
GOSPEL GLEANER



Volume 14

No. 1

THE PSYCHIC DELUGE

Jane Maynard



The mind of the ordinary person today is almost overwhelmed by a daily diet of paranormal claims. Media, in all forms, flood us with the claims of the extra-ordinary to such an extent that an almost circus-like atmosphere of the supernatural and the mystical exists. Many times we find little, in comparison, by way of a rational or skeptical rebuttal of the claims being made. Partly because of this, and also because of the subjective nature of the claims, many honest people are left to wrestle with the illusive, so called "evidences" of the unreal and impossible, and to question within themselves whether or not the claims could possibly be true (as Satan would have it).

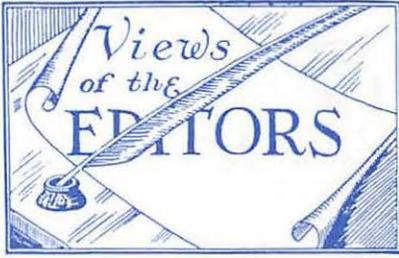
Into this paranormal setting enters the claims of UFO sightings and extra-terrestrial beings (who even go so far as to lift some earth people into another dimension for experimentation). Besides these, are those after death experiences so vividly described, and those claiming the power to communicate with the dead, bringing back messages of comfort and peace to the living. Out of this arena emerges one

particular group, steadily growing in popularity. They are the *psychics*.

The term *psychic* means a medium, and refers to paranormal events and abilities which can neither be explained or understood in light of established physical facts. So, by definition, the psychics base their claims in the realm of the unseen and unknowable. Despite that definition, psychic influence has now entered every phase of American life. How familiar we are with the television ads regarding psychic readings (some even providing 1-800 numbers). Those ads promise such things as good financial fortunes and great careers in the near future, or those lasting, loving relationships on the horizon. Some claim psychic healing powers to the point of removing tumors without medical instruments. Others claim to solve difficult murder cases and are actually being employed by various law enforcement agencies. In some of our American cities defense attorneys now consult psychics before choosing jurors.

Although this is far from an exhaustive list of the areas in which physics profess to have power, it is enough for the Christian to see why their claims are so appealing. Who would not like to have financial security or loving, lasting, marital

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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

THE GLORY OF PREACHING

Bill Dillon



The Lord Jesus Christ glorified preaching when he said: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19). These were truly "gracious words."

The Apostle Paul likewise taught that no task was more noble than preaching. His inspired pen tells us: "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:16). Again he charges: "Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:2). There is no greater work nor a more God-approved deed than to preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8).

Preaching loses its glory, however, when the gospel is secondary in the message. We have heard sermons given which qualified more to be after-dinner speeches saturated with comments about renewing old acquaintances and friendships, current announcements regarding upcoming recreational activities and, of course, a smattering of scripture to fill out the twenty-minute time limit. The glorious plan of salvation failed to receive the slightest mention, to say nothing of any emphasis on the terribleness of sin and the immortal hope of the Christian religion. If someone were to respond to the invitation we could not be sure but what they were volunteering to drive the bus to "Fun-Land" instead of desiring to obey the gospel and be saved from their sins.

The aspiration of every preacher should be to uplift the Savior and let men glory in the blessings of the Kingdom of God. People whose hearts are right will come to where the King is. Little wonder then that Paul said: "For I have determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).

The glory of preaching is lost when the preacher doesn't prepare. It was said of one preacher that he was so involved in hospital visiting and errand-running during the week that on the Lord's Day he didn't know his subject until he stood in the pulpit. The tragedy is that when he finished, his audience did not know his subject either! Jesus said that if the blind lead the blind, both would fall into the ditch. Likewise, the ignorant (unprepared) preacher cannot aid men in growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18) unless he studies his

lessons, prepares his words and ceases the foolishness of "winging it." The pulpit, like heaven, is a prepared place for prepared men!

The glory of preaching is lost when ear-tickling phrases of flattery are substituted for plain contending for the faith once delivered. If preaching is to reach men's hearts, words must have point to them. Let the gospel preacher stand before men, not framing his words to please his peers but, as it was said of Pericles, "on the strength of his character, even to brave their anger by contradicting their will." Men may find the truth about marriage and divorce repugnant; they may rage against the truth preached on beer-guzzling and wine-sipping; they may abhor the truth preached concerning the nonsense of denominationalism and oppose the beautiful teaching of the singularity of the Lord's church. But the mantel of the gallant and the good shall rest upon him who so teaches the truths of God in love for the souls of his fellow men.

We have no company with the excesses of any extremists, nor do we defend rudeness in the name of soundness, but we do cast our lot with men who, without hesitation, haste or hate, "preach the word" in all of its glory. -612 E. 4th Street, Mountain Home, AR 72653

FINE BIBLE LECTURESHIPS

On occasion we are asked to advertise a lectureship going on in our area, and as much as we might like to do so, space simply does not permit. We would, however, like to carry mention of a few Bible lectureships we would like to recommend to our readers in the Arkansas, southwest Missouri and west Tennessee areas. - The Editors.

MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING LECTURES

The theme for the thirty-second annual MSOP lectureship is, "Lessons In Lyrics," involving studies of some of our best known hymns. As always they have an array of excellent speakers on the program. This year's lectureship will be at their new location at 3950 Forest Hill

Irene Road, Memphis, TN 38125. The dates for the lectureship are March 29-April 2.

1998 GOSPEL GLEANER LECTURES

This will be our second annual *Gospel Gleaner* lectureship. The theme this year is, "America's Most Wanted!" (Men Of God). It will be hosted again by the College & North Church of Christ in Mountain Home, Arkansas. Our speakers will be the editors and staff-writers for *Gospel Gleaner*.

We were very pleased with the lectureship last year and are looking forward to this one. For more information please look for our full page ad in this issue of *Gospel Gleaner*. We hope that you can be with us. The dates for our lectureship are April 4-5.

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS LECTURES

This is the ninth annual lectureship hosted by the Bellefonte Church of Christ in Harrison, Arkansas. The theme this year is "Jesus Spoke In Parables." The Bellefonte congregation is nestled in the beautiful Ozarks of northwest Arkansas.

As a secondary attraction Harrison is near Branson, Missouri, if you simply must go. Don't miss this lectureship if you enjoy a spiritual feast. Everything is looking good for an excellent program this year; even better than those of past years, and those have been excellent. The dates for this lectureship are July 12-15.

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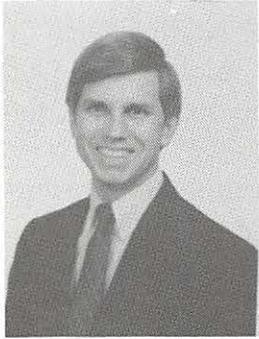
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Sunday Morning Worship	10:30
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00

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Dennis Gulledge, Evangelist

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Dennis Gullede



It is perhaps accurate to say that most people have at least some familiarity with the Ten Commandments. You perhaps learned them as a child. You have no doubt seen the movie. They are typically in the news when the *American Civil Liberties*

Union brings litigation against anyone who dares to display them in a facility such as a public school classroom or a courtroom. In recent news Etowah County (Alabama) Circuit Judge Roy Moore has refused to buckle under to intimidation by the *ACLU* to remove the Ten Commandments from his courtroom wall.

The Ten Commandments were the basic law of the ancient Hebrew state divinely inscribed on two tablets of stone (Exodus 31:18). We find them stated in Exodus 20:1-17 and repeated in Deuteronomy 5:6-21. We find nine out of the ten commandments expressed in New Testament truths, the only exception being the Sabbath law.

The influence of the Ten Commandments runs long and deep even in Western culture. All of our laws descend originally from these mandates handed down to Moses. They constitute the greatest set of laws and the most familiar declarations in all of human history. These laws stand out because they remind us of our obligations to other people as well as to God.

The Ten Commandments are both popular and unpopular in the modern world. They are popular with the majority of the Protestant denominational world that feels that we are still amenable to them as God's law for man today. They are, however, vilified by a popular culture that disdains anything that would dare to define fundamental areas of right and wrong. In this age of personal autonomy it is preferred that "Thou shalt not command." Period.

It is the purpose of this article to give brief consideration to some fundamental truth regarding the Ten Commandments, and in so doing examine a few fallacies surrounding them. There are some truths we need to learn about the Ten Commandments, and a few fallacies we need to avoid.

1. There Are Various Names For The Ten Commandments. Some of the Scriptural designations include "the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments" (Exodus 34:28); "two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone" (Exodus 31:18); "the two tablets of the Testimony" (Exodus 34:29); "His covenant...the Ten Commandments...two tablets of stone" (Deuteronomy 4:13); "the commandments" (Matthew 19:17); and "the law" (Romans 7:4-7). The Ten Commandments are often referred to as the *Decalogue*, which comes from the Greek words *deka* (ten) and *logos* (words). This designation first appeared in the writings of Clement of Alexandria (AD 160-210), and was commonly employed by the "church fathers" who followed him.

The marginal references in some Bibles will show that the Hebrew term for *commandments* is "words," thus, "the ten words." The term *words* is not limited to single words, but to sayings or utterances constituting the words of God! There is no doubt that the contents of that law were divided into ten distinctive precepts (Deuteronomy 4:13; 10:4).

These precepts are not numbered off as first, second, third, etc., consequently different modes of division were adopted. The Jews from an early period regarded the words of Exodus 20:2 as compromising the first commandment, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt..." The command is that people should recognize the Lord as God. The first and second commandments (as commonly arranged) are then

united, thus making ten commandments. In later church history Augustine followed the arrangement in Deuteronomy 5, making the words, "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife" the ninth commandment, followed by, "You shall not desire your neighbor's house..." as the tenth. This division was justified by Augustine on the ground that coveting a man's wife is a distinct offense from that of desiring a man's possessions. Another arrangement adopted by Josephus, Philo and Origen, which gained acceptance during the Reformation, regarded the first commandment forbidding the worship of false gods (Exodus 20:3) and the second as the prohibition of carved images (Exodus 20:4). The command, "You shall not covet," in all its applications, is taken as one commandment (Exodus 20:17).

2. There is a Two-fold Division Of The Ten Commandments. It is generally recognized that the two tablets of the decalogue contain precepts concerning the duties of the ancient Israelites toward God, and also those which concerned their duties to their fellow man. The first four are centered in the worship of God (Exodus 20:2-8). These concern (1) the supremacy of God exalted: "You shall have no other gods before Me," (2) the sin of expressing God in any material form: "You shall not make for yourself any carved image..." (3) the use of God's name in vain: "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain," (4) the rights of God's day (then, the Sabbath) being safeguarded: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."

The other six commands are centered in man's relationship to man, that is, they were given to regulate the Israelites in their associations with each other in both social and family framework (Exodus 20:9-17). Specifically, six of the commandments touch on (1) honor for parents: "Honor your father and your mother," (2) respect for the sanctity of life: "You shall not murder," (3) marital fidelity: "You shall not commit adultery," (4) respect for private property: "You shall not steal," (5) the honesty of witnesses: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor," and (6) the sin of covetousness: "You shall not covet..." The Ten Commandments really made two

demands. First, reverence for God, without which man has no respect for himself or others. Second, love for others, without which no one can truly love God (1 John 4:20).

3. The Ten Commandments Were Limited In Time And Purpose. The opinion widely prevails among religious people that the decalogue provides a perfect moral code sufficient to insure salvation if we abide by them. Thoughtful people, however, will avoid applying to the whole that which was intended for only a part. That is, these laws were provided only for the Israelites (Deuteronomy 5:1-3). They alone could be saved in keeping them (Matthew 19:16-19). It is wrong to expand the application to include all men and to all times.

It is equally true that the Ten Commandments were given for a limited time and purpose. Such passages as Romans 7:4-7; Galatians 3:19-25; Ephesians 2:14-15 and Colossians 2:13-14 prove that the commandments were limited in time and abolished at the cross of Christ. The purpose of the Law was to sharpen the Jew's concept of sin, thus keeping them in check "till the Seed (Christ) should come," (Galatians 3:19, 16).

Of the Ten Commandments nine are principles which are embraced and included in the New Testament applicable to God's people today. The sole principle not included in the New Covenant is regarding the Sabbath day (Exodus 20:8). The seventh day gives way to "the first day of the week" as being "the Lord's day" on which Christians ought to assemble for worship (Acts 20:7); 1 Corinthians 16:2; Revelation 1:10).

