



Gospel Gleaner



Volume 3

Number 1

RESPECT FOR THE BIBLE

Max R. Miller

Seldom ever in the age of man has the word of God occupied its duly supreme position in the affairs of man. Man has appreciated the Bible for its wisdom, its poetic beauty, its unique prophetic utterances, its story of love and sacrifice, and for all that has failed to appreciate and respect the Bible as God's absolute and final will for man. To speak of its beauty and meaning yet not holding it dearly as God's personal revelation to man is to speak with hypocrisy. The Bible is far more than a work of literature, a rare book to be had; it is a book by which our lives are to be ruled and our souls are to be judged. God intends for His people to fashion their lives, their thinking, their speech, their whole being, according to the teachings of that divine Book.

The Bible is a sacred book. Its revelations cannot be found in any other source. Its message is unique: the message of salvation. Not only is its message for the sinner, lost in the muck and despair of sin, but also, and just as much so, for the child of God, the saved, who must continue to shape his life more in the likeness of His divine Son. Those who come to love God's word and give it God's place in their lives come to know a love like none other in all the world. They learn of the power of that word. They know the assurance and assistance of the faith that not only can but often does move mountains of obstacles which could be moved in no other way. Those who give His word

the supreme place in their lives have an affection much like that of Jacob Creath, Jr., a restoration preacher of the last century, who in death wanted his head pillowed on a copy of the sacred text. But death does not separate one from that book of glory. There are four things of eternal nature abiding in this perishing world: love, the church of our Lord, the soul of man, and God's eternal truth, the Bible. In death the word continues; it is to be faced in the judgment; it continues through eternity because it is eternal. Shun it, despise it, reject it—none of these things effects the imperishable word of God. Love it, live it, and die by it and find its greatest treasure.

Many of the world, even those who think of themselves as the redeemed, pay only lip service to that grand revelation. Almost all men everywhere possess copies of the Bible. It is to be found in the homes, schools, offices, the libraries of a nation, but, too few people hold it in their hearts. The admonition is: *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom"* (Colossians 3:16); *"Thou desirest truth in the inward parts"* (Psalm 51:6). David knew the power of that word and consequently said, *"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee"* (Psalm 119:11).

The impiety of ancient Israel was in that their way of religious life was more important

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Editorial...

SEE ROCK CITY



The Edomites were descendants of Esau (Genesis 25:22; Deuteronomy 23:7) and in the likeness of their forebearer, the Edomites were cruel, fierce, turbulent, and nonspiritual people. Esau is best described as "profane" (Hebrews 12:16).

Edom was generally located south of the Dead Sea and north of the Sinai Peninsula. In a region of rugged ravines, chasms, and crags, the Edomites lived in glory and prosperity. Out of a wilderness of rock and sandstone mighty cities were formed with mountains for ramparts. Because of their power and strategic advantage the Edomites possessed a sense of security and a feeling of independence second to none. The rock hewn cities were truly "Wonders of the Desert." The Edomites watched jealously for encroachments from without and thrived on their chief profession, war. Esau's character was accurately described by Isaac in Genesis 27:40 when he said, "By thy sword shalt thou live." Edom's heart was like its cities—made of stone!

The Old Testament prophets pronounced terrible woes upon Edom. Each prophet bore the same message, "SEE ROCK CITY." Though the Edomites were a people of unparalleled security, with fortified rock metropolises, yet, they were slaves to their senses, having no appreciation for the invisible. Though their heads were giddy on the wine of vain pride, God said, "I'll bring you down."

A graphic portrayal of dire judgment is found in Isaiah 34:5-15. The land is to be emptied of inhabitants so that only wild beasts and reptiles remain. What a somber and hopeless prediction!

Another prophecy of Edom is in Isaiah 63:1-6. A tall blood stained warrior comes forth; his garments stained with blood. He has come from Bozrah in Edom and has tread the winepress of the foe. Jehovah himself is pictured as having trodden underfoot and vanquished Israel's worst enemy. Vengeance for vengeance is given.

In Obadiah, as well as Jeremiah 49:7-22, Edom's doom is portrayed as inevitable. Edom shall be made bare and laid bare! Notice Obadiah 3, 4:

"The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?"

Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord."

In Obadiah 10-15, God speaks of Edomite cruelty in the day of Jacob's calamity and again warns, "as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee." Edom's cruelty will be matched by Edom's destruction.

Other prophetic passages which show Edom's doom are Amos 1:11-12; Joel 3:19-20; Ezekiel 25:12-14; 32:29; 35:1-15; 36:5.

Malachi 1:2-5 completes the prophetic picture of Edom. Edom will suffer a tragic end and leave an epitaph reading, "the people against whom the Lord hath indignation forever." Truly, "pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).

The lessons of "rock city" are that genuine security is found in the righteous lives of its people; and no nation built on cruelty and hatred can endure. These lessons are not to be lost in a world that has yet to learn "all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matthew 26:52).

Bill Dillon, editor

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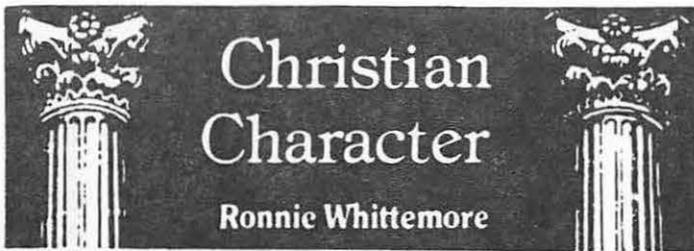
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EDITORS: Bill Dillon & Ronnie Whittemore



"TAKE HEED"



Oftentimes the Israelites are ridiculed by the present and preceding generations for their lack of faith in the Almighty despite the visible proofs of His power and protection. Jehovah God plagued the household and nation of the stubborn hearted Pharaoh. He parted the Red Sea and destroyed the pursuing Egyptians. He provided weary Israel with manna from heaven. He conquered their enemies. In short, God fulfilled his promises and *"there failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass"* (Joshua 21:25).

Yet despite the faithfulness of Jehovah, Israel forsook her Deliverer and followed after strange gods. While Moses was receiving the law atop Mount Sinai, Israel built a golden calf (Exodus 32). Joshua knew the tendency of the people to turn aside after other gods and exhorted the nation before his death. *"Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord"* (Joshua 24:14). And though the people answered Joshua on that occasion, saying, *"God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods;...we will serve the Lord"* (Joshua 24:16, 21), the time came in which Israel began a vicious cycle of unfaithfulness by serving the gods of heathen nations. As a consequence of their sins, God allowed the enemies of the land to oppress the Israelites. But in His mercy and goodness, God raised up judges to deliver His people. Later, Israel rejected their Heavenly King and desired an earthly king to be *"like all the nations"* (1 Samuel 8:5, 7).

Nearly a century later, after the reigns of Saul and David, king Solomon's heart was turned toward Ashtoreth, Milcom, Chemosh and Molech, the gods of his strange wives (1 Kings 11:1-8; Nehemiah 13:26). During

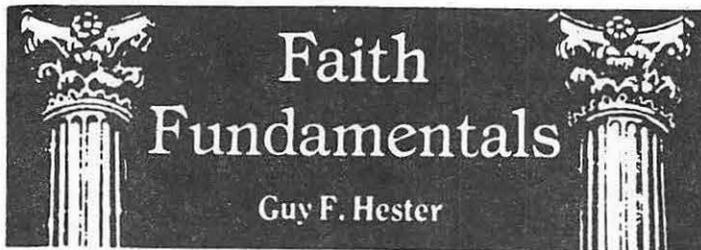
Rehoboam's reign, the kingdom divided and Jeroboam ruled the ten northern tribes and restructured Israel's worship. He built golden calves in Dan and Bethel. He changed the time of worship and the priesthood also. In 722 B.C. Ephraim paid the wages of idolatry when Assyria took the nation captive. About 150 years later, Judah foolishly followed the wicked example of her sister and Nebuchadnezzar, by the might of God (Daniel 4:32), destroyed Jerusalem and took Judah captive.

There are many valuable lessons in the Old Testament for our learning and admonition. After recalling the transgressions of the Israelites in the wilderness to the attention of the church at Corinth, Paul exhorted, *"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"* (1 Corinthians 10:11-12). The **wise** child of God **takes heed** and **learns** from the sins of others. He does not have to commit a particular sin to realize the danger and penalty of his actions. He observes the justice of God in the inspired record. He, like Timothy, can obtain wisdom unto salvation by faith in Christ and His word (2 Timothy 3:15). But the **foolish** child of God refuses inspired counsel. He disregards any warning of consequences and repercussions for sinful actions. His reasoning is that "experience" is the best teacher; therefore, he ignores the just rewards of Uzzah, Korah, Nadab and Abihu.

As mentioned earlier, the Israelites are often ridiculed for their lack of faith and foolishness, yet howbeit that many of God's called out are destined to repeat those same sins because they **will not take heed**. Consider the following:

1. Israel failed to drive out their enemies. God warned Israel, *"But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land where in ye dwell"* (Numbers 33:55). During the days of the judges when *"every man did that which was right in his own eyes,"* the gods of their enemies became a snare to them (Judges 2:3) and Jehovah God used those nations to oppress and punish Israel.

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HAVE WE DONE WHAT WE COULD?



The title of this article is indeed thought provoking: "Have we done what we could?" It is not a question of what I **would** do if I could, but **am** I doing what I can. In Mark 14:3-9, we read about Jesus "*being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster*

box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." Please note especially the statement in verse eight; "***She hath done what she could.***"

I am sure there are things that all of us would like to do that we are not capable of doing. The Lord is not going to hold us responsible for what we **can't** do, but we are held accountable for what we **can** do and nothing that we do "in the name of the Lord" will go unnoticed and unrewarded, not even the offering of a cup of cold water (Matthew 10:42).

While there are things that we cannot do, there are some things that we can all do.

All can obey the gospel and be saved. The gospel plan of salvation is simple: Faith (Hebrews 11:6), Repentance (Luke 13:3), Confession (Matthew 10:32-33), Baptism (Acts 2:38). All who "*obey not the gospel...shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power*" (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9).

All can be faithful, active members of the Lord's church. Someone has said, "The church is full of willing workers, 2% work and 98% are willing to let them work." The Lord has promised the crown of life only to those who are faithful (Revelation 2:10).

All can give freely of their means upon the first day of the week as they have been prospered by the Lord (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). God has so abundantly blessed us all and if members of the church would only give as they **should** and **could**, there would be money enough to do all the things that God would have us do. If we would only give as we are prospered, missionaries would not have to beg for money to take the gospel into destitute places; the hungry would be fed, the naked would be clothed, etc. Remember that "*God loveth a cheerful giver*" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

All can live godly lives and set good examples before others. One of the greatest hinderances to the growth and spread of Christianity today is the ungodly way so many professed Christians live. To Christians Paul said, "*That denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world*" (Titus 2:12). Do these three adverbs, "soberly, righteously, and godly," describe the way we live "*in this present world?*" It is heart breaking to hear someone who needs to obey the gospel say, "I am not a member of the church because there is Mr. _____ who is a member and takes an active part and yet his refrigerator is full of beer." Or, "There is Mrs. _____ who teaches a children's Bible class, but during the week she runs all over town half naked." Or, "There is Mr. _____ who teaches an adult Bible class but about the only time you see him at church is on Sunday morning." Or, "There is Mr. _____ who waits on the Lord's table but he has one of the filthiest mouths on the job that you have ever heard." We can all set the proper examples before others in church attendance and godly living.

All can quit being excuse makers. Isn't it strange that the same headache that keeps one away from worship will not keep him

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THE N.I.V. AND PSALM 51:5

Melvin Elliott

To the textual critic, one mistake in the Bible is as serious as another because in his view a mistake is a mistake whether it has serious doctrinal implications or not. It is true that any mistake is a mistake; however, there is a vast difference in a mistake of no consequence and one that introduces false doctrine into the text.

The same principle is true in translation. For example, in Luke 2:42 the passage says, "...they went up to Jerusalem...." Suppose a translation said they went **down** to Jerusalem? Such would be a mistake but hardly of any consequence to one's salvation. The King James translation has the word "Easter" in Acts 12:4. This is a mistake—it should be "Passover." However, this is of no significance to one's salvation as we shall show.

Acts 12:4 is not a passage teaching us to believe or practice anything. It is not an example of anything the early church did under the direction of the apostles. It teaches neither the observance of Easter nor Passover. It simply marks the **time** these events took place and thus has nothing to do with one's belief or practice in following God's word. Mistranslate it July 4th, or for that matter omit it, and what change will there be in your belief and practice in working out your salvation? This is simply a mistake of no consequence because whether Easter or Passover, it correctly marks the time. This passage obviously does not teach the observance of Easter any more than it would teach the observance of Passover had that word been used. No truth is denied nor false doctrine introduced by this "mistake."

On the other hand, one mistake among many in the New International Version (NIV) that will bring disastrous consequences if believed and practiced can be found in Psalm 51:5. It states, "Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." This is no less than placing in the text the doctrine known as Calvinism—specifically, that of original sin—inherited sin—the Adamic sin. Calvinism is also found in many places in the NIV New Testament. For example, John 3:8 and Romans 8 is full of Calvinism as well as Romans 13:14; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Galatians 5:16-17, 19, 24; 6:7; Colossians 2:11, 13 and numerous other passages. The consequence of Calvinism

if believed and practiced will be the loss of one's soul.

In the Bible, Psalm 51:5 simply refers to the conditions under which David was born. "*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity: and in sin did my mother conceive me.*" What were the conditions under which David was "shapen" and "conceived?" The real Bible, not Calvinism, gives the truth in this matter. First, we must understand that the Bible declares children innocent, "*...and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil...*" (Deuteronomy 1:39).

Now to the conditions into which David was born; "*A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord: even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord*" (Deuteronomy 23:2). If one will check out the ancestry of David, he will find him to be the tenth generation from the adulterous relationship of Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38:13-30; 1 Chronicles 2:1-15). This is the condition into which David was born, but he was not a "sinner from birth"—**guilty** of sin—the Adamic sin. Thus the NIV changes the **condition** into which David was born to the **characteristic** of the one born—under the guilt of inherited sin. This is **fatal** false doctrine!

Such translation is a perversion of the text and the corruption of the doctrine (teaching) of the scriptures! It is the actual placing of the damnable doctrine known as Calvinism into the text—a doctrine if one believes and follows will cause him to lose his soul in eternity because such a one has not followed the truth which will make him free.

Thus the insignificant mistake of Acts 12:4 in the KJV is not comparable to the false doctrine placed into the NIV in Psalm 51:5 and many other places. To misunderstand the **nature of man** and hold the doctrine of original sin with that which springs from it is to hold the doctrine which is the tap root of modern denominationalism. This false system may be the cause of more souls being lost than any other. What false system has come about because "Easter" is in Acts 12:4 in the KJV?

True, there are no perfect translations in that they are absolutely flawless, but we

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"TAKE HEED"
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In this day, many of God's people fail to drive out their enemies. Many are not opposed to pornography, gambling, foul language and the consumption of alcoholic beverages. They, as the Gentiles whom Paul described, "have pleasure in them" that commit sin (Romans 1:32). Others have been vexed by their enemies and participate in their evil.

2. Israel served other gods. "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim: And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt..." (Judges 2:11-12). In this decade, many of those whom God had "delivered from the power of darkness," have turned aside and serve other gods. Perhaps, they love money (1 Timothy 6:10), preeminence (3 John 9), and popularity (Galatians 1:10). Others seek worldly pleasure (James 5:5) and "trust in uncertain riches" (1 Timothy 6:17). But alas, unless they repent, they have also "provoked the Lord to anger" (Judges 2:12; 2 Peter 2:20).

3. Israel desired to be like the other nations. The other nations had kings; Israel wanted a king. The heathen nations had graven images which they could see and touch; Israel wanted graven images. They rejected God so that they might be accepted by their neighbors. God's chosen generation and royal priesthood has become dissatisfied in many places. They are not happy with the increase that God grants through the proclamation and obedience of the gospel (1 Corinthians 3:6), so they propose other plans and schemes that will draw hundreds of carnally-minded people. God's command of "repent ye therefore, and be converted" (Acts 3:19) does not appeal to the masses, so many substitute "feel loved and at ease." For some, gospel preaching is a disappointment and they want to be like the Baptist church across the street or the Methodist church down the block, so they organize a "Singles' Ministry" and hire a "youth minister" and build a "gymnasium" so that they might "fit in" with their neighbors. But the gospel is God's power unto salvation (Romans 1:16) and the cross of Christ is the attraction (John 12:32).

"The proverbs of Solomon" are recorded and preserved for every generation, yet a large portion of these wise sayings were

directed toward Solomon's son. "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother... My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not... My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments" (Proverbs 1:8, 10; 3:1). Had Rehoboam followed the counsel of the older men, and sought the wisdom of the Lord, then perhaps the kingdom would not have divided.

Friends, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). In this generation, God's people need to **take heed** and "keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies" (1 Kings 2:3).

