us. I am going to suggest to you that the power of God still works today and that when we try to define it, it is beyond definition and when we try to put it in a box, you can't put it in a box--because God's power,--we are to receive two things when we are baptized, forgiveness of sin, makes us new creatures, born again with the power of God."

Surely, brother Clayton has read in Romans 1:16, "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." The gospel of Christ is God's power. The word is the medium or product of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). He has given us "the perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25). Brother Clayton said, "We have made the Holy Spirit nothing more than the word of God and that's all it is to us." This writer has never heard anyone state that the Holy Spirit is the word. Some men may have inferred this from comments stating that the Holy Spirit works through the word, but the Holy Spirit is **not** the word. Brother's Clayton's sentence above demonstrates his misconception of the Holy Spirit, for he refers to the Holy Spirit as an **it**. The Holy Spirit is not a vapor or a "mystical thing." The Holy Spirit is a person, the third person of the Godhead (John 16:13-15).

Brother Clayton also said, "...I would suggest to you that somewhere in the middle, we are going to have to meet. That I think that the church's view on the power of God is wrong." **First**, man is not bound to a "church view," but to the word of Christ (John 12:48). **Second**, is brother Clayton the authority to whom we turn for a description of the work or influence of the Holy Spirit? What scripture did he produce in the "sermon" to prove his **thoughts** on the power of God? In fact, he stated, that the power of God is "beyond definition." **Third**, upon what basis did brother Clayton naturally suppose that the answer is found "in the middle?" The answers are found in the Bible, God's word, not in man!

### Different Doctrines

(3) "I would love for this place to be a place for all sorts of different doctrines and different people can come and worship here and we work together in the name of Jesus,

(Continued on page 7)



## PRIORITIES IN EVANGELISM

Dean Crutchfield

If there were no customers in his store, a retail merchant would be busy with such work as dusting the shelves, preparing advertising, washing windows, arranging stock, ordering new stock, and so forth. Should a customer enter the store, the merchant would leave the other work to greet and serve the customer. The other work is important. It must be done, and cannot be ignored. However, the immediate priority is the customer and making a sale.

In like manner, there are times when a farmer will be busy servicing equipment or myriad other chores. However, if the crop is ripe and ready for harvest, all other work will take second place, and he will concentrate his time and effort in reaping the harvest.

In today's world there is much work to be done in reaching people with the gospel. In every nation we need to be busy preaching, teaching, distributing Bibles, passing out tracts, and putting forth every effort to reach those in darkness and the bondage of sin. Unfortunately, because of infidelity, humanism, and callous indifference, much of today's world cares nothing for religion, or eternal verities. Among some people, unconcern has degenerated into disdain and loathing. We go and beg for Bible studies, but our pleas are rejected. We invite people to attend periods of worship and gospel meetings, but our invitations go unanswered. Few, if any, respond. As a result, seats in the classrooms and auditoriums are only partially filled. Often, they are more empty than full.

A few nations are different! For the most part, the opposite of the above is true. In some nations, people are eager to hear and learn. This is certainly true in India!

In India, vast numbers of people are hungering and thirsting for the gospel of Christ. Spiritual matters are of primary importance to them. Hindus and Moslems desire to learn of Christianity. Those in denominations, Protestants and Catholics, wish to listen, discuss, and study the Bible. Party lines and traditional prejudices have

not yet hardened hearts into stony callousness and intolerance of truth. Television has not yet captivated the populace. The great majority of the people are not blinded by affluence and the pursuit of fleshly pleasures. One can travel through the countryside to a village, stop, and begin preaching, and like Antioch in Pisidia, in Paul's day, almost the whole village will come together to hear the word of God. (*Offer Bibles, or tracts, and watch as the mobs of people come flocking around to appeal and implore that they be given one*).

In recent years, it is estimated that more than 300,000 have been converted, and churches of Christ have been established in 14, or more, of the 22 States of India. God has blessed evangelistic efforts there. Nowhere, in our generation, has so much been accomplished by so few, with so little. And, India continues to present tremendous opportunities for the harvest of precious souls.

Brethren, we must not neglect the harvest in India, or in other nations, which also provide great opportunities for the harvest of souls!

In view of this, is it wisdom to concentrate resources and manpower in nations that are not responsive; while we do little in a nation, like India, that is now...**today**...ripe unto harvest? How dare we be apathetic and ignore the cries of those begging for the gospel, while we labor in fields that reject the gospel?

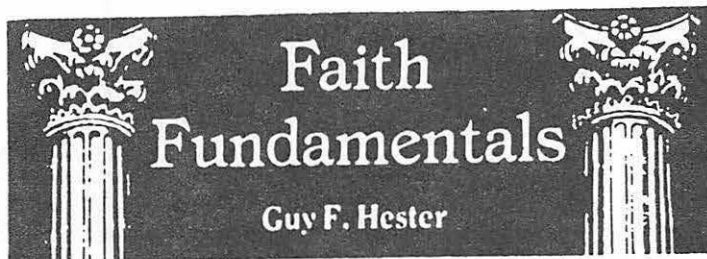
In Matthew 10:14, Jesus said, "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet." Notice, please, that when their preaching was rejected, they departed and went elsewhere. Should we not apply this principle today?

Paul's efforts in Athens (Acts 17) did not result in many conversions. Paul departed and went to Corinth, where "...many...believed and were baptized...And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them." (Acts 18:8, 11). Does it make sense to try and force the gospel on the icy hearts, in a nation, that have closed their eyes, stopped their ears, and slammed their doors in our faces; when at the same time there are those who are hungering and thirsting for the Truth, and begging us to teach them?

Should we "write-off" and abandon forever the field that is barren? Absolutely, not! But first, let us take care of the field that is ripe unto harvest and then go back to the barren ground and try for another crop.

(Continued on page 11)





## THE JUDGMENT DAY

The Bible teaches us that a great day is coming: a day like no man has ever seen before, a day of reckoning. This day will involve both the divine and human elements. God will be on the one hand while man will be on the other; one will be the judge and the other will be the judged. On this day of all days the judgment will take place. The Bible speaks of this event time and time again. Man has been warned to prepare for it and only that day will reveal the results.

Now let us observe a few facts in relation to the judgment which is to come:

**1. There will be a judgment.** The apostle Paul says, *"But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ"* (Romans 14:10). Some may doubt that there will be a judgment, and there are those who publicly and intentionally denounce such a truth but all such people will be brought to their knees one day. The apostle says, *"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God"* (Romans 14:11). Yes, there will be a judgment whether you believe it or not.

**2. All will be there.** The Hebrew writer proclaims, *"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"* (Hebrews 9:27). Since the judgment will take place after death, and death has been pronounced upon every man, we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that all will appear on the day of judgment. All will be there on that great day: the great and small, the rich and poor, the educated and uneducated, the healthy and sick, the saved and unsaved. Yes, all the world who have lived, who are living now, and who will live, shall be there. Not one soul will be allowed to escape.

**3. Each will be judged according to his works.** We read, *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad"* (2 Corinthians 5:10). All works

will be open before the Lord; he will know the hearts of all; not one thing will be allowed to pass by unnoticed. Righteous works will be accepted, but evil works will be condemned.

**4. Christ will be the judge.** The record says, *"Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead"* (Acts 17:31). So Christ will be the judge, the righteous judge. We shall have nothing to fear inasmuch as the Lord will not be a respecter of persons, but will judge us according to our works. Man might not be as fair.

**5. The judgment will be final.** Christ, in picturing it, said, *"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal"* (Matthew 25:46). When the judgment comes it will be too late to prepare. Moreover, after man has been sentenced it will be permanent. Both those who are saved and those who are lost will spend eternity according to God's decree.

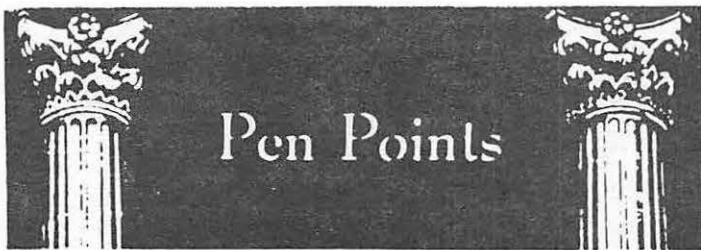
**6. All will be rewarded.** Peter states, *"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear"* (1 Peter 4:17-18)? Those who obey the Lord will be blessed with a crown of life but those who refuse to obey him will be cast into the lake of fire. There are only two classes--no place in between.