The statement that the Ten Commandments have been repealed in Christ should not be cause for any alarm. The *principles* and most of the *specifics* of these laws are still a part of the law of Christ under whose authority we now live. As great as the Ten Commandments are, one cannot learn from them the way of forgiveness through Christ. One should not allow himself to be taken in by the false claim that one can be saved by just obeying the Ten Commandments. One is saved in Christ, not in Moses. -10822 Mabelvale West Road, Mabelvale, AR 72103

FAITH FUNDAMENTALS

"Add To Your Faith"

2 Peter 1:5

"MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE"

(2 Peter 1:10)

Guy F. Hester



[This is the first of a four part series]. There is nothing in this life more important than adequate preparation for the next life. When the apostle Peter gave the admonition to "make your calling and election sure," he was talking to Christians.

This brief statement tells us several things.

First, the Christian life is a "calling." The dictionary defines the word calling: "The vocation or profession in which one customarily engages." Thus the Christian life is to be our vocation or main business. The apostle Paul said to the Ephesian brethren in Ephesians 4:1, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." In this passage Paul speaks of the Christian life as a vocation. One of the great problems in the church today is that we have a lot of "part time Christians." In the sermon on the mount, Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). Spiritual things must come before everything else in this life.

Second, it is an "election." Christians are the chosen people of the Lord. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

Third, our "calling and election" is conditional. Peter admonished in our text: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things, ye shall never fall" (2 Peter 1:10). Notice the "if" in this passage. "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall." Christians are admonished to work out their "own salvation with fear and trembling." The apostle Paul wrote to the Philippian brethren: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the words of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain" (Philippians 2:12-16). We are to work out our own salvation by doing "all things" (verse 14) that he demands of us. By doing all that he demands without murmuring and disputing, we "shine as lights in the world" that is crooked and perverse (verse 15). In the sermon on the mount, Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16). We work out our salvation by holding forth the word (verse 16). In Matthew's account of the great commission, Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:18-20).

The conditional nature of our salvation is implied in the figure that is used in the New Testament of the Christian life being a race. The

Hebrew writer said, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2). Then Paul wrote to the Corinthian brethren: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). The idea that there is nothing that one can do to be lost once he is saved is false and comes directly from Satan and his ministers (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). Peter, in our text, urges: "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure." The American Standard Version says, "Give the more diligence." Do your very best, make every possible effort.

CALLING IS OF GOD

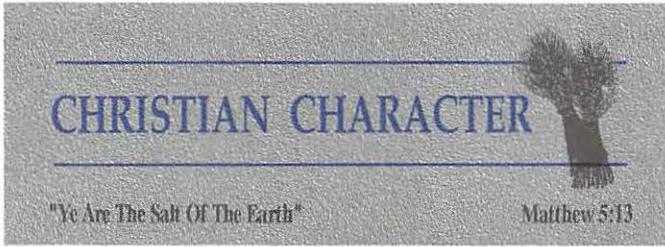
Our "calling" is of God. God calls men unto salvation. On the day of Pentecost Peter said that salvation is for as many as God shall call. "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). The only way that God calls men to salvation is through the gospel. "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14).

What is "the gospel"? The scriptures define "the gospel" as "glad tidings of good

things." Paul said, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:15). The gospel is the ever enduring word of the Lord. Peter declared, "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter 1:25). The gospel is God's power to bring about man's salvation. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of the Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). It is God's power to make known man's unrighteousness. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18). The gospel is God's power of revealing to man His way of making men righteous. "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17). God calls men to salvation by or through the gospel but then it is up to men to make their "calling" (salvation) sure.

GOD'S ELECTION

Those who have been called by the gospel to salvation are the elect of God or God's election. They have been elected, that is selected or chosen, to salvation according to God's foreknowledge. God foreordained (pre-appointed) the death of Christ to redeem men from sin (1 Peter 1:18-20). Man is elected to salvation in his obedience to Christ. Peter said, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied" (1 Peter 1:2). "The proposition 'unto' (*eis*) indicates the design and end of the plan provided for man's salvation—to bring him to obedience, without which no election is available" Guy N. Woods, *A Commentary On The New Testament, Epistles of Peter, John and Jude* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1962), p. 23. [Next Issue: God's Election Are In Christ]. -1101 Airport Circle, Jasper, AL 35504



SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS ARE IN CHRIST

Ronnie Whittemore



The apostle John wrote, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God..." (1 John 3:1). What a wonderful blessing it is to be a Christian! Christians

have so many advantages in this world and the promise of eternal life. These blessings are possible because Christians, as penitent, baptized believers are in Christ. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3). So the question is, how does one get into Christ? While the religious world offers many answers, the Bible supplies us with the answer. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:26-27). Therefore, spiritual blessings belong to those who have been baptized into Christ for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38).

Please consider the following spiritual blessings that are enjoyed only by those who are in Christ.

THE BLESSING OF REDEMPTION

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7). The word "redemption" refers to one's being "purchased"

from sin by the blood of Christ. Therefore, one is no longer dominated by sin nor is he a slave to sin (Romans 6:16-18). Jesus paid the price for our spiritual freedom with His own blood (Acts 20:28; Matthew 20:28; 26:28). In redemption, the guilt of sin has been removed or blotted out (Acts 3:19).

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

According to the dictionary, "forgiveness" refers to the state of being "pardoned or absolved; it is to grant relief from payment of." So the forgiveness of sins is to be pardoned of sins or granted relief from payment for sin. The justice of God demands that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Sin is the "transgression of God's law" (1 John 3:4) and "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23). Yet, the mercy of God allowed a substitution for our sin, not a disregard for it. Jesus became the sacrifice for our sins in that He died in our place on the cross of Calvary. Therefore, God accepted the death of Christ as payment for our sins if we, in turn, give our hearts and lives to the Lord. In doing so, one must obey the gospel of Christ in which baptism changes the condition of the penitent believer when his sins have been washed away by the blood of Christ (Acts 22:16; Revelation 1:5) and he is raised to "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). What relief to know that God holds no past sins against us because Jesus died for us!

RECONCILIATION TO GOD

Reconciliation refers to the state of "being made friends again." Sin alienates or separates one from God (Isaiah 59:1-2; Ephesians 2:12). Though man is born in a safe condition and as a friend with God, he will choose to sin against God which will sever his relationship with God and count him as an enemy. Yet, the wonderful grace of God which provided the opportunity to be forgiven of our sins also provides the way to be reconciled to God. Obedience to divine commands as described previously also reunites us with the Godhead. Sweet fellowship and divine favor are enjoyed
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INTERESTING INQUIRIES

"Understandest Thou What Thou Readest?"

Acts 8:30



“WHO IS MY BROTHER IN CHRIST?”

John T. Polk, II



There is a difference in physical and spiritual brethren.

The physical family known as “Humanity” was represented in Adam and created “in the image of God” (Genesis 1:26-27), and the woman, Eve, “was the mother of all living” (Genesis 3:20). The world was to be destroyed by the flood of water, but God made a covenant with Noah and, following the flood, gave “the rainbow in the cloud” as a sign that He would never destroy the earth again with a flood that extensive (Genesis 6:18; 9:8-19). In the first century A.D., the apostle Paul told idolaters in Athens, before they were converted to Christ that God “is not far from each one of us” because He is our creator (Acts 17:22-29). Everyone on the face of the earth is therefore “the offspring of God” and part of God's family, in a physical sense. Everyone on the face of the earth is NOT necessarily in God's spiritual family, however.

Noah's family was saved from the flood because they entered into the special covenant place God had commanded them to use: the ark. God said, “I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you...So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God “had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in” (Genesis 6:18; 7:16). Of all humanity only Noah's family of eight souls who were in the ark

were saved by faith (Hebrews 11:7). After their salvation through water (1 Peter 3:20), Noah worshipped God on an altar with sacrifices (Genesis 8:20-21). Proper worship acceptable to God was to have been offered by God's saved family.

God delivered the children of Israel (God's chosen family) from Egyptian bondage through Moses by parting the Red Sea, thus enabling them to cross on dry land “by faith” (Hebrews 11:29). Because God covered them with a cloud representing His presence (Exodus 14:29-31; 40:34-38) the apostle Paul says they “all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (1 Corinthians 10:1-4). “Moses wrote all the words of the Lord” to be the book of the covenant for the people to study and obey (Exodus 24:3-5, 7; Exodus 24:1, 5-8; Numbers 3:40-51). Not everyone on the earth entered this covenant by accepting Moses' Law and leadership, thus Moses said, “the Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who are here today, all of us who are alive” (Deuteronomy 5:2-3). That covenant was to be taught to their children who, by natural birth, were to obey it (Deuteronomy 6:1-9). Proper worship acceptable to God was to have been offered by members of God's delivered family.

Christians are those whom God delivers from bondage to sin through Jesus Christ, whether Jews (Acts 13:13-41; Romans 1:16) or Gentiles (Acts 15:6-12; Colossians 2:13-17). All of humanity is called by the gospel of the resurrected Christ to agree to his terms of salvation! “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:15-16). Jesus brings those who follow him to God, but the point of deliverance is their baptism (1 Peter 3:18-22). Jesus' blood dedicates the covenant of the New Testament (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:11-15), but that blood is applied by God to those who “were buried with Him through baptism into death” (Romans 6:3-4). Christians are “all sons of

(Continued on page 19)

“CAN'T WE ALL JUST GET ALONG?”

Allen Webster



When this question is posed, the answer often comes: “It does not matter what you believe in religion, as long as you're sincere.” Or, “You interpret the Bible your way, and I'll interpret it my way.” Contrast this with what Paul wrote, “Now I

beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Corinthians 1:10). It sure sounds like Paul thought folks were supposed to agree!

Jesus, too, prayed that His followers be “one” (John 17:20-21). Since God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33, 40), it follows that the confused, divided and arguing American religious community did not originate in the Divine mind. Nor does it please Him.

Could we all believe the same things? Stop, close your eyes, think about it. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all those who claim to follow Christ were on the same page (cf., Psalm 133:1)? Think of how much more good could be done. It is a noble idea. Maybe it would help to start with areas where we can all agree.

ALL WANT TO GO TO THE SAME PLACE—HEAVEN. We can all agree on where we want to go when we die—a mansion on a street called “Gold” (John 14:2)! It makes sense for all those who want to go to the same place to take the same road. All roads may have led to Rome, but all roads do not lead to heaven. Jesus said, “I am the way [singular], the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). He talked of a one-lane road that leads there (Matthew 7:13-14). Any other road is a dead end (cf., John 12:48; Galatians 1:6-9).

ALL BELIEVE IN THE SAME LORD—JESUS. We can all unite on the Lordship of King Jesus.

He died for us. He bought us. He loves us. He deserves our allegiance. How do we show that He is Lord of our lives? By obeying Him. He said, “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46; John 14:15).

ALL WORSHIP THE SAME GOD—JEHOVAH. The same God is evoked in all religious assemblies. Since we are to please God in worship (John 4:23-24), it makes sense that we should do what He wants in worship instead of what may please us (Mark 7:6-7). [Hopefully we learn to enjoy doing what pleases Him.]

ALL USE THE SAME BOOK—THE BIBLE. The Holy Bible is read in all religious assemblies. All agree that God's Word should be the standard in religion. Someone might say, “Sure, but we can't all see it alike.” Let's think about this. Did God, the omniscient¹ One, give a book that was so confusing that we cannot understand it alike? Was God, the omnipotent One, incapable of giving a book that all could follow in the same way? Did God, the omnibenevolent One, just not want to give a book that all could understand? Certainly none of us wants to slight God by saying that He was either unwilling or unable to convey His thoughts in understandable words (cf., John 8:24).

Thus, we see that when men divide, it is not God's fault. We allow our prejudices and blind spots to keep us from opening our minds to see the truth (cf., 2 Corinthians 3:14-16). By putting aside our preconceived notions, and simply interpreting verses in light of the immediate context and overall Bible context (no correct interpretation of a verse contradicts another verse), we can understand the Bible. Alike. Wouldn't that be wonderful?!

ALL HAVE THE SAME NEED—FORGIVENESS. “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). All of us realize that we are homeless sinners in the soup line of grace.

¹Omniscient means “all-knowing;” omnipotent means “all-powerful;” omnibenevolent means “all-loving.”

We are in no position to bargain—only to beg. God is willing and able to forgive (and only He can forgive, Mark 2:5, 7, 10). Since we cannot cleanse ourselves, it makes sense for all to unite on whatever God has said to do to be saved. A man-made scheme is useless (Jeremiah 10:23).