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

HEAR the gospel of Christ
(Romans 10:13-17)

BELIEVE in Christ
(Mark 16:15-16)

REPENT of past sins
(Acts 2:36-47)

CONFESS faith in Christ
(Romans 10:9-10)

BE BAPTIZED into Christ
(Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE FAITHFULLY
(Romans 12:1-2)

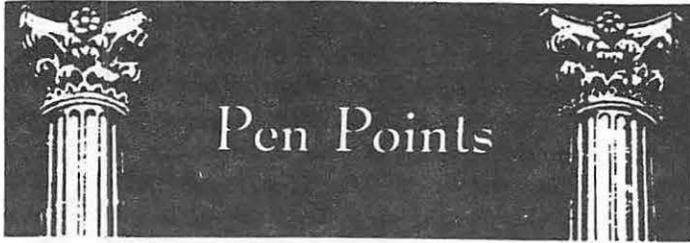
THE N.I.V. AND
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have shown a vast difference exists in flaws of no consequence and those upon which salvation is at stake. Although some may be shown worse than others, nearly all modern translations contain both serious error and diminish support for the truth of God.

Jesus said if a man's son ask him for a fish, "...will he give him a serpent" (Matthew 7:9-10)? Surely this principle is violated when one asks for spiritual food and another places in his hands these modern perversions containing the poison of asps! Those who love either man or God would not do so!

These are not trivial matters, but fundamentals of the faith—essentials to salvation. Think seriously about it and determine to stand with that which supports the truth of God and oppose all that sets itself against the inspired, perfect, complete and inerrant truth of God.

920 E. Cragmont Drive
Indianapolis, IN



Pen Points

MAN'S REACTION TO GOD'S TRUTH

Bill Dillon

The noblest work of any man is to break asunder error's vile chains and give freedom to her slaves. Jesus said, *"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:32). Error is error; to correct a fault of a mistaken brother is as much a noble effort as to baptize an alien sinner. Paul thought enough of the danger of sin in a brother apostle's life that he *"withstood him to the face because he was to be blamed"* (Galatians 2:11). Paul also named Demas as an apostate brother (2 Timothy 4:10); and mentioned Hymenaeus and Alexander as guilty teaching error and committing blasphemy (1 Timothy 1:19-20).

When men in error are confronted with truth, the reaction reveals much as to integrity and character. Some would react in violence to harm the teller of truth. This in fact happened to the Lord when he was smitten on the face (John 18:22-23).

At other times, because of shame or ignorance, men say nothing. In Matthew 22:46, the Pharisees were put to silence for *"no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions."* It was not a superior knowledge nor a greater understanding which caused the Pharisees to be quiet. They didn't answer because they weren't "able." There was nothing to say. They were in true poverty, being destitute of truth.

When men take liberties with the truth, it must be expected that they be called to give an account (1 John 4:1). Although Paul could have overlooked Peter's error in Galatians 2 and spent his valuable time in reaching those yet unredeemed; yet to correct an error wherever it was found was a work well becoming a child of God.

There is a time to keep silent, and be like the Lord in Matthew 27:12, *"when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing."* The Lord knew perfectly the hearts of his accusers; they were hearts of stone. Words would only be wasted when

dealing with men so depraved. If men today could attain the knowledge the Lord had of other men's hearts, perhaps a justification could be found for the silence which is in evidence on the part of those who speak heresy and resent anyone who questions their teaching. The apostolic command is to *"be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is within you with meekness and fear"* (1 Peter 3:15). If man's reaction toward truth is one of neglect, resentment, silence, or avoidance, there is revealed a lack of spiritual awareness comparable to Samson when he was bound, shorn, and blind. If men consider it a high misdemeanor for anyone even to question the course they have taken; and revile and ridicule those who sincerely differ with them, they are nursing a delusion. In the words of another, *"Truth invites criticism, welcomes investigation, and walks unafraid."*

There is a need for all to pray heartily and think rightly regarding truth and repentance. May God give us the wisdom to know that strife with truth is better than peace with error. The Lord's warning to men deserves a hearing, *"That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment"* (Matthew 12:36). In the last day, men must answer for what they have said and done on this dim spot called earth.

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LaFayette, GA 30728



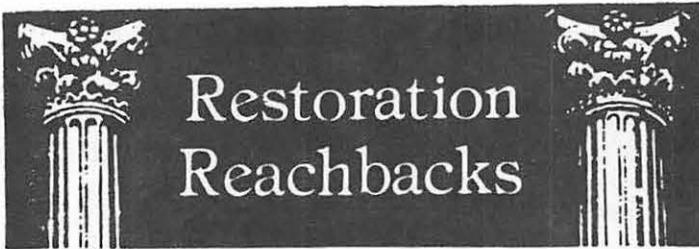
HAVE WE DONE

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away from the job, club, golf course, ball game, etc.? The bad weather that will keep an entire family away from church will not keep that same family away from the job and school? Read Luke 14:16-24 and see what the Lord's attitude is toward excuse makers. Notice that he said that none of them *"shall taste of my supper."*

Have we done what we could?

P. O. Box 501
Hanceville, AL 35077



WASHING SOILED LINEN

David Lipscomb

We have much said now against "washing soiled linen in the front yard." The meaning of this is, it is improper to expose the wrongs of persons and churches in public, lest it make a bad impression upon the world concerning the morals of the church and its members. This shows at least a strong desire to appear well before men. It shows an anxiety that the world should not know of the real evils and shortcomings of members of the church of Christ. And to be ignorant of these is to make a false impression upon the public as to the true morals of the church.

On the other hand, Jesus Christ said: *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."*

Jesus Christ found much of dirty linen in his day both among the worshippers of God under Moses and among his own followers. He washed it in the front door of the universe. He exposed the wrong and held it up to the condemnation of heaven and earth. The Holy Spirit followed the same rule in the apostles, and laid down as a rule to be followed: *"Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear"* (1 Timothy 5:20). The condemnation of sin and sinners before all is to be a means of educating Christians and the world to distinguish between the good and the evil and to deter them from the evil.

All efforts to hide our soiled linen in the back yard tend to make us and the churches whited walls without, *"full of dead*

men's bones, and of all uncleanness within," and make us willing to retain it soiled so it does not appear to men. He who objects to wrongs because they appear to men will soon object to them only when and because they appear to men.

GOSPEL DIGEST
February, 1947



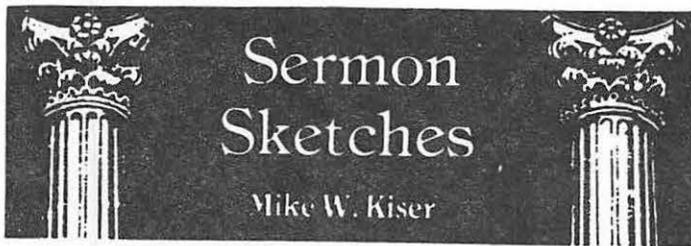
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to them than was the word of God. In time they departed from the truth and rather than be the people of God, the children of Israel, they became the Pharisees, the Sadducees, sects of Judaism. We, the church of God today, do well to learn Israel's lesson. Many are drifting away from the word of God because they have not loved His revelation; they have not stored it in their hearts. Too much of the confusion and disorder (to say little of the doctrinal error taught) is resolved on the basis of human opinion, a pragmatic response of what (according to one's judgments) seems to be the best solution for the present time, and not what God has to say about the matter. More and more decisions among the brethren of Christ are being determined by popular sentiment, fear of response to stated convictions, or partyism, rather than by the inerrant council of God. Such a course is in essence a rejection of divine revelation; progression in this course leads to complete apostasy.

"The Bible has made us what we are," an often quoted remark of brother Foy E. Wallace, Jr. The Bible has made us Christians, the children of God with the promise of eternal life (James 1:18, 21; 1 John 2:25). When we depart from the Bible we depart from the realm of God's saving grace. We are then no longer what we once were. This is easily seen and understood in an individual child of God who apostatizes. Cannot it also be seen to be true of His church? Why can't we see it?

It is only when the word of God, the Bible is first in our lives that we may have the kingdom first and Christ first, last, and always.

Bellview Preacher Training School
Pensacola, FL



THE WARFARE OF THE SAINTS

Ephesians 6:10-18

Introduction:

1. Paul is using military language. He was accustomed to seeing Roman soldiers, so it was easy for him to translate what he saw into Christian terms.
2. In warfare there are three things we must know:
 - a. The enemy. Satan with his unnumbered foes.
 - b. The cause for which one fights (1 Timothy 6:12).
 - c. The battle equipment and how to use it.
3. There are four prerequisites for a good soldier:
 - a. Love for the cause for which he fights.
 - b. Faith in his leader (Hebrews 2:10).
 - c. Faith in his comrades.
 - d. Hope of a victory.
4. Let us consider the following from our text:



I. The Wiles of Satan

- A. The **name** of Satan (vs. 11).
 1. Paul believed in his existence; and that he had an organized army.
 2. He is called:
 - a. "Devil"
 - b. "Satan"
 - c. "The dragon"
 - d. "The evil one"
 - e. "The angel of the bottomless pit"
 - f. "The prince of this world"
 - g. "The prince of the power of the air"
 - h. "The god of this world"
 - i. "Apollyon"
 - j. "Abaddon"
 - k. "Belial"
 - l. "Beelzebub"

- B. The **nature** of his servants (vs. 12).
 1. They are not human forces.
 2. Neither are they omnipotent, or omniscient.
- C. The **number** of his schemes (vs. 11).
 1. Wiles from "methodias"—"schemes."
 2. He presents manifold temptations.
 - a. Unbelief
 - b. Sin
 - c. Conform with the pagan world
 - d. Compromise revealed truth

II. The Work of the Savior.

- A. The **place** of work ("In the Lord," vs. 10). To be "in him" one must have already experienced:
 1. A change of heart (faith—Mark 16:16)
 2. A change of life (repentance—Acts 2:38)
 3. A change of state (baptism—Galatians 3:26-27)
- B. The **power** for the work ("His might," vs. 10).
 1. Human ingenuity and strength are not adequate against Satan.
 2. The Lord provided the way and it is not a social or recreational gospel!
- C. The **panoply** for this word ("Armour of God," vs. 11).
 1. We must put it on, it did not happen automatically at baptism.
 2. We must put it all on! God knows the need!

III. The Weapons of the Soldier

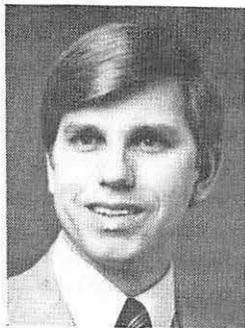
- A. **Reason:**
 1. We must "stand" and "withstand" (vs. 13).
 2. We must face and fight and expect to win!
- B. **Requirements:** (vs. 14-17)
 1. Loins girded with truth (Ephesians 1:13; 4:14, 15, 21).
 - a. It is this belt that keeps all else in place.
 - b. Therefore, reason, tradition, creeds, and philosophy will all break under the strain of battle.
 2. Breastplate of righteousness (Romans 10:1-3).
 - a. For the protection of vital organs (Proverbs 4:23).
 - b. By it we maintain purity and holiness of life.

(Continued on page 11)

Women Of The Word

Dennis Gullede

"PRISCILLA: THE LORD'S LOYALIST"



It isn't often that we find two people whose lives blend so harmoniously together and demonstrate the purest loyalty to God and the gospel as do Priscilla and Aquila. Our attention in this article is drawn to the feminine element of this diligent duo. Among women in the early church

no one was more prominent than Priscilla. Her name is the feminine form of Prisca, meaning, "Worthy, or venerable." Priscilla is always mentioned with her husband Aquila, and it is difficult to isolate her for singular study because when you speak of one you necessarily speak of the other. In this study of Priscilla's life, let us notice:

Her Preeminence

Brother H. Leo Boles said of Priscilla, "She was a prominent woman and stood high in social position..."¹ This may account for the noticeable fact that four of the six times Aquila and Priscilla are mentioned Priscilla is mentioned first (Cf., Acts 18:18, 26; Romans 16:3; 2 Timothy 4:19). Expositors seem to be intrigued at this peculiarity, and as a result there is far too much speculation as to the reason. Some have suggested that Priscilla had the "greater zeal, devotion or ability," or, that she was "of higher rank than her husband," or, "a more active worker" and "the predominant personality." That she was prominent we know, but her greatness is seen in partnership with her husband. The same can be said of Aquila. As twin stars they were "bright with borrowed rays divine."

Her Position As A Wife

Priscilla was indeed an helpmeet of the truest sort. What a happy and harmonious blend of personalities is suggested in Luke's words, "Aquila...and his wife" (Acts 18:2).

They were indeed "no more twain, but one flesh." Always together; inseparable. Priscilla is an example of partnership in marriage as God intended it to be. They complimented each other in their work of tent making and spreading the gospel. They were equals. The modern day concept of equality is that of sameness, a concept far removed from true equality. Sister Irene Taylor has rightly said, "God made us **equal**, but with **different** functions to perform which compliment each other and make the unit whole."²

Her Persistence In Evangelism

Priscilla and Aquila labored together in helping to establish congregations of the Lord's church. Paul left them to work in Ephesus (Acts 18:19). The New Testament shows that the church met in their house in Ephesus and at Rome (1 Corinthians 16:19; Romans 16:5). The early church, being without buildings such as we have today, met wherever it could: in synagogues, schools, homes, etc. This devoted couple was willing to open up their home for the church to meet in.

To find the Lord's church meeting in homes is by no means unusual, even today. But, there is a movement in our day which is threatening the truth of God. It is called the "house church" concept, and is being advocated by such men as Alvin Jennings, and those associated with the Boston church of Christ. According to this false concept congregational "institutions," "forms" and "structures" must give way to "house churches" if we are to be truly scriptural. It sees "the church in thy house" statements in the New Testament as providing a binding pattern, with one congregation per city and a group of elders overseeing each satellite "house church." Certainly there is nothing wrong with the church meeting in someone's house, but this system is a breakdown of congregational autonomy (Cf., Acts 14:23; 1 Peter 5:2).

Her Practice

In Recognizing And Stopping Error

Priscilla is endeared to many for her role in that famous interview with Apollos which is recorded in Acts 18:24-26. Apollos came to Ephesus in A.D. 54 while Paul was on his third missionary journey. There he "spoke and taught diligently the things of the Lord" (Acts 18:25). Was Apollos sincere? Zealous? Intelligent? Eloquent? Were

(Continued on next page)

"PRISCILLA: THE LORD'S"
(Continued from page 10)

his sermons logical and convincing? Of all this there is no doubt. Yet, did all these good qualities excuse the basic error in his preaching? It did not! When Priscilla and Aquila heard him preach in Ephesus they knew that his error could not be ignored (contrary to the thinking of many brethren today), and so, "they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more accurately" (Acts 18:26, ASV).

In that Priscilla had a part in this, does it mean that women may teach or preach publicly as well as a man? It does not (Cf., 1 Timothy 2:12). This was teaching done privately rather than publicly.

Consider yet another observation in this regard: how many brethren are as keenly aware as Priscilla and Aquila were in recognizing error and are anywhere near as capable in correcting it? It is to the eternal credit of these two teachers that they were not content, as many seem to be, to let a brother go on in his misunderstanding of the gospel with the idea that someday he will see his error and correct it. They taught him privately and he was receptive to their careful correction.

Her Perseverance For Truth's Sake

Priscilla and Aquila had risked their lives for the gospel and for Paul (Romans 16:4). This great sacrificial act we doubt the apostle ever forgot. After all, it was Jesus who said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Their's was a loyalty to the limit, and Paul relished the memory of their faith and courage to the end of his life.

The illustrious life of Priscilla may be summed up in two simple words: loyalty and cooperation. Priscilla was loyal to God, to the gospel, to Paul, to her husband and to herself. She is always linked in caring cooperation with her husband, and they are always mentioned in a favorable light in Scripture. Together, they furnish us a wonderful example of the power for good of a husband and wife team working in unison for the advancement of the greatest Cause on earth.

Endnotes

¹H. Leo Boles, A Commentary on Acts of the Apostles. (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1941), p. 285.

²Irene Taylor, "Portrait of Priscilla," The Book of Acts - II, ed., Curtis Cates. (Lebanon, Tennessee: Sain Publication, 1985), pp. 455-456.

540 Tattnall
Milledgeville, GA 31061

HEATH CHURCH OF CHRIST

(Schedule of Services)

Sunday Bible study	9:45 a.m.
Morning worship	10:45 a.m.
Evening worship	6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible study	7:00 p.m.

(Located on Woodville Road—
½ mile west of the Heath Mall)

"THE WARFARE OF"
(Continued from page 9)

3. Preparation of the gospel (Romans 10:15; Ephesians 2:16).
 - a. Shoes protect, help keep balance, and give ample footing.
 - b. "Eptomasia" is readiness of mind (1 Peter 3:15; Romans 1:14; 1 Corinthians 15:58).
 4. Helmet of salvation.
 - a. The sense of salvation is vital (Hebrews 6:19-20; 1 Thessalonians 5:8; Philippians 2:12-14).
 - b. This hope is founded on God's promises (Titus 1:2; 1 John 2:25).
 5. The sword of the Spirit.
 - a. This is our offensive weapon.
 - b. This is our conquering weapon (Hebrews 4:12; Romans 1:16; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Matthew 4:4).
- C. The **reinforcement** is prayer (vs. 18).