The judgment is sure and eternity is certain. With this in mind, what will you do about it? Life is too short, heaven is too wonderful, and hell is too hot for you to take a chance. **Are you ready for the judgment day?**

### HEATH CHURCH OF CHRIST

Route 4      Box 134-AA  
Kevil, Kentucky 42053

Bible School	9:45 A.M.
Morning Worship	10:45 A.M.
Evening Worship	6:00 P.M.
Bible Study (Wednesday)	7:00 P.M.
(Located on Woodville Road-- ½ mile west of the Heath Mall)	



## AVOIDING PROFANE AND VAIN BABBLINGS

Ben F. Vick, Jr.

In concluding his first epistle to the young preacher, Paul wrote, *"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen"* (1 Timothy 6:20-21). The American Standard says *"guard that which is committed unto thee."* The marginal note on the same says *"the deposit."* So, the idea is to guard the deposit. The deposit was the gospel (1 Timothy 1:11; 2 Timothy 2:2). Involved in guarding the deposit, the gospel, is *"avoiding profane and vain babblings."*

*"Vain babblings"* is one word in the original and, according to Thayer, means *"empty discussion, discussion of vain and useless matters"* (p. 343). In a similar vein, Paul commanded Titus, *"But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain"* (Titus 3:9). Paul did not mean it was wrong to discuss that the old law of Moses had ended and that the Jews were no longer amenable to it after Pentecost, because he had done that on numerous occasions, both orally and in written form. But some discussions are empty discussions and are void of any good results. Such describes the upcoming Preachers' Forum at Freed-Hardeman College unless there can be an agreement on formal propositions.

On April 24 of this year, brother E. Claude Gardner wrote me a letter inviting me, along with brother Bill Cline, to meet brethren Ray Hawk and Gordon Smith on the questions of Bible translations and the divided assembly. I was away in a meeting when the letter arrived; but when I returned, I answered it on May 6. The invitation was accepted on my part, provided that, if brother Cline were unable to participate, I would have some say-so as to his replacement. (Evidently, up to this point Hawk and Smith had been making the suggestions). I also suggested

that the discussions be limited to either translations or the divided assembly and that agreement upon specific propositions be reached lest we go everywhere but to the heart of the matter.

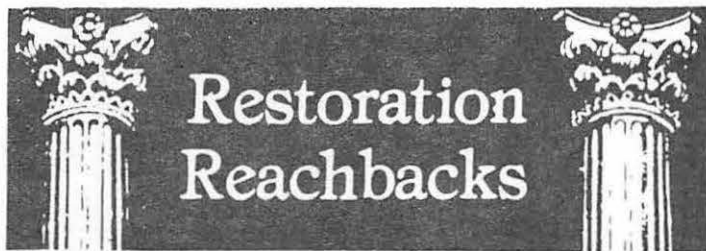
Unbeknown to me, Gardner had written brethren Bill Jackson and Noel Merideth on April 21 (3 days before he had written to me), inviting them to meet Hawk and Smith. Before he had even heard from Jackson and Merideth, he was inviting Cline (or whomever) and me to meet his challengers. Brethren Jackson and Merideth declined because F-HC and her representatives were unwilling to agree to formal propositions.

Before Bill Jackson and Noel Merideth were invited, Gardner had asked brethren Garland Elkins and Robert Taylor to meet Smith and Hawk. Brother Taylor, before accepting the proposed discussion, wanted to know where Gardner stood on the issues. In last year's Preachers' Forum between Highers and Woodson versus Shelly and Hawley, it was evident that Gardner stood on the side of truth with Highers and Woodson; but what about the upcoming forum? Brother Taylor asked brother Gardner several questions, but he gave a politician's response. Brother N. B. Hardeman could have answered the questions forthrightly on a post card and have allowed room for a personal note to the family. Such was not the case with Gardner.

In brother Gardner's answer to my letter of May 6, he stated, *"It was not our plan to have formal propositions to discuss the topics. It has been my observation that formal propositions have not been necessary when articles are written and when speeches and lectures have been given on these topics"* (Letter of May 22, 1986).

Evidently, Gardner's observation came from the field of his own imagination and not from history. Alexander Campbell had said and written much regarding the topics discussed in the Campbell-Rice debate; yet, he insisted on formal propositions and also that he have a say-so in their wording. F. B. Srygley insisted that the proponents of the instrument in worship defend the position set forth in O. E. Payne's book, with which they concurred and endorsed. He insisted that they affirm the instrument to be scriptural—not just permissible. Also, during the height of the controversy on church cooperation and the orphan home, a great deal was written and said by brethren; yet, never, to my knowledge, was a public discussion

(Continued on page 8)



# Restoration Reachbacks

## A DISTINCTIVE PLEA

F. G. Allen

Unless we have a distinctive plea we have no right to exist. The day we become like the denominations around us, that day ends our right to exist as a distinct religious people. If we have a distinctive plea, in that consists our strength. I believe that our distinctive principles are made less prominent in our pulpits now than formerly. I do not mean that our preachers should be always on what is called "*first principles*." Very far from it. But I do mean that our members should be deeply indoctrinated in the things that distinguish us from other religious peoples. The better this is understood the more it will be appreciated and the more firm and consistent will be the Christian life.

When people are led to believe that sectarianism is about as good as New Testament Christianity, their influence for the cause for which we plead is positively hurtful. Whenever we begin to curry favor with the sects and fawn upon them for recognition, we are certain to say but little about a plea that lays the axe at the root of the whole denominational tree. Whenever we begin to curry favor with the world, we are certain to fall in with the world's notions and adjust ourselves to the world's ways. Hence, much of that in which churches now indulge in the way of worldly amusements, carnal methods of raising money, the spirit of mere entertainment in the worship, etc., is due to the fact that they copy the sects rather than the New Testament churches, and are filled with the spirit of the world instead of the spirit of Christ.

The religion of Christ is a religion of spirituality. When you take the spirituality out of a church, you take the life out. You may have members and wealth and culture left, but the power of divine truth and love is gone.

*Paducah Preacher's Efforts...*  
(Continued from page 3)

reaching out and saying, we can overcome these differences if we read the word, if we focus our attention upon Jesus. We are no longer going to be a closed society. We want to reach out and meet those needs and help those people, but we can't do it as long as we have the attitude that we know it all. We need to have the attitude that Christ has all the answers. We are serving him. We love him and we are going to serve him. We are going to reach out to the world."

These statements imply that efforts should be made to restructure the Lord's church. In his "sermon" brother Clayton used the text of Matthew 7:21-29—the **very text** in which Jesus **condemned** what brother Clayton espouses! "*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*" Brother Clayton said that "we can overcome our differences if we read the word, if we focus our attention upon Jesus." Since when, do honesty, sincerity, and the mere reading of God's word save man from his sins and add him to the church (James 1:21-22; 1 John 2:4)? Brother Clayton's concern seems to be directed at men being reconciled to men, but the Bible teaches that men must be reconciled unto God "*in one body by the cross*" (Ephesians 3:16). As a gospel preacher, this writer is dedicated "*to seek and save the lost*," but not under the disguise of deception. Men will be saved from sin when they "*obey from the heart that form of doctrine*" (Romans 6:17). Christ has but one gospel and man's think so's and feelings will not change its saving power (Galatians 1:6-9).

Today, the church of the Lord is faced with threats of apostasy from every direction. The only way to thwart the onslaught of religious error is to pull the sword of the Spirit from the sheath and meet the enemy head-on. The apostle Paul in Ephesians 6:10-17, did not describe armour for the Christian's back, but only his front. Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:13, "*But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.*" May every elder, deacon, preacher and teacher of God's church do his best to beware of wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15).

Ronnie Whittemore, editor



## FALSE ACCUSERS

Bill Dillon

of the issues made without some type of proposition.

But brother Gardner insists that formal propositions are not necessary, alluding to last year's arrangement. However, even in that discussion Rubel never really dealt with the issue, but came with the purpose of proselyting. He said himself that he was not there to defend himself. That's exactly what Hawk and Smith want; otherwise, they would agree to formal propositions. Gardner continues to state the propositions would be in order in ordinary situations. Evidently, then, this is no ordinary situation. Wonder why this issue is any more extraordinary than the issue of baptism, mechanical instruments of music, or the orphan home. Since we are being accused of being neo-antis, why would it not be on a par with these other issues? Perhaps someone can enlighten us.