ALL MUST MEET THE SAME REQUIREMENTS—OBEY THE GOSPEL. Since all need forgiveness, all must meet the conditions whereby God grants it. He is no respecter of persons (Romans 2:11), so whatever He requires of one, He requires of all. Study carefully such passages as John 3:16; 8:24; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:37-41; 3:19; 8:12, 13, 35-39; 9:6, 18; 10:47-48; 16:14-15, 30-34; Romans 6:1-6; 10:10-17; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:26-27; and 1 Peter 3:21. Taken in totality (we cannot pick and choose the commands we will obey), do these not necessitate faith, repentance, confession and baptism as essential for a sinner's salvation? [Note these consider the human part in salvation. Salvation is unmerited (Ephesians 2:8-9), but not unconditional. God sets these conditions].

Should all men believe the same things in religion? According to the Scriptures, they must! It is not enough just to agree to disagree. God expects all to follow only what He revealed (2 Timothy 3:16-17), without addition or subtraction (Revelation 22:18-19). It is the plea of the churches of Christ for all men to unite upon a common understanding of Scripture. Won't you help us restore unity? -P.O. Box 520, Jacksonville, AL 36265

A LOVE FOR THE ERRING

Tracy Dugger

To the Christian, who cares for his fellow brother or sister in Christ, who has a passion for their soul, it is sometimes difficult to tell them when they are wrong. However, it frequently falls upon the child of God to point out and correct the sin or error in someone else's life (2 Timothy 4:2; Galatians 6:1; Matthew 7:5; James 5:19-20). It is not an enjoyable task, but it is an essential one.

To show others their transgression is evidence of our love for their souls. In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul, in essence, sends rebuke to two different parties. He obviously rebuked the incestuous fornicator, but also upbraided the church for their toleration of him. Later in 2 Corinthians, Paul explains his motivation in chastising them, "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you" (2:4 NKJV). From this passage it is evident that the apostle did not enjoy having to reprove and rebuke them. However, because of his abundant love for them, he was compelled to bring their sin to the forefront.

As a result of our love for those who become unfaithful, we ought to be driven to restore them to their first love. Again, it is never easy! It wasn't easy for Paul! In 2 Corinthians 7:8, Paul explained his disposition: "For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceived that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while" (NKJV). Paul is not speaking out of both sides of his mouth when he here says, "I do not regret it; though I did regret it." He is using the term "regret" in two different senses. Paul had many tearful regrets about sending a letter which exposed the immoral activity of a man and the lack of love of an entire church—it burdened his heart deeply. However in another sense, he did not regret his action. His desire was to produce godly sorrow which would lead them to repent (2 Corinthians 7:9-10).

It is never a joy to see someone in sin, but it is a great joy to see sinners repent. Let us endeavor to be the kind of mature Christian Paul was—Hate the sin, love the sinner! Expose the sin in genuine love for the soul of the sinner. The inspired words of James are fitting at this point: "Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20 NKJV). -1519 Miller Street, Malvern, AR 72104



THE FIVE GREAT POWERS OF LIFE

(Luke 7:11-18)

M. W. Kiser



We shall see that what parables were to the ears; miracles were to the eyes. In this particular miracle we see an analogy between physical and spiritual death.

I. THE DEVASTATING POWER OF DEATH.

- A. In this text we have a concentration of sorrow in a few words.
 1. He was a young man (Verse 14).
 2. He was an only son (Verse 12).
 3. His mother was a widow (Verse 12).
- B. Funerals are reminders! Sin brought death into the world (Romans 5:12).
- C. Learn: Spiritual death brings great grief to gracious friends.
 1. After all, we are the ones who love you most.
 2. We have lost the help and comfort you could give us in life.
 3. We have no fellowship with you in what you are doing in life.
 4. We have no hope for your soul when at last your body is hid from us.

II. THE COMFORTING POWER OF PROVIDENCE.

- A. The meeting of these two multitudes was no coincidence! (Verses 11-12).
- B. The Lord knows how to arrange all things.
- C. Learn: In dealing with the grief of spiritual death, there is only one true helper (Acts 4:12; John 14:6).

III. THE COMPASSIONATE POWER OF LOVE.

- A. Compassion and love were the predominate notes in this funeral (Galatians 6:2).
- B. We need to believe in compassionate love (Psalm 126: 5-6; 1 Peter 4:8).
- C. Learn: Jesus can touch and not be defiled! (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15).

IV. THE LIVING POWER OF THE WORD.

- A. The words of Jesus are most remarkable on this occasion.
 1. "Weep not"— a difficult command (Verse 13). As if she had no reason.
 2. "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise"—(Verse 14). As if not dead!
- B. The Living Word and The Spoken Word cannot be separated (Hebrews 4:12).
- C. Learn: It is the word of God that still quickens the spiritually dead.
 1. The word was spoken to a dead man! (Ephesians 2:1).
 2. The word was spoken to him personally! (Mark 16:15).
 3. The word was spoken as if he were alive (Ephesians 1:4).
 4. The word was spoken with authority (Matthew 28:18-20).
 5. The word was spoken for immediate results (Acts 16:33).

V. THE FAR-REACHING POWER OF INFLUENCE.

- A. Examine the effect of this miracle so clearly stated by Luke.
 - 1. "And there came a fear on all" (Verse 16).
 - 2. "And they glorified God saying..." (Verse 16).
 - a. Thought of Moses (Deuteronomy 18:18-20).
 - b. Remembered Elijah (1 Kings 17) and Elisha (2 Kings 4).
 - c. Acknowledged the personal application of the matter.
- C. Influence is a powerful tool for good (Matthew 5:13-16).
- D. Learn: A sinner can be saved to the wonder of others; and a convert made today can reach out for fifty years and bless thousands! (1 Thessalonians 1:7-8).

We must regard this incident as true; or designed to be false. If you are spiritually like the young man then may I urge you to "Arise"! (Romans 6:3-6). -922 Heritage Drive, Sylacauga, AL 35150

WORDS

Bill Dillon

"Talk is cheap" so say some. Not so said Jesus. The Lord's emphatic words were, "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:36-37).

"What a man says doesn't count," is a remark sometimes heard, but, from Jesus comes the unhesitating teaching that men live and die by their words.

The tongue can bless or blight. The children of Israel wept for Moses thirty days after he was dead but think how they treated him when he was alive! They made his life a hardship by their incessant murmuring and complaining. How often is this experience repeated. People find fault with family and friends while neglecting

to say words of appreciation and gratitude. After our loved ones are dead we lavish their memories with words of praise.

Truly, our speech betrays us. Our words tell what we are. May God help us to be revealed as a people of love, compassion, appreciation and truth.

CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED DURING THE PAST QUARTER

Joe & Cathy White Riverside, AL.....	20.00
Bill & Beth Schnell Taylor Mill, KY.....	15.00
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SIX BASIC NEEDS OF MAN

Gerald Cowan

Many human activities revolve around efforts to fulfill basic or essential needs. To the extent that one is able to do so, he is well adjusted and happy. If asked to list their basic needs, most would probably start with the absolute essentials for maintaining life: food, air, and water. Some other needs are basic too, but are not always recognized as such. These can be social, intellectual, emotional and spiritual. We will list six needs that are basic to all men, even though many are not aware of it. Our purpose must sometimes be to make people aware. There will be some necessary overlapping in meaning and application of the needs we are to discuss here. But there is a kind of interlocking pattern: a person is incomplete if any of these matters are denied him or are not present in him. The first one, love, is the basis for meeting all other needs.

I. THE NEED TO GIVE AND RECEIVE AUTHENTIC LOVE IN A DEPENDABLE RELATIONSHIP. Love needs to be received and given. Everyone wants to be loved. The love of which we speak (*agape*) is many faceted. Love is acceptance. It is accepting and being accepted for what one is or can become. Love requires sensitivity and responsiveness to the true value and personhood of its object. That includes an awareness of the needs of others. It means sympathy and concern, the desire to avoid causing needless pain, and to avoid offending or leading someone astray (1 John 3:17-18). Love can be sacrifice, the willingness to give up something, to bear some burden, or do some helpful or needful thing for the other. The cross of Christ is the most meaningful symbol of this kind of love (Galatians 2:20). Love can be defined as the value one places on another, seeing the person as worthy of one's attention. That leads us to the second basic need.

II. A SENSE OF PERSONAL IDENTITY, PERSONAL WORTH, AND SELF ESTEEM. Those who need love most are often those who deserve it least and are the ones most deprived of it. We

often evaluate ourselves according to the way we are perceived by others—and that can be good or bad, right or wrong, helpful or destructive. Love often sees us as better than we are, and assigns a greater value than we deserve. Hatred sees us as worse than we are and assigns a value lower than we deserve. We should really try to see ourselves and each other through God's eyes, and then we would know how to estimate the true worth and importance of ourselves and all others. The worth of man to God—the value placed upon all men and every man by God—is most evident in the efforts of God to provide eternal salvation in Christ for everyone (Romans 5:6-8).

III. A SENSE OF MEANING AND PURPOSE IN ONE'S LIFE. Some see life, individually and collectively, as generally formless and aimless, without goal or direction. Peter called his generation *untoward* (Acts 2:40, KJV), but the aimlessness of many does not prove the aimlessness of life itself. A person needs to feel that his own life contributes something meaningful (this overlaps the sense of worth, self-esteem), something greater than himself, so that he can feel right in devoting himself to it. Some try to find a clue to man's purpose by studying animals. But the premise is false. Man is not an animal, and must not be measured by the same standard. You cannot learn much about what man is by studying rats and monkeys. Nor is man himself the measure of all things. The clue to the meaning and purpose of man's life is Christ. He proved life to be worth the struggle, in spite of cruelty and opposition. He set before us a worthwhile goal: the glorification of God and the salvation of one's own soul (Philippians 2:5-8).

IV. A SENSE OF FREEDOM—PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL, BUT NOT POLITICAL OR MORAL. We are promised spiritual freedom from the tyranny of sin, but only in Christ (John 8:31-39). But freedom must never be interpreted as the right to do exactly as you please in any or all cases. Christianity is not a cloak under which one can

hide his own wickedness (1 Peter 2:16). One is never free to abuse the freedom of others (Galatians 5:13). One is never free from the authority of God (John 12:48). The individual is free to determine his own response to the will of God, but he is certainly not free to determine what God's offer will be, or how God responds to human choices.

V. A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY. One needs to live responsibly in his relationships. The duties of man are corollaries to the rights of man (Luke 12:48). Responsibility is sometimes distasteful, and many reject it, but true freedom can never be irresponsible (cf., Galatians 2:11-17). It is comforting to know there are persons you can depend upon, and the best way to make sure others will be dependable for you is to be dependable for them (Matthew 7:12). It is not possible for one to avoid all responsibility. Each person is responsible, whether he accepts it or not. We are suggesting here that each one needs to understand the extent of his personal responsibility and duties. And then, of course, one should act in the right way and maintain the right relationships with others.

VI. A TRUSTFUL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. Every person needs salvation. A relationship of love is possible. God loves us, and He also seeks and accepts love from us. Only God fully comprehends our worth. The meaning of life is impossible to determine apart from the revealed will and purposes of God. Freedom from the guilt of sin is available only through the gracious forgiveness of God. But one cannot accept God's grace without also accepting personal responsibility and exercising proper stewardship of God's gift (Romans 6:17-18). When one obeys God from the heart, it should be because he sees himself as valuable, because he seeks salvation and freedom through the love of God. He is given responsibility, and his life takes on a new direction, new meaning and purpose.

The joy of fulfillment of needs lies first of all in the assurance of God's acceptance and approval of us. Further joy comes from knowing we have become acceptable to ourselves and

others by adhering faithfully to God's standard, not to our own or some other human standard (2 Corinthians 10:12-18). -1110 S. Vicksburg, Marion, IL 62959

GAINING WEIGHT

Jay Winter

Gaining weight is something that generally gets to be a problem as the years go by. We are told to watch our diets and exercise properly or probably pay the consequences.

Spiritually speaking though, we all should try to gain weight. Here we cannot afford to be underfed. We will experience eternal problems if we are found to be "lightweights." As we place ourselves on spiritual scales how much do we weigh? Are we lightweights or heavyweights?

Every Christian can and should desire to become a heavyweight. We can add the weight of knowledge. Some have died because they lacked this essential ingredient (Isaiah 5:13). The Jews had zeal but were starving for knowledge (Romans 10:1-2). We can add the weight of faith. Some have "little faith" (Matthew 8:26), though the Lord would have ours to be a "great faith" (Matthew 8:10). For our diet to be balanced we need to add works (James 2:26), because faith without works is dead. We also ought to be fed with kindness, compassion, and love toward our brethren (Ephesians 4:32; 1 Peter 3:8), because we are a family in Christ.

