



# GOSPEL GLEANER

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## THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN

Roy J. Hearn

Since the women's liberation movement, efforts are being made to place women in places of authority over men. Such is spilling over into religious bodies; many are appointing women preachers and other officers in [denominational] churches.

It is not surprising, since the denominational world does not respect the authority of the Bible (or they would not exist in the first place). Regrettably, some of our more liberal-minded brethren are advocating the same things.

**Limitations God Placed On Women.** The Holy Spirit gave instructions about the relationship between men and women:

I desire therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and disputing. In like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works. Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness. For Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression: but she shall

be saved through her childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety (1 Timothy 2:8-15).

Observe, (1) men take the lead in prayer, (2) women are instructed about how to dress, (3) women are to learn in silence, with all subjection, (4) women are not to teach nor usurp authority over men, but to be in silence, (5) reasons given in verses 14-15.

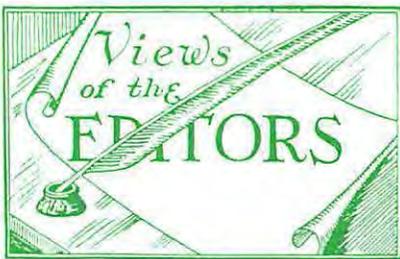
In 1 Corinthians 14:23-35, when the "whole church be come together," instruction are given concerning women.

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law...for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

**Subordination Not A Reflection.** For a woman to be in subjection to men in the church is not a reflection upon their ability or intelligence. It is simply the way God arranged things, and we are not at liberty to alter God's Word (Deuteronomy 4:2; 5:32; 12:32; Galatians 3:15; 2 John 9-11).

1 Corinthians 11:3 says: "I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."

Since Christ had no resentment at being  
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*Editorial*

# WHAT DO WE SEE AT CALVARY

Bill Dillon



The commanding theme of the gospel is Jesus Christ crucified, resurrected and glorified. God so loved the world that He gave His Son to die for the redemption of sinful humanity. The Son so loved the world that He laid down His life for all sinners (Romans 5:7-8).

The Lord's life was not an ordinary life and His sufferings were not ordinary sufferings. In His deepest agony He tasted death for every man (Hebrews 2:9). Words are incapable of describing the horror of that awful and atrocious day. The Son of God died in unbearable pain, while brutish men, looking on, mocked Him and reviled Him.

The sun was darkened as God refused to let the light shine upon such a scene. The foundations of the earth were shaken with a mighty earthquake. The rocks rent asunder and the graves of the saints were emptied. On that day in the long ago there was a fountain opened for cleansing and millions could be delivered from dismal darkness to marvelous light.

In Matthew 27:36, we read, "And sitting down they watched Him there." What do we see at Calvary? We see three things of eternal importance.

We first see: **Sin At Its Blackest.** Down through the ages, sin has left a dark and slimy trail. Sin made havoc with the world's first home (Genesis 3). Sin made a murderer of the world's first baby (Genesis 4). By Noah's day the octopus of iniquity had stretched its poisonous tentacles into every imagination and thought of the heart of man.

The book of Genesis is a microcosm of the human race. In Genesis 1:1 we read, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." But sin became part of earth's picture. And now read the last verse in Genesis, "...in a coffin in Egypt" (Genesis 50:26). That's a perfect picture of the result of sin's black work. Truly, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). When we see Calvary we see sin at its worst.

Next, we also see: **Compassion At Its Best.** No love can compare with heaven's love. The love of God is heightless, aepthless, breathless, limitless, endless and ageless. If no one else in the whole wide world loved you but God, you still would possess a vast treasure.

The Bible from cover to cover shouts of God's care and

compassion. Romans 5:8 says, "But God commendeth His love to us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." (Also see Jeremiah 31:3; Ephesians 2:4-5; 1 John 4:8-10, 16). The compassion of Christ is higher than the heaven; deeper than the ocean; sweeter than the honeycomb; fresher than the dew and greater than the universe.

But, at Calvary, we lastly see: **Salvation In Its Completion.** Jesus cried out, "It is finished!" (John 19:30). "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him: and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

Calvary was God's final solution to man's problems. Man's sin problem could never have been solved apart from the interposing of the blood of the dying Lamb of God. Today, the cross of Christ at Calvary cries out to a world deafened by empty echoes of pleasure. Calvary screams out, "Look unto me and live!"

Jesus Christ saw our sins; realized our guilt; knew our despair; weighed our burdens; witnesses our dejection and observed our hopelessness and died that we might live. Will you live for him? Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

Let the things pictured and portrayed at Calvary draw you to Jesus in all His greatness.—Taken from the book, *Gospel Truths Briefly Told*, by Bill Dillon, 704 Arkansas Avenue, Mountain Home, AR 72653

## PRINTED DYNAMITE!

While lecturing at a bookseller's convention, a University professor made this statement: "You are selling dynamite."

Nothing penetrates the minds, reaches hearts, and turns people to Jesus Christ like the printed Word. Gospel literature is the missionary's most effective tool of evangelism.

World population is increasing at the rate of 160,000 every twenty-four hours, sixty million each year. By the year 2000 it will be about six

billion! However, at that time only two percent of that population will be "Christian." How long will it take the present forty-four thousand foreign missionaries to evangelize so many! Every decade there are twenty-five percent less missionary volunteers. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few" (Matthew 9:37).

Gospel literature is the answer. Martin Luther said that the printing press was a gift from God. The Reformation was the result of the nearly one hundred books he wrote that circulated throughout Western Europe. "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." The average contribution to missions in America is three cents a week!

Every false cult believes in the power of the printed page. Five hundred magazines every sixty seconds (84 million yearly) roll off the world's largest printing press, owned by the so-called "Jehovah's Witnesses." Seventh Day Adventists pour twenty-one million dollars yearly into the printed page in 218 languages.

The English speaking world has over two hundred versions of the Bible, but there are three hundred languages in Latin America without a Bible. Three million people learn to read every seven days, 150 million a year. What shall they read? How shall they hear?

There will never be a substitute for good gospel literature. Do all in your power to spread the gospel by tracts, books and other printed materials. Be a reader. Take advantage of our tract selections today!—Taken from the *Mountain Home Messenger*, February 9, 2000

### GOD'S PLAN FOR SAVING MAN

|                          |                  |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| God's Grace              | ...Ephesians 2:8 |
| Christ's Blood           | ...Romans 5:9    |
| The Holy Spirit's Gospel | ...Romans 1:16   |
| Sinner's Faith           | ...Acts 16:31    |
| Sinner's Repentance      | ...Luke 13:3     |
| Sinner's Confession      | ...Romans 10:10  |
| Sinner's Baptism         | ...1 Peter 3:21  |
| Christian's Work         | ...James 2:24    |
| Christian's Hope         | ...Romans 8:24   |
| Christian's Endurance    | ...Matthew 24:13 |

# IS CAPITAL PUNISHMENT SCRIPTURAL AND THEREFORE RIGHT?

Dennis Gullledge



In 1984, leaders of thirteen denominational churches in Florida signed a joint-declaration condemning the death penalty. This document characterized capital punishment as being inconsistent with God's love. They did not and could not say, however, that it is

inconsistent with God's word. Nor could they charge Scripture with inciting the evils that they lodged against capital punishment.

Consider for a moment the title of this article. It isn't, "Is Capital Punishment Political?" It is. *Newsweek* reports that "...capital punishment in Texas is in the cross hairs this political season" (June 12, 2000, p. 26). It isn't, "Is Capital Punishment Popular?" According to a recent *Newsweek* poll it is supported by 73% of Americans (*Newsweek*, June 12, 2000, p. 27). This statistic is in all probability higher since "People who work in the news media are overwhelmingly opposed to the death penalty..." (John Leo, *U.S. News & World Report*, July 3, 2000, p. 14). It isn't, "Is Capital Punishment Controversial?" It is and always has been controversial. The question is, "Is Capital Punishment Scriptural And Therefore Right?" By *scriptural* I mean that the Bible furnishes us with the objective standard by which to determine the legitimacy of this very controversial question (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

*Capital punishment* comes from a Latin expression meaning punishment that takes the head, and hence, the life of a person. It means that life, for what is regarded justifiable reason, is legally taken by the existing form of government under which one lives. Executions in this country are relatively rare compared to times gone by. In the 1930's executions averaged 167 per year.

Between 1968 and 1976 there were no executions. In 1999 there were 98 people put to death for their crimes.

Undeniably, violence and flagrant disregard for human life have swept over our land. Why? Paul, explaining the sinfulness of men, said, "There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Romans 3:18). This is certainly descriptive of our degrading national character. No wonder murder, destruction, misery and strife are so common! Again, Solomon wrote, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes 8:11). The *Justice Department Bureau of Statistics* confirms that the average sentence for murder is a mere 15 years. The convicted murderer is usually out in 1.8 years. Since 1960, when we began to relax sentencing procedures, violent crime has gone up 500 percent! There are about 20,000 homicides committed annually in the U.S. Fewer than 300 of these will lead to a death sentence. In those cases that do there will be a series of appeals that will typically consume many years and millions of tax dollars before the execution is carried out, if it ever occurs.

The ranges of opinions surrounding the death penalty are basically two: you are either for it or against it. People hear the endless controversy over the death penalty and wonder whether it has God's approval. What does the Bible say?

## The Function Of Civil Government

Civil government is ordained of God for the proper regulation of society. Paul said, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1; cf., 1 Peter 2:13-14). This does not imply that God is pleased

with every decision of government. The Neronian regime under which Paul lived was thoroughly corrupt. We are taught to pray that our rulers will govern wisely and rightly (1 Timothy 2:-1-2).

Every government on earth has basically three functions: First, to protect the innocent. Second, to punish the guilty. Third, to provide justice for all citizens. It is reasonable to believe that God has given civil government the authority to enforce its responsibilities. Paul continued, "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Romans 13:2-4). The sword was the symbol of the magistrate's right to use capital punishment. If citizens vote to take that power away from the government that would be bearing the sword in vain.

### **Capital Punishment In The Old Testament**

The first mention of the death penalty in the Bible is in Genesis 4:10-14. After cowardly Cain murdered his brother Abel, he immediately fears reprisal. Cain said, "My punishment is greater than I can bear...and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me" (Genesis 4:13-14). Those who might have sought revenge would have been members of his own family avenging the death of their brother.

Two basic reasons exist for the death penalty in the Old Testament. First, is the fact that all human beings are created in the image of God and life is therefore precious (Genesis 1:26-27). The connection of the death penalty for murder, at this point, comes from Genesis 9:6, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." Taking away the life of another is the highest crime that can be committed against another, or

society. The reason is the intrinsic value of human life in its divine connection.

The second reason for God's law on murder is that "...the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it" (Numbers 35:33). Matthew Henry was correct when he wrote, "Where wrong has been done restitution must be made; and, since the murderer cannot restore the life he has wrongfully taken away, his own must be exacted from him in lieu of it, not (as some have fancied) to satisfy the manes or ghost of the person slain, but to satisfy the law and the justice of a nation; and to be warning to all others not to do likewise."

### **Capital Punishment In The New Testament**

Pilate asked Jesus, "[K]nowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" (John 19:10). It is worthy of note that Jesus did not argue with Pilate over the legitimacy of the death penalty. Jesus acknowledged Pilate's right to carry it out, but denied his own guilt (Vs. 11).

The Jews once charged Paul with capital crimes that they could not prove (Acts 25:1-10). The apostle spoke in his own defense: "For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die..." (Vs. 11). Paul did not challenge the law, but merely the justice of the charges against him.

Again, Romans 13:1-4 shows the right of civil government to exercise the kind of punishment that the sword represents. Civil law is to encourage the good and punish the evil. Individually, we have no right to take vengeance (Matthew 5:38-39; Romans 12:19). The state, acting as "ministers of God" serves this function (Romans 13:4).

### **Common Objections To Capital Punishment**

Some think that the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13) makes capital punishment wrong. "You shall not murder" (NKJV) is the more precise reading. The Hebrew  
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# THE FIVE ANCIENT EMPIRES, OF THE WORLD: PERSIA

Max R. Miller



Cyaxares was the founder of the kingdom of the Medes (625-585 B.C.). He captured Ahur (614) and destroyed Nineveh (612); subdued the countries of northern Mesopotamia and spread Median boundaries westward to the Halys in Asia Minor. His son

Astyages, who was the last king of Media, succeeded him to the throne (reigned c. 584-550 B.C.). According to Herodotus, Astyages' daughter Mandane married Cambyses. Cyrus the Great was her son. Cyrus, a Persian king under Median domination, revolted against Astyages. Astyages' troops mutinied and surrendered their king to Cyrus. Media became part of the Persian Empire (550 B.C.). Cyrus wisely ordered an administration that shared power with the Medes, thus, the Medo-Persian Empire.

Persia became a vast collection of states and kingdoms reaching the shores of Asia Minor in the west to the Indus River valley in the east. It extended northward to southern Russia, and in the south included Egypt and the regions bordering the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. Our chief interest in the Persian Empire, third of the great kingdoms of the ancient east, lies in its relation to Bible history and the people of God.

The rise of the Medes and Persians found Israel in a state of division and rebellion against their God. Because of idolatrous rebellion against God, Assyria had overrun Israel, the ten northern tribes, and scattered its people among the nations (721 B.C.). Isaiah and others of God's prophets exhorted Israel to depose their idolatrous kings, put away their icons, repent and return to the Lord. Jehovah was a merciful and forgiving God. They

would not repent. God providentially brought forth the nation of Assyria as "the rod of my anger" (Isaiah 10:5). He used Assyria to chasten His rebellious children. Assyria captured and scattered the ten tribes of Israel among the nation.

Judah followed the pattern set by Israel and became steeped in idolatry. Pleas of godly prophets for repentance went unheeded. Jeremiah foretold that Judah's bondage in Babylon would number seventy years. "Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Because ye have not heard my words, Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and a hissing, and perpetual desolations...This whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years" (Jeremiah 25:8-11).

Jeremiah tempers this bitter prophecy with assurances of God's avenging justice against Babylon. "And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations. And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations. For many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also: and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the works of their own hands" (Jeremiah 25:12-14).

In 606 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, moved against Judah. Daniel and others of the

“seed royal” were among those carried captive to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar comes again against Jerusalem in 598 B.C. In 586 B.C. he destroys the city and Solomon’s magnificent Temple, carrying the gold and silver emblems of the Temple as prizes-of-war to Babylon. The artisans, teachers, the wealthy, the able bodied, the best of the land, were carried away to Babylon. Only the aged and infirm were left in the barren land. Judah and its king were now captives in the heart of far off Babylon.

Daniel speaks of God’s providence in the rise and fall of nations: “...the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men” (Daniel 4:17, 25). Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s forgotten dream was nothing less than the prophecies of God’s raising and destroying great nations of the world (of which we write, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome). It would be in the days of the last named that God would establish a kingdom that would never be destroyed (Daniel 2:24-45). This was to be the kingdom of Jesus Christ (Cf., Matthew 16:13-19).

The seventy years of captivity comes near its end. As it does, a noble character appears as a friend of the captive nation of Israel. Cyrus II, the Great, the Persian, renders a decisive and benevolent role in the history of Israel. As a predetermined servant of God and redeemer of captive Israel, he is identified as God’s shepherd, God’s anointed (Isaiah 44:28-45:6). One hundred years before his birth, while the temple yet stood, Isaiah calls him by his God-given name, Cyrus, and defines his role in Israel’s return to Palestine. Cyrus’ decree in 539 B.C. set free the captives Babylon had taken during its harsh rule (Ezra 1:1-4). Along with this freedom the valuable treasures of the Temple taken fifty years earlier by Nebuchadnezzar were restored. Cyrus authorized the Jews to build again the Temple in Jerusalem. “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus

king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The Lord his God be with him, and let him go up” (2 Chronicles 36:22-23). Cyrus ruled for twenty-nine years. Suddenly, at the height of his career, 529 B.C., he was slain in battle with the Massagetae, an obscure tribe on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea.