Brother Smith tells Gardner (sending copies of his letter to all involved) that he is "willing to discuss **anything** with whomever [sic] appears on the forum" with Ray and him. They are willing to defend Smith's 1985 F-HC lecture wherein he accused those who condemn the modern versions and the divided assembly of being neo-antis. Herein lies the rub. Smith and, I presume, Hawk are willing to "discuss **anything** with whomever [sic] appears on the forum," and they probably will—anything and everything but the issue at hand.

On May 28, I wrote a letter to Gardner stating, "Your proposed topics of translations and the divided assemblies are too broad, and it is evident that both of these will also entail a discussion of fellowship which does not deal with one central idea. An abecedarian in the sophomore debating class could detect the weaknesses of your proposed plan."

It was suggested to brother Gardner: Why not, in order to insure wide interest, restructure the program, formulate propositions which clearly define the issues and invite the best men to participate? If such eliminates me; then, so be it. Otherwise, the proposed forum, as it stands to date, will be nothing more than vain jangling and void of any good result. This being the case, I intend to avoid "*profane and vain babblings*."

A favorite device of the Devil is false accusation (Revelation 12:10). Every man has a reputation and a character of some sort or other. Some men are great in reputation and small in character; others are poor in reputation, but rich in character. Even Christ had a reputation; "*He made himself of no reputation*" (Philippians 2:7) that He might display heavenly character. Faithful Elijah had a bad reputation (1 Kings 18:17); also Micaiah (1 Kings 22:8); and it was said of John, "*He hath a devil*" (Matthew 11:18); yet to mention these names is to speak of heaven approved servants of God with character so sterling as to blot out the sun. Brethren should know better than to listen to the mongrel mouths of these who rail with cruel, unjust erroneous words against faithful elders, preachers and churches. Accusation with truth and confrontation with evil is practical righteousness but false words by "hit and hide" critics demonstrate well the maxim "devotion to error cannot produce true righteousness." It is "unholy" men who are said to be "despisers of those that are good" (2 Timothy 3:2-3).

108 Azalea Dr.  
LaFayette, GA 30728

### WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

**HEAR** the gospel of Christ  
Romans 10:13-17.

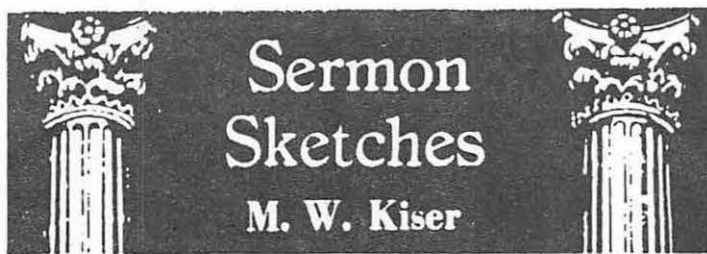
**BELIEVE** in Christ.  
Mark 16:15-16.

**REPENT** of past sins  
Acts 2:36-47.

**CONFESS** faith in Christ  
Romans 10:9-10

**BE BAPTISED** into Christ  
Acts 22:16. I Pet. 3:21.

**LIVE FAITHFULLY**  
Romans 12:1-2.



## THE GOSPEL INVITATION

Matthew 11:28-30

### INTRODUCTION

1. The Bible is a book of wonderful words. One of the wonderful recurring words is "come".
2. Most of us would feel honored if some dignitary were to invite us to dinner; yet here we see the King of kings inviting us to "come."
3. This is an invitation to:

#### I. Salvation (Isaiah 1:18)

- A. This invitation is needed (Noah, Genesis 7:1).
  1. The ark became the means of salvation. Hebrews 11:7;
  2. Water separated the ark from the corruption of the world. 1 Peter 3:20-21; Acts 2:38
  3. The only saved people were in the ark. 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:26-27; Ephesians 5:23-27
- B. This invitation is very urgent (Bartimaeus, Mark 10:46-52).
  1. Others would hinder us. Matthew 23:13
  2. Now is the time to come. 2 Corinthians 6:2
  3. Always, for someone, Jesus is passing by for the last time!
- C. This invitation is often neglected (John 5:40; Matthew 22:3).
  1. Because of impenitence. Acts 28:27
  2. Because of personal matters. Luke 14:18
  3. Because of procrastination. Acts 24:25

#### II. Separation (2 Corinthians 6:17)

- A. One cannot follow Christ until he turns loose of the things Christ opposes.
  1. The rich young ruler. Matthew 19:22
  2. To follow means to go where He goes.

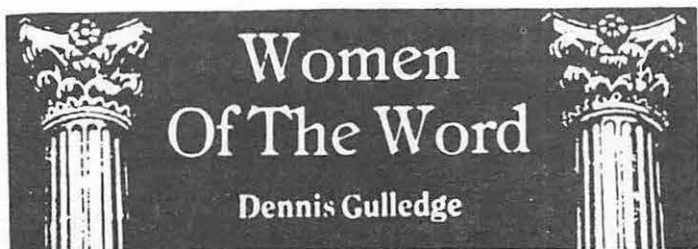
3. Rewards. Matthew 6:33; Romans 8:32
- B. One cannot follow Christ until he comes down from his chosen high places.
    1. Zacchaeus. Luke 19:5
    2. To be in a position to see Christ is not necessarily in a position to walk with Him.
    3. Come down from human creeds and traditions. 2 John 9; Matthew 16:18
  - C. One cannot follow Christ until he comes out of the places of death and darkness.
    1. Lazarus. John 11:43
    2. Only Christ can give life. Ephesians 2:1
    3. How are we made new? John 3:3-5; Romans 6:1-6, 16-18

#### III. Satisfaction (Revelation 22:17)

- A. Jesus is all we need. John 7:37; 6:35; 4:14
  1. Bread and water are necessary to life.
  2. We need what is being offered. Isaiah 53:6
  3. Ill: In 1829 George Wilson was sentenced to hang for murder. He refused a pardon from Andrew Jackson. Supreme Court decreed a pardon is of no value unless accepted.
- B. Some things do not satisfy. Isaiah 55:2
  1. Cesspool or fountain of life? Which for you?
  2. Some are too good to leave the church completely; and too bad to leave the world completely.
  3. Morality alone is not enough. Acts 10:1-4
- C. The freedom dissolves our worn excuses.
  1. "Too sinful." Hebrews 7:25
  2. "Too unlearned." Acts 2:41
  3. "Too many hypocrites." Romans 14:12

### CONCLUSION

1. What hope does a man have who passes up this "gospel invitation?" Hebrews 2:3; 12:25
2. When gospel invitations have ceased, I want to hear Jesus say "come" one more time. Matthew 25:34
3. How will you respond today to this "another gospel invitation."



## THE UNIQUE EVE

Our study for this quarter involves one who precedes all others as a woman among women; the culmination of God's creative activity in Genesis 2. Of course, I speak of "*Eve...the mother of all living*" (Genesis 3:20), she who's name means "life." All godly women since her day are known as "daughters of Eve."

When Eve is mentioned, it is usually to tell of her sin, and the blight which was brought upon the world as a result thereof. Eve made her mistake and is rightly charged with the consequences of her actions. However, that is not the only act of her life. One should not leave the impression that she is all bad. She deserves much more praise than she often gets. It is unbecoming of one to be unnecessarily critical in speaking of his mother. To be sure, she bore her sins and sorrows, the due reward of her deeds, but she also gave us Seth through whom the Redeemer came.

Of the character of Eve we know but little. There is only a small amount of information (Biblical or secular) on her so as to bring out the details of her life. Most studies hold her up as representative of womanhood in general, which is indeed the case, but here we shall attempt to be a little more specific.

As the first woman Eve is unique, with many "firsts" to her credit. Let us examine some of these:

### **Eve Was the First Woman** (Genesis 2:18-23)

This would seem obvious but, let it be said that the creation of the first woman was special, even above that of man. As Cecil Wright observed, "While man was made from the dust of the ground (Genesis 2:7) and was dust refined, woman was made from man and was dust doubly refined."<sup>1</sup>

What is woman? Scripture answers, "*She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man*" (Genesis 2:23). In reply to the above question, Alexander Campbell said, "She is but one-half of man—only the one-half of humanity...I say, we think that she is decidedly the better half."<sup>2</sup> Isaac Errett

added, "Adam is not man without Eve. In discussing man's rights and woman's rights, it should never be forgotten that each is half of the other."<sup>3</sup>

Woman was God's answer to the needs of man. It was not good for man to be alone (Genesis 2:18). Man is a social being. God provided Adam with the opportunity to see his need (Genesis 2:19-20). God provided the only answer to that need and that is woman (Genesis 2:21-22). She was not taken from the dust, nor formed of another animal. Every stage of her creation and presentation to man was designed to make her special to man. The teaching of the Scriptures relative to the divinely intended relationship between man and woman, led Matthew Henry to say that woman was "not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be loved."<sup>4</sup>

The New Testament shows us that woman is the "*glory of man*," being made for him (1 Corinthians 11:7). Woman is in a position subordinate to, but not inferior to man (1 Corinthians 11:8-9). Woman is the "*weaker vessel*" (1 Peter 3:7).