It is simply not possible to be spiritually overfed. The scales should find us "always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58); growing in grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18); and abounding in the faith (Colossians 2:7).

And finally, don't forget the exercise that will enable us to discern between good and evil (Hebrews 5:14). Each and every day of our lives we can feast upon the riches of the Word of God without any fear of being overfed. Daily let us be "Gaining Weight."

SO YOU WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH

Ivie Powell



Invariably, when asked, “Do you want to know the truth?” the majority will answer in the affirmative. Yet, when told, will often reject it. Why? It could be they mean, “Yes, as long as it agrees with my views.” Or, after hearing,

they simply do not understand or believe the truth.

Far too many view Christianity as nothing more than a social club, with things functioning around entertaining and being entertained. The crucial question of: “Are we really following the Bible?” has long been laid aside with many. As long as folks are happy, honest, sincere and doing good works; this is the criteria for acceptance with many.

My friend, I challenge you to take your Bible and search the inspired scriptures, for therein is found the life everlasting. As you begin this study, do so with an open mind and an open Bible. Two questions are submitted for your prayerful and careful consideration: (1) Do you really want to know the truth? and (2) After finding truth will you obey it? Remember Jesus said: “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32), and Peter informs us that obedience to truth purifies the soul: “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth...” (1 Peter 1:22).

By searching the Bible one can learn the following information regarding truth:

*Truth can divide households (Matthew 10:34-38).

*Truth can make enemies (Romans 11:28).

*Truth can test one's convictions (James 1:12).

*Truth can make one sorrowful (Matthew 19:16-22).

*Truth only makes one free (John 8:32).

*Truth must be obeyed to purify the soul (1 Peter 1:22).

*Following truth can result in being persecuted (2 Corinthians 11:21-28).

*God rejoices when His children walk in truth (3 John 3-4).

*Truth can cause many to leave (John 6:47-66).

*Christ is “the truth” (John 14:6).

*Christians must speak “the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15).

*Christians must worship “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

*Those who have not “the love of the truth” will be lost (2 Thessalonians 2:10).

*The Holy Spirit guided the apostles “into all truth” (John 16:13).

*Truth came through Christ (John 1:17).

*Truth must be rightly divided (2 Timothy 2:15).

Now you can see how important truth is according to the Bible. May our attitude be that of the servant of old: “Buy the truth, and sell it not” (Proverbs 23:23)! Let us never allow anyone or anything to keep us from diligently searching for and obeying the truth, for it alone will make us free (John 8:32)! -1272 Bonham Street, Paris, TX 75460

SECOND ANNUAL GOSPEL GLEANER LECTURESHIP *AMERICA'S MOST WANTED (MEN OF GOD)*

APRIL 4-5, 1998

COLLEGE AND NORTH CHURCH OF CHRIST
MOUNTAIN HOME, ARKANSAS

SATURDAY, APRIL 4

- 7:30 -9:00 AM
Gospel Gleaner Breakfast, everyone invited
- 9:00-10:00 AM
"Men Who Serve (deacons)"
Guy Hester, Jasper, AL
- 10:00-11:00 AM
"Men Who Stick (John Mark)"
Ronnie Whittemore, Indianapolis, IN
- 11:00 AM-12:00 NOON
"Men Who Stand (Daniel)"
Ivie Powell, Paris, TX
- 12:00 NOON - 1:00 PM
Lunch
- 1:00-2:00 PM
"Men Who Speak (Samuel)"
Dennis Gullede, Mabelvale, AR
- 2:00-3:00 PM
"Men For All Seasons"
Timothy Wilkes, Hernando, MS
- 3:00 PM
"Questions & Answers"

SUNDAY, APRIL 5

- 9:30 AM
"Men Who Submit (Paul)"
Allen Webster, Jacksonville, AL
- 10:30 AM
"Men Who See (elders)"
John T. Polk, II, Dover, TN
- 6:00 PM
"The Man Who Saves (Jesus)"
M. W. Kiser, Sylacauga, AL

BE OF GOOD CHEER!

YOU ARE NOT INSIGNIFICANT!

...There is some younger person who thinks you are perfect.

...There is some work that won't get done if you don't do it.

...There is someone who would miss you if you were gone.

...There is a reason for becoming better than you are.

...There is a place to be filled that you alone can fill.

relationships? What person, having given up a loved one to death, would not "give anything" to hear from them one more time? Or what distraught soul would ever stop trying to find out who murdered their loved one? The appeal of the psychic is an appeal to the basic human nature in all of us to feel loved, secure and comforted. How subtle is the deceit of Satan when he preys on our deepest human needs as a springboard to promise us all of the things that only our loving heavenly Father can give.

So, faced with what many around us truly believe to be the psychic ability, we as children of God must be ready to respond. We must, however, carefully guard against reacting with paranoia in our thinking toward others. God's people have been confronted with evil since the beginning of time, as His Word and history will so attest. Therefore, realizing that every soul is precious, we must address others in love, with a calm Biblical conviction and with wisdom.

Christians are secure because God is on His throne with all His power and glory, where He always has been and always will be, for He alone is God (Isaiah 43:10; 45:5-7, 14, 18, 21; 46:9; Psalm 86:10). It is this same God alone who does wondrous things (Psalm 72:18; 136:4). He does not and never has dealt with us through mystical, paranormal mediums, because God has communicated His will for mankind in an inspired book—the Bible. God's word is truth (John 17:17).

Furthermore, Christians should not be surprised that the claims made by psychics can look very believable. Satan is a deceiver and he is successful at what he does; check out his track record. It is his business to appear as the great loving, caring, healing and compassionate one (2 Corinthians 11:14). Satan has the power necessary to perform whatever "lying wonders" are needed in order to get his job done (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12). And, his objective is to dethrone God and deify the "self" in man. Deified mankind needs no personal God, because he is his own god.

And that is exactly what the psychic deluge is all about. It is only one very small portion of a much, much greater movement being resurrected out of old paganism, Hinduism, and Eastern occultic religions which teach that we are all *god*.

So do psychics have the power to perform as they claim? Listen to the thinking of James Randi, an internationally known magician (he makes his living with trickery) and escape artist. He has spent over thirty-five years investigating the claims of paranormal abilities flooding the public today. His conclusion was that there is an outrageous deception, promoted widely by the media. He believed this so strongly that he offered \$10,000 to any person or group that could perform one paranormal feat of any kind under proper observing conditions. At last word, Randi had been carrying the money for fourteen years and had never paid out one nickel of it!

Everything in God's holy Word strongly denies the claims of psychic powers. In fact, the Old Testament, in particular, abounds with passages stressing God's view of those who dabble in the paranormal and the mystical (Leviticus 19:31; Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Isaiah 8:19; Leviticus 20:6, 27). We, as Christians, need to be arming our children with the truth in the face of a growing popularity of the paranormal. This deluge is not a new thing; it is the same old deceptive ploy used when the world's oldest lie was told by the world's oldest liar (John 8:44). "...and ye shall be as gods..." (Genesis 3:5). -915 Buzzard Roost Cutoff, Mountain Home, AR 72653

Editor's Note: Jane Maynard is a faithful member of the College & North Church of Christ and conducts Ladies' Day Seminars throughout the brotherhood.

IF YOU MOVE PLEASE SEND US A CHANGE OF ADDRESS. IT COSTS 50 CENTS EACH TIME THE POST OFFICE RETURNS A GOSPEL GLEANER TO US.

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS ARE IN CHRIST

Continued from page 8

as a result of our decision to obey the Lord. Is it not better to be the friend of God rather than His enemy?

PEACE WITH GOD

“And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh” (Ephesians 2:17). One of the most marvelous blessings given to men is peace. The dictionary describes peace as “a state of calm and quiet; freedom from disturbing thoughts or emotions.” God provides His children with freedom from the guilt of sin. While sin troubles and agitates the minds of men, salvation in Christ brings peace of mind in knowing that all sins have been forgiven, that man is no longer an enemy of God, but His friend, and that man is a recipient of the bountiful hand of a gracious and loving God.

Friend, do you enjoy these spiritual blessings? If not, why not? God wants you to be saved and enjoy these wonderful blessings. He sent His only begotten Son to Calvary that you might be a recipient of these favors. Have you obeyed Him? Are you truly in Christ? -1001 E. Albany Street, Indianapolis, IN 46203

"WHO IS MY BROTHER IN CHRIST?"

Continued from page 9

God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” “...And if you are Christ's then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:26-29; Acts 11:26). The “house of God” today “is the church of the living God” (1 Timothy 3:15) and everyone in it has been “born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever” (1 Peter 1:23; John 1:11-13). Those who have been led to believe they were saved before their baptism are not “in Christ”

where every spiritual blessing is (Ephesians 1:3), thus, they remain outside God's spiritual, saved, and delivered family today. Acceptable worship is offered today only by those who are qualified by the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 13:10-16; 1 Peter 1:13-2:10). Anyone on the face of the earth may agree by faith to the New Covenant and be “born again...of water and the Spirit” (John 3:3-5). Every New Testament Book addressed to a place makes a distinction between all living in that place and those who have obeyed the Gospel call, thus becoming brothers in Christ (Romans 1:1-7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1-2; Galatians 1:1-5; Ephesians 1:1-2; et.al.). This truth may be easy to see but hard to accept. Denominational writer, John Ritchie rightly said, “The Church, viewed as the body of Christ, embraced every child of God throughout the world. It *includes* all who have life in Christ, and *excludes* all who are dead in sin” (p. 68, *Tabernacle In The Wilderness*, 1891, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501, reprint 1982).

Because this may be “a hard saying” many may turn back and walk no further with Jesus Christ (John 6:60-66), but I beg you all to enter the family of the Lord and be spiritual brothers (John 6:67-69). 125 The Trace, Dover, TN 37058

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Bill Dillon, Evangelist

READERS' RESPONSE

Luke 10:26

"How Readest Thou?"

PASS IT ON!

A member at the congregation where I preach presented me with a copy of the *Gospel Gleaner* last week. I would love for you to please add my name to the mailing list. John Tracy, Piedmont Road Church of Christ, Marietta, GA.

CAN'T WAIT TO RECEIVE GG EACH TIME

This is a wonderful paper, I can't wait to receive it each time. I have gotten some names and I hope you don't mind to add them to your mailing list. This paper will bring many souls to the Lord I'm sure. Zoe Simes, Jasper, AL.

GG USEFUL IN BIBLE STUDIES

A copy of the *Gospel Gleaner*, Vol. 12, No 2, was passed to me by brother James D. Cox. I enjoyed reading the articles and am using it in our Sunday Bible studies. It is also a good source of my sermon/messages. Would you please include me in your mailing list for me to have a regular and consistent source of Biblical insights. Florlito E. Batoon, San Jose City, Philippines.

FOUND US ON THE NET

I was surfing on the net the other night and came across Garland Robinson's Web page that told me that I could get free copies of *Gospel Gleaner*, simply by writing and asking. I certainly want to get

as much input from brethren concerning the church and some of the thinking of our brethren. I don't understand why most of it is even entertained! Thank you in advance for this service. Lonnie Lambert, Paulding, OH.

ASSISTANCE AND INSPIRATION

I am a full-time student at N.W. Florida School of Biblical Studies, and have enjoyed your publication. I would like to be added to your mailing list, have the publication sent to my home address. Enclosed is a contribution and thank you so very much for the assistance and inspiration that your publication brings my way each time I view a copy. May God bless you with continuance. Sherman Offord, Pensacola, FL.

IN PRISON...YOU VISITED ME

I am requesting to be placed on your mailing list for the *Gospel Gleaner*. I am currently incarcerated, and I am studying the Bible through the Church of Christ. If there is any charge please let me know. Thanking you in advance. Dean Crowell #158334, JRCC, State Farm, VA.

SO ENJOYABLE

A very dear friend (Helen Proffer) gave me the *Gospel Gleaner* to read. So enjoyable! Especially the article Is A Translation Of The Bible Inspired? I rely on the KJ and NKJ for my reading pleasure, my study and my research on topical issues. I like the *Gospel Gleaner* for all the articles were true and interesting. I would like to have the *Gospel Gleaner* sent to me. I am a member of the Lord's church. May God bless all the writers and the work you are doing. You have my prayers. Agnes B. Owen, Ventura, CA.