Cyrus’ son, Cambyses, succeeded him to the throne. He conquered Egypt in a battle at Pelusium in 525 B.C. During his absence, a Magian, Gaumata, who pretended to be Smerdis, Cambyses’ murdered brother, seized the throne. Cambyses, en route to meet the impostor, died of a self-inflicted wound when mounting his horse. Some Persian reports are that he committed suicide. After only seven months reign, Darius who became king as the heir of Cambyses in 521 B.C. overthrew and slew the usurper.

Darius Hystaspes, Darius the Great (522-486 B.C.), was the successor to Cambyses II. He is considered the most able prince to sit on the Persian throne. It was in the sixth year of his reign that the Temple in Jerusalem was completed (Ezra 6:15). The prophets Haggai and Zechariah urged the Jews to give of their might and rebuild the Temple before other disruptions may occur (Ezra 4:24; 5:1-16; Haggai 1; Zechariah 1). This they did and the Temple was completed in 516 B.C. Darius spent his early years as king putting down revolts in Media, Persia, and Egypt. After solidifying his power in the Middle East he rose against the Scythians and Greeks who had rebelled under his predecessor. He was successful in this venture until the Athenians, under the leadership of their Miltiades, defeated his grand army in the battle of Marathon (490 B.C).

Xerxes (NIV, TEV), reigned 486-464 B.C., and is known in the Book of Esther as Ahasuerus. He was the son of Darius the Great and grandson of Cyrus the Great. He campaigned militarily against the Greeks, avenging the loss at Marathon. Herodotus states that as many as five million Persians accompanied him on this  
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## CO-OPERATION

G. K. Wallace

The body is one—the members are many, but together they must work if success is achieved. Paul said, “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12). Then, after Paul discusses the relationship of the different parts of the body and how they should work together in harmony, he says, “That there should be no schisms in the body; but that all the members should have the same care one for another.” (1 Corinthians 12:25). All the members of the body of Christ should have the same care for one another.

We are told there are about one hundred fifty pieces in the average watch, and if one piece of the watch is out of harmony, the watch will not function properly. If one of the pieces in the watch gets dirty, the watch will not keep correct time. This is true of the church. One rusty member in the church can cause much friction. One unclean member in the church can slow down and impede the progress of the people of God. The watch may be sent to the jeweler to be cleaned, but it takes the blood of Christ to cleanse the church. No one would think about trying to drive an automobile if the driving gear propelled one wheel forward and the other one backward. Such a car would have no market value, and would be a total nuisance to its owner.

Without the right care of one for another in a congregation, there will be confusion. In Genesis 11, we read about the confusion at the tower of Babel. When there was a confusion in tongues, there was a confusion in their work, which thus halted the erection of the tower of Babel. In a

congregation where there is confusion over the leadership and what is being taught, the brethren will soon be “scattered abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth” (Genesis 11:1-9). The kingdom of Israel was getting along very well until Jeroboam and Rehoboam got into an argument over who was the head man (1 Kings 12). Their fuss over leadership divided Israel, never to be united again. A lack of cooperation on the part of Barnabas caused him to be separated from the great apostle Paul for a big part of his life (Acts 15:38).

The church today sorely needs cooperation between individuals. The division between Paul and Barnabas did not disrupt the church, but it did separate two good men. The contention between Paul and Barnabas was so sharp “that they parted asunder one from the other, and Barnabas took Mark with him, and sailed away to Cyprus” (Acts 15:39). This sharp contention undoubtedly had its repercussions among the people with whom they were associated. It is not the desire of this scribe to try to justify either Paul or Barnabas in their argument. The fact is, there was a lack of cooperation between these individuals. We, as preachers of the gospel, should learn to work with each other and help each other so the cause of Christ may prosper.

There is a great need for cooperation among congregations. Paul said, “I came to bring alms to my nation” (Acts 24:17). Relief for the poor saints was sent to Jerusalem (Acts 11:27). Paul and Barnabas were sent out by the church in Antioch on a great missionary journey (Acts 13:1-3). When they had finished their tour, they reported to the congregation that sent them out. It is an evident fact that other congregations contributed to the support of Paul and Barnabas. Macedonia helped in this work (2 Corinthians 9:2). The church at Philippi helped in this work (Philippians 2).

We as Christian people should work together with God. We should stand together as individuals and cooperate as congregations in helping to spread the gospel over all the world.

Our greatest need of cooperation is with  
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# IGNORANCE AND APATHY

Dave Smith

The story goes that a couple of men were discussing concerns they had about the direction in which the church was going. One of the men asked, "Would you agree the reasons we're not seeing the church grow as it can and should is because of ignorance and apathy?" The other man responded to his friend's comment in an all too familiar way: "I don't know and I don't care."

As much as we might not like to admit it, all too many Christians have fallen prey to such an attitude. Satan has caused them to buy into the denominations concept of "once saved, always saved"—a concept that leads to a false sense of self-satisfaction...and will lead to eternal ruin for all who remain therein.

How, then, do we stem the tide of such an attitude that seems to be growing on a daily basis? First of all, there must be a re-commitment to the work at hand. Just like those in Nehemiah's day, we must have "a mind to work" (Nehemiah 4:6). Faithful children of God must realize there is a problem and commit themselves to the importance and the urgency of the work. Sad, but true, it is sometimes the perceived indifference on the part of God's faithful children that causes others to place themselves in the throes of ignorance and apathy.

Secondly, "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15), we must convince and convict those with the "I don't know and I don't care" attitude that they are being deceived by the father of lies (John 8:44) and are being led down the path to eternal destruction. It might not be the most pleasant task, but it is a necessity, for if we can convince these individuals of their error, we "shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:20).

In the third place, a re-emphasis must be placed on the importance of Bible study. The Bible is not just some antiquated book with some important sayings in it (as some are pushing); it is

the inspired and infallible word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The respect for God's Word and the authority that goes along with it needs to be rekindled in the hearts and minds of people. We cannot plead ignorance to the teachings of the Bible because we have total access to "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). A restoration of the hungering and thirsting after righteousness is a must (Matthew 5:6). This learning process will more than likely include a re-introduction to the foundational principles of Christianity (the milk) and be built upon with the weightier matters (the meat) as one progresses into spiritual maturity (Hebrews 5:12-6:2; 1 Peter 2:2).

And finally, a reminder of the reward for steadfastness in the faith must be re-instilled. There is a great reward that will be "reaped" if we faint not in well doing (Galatians 6:9). The faithful child of God has been assured, "...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

The following passages from the apostle Paul should point out to us the importance of continual growth in the knowledge of and obedience to God's word, as well as the reward that awaits all those who stick to those teachings:

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

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

Ignorance and apathy can be overcome but only if we rekindle our first love (Revelation 2:4-5a).—1665 Jamestown Road, Cobden, IL 62920

## THE MEGA-CHURCH CONCEPT

John T. Polk, II



*"Some 'mega-churches' have taken their denomination's name off the outdoor signs. Will the 'church of Christ' do the same?"*

There is no need for us to. The churches of Christ (Romans 16:16) are preaching only the Gospel of Christ (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:44-52; Acts 2:1-47) from the Word of Christ (John 12:48; 17:20; 20:29-31; Romans 10:17), and are made up only of Christians (Acts 11:26). What would we need to give up to be more appealing to God?

Denominations are but applying what they have been preaching. "It doesn't make any difference what denomination you're in." Since they have taught denomination doesn't matter, their signs now simply use the term "Family," "Community," or some similar expression instead of their denominational name. And their "worship" has incorporated the elements of "Pentecostal" instruments, "Baptist" singing, "Methodist" groups, and "Catholic" rituals together. The trend today is to form "electic" churches, i.e. to seek the "lowest common denominator" in religion. There are people who think that "broadening" concepts or "re-defining" their doctrines will appeal to the masses in effective ways. Using common practices borrowed from those who have already abandoned the Bible

is an excuse to not abide by God's Word! "Billy Graham Crusades" have practiced this for decades, but now people are building permanent facilities for the exact same thing.

This is nothing new, for it has been tried and failed before. After the Flood, Noah was told, "And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; Bring forth abundantly in the earth and multiply in it" (Genesis 9:7). But mankind later said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4). This "tower of Babel" represents the confusion of languages God caused when He "scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city" (Genesis 11:8). These people emphasized their similarities for "unity's sake" in order to build an impressively large edifice and ignore God's will in the process. Theirs was a "community" structure or "family" force for their own purposes, rather than trusting God and obeying Him. The churches of Christ are made up of "the beloved of God, called to be saints" (Romans 1:7) and should not have "a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they ["unbelieving Jews" JTPII] being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:1-4).

God warned Israel not to incorporate the worship practices of the people in the land He promised. "And you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and burn their wooden images with fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods and destroy their names from that place. You shall not worship the Lord your God with such things" (Deuteronomy 12:2-4; 18:9-14). The churches of Christ must have "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:1-6). Regardless of present-day practices, the structure of belief cannot be changed nor

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## SOME NEW THINGS MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE

Guy F. Hester



The above title may sound a bit strange or unusual. Generally speaking, new things in religion are not true and true things in religion are not new; and yet, the Bible speaks of many new things. Therefore we wish in this article to direct

your attention to a few of these new things the Bible talks about.

**New Covenant.** We learn from a study of the Old Testament that hundreds of years before the New Testament was given, God promised to make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah (Jeremiah 31:31). Then as we turn to the New Testament we find reference made to this statement by the writer of the Hebrew letter as he declared that this promise or prophecy had been fulfilled when Christ died on the cross and took the law of Moses out of the way and the New Testament was given (Hebrews 8:8). Someone asks, "Why was it necessary to take away the Old Covenant and make a new one?" Since that is a Bible question, it is a good one and it is necessary for us to know the answer. So we look to the Bible for the answer and we have it recorded in Hebrews 8:7, "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." In other words,

he is saying that because of the imperfection of the Old Covenant it was necessary for it to be taken away and a new one established or made. We all understand that under the Old Covenant they offered animal sacrifices for sins, but it was not possible to receive the remission of sins through such sacrifices (Hebrews 10:1). Therefore, the New Covenant is one of the new things mentioned in the Bible.

**New Birth.** Then another new thing mentioned in the Bible is the New Birth. Under the Old Covenant the Jews or Israelites came into covenant relationship with God through, or by virtue of, the natural birth. The Old Covenant, or the law of Moses, was given only to them, and those who were born of a Jewish family were automatically of the covenant which God had given them, but under the New Covenant it is different. The New Covenant is not restricted to any particular nationality or people, but it is for both Jew and Gentile alike. Hence, one comes into the benefits of the New Covenant by virtue of the new birth; that is, a second birth. Christians are a people who have been born twice, or born again. All of us were born into our parents' family by a natural or physical birth. But to enter the divine family, or the family of God, we must have a Spiritual birth. Remember the Lord's conversation with Nicodemus in the third chapter of John, in which he said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). When Jesus says a thing cannot be done, that is just the way it is. Then let us notice again, in enlarging upon the thought, he said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Some would tell us that the birth of water here refers to the natural birth or physical birth. But just a little logical reasoning will teach us better than that. Who is it that is born of a natural birth? Is it an infant or a man? But we notice in this text that he said, "Except a man (not an infant) be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Hence, the new birth consists, or is made up of both water and Spirit. I

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# CAN YOU SLEEP AT NIGHT?

Allen Webster



It takes more than a soft pillow to insure sound sleep. Americans live in gated communities, under radar surveillance, with patrolmen circling at all hours, and still can't sleep for fear. Ancient cities encircled their cities with

impenetrable walls. The pioneers circled their wagons to protect themselves from surprise dawn Indian attacks. Modern countries line their borders with nuclear arms. Today's homes are equipped with alarms, motion sensors, and sprinkler systems but we still fear the worst. We are covered by life insurance, health insurance, disability insurance, and fire insurance, but are still not too sure of the future. Even our pets reflect our fears. In 1975, cuddly poodles were the most popular purebred dog in America, with 139,750 registered. There were only 952 registered Rottweilers, a fierce breed often used as a guard dog. By 1994, the poodle population was cut in half to 61,775, while Rottweilers had increased 100 times to 102,596 (American Kennel Club, "To Verify," *Leadership Magazine*).

A Christian's best defense is none of these things. It's a child-like trust in a Father-like God. "Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God" (Psalm 20:7; cf. Isaiah 31:1). "And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee" (2 Chronicles 14:11). "With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles" (2 Chronicles 32:8a). "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" (1 Peter 3:13).

**GOD'S PROTECTION IS LIKE**

**...A HEDGE OF THORNS.** Those who lived in Bible lands were familiar with thorns. Celius, for instance, describes sixteen varieties of thorny plants. Large thorn bushes—called *nabk*, from which tradition says the crown of thorns was woven—sprang up like fruit trees all over. In the Plain of Gennesaret thistles grew so tall and thick a horse could not push through them (McGarvey, *Commentary on Matthew*). Palestinian farmers used thorn hedges to divide fields and discourage intruders (cf. Matthew 13; Mark 4; Luke 8). From the Garden of Eden to the cross of Calvary, thorns played a part in God's plan for man. Interestingly, when Satan accused God of putting a hedge around Job, God didn't deny it (Job 1:10). He denied that the hedge was the reason Job served Him. Isaiah pictured God's people as a vineyard that received God's attention. When they failed to remain faithful He threatened to "take away the hedge thereof" (Isaiah 5:5). God hedges us in with His love and powerful care.

**...A SHIELD.** The Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Genesis 15:1). The Psalmist rejoiced to know that the "...Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield" (5:12). The Christian's armor includes the "shield of faith" by which we quench the fiery darts of the wicked (Ephesians 6:16). This "shield" (*thureos*) was large, oblong, made of wood, and covered with hides (It comes from a root word, *thura*, meaning, "door"). Roman soldiers lined up in formation with these shields in front as a literal wooden wall against the initial onslaught of enemy arrows. Listening to a student read Psalm 23 in chapel, Joseph Sittler, blind with advancing age, heard something he's never heard before. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me..." "The text does not speak," said Sittler, "of the valley of death but the valley of the shadow of death. There is a difference...The wonderful truth...is that God

is with us now. It is not simply that God will be with us in the experience of death itself; it is that God will walk with us through all of life, a life over which death sometimes casts its shadow” (Quoted by Martin Marty in “Context,” August 1 and 15, 1984, *Christianity Today*, Vol 30, no. 2).

**...A WALL OF FIRE.** Campers in the extreme north U.S. and Canadian wilderness have been known to build several campfires in a circle around their sleeping bags to put a “wall of fire” between them and timberwolves. Compare Zechariah’s record: “For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her” (2:5). As late as the nineteenth century, a superstition existed about fire among European peasants. Fire started by the primitive method of friction was regarded as having supernatural protective properties. Cattle driven through this fire would come to no harm, provided all nearby fires were put out when it was kindled. Such superstition points to man’s desire; Scripture points to God’s meeting that desire for His people. Just as David’s men served as a “wall of protection” around Nabal’s shepherds in the field (1 Samuel 25:16), so “the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them” (Psalm 34:7).

**...A MOTHER HEN.** If you’ve been on a farm you’ve probably watched a hen’s chicks scatter looking for insects and worms. As they peck here and there some distance may come to separate them. But let a cat or hound come in their direction, and the hen’s excited clucking brings the chicks under her with startling rapidity. As they hide, she puts herself between them and the perceived danger. This is how Jesus pictured His care for Jerusalem. He wanted to call them to Him and shield them from harm, but they would not (Matthew 23:37). God’s arms are even pictured as “underneath” us (Deuteronomy 33:27). To use Whittier’s words,

*I know not where His islands lift  
Their fronded palms in air;  
I only know I cannot drift  
Beyond His love and care.*

John Greenleaf Whittier, *The Eternal Gardens*.

**...A CROCODILE’S HIDE.** God is “a

buckler to all them that trust in him” (2 Samuel 22:31). The word “buckler” (*magen*) is often translated “shield” but can also mean “the scaly hide of the crocodile.” God can give us “thick skin” when we need it to turn toward those who unjustly criticize (Ezekiel 3:9).