### **Eve Was the First Wife** (Genesis 2:24)

As wife, Eve was "*an help meet*" for her husband Adam (Genesis 2:18). That is, she was a companion suitable to him. Man needs a companion to love him, to share his life, his joys and his sorrows, to be his best friend, and to be a home builder.

Eve provides the basis for the New Testament comparison between the wives of the two Adams. The first Adam's wife was taken from his side. The church, the bride of the second Adam, Jesus Christ, was purchased by the blood from his head, his hands, his feet and his side (Acts 20:28). The New Testament also teaches that the husband must love his wife as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:22-25).

### **Eve Was the First to be Assailed by Satan**

In Edenic paradise man was given a law to be obeyed (Genesis 2:17). Satan's main objective was to weaken Eve's faith in the word of God in general, and the merits of that law in particular (Genesis 3:1-5). Eve travelled down the three well known avenues of temptation in Genesis 3:6 (Cf., 1 John 2:16).

(Continued on page 11)

The penalty for her sin is well known (Genesis 3:16). The consequences were far reaching indeed, even to that of affecting the teaching program of the New Testament church (1 Timothy 2:14). Thus, in the church the woman must take a subordinate role to man. Any practice which places a woman in a position of authority over man is wrong.

### **Eve Was the First to Face the Trials Of Life and Death**

Think of the wonder and amazement that must have flooded Eve's heart as she beheld her first child (Genesis 4:1). She was the first to know the depth of anguish which attends the death of one's own offspring (Genesis 4:25). After the birth of Seth, Eve drops from the Biblical scene, to be referred to no more in the Old Testament. Again, Eve was the first to know the sorrow which sin brings, and was the first to experience Solomon's proverb ere before it was written (Proverbs 13:15b).

### **Eve Was the First to Receive the Promise of Redemption**

She overheard Jehovah's warning to Satan that by the seed of woman a Redeemer would come (Genesis 3:15). Here is the primal prophecy of the coming Christ. Foy E. Wallace, Jr., pin-points the greatness of this prophecy, by showing that, "The natural seed inheres on the male side, such as the seed of Abraham and the seed of David—but in Genesis 3:15 it is **her seed** which would be the object of Satan's enmity."<sup>5</sup>

The creation, fall and redemption of man is the story of the Bible. By one man (and woman) sin entered the world (Romans 5:12). The "tree of life" which was lost in Eden may be regained in heaven (Revelation 2:7), but, we must obey the will of God (Revelation 22:14).

Thus, we have seen the unique Eve with many firsts to her credit. She was the first woman, the first wife, the first sinner, the first mourner and the first recipient of the promised redemption in Christ. In the truest sense every woman is unique who is a woman of the word.

### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup>Cecil Wright, ed., "The Origin of Man," Lesson II—September 13, 1981, Teacher's Annual Lesson Commentary On Bible School Lessons. (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1981-82), p. 17.

<sup>2</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Woman And Her Mission: An Address Delivered before the Henry Female Seminary, New Castle, KY, May 30, 1856," Millennial Harbinger. (June 1856): 307).

<sup>3</sup>Isaac Errett, Evenings with the Bible, Vol. 1. (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1884), p. 48.

<sup>4</sup>Wright, ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Foy E. Wallace, Jr., A Review of the New Versions. (Fort Worth: Foy E. Wallace Jr., Publications, 1973), p. 101.

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### *Priorities in Evangelism...* (Continued from page 4)

Attitudes can change. Doors that were closed can open. Those who say, "No!" this year, may in a few years, say, "Yes".

Should churches be adding a number of preachers to their local church staff, to do the work that members could and should be doing, while there are hell-bound souls, desirous of hearing the gospel, with no one to preach to them? How can churches justify spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to build play houses (family life centers), and secular schools, to care for the physical part of man, while they neglect, or give a pittance, to spread the gospel and help save souls from the fires of hell?

When such things are done, can we say we have our priorities in the proper order. Can we say that we have used common sense in evangelism? Have we been good stewards of our time, talent, and money? Have we done what Paul would have done? Have we done what the Lord wants us to do?

Every day, throughout the world, men and women are keeping their appointment with death. Many depart, unprepared. Some that we could teach, today, who are begging for the gospel, today, will be gone tomorrow. Our opportunity to teach them will then be gone forever! Doors of opportunity do not always remain open. One day, we will stand with those people before the Judge of all the world. What then?



# Readers Response

Dear brethren,

I would appreciate very much my name being added to the mailing list of GOSPEL GLEANER. We need many more good papers such as this.

In his service,  
Terry Claunch  
Fayette, AL

Dear brethren,

I'm enclosing a check for \$7.00 from some of us at Union Grove to help on expenses of sending us a bundle of GOSPEL GLEANERS each month. Thanks for your kindness.

Yours in Christ,  
Henry Hargis

P.S. We enjoy the GLEANER. It is excellent and **sound**. Keep up the good work.

We enjoy reading each article in your paper. Please include me on your mailing list. We worship at Land Between the Lakes congregation at Dover, Tennessee.

In Christian love,  
Tom Elkins  
Dover, TN

Dear brethren,

I recently was shown a copy of the GOSPEL GLEANER and was very much impressed with it. I would like to be put on your mailing list to receive it.

I understand that it is free, but I would send some to help with the expense from time to time.

I am afflicted with cancer, but am a member of the church having served as an elder of the Lake Station church of Christ from 1966 through October 1981.

I appreciate good sound religious publications and encourage their publication wherever and whenever I can.

Thanks in advance,  
brotherly,  
George H. McCord  
Hobart, IN

Dear Sir,

Please place my name on the mailing list of the GOSPEL GLEANER.

Thank you,  
Daniel Ridinger  
Sylacauga, AL

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Arlington church of Christ (McMinnville, TN)	\$ 75.00
Friends at Union Grove (Murray, KY)	7.00
Cecil Allison (Fairland, IN)	15.00
Nancy Pryor (Memphis, TN)	30.00
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# Gospel Gleaner

Volume 2

Number 4

## WHY JESUS DIED

Harold Bigham

The cross and the death of Jesus Christ is central in the theme of man's redemption, in Christian worship and also in living the Christian life. In the death of Christ on the cross of Calvary, one sees the just dying for the unjust; the righteous sacrificed for the unrighteous; the innocent paying the price for the guilty. John, the baptizer, stated, "*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*" (John 1:29). Isaiah prophesied of the sufferings that the suffering Saviour would take upon himself for the sinners of the world (Isaiah 53). Let us notice some reasons why the Son of God, Jesus Christ, died upon the cross of Calvary.

**Christ died to become King.** Jesus the Christ came not as a conquering military great riding on a prancing stallion, but he came riding on a lowly ass colt (Zechariah 9:9). He came not to subdue nations, cities, and lands but to win the hearts of those who would obey him. He did not come as a statesman, yet he delivered many great sermons and was the Master Teacher. He came to minister and to give his life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28). By the cross, he became King of kings, Lord of lords and Saviour of souls (Hebrews 2:9-10). He died to become King over our souls.

**Christ died to prove his Messiahship.** By the cross, Christ demonstrated himself to be the Anointed One. The Hebrew writer

spoke of Christ's purging our sins and reigning on the right hand of God (Hebrews 1:2-4). Christ had victory over death by his resurrection on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:1-19). Christ proved his Messiahship by his death on the cross.

**Christ died to manifest God's love for man.** God's love is evidenced by Paul as he wrote, "*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*" (Romans 5:8). John emphasized the degree of God's love as he recorded the words of Jesus, "*For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life*" (John 3:16). God's tremendous love for man caused his Son to die on the cross.