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GOSPEL GLEANER



Volume 14

No. 2

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

Stephen D. Rook

Because of his sins man is lost, separated from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). This is the case for every man for all have sinned (Romans 3:23). But God, who is merciful and kind, has a plan of salvation by which men receive the remission of sins.

God's plan of salvation is revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ that saves all who believe. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:16-17).

After his death and resurrection, our Lord spoke of God's plan of salvation when he declared: "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-47).

These words of Christ reveal God's plan of salvation to have at least three elements. They are:

I. THE DEATH OF CHRIST. It behooved (was necessary for) Christ to suffer. The apostle Peter wrote, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and

without spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Human philosophy and psychology do not have the answer to man's sin problem. Nor can any man resolve his sin problem by living a so-called "good moral life." In Titus 3:5 we read: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

Redemption, forgiveness, justification and reconciliation are by the blood of Christ (Ephesians 1:7; Romans 5:9-10). "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree...by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:24).

I must needs go home by the way of the cross: There's no other way but this; I shall ne'er get sight of the gates of light, If the way of the cross I miss.

II. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. It behooved Christ to suffer and rise from the dead. Paul observed the relationship between the resurrection of Christ and salvation from sin in 1 Corinthians, chapter 15, when he wrote: "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (verse 17).

The apostle Peter declared, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us

(Continued on page 7)



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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

THE SIN OF OVER-BELIEF

Bill Dillon



William James, the noted philosopher and psychologist, who studied various religious experiences, coined the term "over-belief." Over-belief is to affirm something as true for which there is no evidence.

Religious over-belief is especially noticeable in speculations about the end of the world. This subject has fascinated Bible students for centuries, with a number of American religious groups having their origins in erroneous conjectures regarding the Second Coming of Christ, e.g., Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah Witnesses, etc. As the year 2000 looms closer, theorizing about the end of time will no doubt increase. However, the clear and simple statement of Jesus regarding the end of the world was, "of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matthew 24:36). Anyone who claims to know what no man can know is flagrantly guilty of the sin of over-belief.

Over-belief confronted the first century church as Judaizing teachers maintained it was necessary for believers in Christ to be circumcised in order to be saved (Acts 15:1). Those false teachers did not comprehend how Christ completely fulfilled the Old Testament law. The rite of circumcision had been abolished. They lacked the evidence (scriptural proof) to say circumcision was still binding. The same mistake is made today by religious groups who advocate keeping the Sabbath (Saturday) as a holy day.

Over-belief is not limited to religion. Even scientists can succumb to its charms. This is the case with Dr. Carl Sagan*, perhaps the best known astronomer in America. Sagan has stated, "Evolution really happened!" However, Sagan's emphatic affirmation is nothing more than assumption. A. G. Freed once described the theory of evolution as "a system of hypotheses strung together with a million guesses." To further show the dogmatic foundation of the evolutionary theory, Dr. William Marra, professor emeritus of Fordham University, quotes from the *Humanist Manifesto*: "As non theists, we begin with humans, not God; with nature, not deity." With this, Dr. Marra comments, "they lock themselves into a philosophy of naturalism. Then they put on white coats and pretend there is a scientific basis."

It is easy to say "Prince Charming really came from a frog," but that also is an example of over-belief; just as much as when Dr. Sagan says, "Evolution really happened."

The church of Christ has no immunity to over-belief. There are

voices within our brotherhood today urging broad sweeping changes in the worship and work of the Lord's people. We are told, in order to grow numerically and be relevant to modern American society, the worship of the church must be more emotionally driven and man-centered; we must extend the hand of fellowship and embrace homosexuality as a valid lifestyle; we must acknowledge various other religious groups as brethren; we must change the God-given role of women in public worship, etc. In short, we are called upon to cease "calling Bible things by Bible names and doing Bible things in Bible ways" and begin to walk in the new paths of religious liberalism. Does anyone really believe we can change the world by becoming more like it? Paul taught the early New Testament church to not be conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewing of the mind, proving the good and acceptable will of the Lord (Romans 12:2). The modernistic trends in the church are matters outside of the Lord's will and are further examples of the sin of over-belief.

Let the faithful voices of God's preachers continue to "reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:2). Let every Christian adamantly refuse to do anything but "speak as the oracles of God" in all matters of life and faith.

It is always a tragedy to read more into God's Word than what is there; and equally tragic to subtract or omit anything that is there (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18-19). The sin of over-belief is not likely to fade away this year or any year in the near future; but as long as it exists, it is a detriment to the furtherance of the gospel. -612 E. Fourth Street, Mountain Home, AR 72653

**Carl Sagan died Friday, December 20, 1996 in Seattle, Washington at the age of 62, of complications arising from bone marrow cancer.*

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Bill Dillon, Evangelist

TO OUR READERS

We receive much positive feed-back from every issue of the Gospel Gleaner. While we consider each reader a friend, we cannot give credence to anonymous mail or phone calls occasionally received. Criticisms of the paper or its staff writers are only valued if the critics are identified. We believe this is the only fair way to deal with negative comments. -The Editors

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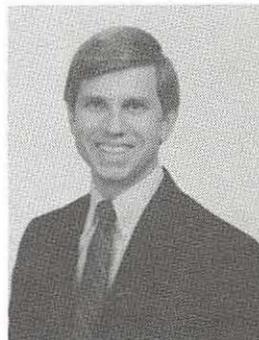
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Dennis Gulledege, Evangelist

“THE MUSTARD SEED, THE LEAVEN” [Part 1]

(Matthew 13:31-32)

Dennis Gullledge



Wayne Jackson, in his book, *The Parables In Profile*, gives three guidelines to remember when studying the parables.¹ First, one should endeavor to determine the “historical occasion which precipitated the story.” The seven

parables of Matthew 13 follow the Pharisaic explanation that the works of Jesus were demonic in origin. In showing that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, Jesus exhibits elementary truths concerning the kingdom, namely its reality, value, growth, influence and vindication.² Second, after thoroughly studying the background of the parable, one should read the narrative several times. The text for this lesson is found in several brief references in Matthew, Mark and Luke. The references will read slightly different in each place due to the individuality of the inspired writer, but the truth stated remains uniform. Third, it is very important to remember that parables are typically designed to teach “a central lesson.”³ The scope of this parable is to show that the kingdom of God would commence with a small beginning, but that it would grow into a great institution.

In this lesson the parable of the mustard seed and the parable of the leaven are being considered together because they treat the same subject from different points of view. As William M. Taylor noted, “They...constitute a pair, and must be studied together if at least we would get at the full truth regarding the subject of which they both treat.”⁴ Alfred Edersheim suggests that the former parable “exhibits the *extensiveness*” of the kingdom while the latter shows “the *intensiveness*, of its power.”⁵ To put it another way, the parable of the mustard seed shows the growth of the kingdom of God *among* us (in the world), and the

parable of the leaven shows the growth of the kingdom *within* us (in our hearts). Indeed, we will see that the parable of the mustard seed teaches the growth of the kingdom from meager beginnings, and that the parable of the leaven shows its influential nature.

This is what some call the “common interpretation” of these two parables. I am following this interpretation because I feel it is most consistent with the context. Others, however, feel that these parables depict an unfolding of the abnormal and unnatural growth of the kingdom, contrary to what God intended.⁶

The Parable Of The Mustard Seed

In Matthew’s account Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches” (Matthew 13:31-32; c.f., Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19). This parable suggests the contrast between the simplicity of the beginning of the kingdom of heaven with the magnitude of its result. It will not be my purpose to explore any so-called hidden meaning in any aspect of this parable, such as the field in which the seed was hidden, the man who hid it or the birds who nested in the branches thereof. The main idea is much too rich to require any embellishment.

The expression “a grain of mustard seed” is a figure of speech used in scripture to denote the smallness of a thing, as Jesus did when he said to the disciples, “If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you” (Luke 17:6). Therefore, any effort to press the words “which indeed is the least of all

the seeds” into literal exactness and quibble at the accuracy of the representation, because other seeds may be smaller, is an exercise in futility.

“But,” says Jesus, “when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches?” (Matthew 13:32). A mustard seed is small, but it is a seed and has the capacity to grow. Luke says that it “grew and became a large tree” (Luke 13:19). That is, it was not a large tree in comparison to trees properly so named, but with respect to the other herbs of the garden. J. W. McGarvey says of the mustard plant, “in Palestine it attains the height of ten feet.”⁷ Such a plant would naturally attract birds. In Jesus’ day birds could often be seen in the mustard plant feeding on the small black seeds of the mustard pods.

Not to be overlooked is the fact that this parable reflects the apocalyptic language of the prophet Ezekiel who, in similar terms, depicted the grandeur of the Egyptian empire. The description begins by showing the Egyptian power as the branch of a cedar planted “on a high and prominent mountain.” It would “bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a majestic cedar” and “Under it will dwell birds of every sort.” That is, Egypt would become a kingdom large enough to provide the subject nations (depicted as birds) rest and refuge under its branches (Ezekiel 17:22-24; 31:5-6). To deny that the parable of the mustard seed depicts the small beginning and the large growth of the greatest of all kingdoms is to re-interpret prophetic imagery already in the minds of the people to whom Jesus addressed it.

From a human point of view the beginning of the kingdom was indeed small and insignificant. Jesus Christ, its founder, bore none of the characteristics normally associated with greatness from a world view. Isaiah portrayed Christ as one who would “grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him” (Isaiah 53:2). His incarnation was marked by a lowly birth (Luke 2:7). His life was largely spent in despised Nazareth (John 1:46).

His followers included a handful of

disciples whose preaching initiated the beginning of the universal kingdom of Christ (Acts 2). The church of Christ, in its origin, was all but unnoticed by the great men of the world, but pushed its conquests into the uttermost parts of the earth (Colossians 1:23). This kingdom, with a small beginning, would prosper and prevail over all other kingdoms of the world. This is consistent with Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream wherein the prophet envisioned the kingdom as “a stone...cut out without hands” (Daniel 2:34). This “stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth” (Daniel 2:35). That is, it became a “kingdom which shall never be destroyed” (Daniel 2:44-45). In the same way, the kingdom of God was destined to rise above and conquer all other kingdoms. Sacred history verifies the unparalleled growth of the church (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:14, etc.).

We should learn the lesson of the grain of mustard seed. A thing may begin small, with little prospect for greatness, and yet prosper in the end because God is behind it. Taylor gives this summary: “The kingdom of heaven on the earth had a beginning, which when compared with its present condition, is as the mustard-seed is to the herb that grows therefrom.”⁸

¹Wayne Jackson, *The Parables In Profile: Exegetical Outlines of the Parables of Christ* (Fort Worth: Star Bible & Tract Corp., 1978), 10-13.

²Jackson, 9.

³As Jackson notes, “Though the parables usually have a basic lesson, frequently there are supplementary lessons embodied in these priceless illustrations. One must be very cautious, however, to be sure that no point is gleaned from a parable that is inconsistent with the story’s basic purpose or with clear biblical truths taught elsewhere” (11).

⁴William M. Taylor, *The Parables of Our Saviour* (New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1888), 54.

⁵Alfred Edersheim, *The Life And Time Of Jesus The Messiah, Vol. 1* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979), 592.

⁶Dr. Herbert Lockyer, *All The Parables Of The Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1963), 184-189. Among our brethren the late Franklin Camp espoused this view in his discussion of Matthew 13 in his taped series called *Redemption Through The Bible*.

⁷J. W. McGarvey and Philip Y. Pendleton, *The Fourfold Gospel* (Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Foundation, n.d.), 338.

⁸Taylor, 55.

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW GOD?

Allen Webster



As little boys do, three tykes were bragging about their dads. "My dad knows the mayor," bragged the first. "So, my dad is friends with the governor," another countered. As contentions continued, they asked the third if his father

knew anyone important. He thought a moment and blurted out, "My dad knows God." Wonderful! Oh, that every boy could truthfully boast.

Knowing God is sort of like drinking the ocean...or counting it's sands...or fathoming it's depths...or walking it's waves. We know only the little that He has revealed of Himself (Deuteronomy 29:29), and we struggle to grasp that (cf., "passeth understanding," Philippians 4:7). Eliphaz, the Temanite, told Job, "acquaint thyself with God" (Job 22:21), though the "physician should have taken his own medicine." Daniel said, "...the people that know their God shall be strong, and do exploits" (11:32).

How well do you know your God? Could you have answered these questions correctly?

DOES GOD EVER HURT? Yes! "For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt...astonishment hath taken hold of me" (Jeremiah 8:21). "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (Genesis 6:6). Our sins break God's heart.