Conclusion:

1. The victory brings great rewards (2 Timothy 4:6-8).
2. There have been no provisions made for defeat (no backpiece).
3. Do you need to be reinstated (see Luke 15:11-32; Acts 8:18-22)?
4. Do you need to change sides (see Colossians 1:13; Romans 6:1-7)?



Readers
Response

Dear Sirs:

I recently obtained a copy of your publication, the GOSPEL GLEANER and very much enjoyed its content. I would appreciate being added to your mailing list. Thank you in advance.

Yours in Christ,
Ronald Earwood
Joppa, AL

Dear brethren:

My wife and I very much enjoyed the three times we visited the Heath congregation. There was a wonderful Christian atmosphere and the singing was excellent! We would very much appreciate having our names added to the subscription list for the GOSPEL GLEANER. Thank you for your consideration.

In Christian love,
John & Barbara Roby
APO, NY

Take our names OFF your mailing list. You are too critical of everyone and everything. You are not a judge.

Mr. & Mrs. J. B. Taylor
Paducah, KY

Dear brethren:

I recently obtained a copy of your magazine GOSPEL GLEANER, and was extremely impressed with the contents thereof. It is hard to find a good publication in the religious realm these days, but there are a few, and if the issue of your magazine that I obtained is typical of all your issues, then your's is one of the few good ones. Your work is appreciated.

I would like very much to be placed on your mailing list. There are others in the congregation with which I worship that would enjoy and greatly benefit from your magazine. If it is possible, we request that you send 8 copies of your magazine to our place of worship so that we all may benefit from your work in the Lord's vineyard.

Thank you for your attention. May your work for the cause of Christ be richly blessed.

Michael R. Underwood
Henning, TN

Dear brethren:

We have read only one issue of your paper, and have found it excellent. Please send the GOSPEL GLEANER to the following addresses.

Mr. & Mrs. Keith Kinder
Osceola, IN

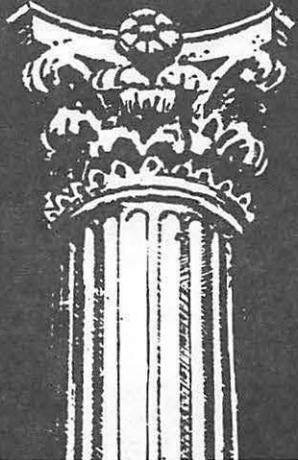
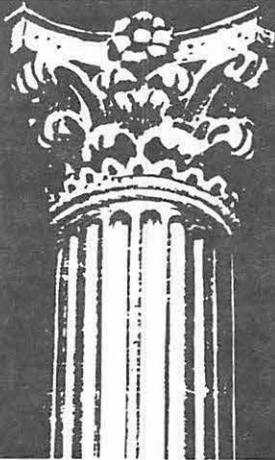
We take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the individuals and churches which help support the GOSPEL GLEANER. We now enter our third year of publication with this issue.

—Editors

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Gospel Gleaner

Volume 3

Number 2

GOD GIVES THE INCREASE

Howell Bigham

The Bible teaches man that God is the one who gives the increase to the body of Christ. Paul writing in 1 Corinthians 3:6 said, "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." When man comes to the understanding that God is the one who does the adding to the glorious institution of Christ and not man, the church will grow both in number and in spirituality.

So many times we hear of men who believe that preaching the word will not convert the soul of man. However, as one reads and studies the scriptures, he will find the word to be "quick, powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, joint and marrow" and that it is a "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). Friend, the gospel will convict men of sin, convert man from evil to righteousness, and will convince him to serve God and Christ.

Those in the first century understood that God's word is powerful—that it needed no help from any man. When it was preached in its simplicity, it converted men from the error of their way. In Acts chapter two we read just how powerful the word of God is. In that great chapter the apostle Peter preached the gospel which contains the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-5). God's power unto salvation (Romans 1:16), converted about three thousand souls on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41). When one studies Acts 2, he will understand that the gospel was preached, that men obeyed the truth that sets man free (John 8:32),

and that God did the adding to the church (Acts 2:47). Friend, it is no different today when we use the Bible as our guide!

However, when we look at the world today, we find men trying to pervert the way of the Lord. Gymnasiums, social events, and the like are being used to draw men to Christ when the word is all that should and can be used to accomplish the salvation of the soul (John 6:44-45; Romans 1:16). There are also those who try "techniqueing" the way of salvation. Those of this caliber denounce the bold preaching of the gospel that is commanded (Ephesians 6:19), and then present the technique of "slipping in the back door" to teach a lost soul the gospel. Friend, the faithful child of Jehovah has nothing to be ashamed of in living the Christian life and in preaching the scriptures of God. The loyal Christian will not use the back door in presenting the word, but will use the front door! Those in the Bible who preached the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11) presented it boldly, without fear nor favor. Because of their trust in the word and in God we read how they went everywhere preaching the word (Acts 8:4). It is time that those in the Lord's church today sow the seed of salvation (Mark 16:15) that men might obey the form of doctrine that is delivered unto them (Romans 6:17). May we never forget that we must preach the word and that God gives the increase!

1412 Parsons Ave.
Sheffield, AL 35660

EDITORIAL

THE WICKEDNESS OF THE WORLD AND THE CHALLENGE OF THE GOSPEL

THE WICKEDNESS



In the latter half of the twentieth century the world faces an appalling situation. The abyss of nuclear destruction hangs over the head of every human being; problems loom which baffle the keenest minds; man's emancipation from the law of God has led to the terror of the aids epidemic; new religious systems and "unity" movements have caused many to cast overboard, as worthless ballast, the faith of the gospel. The brazen shamelessness of homosexuality is rampant (another indication that the floodgates of vice have been thrown wide open). Atheism, agnosticism, blasphemy, profanity, selfishness, strife, fraud, robbery, terrorism, murder, divorce, kidnapping, and greed are words that remind us daily of the exceeding wickedness of the world and the high-handed rule of sin. The world lives, moves and has its very being in the Evil One (1 John 5:19).

THE CHALLENGE

Can the firm grip of Satan be lessened? Is there hope for this present era? Thank God, there is! There is power to bring salvation to a doomed world. The gospel is still God's power to save (Romans 1:16); and, "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). Also, "greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

A ringing challenge is presented to the church to be militant, optimistic and triumphant. To live "soberly, righteously and godly" and shine as lights "in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation" (Titus 2:12; Philippians 2:15). The saving message is to be boldly proclaimed "with all authority" (Titus 2:15). Let the word be preached, reproving, rebuking and exhorting (2 Timothy 4:2).

There never was a time when the world stood in greater need of the gospel of Christ than now. As indifference and despair have taken hold on the lives of millions, we must not forget that our work is the word of God. Great opportunities fill our horizon and rich resources are at our disposal.

The gospel and its ability to change lives is ours to use. The world is wicked, but the word is powerful (Hebrews 4:12).

God gives us energy to labor and work ere "the night cometh when no man can work" (John 9:4). We do not expect nor do we want "to be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease."

We have the tremendous privilege of prayer. It is a tremendous privilege backed by tremendous power. Let prayers ascend for the unconverted, the downcast and the erring; for "more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of" (Tennyson) (James 5:16).

We have the immutable promises of God. This is the basis for optimism. Pessimism is a child of doubt; but optimism is the offspring of faith. Paul's vigorous statement still stands, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

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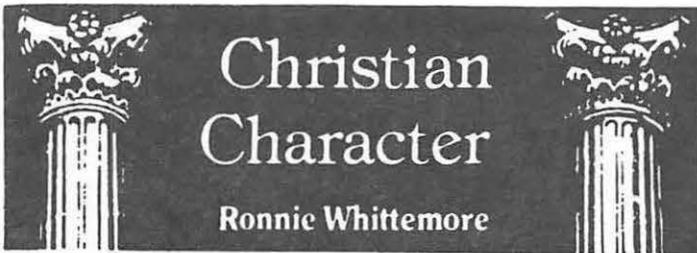
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EDITORS: Bill Dillon & Ronnie Whittemore



Christian Character

Ronnie Whittemore

THE CHRISTIAN AND HABITS

A dictionary definition of habit is "a constant, often unconscious inclination to perform some act, acquired through its frequent repetition; an established trend of the mind or character; customary manner or practice." There are good habits and there are bad habits and one must be careful of the habits which he possesses. Someone once said, "Bad habits are like a comfortable bed; easy to get into, but hard to get out of." Some people spend thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours on bad or filthy habits. Yet, other people have developed good habits upon which they have established a good life. What type of habits characterize your life?



Bad Habits

1. Profane and vulgar language. Television programs, playgrounds, schoolyards, and gatherings of every type are bombarded by the filthy habit of profanity. Most people who possess this habit acquired "their skills" at a young age. Maybe they heard their parents or schoolmates use profane language, so they followed their example. As they grew older, they heard plenty of disrespectful remarks on television. Later, they heard more "gutter talk" at movies. Soon, what was shocking and stunning became tolerable. Now, it has become accepted, embraced and practiced. But God still condemns such behavior. In Exodus 20:7, "*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*" In Ephesians 4:29, "*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers.*"

2. Drinking of alcoholic beverages. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible has nothing good to say about the consumption of strong

drink for enjoyment or pleasure. It is described as that which "*mocks and deceives*" (Proverbs 20:1), "*bites like a serpent*" (Proverbs 23:31-32) and defiles (Daniel 1:8). It is vain for an individual to attempt to justify social drinking or any other "classification" of the drinking of intoxicating beverages. The issue is completely lopsided. Drinking harms one's influence for right. It brings grief and heartache (Proverbs 23:29). And ultimately, it destroys the soul (Galatians 5:19-21). Many people began this bad habit while a teenager. They allowed peer pressure to guide their thinking and their actions. Meanwhile, a habit developed that thousands will not shake. A significant percentage of "social drinkers" become alcoholics. A person cannot become an alcoholic if he never takes that first drink. Why start something that one does not want to finish?

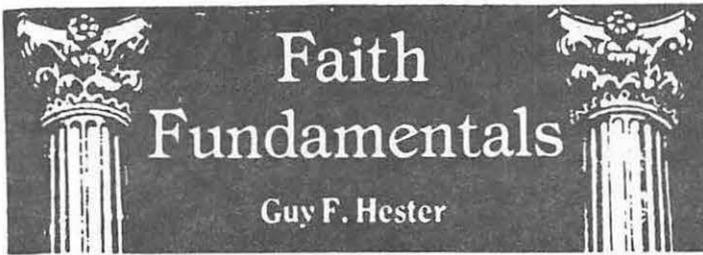
3. Worry. That's right, worry! Some people seemingly cannot be content unless they have something about which to worry. Such activity is fruitless (Matthew 6:27) and unnecessary (Matthew 6:32). Jesus taught that worry is a sin (Matthew 6:25-34). Most people worry about things which may never happen or things which they cannot change. If something can be changed, then the proper action is **work**, not **worry**.

Good Habits

One of the best ways to overcome bad habits is to replace them with good habits. Have you ever considered that it is just as easy to develop a **good habit** as a **bad habit**? There are some habits which will build up a Christian spiritually.

1. Daily Bible reading and study. The apostle Paul on one occasion commended the young servant Timothy by stating, "*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 3:15). But Paul also exhorted Timothy to be constant in the things which he had learned (2 Timothy 3:14). He also admonished him to "*give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine*" and to "*mediate upon these things*" (1 Timothy 4:13, 15). Timothy also was commanded to study (2 Timothy 2:15). Our Bibles should not become as photograph albums which we open once in a great while. Surely it ought to be the desire and the habit of every Christian to read and study his Bible daily.

(Continued on page 7)



LESSONS FROM THE EUNUCH

Acts 8:26-39



Of the thousands of cases of conversion in the book of Acts perhaps more has been written about the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch than any other. Much has been said about Philip's part in the conversion of the eunuch. Philip was a great evangelist who had gone forth from the church at Jerusalem because of the persecutions which came upon the church there. He *"went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them....when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women"* (Acts 8:5, 12). In this chapter we also have the account of the conversion of Simon the sorcerer, his fall and what he was told to do to be restored from his fallen state (Acts 8:9-24). Then in verses 26-39 we have the account of Philip being instructed to *"Arise and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert,"* his coming in contact with the Ethiopian eunuch, the queen's treasurer, his preaching Christ unto him, his confession and baptism. Truly Philip was a great man of God, a powerful preacher of the gospel of Christ and one eminently worthy of all the commendations that have been paid him. But we now want to change our focus from Philip to the eunuch. Even before his conversion there are some outstanding characteristics in this man that are worthy of notation and imitation.

He Was Sincere (Verse 27)

One of the obvious characteristics of this man was his sincerity. He traveled a distance of approximately 1000 miles from Ethiopia to Jerusalem to worship God (verse

27). There were no automobiles nor airplanes in his day but he was so devoted to the old Jewish religion [he was evidently a Jewish proselyte] that he traveled this great distance in a chariot rather than miss worship. Many today who live only minutes from the church building that is warm in winter and cool in summer, that has padded pews on which to sit, find excuses not to get into their air conditioned automobiles and drive the short distance to worship God. People do not miss worship because they live too far from the church building, but because they live too far from God. The Hebrew writer said to Christians, *"Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together"* (Hebrews 10:25). In 1 Corinthians 14:23, Paul talks about the whole church being come together in one place. In most places the church is never **together in one place** because of members forsaking the assembly. Christians need the sincerity of the eunuch when it comes to worship.

He Was Reading the Scriptures (Verse 28)

He had time on his hands and he was using it wisely. We have time on our hands, how wisely do we use it? Paul said, *"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil"* (Ephesians 5:16). What better way do we have of *"redeeming the time"* than by reading and studying the scripture (2 Timothy 2:15; John 5:39).

He Desired Guidance

The place of his reading was Isaiah 53:7-8, a prophecy concerning the crucifixion of Christ. When Philip asked, *"Understandest thou what thou readest?"* The eunuch replied, *"How can I except some man should guide me?"* Although he was an important man and no doubt very learned in many things, he realized that there were some things he didn't know and that he needed the assistance of others in learning of these matters. He was not ashamed to ask questions concerning that which he did not understand. None of us know so much but that we can learn from others. Apollos was an eloquent man who was mighty in the scriptures but was taught by Aquila and Priscilla *"the way of God more perfectly"* (Acts 18:24-26).

(Continued on page 5)

LESSONS FROM THE
(Continued from page 4)

He Loved the Truth

Not understanding what he was reading he asked, "Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man" (verse 34)? He loved truth! He was not interested in an opinion, but truth. One must love the truth in order to be saved. Paul wrote of some in 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12, "With all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they might all be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

**He Obeyed the Gospel
(Verses 36-39)**

He heard Christ preached; he believed; he repented of his religious error; he confessed Christ and was baptized. These are exactly the same conditions that one today must

meet in order to be saved (Mark 16:15-16; Luke 13:3; Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 2:38).

All of those who do not obey the gospel will be punished with everlasting destruction (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

**He Rejoiced
(Verse 39)**

"And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing." And what reason he had to rejoice! He had been born again of water and the Spirit (John 3:3, 5). His sins were remitted (Acts 2:38). He was a new creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). He was a Christian (Acts 11:26). All Christians should rejoice. Paul said, "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice" (Philippians 4:4).

Each of us should strive to possess in our own lives those same outstanding qualities that characterized the eunuch.

P. O. Box 501
Hanceville, AL 35077

THE WICKEDNESS OF
(Continued from page 2)

God has promised a bountiful harvest if we sow the beautiful word (Isaiah 55:10-11). God has promised no persevering labor to be in vain (Galatians 6:9; 1 Corinthians 15:58). With a positive assurance the Christian can press the battle against the foe for "If God be for us, who can be against us" (Romans 8:31)?

The courageous Christian sees the opportunities that abound not the obstacles that abort. Christians are conquerors not quitters. Christians endeavor not exit. To preach the gospel and live the gospel clothes us with a power invincible. "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it" (Revelation 3:8).

May every child of God be filled with the spirit of courageous Caleb who said, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Numbers 13:30).

Bill Dillon, editor

PLAN OF SALVATION

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)



SPREADING THE GOSPEL IN GUYANA

Ronnie Whittemore

Since September of 1985, the Lord's church at Heath has been involved in the spreading of the gospel in the country of Guyana, South America. At that time, the church began supporting a native of Guyana, brother Harachand Bhola, in his work of preaching the gospel in Vreed-en-Hoop. In August of 1986, this writer and brother Rodney Miller, an elder at Heath, with the Lord's help, spent a week in Guyana. Those things were rehearsed in the October-December, 1986 issue of the GOSPEL GLEANER (Volume 2 Number 4). Realizing the great opportunities and potential in that area of the world, another trip was planned for the early part of this year.