**Christ died for our sins.** Christ's blood was shed in death as atonement for our sins (Romans 5:9-11). His blood went backward and forward in redeeming man. His blood covers our past sins and future sins as one

(Continued on page 4)

**PADUCAH PREACHER'S EFFORTS  
IN RESTRUCTURING THE CHURCH**

(Part Two)

**In Pen Points . . . . . Page 7**



## Editorial...

### LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS



An ancient and wise King once wrote "*Vanity of vanities, all is vanity*," (Ecclesiastes 1:2). As the monarch used the word "vanity," he was not referring to a ladies' dressing table but to the end result of a lifestyle that omitted God. Vanity means "empty, worthless or futile." Why did the King's lifestyle prove profitless? What was the lifestyle? Can men today learn from this story?

Few have ever had a better opportunity to explore life than Solomon. He lived a pleasure-packed existence; fantastic wealth; enormous power, great wisdom, respect, wives and concubines and world-wide fame would make him the envy of most men in any generation. Solomon was highly gifted and extremely ambitious and he set out on a quest to reach the top of success in every endeavor. Surely he would come to have contentment and satisfaction. But, sadly, after his pursuing, all he had was a painful and hungry heart. Where did Solomon go wrong?

Solomon's miscalculations led into the dark and unsatisfying pathways of the meaninglessness and the emptiness of worldly matters. Solomon's dissatisfaction with human wisdom is evident. In Ecclesiastes 1:17, he said:

"And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. For in much wisdom is much grief..."

Wisdom divorced from God is foolishness.

The futility of worldly pleasure is seen in Ecclesiastes 2:1:

"I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity."

What are earthly pleasures apart from the soul's deep needs?

The bankruptcy of riches, fame and power are likewise felt as he writes again in Ecclesiastes 2:4-11:

"I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees: I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me: I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I got me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun."

All things of an earthly nature resulted in a hollow echo. Solomon was learning that pleasure without God is an illusion; riches without righteousness equals vexation of spirit; and fame without faith is futile.

(Continued on page 4)

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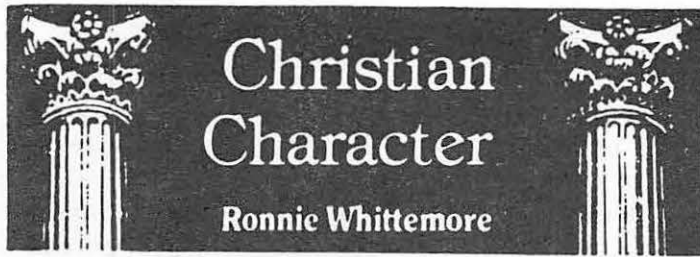
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## CHRISTIANITY: A DAILY RELIGION



One of the most interesting and enlightening studies of the Bible is to trace a particular word or phrase and the use of that word or phrase throughout the scriptures. In Genesis chapter one, the phrase, "And God said," is used about ten times. That is followed by two other phrases—"and it was so" and "it was good." The Psalmist summarized Genesis one in this way, "For he spake, and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast" (Psalm 33:9). In the book of Hebrews, the inspired writer exhorted the saints with the words, "Let us" numerous times. (To preachers this is known as the "Let Us Patch" in Hebrews).

The word "daily" occurs frequently in the scriptures. Under the law of Moses, the priests were required to offer sacrifices **daily** (Exodus 29:38-39) and the high priest burned sweet incense **every morning** (Exodus 30:7-8). In this busy world, men often neglect their responsibilities to God. Usually God is remembered upon the first day of the week, but forgotten the rest of the week. Some people practice a "Sunday religion" and not a "daily religion." Today, God's people constitute a priesthood (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6; 5:10). Christians are to offer daily sacrifices and service unto God (Romans 12:1-2). The book of Acts describes the conduct and practices of the Lord's priesthood in the first century. The twentieth century church can learn about the devoted lives of these faithful men and women by tracing the word "daily" throughout Acts.

### Daily Evangelism

In Matthew 26:55 Jesus said, "I sat daily with you teaching in the temple." The early church followed the example of Christ (1 Peter 2:21). The church grew and multiplied because of daily evangelism. "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach

and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42). Even when persecution came upon the church at Jerusalem, the church continued her evangelistic fervor. Despite the death of Stephen and the imprisonment of the apostles, "they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4).

The Lord's church in this century also can increase if she works daily. Paul gave the admonition, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9). It seems that many people have forgotten the divine formula of conversion. Many brethren have "zeal without knowledge." In an attempt to draw large crowds into buildings, gadgets and gimmicks have been employed to entice the world. The Lord's church is a spiritual kingdom, not an earthly one (John 18:36). God has never authorized the dangling of carnal things in the faces of carnally-minded people in an effort to tease or trap them in the church. Conversion is gospel obedience (Romans 6:17-18). Jesus said, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matthew 13:15). When his hearers rejected the divine message, Jesus did not resort to trickery or some "new thing." Paul recorded, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:6). Peter preached, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19). Though nearly 2,000 years later, the Lord's people have no new message, no new appeal, no new method (John 12:32). The gospel of Christ is to be preached **daily** to a lost world (1 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

Dear Christian reader, when was the last time that you taught the gospel to a friend? a relative? or a stranger? Have you mailed or given a tract to someone lately? Do you avoid or invite religious discussions at work? Are you preaching the gospel or a gimmick?

### Daily Study

Jesus told his Jewish hearers, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). Paul commanded Timothy, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). A great commendation is delivered to the Bereans

(Continued on page 4)



**Why Christ Died**  
(Continued from page 1)

meets his requirements for pardon. He is our propitiation (1 John 2:2). He is our Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5). He brings sinful man back into a friendly relationship with God the Father after his separation because of his sins (Isaiah 59:1-2). Our sins put the Son of God on the cross.

In his death, Jesus the Christ sustained the majesty of divine law which sinful man had trampled under foot. Christ paid the penalty of its violation. Because of his death, sinful man can live forever in the bliss of heaven by obedience to heaven's terms of pardon.

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**Lifestyles of the Rich . . .**  
(Continued from page 2)

Solomon did find value in worshipping God (Ecclesiastes 5:1-2). This was even more meaningful when the last unyielding fact of life was faced—death! In 8:8 he reminds us of the sobering reality:

"There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death..."

Once death comes, destiny is determined for "where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Ecclesiastes 11:3). At last "shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

King Solomon was a wise man who tells the true meaning of life begins and ends in reverence to God. "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). After being lost following his passions and pride, finally he woke up to know what a fool he had been. Out of his neglect of God and misdirected love, he finally saw the wonder of a God-centered life; while living life "under the sun," he discovered the fulfilling promise of life over the sun. Twentieth-century man could learn much to his eternal betterment from the lifestyle of the rich and famous Solomon.

Bill Dillon, editor

**Christianity: A Daily . . .**  
(Continued from page 3)

in Acts 17:11. "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." In the Old Testament, God's people were "destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6).

Certainly God's people today cannot "grow in grace and knowledge" without a daily study of the word. Just as physical food is essential to the physical body, spiritual food is necessary for the spiritual body (Matthew 4:4; 5:6). God's word guards men from sin (Psalm 119:11). God's word guides men in the pathway of life (Psalm 119:105). God's word grants understanding (Psalm 119:130). God's word gives comfort (1 Thessalonians 4:18). And men can rest assured that God's word is right (Psalm 33:4). With all these blessings and privileges literally at his fingertips, how can one deny himself of daily study and meditation? Paul encouraged Timothy to "give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." He emphasized, "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. 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 4:13, 15-16).

Dear Christian friend, are you a daily Bible reader? Do you devote time each day for a diligent study of God's word? Parent, do you study with you children? Do you and your children attend Bible classes regularly? Are you striving to "understand what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17)?

If the Lord's people study **daily** and teach the gospel **daily**, there will be **daily** results. In Acts 2:47, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Yes, Christianity is a **daily** religion.

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**HEATH CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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Evening Worship	6:00 P.M.
Bible Study (Wednesday)	7:00 P.M.

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½ mile west of the Heath Mall)



## THE CHURCH AT VREED-EN-HOOP

Ronnie Whittemore

Upon occasion, the *GOSPEL GLEANER* is afforded the opportunity to report on evangelistic efforts in mission fields. In the past, space has been allotted in this column to rehearse all that God has done (Acts 14:27) in the nations of Guyana, Ghana, and India. On Friday morning, August 29, this writer and brother Rodney Miller, an elder at Heath, departed from Barkley Airport in Paducah and arrived ten hours later in the country of Guyana, South America. After going through customs and security, we were met by brother Harachand Bhola and his wife, Chandra. Brother Bhola is the preacher at the Vreed-En-Hoop congregation in Demarara. He is supported by the church at Heath.