DOES GOD EVER GET TIRED? Can omnipotence fatigue? Yes! "Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?" (Malachi 2:17). God gets tired of men who persist in their sins.

DOES GOD EVER GET MAD? Does the God of love ever get angry? Yes! "...God is angry with the wicked every day" (Psalm 7:11). "Therefore

the Lord heard this, and was wroth; so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel; Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation" (Psalm 78:21-22). God gets angry with man's sin (Numbers 32:10-15); error (2 Samuel 6:7); disobedience (Joshua 7:1-12); and idolatry (Judges 2:11-14). His wrath is described as fierce (Psalm 78:49-50); destructive (Psalm 90:7); and powerful (Psalm 90:11). God has always been "slow to anger" (Nehemiah 9:17) and "retaineth not his anger forever" (Micah 7:18). In fact, it "endureth but for a moment" (Psalm 30:5). "...he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath" (Psalm 78:38). To appease God's anger, one must pray (Numbers 11:1-2; Deuteronomy 9:19-20); act righteously (Numbers 25:3-12; cf., Joshua 7:1, 10-26); and obey (Deuteronomy 13:16-18).

DOES GOD EVER LAUGH? Yes! "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision" (Psalm 2:4). "The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming?" (Psalm 37:12-13). "But thou, O Lord, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision" (Psalm 59:8). "But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh" (Proverbs 1:25-26). These verses all picture God as laughing in derision toward those who have set themselves against Him. As you can see, "It is a sad day when God laughs!"

DOES GOD EVER GET JEALOUS? Can an all-loving God be jealous? Yes! "Thou shalt have no other gods before me ... Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God..." (Exodus 20:3, 5). "For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" (Exodus 34:14). There is a righteous type of

jealousy that is born of pure love. God cannot accept a rival for His children's affections.

DOES GOD EVER HATE? Surely the omnibenevolent God has no room in His great heart for hatred. "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity" (Psalm 5:4-5). "These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:16-19).

DOES GOD EVER EXERCISE? "...I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 9:24). "And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (Luke 15:20).

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). "But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me..." (Jeremiah 9:24). -P.O. Box 520, Jacksonville, AL 36265

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

Continued from page 1

again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3).

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead declared him to be the Son of God (Romans 1:4), having the authority to forgive sins. Jesus himself said, "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will" (John 5:21). Thus Peter and the other apostles preached, "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31).

Let us rejoice and praise God that He

raised Jesus from the dead, making possible our "lively hope," as He is but the firstfruits of them that sleep (1 Corinthians 15:20-23).

Blest be the Father of our Lord, Who from the dead has brought His Son! Hope to the lost was then restored, And everlasting glory won.

III. PREACHING. Repentance and remission of sins should be preached. Elsewhere Scripture records Jesus saying, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Paul announced, "I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are in Rome also" (Romans 1:15). And he wrote that "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21).

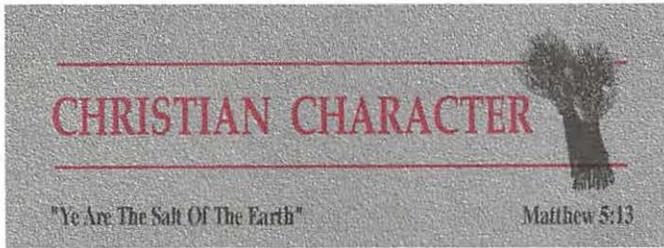
Preaching educates men as to the facts, commands, and promises of the gospel of Christ. Declaring the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4) convicts, inspires, and motivates the heart of man to respond to God's call (2 Thessalonians 2:14).

Men do not learn how to be saved through a vision or a "miraculous experience." Cornelius, though a good moral man who experienced an angelic visit, needed to hear the preaching of Peter, who would tell him words through which his salvation would be obtained (Acts 10:1-6; 11:13-14).

Thus the apostle Paul instructed preachers to "Preach the word" (2 Timothy 4:2). Paul referred to Scripture, to the Bible, the inspired word of God (2 Timothy 3:15-17). Therefrom does man learn God's plan of salvation.

In Acts, chapter 2, record is given of Peter's response to our Lord's instruction "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name." To those pricked in their hearts by Peter's earlier preaching, who asked, "What must we do?" Peter declared, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:37-38).

May every accountable man and woman hear and believe God's plan of salvation and then repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. -1714 S. College Street, Trenton, TN 38382



MEN WHO STICK— JOHN MARK

Ronnie Whitemore



Within the pages of the Bible, there are many great men of God described. The apostle Paul was a man of perseverance, great faith and submission. He was a spiritual giant and many of us do not identify so closely with such a man. Samuel, the great prophet, priest and judge was a faithful man of God who stood before a defiant King Saul and not many of us consider ourselves to be like Samuel. Daniel possessed such great faith that he went to the lion's den and faced adversity, danger and death because of his virtue. He proved to be a man of great conviction and there are few like him. Of course, we read of Jesus, our Savior, our great example who was willing to sacrifice everything for the salvation of the world. He is the one that we are commanded to follow in his steps and to strive to live in his image and likeness. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5).

But the character of our study in this article is about a man with whom many of us will identify. A study in the life of John Mark involves some knowledge of principles and a host of speculation regarding details. The story of John Mark and his departure from Barnabas and Paul on the first missionary journey is void of a definite explanation as to the reason for his departure. Was it faith that faltered? Was it health that ceased? Was his attention diverted? Did he lack conviction? Did he become discouraged? Did he lose a

family member, his business, his wife? Did he lose his way? Did he lose himself?

Passages Pertaining To Mark. A complete Biblical summation of the life of John Mark can be traced through a few passages. There is speculation that the "certain young man" who left his garment and fled from the presence of Jesus' captors in the garden was John Mark since this event is mentioned in his account of the life of Christ (Mark 14:51-52). A formal introduction of Mark appears in Acts 12:12, and he is identified as the son of Mary and later as the nephew of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10 KJV). He was selected by Paul and Barnabas to accompany them on their missionary journey (Acts 12:25). He is specifically mentioned by name prior to the episode with Elymas the sorcerer and again mentioned specifically when he departed from Paul and Barnabas following this episode (Acts 13:5, 13). Mark's action would prove to be a strong point of contention between two spiritual giants. When the time came for the second missionary journey, Barnabas wanted to take John Mark, but Paul refused to accept him (Acts 15:37-38). Later, Paul would approve of Mark and commend him (2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24). Finally, Peter mentions him as "his son" in the gospel (1 Peter 5:13).

Points About Mark's Personal Life. His home life. John was the son of Mary, the sister of Barnabas. Some suggest that the Scriptures infer that Mary was a woman of financial means and influence because she owned property. On one occasion the church met at Mary's house for worship or devotion (Acts 12:12). John Mark was the nephew of Barnabas. So besides a strong spiritual tie with John Mark, Barnabas also tried to honor the physical blood ties which is common even today.

His name. John was his Jewish name which meant "God has been gracious." Mark or Marcus was his Roman name which meant "large hammer." The Roman name, Mark, gradually superseded the Jewish name much like Paul was to Saul and Barnabas was to Joses.

Problem For Paul For The Second Missionary Journey. The contention that arose between Paul and Barnabas over John Mark was

not a question of who was right or wrong. It was a matter of resolving a problem of judgment for the sake of the Lord's work and to the glory of God. Many brethren would do well to take to heart the example of these two great men of God. The result of their problem was two missionary journeys, the gaining of a brother, John Mark and continued help to one another for years to come. Paul still regarded both men as fellow laborers, not heretics.

While some conclusions may be speculation, there are certain facts which we know about John Mark's departure. He is mentioned by name in Acts 13:5 and Acts 13:13. There was a great confrontation between Paul and Elymas the sorcerer between those two verses. Immediately following this event, things escalated, with the envy and anger of the Jews increasing against Paul and Barnabas. One may conclude any of the following: Did John have the stomach for this kind of work? Is this what John had in mind? Did he have some romantic idea of what this missionary work would involve? Was he really qualified at this time to do that kind of work? Would he ever be able to walk in the steps of these two great men of God in this way?

There is a great lesson in 2 Samuel 21:15-22 about a great giant slayer of the past who realized later in life that he could no longer slay giants, but had to defer to the younger, stronger men. Yes, King David recognized that his role had to change. During our Christian journey, sometimes our roles must change. We still serve the Lord. We still maintain our faith and integrity, but our roles must change. One must grow and mature in the Lord.

Perseverance Of John Mark. Possible Impediments. The actual reason for John Mark's departure is not important. If it were, then the Lord would have revealed it. Instead, our lesson is found in the possible impediments that could have detoured John Mark. Like Paul who suffered from a "thorn in the flesh," was John Mark's reason for leaving due to something spiritual, emotional, physical or just a change in circumstance? There are a number of reasons that could be assumed about John Mark. He may have become discouraged and weary as some conjecture. Or he

may have become homesick. Maybe he had responsibilities that called him back home. Had his faith weakened? Did he become involved in personal sin? Perhaps he was not ready for this kind of work at this point in his life. He may have lacked confidence; he could have been intimidated by Paul or Barnabas or both. He may have needed more training. He could have lacked maturity. Maybe he went too soon with these two great soldiers of the cross. Was he somewhat prejudiced toward the Gentiles as was Barnabas on one occasion? (Galatians 2:13).

Whatever the reason for John Mark's departure, evidently Paul did not think it would be expedient for him to return with them and visit the same places and strengthen the same brethren.

Tied to the Promises of God. The lesson for us is this: Regardless of the reason for John's departure from Paul and Barnabas, he persevered! While we may not know the reasons or circumstances, we do know from implication that John had to possess certain characteristics to overcome any difficulty. He trusted the promise of God that the necessities of life would be provided (Matthew 6:33; Psalm 37:25). He followed the principles of God that would pave the way through this turbulent world (Matthew 5:38-44; 7:12). He knew the Lord would always provide a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13). He accepted God's promise to protect him as a rock in a storm (Psalm 18:2; 31, 46; 27:5; 31:2-3; 61:2-3). He knew that God could make him strong in spite of weakness (Acts 13:46). He maintained his faith in God's Word (Acts 6:7; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; Hebrews 4:2). He had the promise of God's providential care (Hebrews 13:5-6).

Conclusion. This study concentrated on the life of an individual about whom most of us would identify. He was not a spiritual giant in the likeness of Paul or Barnabas, but an evangelist who possessed weaknesses and was able to overcome them. He played a vital role in service to the Lord and proved that he was among those men who could stick or persevere regardless of the circumstance. We need to be like John Mark in our daily Christian walk. -1001 E. Albany Street, Indianapolis, IN 46203



DAVID AND HIS HARP

(Amos 6:1-5)

M. W. Kiser



David was not the inventor of mechanical instruments of music. Jubal was the father of those who used the harp (Genesis 4:21). Therefore, David did not invent it. What is the prophet talking about? What of the use of instruments in

worship?

I. WHO INTRODUCED MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS INTO OLD TESTAMENT WORSHIP?

- A. To David goes this honor! (1 Chronicles 25:1-6; 23:5; 2 Chronicles 29:27).
- B. There is a difference between something tolerated and commanded.
 1. Kings (1 Samuel 8:22; 7-18).
 2. Divorce for many causes (Deuteronomy 24:1; Matthew 19:7-8).
 3. Polygamy (1 Samuel 1; Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:31).
 4. Instruments of music (Isaiah 5:11-12; Amos 5:23; 6:5).
- C. The Old Testament does not serve for the authority for what we are to do today (Romans 7:4-6; Galatians 5:4). Our sacrifice and praise (Hebrews 13:9-15).

II. WHAT DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT SAY ABOUT ITS USE.

- A. Silence. How should we treat the silence of the scriptures? (Hebrews 7:14).
- B. The word is complete (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3; Jude 3).
- C. It is not and cannot be a matter of faith (Romans 10:17; 2 Corinthians 5:7).

III. WHY AM I AFRAID OF ITS USE IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP?

- A. It is an unscriptural thing. No precept, no example, no inference.
- B. It is an anti-scriptural thing (1 Corinthians 14:6; Revelation 22:18).
 1. The apostles declared the "whole counsel" and "kept back nothing that was profitable;" yet, never mentioned it (Acts 20:20, 27).
 2. The apostles were guided into all truth, which included matters about worship; yet, never mentioned it (John 14:26; 16:13; John 4:24).
 3. The apostles are to be followed! (Acts 2:42; Philippians 4:9).
 4. The only way to get it is by presumption (Deuteronomy 18:20f; Psalm 19:13).
- C. It is a divisive thing. It cannot be called an expedient because:
 1. It must first be lawful [Not established] (1 Corinthians 6:12).
 2. It must also edify [Not just me; but the church] (1 Corinthians 10:23).
 3. It must not cause an offense (1 Corinthians 10:28; see Romans 16:17).
- D. It is a relic of the Roman apostasy (666 AD; see Matthew 15:1-9).
 1. It stands on the same ground as Infant Sprinkling and Incense.
 2. The apostasy did not develop toward simplicity; but innovations!