We’d all sleep better if we stopped at 1 Peter 5:7 before closing our eyes: “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” God is there. He is awake. “He that keepeth thee will not slumber” (Psalm 121:3b).—P.O. Box 520, Jacksonville, AL 36265

### SOME NEW THINGS IN THE BIBLE

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am aware of the fact that there is much controversy and misunderstanding among religious people as to what the new birth is and how it is brought about. However, there is no reason for anyone to be ignorant of what the Bible teaches concerning this matter. God has revealed this information to us in such a simple manner as to eliminate all difficulty in understanding. We understand that in the natural, or fleshly birth, there is first a begetting and then a bringing forth. So it is with the Spiritual or new birth. The Bible is plain that we are first begotten by the word of truth and then brought forth from the waters of baptism. The apostle Peter expressed it this way, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Peter 1:23). Then James said, “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth” (James 1:18). Of course, “The word of truth” is the word of God or the gospel of Christ. Hence, the fearless apostle Paul said to the church at Corinth: “For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel” (1 Corinthians 4:15). Therefore, according to the Bible, instead of being born again in some mysterious or miraculous way, one is born again by the gospel, or the word of God, through obedience thereto. *To Be Continued*—1925 County Highway 59, Haleyville, AL 35565

# TRICKS OF THE DEVIL

(1 Peter 5-8)

M. W. Kiser



The word "devil" means "slanderer." Here he is called our "adversary," not a friend, but an opponent. He stalks us as a "roaring lion," a fierce beast whose hunger is never satisfied. He "walks about," active in his pursuit; "seeking" us, some he already has. "Whom he may devour," or swallow. By being in mental control, and active we can resist him. What are his most famous tricks?

## I. TO KEEP YOU OUT OF THE CHURCH.

- A. He knows there is just one church (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 4:4)
  1. So who is saying, "One is just as good as another?"
  2. Or that "God is pleased with division?"
- B. He knows it is the blood washed body of Christ (Acts 20:28).
  1. That the blood of Christ washes away sin (Revelation 1:5; 1 John 1:7).
  2. And the connection between the blood and baptism (Acts 22:16).
- C. He knows that the saved are in the church (Acts 2:47).
  1. That the same thing that saves a person puts him in the body (Galatians 3:26-27; 1 Corinthians

2. 12:13; Romans 6:3-4).
2. If he keeps you out of the church, then he keeps you out of Christ, and therefore, with the lost and the doomed (Ephesians 2:12).
- D. He knows that in the church God is glorified (Ephesians 3:21).
  1. That this cannot be done in human organizations or fraternal orders.
  2. Now, who is it that is saying, "Stay at home, that is enough?"
- E. He knows that by the church the gospel of Christ is preached (Ephesians 3:10).
  1. If you are kept apart from it, then you cannot help (Mark 16:15).
  2. He doesn't care what is preached as long as it is not the gospel!

## II. TO GET YOU BACK INTO THE WORLD.

- A. He is often successful in this undertaking
  1. The case of Demas (2 Timothy 4:10).
  2. The love of the world will do it every time (James 4:4; 1 John 2:15).
- B. Why does Satan want you back into the world?
  1. He will have you in a worse condition (2 Peter 2:20-22).
  2. Soon, repentance will be impossible (Hebrews 6:4).
  3. Then, you will face damnation with him (Hebrews 10:26-29; Matthew 25:41).
- C. How does he get us back into the world?
  1. He does all he can to weaken our faith (job, home, social life).
  2. Gives us association with evil companions who will corrupt us.
  3. Tempts us with worldly enterprise; making money and fun for our god.

4. He tells us, "You can't fall from grace!" (see: Genesis 3:4).

III. TO RENDER YOU WORTHLESS TO THE CHURCH.

- A. By abiding in the vine, but not bearing fruit (John 15:2; James 2:24).
- B. Convincing you that the assembly is not important (Hebrews 10:25).
- C. Having you believe you don't need to study your Bible (2 Timothy 2:15).
- D. Having you lead a prayerless life; thus to be guilt ridden (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
- E. Telling you not to eat the Lord's supper. (No view of the cross, yourself, or your hope being weekly kept in mind (1 Corinthians 11:26-30).
- F. Gives you a covetous heart to keep you from giving (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).
- G. Make a watchdog out of you because he delights in members who criticize the church as if they were not a member (Matthew 7:1-2; 1 Corinthians 12:20-27).

There is a great election. God has voted for your soul to be saved. The devil has voted for your soul to be lost. Which way will you vote even today?—P.O. Box 2597, Sylacauga, AL 35150

| CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED DURING THE PAST QUARTER           |          |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| I. W. & Faye Loudermilk<br>Decherd, TN.....              | 50.00    |
| Mr. & Mrs. Earl Carr<br>Livingston, TN.....              | 25.00    |
| Trevle Wood<br>Murfreeseboro, TN.....                    | 100.00   |
| Walter & Eathel Buckley<br>Maynard, AR.....              | 25.00    |
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| Walnut Grove Church of Christ<br>Livingston, TN.....     | 200.00   |
| Elizabeth Church of Christ<br>Elizabeth, AR.....         | 50.00    |
| Arlington Church of Christ<br>McMinnville, TN.....       | 75.00    |
| Mabelvale Church of Christ<br>Mabelvale, AR.....         | 1,250.00 |
| Mountain Home Church of Christ<br>Mountain Home, AR..... | 1,200.00 |

**HOW DO YOU STUDY YOURSELF INTO ERROR?**

Dennis Gullede

*One of the reasons for studying the Bible is to learn truth and abandon error, but have you noticed the current trend of some brethren "studying" themselves into error? The elders of one congregation announced that they have studied the matter and concluded that there is no New Testament prohibition of instrumental music in the worship, and they decided to adopt it's use. Another church says that they have studied it and decided that there is no reason to limit taking the Lord's Supper to Sunday only. They will observe it on another day as well. Yet another group says that after careful study they have decided that they will use women in a "more active" role in their worship services.*

*We must wonder what accounts for this current trend, but one doesn't have to wonder long when he realizes that when people have a mind to do a thing they can easily "study" themselves into it. Their hermeneutics will give them the license to do whatever they like in religion and the fact that they have "studied" it will give it the appearance of honest investigation. The very reverse of this disturbing trend was seen in the early days of the Restoration Movement when it was not unheard of for entire congregations to study themselves out of sectarianism and into New Testament Christianity! Now we have brethren "studying" themselves out of following the New Testament order ("tradition" as they call it) and following a course back into denominationalism. Go figure!*

# WHAT IS THE RESTORATION PLEA?

Ivie Powell



The New Testament church was prophesied of (Isaiah 2:2-3; Micah 4:1-2; Daniel 2:44), and established on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2). Departures from the faith came early in the second

century. Even in its early beginnings a falling away was promised, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first..." (2 Thessalonians 2:3). Observe also 1 Timothy 4:1, "...that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." Such departures were predicted to come from within (Acts 20:28-31). And as the New Testament writers said, a great falling away would take place.

Whereas the first century church was characterized by unity of doctrine, organization of worship, and work, the fifth century church was characterized by doctrinal corruption. By the year 325 A.D. the first creed was adopted known as the Nicene Creed. John D. Cox in commenting on "The Development of Papal Power" said:

When Rome lost her place as capital of the world by the founding of Constantinople as the capital of the Roman Empire in 325 A.D., she began to assert her right to be the capital of the church. The five presiding bishops who lived in Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople and Rome were called "Patriarchs." The Patriarch at Rome took the title of "papa, father," afterward modified to "pope." A bitter battle for power was waged among the patriarchs. This battle finally narrowed down to a contest between the pope of Rome and the patriarch of Constantinople as to which should be the head of the church.

In 588 A.D. the patriarch of Constantinople, John the Faster, assumed the title of "Universal Bishop of the Church." This was bitterly contested by the pope of Rome. In 606 A.D. the emperor took the title of "Universal Bishop" away from John the Faster and conferred it upon Boniface III then Pope of Rome. Thus papal supremacy was formally introduced. The date 606 A.D. really marks the beginning of what is now known as the Roman Catholic Church, in a fully organized state, with the pope of Rome as its head (*Church History*, pp. 39-40).

Following this period there was a millennium of darkness—the Dark Ages—a period in history when the church of Christ was lost to the eyes of the recording historians of the world. To roll back the tide of apostasy, men such as Martin Luther and John Calvin attempted to reform the Catholic Church. On October 31, 1517 Martin Luther, a young Catholic Monk, nailed ninety-five theses, or propositions, to the castle church door at Wittenberg to protest against the innovations of the Catholic Church. It must be pointed out, that it was not Luther's intention to break away from the Catholic Church, but to call these matters to their attention, hoping to reform the situation. The results of Luther's theses was the beginning of the Protestant Reformation Movement.

While Luther and others were protesting against the apostate church, later on, other men took an altogether different approach. This movement was an independent movement without organized efforts. Men such as Thomas Campbell, Alexander Campbell, Jacob Creath, Jr., Barton W. Stone, Raccoon John Smith and many others decided instead of trying to reform, to completely renounce all human creeds, and innovations and to go back to the Bible. Thomas Campbell's  
(Continued on page 20)

# WHAT ABOUT “SAME-SEX” MARRIAGES

Jerry W. Joseph

In today's news you hear much about what is called “same-sex” marriages. What is promoted by such is a man married to a man or a woman being married to a woman. What about such marriages? Are they approved of God? In discussing such issues, many want to leave God out of the picture. Some are more concerned about the feelings and the thinking of man than the will of God. As we turn to the Bible we can see, understand and know how God feels about “same-sex” marriages.

“The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female. And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19:3-6). Concerning marriage, God from the beginning ordained that it was to be male and female to be joined together. In Genesis 2:18, we read that God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.” What was it that God gave to man to be his helper? Was it some animal? NO! Was it another man? NO! It was woman. “And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man” (Genesis 2:21-23). God made “Woman” not another “Man” for man. As one has said, God

gave Eve not Steve for Adam!

Notice the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:1-3, “Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.” Paul said that a “man” is to have his own “wife” and a “woman” is to have her own “husband.” It is not “man” with “man” nor “woman” with “woman.”

“Same-sex” marriages are contrary to God's plan. Marriage is to be between “man” and “woman.” This has been true from the beginning. “Same-sex” marriages are not pleasing to God for they constitute a homosexual relationship. Homosexuality is condemned by the Scriptures (Genesis 19:1-14; Leviticus 18:22-23; 20:13; Romans 1:26-32; 1 Timothy 1:8-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Since homosexuality is condemned by God and “same-sex” marriages are homosexual, we must therefore conclude that such marriages are not approved by God.

Since God is the originator of marriage, he knows what is best. We had better listen to God and make our marriages according to His Will. Let us build our marriages upon His Word and they will be pleasing to God.—1714 South College, Trenton, TN 38382

*It's good to have money, and the things money can buy,  
But it's best to check up once in a while to be sure you haven't lost the things money can't buy.*

# ALEXANDER CAMPBELL AND THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Wayne Cox

We want to reflect upon the life of one of the most famous men in the Restoration Movement, Alexander Campbell. In this brief synopsis of his life, it is not our intent either to deify or dehumanize Campbell, but to point out the hardships through which he went, the sacrifices which he made, and the labor in which he engaged as he determined to return to the simple teaching of the Word of God.

As one looks back in history, he sees that man has not long abided by the will of God. God's will has never changed, nor will it ever! "The word of the Lord endureth forever" (1 Peter 1:25). God has not departed from man, but man has departed from God. Thus, the need for restoration, the desire to return to the teaching of the Bible, to "speak where the Bible speaks, to remain silent where it is silent," to do Bible things in Bible ways, and to call Bible things by Bible names. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11). This was the plea of Campbell and others in the early part of the Restoration Movement, and it had best be our plea today!

**EARLY LIFE.** Campbell was born September 12, 1788, near Ballymena, County Antrim, Ireland. He was the first son born to Thomas and Jane Corneigle Campbell, with Thomas serving as preacher for the Sueder Presbyterian church. Thomas Campbell had a high regard for the Bible, and each day the family would read and discuss the Scriptures in a family devotional. It was a Campbell family rule that each child in the household should memorize a verse of Scripture every day to recite at this family study. No doubt, this early childhood practice was appreciated by Campbell as he grew more mature.

**A RETURN TO SCRIPTURE.** In 1807, Thomas came to America because of health reasons, with his family hoping to be reunited with him later. The next year, Alexander and family set sail to join Thomas in America, but were shipwrecked off the coast of Scotland. Before

being rescued, Alexander promised God that if he would be spared from the raging sea, he would devote his life to the preaching of the gospel. Their reunion with Thomas thwarted, at least for the time being, Alexander decided to enter Glasgow University, and studied there one year. While at Glasgow, he met the Haldane brothers, James and Robert, independent reformers who would leave a lasting impression on young Campbell's mind. These men had left the church of Scotland because of its cold formalism; they believed in the independence of congregations, accepted the Scriptures as their only creed, and preached a simple gospel. Campbell would later adopt these same ideals, since they did not begin with the Haldanes, but with God.

The Campbells were finally reunited in America at Pennsylvania in August, 1809. Father and son were surprised to learn that they both shared similar views and concerns for restoring the New Testament pattern of unity, teaching and worship—both had earlier renounced Presbyterianism. They adopted the famous motto: "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent"—the same command of God through Peter, just in different words: "if any speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11).

"Buy the truth, and sell it not..." (Proverbs 23:23). Alexander loved the truth more than anything else, and in his sage search for the truth, he made the Bible the ultimate source of all authority. Although he read extensively from other men, he still thought independently, took only from other men what he conceived to be in harmony with truth, and rejected all else. He preached his first sermon at the congregation of Brush Run on September 16, 1811. His text was Matthew 27:24-27; his theme; comparisons between wise and foolish men. Campbell eventually became the preacher for this congregation.

The Campbells had formerly believed and advocated infant baptism and sprinkling due to

being associated with Calvinism in the Presbyterian church. However, at the birth of his first child, Alexander began to investigate this subject in greater detail, and after studying the word “baptize” in the Greek and finding that it meant immersion, he decided to be immersed. On June 12, 1812, Campbell along with six others, including his wife and father, Thomas, were immersed by Matthias Luce.

In 1813, the Brush Run church was admitted into the Redstone Baptist Association. Its belief was founded in the Philadelphia Confession of Faith adopted by Baptist churches in 1742. Its doctrine, like that of the Westminster Confession of Faith followed by most Presbyterians, was Calvinistic to the core, and was changed only in those points that suited Baptist practices. However, Campbell was never satisfied with the Redstone Baptist Association. His most famous sermon, “The Sermon on the Law,” was delivered before this association on September 1, 1816. To say the least, his lesson had a profound effect on his hearers! One woman in the audience fainted, and many Baptist preachers were called out of the assembly to determine what to do about Campbell—they did not like what they were hearing! Perhaps for the first time in this country, a distinction was made between the Old and New Testaments. In his lesson, Campbell showed that the New Testament was God’s law—His only law for people this side of Calvary. This was a “moving sermon” indeed, for it moved Campbell right out of the Redstone Baptist Association! In 1823, Campbell joined the Mahoning Baptist Association, but seven years later, it was decided that this group should not exercise supervision or jurisdiction over congregations, and that it should never meet again.

The above is but a brief overview of the progress Campbell was making as he was studying himself out of denominationalism and sectarianism, and as he was returning to simple New Testament Christianity. However, we do not wish to leave the impression that Campbell was an infallible spiritual superman, for he was not. In fact, some of his theological positions were wrong, such as his views on millennialism, as to who was

or was not a Christian or his brother in Christ. We indeed sympathize with Campbell and others like him who were coming out of a world of religious error, but at the same time, we hope he changed these erroneous positions later in life.

We also emphasize that Campbell in no way founded or established the church of Christ, and anyone who would so affirm is ignorant of the facts and tells an untruth. Christ promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18), He built it (Acts 2), and several hundred years before Campbell was ever born it was in existence (Romans 16:16). Anyone who labels a member of the church of Christ a “Campbellite” also displays an ignorance of the facts. Further, near Paris, Kentucky, at the famous Cane Ridge building is the burial place of William Rogers, beloved companion of Barton W. Stone. Part of the inscription on his monument reads that he was “united with the Church of Christ in 1807.” Thus, the name “Church of Christ” was worn by this congregation at least two years before Campbell set foot on American soil in 1809—“proof positive” that he did not establish the church of Christ!