On February 20, brethren Roger Brandon and Steve Miller, who serve as deacons at Heath, and Guy F. Hester who preaches for the Northside church in Hanceville, Alabama embarked with several trunks of food and medical supplies (many thanks to the brethren at Hanceville and Heath who donated those items) to Guyana. (For brethren Brandon and Miller, this was their second trip to Guyana. They participated in a campaign in September, 1984 during which brother Bhola was converted). Through two weeks of daily Bible classes and nightly preaching, fourteen people were baptized into Christ and the church was strengthened (Acts 20:32). It is quite refreshing to find a group of the Lord's people who are eager, diligent, and zealous toward God. Whether attending Bible classes or listening to the preaching of the word, these Christians anxiously turn the pages of their Bibles to check passages and in many cases can quote verses right along with the preacher.

In this country, we often take for granted the tools and privileges of proper teaching and preaching. Likewise, there are many opportunities in this country of training men to preach. But such conveniences are rare in Guyana. Therefore, in their daily Bible classes, the brethren discussed and studied a variety of subjects with which the Guyanese

brethren had difficulties and questions. Brother Steve Miller also devoted some time the first week to conducting a singing class. Besides preaching in the evenings, brother Hester studied with brother Bhola concerning the work and role of a preacher.



Another Precious Soul Is Baptized Into Christ

Among the bright spots of the work in Guyana is the establishment of other congregations as a result of confirming the church at Vreed-en-Hoop. During last summer's endeavor, a mother and her daughter were converted. They live on the small island of Leguan. Since that time, the Lord's church

(Continued on page 7)



Church of Christ at Vreed-en-Hoop

2. Daily prayer. The prophet, Daniel, serves as a great example of one who prayed daily. While in captivity and under the threat of death if he should petition the God of heaven (Daniel 6:7), Daniel maintained his spiritual habit of praying to God three times a day (Daniel 6:10). The Psalmist said, "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice" (Psalm 55:17). God's people in this dispensation are likewise to continue in prayer (Colossians 4:2). "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). "...Continuing instant in prayer" (Romans 12:12). What better way is there to begin and end a day than with prayer?

3. Regularity in worship unto God. The Psalmist anxiously welcomed the time to worship God. "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psalm 122:1). The Bible commands faithfulness in attending worship services (Hebrews 10:24-25). The early church remained steadfast in its worship unto God (Acts 2:42; 20:7). And surely gathering with the saints upon the Lord's day or attending mid-week Bible study is also a means of encouragement, strength, inspiration and influence. To neglect such opportunities is to commit sin. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

Certainly there are many other habits which could be added to these lists. Some habits should be broken and some habits should be practiced. May every child of God shun evil and live godly.

Route 4, Box 134-AA
Kevil, KY 42053

OUR PLEA

In humility we cherish the hope that this church may speak as the Bible speaks and be silent as the Bible is silent, preach the good news of salvation to the unredeemed, encourage the weary, lift up the fallen, strengthen the saved and point out the way of life everlasting to all whose lives we touch. To reproduce faithfully the church of the New Testament is our aim. That all believers may be united to Christ is our plea. That God may use us as a channel through which His blessings may flow into the lives of others is our prayer.

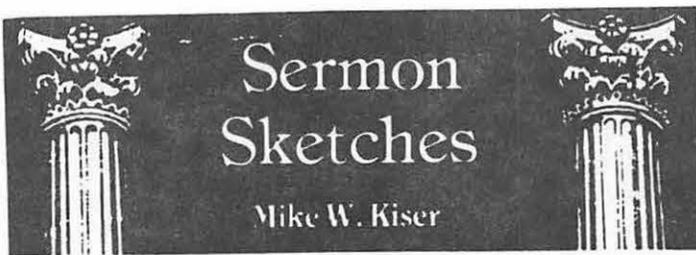
meets regularly on Leguan. Brother Roger Brandon had the opportunity to preach on each Sunday during their stay. Including men, women and children, twelve met one Sunday and about twenty-five on the other Sunday. Brother Terry, one of the young men at Vreed-en-Hoop, normally speaks and helps the church each Lord's day.

Another congregation meets regularly in Windsor Forest. This church began with the conversion of one family and later, a young lady who is married to a devout Hindu was also baptized into Christ. In Matthew 10:34-38, Jesus said that following him could produce division even in one's own family. "And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (verses 36-37). Nevertheless, this young lady obeyed the gospel even though she may face severe tribulation from her family.

In Acts 8, Philip, the preacher, asked the Ethiopian eunuch, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" The eunuch replied, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" In like manner, our brethren in Guyana need guidance, teaching, and prayers. Lord willing, another trip is planned for August.

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ARE YOU A LOYAL CHURCH MEMBER?

Matthew 10:32-33

Introduction:

1. The question is not, "Are you a church member?"



a. The focal point in this discussion is the word "loyal."

b. "Loyal" means "to be true, to stand by, to defend, to support."

2. This present age is characterized by disloyalty in almost every area of human behavior.

a. More homes are being torn apart by immorality and disobedience.

b. More nations are being torn apart by treason and dishonesty.

c. More members are becoming disloyal to the church yearly.

3. Wherein lies the strength and weakness of this church?

a. The strength of the church is perfect.

1- It has a sure foundation (1 Cor. 3:11).

2- It has a divine head (Eph. 1:22-23).

b. The weakness of the church lies in its members.

1- We are the material of the structure (1 Peter 2:5).

2- We need more members who can sing the song from the heart, "I Love Thy Kingdom Lord."

4. Why should you be a loyal member?

I. To Be Loyal To Christ

A. Now when I speak of the church I am speaking of something divine (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 3:10-11).

B. What you do with the church is what you do with Christ.

1. Saul persecuted the church (Galatians 1:13, 23).

2. Saul persecuted Christ (Acts 9:5).

3. Note the relationship (Ephesians 1:22-23; 1 Corinthians 12:12, 27; Matthew 25:40).

C. The church is special to Christ (Ephesians 5:21-32; Acts 20:28).

1. He is its lover.

2. He is its redeemer.

3. He is its husband.

4. He is its sanctifier.

5. He is its satisfier.

6. He is its bridegroom.

II. To Be Thankful To Christ.

A. Love should be required (1 John 4:19; John 15:15, 23).

B. What is man's condition without membership (Matthew 18:3)?

1. Lost in sin (John 3:16; Luke 19:10)

2. Child of the devil (John 8:44)

3. In darkness (Colossians 1:13)

4. Without God and hope (Eph. 2:12)

5. No spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3)

C. Compare that to the condition of one who is a member (2 Corinthians 5:17).

1. Saved (2 Timothy 2:10; Eph. 1:7)

2. Child of God (Galatians 3:26-27)

3. Citizen in the kingdom (Heb. 12:28)

4. Having a sure hope (Heb. 6:18-19)

5. All spiritual blessings (Gal. 3:14)

III. To Be Powerful For Christ

A. We cannot win souls without loyalty (John 15:4-5).

1. We are a field instead of a force for evangelism.

2. Gideon won the battle the day before (32,000 less 22,000 cowards; less 9,700 careless = 300 consecrated).

B. You have no "light" if you are not loyal (Philippians 2:15-16).

1. There is a difference between a "demon station" and a "demonstration."

2. We are trying to substitute "eloquence" for "elegance."

C. Two other divine institutions suffer when you are not loyal.

1. The nation (Psalm 33:12; 9:17)

2. The home (Ephesians 6:4—Whose home promotes crime and ungodliness?)

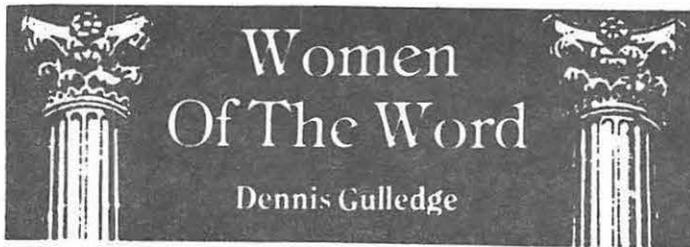
IV. To Be Honest With Christ

A. Jesus spoke often about "stewardship" (Matthew 25:14-30).

B. Christians are stewards (1 Corinthians 4:2; Matthew 6:33; 1 Corinthians 6:20).

1. Some members you "count on," and some you just count.

2. Some are ready for the "financial" report, but not the "work" report.



"REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE"



Lot's wife is one of those nameless women of the Word. The first direct reference in the Scriptures to her is when the angels came to hasten Lot and his family out of doomed Sodom (Genesis 19:15). Those details which would appeal to our interests, i.e., her name, race, family heritage, character, etc., the Holy Spirit has left to the sacred things of God (Deuteronomy 29:29). All that we can know about her is compacted into one brief verse: *"But his (Lot's, DG) wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt"* (Genesis 19:26). Yet, she is worthy of our attention because the Lord chose her as a woman to be remembered, in the words, *"Remember Lot's wife"* (Luke 17:32). What should we remember of Lot's wife?

I. Remember Her Evil Surroundings

A good many years before Abram and Lot departed Haran, and later Egypt, and then returned to Canaan (Genesis 12-13). Both Abram and Lot prospered materially *"so that they could not dwell together"* (Genesis 13:6). Lot, then, *"pitched his tent toward Sodom"* (vs. 12). Later we find him dwelling in Sodom (Genesis 14:12), and then sitting at the city gate where the elders commonly gathered to conduct business affairs (Genesis 19:1).

While the bad consequences of his choice to settle in wicked Sodom were no doubt apparent to him, the apostle Peter, by inspiration, tells us that Lot was *"sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their lawless deeds)"* (2 Peter 2:7-8). Even so, he must have married a woman of either Sodom, or *"the cities of the Plain"* (Genesis 13:12). Either way, it

is in wicked and depraved Sodom that we first read of Lot's family life (Genesis 19:15).

There is no doubt that Lot's wife resided in Sodom for quite a number of years, possibly all of her life. Her children were born there and married there (Genesis 19:14-16). To her Sodom would have some delightful associations; obviously too many, as she refused to break with it all at once.

II. Remember Her Demise

The divine injunction was clear: *"Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed"* (Genesis 19:17). Sadly, Lot's wife could not leave without that forbidden backward glance. Why? "God does not state 'why' she looked back, but no doubt her heart was where her treasure was and she paid a terrible price for 'loving this world.'"¹

The Bible states that Lot's wife *"looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt"* (Genesis 19:26). You will note that she was "behind" Lot. This would indicate her reluctance to abandon the place which she called home. She fell behind, not from lack of strength to keep up, but from a divided will.

A point of debate in this inspired narrative has long been whether Lot's wife was turned to salt for her sin (as divine punishment for her disobedience), or by her sin (because she lingered too long and was consumed in the sulphurous elements as an unfortunate consequence). Also, what is the significance of the word "became" in Genesis 19:26? Does it imply a metamorphosis, or that she was "overtaken by sulphurous vapors, and encrusted with salt?"² Without attempting to add detail where there is none, suffice it to say *"she became a pillar of salt."*

Later ages have not been content to leave the matter, but have insisted on identifying the "pillar." Several have laid claim to having seen it, among whom are such notables as Josephus,³ St. Clement⁴ and Irenaeus.⁵ So absurd have been such claims that in 1827 Adam Clarke jokingly wrote, *"...that either the statue does not now remain, or that some of the heaps of salt or blocks of salt rock which are to be met with in the vicinity of the Dead Sea, may be remains of Lot's wife!"*⁶

(Continued on page 10)

- C. Build a case for an honest funeral!
1. "Every time I pass the church, I stop and pay a visit. So when they bring me in stretched out, the preacher won't ask 'who is it?'"
 2. Imagine the preacher telling the whole truth at some funerals. "Here lies _____. He was a _____ member."

V. To Be Eternally With Christ

- A. Heaven is not just wishful thinking apart from revelation.
1. Jesus told us heaven is real (John 14:3; Acts 7:55-56).
 2. Paul told us the same (2 Cor. 5:1-8).
- B. Now who will spend eternity with Christ?
1. Those who were disloyal (Revelation 3:5; 22:18-19; 21:27)?
 2. Those who were loyal and laid their treasures up in heaven (Matthew 6:20; Luke 10:20; Revelation 2:10; 14:13; 22:14).
- C. We will all one day cross that great divide into eternity.

Conclusion:

1. The earnest desire of every Christian should be to sing:
"May thy rich grace impart,
Strength to my fainting heart,
My zeal inspire;
As thou has died for me,
O may my love to thee,
Pure, warm, and changless be,
A living fire."
2. If you are not a loyal member, here is why I preached this sermon: Galatians 6:1-2; Hebrews 10:24-25; James 5:19-20.
3. There are no good reasons for not being a loyal member of the church of our Lord.

III. Remember Her Mistake

"Disobedience was her sin. Her fate testifies anew to each generation the gravity of violating divine instruction."⁷ She is a warning to the disobedient and backsliding (Luke 17:32).

She was a woman with a divided heart who could not make a clear-cut break with the lascivious lifestyle of her sordid surroundings. God's people must make a clean break with the world (2 Corinthians 6:17; Colossians 1:13; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17), and not look back (Luke 9:62; 2 Timothy 4:10)! Never can we travel very swiftly toward heavenly heights if our hearts are lingering near Sodom.

Yes, "Remember Lot's wife!" Remember that God gave her the opportunity to make a new start. Remember that she took that opportunity, but only half-heartedly. Remember that her demise was the result of a divided mind. For almost to do a thing is really not to do it at all. To be almost persuaded is to miss the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. To be almost a Christian is to be lost. To almost escape to the heights of safety is to share the fate of all Sodom and perish as surely as one within her gates.

-Endnotes-

¹Andrew M. Connally, "The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and Subsequent Events," IN: The Book of Genesis - 1985 Spiritual Sword Lectures, eds., Garland Elkins and Thomas B. Warren. (Lebanon, TN: Sain Publications, 1985), p. 237.

²Herbert Lockyer, The Women of the Bible. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), p. 175.

³Antiquities, I, xi:4.

⁴First Epistle to the Corinthians, Chapter XI.

⁵Against Heresies, XXXI:1.

⁶Adam Clarke, Clarke's Commentary, Vol. 1. - Genesis to Deuteronomy. (New York: Abingdon Press, n.d.), p. 127.

⁷Lottie Beth Hobbs, Daughters of Eve. (Fort Worth: Harvest Publications, 1963), p. 27.

HEATH CHURCH OF CHRIST
(Schedule of Services)

Sunday Bible study	9:45 a.m.
Morning worship	10:45 a.m.
Evening worship	6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible study	7:00 p.m.

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½ mile west of the Heath Mall)

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Readers Response

Dear Sirs:

I recently obtained a copy of your publication the GOSPEL GLEANER and very much enjoyed its content and would appreciate being added to your mailing list.

Yours In Christ,
Mrs. Mary L. Wigintan
Dyersburg, TN

Dear brethren:

Because of the necessity of good, solid and informed Bible study, it has been suggested that our members avail themselves of the fine literature that members of the Lord's church produce. However most of the members of the small congregation here in Edenton feel as though they cannot afford to pay the usual subscription price for the "better known" publications. Fortunately, it has come to our attention that you offer your publication without cost to those that might be interested. With the desire to assist you in keeping your costs as small as possible, it has been suggested tht instead of individuals requesting to be put on your mailing list, that a bundle of twenty be sent to the building here in Edenton for distribution.

We know that any such effort as yours is not without cost, and we hope to be able defray some of the cost by sending you a nominal contribution on occasion. We are very thankful that you are willing to allow others the opportunity to avail themselves of the material that you put together so painstakingly. Thank you so very much.

Yours in Christ's love,
Robert Mayo, evangelist
Edenton, NC

Dear brethren:

My husband and I just read the January - March 1987 GOSPEL GLEANER. Please add our name to your mailing list...We were especially interested in "The N.I.V. and Psalm 51:5." We discussed it in our last Wednesday night class. So when I found this today, I ran a bunch of copies and placed them in the foyer...We are of the opinion that brethren everywhere should take a stand against the NIV and several other new "translations."

In His service,
Sarah McNeiel
Arab, AL

Dear Sirs:

I recently obtained a copy of your publication the GOSPEL GLEANER and very much enjoyed its content and would appreciate being added to your mailing list.

Yours in Christ,
Mrs. Mary L. Wigintan
Dyersburg, TN

Dear brethren:

I picked up a copy of the GOSPEL GLEANER at the Central congregation in Paducah. I really enjoyed reading it. Sort of refreshing to find a brotherhood publication worth reading. Please put me on your mailing list! Also, I'd like my son Michael Heath to receive the GLEANER as well. God love you in your effort to serve Him.

In the Master's service,
Harold Heath
Eddyville, KY

Would you please place me on your mailing list to receive your GOSPEL GLEANER.

Thank you,
Walter Slayden
Anna, IL

Several readers have written to us and asked about a subscription price for the GOSPEL GLEANER. Subscription to the paper is FREE. The church at Heath along with individual and other church support absorb the cost of the printing and mailing. We are happy to provide this teaching tool and desire that all glory be to God.

- Editors -

READERS' RESPONSE
(Continued from page 11)

Dear brethren:

Would you please place me on the mailing list for the GOSPEL GLEANER. If there is a subscription price, please inform me.