IV. WHAT ARE SOME MODERN ARGUMENTS IN ITS FAVOR?

- A. "Playing is a talent." (Acquired talent; there would be no limit!).
- B. "There is no law against its use; therefore, no transgression."
 - 1. There is a law against going beyond what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6).
 - 2. We are to abide within certain bounds (2 John 9).
- C. "We shall have it in heaven" (Revelation 14:1-4).
 - 1. Key verse is 1:1 "signify;" sign cannot sign itself.
 - 2. Heard singers. "As" signifies: volume, rhythm, and melody.
- D. "We have it in the home." (Things morally right and religiously wrong).
- E. "It is authorized by the word *psallo*" (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).
 - 1. "Twitch, twang, pluck"—context must determine the instrument.
 - 2. If a command, then everyone is to have one (Proving too much).
 - 3. Still not authority for its use with all songs (Proving too much).
 - 4. It would be mandatory, could not *psallo* without one! (James 5:13).
 - 5. Words change their meanings. Look at the King James Version of 1611.
 - 6. It is not proper to assign Old Testament meanings to New Testament words.
- F. Let us not abandon our plea for something we cannot prove by the Bible! -P.O. Box 2511, Sylacauga, AL 35150-2481

CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED DURING THE PAST QUARTER

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"I have no objection to organs in our chapels provided they are neither seen nor heard"—John Wesley, founder of the Methodist church.

"The organ in the worship is an ensign of Baal"—Martin Luther, founder of the Lutheran church.

INTERESTING INQUIRIES



"Understandest Thou What Thou Readest?"

Acts 8:30

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO OUR CHILDREN?

John T. Polk, II



"Will someone comment on the Jonesboro shooting tragedy? What is happening to our children?"

Nothing that cannot be fixed by God's Word.

On March 24, 1998 in Jonesboro, Arkansas, two boys, ages 13 and 11, opened

fire on their fellow middle school classmates killing five and wounding ten. They had: (1) warned for weeks this would happen; (2) stolen a grandparent's guns and ammo, and parents' van; (3) dressed in camouflage; (4) set off a false fire alarm at school; (5) fired when children came out of the school; (6) fled when policemen came within minutes. This was pre-meditated, cold-blooded, and merciless. A teacher was killed protecting a student. Both boys had been jilted by "girlfriends" who were among those shot.

Item 1: Face The Crime. God always punishes those who murder fellow humans, beginning when Cain killed his own brother, Abel (Genesis 4:1-15). From then on, good people are victims of wickedness (1 John 3:11-13). Since the Flood in Noah's day, God decreed, "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man" (Genesis 9:6). This was upheld in Moses' Law (Exodus 20:13), and under Christ is made the duty of government (Romans 13:1-4). At no time does God ask murderers: if they had been abused or were on drugs/alcohol; their age; their problems;

their societal influences; their family history; or if others were doing the same thing! Murderers deserve to die for their deed! If this sounds heartless, God reminded the Israelites that those condemned should "die without mercy" (Deuteronomy 7:16; 13:8-9; 19:13, 21; Hebrews 10:28). Every victim's blood cries for God's vengeance (Genesis 4:10). Whether "serial killers," "terrorists," "enraged exes" or "juvenile slaughterers," God's verdict had already been rendered, and any court system that does not give the same verdict must answer to God! Our only prayer and appeal for murderers should be that all would obey the gospel of Christ to save their souls (Acts 2:38; Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Though a Christian, Paul said, "For if I am an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I do not object to dying" (Acts 25:11). Murderers converted in prison should die for their murder.

Item 2: Who's responsible? The boys are. (1) Not God. Sin is in the world because of human behavior, not what God does (James 1:12-17). The righteous will suffer at the hands of the wicked (John 15:18-25). (2) Not things! Why confiscate guns because of misuse but not confiscate all cars and vans that are similarly misused? Drunk drivers kill more people than gun-users. These guns and the van were all legally kept by the owners! Government can blame things but the heart must be changed. (3) Hearts. Jesus "knew what was in man" (John 2:24-25) and that sin comes from within a person's heart not from outside (Matthew 15:28-20). External factors may fuel inner rage, but each person is responsible for the expression of that rage (Ephesians 4:17-20, 26-27). Parents neglect children through selfishness, divorce, jobs, or drugs/alcohol. There is no such thing as "quality time" without "quantity time." Institutionalized children often suffer "attachment disorder" whose symptoms are: "incapacity to form bonds of trust and love, coldness, even cruelty to primary caregivers, indiscriminate affection for strangers, destructiveness without remorse, a gift for lying and manipulation, brutal self-abuse" (pp. 24, 26, *US News & World Report*, July 14, 1997). Disen-

(Continued on page 19)

PLANTING THE SEEDS OF UNBELIEF IN THE HOME

Daniel F. Cates



Last spring I noticed that there were a few areas of the lawn that were a little less grassy than others and I decided to lay some bare spot filler seeds down to try to get those areas to grow a little thicker. It was amazingly easy to “plant”

those seeds and it didn't take too much attention to make them grow. To plant the seeds all that you did was cast them on the ground, rake a little dirt over them, and then water (or if rain was coming just watch). Planting seeds of unbelief in the home is similar to planting those grass seeds: It is simple, requires little work, and little to no attention. This article will focus on seven things, easy things, that people do unwittingly that slowly turn their children, or others, away from God.

It is easy to plant the seeds of unbelief when we don't encourage involvement or get involved ourselves. You can't get any easier than that! Paul's instruction to the Corinthians was to be, among other things, “always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58). Neither were they to abound in excuses, nor in indifference; they were to abound in work. We must do the same and let it be seen (not in a showy way, but as the example of Matthew 5:16).

The seeds of unbelief will be planted when we don't recognize “small” sins as having big, yea eternal, consequences. Not only will this plant the seeds, it will water and fertilize them too! This can really be tied to the next point so let's move on.

We plant the seeds of unbelief when we allow our own “pet” sins to go unchecked. Pet sins are like those “small” sins, and they will cost us our souls as quickly as a “large” one. Sins, unlike some Olympic events, do not get more “points” when the degree of difficulty increases, for Romans 6:23 simply says that “the wages of sin is death.” We must “check” these small sins,

these “pet” sins, these sins that we generally ignore or do not even think about. By check I don't mean trying to ease away from these sins, I mean check them like in hockey, where to check a person is to hit a person suddenly and with great effect. When a proper check is laid on someone, his forward progress is effectively stopped. We must check our “pet” sins.

The seeds of unbelief are planted when we don't go to the Bible for answers to life's questions. Growing up I was taught the importance of seeking good advice (not necessarily advice I wanted to hear, but good advice). Proverbs 11:14a says “Where no counsel is, the people fall.” We should seek the advice in physical matters from those who have been through given situations, and we do, whether it be a parent's advice, a preacher's advice, an older friend's advice, or even the advice of the weatherman on a partly cloudy day. How much more should we go to the Bible for the inspired answer to all spiritual questions, and perfect guide for many matters physical.

Unbelief's seeds are planted when we don't discuss God at home. Our Christianity is to be our job (Ephesians 4:1), not our hobby. It should serve as the basis for our lifestyle (Philippians 1:27). It should serve as the basis upon which our home is built. Only when Christianity is our vocation and conversation will it serve as the motivation to talk about God in our homes.

The seeds of unbelief are scattered far when we don't prioritize worship services. There should be nothing greater than our desire to worship our Creator and Father (Acts 17:28). I am reminded of the song *I Gave My Life For Thee* which concludes verse one, “What hast thou giv'n for me?” Are we so naive as to think that such a lack of gratitude, reverence, and desire will not have an effect on our children, friends and others? Two things I want to point out though: First, there

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CONSIDER OUR GOD

Ivie Powell



One's concept of God determines how he enters into worship. How do you view God? As you enter into the assembly how do you come into His presence? A brief consideration of the attributes of God will greatly enrich one and create within

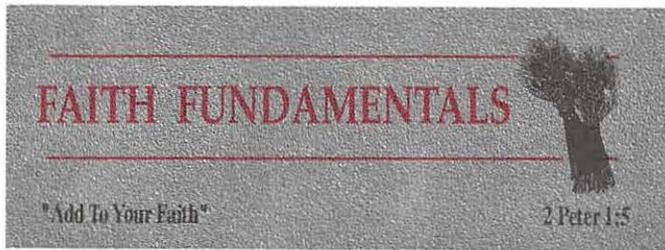
one the desire to come into His presence with thanksgiving and praise. The following information gathered from various sources will strengthen, encourage and humble us.

- ◆ He is Omniscient...A being of infinite knowledge, that is, he knows all things: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out" (Romans 11:33).
- ◆ He is Omnipotent...Unlimited in power or authority. "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (Revelation 19:6).
- ◆ He is Omnipresent...Present in all places at the same time. "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 23:23-24).
- ◆ He is Infinitely Just..."Justice and judgment are the habitations of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face" (Psalm 89:14).
- ◆ He is Infinite Holiness..."And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isaiah 6:3).
- ◆ He is Infinite in Goodness..."The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works" (Psalm 145:9).

- ◆ He is Eternal..."Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hast formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God" (Psalm 90:2).
- ◆ He is Unchangeable..."Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17).
- ◆ He is the Creator of all things..."Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11).
- ◆ He is Perfect in His Justice..."And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints" (Revelation 15:3).
- ◆ He is Merciful..."Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).
- ◆ He is Love..."...for God is love" (1 John 4:8).

This Great and only God graciously gave His only begotten Son to die for our sins (Romans 5:8). If one will obey His simple plan of salvation hear (Romans 10:17), believe (John 8:24), repent (Luke 13:3), confess (Matthew 10:32 and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) God will add him to His family, the church, wherein are the saved (Acts 2:47). As a child of God, one will have the wonderful privilege of praising God daily and working in His vineyard. And every Lord's day he will have the added privilege of assembling with the saints to worship the great "I Am" (Exodus 3:14), "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

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"MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE"

(2 Peter 1:10)

Guy F. Hester



[This is the second of a four part series]. God's elect, chosen ones, are in Christ. When Paul wrote to the Ephesian brethren, he said, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in

heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Ephesians 1:3-4).

The process whereby one is purified from sin, or redeemed from sin, is the same process or means whereby he gets into Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 Peter 1:22-23; Galatians 3:26-27).

When men get "in Christ" they are then God's elect, chosen or selected ones. It is impossible for human language to adequately describe the honor and blessing of being chosen of God to salvation. John expressed it this way: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:1-2). One must make his "calling and election sure" in order to receive that abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom.

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:10-11).

Peter said, "For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." The antecedent of "these things" are the graces or virtues listed in the preceding verses: "virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity."

"IN YOUR FAITH SUPPLY"

"Add to your faith (in your faith supply...ASV) virtue." Virtue is the courage to do right in the face of wrong. It takes a great deal of courage for the Christian to stand up for right and oppose wrong. That is one of the main reasons for the tremendous problem that we are experiencing with liberalism in our brotherhood today. We do not have enough elders, preachers and ordinary Christians who will take an active stand against the error that is being propagated by so many apostate brethren in the church (Galatians 2:11, 14). What about in my home congregation? Is there a tendency to just ignore that which is wrong? Virtue demands that I have the courage to stand up for that which is right. It takes a lot of courage for the Christian to refuse to yield to the temptations to do evil that are made so alluring by Satan and his crowd. I must "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

"In your faith supply...knowledge." This is a knowledge "which enables a man to decide rightly and to act honourably and efficiently in the day to day circumstances and situations of life." William Barkley, *The Letters Of James And Peter* (Edinburg: The Saint Andrew Press, 1964), p. 357. David said of himself: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11). Peter tells Christians: "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). The only way that we can grow in knowledge is through diligence in a study of the inspired scriptures (2
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RESTORATION REACHBACKS

"Ask For The Old Paths"

Jeremiah 6:16

I WILL LEAD ON GENTLY

G. K. Wallace

A good leader will display tender consideration for the old, young, weak and unfortunate. Jacob knew this when he said to Esau, "I will lead on gently." He realized "If they overdrive them one day, all the flocks will die" (Genesis 33:13-14). A good leader will not overdrive.