**CONCLUSION.** Campbell was no exception to the rule that all will one day die. He preached his last sermon in 1866, entitled “The Spiritual Blessings in Heavenly Places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). During his closing days of life, he was known to quote much scripture to those near him even when he said nothing else. A cold and fever led to his death at 11:45 p.m. Sunday, March 4, 1866, at the age of 78. Thus ended the life of a successful farmer, teacher, preacher, statesman, postmaster, author, editor, and debater—undoubtedly the dominant figure in the history of the Restoration movement.

Someone once said: “The reward of great men is that, long after they have died, one is not quite sure that they are dead.” Alexander Campbell has been dead now for some 134 years, but many of the convictions he held, many of the principles that guided him, and his ideals and love for the truth of God’s will live on in the hearts of many who remain dedicated to the restoration of New Testament Christianity.—P.O. Box 216, Verona, MS 38879

## CO-OPERATION

Continued from page 8

God. Paul said, "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." Paul also said, "Without him, I can do nothing." There are some conditions under which God will not work with us. He will not work with us when we oppose him. The life of Nebuchadnezzar is an apt illustration of this statement. See Daniel 2. Jehovah will not cooperate with us when we are polluted with sin. The sin of Achan is an evident fact that God will turn his back on people when their lives are sinful. See Joshua 7. Jehovah will not cooperate with us when we reject his will and try to do as we please. Nadab and Abihu turned from the law of God and offered strange fire and Jehovah destroyed them (Leviticus 10:1-2). God works with us when we are in harmony with him. Why was Noah able to build an ark to sail upon an ocean that had no shore in such a distant age? God is the answer. Why was David able to walk out in the valley and kill the giant who struck fear into the hearts of Israel? God is the answer. Why was Gideon able to win such a great battle with only three hundred soldiers? God is the answer. Why was Sennacherib destroyed when he came down to fight against Israel? God is the answer. Space would fail me if I should tell "of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David and Samuel and the prophets" (Hebrews 11:32).

If we are to be successful in working together as congregations and individuals, we must first learn to work with him who for us died.—*Gospel Advocate*, Vol. 127, No. 27, July 2, 1964

## WHAT IS THE RESTORATION PLEA?

Continued from page 16

famous statement became their motto: "Where the Bible speaks; we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent." Thus started the Restoration Movement. A movement designed to go back to the Bible, and completely restore the New Testament church in doctrine, organization, and practice.

It must be pointed out that the Restoration Movement was evidenced in Scandinavia, Europe, England, and Scotland long before it was to greatly affect the New World! The new world of colonial America was to experience the spiritual awakening and congregations of the church of Christ were to be found meeting in North Carolina, Virginia, Vermont, and New Hampshire before the close of the 18th century.

The concept that Alexander Campbell founded, and organized the church of Christ is without support! There is a tombstone of a man by the name of William Rogers in the old Cane Ridge Cemetery in Kentucky. The engraving on the stone is as follows: "William Rogers born...July 7, 1784, Removed with his father to Cane Ridge...Apr. 1798, United with the church of Christ at Cane Ridge 1807..." Friends when William Rogers united with the Lord's church at Cane Ridge in 1807 Alexander Campbell was nineteen years of age in Ireland!!! The truth of the matter is that Jesus Christ established the church of Christ on the first Pentecost following his resurrection as is recorded in Acts 2. Alexander Campbell did not intend to start a new religious organization or to reform those present but to go back to the Bible, and completely restore the New Testament church. A movement that did succeed!!! If you aren't a Christian, why not confess your faith in Christ (Matthew 10:32), repent of your sins (Acts 2:38), and be immersed for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38), and God will add you to the church wherein are the saved (Acts 2:47). You will then be a member of the church; not a denomination, but the same church that Peter, Paul and other early Christians were members of—the church of Christ!—111 South Curry Street, West Plains, MO 65775

## MY PLACE

There is a corner somewhere that I alone can fill.

If I fail to take my place, no other ever will.

It's all a part of God's great plan, that each a worker be,  
And somewhere in His vineyard wide, the Lord needs even me!

## THE MEGA-CHURCH CONCEPT

Continued from page 10

incorporate non-biblical worship into it. The church of Christ is the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 1:2; 12:12-18; Colossians 1:18), and that figure necessitates a strict “skeletal system” of tenets that makes it look the same wherever or whenever it may be found.

It was an act of Satan for “David to number Israel” (1 Chronicles 21:1-30), because God wanted Israel to trust in Him not their own might (Deuteronomy 17:14-20). The church of Christ began in Jerusalem with 3000 members on the Pentecost after Jesus’ resurrection (Acts 2:22-41), which later rose to 5000 (Acts 4:4), and multitudes added afterwards (Acts 5:14), so it is not having large numbers of members that is the sin. The sin today is trusting in great numbers for salvation instead of God’s promises in his word! It is in refusing to preach what is divinely taught regardless of the numbers, or put another way, desiring large numbers regardless of how little Bible doctrine it takes! Jesus warned that “wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

This “mega-church” concept may be trendy, but it attracts “children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting” (Ephesians 4:14). “Wind Of Doctrine” may feel fresh but only if one’s soul is facing away from God. It is the same tired, old, wasteful approach that mankind has always used to leave God out of religion! It is yet another doctrinal “toss of the dice” (Greek *kubeia*) or “scheme” of deception (Greek *meqodeia*) that will cause losers by the thousands. Such churches have no love for God, for they reject his commands. John said, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3). While they are changing their signs, they should call themselves “The Church of Demas,” for Demas forsook the

apostle Paul “having loved this present world” (2 Timothy 4:10). Literally, Demas “loved the here and now,” or we might say, he felt the present had more appeal than the past or future. But Jesus cautioned those who would listen to what He had to say that “the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful” (Mark 4:19). “Mega-churches” are built upon 1) anxiety to attract the world; 2) false sense of strength in possessions; and 3) selfish wants - the very things Jesus said would not be successful! Ironically for “modern-ist” churches to succeed, they turn from “old-fashioned” ways of the past, which includes reliance upon Scripture. The French expression “a la mode” means “according to fashion, or currently.” If you want “church a la mode” you may have it, but if you want “churches of Christ”—we’re still here.—125 The Trace, Dover, TN 37058

## NO NEED TO APOLOGIZE

- ◆ for telling the truth.
- ◆ for living a pure life.
- ◆ for your faith in Christ.
- ◆ for acknowledging your sins.
- ◆ for doing your best
- ◆ for thinking before acting.
- ◆ for hearing before judging.
- ◆ for forgiving your enemies.
- ◆ for helping a fallen brother.
- ◆ for being honest in business.
- ◆ for thinking before speaking
- ◆ for being true to the Lord.
- ◆ for standing on your principles.
- ◆ for harboring only pure thoughts
- ◆ for being courteous and kind.
- ◆ for money given to the Lord’s cause.

## FIVE ANCIENT EMPIRES OF THE WORLD

Continued from page 7

expedition. (Herodotus was given to exaggeration!) Josephus reported that a great body of Jews accompanied this expedition. Militarily, Xerxes' invasion of Greece was a failure. Greeks opposed the Persians at Thermopylae where only three hundred Greeks stopped the advance of the Persian army, slaughtering more than twenty thousand at the battle of Thermopylae. Xerxes' armada suffered a crippling defeat by the Greeks at Salamis under the cultured Themistocles (480 B.C.). In one day they defeated the Persians on land at Plataea and Mycale. Here Xerxes abandoned all hope of conquering Greece.

Artaxerxes Longimanus (465-424 B.C.) reigned the longest of the Persian kings, forty-one years. Ezra was a "ready scribe" among the Judaeans in Babylon. Nehemiah was an official representative of the Persian government. Through Artaxerxes' patronage Ezra returned to Jerusalem with about seven thousand other Jews (Ezra 7, 8). His chief purpose there was to reestablish the law of Moses, teach the people and set judges over the land. Thirteen years later Artaxerxes Longimanus would send Nehemiah, his personal cupbearer, to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. It seems that Nehemiah was the first governor of the province of Judah. Haggai and Zechariah were prophets in the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus. Malachi, too, is probably from the Persian period. His book shows an awareness of the world at large and is positive toward the Gentiles and the government. The Book of Esther is a story of God's rescue of His people during the rule of the Persian emperor. With the books of Malachi and Nehemiah, the Old Testament period ends. The Persian period is the last of the great nations to be a part of Old Testament history. However, other nations are spoken of by way of prophecy and will play a major role in the unfolding of God's great scheme of redemption and the establishment of His eternal kingdom, as prophesied by Daniel the prophet.

With this we have passed from the Biblio-Persian period of history. The end of the empire was near. Persia, in its decline, as most great

nations, passed to lilliputian kings of small stature. Persia became weaker as one king succeeded another. Kings that followed were: Xerxes II (425 B.C.), twenty-five years; Sogdianus (425-424 B.C.) only six months; Darius II (424-405 B.C.), nineteen years; Artaxerxes II (405-359 B.C.), sixty-six years; Artaxerxes III (359-338 B.C.), twenty-one years; Arses (338-336 B.C.), two years, and Darius III (336-331 B.C.), six years.

Alexander the Great, in the battle of Gaugameela or Arbela in 331 B.C., completely overthrew Darius III who shortly fell by an assassin's hand. He consolidated the Persian Empire into the Macedonian Empire. The hand of God is in the history of man and nations. "...the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men" (Daniel 4:17, 25).—10726 Hwy. 59 W., Burlison, TN 38015

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Dennis Gulledege, Evangelist

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## THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN

Continued from front page

subordinate to the Father, women should not feel offended at being in subjection to the men in the church.

**Observe The Attitude Of Christ.** Romans 15:3 says, "Christ pleased not himself." In John 4:34 Christ said: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." John 5:30 says Christ could do nothing of himself, "Because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." John 8:28-29 has Jesus saying that he can do nothing of himself, but what God had taught him, and "I do always those things that please him."

Therefore, since Christ is subject to God the Father with no resentment, and man is subject to Christ, women should respect without resentment the scripture that places her in subjection to man.

Remember man has a head also, and that is Jesus Christ who is above all. Man is not degraded because he is subject to Christ, and the woman is not inferior because God placed her in subjection to man.

Some have argued that if the apostle Paul had lived today he would have taught differently. However, Paul did not speak of himself, but the Holy Spirit spoke through him (1 Corinthians 2:9-13; 14:37), and these words of God given by the Holy Spirit are for all time and unchangeable.—790 State Street E2, Cookeville, TN 38501

## IS CAPITAL PUNISHMENT SCRIPTURAL?

Continued from page 5

(NKJV) is the more precise reading. The Hebrew word used here proscribes not only premeditated murder, but also manslaughter (Numbers 35:11). If the prohibition extended to capital punishment it would be difficult to understand why there are twenty-two capital crimes listed in the Old Testament. In fact, the very next chapter provided for the death penalty under Mosaic Law (Exodus 21:12).

It is said, "Capital punishment is not a deterrent to murder." The main objective of capital

punishment is not deterrence, but punishment. In the first place, it is not called capital deterrence. It is called capital punishment because the state has the God given right to punish the murderer for his crime. Second, the deterrence argument is a farce in a land where the death penalty is so sparsely used (Ecclesiastes 8:11; Numbers 35:33). If the extreme punishment were consistently and regularly carried out we might see that deterrence is very much a factor!

It is sometimes argued that capital punishment is contrary to God's love. These proponents of their own brand of "love" would have us to "turn the other cheek" even in the most extreme cases of brutality and murder. These people may not have any use for God in any other realm of life, except in this one where they find it convenient to exploit divine love for their own benefit. Human sentimentality does not change God's law in this or any other realm (Romans 13:4). Let it be remembered that God's love does not exclude his justice (Romans 11:22).

Capital punishment will always be a controversial subject. Arguments for and against it will continue to fly to and fro. May we never forget to ask what the Bible says on it and let that be the determining factor in our view of the matter.—10822 Mabelvale West Road, Mabelvale, AR 72103

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Bill Dillon, Evangelist



### **WELL DONE AND INFORMATIVE**

I downloaded some of your articles and bulletin articles today. I found them to be well done and informative. Could you put me on your mailing list for the *Gospel Gleaner*. I received a copy from the lobby of the Memphis School of Preaching and found your Web Site. Michael Golwitzer, Burton, MI.

### **INTRODUCED TO GG BY A FRIEND**

I was recently introduced to *Gospel Gleaner* by John T. Polk II, a friend of long standing. Although I knew of your paper, I had never read an issue. Please add my name to your mailing list and that of a friend and helper. Enclosed is a check to help defray expenses. Carroll P. Bennett, Camden, AR.

### **DOWN TO EARTH**

The *Gospel Gleaner* is my very favorite Gospel Paper. Your writings are so down to earth and easy to understand. I'm so thankful for men of your caliber. Would you please send a copy to my son and his wife. Billie Wood, Midland, TX.

### **GG LOVED BY GHANA BRETHREN**

How are you doing? I hope this letter finds all of you doing fine by the grace of God. I received the bulk shipment of *Gospel Gleaner* you mailed to me last year. I received it early this year, thank you very much. I want you to know that brethren in Ghana love this publication so much. Those who have received copies before always ask of the next issue. I therefore wish you will continue to send as

much as you can, when it is possible because the demand is greater than we can supply. Thank you and may God continue to bless you in this wonderful work. Paul Adon, Ghana West Africa.

### **APPRECIATES GG**

I do so enjoy reading the *Gospel Gleaner*. I appreciate your writings as well as the staff. I am going to the preacher training school at the Ensley congregation in Pensacola, Florida very soon. The Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies, directed by brother Ken Burleson. I am not there yet, but I have put my new address on this letterhead. If you don't mind, would you change the mailing address on the 14th of August? I'd like to continue to learn from your writings. I am determined to remain in the straight and narrow way of the Lord, but I could sure use some extra prayers from the brethren. Also, if you would, pray God that we might have more men willing to put it all on the line for the truth and begin preaching. Many of the great teachers, with great intelligence and great ability, are getting on in age and slowly passing away from this world and few are filling the gaps. If we, (the up-coming generation) don't step up to the plate, the true church of Christ will be swallowed up in liberalistic denominationalism. Please encourage the younger to develop skills to defend against this. Thank you for your efforts! Scott A Kluft, Dresden, TN.

### **INFORMATIVE AND BIBLICAL**

It has been my pleasure, for the past three years, to have received the *Gospel Gleaner*. It has been very informative and Biblical. However, because of a recent move, I have been unable to receive your latest issue. I tried to get my mailing address changed this past April via: email, however, that seemed to have failed. Could you please add my name to your updated address list? Thank you for your help in this matter! Allen Weakland, Farmington, MO.

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# GOSPEL GLEANER

Volume 16

No. 4

## WHY WORSHIP REGULARLY AND FAITHFULLY?

Tom Holland

According to a recent Gallup poll thirty-eight percent of Americans attend a place of worship. "This is the lowest figure in the last 50 years." *Gospel Advocate*, Feb. 1998, P. 9).

Have sixty-two percent of Americans accepted the doctrine that supposedly puts the "emphasis on Christ instead of the church?" Have people begun to really believe the old denominational dogma that separates salvation and the church? "One supposedly gets saved and then joins the church; he/she may even join the church of his/her choice." Has the church become as unimportant to people as it is non-essential to their salvation?

People who know the truth understand that in the process of salvation the Lord adds people to His church (Acts 2:47). People are reconciled to God "in one body" (Ephesians 2:16). The body is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). The means of reconciliation is the cross of Christ (Ephesians 2:16). If the cross of Christ is necessary then the church of Christ is essential. The cross of Christ gives significance to the church of Christ. In fact, Jesus died for the church (Ephesians 5:25). It is true that Jesus "tasted death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). However, only those in His church have taken advantage of the blessings of the

Savior's death.