Sincerely,
Joe Cornelius
Texarkana, Arkansas

Dear brethren:

After receiving a sample issue of GOSPEL GLEANER from brother Glenn Jobe of the church of Christ in Schaumburg, I have found it most interesting and feel that the members here at West Side would profit from such reading.

If it would possible, could you send us a bundle of 12-15 each time you print them to the West Side church of Christ? I would really appreciate it.

Thank you for helping in the matter. God bless you is my continued prayer.

Yours in Christ,
Arnold Kelley, minister
Elgin, IL

Dear brother Dillon:

I recently was handed a copy of your paper and enjoyed it. I would like to receive your paper. Please place me on your mailing list.

Yours in Christ,
Spencer Merriweather
Denmark, TN

Dear Sirs:

Please add my name to your mailing list so that I might receive your publication. I picked up a copy when visiting in middle Georgia last week. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,
John Tracy
Smyrna, GA

Dear brethren:

I have enjoyed reading and studying every article of the GOSPEL GLEANER. Please put my name on your mailing list.

Thank you,
Iris Oden
Benton, KY

CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED

Arlington church of Christ (McMinnville, TN)	\$ 75.00
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Gospel Gleaner

Volume 3

Number 3

BAPTISM AND ROMANS 6

Gilbert Gough

The subject of water baptism is one of the most controversial topics in the religious world today and has been for many centuries. Beliefs differ as to the **mode** of baptism. Some believe that baptism is sprinkling; or others, pouring; and still others believe that it is immersion. Beliefs differ as to the **timing** of baptism. Some think that infants must be baptized. Others believe that one must be of the age of accountability because they must understand what they are doing. Beliefs differ as to the **essentiality** of baptism. Some believe that baptism is only a sign that one has already been saved, while others contend that baptism is for the remission of sins and unto salvation. Other contrasts can be shown as how people differ as to the subject of water baptism, but people are not the authority in matters of salvation, are they? God is! The important question for our study is, "What does the Bible teach about baptism?"

Romans 6 is truly a great chapter of the Bible. Its great theme is being made free from sin. Sin is that which separates man from God (Isaiah 59:1-2), and all men have sinned (Romans 3:23). Thus, this chapter of the Bible is very important to our souls. Romans 6:3-11 will be used as the text for this study. From this text we will discuss three basic points. 1) Baptism is immersion. 2) Baptism is remission. 3) Baptism is regeneration.

BAPTISM IS IMMERSION (6:3-5)

Baptism is immersion because by its very definition it means immersion. The Greek word "baptizo" means to dip, plunge, or immerse. It implies an overwhelming. Reputable scholars and their lexical studies of "baptizo" agree. Baptism by definition means immersion.

If the Lord had authorized sprinkling, He would have used the word "rhantizo" which means "to sprinkle." If the Lord had authorized pouring, He would have used the "katacheo" which means "to pour down upon." However, these words are not used by the Lord's inspired writers in reference to baptism.

Baptism is immersion because only in immersion are we buried and raised. *"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead..."* (verse 4). Baptism is the semblance of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). When one is baptized, he has obeyed the likeness of the facts of the gospel (Romans 6:3-4).

Baptism is immersion and is essential because of its being in the likeness of the death and resurrection of Christ. *"If (statement of conditionality) we have been planted (united) in the likeness of his (Jesus') death, we shall*

(Continued on page 6)

EDITORIAL

THE NOT-SO-OUT-OF-DATE BOOK



Our world is one of many perils and problems and trials and troubles. The solution to every difficulty can be found in one's attitude toward the Bible. If the Bible is the word of God (and it is), then your attitude toward the Bible reflects or mirrors your attitude toward God. Do you believe

that the Bible is the Book which men need today? In this age where old-fashioned ethics are out of place; where morality seems only to apply to ages gone by; where Biblical morality is denied in name of modern circumstances and situation...it may sound unusual, but nonetheless true, that the Bible is the not-so-out-of-date book. The word of God is as new as the morning and as fresh as the spring dew.

Someone may be quick to say however that life is too complicated to be helped by a pattern of writings as ancient as the Bible. Because of this type of thinking, many people's lives are characterized by a distinct lack of principles or standards. But as Dwight Eisenhower in 1959 said, "the more complicated life becomes the more important it is to keep our principles and purposes clear." An absence of principles and standards in life has led to the rather inconsistent situation of broad-mindedness coming to mean indifference. We should not be nor does the Bible teach that indifference toward doctrine is the key to true religion.

For men and women willing to investigate and search, the Sacred Volume is found to be a perfect blueprint for success, happiness, and tranquility. With the Bible, one can learn how to live with meaning, not with meanness!

The principles taught by Jesus Christ in the Bible are not the untried views of an idle philosopher, but are the outgrowth of the Lord, first doing, then teaching. Acts 1:1 tells us that Jesus began both "to do and teach."

Do we need the Bible today or is the Book better suited for another time? Let us examine some Bible teachings and make a determination from that:

(1) The Bible instructs us to love one another. "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12). Do we need more love? or less? Jesus practiced love and taught love. Racial prejudice was an immense problem back in the first century as it continues to be today. It was believed by the Jews that the other races had been created in order to "feed the flames of hell." Such enmity is not unheard of in these times. But in John 4, the Lord visited among the despised Samaritans and taught them and many believed. In Acts 10:34-35 the scriptures say this: "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Now, do we need a book that teaches justice among men and fairness as a rule of life?? Is the Bible out-of-date?

(2) In Matthew 15:1-6 the Bible teaches respect and honor for father and mother.

(Continued on page 7)

The GOSPEL GLEANER is published quarterly by the Heath church of Christ which is overseen by Wilford Brandon and Rodney Miller, elders.

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EDITORS: Bill Dillon & Ronnie Whittemore

Christian Character

Ronnie Whitemore

THE CHRISTIAN AND HUMILITY



Humility is a trait which should characterize every child of God. In fact, one cannot enter the kingdom of heaven nor obtain the rich promises of God unless he humbles and submits himself unto God. Jesus said, "...Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3-4). Jesus also stated, "...If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 16:24-25). In Luke 14:11, Jesus proclaimed that ultimate exaltation is found in humility. "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

The opposite of humility is pride, arrogance and selfishness. Humility includes the realization that others deserve a special kind of treatment. But this society, to a large degree, concentrates on satisfying self and not serving others. And this attitude has carried over to the Lord's people. (Actually, many people who profess to be Christians have never lost their pride and found true humility). The Bible contains several examples of humble servants of God. John the Baptizer recognized his role as the Lord's forerunner. His work involved the preparing of the way for the Mighty Messiah. Yet, John did not boast of his work or "get too big for his britches." He said, "He (Jesus) must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). Before Jesus came unto John to be baptized in the river Jordan, John stated, "...he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear..." (Matthew 3:11). When

Jesus requested baptism—"to fulfill all righteousness"—"John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me" (Matthew 3:14)? In Matthew 8, a certain centurion besought Jesus to heal his servant who was "at home sick of the palsy" (verse 6). Jesus said that he would "come and heal him" (verse 7). The centurion simply stated, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed" (verse 8).

In the days of the kings of Israel, Saul and Solomon at the beginning of their reigns were humble men before God. Saul, when chosen and announced as the first king of Israel, was found in the baggage (1 Samuel 10:22-23). Solomon, the son of David, requested wisdom from the Lord that he might better serve the people (1 Kings 3:5-10). But certainly humility is most beautifully defined by the life and teaching of Jesus.

Jesus is described in the New Testament as the "Son of God" nearly fifty times and as the "Son of man" over sixty times. This latter term emphasizes his humanity while upon earth (John 1:14) and the former term stresses his deity. He left the glories of heaven to become the Savior of the world (1 John 2:2). He left the company of the first and third persons of the Godhead to be mocked, scoffed, shamed and deserted by men. Yes, Jesus became a minister, a servant, and a sacrifice for every man.

Men cannot fully appreciate nor understand humility without the example and teachings of the submissive Son of God (John 4:34).

Humility Exemplified

In the first century, open sandals were worn by men in their travels. The roads were dry and dusty. Therefore, the host of a gathering would honor his guests by washing their feet. This act was a sign of servanthip. The apostle Paul mentions it as one of the marks of a widow worthy to be cared for by the church (1 Timothy 5:10). The sinful woman in Luke 7 washed Jesus' feet with her tears.

In John 13, the Bible records that Jesus washed his disciples' feet. But this humble act of Christ cannot be fully appreciated unless one knows the hearts of these disciples. In Luke's inspired record, there was strife among the disciples at that very hour as to whom among them would be greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Luke 22:24). Just a few

(Continued on page 4)

THE CHRISTIAN AND HUMILITY
(Continued from page 3)

days earlier, James and John requested that they might sit on the right hand and on the left hand of Christ (Mark 10:35-37). As a result, the other ten were displeased (Mark 10:41).

With this information in mind, what was the scene of John 13? On his darkest night, Jesus gathered with his apostles. There was a spirit of strife and contention among them, even though, Jesus had taught for three years that greatness is found in humility, service and sacrifice. Each apostle had before him the opportunity and the means whereby he could manifest an humble spirit by performing the task of a servant. Instead, Jesus *"arose from supper; and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poured water into a bason, and washed the disciples' feet and wiped them with the towel"* (John 13:4-5).

Humility Expounded

In Luke 18:9-14, Jesus taught that parable of the Pharisee and the publican. On one hand, there was the Pharisee who did not rely upon the mercy and grace of God, but upon his own works. He *"stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess."* On the other hand, there was the publican who *"would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner."* Jesus pronounced justification upon the publican rather than the Pharisee. What was the reason? *"...He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."*

In James 2:1-12, the inspired writer warns against partiality. Some men were guilty of uplifting the rich and respected while ignoring the poor and down-trodden. Therefore, these men had become respecters of persons and violaters of God's law.

The world needs more humility. Men ought to be humble before one another. It is anti-God, anti-Christ, and anti-Christian for a person to use his education to insult others [the use of doctor (title), rather than brother (relationship); the insistence of degrees in the pulpit rather than requiring a faithful life and knowledge of the Word], or for a person to refuse to help the poor and needy because one feels that he is above such, or for a person to become so full of self that

he loses sight of what is important. Several months ago, an article came across this writer's desk in which a missionary expressed regret and reservation in an evangelistic effort because only fifty souls were baptized into Christ in a week's time. (In an earlier and similar endeavor over 120 had been converted in a two-week period). But the missionary was thankful at the end of the recent two-week effort because the total converted was over 150, **a new record!** When such attitudes exist, many questions are raised concerning the motives, methods and manner in which the gospel is being preached. As memories recall, Jesus expressed joy and happiness over **one** lost sheep that was found (Luke 15:3-7).

The aim of every Christian should be to serve God humbly and faithfully. Friend, put yourself at that passover supper and look upon Jesus as he washes the feet of the disciple whom he loved and the feet of the one who would later deny him three times. Then watch Jesus as he washes the feet of him who would betray him! That is humility!

Route 4, Box 134-AA
Kevil, KY 42053

**WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?**

HEAR the gospel of Christ
Romans 10:13-17

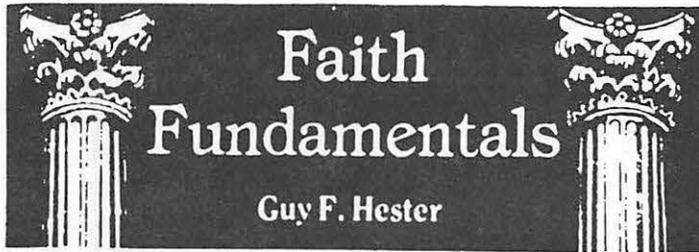
BELIEVE in Christ
Mark 16:15-16

REPENT of past sins
Acts 2:36-47

CONFESS faith in Christ
Romans 10:9-10

BE BAPTIZED into Christ
Acts 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21

LIVE FAITHFULLY
Romans 12:1-2



**IS IT A MATTER OF CHOICE?
(First of Two Parts)**



The religious world has become so liberal that many preachers are extending choices to men where God has not allowed any choices. These men offer such enticing options to attract a following, but the choice means that converts are not following the Lord. There are some things upon which God has firmly legislated, and the matter was then closed. Man was not given the privilege of changing them. He must either accept what God decreed, or pay the penalty for rebelling against God's authority. God has never tendered to man the right to stake out the grounds for reconciliation, or devise his own plan for justification. God alone operates in that field. Now let us consider the question, "Is it a matter of choice?"

Is the church a matter of choice? Many today are calling on men to "join the church of their choice." This leaves the impression that it is perfectly alright with God for man to choose among various churches. But God does not have an assortment of churches, and our salvation is not a matter of playing "eenie, meenie, miney, moe." God does not allow us to go shopping among a variety of divine organizations to find the right shade of righteousness, devotion and fervor. God has never extended to man a choice in churches. Where would a preacher find scriptural grounds for thanking God "for so many different churches that each may have the church of his choice?"

How many churches did Jesus say that he would build? "And I say also unto thee, *That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*" (Matthew 16:18). Christ gave himself for how many churches? "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25). How many churches did the blood of Christ purchase? "Take

heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Jesus is head of how many bodies? "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22-23). "And he is Lord," and only one church today exists by his divine authority. Therefore, where has God permitted man any choice in this matter?

Our chief concern should be, am I a member of the church of the Lord's choice? Man really has no choice in this all important matter.

Is church membership a matter of choice? Along with the "church of your choice" idea, there was developed the practice of churches exercising a choice as to membership applicants. So a common practice arose of "voting them in." But where did God give man a choice as to whom he would have enter this divine institution? Fallible men sit in judgment over the souls of men in this practice and feel that they have a choice in the vote that they cast. Have they considered that their choice shows utter contempt for God's stated work in this matter? Read carefully Acts 2:47. "*Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*" Please note, the **Lord** adds to the church. Who will contend that man has a choice in whom shall be admitted into "*the house of God, the church of the living God*" (1 Timothy 3:15)? Is it man's choice or God's decision?

Man has the idea that he can be saved from sins, and then shop around for a church to "join." But God has never left that to man's choice. He has set forth in John 3:5 that man must "*...be born of water and of the Spirit.*" This makes one a child of God, and necessarily in God's family, or house. Paul confirms this in Galatians 3:26-27. "*For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you has have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*" One who accepts the testimony of the Spirit and believes in christ is thus begotten of the spirit. Then in obedience in baptism he is born of water. This is the spiritual birth into the family of God, which is the church. Now where has God extended to man any choice as to which divine family he will become a member?

P. O. Box 501
Hanceville, AL 35077

be also in the likeness of his (Jesus') resurrection" (verse 5). If one has not been planted (united) with Christ in baptism, there will be no resurrection. If there is a resurrection in baptism (and there is), then there must be a rising or coming up out of something. In Bible baptism there is the resurrection from water (cf. Acts 8:39).

Baptism is immersion because that is the way God planned it. Jesus taught, "*He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved...*" (Mark 16:16). Peter concurred with Jesus in Acts 2:38, "*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins....*"

Naaman of 2 Kings 5:1-14 was told to be washed in the river Jordan seven times. What if he decided (above what the prophet of God told him to do) to be sprinkled seven times? Would that have met God's requirement? No! Men must obey the commandments of God as God has specified.

Baptism is immersion because the rest of the Bible attests to the fact. At Jesus' baptism the Bible records, "*And Jesus when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water...*" (Matthew 3:16). If Jesus were not immersed, how could He come "*out of the water?*" The language of Matthew 3:16 will not permit sprinkling or pouring. When John was baptizing in Aenon, the Bible says, "*And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salem, because there was much water there, and they came and were baptized.*" Sprinkling does not take that much water, but John needed much water. Why? So he could immerse the people.

The conversion of the Eunuch of Acts 8 stands as the classic example of immersion. Note the language of the passage. "*And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip that the Eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing*" (verses 38-39). Obviously, the Eunuch was immersed for them to go "*down both into the water,*" and "*come up out of the water.*" Again, the language will not permit sprinkling or pouring. One does not go "into" and "out of" sprinkling or pouring. Baptism only, which is immersion and emersion, fits the Bible's teaching.

Remission is a dismissal or a release. When it is used in the New Testament, it is linked with the dismissal of one's sins. One has been released or cleared of the penalty of sin. Eleven times remission is followed by "of sins" and once by "of trespasses." It is translated as "forgiveness" in Mark 3:29; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14.

The leprosy of Naaman was in remission when he obeyed the prophet of the Lord. He was released from the disease when he dipped himself seven times in the river Jordan. Remission in the New Testament is not for the cleansing of the body. Peter so affirms: "*The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*" (1 Peter 3:21). Remission of sins is the cleansing of the soul.

Paul explains that once a person has been baptized then the body of sin is destroyed. No longer does that person serve sin. In fact, Paul says, "*For he that is dead is freed from sin.*" To be "freed from sin" denotes release from sin, thus remission.

Baptism is remission because the rest of the New Testament attests to the fact; in fact, Peter states the fact in Acts 2:38. "*And Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins....*" No matter how one negatively responds to this truth; it is unchanged, nor will it change. Repentance and baptism must be obeyed in order to receive remission of sins. At the point of baptism, sins are dismissed, released, or cleared from our souls.