On Saturday, the day was spent in getting acquainted with the Bhola family, unpacking, visiting Georgetown, and attempting to get a call through to the United States. This last effort proved unsuccessful all week. Beginning Sunday, the entire week was filled with Bible classes, Bible studies, and gospel preaching. The main objectives of the journey were to strengthen brother Bhola, edify the church, and teach the lost. These efforts proved to be very successful. Each weekday (Monday - Thursday) consisted of a Bible class from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. The major course of study was "The One True Church." The rest of the afternoons were filled with Bible studies and trips to Georgetown for food. At 6:30 each evening, a gospel meeting was conducted in which forty to fifty people were in attendance. On the final night, the largest crowd (sixty-four) assembled.

During the week, nine souls obeyed the gospel of Christ. On Sunday evening, brother Miller baptized (in mud to his knees) the first penitent believer, a young lady named Suzanne. She then attended every Bible class and every service of the gospel meeting the remainder of the week. This type of dedication was typical not only of the new converts, but also of the

saints at Vreed-En-Hoop. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24).

Grace, one of the members at Vreed-En-Hoop, led two of her sisters to Christ. Such action is a reminder of the apostle Andrew. Although very little is said about Andrew and his work, the Bible records that "one of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus" (John 1:40-42).

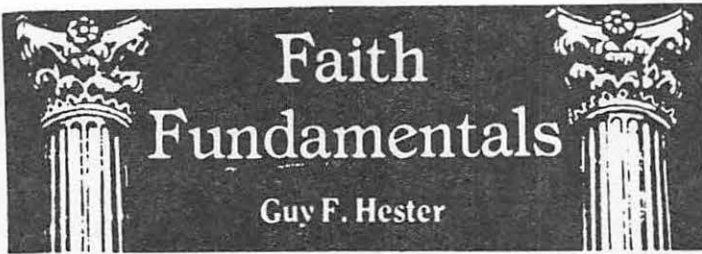
Two women (mother and daughter) from the nearby island of Leguan also were converted. Efforts are now underway by the brethren to evangelize this small island. As one readily sees, opportunities abound in this fertile country.

Due to the generosity of the members of Heath, food and medical supplies were taken to the brethren in Guyana. They expressed their thanks for the much needed items.

There are several goals planned for the work in Guyana. Bible correspondence courses will be offered and conducted by the church at Vreed-En-Hoop. Audio and visual tapes of gospel preaching will be provided to edify the church. And Lord willing, future journeys will be made to plant the seed (Luke 8:11) in the hearts of men and confirm the church. The apostle Paul stated in his salutation to the church at Thessalonica, "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father" (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3). Please, remember these brethren in your prayers.



Vreed-En-Hoop, Guyana, South America



## THE TIMES OF OUR LIVES



*"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14).*

In the above text the apostle gives the formula for a successful and happy life: **live in the present, forget the past and look to the future.**

Life has three important chapters: **past, present and future.** The attitude that we have toward each of these will determine to a great extent our welfare here and eternal welfare in the world to come.

### The Past

Life's first chapter is the past. What a great storehouse of memories we have of the past both happy and sad. Memory is such a useful tool for successful living. It is so good to occasionally reminisce and in our memories relive some of the good times of our past. Sometimes we may even want to spend some time with some of our sad memories, and even this can be good for us if we remember to soon put them back where they belong and go back to living in the present. But there are some things about the past that we are not to remember if we would be happy and successful. Paul said, *"forgetting those things which are behind."* We should forget the mistakes of the past. When we have done all that we can to correct our mistakes, we should bury them in the sea of forgetfulness. That is what God does. *"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more"* (Hebrews 8:12). There is no sin so great but that the blood of Jesus will wash it away if forgiveness is sought in the right order. *"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us*

*from all sin"* (1 John 1:7). After we have properly sought the Lord's forgiveness, we must be willing to forgive ourselves, put the past where it belongs and live in the present.

### The Present

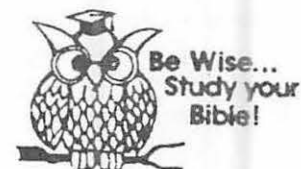
The second chapter in our lives is the present. There are things that we must do today if they are ever done. Today we must choose whom we will serve (Joshua 24:15). Today we must be workers of the Lord (John 9:4). Today we must exhort and encourage one another in Christian living (Hebrews 3:13). We must plan for the future but live as though today were our last, it may be (James 4:13-14)!

We must set our priorities in order and learn to put first things first. We have time enough to do all the things that God requires of us but that time is **now!** *"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation"* (2 Corinthians 6:2). The Lord has promised us **now** but nothing beyond!

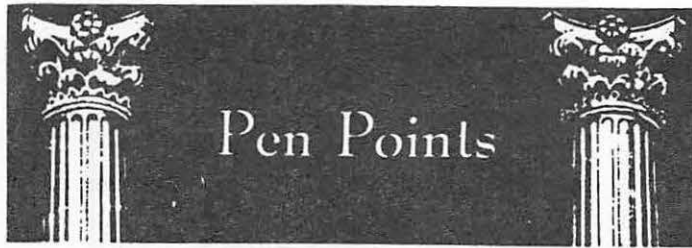
### The Future

The final chapter of our lives is the future. While the present always remains the same, the past is continually getting longer and the future is getting shorter. We need to plan well for the future. Time is running out for us all. Paul said, *"Reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."* The best preparation we can make for the future is to do the best we can today. We need to learn to live one day at a time. The one who is not a Christian should see in the approach of death the need to penitently confess Christ and be baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 2:38). Being a Christian makes for a better life now and eternal life in the world to come. When this life is over eternity will have only begun! **Live in the present, forget the past and look to the future.** Do the very best that we can day by day and trust in the Lord to take care of the rest (Matthew 6:33).

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## Pen Points

### PADUCAH PREACHER'S EFFORTS IN RESTRUCTURING THE CHURCH (Part Two)

In the last issue (Volume 2, Number 3) the editorial page featured the first part of a review of a sermon delivered by brother David Clayton at the Broadway church of Christ on April 6, 1986. As the title of the article and the three points discussed earlier indicate, brother Clayton, by the contents of his sermon, is charged with attempting to restructure the church of the Lord.

*It should be noted by our readers that the italicized excerpts following their respective headings are from a transcript of brother Clayton's sermon.*

#### Changing of Definitions

(4) "Part of whole tradition is let's go back to the Bible, let's speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent. First of all, let's look at those two statements for a moment. Let's go back, it says, to the Bible. Well, let's ask ourselves the question, has there ever been a point in time in which man has ever been to the Bible? Has there ever been a point in time in the history of all of God's people where we can actually say, we have been where the Bible is? I would suggest to you that from the very beginning of time, beginning with Adam, that we have never been back to the Bible because the Bible is always in front of us, directing us, leading us, guiding us and I understand the implications behind the phrase 'let's go back to the Bible.' What that means is, let's get rid of creeds, and doctrines and everything else that are contrary to the will of God and let's let the Bible speak where the Bible speaks. But, I think we need to make the point that even in the Old Testament times, the prophets were always urging the people to go back to God's word....There is also a phrase we have that says 'we will speak where the Bible speaks and we will be silent where the Bible is silent.' I would suggest to you here, again, that it should be 'we will speak where the Bible speaks, but where it is silent, there is freedom.' We are at liberty and as long as it is not contrary

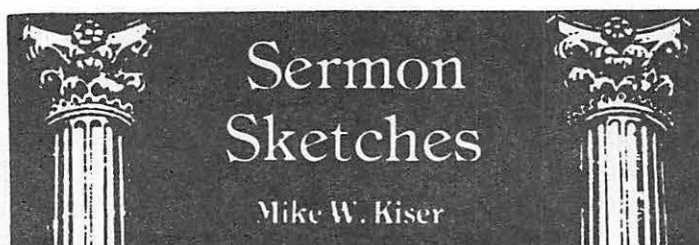
to what the Lord wants us to do, we have those freedoms. We have many times stuck in this thing and said well, I don't find it in the Bible, so I am going to be silent about it, or I can't do this or I can't do that. I might add, first of all, there are very few things that the Bible is silent of. In fact, just about everything that you find in terms of life, the Bible has something to say about. But, what I wanted to point out to you this morning is that the Bible, the word of God, tells us about Jesus and that Jesus must be the one that has priority in our life."