We may "overdrive" by continual controversy about "words to no profit" (2 Timothy 2:14). It is so easy to reject the weak if they have not reached the heights of the strong (Romans 14:1). It is tempting to condemn the young if they do not know life as we who are older know it. We may require of the young and weak a degree of courage and other graces which in their case may be only buds.

We may "overdrive" by preaching nothing but severe truth, threatening and punishment, and never emphasize the great promises of God. It is ours to console as well as to condemn. The great comforting passages of the Bible should not be reserved for funerals only.

We may "overdrive" by manifesting austerity, suspicion and harshness toward those who disagree with us. We must do good unto all men (Galatians 6:10). To return good for evil is indeed a golden rule (Matthew 7:12). Faultfinding has a place, but not to the neglect of worthy praise. "Fathers, provoke not your children, that they be not discouraged" (Colossians 3:21). We may discourage even the strong by dwelling upon the woes and trials of Christianity and saying little or nothing about its joys.

Jesus has a special place in his heart for the poor and downtrodden. He was tender and kind to the most sinful. Even to those who would become leaders he said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now" (John 16:12). We should not drive like Jehu, but lead like Jesus. We move a lighted candle slowly lest it go out. A fire almost expiring can be put out by a strong wind. A tender plant can be watered too much. In dealing with the weak we would do well to follow the hospital rule: "Walk softly and speak quietly." We are all little children first and had to learn to walk. "The Lord's servant must not strive." We must have "a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another...and love which is the bond of perfectness (Colossians 3:12-14). These qualities help to make a good leader. (*Torch of Truth*, Winter 1990)

THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

Perry B. Cotham

The Charismatic Movement is growing in America and all parts of the world. Those who are part of this movement claim the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the ability to speak in tongues, the power of healing and prophecy, and other gifts of the Spirit.

The movement originated in the early 1900's, and was confined generally to the Pentecostal Holiness, Assemblies of God, or the Church of God. Due to the revival fervor of the 1960's, the charismatic influence spread to most mainline denominations and even the Roman Catholic church.

Surveys indicate that charismatics have become an important social and political influence. Some insist they number more than 20 million in America (*Dallas Morning News*, August 23, 1997). The "Spirit filled" movement is growing fastest in third world countries.

This movement present a challenge to the church of Christ. More teaching from the Scriptures needs to be done concerning the Holy Spirit and His influence. -1814 Santa Cruz, Grand Prairie, TX 75051

THE SECOND ANNUAL GOSPEL GLEANER LECTURESHIP

The Second Annual *Gospel Gleaner* Lectureship is history. The College & North Church of Christ in Mountain Home, Arkansas was privileged to be the host for this yearly feast of spiritual things.

The crowd size ranged from 150 on Saturday (April 4) to nearly 600 on Sunday as each speaker capably sounded out his contribution to the theme "America's Most Wanted (Men of God)." Brother Dennis Gulledge, of Mabelvale, Arkansas was unable to participate due to a family illness. But Stephen Rook, minister of the Trenton Church of Christ, in Trenton, Tennessee, filled in at the last minute for brother Gulledge to speak on "Men Who Speak (Samuel)."

Guy F. Hester began the lectureship with a reminder of the important work of deacons in the Lord's church with his lesson entitled, "Men Who Serve (Deacons)." Ronnie Whittemore's lesson on "Men Who Stick (John Mark)" concentrated on the life of a young man who possessed a weakness but persevered to become an effective servant for Christ. You may read brother Whittemore's fine lesson in this issue of *Gospel Gleaner*. Ivie Powell gave a typically powerful presentation dealing with the subject "Men Who Stand (Daniel)." Brother Powell is the latest addition to our team of staff writers. Timothy Wilkes, of Hernando, Mississippi, was invited to speak on the subject "Men For All Seasons." Allen Webster very capably addressed the topic "Men Who Submit (Paul)." John T. Polk's message on "Men Who See (Elders)" reminded those who lead the flock of God that "believing is seeing."

M. W. Kiser's concluding message on Sunday evening (April 5) was a pulpit masterpiece entitled "The Man Who Saves (Jesus)." Brother Mike's presentation featured "Jesus the Divine, Needed, Exclusive, Universal, Perfect, Powerful, Compassionate, Conditional, Continual and Coming Saviour. O' what a Saviour!" In fact every lesson was a genuine gospel message.

Those who attended were encouraged, enlightened and uplifted as God's Word had free course in the hearts of all who heard. We hope that you will put the *Gospel Gleaner* lectureship on your list of priority programs to attend and join us in 1999!

Plans for the Third Annual *Gospel Gleaner* Lectureship are already underway. Anyone wishing to obtain copies of cassette or video tapes of the lectures may do so by writing: *Gospel Gleaner Lectures*, P.O. Box 880, Mountain Home, AR 72654-0880; or calling 870-425-4330; or e-mailing to: church@centuryinter.net.



Lectureship Speakers: (Front Row, L-R) Stephen D. Rook, Bill Dillon and Ronnie Whittemore. (Second Row, L-R) John T. Polk, II, Timothy Wilkes, M. W. Kiser, Guy Hester, Allen Webster and Ivie Powell



Lectureship Attendees enjoying breakfast

MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE

Continued from page 15

Timothy 2:15). To some Jews who are lacking in their knowledge of the Son of God, Jesus said, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). The scriptures contain all things that pertain to life and knowledge (2 Peter 1:3).

"In your faith supply...temperance." Temperance is self-control. "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). The Christian must be temperate in all things. It goes without saying that he must have the self-control in his life to resist the temptations to do evil. Everyone is sometimes tempted by evil.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren" (James 1:12-16). We should not be discouraged that we are tempted, but we must have the temperance or self control to resist temptation.

Temperance must also be exercised in doing that which is right in and of itself. There must be balance to our lives. We must not do one good thing to the exclusion of other things. I knew a preacher once who became so involved in his preaching that he lost his family through neglect. [To be continued in next issue]. -1101 Airport Circle, Jasper, AL 35504

CONSIDER OUR GOD

Continued from page 14

Beloved, as we come into His presence this Lord's day let us do so reverently, and with great joy—truly our God is Awesome! -1272 Bonham Street, Paris, TX 75460

"THE PRECIOUS BOOK DIVINE"

*How precious is the Book divine,
By inspiration giv'n!
Bright as a lamp, its precepts shine,
To guide my soul to heav'n.*

*Holy Book divine
Precious treasure mine!
Lamp to my feet, and a light to my way
To guide me safely home.*

*It sweetly cheers my drooping heart,
In this dark vale of tears.
Light to my life, it still imparts,
And quells my rising fears.*

*Holy Book divine!
Precious treasure mine!
Lamp to my feet, and a light to my way
To guide me safely home!*

*This lamp thru all the tedious night
Of life, shall guide my way,
Till I behold the clearer light
Of an eternal day.*

*Holy Book divine!
Precious treasure mine!
Lamp to my feet, and a light to my way
To guide me safely home.*

L. O. Sanderson

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO OUR CHILDREN?

Continued from page 12

franchisement, therefore fear and hatred, is the common theme in school murders in Jonesboro, Paducah, KY (12/97), Pearl, MS (10/97), nearly all teen gangs, urban juvenile violence, and college crime. Studies show "What children need is the touching, holding, cooing, rocking, and stimulating that come traditionally from a mother... Attention is the greatest gift that parents can bestow" (p. 92, *US News & World Report*, August 25, 1997). The Society for Neuroscience found that denial of touch had "serious biochemical consequences for the baby. A mother's caresses seem to help moderate production of a hormone affecting the body's reaction to stress" (p. 62, *US News & World Report*, November 10, 1997). Truly the anthem of the alienated is "The Cat's In The Cradle." Society provides "movies and cable and the Internet in rural areas. Evil has a nice direct marketing pipeline to rural areas that it didn't have in decades past" (Brian Levin, Criminologist at Stockton College, Pomona, New Jersey, *USA Today*, p. 11a, March 26, 1998). *Pearl Jam* had a rock video on MTV ending with an alienated teen spraying bullets into a classroom of students. The scary thing is how rapidly little hearts are filled with hatred for others. There are more Jonesboro's coming as long as children are rejected by either or both biological parents. If children are not brought up in the training and admonition of the Lord by loving parents it will only get worse (Luke 18:15-17; Ephesians 6:1-4). Jesus said, "because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold" (Matthew 24:12).

The church of Christ must "preach the word" more fervently than ever before. The handwriting is on the wall which says the world's ways won't work. God will hold the world accountable for its sins (John 3:16-21; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13), and the gospel of Christ is an appeal to replace the attitude of the world with the love of God by obedience to Christ (Colossians 3:1-17; Acts 2:36-38). Adolescents must "flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of

a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2:22). Have we hugged our children—a lot? -125 The Trace, Dover, TN 37058

PLANTING THE SEEDS OF UNBELIEF

Continued from page 13

are times you have to miss; second, any other time you can't! Remember the checking pet sins part.

Finally, the seeds of unbelief are sown when we speak of the church as if it were a denomination. How many of you have said, "Well, at my church..." Whose church is it? It is not any man's church, rather it is the one body of Christ (Ephesians 5:23): peculiar in nature (1 Peter 2:9), singular in number (Ephesians 4:4), universal in scope (Matthew 28:19-20), and predestinated to be redeemed (Ephesians 1:5). That is the church of which I am a member. There is no other like it and none should be compared to it. -14807 White Oaks Lane, Mabelvale, AR 72103

**"Be nice to people on your way up
—you will meet them again on your
way down."**

BILL'S BEGGED, BORROWED AND BEGOTTEN

"Truth is always strong, no matter how weak it looks, and falsehood is always weak, no matter how strong it looks." -Phillip Brooks

"A thousand errors may live in peace with one another, but truth is a hammer that breaks them all in pieces." -C. H. Spurgeon

"Love is not blind. Lust is blind. If love is blind, God is blind." -Gordon Palmer

"The Christian's motto should not be 'Let go and let God' but 'Trust God and get going!'"

READERS' RESPONSE

"How Readest Thou?"

Luke 10:26

HELPING PREACHERS AT MSOP

I am trying to get the members to subscribe to sound publications, but thus far have not met with much success. Your paper is excellent, as I often read it while attending Memphis School of Preaching (I want to thank you for sending it to the school). Recently, while attending the lectureship there, I picked up the last two quarters of your paper. Again, they were most beneficial to me and I know to others as well. Ricky Spacek, Bardwell, KY.

YES, WE SEND BUNDLES

In our last business meeting, the men decided that it would be a good idea for the congregation here to subscribe to some sound gospel literature. As our funds are limited at the moment, one of the men recommended *Gospel Gleaner* because it is both outstanding and free. I do not know if you mail bundles of your journal to churches or not. If not, I have included a copy of the mailing address of each family in our congregation for you to add to your subscription list. Thank you and keep up the good work. Travis L. Quertermous, Pacific, MO.

"BRETHREN, WE ARE DRIFTING!"

Thanks for sending the *Gospel Gleaner* to me. I look forward to every issue, I enjoy it so much. May God richly bless you, and each writer. Man is drifting farther away from God each day. Keep up the great work you are doing. Jim Brinkley, St. Albans, WV.

A PRAYER TO CONTINUE

I have been given one of your publications by one of my brethren. I will pray that you can continue in this service. I will also give a contribution to the work. We all need to grow in wisdom. I would like to receive your publication. I hope to be a preacher one day and need all the knowledge I can get. Billy Roper, Ridgely, TN.

IDEAS FOR SERMONS

My mother has received the *Gospel Gleaner* for years. My brothers and I have enjoyed them. My brothers tell me that they sometimes get ideas for their sermons from the *Gleaner*. My mother is very ill, please pray for her. Andrea Talley, Metropolis, IL.

GG ON THE NET

I would like to receive your quarterly publication. I received this information on the Internet, on the Alkire Road church of Christ Home Page, which is the congregation that I grew up in. James D. Mollette, Pleasant Hill, OH.

I ran across your address on the World Wide Web. It looks as though we share a determination to spread the Old Jerusalem Gospel. I would like to receive a subscription to your publication. Jeff Sweeten, Comanche, TX.

I recently came across information about your publication on the Internet. The information was located at the *Seeking the Old Paths* web site. From what I read about your publication there I felt that it is a very good and firmly based in the Scriptures production. Thank you again for your time and for your choice to stand for what is right in a time when it is so easy to go astray. Adam Dale, Auburn, AL.

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