Ananias describes remission of sins as a washing. He told Saul of Tarsus to "*Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord*" (Acts 22:16). Remission of sins comes as a result of one's washing away his sins in baptism.

BAPTISM IS REGENERATION (6:8-11)

Paul teaches the Roman brethren that after Christians die to sin, they are regenerated to new life. Regeneration is a "renewal, or rebirth." It is to "bring into existence again." Thus, when one is baptized, he dies to sin and is "born again" into Christ.

"*Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him*" (verse 8).

(Continued from page 2)

In a time when so many families are coming apart at the seams it would appear only wise to practice what the Bible teaches in regard to having respect and love for our family members. We read in Ephesians 6:1-2: "*Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise).*" The Bible then teaches the proper relationship of parents to children and children to parents. Is the Bible out-of-date?

(3) Let us examine further and notice now that in Matthew 5:7 the Book teaches: "*Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*" Do we need mercy today? Would this help people in their attempts to get along with one another? Would this help world peace? The Lord Jesus Christ, while not approving of sin, did love the sinner. Matthew 9:11-12 tells that he had an interest in publicans and sinners. He dealt kindly with the adulterous woman of John 8. It is written that Jesus was one "*who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him*" (Acts 10:38). Does all this sound like a book that is out-of-date? To the contrary, it sounds like someone knows us better than we know ourselves!

(4) But there is more, as we now read in Luke 12:16-21, Jesus told of the lesson on being rich toward God. The truth is that if a man leaves God out of his plans, then he is a fool. The Bible teaches that you can be rich without money by being rich in faith. Riches of the world can sometimes be a hazard not an help. At any rate, the Bible emphasis is on the spiritual not material. Our primary interest should be in the things of God not the things of men. Jesus even said in Matthew 6:33, "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*"

Here is the bottom line. The world would be a better place if the Bible would be our guide. In Acts 17:11 it is written, "*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.*" Will you study? In your studies you will find that "*ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you has have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ*" (Galatians 3:26-27).

The Bible is an inexhaustible mine of wealth. It contains veins of spiritually rich ore that never run dry and pockets of spiritual gold

that no one can empty. The treasures of the Bible must be sought and dug out. Some diamonds lie on the surface of the earth easy to find, but others, just as valuable, lie beneath the soil—and to obtain these you must really dig. Because the Bible retains its truths and richness in every age, its words come with greater force than ever before to the soul of man. Isn't it apparent that only the infinite mind of an infinite God could have created such a wonder? Isn't it time you studied the Bible? Then you can know for yourself that the Bible is the not-so-out-of-date book.

Bill Dillon, editor

BAPTISM AND ROMANS 6

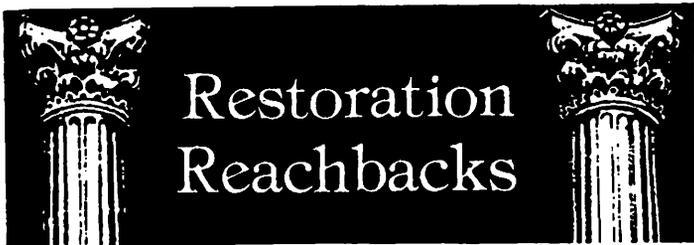
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If one dies with Christ, then he shall live with Him. "*Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord*" (verse 11). Being regenerated or born again necessitates a death from sin, and then a coming to life in Christ.

The rest of the New Testament proves this fact. "*Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses*" (Colossians 2:12-13). Note the condition of their souls. They were dead in their sins, but now they are made alive. That's regeneration! "*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*" (2 Corinthians 5:17). To be in Christ one must be baptized (Galatians 3:27). Once in Christ the old man of sin is dismissed and the new man in Christ is adopted. That's regeneration! Once one is buried with Christ in baptism, there is the "*walk in newness of life*" (Romans 6:4). That's regeneration!

Clearly baptism is taught as immersion, remission and regeneration in the text of this study. Only the mind prejudiced with denominational foolishness is unable to see these truth in Romans 6:3-11. Wishful thinking, personal prejudices, blind acceptance of man-made traditions will not change the truth.

Route 2, Box 212
Hazel, KY 42049



Restoration Reachbacks

UNITY OF THE SPIRIT

David Lipscomb

No union is acceptable to God unless it is effected by and based upon the word of God. Christ, in his prayer for the union of those who believe on him, prayed: "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). "Sanctify" means to set apart. The prayer was: Separate them, and set them apart (from the world) to God through the truth. Lest men should misapprehend what he regards as truth, he adds: "Thy word is truth." No one can be separated from the world, or sanctified to God by the truth, save as he makes that truth the rule of his life, and is led away from all other paths into the path marked out by this truth.

"And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:19).

The only way of sanctification is through the truth of God. The only union possible is in the truth as God has delivered it. He who turns from the truth of God—sets aside any of that truth for the sake of union with others—not only sets at naught the authority of God, but he places himself upon ground upon which union is impossible. Union is not only undesirable, but impossible, save as men are sanctified by the word of God. A union in any other way save as we are sanctified by and in the truth would be a union out of and against God. If this were possible, it would only be the presage of swift and widespread destruction from God.

"I praised and honored Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Daniel 4:34-35). A union or combination of all the inhabitants of the earth into one body, that did not grow out of and is not guided by faithful adherence to and love for the word of God, would be the signal for the Lord's destroying them with a tornado of divine wrath.

GOSPEL DIGEST
February, 1947

Second Annual Mississippi Lectureship

August 23 - 27, 1987

EAST MAIN CHURCH OF CHRIST
1606 E. Main, Tupelo, MS 38801

"God's Mission For The Church Today"

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23

9:45 - 10:25 To Know And Love The Truth Curtis Cates
10:35 - 11:35 Seeking First The Kingdom David Brown
BREAK UNTIL 6:30 PM
6:30 - 7:15 In Glorifying God Roger Jackson
7:15 - 8:00 Concerning Preaching Charles Blair

MONDAY, AUGUST 24

9:00 - 9:45 Membership Is Necessary Jim West
10:00 - 10:45 Concerning Restoring the Lost/Fallen Jimmy Bates
10:00 - 10:45 I Timothy 2:9-15 Textual Study (Ladies Only) Irene Taylor
11:00 - 11:45 Concerning Fellowship Tom House
11:45 - 1:00 BREAK FOR LUNCH
1:00 - 1:45 Concerning Withdrawal of Fellowship Bill Graddy
2:00 - 2:45 The Church David Jones
3:00 - 3:45 Concerning The Modern Versions Robert R. Taylor, Jr.
3:45 - 4:30 Question & Answer Session Concerning Modern Versions Robert Taylor

4:30 - 7:00 BREAK FOR DINNER
7:00 - 7:30 SINGING
7:30 - 8:15 The Effect of The Home On God's Mission Windell Fikes

TUESDAY, AUGUST 25

9:00 - 9:45 Evangelism - The Book of Acts Artis Richardson
10:00 - 10:45 Responsibilities and Work of a Deacon Terry Joe Kee
10:00 - 10:45 The Christian Wife & Mother (Ladies Only) Muggie Colley
11:00 - 11:45 Preachers: Their Qualifications and Work Max Miller
11:45 - 1:00 BREAK FOR LUNCH
1:00 - 1:45 Elders Qualifications: Positive Grady Miller
2:00 - 2:45 Elders Qualifications: Negative Gilbert Gough
3:00 - 3:45 The So-called "New Hermeneutics" Dub McClish

3:45 - 4:30 Question & Answer Session Concerning the So-called New Hermeneutics Dub McClish
4:30 - 7:00 BREAK FOR DINNER
7:00 - 7:30 SINGING
7:30 - 8:15 In Worship Gary Colley

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26

9:00 - 9:45 In Subjection To Christ Calvin Barber
10:00 - 10:45 As Seen In The Life Of Christ Wally Scalfie
10:00 - 10:45 Older & Younger Women's Responsibilities (Ladies Only) Grace Young
11:00 - 11:45 Misconceptions Of God's Mission For The Church Tom Bright

11:45 - 1:00 BREAK FOR LUNCH
1:00 - 1:45 Regarding Benevolence Frank Young
2:00 - 2:45 As The Pillar and Ground Of The Truth John Stewart
3:00 - 3:45 Concerning Grace and Law Jerry Moffitt
3:45 - 4:30 Question & Answer Session Concerning Grace and Law Jerry Moffitt

4:30 - 7:00 BREAK FOR DINNER
7:00 - 7:30 SINGING
7:30 - 8:15 God's Mission Includes All the Members Ed White

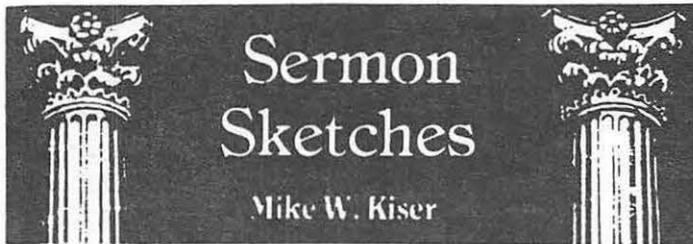
THURSDAY, AUGUST 27

9:00 - 9:45 The Church - Kingdom Aspects Clyde Mize
10:00 - 10:45 Responsibility of Elders: To the Congregation R. J. Hearn
10:00 - 10:45 Mary & Martha Lessons (Ladies Only) Grace Young
11:00 - 11:45 Responsibility of the Congregation to Its Elders Garland Elkins

11:45 - 1:00 BREAK FOR LUNCH
1:00 - 1:45 As Salt and Light Melvin Sapp
2:00 - 2:45 Is Worldwide Robert Lambert
3:00 - 3:45 Concerning II John 9-11 James Boyd
3:45 - 4:30 Questions & Answers Concerning II John 9-11 James Boyd
4:30 - 7:00 BREAK FOR DINNER
7:00 - 7:30 SINGING
7:30 - 8:15 His Missions Does Not Change in a Changing World J. Noel Merideth

The Second Annual Mississippi Lectureship, like the first, is the result of the cooperative efforts of brethren of like faith and kindred spirit in the greater Mississippi area, seeking to bring glory to The Almighty, through the proclamation of His sacred Word.

Directors: Bill Clayton and Sidney White



WORDS AGAINST THE LORD

Malachi 3:13-16

Introduction

1. There were some who openly spoke against the Lord in Malachi's day.

- a. They said that divine worship, obedience to God, and repentance were useless.
- b. If they did these things, they were no better off and if they refused, they were none the worse.



2. Some think that the only way to speak against the Lord would be to use His name in vain.

- a. Indeed, that is a crime!
 - b. See Exodus 20:7; James 3:9-12
3. What are some other ways men speak against God?

I. Some Speak Words Against God's Existence.

A. They say, "There is no God. He is just the figment of your imagination."

Ill: Mr. Ingersol was asked, "Do you believe in God?" He replied, "Well, I have never seen one."

B. *"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good"* (Psalm 14:1).

Ill: A well known preacher was handed a piece of paper from a heckler. It had on it one word, "fool." The preacher said, "I've often heard of people who write letters and forget to sign their names; but his is the first time one signed his name and forgot to write the letter."

C. Why should the idea of God be thought incredible?

1. The universe abounds with proof of His existence (Psalms 19:1).
2. Humanity testifies of the need for God (Acts 17:22-29).

II. Some Speak Words Against God's Power.

A. They say, "All that we see in nature evolved from one cell."

B. Here are two obvious flaws with the theory:

1. It is inconsistent.
 - a. Even the evolutionist needs a place to start.
 - b. Something does not come from nothing.
2. It is ruinous.
 - a. Oliver Goldsmith said, "People seldom improve when they have no model but themselves."
 - b. Humanism lowers humanity!

C. The Bible gives the best and most logical explanation (Genesis 1:1, 27; Psalm 100:3).

III. Some Speak Words Against God's Book.

A. They say, "The Bible is just an antique book of Hebrew folklore and legends."

B. *"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).

1. I have never heard anybody say, "I was in darkness and despair, helpless and hopeless. Then I read after Hugh Hefner and Carl Sagan and now my life is full of meaning and hope."
2. I have heard them sing, "Holy Bible, Book Divine."

C. It is reasonable to believe the Bible! Because:

1. It is reasonable to believe that God would communicate in a definite way.
2. And, it is reasonable to believe that the Bible is that communication.

IV. Some Speak Words Against God's Son.

A. They say, "Jesus was a good man and great religious teacher; but he was just a man."

B. *"And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead"* (Romans 1:4).

1. Someone charged, "The Christian religion, what is it? It would be easy to start a religion like that!"

(Continued on page 11)

Women Of The Word

Dennis Gullede

ESTHER: A PARTICIPANT IN GOD'S PROVIDENCE



Esther was a lovely Jewish maiden, whose ancestor Kish had been among the captives taken from Jerusalem when Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon (Esther 2:6). She was an orphan and had been reared by her cousin Mordecai, who "took her for his own daughter" (2:7). Her original name was Hadassah, which is Persian for "a myrtle," but was changed to Esther, meaning "a star," or literally, "the planet Venus" (2:7).

In the book of Esther we have a picture of the Jews in the Persian state. In the woman Esther we have a picture of piety, faith, courage and heroism, combined with a strong sense of duty. That she was raised up as an instrument of God to avert the annihilation of the Jewish people is evident from the Scripture account. She is one of a few of God's chosen people who were placed in dominant positions in foreign courts. In this relation Esther stands uniquely among such greats as Joseph, prime minister of Egypt; Moses, who was trained in the Egyptian court; Daniel, who was honored in Babylon, and Nehemiah, the cupbearer of Artaxerxes.

The story of Esther is well known among the Jewish people, and the book is held in high esteem by them, but Christians have largely neglected it. It only remains here for us to remark on some of the prominent lessons in her life as given in the Bible.

The career of Esther stands along side that of Joseph as a demonstration of the providential hand of God in human affairs. We have not the benefit of direct statements which identify God as acting thus (Cf., Genesis 39:3, 23), because the name of God is not used in the book, so we must see if we can find God in the facts as they unfold.

The word "providence" signifies "foresight." Foresight and forethought both suggest a

future end, a goal or a definite purpose for attaining an end. Perhaps we should ask then, what was the "future end" which God had in view as per the story of the book of Esther? The answer—that the extermination of the Jewish race might somehow be averted (Cf., 3:6-15). Once the decree had gone out of the instigation of Haman "to destroy, to kill and to cause to perish, all Jews...in one day" (3:13), even the Persian king himself could not revoke it. It seemed a hopeless inevitability to every Jew that his demise was certain, except to Mordecai who had faith that it somehow might not be.

Mordecai asked Esther to plead with the king on behalf of her people (4:18). But, what could be her plea since the decree had gone out and could not be reversed? Mordecai did not know. "Who knoweth," he said, "whether thou art come into the kingdom for such a time as this" (4:14)? He could see but little hope, except in the young queen. The rest of the story reveals the following: Esther obtained the favor of the gilded sceptre to appear before the king and she invited Ahasuerus and Haman to a banquet (5:1-5), and a second banquet the next day (5:6-8). Haman again becomes indignant at the contempt of Mordecai, and builds a gallows for him (5:9-14). Sleepless after the banquet, the king is read to from the court annals, and learns of Mordecai's good service to him (6:1-5). The king asks Haman how such a man should be honored and Haman unwittingly bestows honor upon Mordecai, while thinking it was for himself (6:6-13). At the second banquet given by Esther for the king and Haman (6:14-7:1), Haman's plot to destroy the Jews was uncovered (7:2-6), and he died on the gallows which he built for Mordecai (7:7-10).

Esther then put Mordecai in Haman's position (8:1-2). Esther tried to persuade the king to reverse his law, but he could not and the Persian law stood (8:3-11), so the Jews were allowed to defend themselves (8:12-14). Mordecai is honored and the Jews rejoice (8:15-17).

What is there in all this to demonstrate the providential working of God? The salvation of the Jews depended upon the second decree that was given. How did the king happen to allow that second decree? He extended the sceptre to Esther a second time, else it would not have happened. Another reason for it is because Mordecai was set in Haman's place as Prime Minister of Persia. How did that happen? It depended upon Haman's

(Continued on page 11)

WORDS AGAINST THE LORD

(Continued from page 9)

2. The reply, "Oh, yes! One would only have to be crucified and rise again the third day." (see: Luke 24:46-47).

C. It was the combination of His two natures that enables Him to be our Saviour. John 1:14; 3:16; Isaiah 7:14; 1 Timothy 2:5

V. Some Speak Words Against God's Ability and Integrity.

A. They say, "We cannot understand the Bible." Therefore either God could not or would not give us a book that we can understand.

B. This makes God responsible for all the religious confusion in the world.

1. He has one man affirming what another denies.

2. If one man were to preach it every way, he would be thought crazy or a hypocrite.

C. God wants it taught, believed and obeyed which calls for understanding. Matthew 28:18-20; Isaiah 35:8; John 8:32; 2 Timothy 2:15; John 17:20-21.

VI. Some Speak Words Against God's Impartiality.

A. They say, "God elected some to be saved and others will be lost."

B. "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35).

Ill: A man was rightly accused of stealing a horse.