One of the feeble efforts of religious groups to justify their traditions and human doctrines is to change the definitions of words and phrases. The restoration slogan—"Let's get back to the Bible"—expresses the need of following and obeying the word of God. Paul commanded, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus..." (Colossians 3:17). Jeremiah exhorted, "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16). Brother Clayton acknowledged that this definition applies to the slogan, but he also applied the metaphor that the Bible is man's guide (Psalm 119:105). He mixed apples and oranges. He then stated, "we have never been back to the Bible because the Bible is always in front of us, directing us, leading us, guiding us..." Friends, such reasoning is illogical, ridiculous and dishonest. He further emphasized that no one in history has been "back to the Bible." What about Enoch? Was he not faithful to God's word (Genesis 5:24; Hebrews 11:5)? What about the early church? "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine..." (Acts 2:42)? God has given his inspired and perfect word (2 Timothy 3:16-17) that men might obey the truth (Romans 6:17-18) and "walk in the light" (1 John 1:7) so that by God's grace, they might be saved. If it is impossible to submit to the will of God (John 8:32), then "we are of all men most miserable."

Another restoration slogan mentioned was "we speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent." This slogan has always meant that man must be governed by what God says. There must be authority from God for any teaching or practice. Under the old law the priests came from the tribe of Levi. In Hebrews 7:14, "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood." The Lord remained silent or gave no authority for priests' being taken from

(Continued on page 9)





## "BEHOLD I THOUGHT"

2 Kings 5:1-14

### INTRODUCTION:

1. From the least to the greatest, men like to expound their own thoughts on matters of religion.
2. We do not want to discourage thinking, but opinion as a basis for religion is to be discouraged.
3. Our accountability is to God, and He will have the last word. John 12:48



### I. Reasons Why Man Cannot Follow His Own Thoughts.

- A. Man cannot guide himself. Jeremiah 10:23; 1 Corinthians 1:21
  1. Man's ingenuity is wonderful. His accomplishments are astounding. When some say, "I think," we stop and take notice.
  2. In the area of directing his steps toward heaven, man is a failure. God has said that it cannot be done.
  3. In this area, God will destroy man's wisdom. 1 Corinthians 1:19
- B. Christianity is not a system of "think so," but "revelation."
  1. It did not originate, nor does it continue with thoughts coming from men's minds.
  2. It originated in heaven, and was delivered to man by the inspiration of God. Galatians 1:11-12; 2 Timothy 3:16-17.
  3. We "walk by faith and not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5:7; Romans 10:17
- C. God's thoughts are not man's thoughts. Isaiah 55:8-9
  1. The highest thought of man is not as great as the most foolish thought of God.
  2. God has often acted contrary to man's thinking.

3. A million people thinking a thing "so" has never, nor will ever make it so.

### II. Examples of Those Who Followed Their Thoughts.

- A. Cain (Genesis 4:3-4; Hebrews 11:4)
  1. He thought the fruit of the ground was alright.
  2. He thought one way was as good as another.
  3. He thought there was no sin in such a small thing.
- B. Naaman (2 Kings 5:1-14)
  1. He thought Elisha would make a display.
  2. He thought home rivers were as good as Jordan.
  3. He thought the prophets command was too simple.
- C. Jonah (Jonah 1)
  1. He thought he could escape responsibility.
  2. He thought he could hide from God.
  3. He thought he was safe and went to sleep.
- D. Peter (Matthew 17)
  1. He thought three systems would be fine.
  2. He thought Moses should be honored.
  3. He thought Jesus would not die.
- E. Paul (Acts 26:9)
  1. He thought he should persecute the church.
  2. He thought he was doing right.
  3. He thought God was pleased with him.

### III. Practical Application For This Age.

- A. Men think they can be saved by just being sincere.
  1. Sincerity is necessary and hypocrisy is condemned. 1 Corinthians 5:8; 1 Peter 2:1
  2. Sincerity is one saving condition, but not a saving power or the sum total of conditions.
  3. One may sincerely believe error and be lost. 1 Kings 13:1-26; Matthew 7:21-23; 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12
- B. Men think sinners should pray through to salvation.
  1. This is widely preached and practiced. You would think there is much Bible evidence for it. There is none!
  2. We are not told to "pray," but to "obey." Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 5:8-9

(Continued on page 11)

Judah, Reuben, or any of the other tribes, only Levi. The Christian Church understands the connotation of this slogan because they made the same change in the slogan (years ago) in an effort to justify the mechanical instrument that brother Clayton proposed; "we will speak where the Bible speaks, but where it is silent, there is freedom." Though he emphasized, "We are at liberty and as long as it is not contrary to what the Lord wants us to do, we have those freedoms," notice what he places in the category of silence and liberty—the modern versions. Does the Bible grant freedom in translating, accepting and teaching from modern versions? Man has the right to produce modern translations by the **generic** command, *"teach all nations"* (Matthew 28:19). However, God's **specific** principles and warnings about perverting his word (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18-19) regulate how they are to be translated—**faithful to the text**. Therefore, God's approval does not rest with a perverted version of the Bible. By placing "liberty" in the slogan, matters of obligation become optional. Noah could have built the ark out of pine wood. Aaron could have offered a cow rather than a lamb for the passover and man could be sprinkled rather than immersed for the remission of sins. This taking liberties with the word of God opens the gates for any "ear-tickler" or "eye-pleaser" that the Bible does not say explicitly, "Thou shalt not."

Changing the definitions of words and phrases results in confusion. If a preacher uses words in which he applies one meaning and the hearers apply another meaning, there is contradiction and chaos. For a preacher to do so purposely is dishonest and immoral.

### **"Preach Only Jesus"**

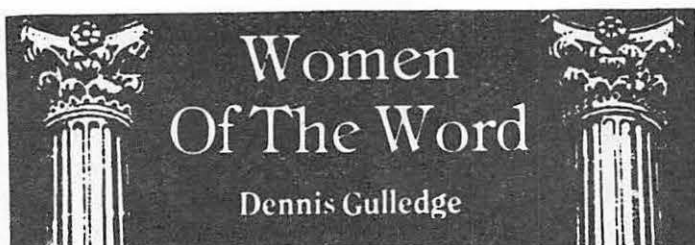
(5) *"In James chapter one and following, he says, the one who looks into the perfect law will discover what true religion is all about, not forms, not doctrines, 'pure religion and undefiled before the Father is this, visit the widows and the orphans in their affliction and keep yourself unstained from this world.' Reaching out and meeting the needs of those round about us,....I think part of the problem is sometimes people say what's wrong with the church? What do we need to do? What's wrong in my life? What do I need to do? It's not what we need to do. It's who we need to know and it's who we need to serve. You can try methods all day long and we need to*

*try those methods, but until we know Jesus and have a relationship with him, nothing is going to work. So, I would like, I guess, in closing this morning to encourage us, encourage myself. Let's not lose the focus of Hebrews 12. Hebrews 12 says, "keep your eyes fixed on Jesus." Please don't misunderstand me. Some of you will understand that. The word is important to me. The church is important to me, but not nearly, nearly, nearly as important to me as my relationship with the Lord. And, if I don't have a relationship with the Lord then the Bible doesn't mean a thing to me. It's just a bunch of words."*

For years many brethren have preached "Jesus the man, but not the plan" or "Jesus the man, but not his church." To preach Christ is to preach his plan, his commandments, and his church. Jesus is described as the eternal Word (John 1:1-3). One shows his love for Christ by obedience. Jesus said, *"If ye love me, keep my commandments"* (John 14:15). Brother Clayton emphasized man's relationship with Jesus as opposed to his obedience to the Lord. "It's not what we need to do. It's who we need to know and it's who we need to serve." John recorded, *"He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him"* (1 John 2:4-5). Pure religion includes not only helping others (Matthew 25:31-46; James 1:27; Galatians 6:10), but the following of doctrine (Acts 2:42; 1 Timothy 4:6, 13, 16; 5:17; 6:1, 3; 2 Timothy 4:2-4). Jesus, the head cannot be severed from his church, the body (Colossians 1:18). Members of the church, the body work and function as a unit bringing glory to God (1 Corinthians 12:12-25; Ephesians 3:21). One's relationship with the Lord cannot be right without a proper relationship with the word and the church (Ephesians 5:25-27). Jesus stressed that without obedience, there is no "relationship" with him. *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven"* (Matthew 7:21).