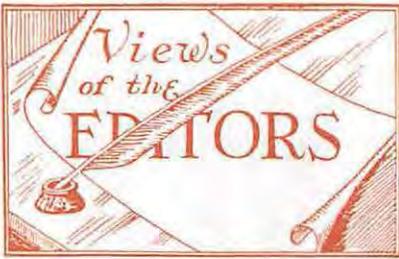
The Lord's church may be as unimportant to a skeptical world as it is non-essential to a denominational world, but faithful members of the church of Christ know the importance of the church to Christ and the value of the church to people so they assemble regularly and faithfully for worship in the church. Why?

When Jesus instituted a memorial to Himself, the Lord's Supper, then they assembled, "came together" (1 Corinthians 11:33). Furthermore, the Lord admonished His people not to forsake the assembly (Hebrews 10:25). They assembled to eat the Lord's Supper on the "first day of the week" (Acts 20:7).

Because Christians have been saved from sin and reconciled to God by the blood of His Son, they gladly assemble to keep a memorial to God's Son. A compelling gratitude for the sacrifice of the Son of God brings them to His table with faithful regularity.

God wants His children to assemble to "provoke one another to love and good works" (Hebrews 10:24). Since the saved comprise the "body of Christ" (Colossians 1:12-18), it is important for the members of that body to edify or

(Continued on page 23)



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The *GOSPEL GLEANER* is dedicated to restoring New Testament Christianity. We welcome your comments and questions regarding any article found herein.

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## Editorial

# WHAT THE BIBLE DOES

Bill Dillon

The brilliant Yale professor, William Lyon Phelps, once said, "If I had to make the choice, I'd rather my son have a knowledge of the Bible without a college education, than a college education without a knowledge of the Bible." During World War II an American soldier was given a New Testament as he prepared to travel overseas. The youthful soldier accepted the gift with the remark, "Thanks, I may be short of cigarette papers over there." After a few weeks had passed he sent home a check to help in the printing and distribution of Bibles. What happened to change his attitude about the Bible? What had he discovered in the New Testament that was so fascinating?



**The Bible Touches Man.** Today, man needs more than fascination; he needs salvation! People read and study the Bible because it does for them and to them what no other literature can. The Word of God is the undergirding of all of life. It reaches the part of man that no surgeon's scalpel can ever touch. Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The Bible reaches to the soul and heart, the very essence of man.

**The Bible Tells Us Of God.** The fact the Bible exists shows that God yearns for man and the fact of man's interest in the Bible shows he yearns for God. The Bible is a "Jesus-book." It tells us with faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, we can live more richly than we have ever lived before (John 10:10; 20:30-31). All sparkling history, sweet poetry and sublime prophecy of the Bible provides a magnificent road leading up to the unfolding of the life of Christ and the establishment of His Kingdom. Those who recognize this truth and live accordingly will find life sweeter and more purposeful.

**The Bible Treats Man's Ills.** The Bible, as God has given it, is perfectly suited to man, as God has made him. The Bible is not to be relegated to the category of religious relics. Man doesn't live by relics; he lives by "instruction of righteousness." Jesus said that man lives "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). The Holy Bible is a living book; as up to date as tomorrow's newspaper.

The threads of suffering and tragedy are woven through the fabric of human experiences. In a world of trials and tribulations and problems

and perplexities the never-failing scriptures speak to the human heart and say, "Peace, be still." To the troubled, the Lord says, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). To the fearful the Book says, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us who can be against us?...Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:31, 37). To all, the Book says, "God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Part of the tremendous appeal of the Bible is that it has made known to multiplied millions the satisfying answers to the difficult questions with which man has to grapple. This does not mean the Bible supplies all the answers to all the difficult questions but it does shed sufficient light on our darkened way. Clarence Macartney has explained it this way:

*"If you have ever walked at night with a lantern in your hand you know how a lantern is carried—not high up at one's waist or shoulder, but down toward one's feet, near the path. The lantern does not light up the whole territory around you, so it is with the Bible."*

*"The light of the Bible does not illuminate every subject or answer every question of man's mind. But on the great theme, on the important matter, how to live, and how to meet temptation and sin, and how to gain Eternal Life, it does give us sufficient light. The Bible like a lantern gives you light of the next step, the light of the next, and then for the next, until traveling days are over."*

If a man cherishes the privilege of a happy journey through life, he will give heed to the Word of God. Woodrow Wilson was entirely correct when he said, "A man has deprived himself of the best there is in the world who has deprived himself of this, a knowledge of the Bible."—Taken from the book, *Gospel Truths Briefly Told*, by Bill Dillon, 704 Arkansas Avenue, Mountain Home, AR 72653

## ANY ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT?

The following questions are ones that we would do well to ask (and answer) ourselves from time to time...

1. Am I so **CRITICAL** that I see only a person's failure and not his/her good points?
2. Am I so **CHILDISH** that people must handle me gently lest I be offended?
3. Am I **MATURE ENOUGH** to handle hurts and disappointments without feeling mistreated and making everyone else miserable?
4. Do I **HURT** people while boasting "I believe in saying what I think?"
5. Can I be completely **TRUSTED** with confidential information?
6. Am I guilty of making **SARCASTIC REMARKS** about the success of others?
7. Am I big enough to admit when I am wrong, or do I seek to excuse myself by **BLAMING OTHERS?**
8. Do I excuse my sins while self-righteously **CONDEMNING** others?
9. Are others **UPLIFTED AND ENCOURAGED** through their association with me?
10. Do I follow after peace, or do my words and actions **PROMOTE STRIFE?**

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Bill Dillon, Evangelist

# SOMETIMES, WE JUST DON'T KNOW

Dennis Gullledge



Visiting the sick is a vital part of the ministry of Christ. Faithful gospel preachers engage in visiting the sick out of care and compassion, not obligation. If someone says that the preacher visits because, "That's part of his job," then he does not know the

heart of the true evangelist. Preachers, who truly care, want to know about those in the congregation who are sick. They certainly want to visit them, as well. We want to take to heart the Lord's directive, "I was sick, and ye visited me" (Matthew 25:36).

Sometimes it is the case that a brother or sister enters and leaves the hospital before the preacher ever learns about that person's condition. When that happens, the caring evangelist feels bad, because it appears to the afflicted brother or sister that he does not care. Perhaps the church member, then, spreads the word, "Well, the preacher didn't bother to come and see me." The complaint gets around to just about everybody except the preacher. Yet, if the preacher had known of the person's situation he certainly would have been there. Some brethren apparently think that preachers are omniscient and automatically know of their situation without a word being said to them about it.

James 5:14 reads, "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." The meaning of that controversial verse is not my concern here. I find delight, however, in the interesting comments of

Albert Barnes on this verse. He says, in part:

It may be added, as worthy of note, that the apostle says they should *call* for the elders of the church; that is, they should *send* for them. They should not *wait* for them to hear of their sickness, as they might happen to, but they should cause them to be informed of it, and give them an opportunity of visiting them and praying with them. Nothing is more common than for persons—even members of the church—to be sick a long time, and to *presume* that their pastor must know all about it; and then they wonder that he does not come to see them, and think hard of him because he does not. A pastor cannot be supposed to know everything; nor can it be presumed that he knows when persons are sick, any more than he can know anything else, unless he is apprized of it; and many hard thoughts, and many suspicions of neglect would be avoided, if, when persons are sick, they would in some way inform their pastor of it. It should always be presumed of a minister of the gospel that he is ready to visit the sick. But how can he go unless he is in some way apprized of the illness of those who need his counsel and his prayers? The sick *send* for their family physician; why should they *presume* that their pastor will know of their illness any more than that their physician will?

I say, amen to these remarks by Mr. Barnes! Understanding that his use of the word *pastor*, as applied to the preacher is both ashdodic and unscriptural (cf. Ephesians 4:11), his point is nevertheless well taken. The elders want to be

called if there is someone in the hospital, or sick at home. So does the preacher. As servants of God we all want to visit and pray for those who are sick. It could be that in the entire debate of the meaning of James 5:14 we may have missed this obvious directive. Read it again!

## **ADDENDUM: A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO HELP**

Dennis Gulledge

The above article was submitted as my associate editorial in the August-September 2000 issue of *First Century Christian*. It illustrates a frustrating problem to me as a gospel preacher, although I can happily say that it is not a frequent problem. I can easily understand a person's preference for privacy in some situations and the desire that certain ailments not be broadcast, if such is their wish. If someone requests, "No Visitors Please," I respect that as well. My article, however, touches on the matter of brethren who bear their physical infirmities in secret and then scorn the preacher in their own private circles for his supposed ineptitude in failing to visit the afflicted saint. Such seems to me both unfair and unjust.

Not long after my article appeared in *First Century Christian* I received a letter from brother J. A. Floyd, Jr., of Bowling Green, Kentucky. Brother Floyd wrote, in part, "Saw your article in a recent issue of *First Century Christian*. For the last 16 years I have been involved in a hospital ministry. One of the main things I do is to contact elders and church offices when members are hospitalized." I am impressed. Here is a brother who is doing something to help eliminate for many others the very problem I discussed in my article. This is undoubtedly a vital work in his area as it would be in any area where it is or might be done.

The Woodburn church of Christ of Bowling Green oversees brother Floyd's work in visitation ministry. A dozen other congregations support him as they benefit from his work as well. Brother Floyd prepares a quarterly report of his work, including visits in hospitals, nursing homes,

funeral homes and private homes. He also includes reports of funerals attended, funerals conducted, phone calls, cards mailed, business trips and gospel handouts. By "gospel handouts" he means bulletins, tracts and Bible markers. Brother Floyd views his purpose as helping elders of the churches that support him to fulfill their responsibility as shepherds. I know, in my case, anybody who informs me of one of our members who is in the hospital, if I might not otherwise know of it, helps me greatly! I am happy to offer my amen to brother Floyd's efforts, and my prayers for the success of his labors.—10822 Mabelvale West Road, Mabelvale, AR 72103. Email: [dkg621@swbell.net](mailto:dkg621@swbell.net)

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

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**Dennis Gulledge, Evangelist**

## **THANK YOU CONTRIBUTORS!**

We are blessed by kind and generous readers who send us money in support of *Gospel Gleaner*. We do not solicit your contributions, but you come through anyway in support of our efforts to teach the gospel as effectively as we can to as many as we can. We thank you!—Dennis Gulledge, co-editor.

# THE FIVE ANCIENT EMPIRES, OF THE WORLD: GREECE

Max R. Miller



The Bible is the first reference to the people of Greece. Moses, the most ancient and accurate recorder of ancient people and events (author of the first five books of the Bible) records that there was one Jepheth, a son of Noah, who had a son named Javan. The *Table of*

*Nations* shows the descendants of Javan as settling in “the isles of the Gentiles” (Genesis 10:1-5). Javan is the Hebrew word for Greece, a form that is related to another name for the Greeks, the Ionians. In the earlier times there was no universal name that identified the people or the land of Greece. The earliest histories of Greece, as it is with other ancient civilizations, was unwritten, passed down in the form of “singing stories,” such as those attributed to Homer. It is difficult, and in many instances impossible, to distinguish actual historical events from the stories of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* and other “tales” of ancient times. Its history is entwined in the stories, myths, fables and religious superstition.

The Greeks themselves have completely forgotten their distant past. Moses makes first mention of “the isles of the Gentiles,” but otherwise, its history may be traced back for more than three thousand years. Its history is one of struggle, explorations and trade among the nations. As the histories of all nations, there were rising periods of glory, peace and prosperity, then times of war, hardship, hunger and defeat. They have always been a courageous and hardy people in a harsh land of mountains with limited fertile valleys. They are survivors. Even today, Greece is one of the oldest nations and people in the world.

It is not in the scope of this short paper to

mark the earlier periods of Grecian history. Our particular interest in Greece is as it may in some way relate to Bible history and God’s purpose in those people. Of the five ancient nations of which we write, the histories of the Greek nation occurred in a time when there was no oral or writing prophet in Israel. The age of Biblical inspiration closed before the rise of Greece as the nation of our interest came to the fore as a great power. The Old Testament closes with the Persian period, about 450 B.C. It opened again in New Testament times with the Roman Empire holding sway over the world. It was in this period of Biblical silence, the Greece of our interest occurred. We here consider the period of Grecian history in this time of Bible silence. Old Testament prophets did speak during its existence. The prophecies of Daniel precisely foresee future historical events that involve the children of Israel and the nation of Greece and its illustrious king, Alexander the Great.

The ascendancy and conquest of Greece, in this period, originated with one, Philip II, 382-336 B.C., King of Macedon. He proved himself to be a military genius. Philip developed the strongest army in the world. Relying only on soldiers recruited on a voluntary system, he constructed a force of 40,000 men who were sternly disciplined, trained to march long distances in full equipment, carrying their baggage and food sufficient for three days. He carried out aggressive campaigns in Greece, defeated the Illyrians (358), captured Olynthus (348), and annexed much of Thrace (342-340). Philip, with loyal Macedonians, crushed the combined Athenian and Theban army at Chaeronea (338). With this victory he had completed the conquest of all Greece by overrunning the Peloponnesus. Philip treated his conquered foes with generosity and so gained their

co-operation, a more fruitful method than the destruction of their cities. In 337 Philip was chosen as commander of the Greek forces against the formidable and world dominating kingdom of Persia.

Persia had rendered a humiliating defeat to the Macedonian and the Greek nations and forced a humiliating peace upon them (386 B.C.). She acquired control over the Greek cities on the Asiatic coast and gained the right to interfere in the affairs of the Greek communities. Persia was master of the world and a constant threat to Philip. She bribed and otherwise persuaded some of the larger Greek City-States to take up arms on the side of the Persian Empire and against Philip. In 338 B.C. the Macedonians declared war on Persia. With this, Philip began at once to prepare for the invasion of Persia. Fatefully, before he can mobilize his troops and march to war, he was assassinated by Pausanias, a young Macedonian seeking fame and immortality (336). Philip's ambition for conquest of the Persians was now stilled by the cold hand of death.

Alexander, son of Philip, with skillful strokes cleared the scene of aspirants for the throne and established himself as king of Macedonia (336 B.C.). He was then twenty years of age. Alexander by natural talents and burning zeal to achieve fame as a warrior as a descendant of Hercules, set out to claim his fame and fortune. He was encouraged to this end from an early age and was ready to assume command of the small empire of Macedonia.

Alexander received an enviable education. While a youth, Philip was so impressed by his ability he determined his son would have the best education available. He selected Aristotle, a Greek philosopher, for his tutor. From age thirteen to seventeen (342-335 B.C.) Alexander was under the tutelage of Aristotle. He advised Alexander concerning the duties of kings, and encouraged him to follow his father's military projects in Asia. Alexander was imbued with Greek feelings, ideas of conquest, discipline and qualities of authority learned from his father.

Early in life, Alexander showed indication that in time he would be worthy of the appellation,

Alexander the Great. At sixteen he ruled Thrace and Macedonia in his father's absence. At eighteen he led his army victoriously against Athenians and Thebans at Chaeronea. No invasion of Persia and regions beyond could be attempted until the tribes on the frontiers of Macedonia were repulsed and subdued. Tribes and city states north and south came under his control. Clans, tribes and kings across the Danube, Thessaly, Corinth, Thebes, the Illyrians, from north to south, came under the powers of Alexander.

In 334 B.C. Alexander set out to invade Persia. During the next ten years, his conquests extended Greek influence as well as the Greek civilization and language throughout a Macedonian empire that ranged as far east as northern India and to the Caspian Sea, to the shores of the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf, and the pyramids of Egypt, the land of the Nile. He established many cities in his name, *Alexandrias*. In conquering nations, rather than ruling with the iron hand of a later Rome, fighting rebellion and skirmishes throughout the empire, he dispensed mercy and goodness to vanquished foes, allowing them to continue the administration of their countries, paying tribute to him and Greece. Many of his conquered foes found honor and prestige in Alexander's fighting forces. This was as he had learned from his father Philip. By the time of his death in 323 B.C., the culture of Greece had spread through most of the ancient world.