1. He replied, "There were just so many horses foreordained to be stolen and yours was one of the number. I am not to be blamed."

2. The owner replied, "There are just so many horse thieves foreordained to be caught and hanged. It appears you are one of the number. I am not to be blamed."

3. The thief responded, "There are a certain number of stolen horses foreordained to be returned. Yours definitely is one of the number!"

C. This doctrine contradicts plain Bible teaching. John 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9; Hebrews 2:9; Matthew 11:28-30.

VII. Some Speak Words Against God's Justice.

A. They say, "God will not have a hell in eternity. He is too loving and it would be unfair."

B. Read Luke 16:19-31.

Ill: A man once had a doctrinal hobby.

1. He claimed if a man married twice, even if his first wife were dead, he would be guilty of polygamy.

2. Then his wife died and in six weeks, he changed his mind!

C. The Bible is clear on who will be in hell and why they will be there. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 21:8.

Conclusion

1. Would you dare use God's name in vain?
2. Are you guilty of speaking other words against God?
3. You too can be saved (Mark 16:15-16).

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Moving?



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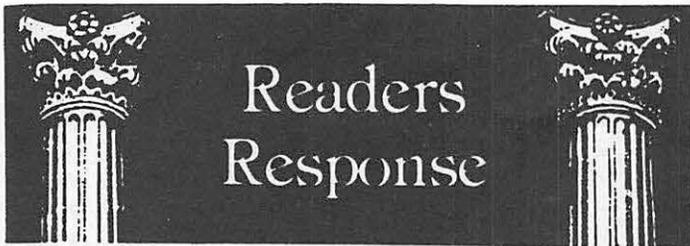
ESTHER: A PARTICIPANT

(Continued from page 11)

arriving in the king's court just after the clerk had read of Mordecai's saving the king's life. If it had been a few minutes earlier, Mordecai surely would have been killed at Haman's request. How interesting that the king could not sleep that night and heard the story of Mordecai's actions when he did. Again, how did it happen that Esther was made queen of Persia, herself being a Jew, who, by her influence and charm so manipulated the events as to turn the king's wrath upon Haman?

The questions are many and the answers may not always be obvious, but, was God involved? How do you answer? Surely God is providing for his own. His hand you cannot see, and his name (as in the book of Esther) you may not hear, but he is there!

540 Tattnall
Milledgeville, GA 31061



Readers Response

Dear brethren:

I have just finished reading the last issue of the GOSPEL GLEANER and enjoyed it so much that I just had to write and thank you for making it possible for us to receive it. We distribute it as widely as possible here at Montrose, and the brethren seem to enjoy reading it as well as I do!

I'm sending you a check for \$20.00 to help in mailing expenses, etc. Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,
Wally Kirby
Carthage, TN

Dear brethren:

Thank you so much for sending me the GOSPEL GLEANER and I appreciate your stand for the "Old Jerusalem Gospel." Two other requests have been made to be added to your mailing list. I'm enclosing the addresses.

To God be the glory,
Allen L. Webster
Oxford, AL

Dear brethren:

I am sending this note to thank you for a fine publication. I worship with the Garfield Heights church of Christ. I am glad the elders had a desire for the congregation to have fellowship in your labor of love. Keep up the good work.

In His Service,
Marie Carson
Indianapolis, IN

Dear brethren:

I would like to receive the paper called GOSPEL GLEANER. I received a copy and like it very much.

Thank you.

A brother in Christ,
Arthur Pigman
Clinton, TN

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Gospel Gleaner

Volume 3

Number 4

MODERN BAALS

Max R. Miller

The word **Baal** was a generic term for **god** in many of the Syro-Arabian languages of Old Testament times. Baalism was the idolatrous worship that pagan nations offered the many and various false gods of heathendom. Sadly, and at times, the people of God, those divinely called and chosen vessels of God's grace, turned from the only true and living Jehovah God unto the dead and fruitless worship of the idolatrous Baal. Ancient prophets assailed the foolish Hebrews for their turning to the vain worship of Baal (cf. 1 Kings 18). Israel hotly contended for their idol and fiercely persecuted the prophets of God for their denunciations of their idolatry. Israel's incorrigible affections for their idols caused God to turn in disgust from his people (Hosea 4:16). Israel made more sacred the things of Baal than they did those things of God.

The seas of time have brought to port modern Baals with their false and deceitful ways. Many today bow at the feet of their idols and images, worshipping them, having exalted them above their fellowship with God and His people. Of many modern Baals, we here briefly consider only a few.

SACRED WORKS

He that "*worketh righteousness is accepted with*" God. However, some works among brethren work to the harm of our sacred cause. The deifying of the "bus ministry" has caused much discord and has caused division in a number of churches. Some are so enamored with this

program that they have projected their ministry as the primary work of the church. The sacredness of the ministry has been defended with more fervor than the church itself. With some it has become more important than the church, with the church suffering division as a result. Some of the college campus works have also developed in Baalism which is nothing less than cultism. When opposition is voiced to known heretics and apostates who are participants in these programs, or to unscriptural teachings and practices advocated and practiced in the programs, the shout-downs of jealousy, persecution, misunderstanding, etc., rises above and drowns out all scriptural objections to the Baal. The Family Life Centers, once could find no place among us. Now these are becoming the thing to have. Some preachers and elders contend for this Baal more so than they do "*for the faith which was once delivered.*"

SACRED MEN

Sacred men of Baal are not necessarily holy men of God. Some men of reputation have moved from their once sure foundation to take up a position of error. Other men who still speak words of truth are gently drifting along toward or with the apostates. Multitudes of members of the church have their eyes so fixed on the sacred men that they do not realize that their idol has moved from the glorious light of Christ into the shadow of

(Concluded on back page)

EDITORIAL

MEANING OF THE CROSS



In 1 Corinthians 1:18, Paul said, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." What does the cross of Christ mean to you? The most significant event of history means precious little to most people.

The true meaning of the cross is seen as we fasten our gaze upon:

1. THE MEASURE OF MAN'S SIN. Sin nailed the Lord to the cross. The scripture says, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" and "he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:4-5).

The hand of God's wrath is lifted up against all sin and unrighteousness of man. God's judgments are righteous. When men are under the penalty of human laws, they often complain of their lot; and men under the just condemnation of God's law frequently speak disparagingly of Him also. Hard thoughts against the Lord, however, do not change man's state of being lost.

Man struggles in his limited and weak understanding to comprehend the hideousness of all sin. But in looking at Calvary, man comes to realize that sin is indeed a terrible thing in the sight of a holy God, especially if it took the death of His only Son to furnish a remedy (1 Peter 1:18-20).

2. THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD'S LOVE. Romans 5:8 is a verse near to the heart of every believer, "God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Many times in many ways God has shown the abundance of His love for us.

Some deny the love of God for sinners, yet, the rich young ruler was lost and the Bible says that Jesus loved him (Mark 10:21). It is humbling and at the same time uplifting to realize the bounty of heaven's love to us. Who could every deny the unspeakable value of God's great love?

3. THE MEANS OF SALVATION. One glance at dark Calvary reminds us that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). Also "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4). Neither angels nor animals could be the satisfactory payment for sin; but "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). It is plain that conversion and Calvary are joined inseparately together.

It is a matter of tremendous importance, to be cordially embraced by our minds that in baptism the death, burial and resurrection of Christ are typified:

D → B → R

Paul's language in Romans 6:1-4 removes any doubt on this point to the earnest mind.

Let every sinner come to know the language of the redeemed, "unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Revelation 1:5).

"Years I spent in vanity and pride,
Caring not my Lord was crucified,
Knowing not it was for me He died on Calvary.
Mercy there was great and grace was free;
Pardon there was multiplied to me;
There my burdened soul found liberty, at Calvary."

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EDITORS: Bill Dillon & Ronnie Whittemore

Evangelistic Etcetera

THE GOSPEL CONTINUES IN GUYANA

Ronnie Whittemore



On Friday, August 28, this writer and brethren Allen Carmichael and Larry G. Davis, members at Heath, began a two week missionary journey to Guyana, South America. This evangelistic effort marked the third such trip by the church since last year. Regular readers of the GOSPEL

GLEANER may remember articles on this work from past issues in the "Evangelistic Etcetera" column. Brother Harachand Bhola, a native and local preacher at Vreed-En-Hoop is supported by the church at Heath. He and his wife, Chandra, met us at the airport and we arrived at the Bhola's about 4:00 a.m. on Saturday.

Following a day of getting acquainted and running errands, Sunday marked the first day of a two week gospel meeting. Two congregations, one in Windsor Forest and the other on the island of Leguan which began as a result of the work at Vreed-En-Hoop, met with the Vreed-En-Hoop brethren on Sunday. On Monday morning, daily Bible classes were begun to strengthen and edify the church. During the afternoons, Bible studies were conducted and visitations made.

During this evangelistic endeavor, many things proved to be hindrances. First, a gasoline shortage caused transportation problems for those who desired to participate in the daily Bible classes. It was common for a car to be in line for hours at a service station. Second, many more people seemed to have jobs than last year. Though this was good for the economic and social conditions of the area, it too hindered the daily Bible classes. Third, a damaged transformer caused electrical current to be available only twelve hours a day. The first week, the electric company agreed to provide electricity for the night services; however, when businesses and schools reopened the second week, the electric company could only provide electrical power

during the day. Therefore, the gospel meeting for the final week had to be conducted in the dark or by the use of candles. Yet despite these difficulties and inconvenient circumstances, the gospel was preached, classes were taught and the church was edified.



The lower part of the church building at Vreed-En-Hoop is being enclosed for additional space.

The first week produced many good results. Brother Allen Carmichael studied with David and Lauto Sewdiel early in the week. This couple had been attending the services regularly during the past few months. Their background and family religion is Hinduism. On Wednesday evening, David expressed his desire to be baptized into Christ. So following the evening worship, everyone walked to the river and brother Carmichael baptized him. At the time of our departure, David's wife, Lauto, had not been converted, but we have hope that she will shortly if opportunity and time permit.

Thursday evening was also a time of great opportunity. In the past year, the church at Vreed-En-Hoop had been conducting a Bible correspondence course. About eighty-eight students enrolled in the course. At the time of our visit, about thirty had completed the course. So prior to the Thursday evening service, a short ceremony was held to pass out certificates to those who had completed the course. About twenty-five students were present and remained for the evening services. The ceremony was conducted similar to a graduation exercise in the United States. Three of the students recited poems

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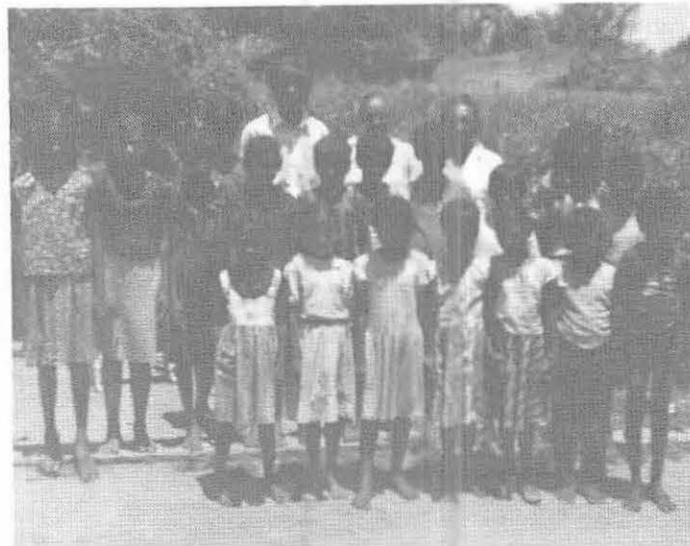
which they had learned in connection with their lessons. Then a brief address was given by this writer on the accomplishments of the students and the importance of a lifetime of study of God's word as well as a reinforcement of God's plan of salvation as they had studied. After which, brother Bhola announced the names of these students and their certificates were awarded. To Americans, this would seem a very small accomplishment, but in a country where opportunities and challenges are few, the Guyanese considered it a great accomplishment. From a spiritual standpoint, it was a great accomplishment. First, men and women were studying their Bibles. Second, many of them came from remote areas where contact is limited. Third, these students desired to learn more and study more. Fourth, the church at Vreed-En-Hoop now has contacts for home Bible studies and hopefully and prayerfully, conversions.



*Graduation exercise
for Bible correspondence course students*

On Sunday, September 6, while services were held at Vreed-En-Hoop, brother Carmichael along with brother Earl Bhola, travelled to Leguan and conducted worship services. This congregation began over a year ago as a result of a couple of conversions. Since that time, the church at Vreed-En-Hoop has sent a man regularly to the island on the Lord's day. In the afternoon, brother Davis studied with a couple of men in Vreed-En-Hoop. They studied the examples of conversions in the book of Acts. They were both given a chart of these events and

encouraged to study and investigate them at home. That evening one of the two young men, Ronald Chester, returned for the evening worship and stated that he had studied them again that afternoon and he believed and wanted to be baptized. So that same evening, brother Davis baptized him into Christ in the river.

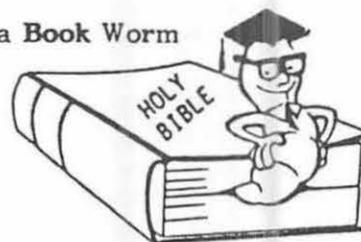


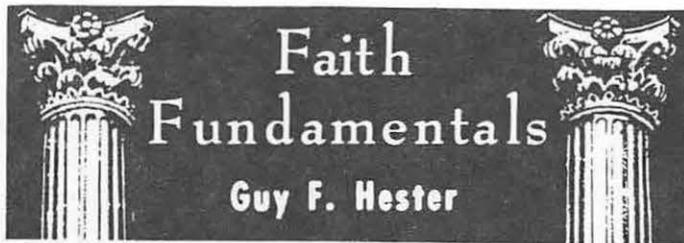
A normal assembly for worship on Leguan

During the remainder of the week, other Bible studies were conducted and services held every evening. Yet despite, no other visible signs of conversion, the gospel was preached and at the least, the churches at Vreed-En-Hoop, Windsor Forest and Leguan were edified. But we also left with the knowledge that many were nearer to salvation. In Isaiah 55:11, God promises and assures his people that *"my word...that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."* A couple of weeks after our departure, we received news of two others who were baptized into Christ. And so the Lord's work continues in Guyana.

10015 Woodville Rd.
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Be a Book Worm





**IS IT A MATTER OF CHOICE?
(Second of Two Parts)**



In view of the fact that the religious field is overflowing with religious leaders who offer men choices in matters where God has not allowed any choices, certainly a study of this subject is needful. In this issue of the GOSPEL GLEANER, we conclude the series, "Is It a Matter of Choice?"

Is the mode of baptism a matter of choice?

Some preachers have extended man a choice as to which "Mode of Baptism" he receives. On request they will immerse, sprinkle or pour. But where has God made this a matter of choice? Baptism is a command which the Lord set forth to be complied with in trusting faith. The very nature of the act is clearly revealed in Colossians 2:12. "*Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*" Does this sound like God is saying, "Take your pick as to baptismal modes?" Any honest, accountable person will readily see that sprinkling and pouring are acts ordained of men and not of God. Further we read in Romans 6:4, "*Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*" Unless it is a burial it is not scriptural baptism. It must be a planting. "*For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection*" (Romans 6:5). Does man's choice supercede God's instructions?

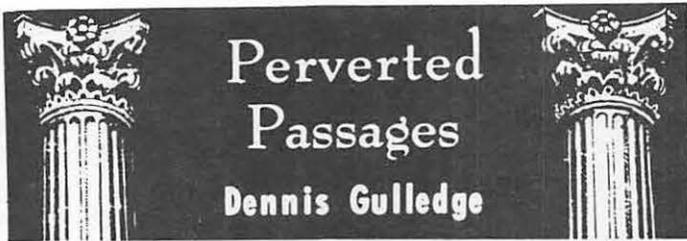
Is the name a matter of choice? Many have extended to people a choice as to the name to be worn in religion. Party names of rival religious groups are often excused with, "There's nothing in a name anyway!" But God has never sanctioned this. Names

have always had real and vital significance with him. He has not allowed man a choice in the matter of names. Notice the importance attached to the name of Jesus Christ in the scriptures. "*And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name, Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins*" (Matthew 1:21). "*And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem*" (Luke 24:47). "*To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins*" (Acts 10:43). "*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12). How can anyone, in view of these scriptures contend that one name is just as good as another? Who has given men a choice regarding names?

Even at the first proclamation of the gospel, Peter commanded, "*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*" (Acts 2:38). Later at Samaria, the people heard the gospel and the record says in Acts 8:12, "*But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and woman.*" On another occasion Peter preached the gospel to Cornelius and his house, "*And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord*" (Acts 10:48). In Acts 22:16 Ananias said to Saul, "*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*" In view of so much that God has said about that name, who would extend to man a choice, and contend that there is nothing in a name?