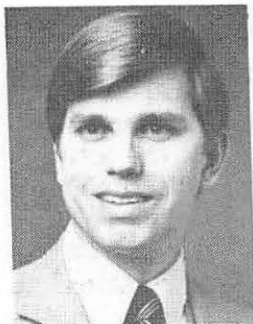
Friends, hearts would rejoice if only brother Clayton and the elders at Broadway would renounce their error, repent of their wrongs, and return to the Lord and his truth. That is our prayer.

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### **JOB'S WIFE:**

#### **"SPEAKING AS ONE OF THE FOOLISH WOMEN"**



*"Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips" (Job 2:9-10).*

This is a domestic scene. It will appear to be very much like home to some. A husband and wife seem to be in an argument. The wife offers a suggestion which the husband does not receive with enthusiasm. He tells her that she speaks as a foolish woman might speak. Notice that there is not the maliciousness in his reply that most husbands are guilty of when addressing their wives. Job attacks her suggestion, but not her person. He says that she speaks foolishly, but it is not in his heart to call her a fool.

There is no doubt that you are familiar with the Old Testament patriarch Job. Yet, what do you know about Job's wife? All that we can know of her is included in our text above. Her fame is a tainted one because of her recommendation to Job that he renounce God in the midst of his sufferings. What can we learn from Mrs. Job? This question we shall attempt to answer.

#### **These Words Are Part Of the Most Intense Drama In the Bible**

There was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and among them was Satan (Job 1:6-12). Observe the account that Satan gives of himself (Vs. 7b). Compare 1 Peter 5:8. Observe also that Satan is supreme in his distrust of man (Vss. 8-11). However, do not let God's trust in man escape your notice. He trusted Job enough

to allow him to be put to Satan's test (Vss. 13-22).

Again, the sons of God come to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan is among them (Job 2:1-6). Satan has failed, and what excuse can he offer to justify it? He says, *"Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life"* (Vs. 4). This may be true of most, but of some it is a base slander. Some will die for their children, home, country, faith, etc. Yet, Satan is sure that neither Job nor anyone else belongs to that class.

The end of Satan's onslaught against Job finds the patriarch emerging with his faith in God still strong. Instead of turning from God, Job pressed ever more closely to him (1:20-22; 2:10).

### **Job Still Has His Wife**

With his family and all he owned destroyed there was one familiar face left to Job. That was his wife. But what contribution did she make to his and her well being? Admittedly it was vastly disappointing. She did not react in a way characteristic of women at their best.

Often when a husband and wife face a tragedy together one will remain a source of strength for the other. In most cases this is the woman. Job's wife, however, did not reach that sublime height of feminine fortitude. She not only denied her husband sympathy and solace, but also acted in league with the adversary to try to persuade him to renounce the Almighty.

Her counsel was that he *"curse God and die,"* or renounce God as unworthy of confidence, and submission as unreasonable, and let God put him out of his misery. However, Job's response was that she spoke as *"one of the foolish women"* (2:10). The word *"foolish"* means stupid, wicked, abandoned or impious. The idea being that her advice was such that one might expect to hear from the wicked.

### **Why This Terrible Advice?**

It may be that the strength of her usual virtue was overcome by the severity of trials. It is not conclusive that her general character was bad. Her words and Job's answer suggest that she gave him desperate advice. The lesson here is that Job's wife is an example of the type of reaction to trials to which we are all susceptible. The experience through which Job passed, she also passed. The wealth that was lost was also her wealth. The children who died were also her children. What occurred

*(Continued on page 11)*



not only tested the mettle of Job's character, but also tested hers, and revealed a lack of strength therein. There may be times in life when we too are tempted to give vent to feelings of rebellion, and to murmur and even renounce God. In the face of such times may we imitate Job, and not his wife.

### Why Was Her Suggestion Foolish?

**First**, she displayed a dangerous philosophy all too common today. That is, serve God if it is profitable, but renounce him if it is not. As long as life was smooth and every day a delight she thought that faith in God was reasonable. But, when the tempest was on and her ship fell to pieces, then to hold on to faith in God was no longer reasonable nor beneficial.

Satan contends that man does not serve God for nothing, and that no one would obey God solely on the basis of his faith. Yet, the book of Job proves that it is possible to continue in faith even though all the "props" upon which we normally lean in life are taken away. The apostle Paul *"suffered the loss of all things"* in order that he might gain Christ (Philippians 3:7-8). Peter spoke of *"the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ"* (1 Peter 1:7). Every Christian is admonished to be *"faithful unto death"* (Revelation 2:10). God does not ask for a fair-weather faith on our part, but rather a faith that will withstand trial and affliction.

**Second**, she suggests the idea that pain and suffering are inconsistent with the love of God. Job's wife possibly regarded God as stern and severe, and hardly a God of love. Such a God as would allow so much to happen to them, she believed was unworthy of human allegiance. Perhaps it is better for us to regard human suffering as a mystery of God's providence. That is, that in the counsel of the Omnipotent and Omnibenevolent God there are reasons for life's difficulties, and in that we can rest faith.

**Third**, her suggestion that Job renounce God was the very opposite of the kind of advice they both needed. To renounce God is to renounce our only hope (Psalm 42:5). To renounce God is not to eradicate the sickness, but the remedy. To renounce God is not to strike out at the disease, but the Great Physician.

Are we so privileged creatures in this low land of sin and sorrow that we cannot drink of the mixed cup of life? Shall we forget all the blessings which have crowned our days, and focus only on the days of suffering? Must we renounce God because all does not go well with us in life? No! May we never speak *"as one of the foolish women speaketh."*

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### *"Behold I Thought"*

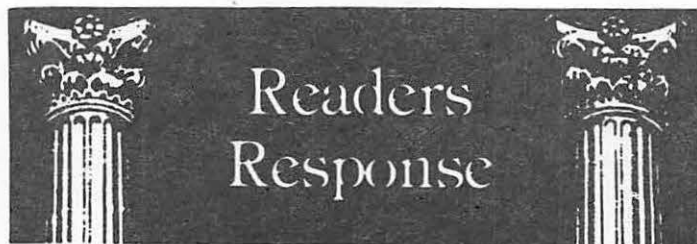
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3. Saul of Tarsus prayed three days. He was told to cease and be baptized. Acts 22:16; 2:38
- C. Men think one church is as good as another.
  1. This idea suggests God wants denominationalism.
  2. However, Jesus promised only one and built only one. Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 5:25
  3. With a knowledge of the Bible, would one think this way?
- D. Men think that we are to follow our personal taste in worship.
  1. So we hear of "high church" and "low church." We see everything from "ceremony" to "confusion."
  2. Worship has always been governed. John 4:24; Matthew 15:9
  3. We should do only that which we know God has authorized and approved. Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:19
- E. Men think that they will have a second chance.
  1. They think heaven is for everybody and hell is only for the devil and his crowd.
  2. The Bible teaches that from the human family, some will go into Hell. Matthew 25:14-30; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9
  3. There will be no second chance. Hebrews 9:27; Luke 16:19-31

### CONCLUSION:

1. God has spoken. Hebrews 1:1-2
2. You therefore can walk by the highest thoughts.
3. Would you desire to do otherwise? Would you dare do otherwise?

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# MTI 28:18-19 **EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION** MRK 16:15-16

PREACHING	BELIEVED	REPENTED	CONFESSED	BAPTIZED	SAVED
PENTECOST ACTS 2:14-41		REPENT VERSES 37-38		BAPTIZED 38-41	REMISSION OF SINS 38-47 SAVED
SAMARIA ACTS 8:5-13	BELIEVED 12			BAPTIZED 12-13	
EUNUCH ACTS 8:35-39	BELIEVED 36-37		CONFESSED 37	BAPTIZED 38	REJOICED 39
SAUL ACTS 9:1-18				BAPTIZED 18	SINS WASHED AWAY 9:10
CORNELIUS ACTS 10:34-48	BELIEVED 43			BAPTIZED 48	REMISSION OF SINS 43
THE JAILER ACTS 16:29-31	BELIEVED 31			BAPTIZED 33	
LYDIA ACTS 16:14-15	ATTENDED 14			BAPTIZED 15	
PREACHING ROM. 10:14	FAITH HEB. 11:6 HEB. 5:8,9	REPENTANCE LUKE 13:3	CONFESSION ROM. 10:10 II THESS. 1:7-9	BAPTISM GAL. 3:27	SALVATION II TIM. 2:10

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