In so brief a paper, a summary of his expeditions is in order: He, with Macedonian and Greek troops, striking with terror, advancing in unique phalanx formation, conquered Thrace and Illyrian territories, destroyed Thebes, and gained ascendancy over all Greece (335). He began his expedition to attack Persia (334); won battles of Granicus (334) and Issus (333) against Darius III, defeating the Persians. All Phoenicia except Tyre, submitted after Issus, and by a difficult siege of seven months, Tyre was overrun. On to Gaza, he occupied Egypt, and founded the great city of Alexandria (332). From Egypt early in 331 B.C., Alexander invaded the Persian Empire for the second time. Darius assembled an army of about

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# SPRINKLING, POURING, OR IMMERSION, WHICH?

Ivie Powell



If three preachers were to stand before an audience and preacher A were to say, "Baptism is by immersion only," and preacher B said, "Baptism is by sprinkling or pouring only," and preacher C replied, "It doesn't matter whether baptism is by sprinkling, pouring or immersion," you would have to determine which of the three were preaching the truth. Since the Bible teaches only one thing on any one doctrinal subject, all three could not be right. Therefore, two of the three would be presenting false views of the truth!

One of the best methods of clearing up the question, "Is baptism sprinkling, pouring or immersion?" is to define the word. The word baptism is from the Greek word *baptidzo*.

In Liddell-Scott's *A Greek-English Lexicon* (pp. 305-306) the references to this word in classical Greek are listed. This standard dictionary for classical Greek says the word is used in reference to a person being drowned, of a ship sinking, of soaking something in wine, of a person getting over his head and ears in debt, and of a young man getting into deep water (in an argument).

Joseph Henry Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (p. 94) defines the word as follows: "to dip repeatedly, to immerse, submerge, to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water."

W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich's *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (p. 131) has the basic meaning of the word simply as "dip, immerse."

The Greek word translated "sprinkle" in

the New Testament is *rantizo*, the word for "pouring" is *cheo*. At every place where the word "baptism" appears it is *baptidzo*, never *rantizo* or *cheo*.

Perhaps you are thinking, "If baptism is a burial in water, where and when did sprinkling or pouring originate? In 1311, the Council at Ravenna officially adopted sprinkling as baptism. One thing is for sure, and that is, it did not come from God.

Beloved, innovations of man cannot possibly fulfill God's plan of salvation! According to the Bible baptism requires:

- MUCH water (John 3:23).
- A GOING TO the water (Acts 8:36).
- A COMING UP OUT of the water (Matthew 3:16).
- Baptism is a BURIAL in water (Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12).
- Baptism is to be administered in the NAME of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-20).
- Baptism is FOR the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
- Baptism puts one into the body of Christ (Galatians 3:27).
- Baptism STANDS BETWEEN the alien sinner and salvation (Acts 22:16).

Have you been scripturally baptized? If not, then do as they were told to do on the day of Pentecost, "...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall received the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Having done that the Bible says, "...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). As Ananias told Saul of Tarsus, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" Acts 22:16).—111 S. Curry St. West Plains, MO 65775

# BALANCING DOCTRINE AND DISCERNMENT

Neal Pollard

First, the doctrine of Christ is indispensable! Timothy was told, “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (1 Timothy 4:16). On the “soul-saving” front, many have attempted to water down the message. Sadly, some members of the church have sought to defuse a gospel sermon or Bible class, taught kindly but firmly, by apologizing to their non-Christian visitors for the distinctive message of the New Testament. If one is baptized who must be won through such conniving, coddling, or coercion, he or she will be converted to the wrong person or thing.

Having said that, let it also be observed that doctrine must be balanced with an intelligent—even sensitive—approach to soul winning. By sensitive is meant, not the paranoid fear of offending which has yielded the political correctness currently distorting the American mind, but a clear awareness of those whom we are trying to win to Christ. By intelligent is meant particularly using the common sense with which God equipped us to use wisdom in winning souls (Proverbs 11:30)

Use Discernment To Get Them “In The Door.” That necessitates being approachable, living in such an exemplary way that people recognize a distinctiveness about you, being friendly, and being bold enough to offer an invitation. If you try to mow them over with doctrine before you lay a foundation of trust and genuine concern, they will “turn you off” on the subject. You must also “use hospitality” (1 Peter 4:9). Put an “open door” upon the hinges of your home—a warm and welcoming place that provides you with an avenue to attract them to the idea of Christian entertainment (watch what you call “fun,” Psalm 101:3), Christian family (watch how you interact, Proverbs 17:1), and Christian living

(watch how you “walk,” Colossians 4:5). “Clean fun,” genuine concern, and agape love demonstrated before them will get them in the door.

Use Discernment While They Are “Inside.” When people visit the assemblies, see them as magnets. Build a desire to want to make them feel “at home.” This may not initially be comfortable for you. But, let no one blame God for not making contact with visitors. Too many say, “It is not in my personality to ‘go up’ to others.” If that is so, modify your personality. I’ve seen shy, quiet people whose love of souls moved them out of their “comfort zone.” Also, if you are in a teaching or preaching position, speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). It is never necessary to be insulting or belligerent in plainly, firmly presenting the gospel message. Many circumstances where we have been eager to call a person or religious group by name would have been more effective, without compromising, by attacking the person’s positions or the group’s doctrine (though, certainly, at times “name calling” is necessary). Watch how you interact with others—the church is no china shop and we have too many bull(ie)s!! An obnoxious comment or rudeness, to whomever it is directed, may forever shut the door! Use more self-control in your dealings with everyone (2 Timothy 3:3, NASB).

Use Discernment After They Have Become Part Of The “Household.” Remember, babies cannot eat meat. There needs to be Bible Classes appropriate for growing spiritual babes (1 Peter 2:2). Also, exercise patience liberally (1 Thessalonians 5:14). There should be considerably greater intolerance for the social drinking, dancing, cursing, doctrinally distorted views, and similar sins of those who have been members of

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# DEATH HURTS, BUT JESUS HELPS

## READ JOHN 2

Allen Webster



Death hurts. We see this in Martha's words and Mary's tears. When the Visitor welcome above all others finally arrived at Martha's house, He did not find a party. He found tear-blurred eyes, faces red and swollen from crying, and

emotions on edge. Death had charged a high toll and left poverty in its wake.

### ***Death hurts because of the initial shock.***

Mary and Martha's grief was doubtless intensified by the fact that Lazarus was cut off in the midst of his life. We never know when death will come.

*The clock of life is wound but once, and no man has the power, To tell just when the hands will stop, at late or early hour. Now is the only time you own, live, love, toil with a will Place no faith in tomorrow, for the hands may then be still.*

Often death comes unexpectedly—as in an accident or an emergency surgery that failed. Even if it comes expected—after several hard months dealing with a terminal illness, it still leaves a shock in its wake. If you've been to a funeral, then you know that death still hurts. If you've lost a parent, child, spouse, grandparent, friend or someone else dear to you, then you know about the pain you feel deep down. You had time to tally the loss that continues long after everyone had gone home.

### ***Death hurts because it leaves us lonely***

These sisters missed their brother. When death leaves an empty chair at the table, an empty bedroom in the house, an empty pew at church services, it can be very lonely for awhile—even when others we love are still around. It can make us feel like the little boy pictured in a *Saturday Evening Post* cartoon. It showed him talking on a phone saying, "Mom is in the hospital, the twins and Roxie and Billie and Sally and the dog and me and Dad are all home alone." Mary and Martha

still had each other, and their friends, but they felt "all alone" without Lazarus. Though we enter and leave the world by ourselves, we are sometimes more alone while living than at any other time. David said, "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me; refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul" (Psalm 142:4; cf., 31:11; 69:20; 88:8, 18).

Does Jesus know about this? Does He care? O yes He cares! (Read 1 Peter 5:7). Death hurts, but Jesus helps. How?

***Jesus helps us grow through the adversity itself.*** Biologists recognize "the adversity principle" at work among plants and animals. Strangely, habitual well being is not advantageous to healthy life. Any species—including people—that does without challenge soon becomes weak. One survey found that 87% said "a painful event (death, illness, breakup, divorce) caused them to find more positive meaning in life." Jesus said, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Ironically, adversity can be therapeutic and trials can be occasions of joy (James 1:2). Adversity grants patience. James wrote: "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (1:3-4). Adversity purges. Peter said, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7). As gold ore is put into a fire of flame to remove dross, so we must be put into a fire of suffering to remove impurities from our characters that we might be better people. A poet said:

*I walked a mile with pleasure, she chatted all the way  
Yet she left me none the wiser for all she had to say;*

*I walked a mile with sorrow, and ne'er a word said she,  
But O the things I learned when sorrow walked with me.*

**Adversity sobers.** Paul was concerned that the young women learn to be “sober,” young men “sober-minded” and old men “grave” (Titus 2:2, 4, 6). One way God helps us gain this desired trait is adversity. Solomon said, “It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart” (Ecclesiastes 7:2). It is not more pleasant to go to a funeral home than a party, but it teaches more valuable lessons. It reminds us that (1) We will not live forever (Ecclesiastes 12:7; James 4:14) and (2) this lifetime is a training ground for the next (2 Corinthians 5:10). We must prepare (John 3:3-5; Acts 2:38) and live faithfully (1 Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10).

**Jesus helps people through His people** (2 Corinthians 1:2-4). The mourners who came to comfort Mary and Martha illustrate this point. This was a common Old Testament practice (Genesis 37:35; 2 Samuel 10:2; 1 Chronicles 7:21-22; Job 2:11; 42:11). The Jewish mourning period generally lasted thirty days, and their custom was to weep at the tomb as often as possible during the burial week to “get it out of their system.” The weeping was often an almost hysterical wailing and shrieking, for they thought that the more unrestrained the weeping, the more honor it paid the dead. Christians today are to help those who lose loved ones as long as it takes and are to “...weep with them that weep” (Romans 12:15; Job 30:25; 1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11). Those who have known affliction, doubt, sickness, and temptation are better equipped to console others in pain (1 Peter 3:8). Tender-hearted Christians (Ephesians 4:32), have often been known to cry with their friends in funeral homes and hospitals.

**Jesus helps by assuring us that there is a better life beyond.** Death is a termination of earthly life, but not a termination of life. We are not really on our way to death, but on our way to life. Edward the Confessor’s last words were: “Weep not, I shall not die; and as I leave the land of the dying I trust to see the blessings of the Lord in the land of the living.” The housing of the soul

is torn away, the tabernacle to be taken down (2 Corinthians 5:1), but it’s not destruction. We should not speak of a Christian in the past tense—as if he does not exist any more. “God is not the God of dead beings but of living beings, for all live unto him.” Imagine an artist carving a statue of expensive marble with gold inlay. He purchases expensive tools and spends years bringing the work to completion. Will he then ask his helper to take a hammer and break it in pieces? Imagine a business owner thoroughly and patiently training a worker. He treats the worker as a son and shows him how to run every part of the business. When he has him trained and ready to take over the responsibilities, will he fire him? Yet that is what happens if God makes us His children, trains our souls, and then refuses to grant us immortality. After all, this life is “but a vapor” (James 4:14) and a thousand years are but one day (2 Peter 3:8).

On the great painter Albrecht Durer’s tombstone in his native city, Nuremberg, they put the word *Emigravit*, which means, “He has emigrated.” That’s death—an immigration path to heaven’s fair city.—P.O. Box 520, Jacksonville, AL 36265

## BALANCING DOCTRINE AND DISCERNMENT

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the church for a long period of time than for those who are “young in the faith.”

The saints are summoned by the Savior to be soul-centered (Matthew 28:18-20). Understand that the lost are just that—lacking direction as they walk around in darkness (1 Peter 2:9). After Paul asked for prayers so that he would know the way he ought to speak to the lost, he charged Christians, like you, to “conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person” (Colossians 4:4-6). Let not one iota of doctrine suffer in that, but use common sense in imparting it!—6856 Cold Harbor Road, Mechanicsville, VA 23111

## LET US BE CHRISTIANS, NOT ISHMAELITES

John T. Polk, II



*Why does the Church of Christ claim to follow only the Bible?*

Because to do otherwise shows a lack of faith in God's Word.

The promise God made to Abram (Genesis 12:1-3) is fulfilled by the rest of the Bible! The "great nation" was Israel who was called out of Egypt by God through Moses (Exodus 1-15); the "land" was Canaan/Palestine which they were given (Joshua 21:43-45), removed from but returned to that land seventy years later (Jeremiah 25:1-14; 2 Chronicles 36:15-23; Ezra 1:1-2:1; Nehemiah 7:4-8:18); the "in you" referred only to Jesus Christ who is the blessing to all families (Galatians 3:16). Thus all today who are saved by Christ Jesus become "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:26-29). If, by Moses' Law, the Israelites were God's answer to the promise He made to Abraham, then "the promise is made of no effect" (Romans 4:14). No Israelite (Jew) living today has any promise from God upon which to base his/her occupation of Palestine, and all who claim otherwise cancel out all of Jesus' birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension. If that is not "antichrist" doctrine (1 John 2:22; 4:1-3), what is? Little wonder, then, that Abraham is called "the friend of God" (James 2:23), "believing Abraham" (Galatians 3:9), and the "father of all those who believe" (Romans 4:11). As Abram and

Sarai aged, Sarai's uncertainty as to how they would have a child of promise grew, so Sarai offered her handmaid, Hagar, as a possibility. That son of Hagar and Abram, Ishmael, was a child of flesh, not promise (Genesis 16:1-16; 17:18-21; 21:9-21; Galatians 4:21-31). After Ishmael was born, God reminded Abraham it would be through Sarah his lineage would continue (Genesis 18:9-11; 21:1-7). The religion of Mohammed (Islam) claims Abraham is its father through Ishmael. Ishmaelite thus becomes a metaphor for all efforts to fulfill God's will some other way than that revealed by God.

**Seed Or Scheme?** Jesus taught and explained in Mark 4:1-20 that His doctrine ("word," verse 14) has in it all the power necessary to make the ground ("hearts," verse 15) produce ("bear fruit," verse 20). He resolutely declared the success of the seed was determined by the condition of the heart at the time it was sown. This means that all other attempts to make the word successful or force conversion are acts of unbelief and distrust in this teaching of our Lord! The past is littered with "build churches fast" gimmicks ranging from buses to "boosters," from gigantic excitement (falsely attributed to the Holy Spirit) to gargantuan edifices (falsely called "sanctuaries"), from gurus to gymnastics, from hiring new ministers to firing the old ministers, and from sales to subterfuge, but they all went for naught. The "gains" become "losses" with the first "tribulation or persecution" (verse 17), or else when Christians are thrown to the "lions" of the world only to have them "choke" (verse 19). The "quota" is not set by the Lord for Christians to make hearts produce, but we must have faith in His system of sowing the seed everywhere to everyone and trust God for the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6). So in 1 Corinthians 1:17 Paul taught that Christ did not send him to baptize ("produce") but to preach the gospel ("sow the seed"). Be a Christian, not an Ishmaelite.

**Christ Or Corporation?** The church of Christ is His body (Colossians 1:18-24; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27), with each local gathering directly under Him as its Head. Paul addressed "the church of God which is at Corinth, to those

who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (1 Corinthians 1:2). Plainly in 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, there was not to be any divisions in that local body, whether in doctrine (verse 10), salvation (verse 12), or religious affiliation (verse 13)! All efforts to "sub-divide" local churches of Christ or "unify" them in some corporate structure are acts of unbelief and distrust in the teaching of our Lord! Whether it be forming "sectarian" structures over splinters of local churches, or "Neo-sectarian" structuring of all local churches into a conglomerate, it is Ishmaelite, not Christian. Local churches must not be bound together into a denomination either by hierarchy or by discipline. Every effort to organize sects within a local church or that rejects the organizational structure of local churches is Ishmaelite, not Christian. Some preach salvation without the gospel and then add a denomination within a local church, while others preach salvation by the gospel and then add a denomination by combining the local churches. Some preach all denominations are in Jesus Christ, but others preach Jesus Christ is a denomination, but both are acts of unbelief and distrust in this teaching of our Lord! Those who disrespect Jesus' order of salvation (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38) and those who disrespect Jesus' ordering of the saved (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5) are Ishmaelites and not Christians!