Every name in religion other than that given by the Lord blasphemes the worthy name of Christ. No religious body can glorify God through human names that divide. Please note carefully the following scripture quotations regarding the name of Christ and the name Christian that is to be worn by those who faithfully follow Christ. "*Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf*" or "*in this name*" (R.V.; 1 Peter 4:16). "*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). "*Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called*" (James 2:7)? "*Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which*

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Perverted Passages

Dennis Gullede

JOHN 3:16



In this issue of GOSPEL GLEANER, we are proud to introduce a new column entitled, "Perverted Passages," dealing with denominational errors as well as some brotherhood hobbies. This column will appear interchangeably with our other column, "Women of the Word." We hope that you will find this new column to be profitable to you in your study of God's word, and will look for "Women of the Word" in the next issue.

One of our most essential tasks is to handle God's word aright (2 Timothy 2:15, ASV). However, the sad truth is that there are some who "corrupt the word of God" (2 Corinthians 2:17), handle "the word of God deceitfully" (2 Corinthians 4:2), and "wrest" the scriptures "unto their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:16). Experience teaches us that it is possible for people to have a broad range of Bible knowledge, and yet have it so confused as to misrepresent (intentionally or unintentionally) its real meaning. We should remember Paul's warning to the churches of Galatia, that there are "some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ" (Galatians 1:7).

The passage which carries the distinction of being the most memorized verse of the New Testament is also one of the most widely perverted passages spanning both testaments. In John 3:16 we find Jesus saying, "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." This passage has had many thrilling tributes laid at its feet. It is known to all as, "The Golden Text of the Bible." The great Foy E. Wallace, Jr., called John 3:16, "The most wonderful sentence ever written. The sum total of the whole plan of salvation. The little Bible--the 'Gospel in a Nutshell.'"¹ Matthew Henry said, "Here is the gospel indeed, good news, that best that ever came from heaven to earth. Here is much, here is all in a little, the word of reconciliation

in miniature."² Many people have a high regard for this passage and have sung its praises in tongue and pen, but in the wake of lofty human appraisals come some very serious abuses.

The first abuse of John 3:16 that we shall mention is that some have used it as a proof text for the idea that eternal life is a present possession for the Christian, and that he cannot lose it. Those who thus believe argue that eternal life is from the moment of belief, and can never be forfeited or lost.³ Brother Guy N. Woods wrote, "When debates were common such views were seldom entertained by members of the churches of Christ since in those encounters the truth, regarding eternal life, was clearly taught and emphasized. When such passages as 1 John 5:11, 13, John 3:16, and other verses were cited in an attempt to show that eternal life is a blessing available to, and actually possessed by children of God today, it was pointed out that truth is always consistent with itself..."⁴ Woods went on to say that there are two classes of scriptures touching the matter of eternal life, one asserting that it is a **promise** (Titus 1:2; 1 John 2:25), and the other that it is **possessed** (1 John 5:11, 13). These passages are easily harmonized when it is understood that eternal life is in prospect to be realized at the end of time (Titus 3:7; Matthew 25:46).

Many have tried to find in John 3:16 support for the teaching of salvation by "faith only." For example, the famous Baptist debater Dr. L. S. Ballard in his 1953 discussion with brother Thomas B. Warren on the plan of salvation, alluded to John 3:16 while affirming that, "The believer in Christ receives spiritual life at faith in Christ."⁵ That little expression "at faith" suggests that one is saved at the point of belief, and before his faith leads him to any act of obedience at all.⁶ In other words, the claim is made that, Jesus offers salvation merely and solely on the basis of mental acceptance (belief, trust).

Some are convinced that there is merit in this argument because the passage fails to mention baptism in connection with salvation. Yet, the reader will observe, that neither does the passage mention repentance (which is "unto salvation" 2 Corinthians 7:10), nor does it mention confession (which is also "unto salvation" Romans 10:10). As Guy N. Woods has written, "If because John 3:16 does not mention water baptism it is to be rejected as a condition of pardon, by the same token we must reject repentance as well because there is as much said about

(Continued on page 10)



"GASHMU SAITH IT"

B. C. Goodpasture

All that we know of him justifies the conclusion that Gashmu, or Geshem, was one of the least of the minor characters of the Bible. He was so small that most of the other insignificant Biblical characters seem to gain in size compared with him.

Who was this man Gashmu? (It may be that good men in particular and all men in general are due an apology when Gashmu is called a man. It is our settled conviction that if old Diogenes, who stalked the streets of Athens in broad daylight, with lantern in hand, in search of a man, had met this fellow Gashmu, he would have looked disappointed, shifted his tub to the other shoulder, trimmed his lantern, replenished his oil, and continued his forlorn quest!) He was an Arabian probably, an inhabitant of the wild Arabian Desert, who joined Sanballat and Tobiah in opposition to Nehemiah in his work of restoring the walls of Jerusalem. Whether he was one of the "governors beyond the river," to whom Nehemiah came, and whose mission "grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel" (Nehemiah 2:10), we do not know. He was in sympathy with these "governors," if not one of them. He joined them in ridiculing the first efforts of Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of the Holy City, and afterwards repeatedly sought to entice him to the plains of Ono, professedly for "counsel," but actually for "mischief." After ridicule, force, and compromise had failed to stop Nehemiah, they tried one other thing—slander.

The origin of this vicious slander was attributed to Gashmu. "Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand, wherein was written, *It is reported among the nations, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel; for which cause thou art building the wall: and thou wouldest be their king, according to these words. And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee*

at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah: and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together" (Nehemiah 6:5-7). Gashmu and his miserable henchmen who gave publicity to his attack were prompted by dark and sinister motives. They did not care for the king of Persia. At heart it really made little difference with them whether Nehemiah was loyal to the king or not. What Nehemiah was doing did not fit into their plans. They wanted his work stopped. Their own selfish ambitions would impel them to use any means available to get Nehemiah out of the way. The slander of Gashmu was well timed and made some show of reason. But Nehemiah was undaunted. "Then I sent unto him, saying, *There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart. For they all would have made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. But now, O God, strengthen thou my hands"* (Nehemiah 6:8-9). Gashmu and those who gave voice to his lying misrepresentation underestimated the courage of Nehemiah. They did not take into consideration the source of his strength. He was not the man to quail before such opposition.

The tribe of Gashmu, unfortunately, is not yet extinct. He was not the last man to seek personal advancement through the defamation of another. He lives, in principle, wherever anyone is assailed maliciously on the authority of "they say." His name abides as a synonym of oft-quoted, but absent, authority. Anyone who takes up a slander on the slender and unreliable support of hearsay puts himself in the class with Nehemiah's accusers who so fluently quoted Gashmu. It matters not whether it has to do with someone's morals, financial integrity, or doctrinal soundness. Gashmu and his satellites did not establish their loyalty by accusing Nehemiah of treason.

From the case of Gashmu in his dealings with Nehemiah these conclusions may be drawn:

The fact that one is quoted as authority does not necessarily make him reliable.

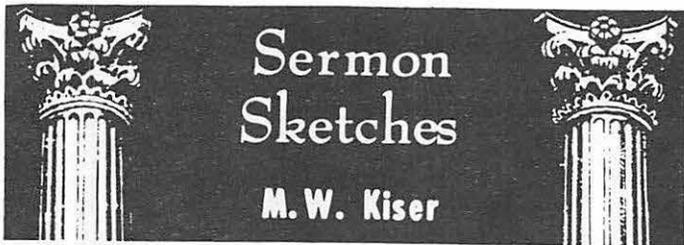
The circumstance that a thing is currently reported does not make it true.

Accusing is not proving.

Pronouncement of condemnation is not establishment of guilt.

Professed motives are not always the dominating motives.

(Continued on page 8)



HEAVEN Revelation 21:1-4

Introduction

1. There are three words that always touch a responsive chord in the heart of man: mother, home and heaven.

2. Heaven, and how to get there, is the most wonderful thought that can occupy the mind of man. God has not left us in darkness (Psalm 119:105).

3. If there is nothing beyond this life, then the message of 1 Corinthians 15:19

is true.

a. If there is, then the misery belongs to others not Christians.

b. For they plan for this life only, work for this life only, purpose for this life only (Mark 8:36).

4. Let us consider the following about heaven.

I. The Fact of Heaven

A. Question: "Is heaven a real place or just a fancy dream or state of mind?"

B. Jesus proves that it is a place (John 14:2).

1. Bodies have been known to disappear (Genesis 5:24; 2 Kings 2:11).

2. The resurrected glorified body of Jesus was seen leaving this world (Acts 1:3-11; Mark 16:19).

3. Where is He? Ephesians 1:20-21; 1 Peter 3:22

C. What kind of place is heaven?

1. A prepared place (John 14:2)

2. A perfect place (Revelation 21:27)

3. A permanent place (2 Corinthians 5:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Psalms 23:6)

II. The Finality of Heaven

A. What is there, will always be there; therefore perfect security (Matthew 6:19-20).

B. What do we know here?

1. See Revelation 21:4.

2. Happiness gives way to:

a. Sorrow

b. Suffering

c. Separation

C. "No Night There."

1. See Revelation 21:25; 22:5.

2. Night is a symbol of:

a. Weariness

b. Ignorance

c. Sin

d. Danger

e. Want

f. Death

III. The Fellowship of Heaven

A. We like to be with those whom we know and love.

1. God has a huge family (Ephesians 3:15).

2. You must be in it here to be in it there (Acts 2:47; Colossians 1:13).

3. An old saint wrote his wife: "I have just been told my hours are numbered. Maybe before you get this letter I will be in the palace of the king. Don't bother to write, I will meet you in the morning."

B. Will we know each other in heaven? Luke 16:19-31

C. With whom will we have fellowship?

1. Our Saviour (1 John 3:2)

2. The redeemed of ages past (Revelation 22:14)

3. Saved ones we have known

IV. The Folly of Those Who Miss Heaven

A. None, but a few have a claim (Matthew 7:13; John 14:1; 3:18).

B. Why is it so foolish that some will miss heaven?

1. Because the debt of sin has been paid (Isaiah 53:11; 1 Peter 3:18)

2. Because the power to save has been provided (Romans 1:16)

3. Because the invitation to salvation is being offered (Revelation 22:16; Acts 10:48; Acts 2:38-39)

C. Are you a part of the multitude that will miss heaven?

1. Voltaire said to the king of Prussia, "I would sell my place in heaven for a Prussian dollar." The king responded, "We never buy anything without making sure of the owner's right to it. If you can prove your right to heaven, I will give you ten thousand Prussian dollars for it."

JOHN 3:16. . . .
(Continued from page 6)

baptism in it as there is of repentance. If to this the objection is offered that repentance is elsewhere made essential to salvation, as indeed it is (Acts 17:30), so also is baptism in water (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3, 4; 1 Peter 3:20, 21)."⁷

Another abuse of this precious passage which we are studying is the popular idea that it is about all the Bible that some people need. This falls into the same category of those who believe that all they need to do religiously is keep the Ten Commandments and stay out of jail, or that the Sermon on the Mount contains all the instruction necessary to insure divine approval upon the head of the faithful observer. Such an approach is ridiculous because John 3:16 was never intended to be viewed as a comprehensive package of saving instructions to the exclusion of the rest of God's word, even though this seems to be its most common application.

The truth is: we need all of the Divine Revelation from start to finish. We need all 66 books, 1,189 chapters and 31, 102 verses from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21. The Bible itself is our textbook on salvation—not just John 3:16!

Some people carry their abuse of the Golden Text so far as to seek in it heavenly sanction for any and every religious practice motivated by human sincerity. The truth is, however, that there is not another verse in the entire Bible which refutes more error than John 3:16. It is a refutation of atheism, agnosticism and humanism (it reveals God), of Calvinism (it extends God's provisions to all the world, and not to a selected few), of Modernism (it asserts the virgin birth in Christ as the "only begotten Son"), of Oneness Pentecostalism (it demonstrates God and Christ to be separate and distinct persons) and of Universalism (it reveals that men will perish who do not believe and obey Christ). Therefore, instead of John 3:16 being an umbrella to shelter every way that seemeth right unto a man in the way of religion, it is actually a militant refutation of the many false ideas it is thought to support.

-Endnotes-

¹Foy E. Wallace, Jr., THE ONE BOOK: Analyzed and Outlined. (Murfreesboro, Tennessee: DeHoff Publications, 1987). p. 101.

²Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry's Commentary: Vol. V—Matthew to John. (McLean, Virginia: MacDonald Publishing Company, n.d.). p. 188.

³L. S. Ballard, Warren - Ballard Debate on the Plan of Salvation. (Jonesboro, Arkansas: National Christian Press, 1979). p. 9.

⁴Guy N. Woods, Questions and Answers, Volume II. (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1986). p. 170.

⁵Ballard. Op. cit.

⁶Warren. Op. cit. p. 23.

⁷Guy N. Woods, A Commentary on the Gospel According to John. (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1981). p. 67.

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HEATH CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Evening worship	6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible study	7:00 p.m.

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½ mile west of the Heath Mall)

HEAVEN. . . .

(Continued from page 9)

2. Rich man told a poor man, "All this is mine." Poor man pointed up and said, "All that is mine. I'm richer than you are."

Conclusion

1. He is the Son! Therefore heir! Romans 8:17
2. Are you a friend and follower of Christ?
 - a. Let us not only rejoice for what he did for us here on earth, but also for what he is doing for us in heaven.
 - b. And let us live like we expect to spend eternity there.

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Calvary's Cross was truly the great work of God. Challenging the admiration of angels and demanding the joyful acceptance of every last soul. At Calvary the grateful hearts of men can exclaim, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

4. THE MARK OF SEPARATION. Concerning a preacher it was asked, "Is he a good mixer?" "No" was the firm reply, "but he's a good separator!" This should be true of every man who takes the cross of Christ seriously. Paul said, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14). The message of the cross is a message of separation. Men must be made to see the brutality and blight of sin so their lives will be apart from it. Our world needs the burning message of "come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, touch not the unclean thing" (2 Corinthians 6:17). The preaching of the cross is a call to purity. 2 Corinthians 7:1 says, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

A Christian's life is the exemplification of Christ. A Christian must be in the world, yet not of the world. Those without must see a clear-cut line of distinction drawn between the church and the world. Yet, the flood tides of ever increasing secularism have engulfed many lives and even entire churches. The church of Christ must be more than a second rate amusement center. We need to hear the sterner calls of conviction, sacrifice, duty and responsibility.

5. THE MESSAGE OF HEAVEN. The outstretched arms of a King dying on an old rugged cross remind us that all sin-stricken men can be included in their embrace. No wonder angels rejoice. The greatest and sweetest of all messages is "Christ receiveth sinful men." No man can be saved except by walking the blood sprinkled way of the cross. Other foot paths lead nowhere.

"See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?"

What love; what compassion; what mercy;
what salvation!

Bill Dillon, editor 11

Dear brethren:

I really like the GOSPEL GLEANER and would love to receive it. I come in contact with it at Paducah, Kentucky. Please put me on your mailing list.

In Christ,
Harold Heath
Casa Grande, AZ

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Jim & Bonnie Vansandt (Wetumpka, AL)	20.00

darkness, and that they themselves now are in the shadows. One cannot "walk in the light" and stand in the shadow of any man. Sound and faithful men are to be looked to and their examples of faithfulness are to be imitated (Philippians 3:17). When they become unsound, when they begin to drift with the stream of apostasy, they then are no longer to be held in high esteem and honor. It is not who and what one was, but who and what one now is that counts.

SACRED TRANSLATIONS

Bad translations of the Bible have become Modern Baals. This is especially true of many of the modern Bibles. When a random reading from these Modern Baals reveal that they are Calvinistic, Pentecostal, Premillennial and "faith only," the question naturally arises, "why have them among us? why defend them?" The only answer is Baalism. One advocate recently in defense of "his" translation and in answer to the question: "Is a version reliable regardless of what it teaches?" said "Yes." Yes! Heretical versions of the Bible are reliable to a Baalite! Is a preacher reliable regardless of what he teaches and preaches? According to Baalism, the answer to this must also be yes. "O Baalite, thou art beside thyself; much worshipping at the feet of Baal hath made thee mad." When one hears spoofing of the King James and American Standard Versions of the Bible, be assured it is by one who is bowing down to the Baalism of so-called modern speech translations of the Bible.

"Wisdom is the principle thing therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding" (Proverbs 4:7). None should be opposed to learning, wisdom or true scholarship. Some, however, have made a Baal of scholarship. Some graduate schools are primarily interested in the scholarship from the 1950's until the present. Students rarely are to document their research with the works of the old scholars. Modern scholarship is riddled with "perhaps," "likely so," "we can't really know," "viable alternative," "it hasn't been proved," "maybe," "it is thought by reputable scholars...." International politics are more certain and stable than that kind of scholarship. It is still true that "cornfield preachers" can take faithful translations of the scriptures and win souls to Christ. Modern scholarship is not winning souls to Christ. When we wait for modern scholarship to lead us to the lost in our community, to open doors to mission fields afar, to carry the burden of sacrificial preaching and teaching—we will be left waiting.

Our works are only tributary to the grand purpose of magnifying the glory of God. Men are lowly earthen vessels to bear the riches of the gospel to others. Translations are essential; they should express sacred truths clearly. We all should be diligent students of the word. None of these things should be elevated and worshipped as gods. There is only one deity; Jehovah God is His name. Let us worship Him only.

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