**Brother Or "Big Brother?"** As immorality and sin increase, the public clamor is for someone to "save them" or at least make them safe. Confidence in and love of God drives out fear (Mark 5:36; 1 John 4:17-19). Unfortunately this often means they turn to increasingly bigger, more intrusive government which is only too glad to take more money away from them and increase its size and power over their lives.

True to human behavior, "evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:13). Indeed, "stressful times" occur when people are "lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without

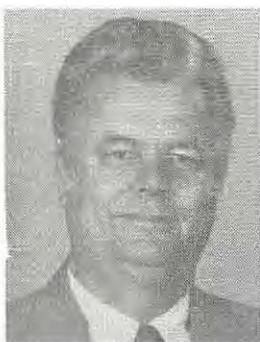
self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power" (2 Timothy 3:1-5), and the only remedy is "from such people turn away," that is, be converted to Christ (Acts 2:38-41; 3:19-21). Since the human heart is the source of sin (Matthew 15:15-20), and the Bible is the sharpest instrument for piercing it (Hebrews 4:12), then the more sin increases, the more people should demand that the Bible be taught! Government has no ability or power from God to change people for good, but only to praise good works and punish those who do evil (Romans 13:1-4). When people demand "separation of church and state" they usually mean "let government rule over my life, not God." Tragically, that is exactly what happens! A public whose lives have become sinful, corrupt, immoral, or indecent votes for politicians who will impose government regulations over their lives, which replace God's rules. Therefore, the bigger government gets, the less influence God has over those people. All "big governments" throughout history have gone down in flames because increasing governments of men is an act of unbelief and distrust in this teaching of our Lord! The political party of unbelief is Ishmaelite, not Christian.

No matter how one arrives at it, if the conclusion is to try another way of life than God's way, it is doomed to failure in this life and in the life to come. Remember Jesus said, "He who does not love Me does not keep My words, and the word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent Me" (John 14:24). "The disciples were first called Christians (not Ishmaelites, jtpII) in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). All descendants of Ishmael (whether Islamic, Sectarian, or Neo-sectarian) must be saved through Jesus Christ, who is of Abraham (Hebrews 2:14-18; Acts 2:38; 4:12; Matthew 1:1-2). Whom will you follow?—125  
The Trace, Dover, TN 37058

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## SOME NEW THINGS MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE (Part 2)

Guy F. Hester



In part one of our series we noticed that the New Covenant and the New Birth are two of the new things that are mentioned in the Bible. In this installment we call attention to a few other new things that the Bible talks about.

**New Creature.** Another new thing we read about in the Bible is the New Creature. In the process of the new birth one becomes a new creature in Christ and old things are passed away (2 Corinthians 5:17). Then in his letter to the Roman brethren, Paul said, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). Then again, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Galatians 6:15). Let us notice, "in" especially from these passages, the in is "In Christ" (not out of Christ) that one is a "new creature." That it is also "In Christ" that one is made free from the "condemnation" of sin. So whatever it is that puts one into Christ is the new birth. Hence we raise the question, "What puts one into Christ according to the Bible?" Can we find this answer in the Bible? Friends, the apostle Paul answers this question for us in such a simple way that it would

take a lot of help to misunderstand it. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3). So the conclusion is that when one is raised from the waters of baptism, he or she is brought forth from the kingdom of darkness or the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of Christ. Or, in other words, born again, and become a new creature. Notice that Paul said that we "rise to walk in newness of life" (verse 4).

**New Clothing.** Then when one enters the New Covenant, by the New Birth and becomes a New Creature, it is necessary to put on New Clothing. So Paul said, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Colossians 3:10). Again, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). Hence, we put on Christ, or are clothed with his righteousness. As new creatures, we have on new clothing.

**New Food.** Not only does the New Creature or New Man require New Clothing, but he also requires New Food. The food that the old man feasted upon will no longer suffice. Peter said, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2). If we feast upon the sincere milk of the word as we should, it will cause such rapid growth that it will not be long until we can handle the meat of the Word. It is sad to say that some never make this desired growth, and some even die spiritually, as a result of a failure upon their part to feed their souls upon the spiritual food as they should. Too many members of the church are like the Hebrew Christians to whom the apostle said, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (Hebrews 5:12). Too many are literally starving their souls for that spiritual food which God has provided for us in his word. Our Lord said in reply to the temptation of the devil, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). So let us as new creatures feast daily upon

the new food, the word of God, lest we die spiritually.

**New Name.** Then another new thing mentioned in the Bible is the New Name. The new creature in Christ has a new name waiting for him just as soon as he is born into the family of God. The new name, of course, is a family name belonging exclusively to the family of God or Christ. We wear the name of the head of the family. The earthly father is the head of the fleshly family, and the children born into his family all wear his name. So it is with the family of Christ. He is the head of the family which is the church (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18). Therefore, since the church is the family, and He is the head of the church, he is the head of the family, and everyone that is born into this family wears his name. Hundreds of years before there was a Christian on earth, God said this through the prophet, "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name" (Isaiah 62:2). Now we notice according to this text that God was going to give this new name when the Gentiles had seen his righteousness. In other words, just as soon as the church had Gentile members or had heard the gospel in which he reveals his righteousness, the new name was to be given. For sometime after the church was established, or had its beginning, only Jews were members of it. Cornelius and his household were the first Gentile converts. We read of their conversion in the tenth chapter of the book of Acts. Then in the very next chapter we have this significant statement, "And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch" (Acts 11:26). Now this was after Cornelius and his friends and kinsmen had heard the gospel or had seen the righteousness of God. Hence the new name was the name Christian. In Acts 26:28, after Paul had preached to king Agrippa, he said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Agrippa knew that if he obeyed the gospel that Paul preached he would be a Christian, and so it is today. When the gospel is preached and obeyed it makes only Christians. It takes something different from the gospel to make one a denominationalist because

the gospel of Christ will make one nothing but a New Testament Christian. *To Be Continued*—1925 County Highway 59, Haleyville, AL 35565

## WANTED

### People:

- ◆ Who are as interested in the church on Sunday and Wednesday nights as they are on Sunday morning.
- ◆ Who are as liberal with their money as with their advice.
- ◆ Who are willing to deny themselves in order to serve God.
- ◆ Who love God more than pleasure (2 Timothy 3:4).
- ◆ Who are not only church members but also church workers.
- ◆ Who are willing to let church work interfere with their work and pleasure.
- ◆ Who are willing to spend at least half as much of their time studying the Bible as they do watching television.
- ◆ Who can be half as enthusiastic about a gospel meeting as about the World Series or the Super Bowl.
- ◆ Who are as anxious to tell other the good news of the gospel as they are to tell them the latest gossip.
- ◆ Who are willing to practice in their lives what they say they believe in their hearts.
- ◆ Who aspire to be leaders in the church purely for the good they can do for others and the greater service they can render to God.
- ◆ Who can object to something without becoming objectionable, and who can disagree without becoming disagreeable.

—Author unknown



# UPON US AND OUR CHILDREN

James D. Bales

The people who cried for the blood of Christ were very short-sighted. They may have been wide-awake business men and far-sighted herdsmen, but they were blind when it came to being able to determine the best in life and also of seeing the results of sin. They cried for the blood of Christ, saying, "Let His blood be on us and on our children." In other words, "This man is nothing so why should we fear and fail to kill Him. There is nothing that He can do to us. It is a matter of little consequence."

A great multitude of people have the same brazen attitude when it comes to the choice between sin and righteousness—between Christ and Barabbas. They seem to say that they are able to bear the consequences of sin. Why should they be afraid of the wages of sin? Why, we and our children can easily bear the consequences. This surely is an attitude born of ignorance and failure to realize that sin really has its wages. We see from this statement that not only the one who sins but also others who are dear to him will have to suffer as a result of his sin.

Does not history bear witness of God's answer to this challenge? Many of those very people, and their children later, died by the sword, fire, famine, and disease. Some were sold into slavery for less than the price of the Christ. Others died upon crosses. Their request was granted—we only have to see the history of those who ill treated and rejected the Christ to know that. And today nations and individuals rise or fall to the degree that they ignore or follow Christ and His teachings.

Did you ever see a drunkard whose children had to go in want as a result? Did you ever see the disgrace that sin brings to a man and his family? Have you ever seen parents who wrecked their bodies and minds in loose living to such an extent that their children suffered? Have you seen the materialistic parents who failed to give their children any idea of the higher things of the spirit and left them only a selfish material conception of life? They overcome it sometimes, but oh! how hard it makes the path for them.

If some of the loose living, careless, materialistic parents of today have no regard for themselves, they should respect their children's welfare. Remember, you can lighten the load for them or you continue in sin and say, "Let us and our children suffer for it"—and they surely will. If you do have that attitude, then don't make the complaint to God that the burden is too much to bear—because you, and others like you, put every ounce of that burden on your own shoulders. Then, too, never complain if your children merely eke out their selfish existence on the level of the beast. Let us realize that when we sin we are asking for a horrible thing to come to pass—suffering for ourselves and for our children. (*20th Century Christian*, October 1939).

## CHARLES DARWIN

### An Illustration

James D. Bales

It is commonly assumed that one may lay aside the spiritual, make his fortune or have his fling, then pick up the spiritual where he left it and live a spiritual life. It is true that many an individual has returned to godliness from ungodliness. It is also true that any individual who determines to do it can do so. But, it is often the case that an individual so kills the spiritual within him that he finds it well-nigh impossible to revive it.

But, says an individual, I do not oppose the spiritual, I am not antagonistic to it; I simply don't have time for it now. That the end of such a road is spiritual death—whether or not every individual

travels the road to its end—may be illustrated by something that happened in the life of Charles Darwin in regard to appreciation of beauty. He said that:

*Up to the age of thirty or beyond it, poetry of many kinds gave me great pleasure; and even as a schoolboy I took intense delight in Shakespeare, especially in the historical plays. I have also said that pictures formerly gave me considerable, and music every great delight. But now for many years I cannot endure to read a line of poetry. I have tried lately to read Shakespeare, and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated me. I have also almost lost my taste for pictures or music...My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts; but why this should have caused the atrophy of that part of the brain alone, on which the higher tastes depend, I cannot conceive...If I had to live my life again, I would have made a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music at least once every week; for perhaps the part of my brain now atrophied would thus have been kept alive through use. The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the motional part of our nature.*

Most members of the church do not rush into apostasy and spiritual suicide. Of those who do depart from the faith very few of them started out with that purpose in mind. They simply neglected the study of the Bible, prayer, gathering around the Lord's table, and personal work in the kingdom. They became so interested in other things that they failed to supply the inward man with spiritual sustenance. Gradually they drift to destruction.

The Bible warns us against such carelessness. Let us follow its admonition.

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto

us by them that heard him" (Hebrews 2:1-3).

Are you indifferent to that which builds the spiritual? Are you attempting to live mentally and spiritually upon a diet of secular reading and meditation? Think well and act wisely or a worse fate than physical death will befall you. (*20th Century Christian*, April 1948).

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** In this edition of *Restoration Reachbacks* we take a look back at some of the early writings of the late brother James D. Bales (1915-1995). Included here are two articles from early editions of *20th Century Christian*. On the web you can access some very interesting information on the life of brother Bales at <http://www.gate.net/~jonbales/Family/EarlyFam1.htm>.—Dennis Gullede

## DEATH BY WHINING

Burt Jones

It is calculated that over one million of the children of Israel died in the wilderness by the judgment of God for their murmuring during that brief forty years.

Whenever you are tempted to tell your troubles to others, remember that half of your listeners are not interested, and the rest are glad that you are finally getting what is coming to you.

I am convinced that "whiners" live shorter lives than those whose primary concern is for others. Whining is an enemy of enthusiasm. All of us know those who, when asked how they feel,—will TELL YOU!! More likely than not, it is a long tale of woe filled with whining. Whining causes the whiner and the "whinee" to be depressed. Constant depression contributes to uncontrollable emotional distress, which results in a condition of chronic dejection.

Lest the reader think this writer to be meddling, consider the record with references to whining. The fifth book of Moses speaks by inspiration unto all Israel; "And ye murmured in your tents, and said, because the Lord hated us, he hath brought us out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us. Whither shall we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, the people is greater

(Continued on page 19)

# WHY THE DEAD SEA IS “DEAD”

Russell M. Kline

According to Acts 20:35, Jesus once said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” It is not known exactly when or where He spoke these words, but there is little reason to doubt that they are His. The wisdom which these words offer to the world is essential to complete understanding of the subject at hand.

According to *Baker's Bible Atlas*, the Dead Sea, which is also known as the “salt sea” (Genesis 14:3), the “sea of the plain” (Deuteronomy 4:49), the “eastern sea” (Joel 2:20), and the “asphaltic lake” (Josephus) is located about sixty miles inside of Palestine from the Mediterranean. It is forty-eight miles long, and ten miles at its widest point. Its surface is 1292 feet below sea level, and it reaches a maximum depth of about 1300 feet. The water in the sea has a twenty-five percent mineral content, making it some of the heaviest and hardest water in the world. Today, minerals like salt, potash, and bromine are mined commercially from its depths.

It is called the “dead” sea, because no fish can live in its depths, and few animals make their homes on its shores. It has often been said that the Dead Sea is “dead,” because it does not *give* what it *receives* (Acts 20:35). It is estimated that six and one-half million tons of water flow into it every day, but not one drop ever flows out. Only the extraordinary rate of evaporation, caused by the harsh climate, keeps it from flooding the land. When Christians do not give what they receive from God, they can become just like the Dead Sea, in a spiritual sense.

## God Gives Us Love, But Do We Give Love?

God loves us much more than we deserve His love (1 John 4:8). He loves us so much that He was willing to sacrifice even that which is most precious to Him for our benefit (John 3:16). He loves us so much that He did this, even when the world hated Him (Romans 5:6-8). He loves us so much that, even in this day and age, He gives

us an abundance of opportunities to repent of our sins, and obey his word, so that we might be saved (2 Peter 3:9). As the old song says, “the love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell...”

God does not want us to be selfish with the love that He gives us, but rather He commands us to share it with the whole world (Matthew 22:37-40). We must demonstrate our love for Him by obeying His commandments (John 14:15). We must demonstrate our love for others by doing good works for them (Galatians 6:10). A real expression of love is manifested in deeds, rather than words (James 2:15-16). Although we may live in a world which values symbolism over substance, God is much more impressed by what we do than what we say (Mark 7:6). How much love have you given to God and to your neighbor today?

## God Gives Us Material Blessings, But Do We Give Of Our Blessings?

We are indebted to God for everything that we possess (James 1:17; Matthew 6:25-34). In fact, it may be argued that God owns everything, and we are merely stewards of His goods (Luke 16:1-10). As we begin to realize that God is the source of all our material blessings, we must learn to respect His power over our lives, understanding that our source may be cut off (Luke 12:15-21).

God does not want us to be selfish with the material blessings He gives us, but rather He commands us to share them (2 Corinthians 9:6-7). We are commanded to give some of the means with which we have been blessed back to God, in the form of contributions to His church (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). The amount of this gift is to be determined by us, but we must give as much as we possibly can (Luke 21:1-4). The money that is taken up in these collections must be used to do the Lord's work (2 Corinthians 9:12). In addition to this, we are obligated to share what we have

with those who are in need (Matthew 25:31-46). How much of your means have you given to God, and to your fellow man, today?

### **God Gives Us Salvation, But Do We Give Salvation?**

Even after we do all that is required of us by the gospel plan of salvation, it is still up to God to save us (Luke 17:9-10; Romans 6:23). It is in this way that we are saved by grace, for God gives us our salvation, even though we could not possibly deserve it (Ephesians 2:8). As long as we cherish and hold fast to that precious gift, the hope of a home in Heaven will always be ours (Revelation 2:10).

God does not want us to be selfish with our salvation, but rather He commands us to share it with everybody (Matthew 28:18-20). We accomplish this mission by “going” everywhere that we can in this world, and by “teaching” everyone who will listen to us about Christ. We cannot sit and wait for sinners to come to us. We must take the initiative. When we teach others, we may do so by the words that we speak (1 Corinthians 1:21), or by the example that we set before them (Matthew 5:16). If we will make an effort to do this noble work, then God will bless our works of evangelism (1 Corinthians 3:6-7). But, it must be affirmed that sharing our salvation is not an optional matter for us! Have you given salvation to someone today?

Christians are supposed to be a people who give of their love (Matthew 22:37-40), of their means (2 Corinthians 9:6-7), and of their salvation (Matthew 28:18-20), among other things. When we fail to give, we become like the Dead Sea, in a spiritual sense (1 Timothy 5:6; Romans 6:23). Don't allow yourself to sink into this sad spiritual condition. Give something to someone today!

#### **DEATH BY WHINING**

Continued from page 17

and taller than we...” (Deuteronomy 1:27-28).

In the New Testament the laborers whined about the wages received by the laborer hired in the eleventh hour. “And when they had received it

[a penny], they murmured against the Goodman of the house, saying, these last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day” (Matthew 20:11-12). And in Bethany, “there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of ointment made?” (Mark 14:4).

Whining is whining whether five thousand years ago or five minutes ago. May I suggest that you enter into your private place and contemplate why God decided to single you out to be the recipient of all the bad fortune, inferior physical appearance, marginal family situation, and gloomy prospects for anything good in the future? The truth is, all of your friends with inferior looks and talent and worse circumstances have learned an extremely important secret. They have discovered that those who whine usually talk about themselves and their problems ninety-five percent of the time. They have discovered that whiners almost never ask about others and how they may help.

When you finish this article, attempt this experiment for the next seven days. Each time you are tempted to do what you normally do and whine, do something for someone else!

Those who have hardships and daily problems, and yet continue to maintain a positive Christian attitude, are edifying to be around. Whining is a luxury for which you pay a large premium. How would you like to be on the receiving end of your murmurings day after day? By transferring your emotional overload to another it then becomes part of the load that they have to carry.

This does not mean that you are to go around with a plastic, sprayed-on smile, not acknowledging reality, but it does convey the idea that with a determined, enthusiastic outlook, you will be the Christian around whom people enjoy being. And, if they enjoy being in your company, you have the chance to study with them, and to comfort hurting brethren, and to accomplish things that you could never do if you sentence yourself to a spiritual death by whining.—P.O. Box 985, Moundsville, WV 26041



# LESSONS FROM THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

(Luke 4:1-14)

M. W. Kiser



The Lord Jesus Christ was both human and divine (Philippians 2:5-9). This enabled Him to work out human redemption (Hebrews 2:10; 4:14-15; 5:8-9). One of the examples that he left us (1 Peter 2:21) is that of overcoming temptation.

What are some of the lessons we learn from the temptation of Jesus?

## I. THERE IS A PERSONAL DEVIL.

- A. He is not some mythical character (Genesis 3:1-5; Job 2:1-2).
- B. Did he come visibly and audibly to Jesus? Or spiritually?
  - 1. It is not a question of whether it happened; but how it happened.
  - 2. "Moment of time" seems to suggest a spiritual vision of things.
  - 3. Satan does not come bodily in red underwear! (Hebrews 4:15).
- C. He is the enemy of all righteousness and all men (1 Peter 5:8).

## II. TEMPTATIONS CAN CLOSELY FOLLOW GREAT SPIRITUAL EVENTS.

- A. Jesus had just been baptized and

anointed. "Then was..."

- B. It was after Pentecost that persecutions came upon the church (Acts 4:1-3).
- C. He wants you before you are rooted and grounded (Luke 8:12; Ephesians 4:14).

## III. THE HOLIEST OF MEN CAN BE TEMPTED.

- A. Jesus was God in the flesh. "If thou be" means since you are!
- B. The case of the young man Joseph (Genesis 39:9).
- C. We should never deny the possibility of it happening (Matthew 6:13).

## IV. THERE ARE THREE AVENUES OF TEMPTATION (see 1 John 2:15-17).

- A. We are always tempted with temporal concerns (Colossians 3:2).
  - 1. These are bodily necessities.
  - 2. The poor are always tempted to distrust God.
- B. We are always tempted with the idea we can't fall (1 Corinthians 10:12).
  - 1. This is an appeal to spiritual pride.
  - 2. The righteous are tempted to presume on God.
- C. We are always tempted with selfish purposes (Matthew 6:33).
  - 1. There is always the love of things earthly and transitory.
  - 2. The rich are tempted to gain more by unlawful means.

## V. THE DEVIL ALWAYS STRIKES AT OUR WEAKEST POINT.

- A. He came after Jesus fasted forty days and was hungry.
- B. He knows where our soft spots (desires) are (James 1:14).
- C. It should be kept in mind that what is an easy access to one person may not be to another for the devil (Hebrews 12:1-2).

- VI. THE DEVIL CAN BE DEFEATED.
- A. How? By the word of God (Luke 4:4).
  - B. Why? Because it is the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17).
  - C. When? It must be hid in the heart (Psalm 119:11; Colossians 3:16; 1 John 4:4).

- II. THE DEVIL WILL KEEP RETURNING.
- A. He came back to Jesus (Luke 4:13).
  - B. He came back to Peter (Luke 22:31; Galatians 2:11).
  - C. He will come again and again to us (Ephesians 6:10-12).

There is a value to temptation (James 1:2-12). We know that man's temptations are tempered to his strength (1 Corinthians 10:13). And I would have every person here to keep in mind that you can come out of Satan's kingdom (Colossians 1:13; Revelation 22:17).—P.O. Box 2597, Sylacauga, AL 35150

## FRIENDLY PERSUASION

If, indeed, all mankind were equally in love with truth, we might have only to propose a change for the better, and all would embrace it. But just the reverse of this is the true history of society. The more clearly and forcibly an unpopular truth is argued, the greater will be the dislike to it by all who are interested in representing it to be error.

Pride, ambition, and selfishness are all powerful allies of error. The pride of the understanding is the most invincible of all sorts of pride, especially when religion is the problem. And as long as there are conflicting creeds, sects, and divisions among religionists, so long will it be our duty to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.

Never was there so much need to study as in the defense of the truth. We must conciliate the passions, while we besiege the understanding. We are not to suppose all our opponents to be knaves and impostors to be disinterested and obstinate. We must remember that in this world of weakness and error, the good and virtuous are often enlisted under the banners of error. There are honest differences of opinion, and men equally sincere on both sides of many questions.

Friendly and persuasive were the words and arguments of the prophets, apostles and our Savior to these who appeared honest in their convictions, but severe and tart were their reproofs to such as appeared obstinate in error. Courtesy and kindness will be our best guides, and a good example will often achieve more than a thousand arguments.—Alexander Campbell (1830)

### CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED DURING THE PAST QUARTER

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| Wilma McAdams<br>Judsonia, AR.....                       | 50.00    |
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250,000 men on the plain of Gaugamela (Arbela). Alexander, with 40,000 infantry and 7,000 cavalry, moved his forces against the Persians. They retreated in great disorder, losing 40,000 to 90,000 men in the battle. The Macedonians lost fewer than 500. He next invaded eastern Persia (330-322) and northern India (326) and defeated Porus on the Hydaspes (326). He reached Punjab, and had set his sights on the Ganges, when his troops mutinied, fearing they would march off the edge of the world. Some of his loyal soldiers had been on the "front lines" for more than ten years. Alexander withdrew to Persia (325-324). Not long afterwards, he died of fever in Babylon. He had reigned twelve and two-thirds years. He left no heir. "The great horn" was broken (Daniel 8:5-8).

Alexander the Great is not considered merely as a military conqueror. He hellenized (to make Greek or Hellenistic in form or culture) the world of his day and for centuries yet to come. Everywhere he went, he founded autonomous Greek cities. Grecian thought became the norm for the philosopher, and the Greek language was the language of the people.

It is impossible to estimate the effect of this spread of Greek on the promulgation of the gospel of Christ. Without the common language of Greek, Christianity could never have spread beyond Judea. The Greek language became a well nigh global language. The *koine* (common) Greek language was almost universally spoken and written in eastern Mediterranean countries in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. It was the language of the New Testament Age, and of the New Testament itself. This, surely, was the Hellenic language's greatest contribution to civilization. It is true that some biblical critics deny Daniel's prophecies foreseeing future events in nations because they were so exact. Nevertheless, they were true. One may note the prophecies of Daniel as they relate to the nation and peoples of Greece. Daniel prophesied of this era. Chapters 11 and 12 comprise the last recorded communication that was made to Daniel. "The

revelation which is made in these two chapters not only embrace a large portion of history of interest to the Jewish people of ancient times, and designed to give instruction as to the important events that should pertain to their nation, but also, in its progress, alludes to important periods in the future as marking decisive eras in the world's history, and contains hints as to what would occur down to the end of all times" (*Barnes Notes on Daniel*).

Within the next twenty years, warring generals of Alexander's army split the vast kingdom into four powers. Antigonos occupied the country from the Mediterranean to Central Asia. Cassander ruled Macedonia. Ptolemy Lagi ruled Egypt and Southern Syria. Lysimachus ruled Thrace. In short time, greed and conquest had eliminated Cassander and Lysimachus. Dynasties of the Seleucids and the Ptolomies arose from the ashes of Alexander's splendid kingdom. The Seleucids was a dynasty of Macedonian kings that reigned in the Middle East from the fourth to the first century B.C. It was established when the empire of Alexander the Great was partitioned among his followers. It originally extended eastward from Asia Minor into what is now Pakistan. The Ptolemaic dynasty was founded by Alexander's general, Ptolemy. He was named governor of Egypt by Alexander. He established himself as an independent ruler in 305 B.C., adopting the name Ptolemy I Soter.—10726 Hwy. 59 W., Burlison, TN 38015

## *What Is Brotherly* **LOVE?**

It's **SILENCE** when your words would hurt,  
 It's **PATIENCE** when your brother is curt,  
 It's **DEAFNESS** when some gossip flows,  
 It's **COMPASSION** for a brother's woes,  
 It's **COURAGE** when misfortune falls,  
 It's **FIRMNESS** when duty calls,  
 It's **WILLINGNESS** to help another,  
 It's **TRUSTING** and especially a brother,  
 It's **RESTITUTION** made when due,  
 It's **FORGIVING** when asked of you.

## WHY WORSHIP REGULARLY & FAITHFULLY

Continued from page 1

build one another into a likeness of their Lord (Ephesians 4:13-16).

Those who embrace the “give me” mentality of the world may have trouble understanding that God’s children come together to help one another worship God “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24), and they assemble to stimulate one another to be more dedicated in the Lord’s work and active in His service.

People who think in terms of coming to a worship service to get an emotional “high” may have difficulty appreciating that God’s true children come together to give: glory to God in songs of praise and prayer, to give honor to Christ in keeping His memorial and to give strength to others by proclaiming in the Lord’s Supper that Jesus shall indeed come again, and through singing and preaching to urge Christians to be active in the Lord’s work (1 Corinthians 15:58). They assemble to give to the Lord (1 Corinthians 16:1-2), and thereby express their gratitude to God (2 Corinthians 9:6-11).

Those who do not deeply love the Lord may find a ball game, a car race, shopping, fishing, or golfing more fulfilling than taking the time and putting forth the effort to assemble with those “of like precious faith” to worship God; but those in whose hearts the love of God dwells find great joy and fulfillment in true worship to God.

Those who really know God as their Father and who really know and love the Lord as their Savior delight in regular and faithful worship. Their attitude is expressed in the beautiful hymn, “Welcome, delightful morn, thou day of sacred rest, I hail thy kind return, Lord make these moments blessed...from the low train of mortal toys, I soar to reach immortal joys.”

The strength of faithfulness and the virtue of regularity come together to give purpose and meaning to worship assemblies for God’s true children.—PO Box 611, Brentwood, TN 37024-0611

## THINGS I WISH I HAD KNOWN BEFORE I BECAME TWENTY-ONE YEARS OF AGE!\*

H. Leo Boles

### INTRODUCTION:

Much trouble and worry come about because we didn’t know—didn’t think. Many know and preach, but don’t practice. The following is the results of a questionnaire from successful men.

### I Wish I Had Known:

1. What I was to make my life work.
2. That my health after thirty years of age depended largely upon what I ate before reaching the age of twenty-one.
3. How to take care of money.
4. The commercial asset of going neatly and sensibly dressed.
5. That habits are hard to change after twenty-one years.
6. A harvest depends upon the seed sown.
7. Things worthwhile require time, patience, and work.
8. That I can’t get something for nothing.
9. That the world will give me what I deserve.
10. That by the sweat of my brow I must earn my bread.
11. That a thorough education brings the best of everything.
12. That honesty is the best policy for right.
13. The value of truth in everything.
14. The folly of not taking the advice of older people.
15. What it really means to parents to rear their son.
16. What hardships and disappointment leaving home against parent’s will brings.
17. More of the Bible.
18. The value of the opportunity of serving my fellow-man.
19. That Jesus is with me always.
20. That God’s relationship to me is as good as that of a shepherd to his sheep.

\*Chapel Talk by H. Leo Boles at D.L.C., Spring, 1928. Taken from, *A Word Fitly Spoken*, by John D. Cox.



### **ENJOYS READING GOOD LITERATURE**

A Christian friend gave me a publication which I found to be good sound Gospel literature. I would like to be added to your subscription list. I have been a Christian since 1961 and have seen a lot of changes, some good, some bad. I enjoy reading good literature. Thanks for adding me to your mailing list. Linda Sydnor, McKenzie, TN.

### **VERY WELL DONE**

Please find enclosed \$10.00 to help with publication costs of the *Gospel Gleaner*. It is very well done but I especially appreciate your stand for the truth. V. Glenn McCoy, Yorba Linda, CA

### **GIVEN A COPY**

Would you please add us to your mailing list. I was given a copy of your excellent paper and enjoyed it very much. Prentiss Johnson, Ridgely, TN.

### **SOUND & BALANCED**

I am a missionary serving in eastern Europe-Romania. Because there are few sound sources for Bible study in the Romanian language, our team is working on tracts to this end. I have been impressed with the sound and balanced approach of the *Gospel Gleaner* and would like to know if I may submit articles for publication and if so, do you have specific article guidelines? We wish you well in your work. We all need encouragement from fellow Christians involved in the eternally important struggle over men's souls. Paul & Rachel & Jewell Marie Holland, Iasi, Romania.

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### **KEEP IT UP**

Please add my name to the mailing list of *Gospel Gleaner*. My father gets your paper and I enjoy reading it but would like to have my own copy. Thank you and keep it up. Johnny Kelton, Morgantown, KY.

### **PROFESSIONALLY WRITTEN**

I would like to receive *Gospel Gleaner*. A friend in Christ let me read a copy of it and I was very impressed with it. The articles were very professionally written. Mark Partlow, Garland TX.

### **LIKES IT VERY MUCH**

We were given a *Gospel Gleaner* and we like it so much that we would like to get one. Please send us one or let us know how to get one. Duvone Dale, Huntsville, AL.

### **APPRECIATES ZEAL & BOLDNESS**

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to you, family and the entire brethren. I must confess that I do appreciate the zeal and boldness in standing for the truth of gospel thus fulfilling the call of 2 Timothy 3:16. I have by chance come across some edition of your publications and I will be greatly honored if I am enlisted to receive copy of *Gospel Gleaner* and other relevant gospel materials that will aid me in preaching the sound doctrine to brethren and prospects. I am presently laboring with a new congregation at Ewah Road, Benin City. My postal address for now is my home congregation in Warri. Martins O. Toritseju, Nigeria.

### **APPRECIATES STAND FOR TRUTH**

Please add my name to your mailing list for the *Gospel Gleaner*. For several years I received the paper and I don't know how I was dropped from your list. I appreciate your stand for the truth and may you ever continue that stand. Frank Paris, Alamo, TN.

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